

Opportunity Title: USFS Distribution and Conservation of Tropical Tree Species
in Caribbean Forests Fellowship

Opportunity Reference Code: USDA-USFS-IITF-2025-0069

Organization U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Reference Code USDA-USFS-IITF-2025-0069

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.

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!

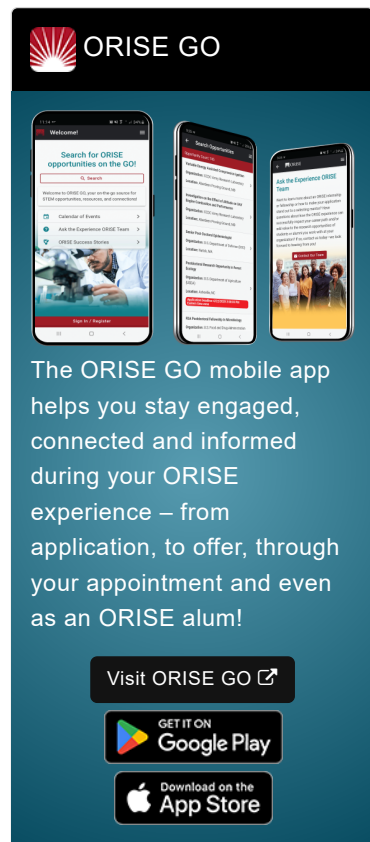
Application Deadline 9/12/2025 3:00:00 PM Eastern Time Zone

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

USFS Office/Lab and Location: A fellowship opportunity is available with the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service (USFS) within the International Institute of Tropical Forestry (IITF), located in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

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 IITF is headquartered in Río Piedras, Puerto Rico, and its mission is to develop and disseminate scientifically based knowledge that contributes to the conservation of forests, wildlife, and watersheds of the American tropics in the context of environmental change. Current research focus includes



Opportunity Title: USFS Distribution and Conservation of Tropical Tree Species
in Caribbean Forests Fellowship

Opportunity Reference Code: USDA-USFS-IITF-2025-0069

disturbance ecology, climate change, forest ecosystem services, urban ecology, and forest policy and governance.

Research Project: The project proposes to address gaps in knowledge of Caribbean tree species distribution focusing on assessing patterns of species richness, diversity, turnover, and endemism. The project approaches will include species distribution models and integration of spatially explicit environmental variables including climate, hurricane disturbance, and land-use, among other global and Caribbean region drivers. The project goals are to support conservation assessments and management actions with a focus on endemic tree species in the Caribbean region. The project fellow would conduct research and analyses on Caribbean tree species dynamics in landscapes prone to hurricanes using data from permanent forest plots located in various forest types in Puerto Rico, Culebra, Vieques, US Virgin Islands, and other Caribbean forests. The increasing incidence and strength of hurricanes and droughts, combined with land cover changes, sea-level rise, and forest fragmentation are changing the landscape of Caribbean forests, and thus create the need to assess the distributions and conservation status tree species as important elements of biodiversity, cultural heritage, and other ecosystem services. This project will focus on leveraging data from permanent forest plot datasets in the Caribbean to build a comprehensive view of tropical tree species in support of conservation and broader management actions.

Learning Objectives: The fellow will have the opportunity to become acquainted with processes for documenting, organizing, and integrating permanent forest plot data sets, herbaria data sets, and querying taxonomic repositories using readable and reproducible programming. The project will also provide opportunities to learn about forest ecology, tree species composition, and hurricane disturbance dynamics in Caribbean forests.

The postdoctoral fellow will have the opportunity to present analyses and map visualizations outputs in workshops, seminars, reports, and peer-reviewed publications developed and co-authored with mentors and collaborators. The fellow will have ample opportunities to share communications of outputs in various platforms that are expected to serve to inform knowledge of local and regional plant taxonomy, species population sizes, and species abundance distributions for Caribbean tree species.

Mentor: The mentor for this opportunity is Tamara Heartsill-Scalley (tamara.heartsill-scalley@usda.gov). If you have questions about the nature of the research, please contact the mentor.

Anticipated Appointment Start Date: August 2025. Start date is flexible 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.

Opportunity Title: USFS Distribution and Conservation of Tropical Tree Species
in Caribbean Forests Fellowship

Opportunity Reference Code: USDA-USFS-IITF-2025-0069

Level of Participation: The appointment is full time.

Participant Stipend: The participant will receive a monthly stipend commensurate with educational level and experience. Current stipend for this twelve-month opportunity is \$72,000, which is a stipend of \$6,000.00 per month based on full-time participation. Health, medical and dental, insurance reimbursement up to \$547 per month and a \$3,000 travel allowance in support of research.

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. Foreign national candidates may have a mandatory in-person requirement depending on visa status.

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 ORISE.USFS.WO@ornl.gov and include the reference code for this opportunity.

Qualifications The qualified candidate will have received a doctoral degree in a relevant field (e.g., Ecology, Geography, Biology or Forestry or other related field), or be currently pursuing the degree with completion by July 21, 2025. Degree must have been received within the past five years.

Preferred Skills:

- Strong analytical skills and demonstrated experience with statistical programming in R.
- Experience using geospatial data for landscape-scale research.
- Experience with Species Distribution Modelling.
- Enthusiastic about developing novel research ideas, questions, and approaches.
- Strong writing skills and demonstrated experience lead-authoring peer-reviewed publications.
- Ability to communicate in an effective manner with research team members.

Point of Contact [Justina](#)

Opportunity Title: USFS Distribution and Conservation of Tropical Tree Species
in Caribbean Forests Fellowship

Opportunity Reference Code: USDA-USFS-IITF-2025-0069

**Eligibility
Requirements**

- **Degree:** Doctoral Degree received within the last 60 months or currently pursuing.
- **Discipline(s):**
 - **Computer, Information, and Data Sciences** ([2](#) 👁)
 - **Earth and Geosciences** ([1](#) 👁)
 - **Environmental and Marine Sciences** ([4](#) 👁)
 - **Life Health and Medical Sciences** ([6](#) 👁)
 - **Social and Behavioral Sciences** ([1](#) 👁)
- **Veteran Status:** Veterans Preference, degree received within the last 120 month(s).