Summer Field Assistants Needed
Ecosystem change in the Arctic
USDA Forest Service International Institute of Tropical Forestry (IITF)

Posted: April 30, 2014.

Position available: Summer field work sampling vegetation in Northern Alaska, working from the University of Alaska Toolik Field Station (http://toolik.alaska.edu/) approximate dates June 23 through July 31. Applicants should have a strong interest in field ecology and plant identification - including bryophytes and lichens.

Contact for details: William Gould, Research Ecologist, US Forest Service International Institute of Tropical Forestry. Tel. 787-764-7790 , wgould@fs.fed.us

Background: This research is part of an integrated large scale experimental study, the International Tundra Experiment (ITEX) (http://www.geog.ubc.ca/itex/), to look at the response of Arctic vegetation to changes in climate. It is also part of the Arctic Observing Network (AON), a large scientific program focusing ecosystem change in the Arctic. ITEX has been measuring experimentally controlled changes in productivity, phenology, vegetation composition, and nutrient fluxes within small scale vegetation plots replicated at many sites across the Arctic.

The field assistants will work with a team to continue with these long term measurements by sampling vegetation composition in natural and experimentally modified (by warming and altering snow depth) plots at the Toolik Lake Long Term Ecological Research (LTER) site in Northern Alaska as well as at long term monitoring plots at Toolik Lake and nearby Imnavait Creek.

The goal of this study is to determine real and potential responses of arctic tundra to climate in order to further our understanding of ecosystem response to climatic change and to better our response to these changes in terms of land management.

The student will work with Dr. William Gould (US Forest Service) and in cooperation with collaborators from Florida International University in the NSF funded project.

Candidates should have the following skills:
- Educational background in ecology, botany, environmental studies, or a related discipline;
- Proficiency and experience in identifying and keying plant species;
- Motivation to work independently and the ability to work from a remote field station for the summer.

Applicants should submit the following to William Gould at wgould@fs.fed.us:

- Cover letter summarizing research interests and academic and professional background.
- Resume/CV.
- Copies of transcripts (unofficial transcripts acceptable).
- Names and contact information for two references (no letters needed at this time).