

Opportunity Title: USDA-FS Conservation Practices and Soil Health Fellow

Opportunity Reference Code: USDA-FS-SRS-2026-0268

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.

All documents must be in English or include an official English translation.

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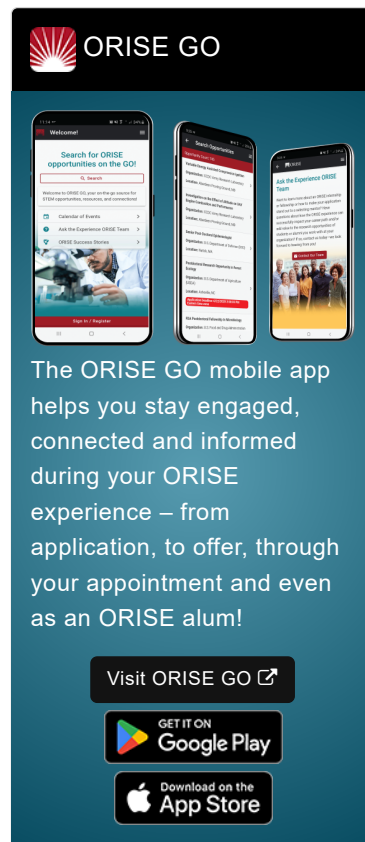
Application Deadline 8/28/2026 3:00:00 PM Eastern Time Zone

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 Southern Research Station (SRS) located in Durham, North Carolina. **The fellow may participate remotely twice a week.**

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.

The fellowship will be sponsored by the USDA Forest Service, Southern Research Station, Eastern Forest Environmental Threat Assessment Center (EFETAC), in Durham, NC. EFETAC's mission is to deliver science, assessments, and resources that help working land managers and technical service providers build resilience to disturbance and improve forest and soil health. EFETAC shares space in the Southern Research Stations Forestry Sciences Laboratory in Durham, North Carolina. The facility houses approximately 50 research scientists and support



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staff who's work focuses on forest health, forest threats, forest economics, assessments, and outreach. There are two small meeting rooms and one large conference room, each equipped with video-conferencing capabilities. There is adequate office space dedicated to visiting scientists and other collaborators. Additionally, the Research Triangle Foundation of North Carolina is nearby and has large state-of-the-art conference rooms available for use.

Research Project: This project will quantify the benefits of USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Environmental Quality Incentives Program ([EQIP](#)) [Forestry Practices](#) on soil health. During engagements with NRCS state planners, *identifying needs and solutions when improving soil health in forests* was documented as a challenge they have encountered when collaborating with landowners. This project will conduct a systematic and/or meta-analytic literature review to quantify the net benefits of EQIP Forestry Practices on soil health, publish results in a peer-reviewed article, and produce a companion guide for NRCS field staff. The guide will give planners information on which practices could be used and how they should be implemented to achieve desired soil health results. SRS staff will be available for one-on-one discussions to share their experiences and broaden your understanding of government-based scientific research. Weekly mentoring meetings will be scheduled to support your professional development. Projects will be coordinated with SRS staff who have decades of experience delivering climate adaptation and mitigation resources.

Learning Objectives: Under the guidance of a mentor, you will have the opportunity to learn to:

- Detail the research USDA is conducting to help land managers build resilience to threats and improve forest and soil health
- Understand the NRCS and how their conservation practice standards improve soil health and forest productivity and reduce risk to disturbance
- Improve conservation standard implementation and outreach
- Improve interpersonal, analytical, writing, speaking, and strategic planning skills

Mentor: The mentor for this opportunity is Mac Callaham (mac.a.callaham@usda.gov). If you have questions about the nature of the research, please contact the mentor.

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

Appointment Length: The appointment will initially be for one year.

Level of Participation: The appointment is full time.

Participant Stipend: The participant will receive a monthly stipend commensurate with educational level and experience. **The anticipated stipend range is \$7,873 monthly.**

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

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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.

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

Qualifications The qualified candidate should be currently pursuing or have received a master's or doctoral degree in the one of the relevant fields (e.g. natural resource or related science background).

Preferred skills:

- Knowledge of forestry practices, natural resource management, and conservation
- Communication, writing, organizational, and analytical skills
- Experience with literature reviews and/or meta-analysis and applying results into a summary of findings
- Experience organizing and leading engagement sessions and completing post-engagement activities (e.g., summarizing key messages, following up on next steps, tracking workflow)

Stipend \$7,873.00 Monthly

Point of Contact [Michele](#)

- Eligibility Requirements**
- **Degree:** Master's Degree or Doctoral Degree.
 - **Discipline(s):**
 - **Earth and Geosciences** ([1](#) )
 - **Environmental and Marine Sciences** ([6](#) )
 - **Life Health and Medical Sciences** ([6](#) )