

Opportunity Title: USFS Graduate Student Internship in GIS/Remote Sensing

Opportunity Reference Code: USDA-USFS-2021-0198



Organization U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

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A complete application package consists of:

- An application
- Transcript(s) – For this opportunity, an unofficial transcript or copy of the student academic records printed by the applicant or by academic advisors from internal institution systems may be submitted. Selected candidate must provide proof of completion of the degree before the appointment can start. All transcripts must be in English or include an official English translation. Click [Here](#) for detailed information about acceptable transcripts.
- A current resume/CV
- Two educational or professional recommendations. Applications need at least one recommendation submitted in order to be viewed by the mentor.

All documents must be in English or include an official English translation.

Description **Applications will be reviewed on a rolling-basis, and this posting will remain open until a qualified candidate is identified.*

USFS Office/Lab and Location: A research opportunity is available with US Forest Service (USFS), Southern Research Station, Eastern Forest Environmental Threat Assessment Center located in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina. Initial research location may be remote depending on COVID restrictions.

At the heart of the U.S. Forest Service's mission is their purpose. Everything they do is intended to help sustain forests and grasslands for present and future generations. Why? Because their stewardship work supports nature in sustaining life. This is the purpose that drives the agency's mission and motivates their work across the agency. It's been there from the agency's very beginning, and it still drives them. To advance the mission and serve their purpose, the U.S. Forest Service balances the short and long-term needs of people and nature by: working in collaboration with communities and our partners; providing access to resources and experiences that promote economic, ecological, and social vitality; connecting people to the land and one another; and delivering world-class science, technology and land management.

Research Project: The overarching goal is to use structural measures from NASA's Global Ecosystem Dynamics Investigation (GEDI) instrument and in situ measurements from the Experimental Forests Ranges (EFR) and the Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) to explore forest biodiversity and its relation to structural diversity, and to relate both types of diversity to productivity, carbon cycling and major disturbances such as fire, drought, invasive pest outbreaks, and sea-level rises.

The specific objectives designed to achieve the overarching goals are to:

- Map both structural and species diversity of southern forests using data from GEDI, other satellite data, and measurements from the EFR network and FIA;
- Evaluate the performance of GEDI products for estimating forest structural and plant diversity of all species at the site level;
- Quantify forest structural diversity - productivity (carbon cycling) relations at local and regional scales;
- Elucidate how structural diversity regulates the resilience of forest productivity/carbon sequestration to fire and drought.

Learning Objectives: Our proposed project will examine how structural diversity is related to forest productivity and carbon sequestration (and thus water use), and explore the resilience of southern forests to fire and drought, and therefore will address SRS priority research areas in Fire, Water, and Restoration. This

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study combines expertise from multiple RWUs and Centers, incorporating field data from all the EFRs and FIA. Forest restoration to improve forest ecosystems services is a high priority area of R8 and Southern Group of State Foresters. Our proposed work therefore addresses all the four criteria of this solicitation. Through this research and collaboration, the follow will

- Gain an appreciation of the practical challenges and limitations of remote sensing in both short and long-term monitoring and assessments in forest ecosystems
- Improve understanding of fundamental monitoring needs and how evolving technology can assist forest management in the future

Mentor: The mentors for this opportunity include Qinfeng Guo, Jeff Atkins, Jingfeng Xiao, and Ge Sun. Please feel free to contact Qinfeng Guo (qinfeng.guo@usda.gov) or Jeff Atkins (Jeffrey.atkins@usda.gov) if you have questions about the nature of the research.

Anticipated Appointment Start Date: As soon as a qualified candidate is identified. Start date is flexible and negotiable, and will depend on a variety of factors.

Appointment Length: The appointment will initially be for one year, but may be extended upon recommendation of USFS and is contingent on the availability of funds.

Level of Participation: The appointment is part-time (20 hours per week).

Participant Stipend: The participant will receive a monthly stipend commensurate with educational level and experience.

Citizenship Requirements: This opportunity is available to U.S. citizens, Lawful Permanent Residents (LPR), and foreign nationals. Non-U.S. citizen applicants should refer to the [Guidelines for Non-U.S. Citizens Details page](#) of the program website for information about the valid immigration statuses that are acceptable for program participation.

ORISE Information: This program, administered by ORAU through its contract with the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) to manage the Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education (ORISE), was established through an interagency agreement between DOE and USFS. Participants do not become employees of USDA, USFS, DOE or the program administrator, and there are no employment-related benefits. Proof of health insurance is required for participation in this program. Health insurance can be obtained through ORISE.

Questions: Please visit our [Program Website](#). After reading, if you have additional questions about the application process please email USForestService@orise.orau.gov and include the reference code for this opportunity.




Qualifications

The qualified candidate should be currently pursuing a master's or doctoral degree in one of the relevant fields, or have already received a master's degree.

Preferred skills:



- Familiarity with spatial data analysis, GIS, remote sensing, Google Earth Engine, R and/or Python
- Forest databases and forest dynamics
- Strong writing skills

Eligibility Requirements

- **Degree:** Master's Degree or Doctoral Degree.
- **Discipline(s):**
 - **Computer, Information, and Data Sciences** (3 )
 - **Earth and Geosciences** (1 )
 - **Environmental and Marine Sciences** (7 )

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- **Life Health and Medical Sciences** (6 )
- **Mathematics and Statistics** (2 )
- **Other Non-Science & Engineering** (1 )
- **Social and Behavioral Sciences** (1 )

Affirmation I have received a master's degree or am currently pursuing a master's or doctoral degree.