

Ph.D. and M.S. Graduate Research Assistantships in Fire Ecology at Virginia Tech

I am recruiting two graduate students (one M.S. and one Ph.D.) to work with me in the Department of Forest Resources & Environmental Conservation at Virginia Tech beginning either spring 2015 or summer 2015. The students will have some flexibility in specific topics, but the general research areas will fall into one of these three general areas of fire and forest ecology:

Mechanisms of altered flammability in eastern US woodlands and forests- my lab has been focused on laboratory-scale flammability of a diversity of species from North America. Our current work focuses on understanding differential moisture and litterfall relationships and evaluating our lab-based findings in the wild. Our interests are focused on oak-hickory ecosystems in north Mississippi and SW Virginia and longleaf pine-oak ecosystems across the southeastern US.

Patterns of oak recovery across wildfire severity gradients- we have been working on understanding the pathways of California black oak following wildfires in 2002 and a re-burn in 2012 in the southern Cascades of northern California. Our current work is evaluating survival of remnant oaks and tracking the effects of multiple fires on oak community composition and structure.

We have on-going work on the fire ecology of American chestnut, ecology of upland oaks in fire-prone ecosystems, post-fire tree mortality, fire-disease-insect interactions, the ecological consequences of fuels treatments (mostly mastication and prescribed fire) and others that could be pursued.

Strong applicants will be creative, have a competitive GPA, GRE scores, and have substantial research experience, in the field and/or laboratory. Applicants for the Ph.D. position will have a strong research background with publications and substantial statistical and/or modeling experience. Education and training in fire ecology, a lack of fear of statistics, and great passion for your work will all help. In your email to me (mvarner@vt.edu<mailto:mvarner@vt.edu>), please include your research interests, a resume/CV with relevant scores, a writing example, and contact information for two references who can speak to your potential as a productive scholar.

Both positions have competitive stipends, tuition waivers, computing, and travel funding. Virginia Tech is located in Blacksburg, an awesome college town in the Appalachian Mountains with a pleasant climate and vibrant community. The Department of Forest Resources & Environmental Conservation is consistently ranked among the world's most outstanding forestry programs. Related departments across Virginia Tech have related expertise in ecology, meteorology, materials flammability, and modeling.

Send material or direct questions:

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