

Opportunity Title: USDA-FS Economics of Birding-Related Recreation and Tourism in Alaska

Opportunity Reference Code: USDA-FS-PNWRS-2025-0160

Organization U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

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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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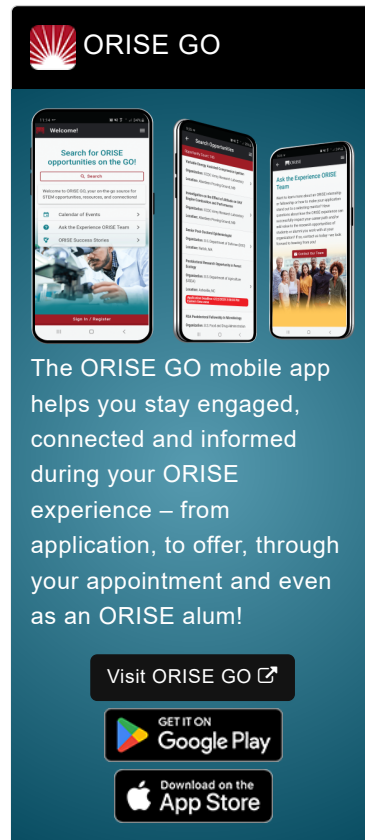
Application Deadline 1/9/2026 3:00:00 PM Eastern Time Zone

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 Northwest Research Station (PNWRS). **The opportunity is remote, but office space may be available in select locations, if desired.**

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 fellows will contribute their research skills to understand how different models are used to estimate recreational benefits and visitation. This project will be focused on recreational birdwatching on public lands in Alaska. Birdwatching is a growing sector



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of nature-based tourism, and the migratory breeding grounds in Alaska attracts bird watchers from around the world. Bird watchers traveling to birding festivals in Alaska such as the Stikine River Birding Festival (Tongass National Forest in partnership with the local government and community organizations), Yakutat Tern Festival, and the Kachemak Bay Shorebird Festival, Copper River Delta Shorebird Festival (Chugach National Forest and Cordova Ranger district in partnership with the local government and community organizations) contribute to local economies.

Learning Objectives: The fellow will have opportunities to strengthen their research skills by engaging in the full cycle of research activities, including developing research questions and methods, reviewing literature, analyzing data, writing publications for peer review, and presenting results to scholarly and managerial audiences.

Under the guidance of a mentor, the fellows will:

- Become familiar with the literature and methods used to estimate recreational benefits and visitation to public lands
- Code and analyze collected data to estimate models of recreational benefits and visitation to public lands
- Report project findings in scientific articles and management-relevant products
- Participate in regular meetings with mentor(s) and research team
- Contribute to research conducted by the USDA FS and academic partners on the topic
- Collaborate with researchers from the USDA FS and academic partners
- Develop updated reports (oral, written) to inform mentors and collaborators about activities and results concerning research progress (e.g., presentations, posters, and manuscripts)
- Communicate relevant findings and implications to resource managers

Mentor: The mentors for this opportunity are Sonja Kolstoe (sonja.kolstoe@usda.gov) and Lee Cervený (lee.cervený@usda.gov). If you have questions about the nature of the research, please contact the mentors.

Anticipated Appointment Start Date: January 2026. Start date is flexible and will depend on a variety of factors.

Appointment Length: The appointment will initially be through September 30, 2026, but may be extended upon recommendation of USDA Forest Service and is contingent on the availability of funds.

Level of Participation: 40 hours/week participation is preferred, but part time participation will be considered.

Participant Stipend: The participant will receive a monthly stipend commensurate with educational level and experience. **The monthly stipend rate at 40 hours/week for this opportunity ranges from \$5,680 - \$6,870.**

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.

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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.PNWRS@orau.org and include the reference code for this opportunity.

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

Preferred skills:

- Strong modeling skills
- Familiarity with, and experience with statistics and econometrics
- Technical writing and communication skills
- Proficiency in statistical programming languages (e.g., R, STATA, etc.) and geospatial programs (ArcGIS, QGIS, R, etc.)
- Willingness to learn programming languages
- Experience with large datasets and spatial datasets

Stipend \$5,680.00 – \$6,870.00 Monthly

Point of Contact [Michele](#)

- Eligibility**
- **Degree:** Master's Degree or Doctoral Degree.
- Requirements**
- **Discipline(s):**
 - **Computer, Information, and Data Sciences** ([1](#)👁)
 - **Environmental and Marine Sciences** ([1](#)👁)
 - **Social and Behavioral Sciences** ([6](#)👁)