

**Opportunity Title:** USDA Forest Service Global Forest Monitoring Protocols

**Opportunity Reference Code:** USDA-FS-PSWRS-2025-0101

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

**Reference Code** USDA-FS-PSWRS-2025-0101

**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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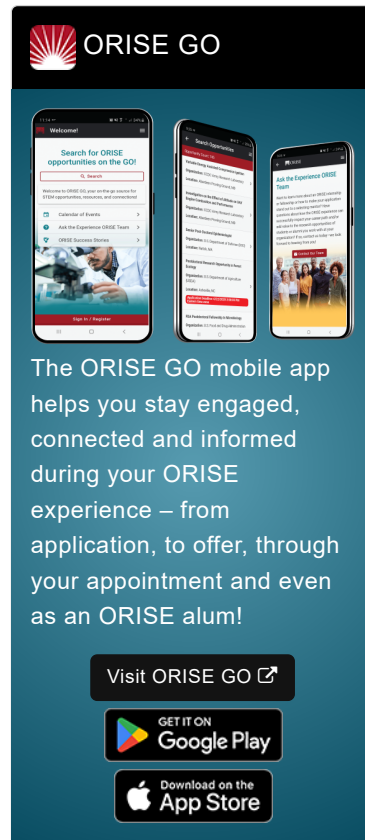
**Application Deadline** 10/24/2025 3:00:00 PM Eastern Time Zone

**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 Pacific Southwest Research Station (PSWRS) located in Hilo, Hawaii.

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 Hawaii Permanent Plot Network, known as HIPNET ([www.hippnet.hawaii.edu](http://www.hippnet.hawaii.edu)), is a long-term ecosystem and climate monitoring project, conducting vegetation remeasurements every 5 years for monitoring ecosystem plots on Hawaii Island's windward (wet) and



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leeward (dry) sides. The HIPNET forest monitoring plots are part of the Smithsonian Institution's global forest monitoring network known as the Forest Global Earth Observatory (ForestGEO, <https://forestgeo.si.edu/>). The standardized protocols utilized in the HIPNET project were developed by the Smithsonian's Center for Tropical Forest Science (CTFS) and are the same as those used by the ForestGEO sites around the world. The HIPNET plots provide a natural outdoor classroom for hands-on training in these global forest monitoring field techniques utilized in ForestGEO and the computer software and hardware technology currently being used.

The participants will be mentored as part of a larger field team to learn the field protocols for the vegetation measurements within the 2 permanent forest plots of HIPNET. Field research in the 4 hectare forest plots will involve collecting information for every tree that is greater than 1 cm diameter in size and specifically will involve tree identification, tagging and marking new trees, mapping new trees into the geo-referenced database, collecting tree diameter data, collecting growth habit data, and estimating abundance of herbaceous vegetation. The 2 HIPNET sites are within different forest types thus providing experience in both tropical wet and dry forests and the opportunity to learn the vegetation communities of these two forest types on Hawaii Island.

Participants will also gain experience in the quality assurance and quality control protocols used by HIPNET in the field and with the larger dataset. Participants will have the opportunity to learn about how the data is analyzed to answer research questions related to forest dynamics if there is interest by the participant. The fellowship will be primarily field based and out of the USDA Forest Service – Institute of Pacific Islands Forestry office in Hilo, HI. It will involve hiking steep and rough terrain and standing for long durations. Field conditions can be cold, hot, wet, windy, and/or dry.

**Learning Objectives:** The internship will help the successful applicant build knowledge, experience, and competence in the following areas:

- Plant identification and vegetation monitoring techniques
- Standard ecological sample processing protocols
- Data entry, management, and analysis

**Mentor:** The mentor for this opportunity is Susan Cordell ([susan.cordell@usda.gov](mailto:susan.cordell@usda.gov)). If you have questions about the nature of the research, please contact the mentor.

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

**Appointment Length:** The appointment will initially be for 10 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 part time.

**Participant Stipend:** The participant will receive a monthly stipend

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commensurate with educational level and experience. **The anticipated stipend range is \$400 - \$480 per week.**

**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 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.PSWRS@orau.org](mailto:ORISE.USFS.PSWRS@orau.org) and include the reference code for this opportunity.




**Qualifications** The qualified candidate should be currently pursuing a master's degree in the one of the relevant fields (e.g. a field related to Ecology, Environmental Geography, Forestry, or the Biological Sciences).

**Preferred skills:**

- Basic background in the Biological Sciences, including either completed credit hours in Botany, Biology, Ecology, Environmental science or related coursework, or previous experience in the field and/or laboratory collecting biological data.
- The ability to navigate in the field using GPS units, compasses, and maps.
- Previous experience conducting biological scientific data in the field and in identifying native Hawaiian plants is favorable.
- Previous experience with off road driving (4x4), a valid driver's license, and no major traffic violations is also favorable.

**Stipend** \$400.00 – \$480.00 Weekly

**Point of Contact** [Justina](#)

- Eligibility Requirements**
- **Citizenship:** U.S. Citizen Only
  - **Degree:** Currently pursuing a Master's Degree.
  - **Discipline(s):**
    - **Earth and Geosciences** ([2](#) )
    - **Environmental and Marine Sciences** ([4](#) )
    - **Life Health and Medical Sciences** ([7](#) )