

PhD Research Assistantship

Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources
University of Georgia, Athens

Our research team seeks a candidate at the PhD level to investigate the use of expert-based qualitative knowledge in the construction and validation of predictive models for natural resource management. The research setting involves a large-scale, long-term experimental manipulation of coarse woody debris (CWD) in forest plots at the Savannah River Site (DOE), South Carolina. A key question is how to reconcile qualitative predictions of species and community response provided by knowledgeable experts prior to the experiment. The candidate will conduct research into and compare among suitable techniques for building predictive models from disparate and qualitative information. This research will likely take the candidate into areas beyond ecological sciences, including social, cognitive, and statistical sciences, where such methods have had greater development and application. The proximate goal of the research is to assess the biological predictions in conjunction with the CWD experiment, but the broader goal will be to provide tools and theory that can be applied by natural resource scientists faced with building predictive models for decision support where little or no empirical data exist. This stipend, funded by the U.S. Forest Service, provides a salary of \$19,539 per year at 40% FTE (16 hours/week), plus health insurance benefits. Graduate students on stipend at the University of Georgia receive a substantial tuition waiver (all but \$25); however, the student is responsible for paying required fees (approximately \$1,100/semester).

Qualifications: Candidates should be proficient in quantitative principles and methods and will possess a solid foundation in an area of natural resources science. Applicants should have earned a degree at the master's level or above, with an area of study in statistics, ecology, wildlife management, or another relevant field. The student will conduct informal and occasional site visits to SRS but should have no expectation of performing field work as part of this project.

To be considered, please assemble in a single pdf document the following, and email to the address below: (1) a cover letter describing your qualifications and career goals, (2) a CV or resume detailing your experience, skills, and accomplishments, (3) unofficial transcripts of undergraduate and graduate coursework, (4) a copy of your most recent GRE scores, and (5) the contact information of at least 3 references who can attest to your qualifications and fitness for graduate study. The position will remain open until a suitable candidate is found (expected start January 2015).

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