

**Opportunity Title:** USFS Research Opportunity in Forest Economics and Policy

**Opportunity Reference Code:** USDA-USFS-2023-0201

**Organization** U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

**Reference Code** USDA-USFS-2023-0201

**How to Apply** *Connect with ORISE...on the GO!* Download the new ORISE GO mobile app in the [Apple App Store](#) or [Google Play Store](#) to help you stay engaged, connected, and informed during your ORISE experience and beyond!

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. Click [Here](#) for detailed information about acceptable transcripts.
- A current resume/CV
- Two educational or professional recommendations. At least one recommendation must be submitted in order for the mentor to view your application.

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

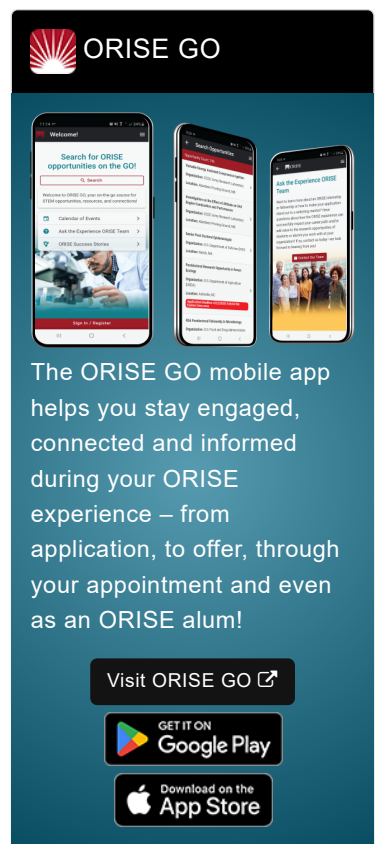
**Application Deadline** 7/7/2023 3:00:00 PM Eastern Time Zone

**Description** **\*Applications will be reviewed on a rolling-basis.**

**USFS Office/Lab and Location:** A research opportunity is currently available with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), U.S. Forest Service (USFS), within the Forest Economics and Policy Work Unit at the Southern Research Station, located in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina. **Remote participation will be considered for this appointment.**

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.

The mission of the US Forest Service Southern Research Station is to "create the science and technology needed to sustain and enhance southern forest ecosystems and the benefits they provide." The Forest Economics and Policy Work Unit, a part of the Southern Research Station, aims to advance understanding of how: forest-based disturbances and their management affect economic values, policies influence forestry decision making, forest product markets behave and are affected by policies and shocks, and forest-based ecosystem services are produced and valued.



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**Research Project:** The USDA Forest Service, Southern Research Station (SRS) is seeking a scholar wishing to practice and refine their research skills through a research project focusing on timber losses from causes including natural disasters, and the potential deductibility of those losses under current federal income tax law. The scholar will be mentored by scientists in the SRS Forest Economics and Policy research work unit and will also interact with scientists from Forest Inventory and Analysis. The mission of the Forest Economics and Policy unit is to advance understanding of the relationship between natural and human-caused disturbances and economic values; to examine how public and private forestland management is affected by government policies and private sector institutions; and to characterize domestic and international supply and demand for forest products.

Standing timber can be damaged or destroyed by numerous causes, including wind, fire, ice, flooding, insects, disease, drought, as well as from vegetative competition and animals. The only financial compensation many forest owners may receive after loss is through income tax deductions. The deductibility of losses depends on categorization as casualty, non-casualty, or other and on whether a taxpayer is classified as a personal use, investment, or business owner. This research project will aid in the construction of a national level dataset to understand these losses and the deductibility amongst private forest landowners. It will contribute to the policy dialogue about potential future changes to tax laws.

The research project for this proposed nine-month appointment would be done in two main parts:

1. Estimate the proportion of family (non-corporate) forest owners likely to be personal use, investment, or business, using the National Woodland Owner Survey (NWOS).
2. Use Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) plot data on tree mortality and causes, connected to market price data to estimate fair market value of losses. This will link to federal disaster area data and the family forest ownership tax categories from part 1 to determine deductibility of losses.

**Learning Objectives:** Learning experience benefits for the selected scholar include:

- Deepen knowledge of forests and forestry in the United States.
- Learn about tax policy affecting private forest landowners in the U.S.
- Understand and utilize large data sets including the Forest Service's NWOS and FIA plot data.
- Extend practical experience of quantitative research methods.
- Practice scientific communication and writing skills.
- Practice critical thinking.
- Collaborate with a team of established scientists

**Mentor:** The mentor for this opportunity is Gregory Frey ([gregory.e.frey@usda.gov](mailto:gregory.e.frey@usda.gov)). If you have questions about the nature of the

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research, please contact the mentor.

**Anticipated Appointment Start Date:** **July 1, 2023.** Start date is flexible and will depend on a variety of factors.

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

**Level of Participation:** The appointment is full-time.

**Participant Stipend:** The participant will receive a monthly stipend commensurate with educational level and experience that will be approximately \$6,000 per month.

**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](mailto:USForestService@orise.orau.gov) and include the reference code for this opportunity.

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

Preferred Skills:

- Experience in forestry or natural resource field
- Experience in data management, analysis, and visualization
- Interest in the intersection of society and natural resources
- Interest in policy formulation and impacts

- Eligibility Requirements**
- **Degree:** Master's Degree or Doctoral Degree.
  - **Discipline(s):**
    - **Computer, Information, and Data Sciences** ([17](#) 👁)
    - **Earth and Geosciences** ([1](#) 👁)
    - **Environmental and Marine Sciences** ([5](#) 👁)
    - **Life Health and Medical Sciences** ([4](#) 👁)
    - **Other Non-Science & Engineering** ([1](#) 👁)

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- **Social and Behavioral Sciences** ([7](#) )