

Opportunity Title: USDA-FS Postdoctoral Fellowship in Forest Restoration

Tradeoffs

Opportunity Reference Code: USDA-FS-PSWRS-2026-0113

Organization U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Reference Code USDA-FS-PSWRS-2026-0113

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 5/8/2026 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 Southwest Research Station (PSWRS). **The opportunity is remote.** Depending on proximity, the selected candidate may opt for office space in Placerville, Davis, Vallejo, Redding, or Arcata, California.

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: Western U.S. forests are at high risk from disturbance, particularly fire, as a result of fire exclusion and historical management



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practices. These disturbances jeopardize community safety and other ecosystem services, such as carbon storage, wildlife habitat, and wood products. For the past 30 years, scientists and managers have applied thinning and prescribed fire as a way to address these challenges. However, critical evaluations of treatment outcomes are needed to assure forest restoration and hazardous fuel reduction projects are supported with the best-available scientific information. Establishing the tradeoffs of forest restoration for carbon storage and sequestration can help demonstrate the value of improved forest management vs maintaining stands at higher stocking that may be at greater risk of disturbance. Large-scale silvicultural experiments offer the most robust trials of forest restoration outcomes available.

The research fellow will participate in the analysis and write-up of two related long-term silvicultural field trials: Blacks Mountain Ecological Research Project, and the Gooseneck Adaptive Management Area. These experiments represent two of the largest and longest-running, forest restoration experiments in the country. Possible topics for independent study projects include modeling carbon tradeoffs under unplanned fire and the long-term outcomes of restoration treatments for structure, composition, and tree vigor. The fellow will also be able to travel to national or regional conferences to disseminate findings, interact with land managers and other scientists, and develop professionally.

Learning Objectives: The USDA-FS expects to mentor the fellow to help further develop their skills in these areas, particularly scientific writing.

- Improve knowledge of science and knowledge gaps regarding the long-term tradeoffs associated with forest restoration
- Develop skills in modeling silvicultural treatment outcomes
- Acquire advanced data analysis skills in the data management, analysis, and visualization of long-term experiments
- Detail processes of experimental design, study planning, and monitoring
- Collaboration as a member of a research project team
- Compose original research
- Enumerate from western U.S. coniferous forest ecosystems and management, and knowledge of experimental design, data management, and analysis.

Mentor: The mentor for this opportunity is Christopher Looney (christopher.looney@usda.gov). If you have questions about the nature of the research, please contact the mentor.

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

Appointment Length: The appointment will initially be for seven 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

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commensurate with educational level and experience. **The anticipated stipend is \$5,837 paid monthly. Fellows receive an additional \$738.88 monthly stipend for health, vision, and dental insurance. The fellow would also have a \$2,000 operating budget for travel and national conference attendance, such as the Society of American Foresters National Convention.**

Citizenship Requirements: This opportunity is available to U.S. citizens and Lawful Permanent Residents (LPR) 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 and include the reference code for this opportunity.

Qualifications The qualified candidate should be currently pursuing or have received a master's degree in the one of the relevant fields (forestry). Degree must have been received within the past five years, or be currently pursuing and anticipated to receive by 5/8/2026.

Preferred skills:

- Experience in scientific writing and data analysis
- Education and experience in data management, analysis, and visualization in R

Stipend \$5,837.00 Monthly

Point of Contact [Michele](#)

- Eligibility Requirements**
- **Citizenship:** LPR or U.S. Citizen
 - **Degree:** Master's Degree received within the last 60 months or currently pursuing.
 - **Discipline(s):**
 - **Environmental and Marine Sciences** ([7](#))
 - **Life Health and Medical Sciences** ([11](#))
 - **Mathematics and Statistics** ([1](#))
 - **Veteran Status:** Veterans Preference, degree received within the last 120 month(s).