

Opportunity Title: USDA-FS Ecological Site Descriptions for Puerto Rico and the USVI

Opportunity Reference Code: USDA-FS-WO-2025-0005

Organization U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Reference Code USDA-FS-WO-2025-0005

How to Apply *To submit your application, scroll to the bottom of this opportunity and click **APPLY**.*

A complete application 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. Click [here](#) for detailed information about acceptable transcripts.
- A current resume/CV, including academic history, employment history, relevant experiences, and publication list
- 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.

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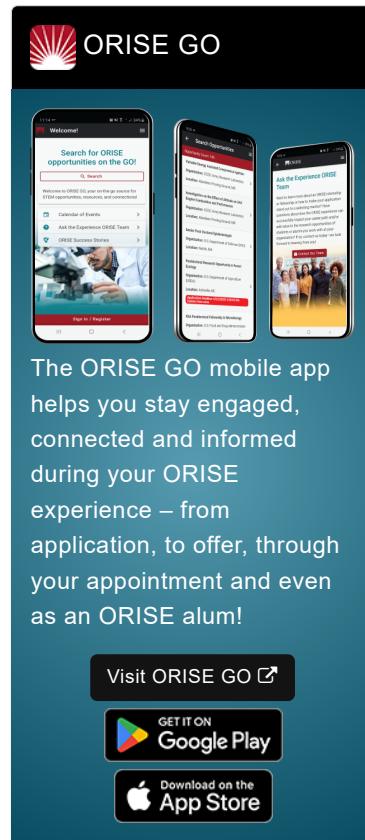
Application Deadline 3/14/2025 3:00:00 PM Eastern Time Zone

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

USDA Forest Service Office/Lab and Location: A fellowship opportunity is available with the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service (FS) within the Forest Service Washington Office (WO) located in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

At the heart of the USDA 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 USDA 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 participant will be engaged in conducting Ecological Site inventory and development across Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The Ecological Site survey, done in collaboration with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), includes collecting



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soils and vegetation data for several common land uses, including forests, range, pasture, wetlands, beaches, orchard, and field crops, and developing ecological site descriptions that will be included in soil survey publications following standards outlined in the NRCS National Ecological Site Handbook. The project includes participating with a team to establish inventory plots in Puerto Rico to record herbaceous plant and tree species composition and characteristics; gathering standardized inventory information on tree and herbaceous vegetation species composition and structure; providing taxonomic expertise in the field and identifying unknowns to develop a complete inventory of species for each site; assisting with quality check as inventory data is entered into electronic databases; helping in collecting site ancillary data; location, photographs, general site description, particularly noting disturbance history, and communicating regularly with project lead, NRCS collaborators, and the team members.

Learning Objectives: The participant will have an opportunity to enhance and gain specialized skills in conducting natural resource inventories, identifying the local flora, handling species inventory data, experience organizing data, assessing data quality, and reporting on field activities. The participant will learn from a field sampling leader and develop efficient field sampling protocols so that final species lists and descriptive reports contribute vegetation information to the Ecological Site Descriptions being developed by NRCS.

The participant will have an opportunity to gather field data and voucher samples as needed, review species names and all data for accuracy and consistency, and provide input to a site report containing vegetation data, ancillary data, photographs, and field notes.

Mentor: The mentor for this opportunity is William Gould (william.a.gould@usda.gov). If you have questions about the nature of the research, please contact the mentor.

Anticipated Appointment Start Date: February 2025. Start date is flexible and will depend on a variety of factors.

Appointment Length: The appointment will initially be for 8 months but may be extended upon recommendation of USDA Forest Service 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.

Citizenship Requirements: This opportunity is available to U.S. citizens only.

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

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through an interagency agreement between DOE and USDA Forest Service. Participants do not become employees of USDA, USDA Forest Service, 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 ORISE.USFS.WO@oraui.org and include the reference code for this opportunity.

Qualifications The qualified candidate should be currently pursuing or have received a bachelor's degree in the one of the relevant fields. Degree must have been received within the past five years, or anticipated to be received by 12/31/2026.

Preferred skills:

- Demonstrated a level of taxonomic expertise related to the flora of Puerto Rico, the ability to identify unknown plant samples and use taxonomic keys and literature to do so accurately.
- Experience in participating in vegetation description field projects, contributing to teams efficiently, and demonstrate the ability to conduct field sampling in support of scientific goals.
- Bilingual in English and Spanish.

Point of Contact [Justina](#)

- Eligibility Requirements**
- **Citizenship:** U.S. Citizen Only
 - **Degree:** Bachelor's Degree.
 - **Discipline(s):**
 - **Environmental and Marine Sciences** ([14](#) )
 - **Other Non-Science & Engineering** ([2](#) )
 - **Science & Engineering-related** ([1](#) )