

Opportunity Title: USDA-FS Forest Monitoring in Palau
Opportunity Reference Code: USDA-FS-PSWRS-2026-0305

Organization U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Reference Code USDA-FS-PSWRS-2026-0305

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

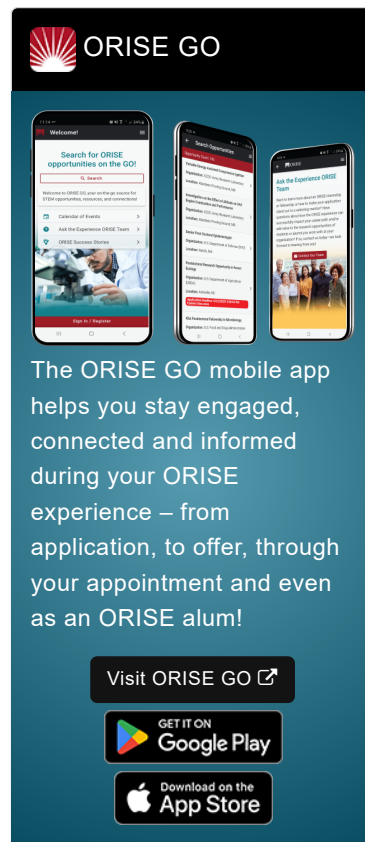
Description ***Applications will be reviewed on a rolling-basis.**

USDA Forest Service Office/Lab and Location: A fellowship opportunity is available with the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service (FS) within the Pacific Northwest Research Station (PNWRS) located in Melekeok, Palau.

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:

Two field fellowships for 6 months duration are available to participate in a long-term forest dynamics monitoring plot in the Republic of Palau that is part of the Smithsonian Institution's Forest Global Earth Observatory network known as ForestGEO



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(<https://forestgeo.si.edu/sites/palau/ngardok>). This forest monitoring project is a partnership of the USDA Forest Service – Institute of Pacific Islands Forestry (IPIF), the Melekeok Conservation Network, Palau’s Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and the Environment (MAFE), and the Coral Reef Research Foundation (CRRF). You will participate as part of a field team that includes our local partners to help with this long-term forest and climate monitoring project. The field team will be conducting vegetation re-measurements completed every 5 years for monitoring forest dynamics within the 4-hectare plot located in Ngardok Nature Reserve, Melekeok State in Palau. Research in the forest plot will involve locating 14,000 tagged and geo-referenced trees, measuring tree diameters, and identifying new trees and their locations following standardized protocols established by the Smithsonian’s Center for Tropical Forest Science and used by all plots in the global network. You will be field based within a tropical forest where conditions can be very hot, wet, and humid. Typical days will consist of significant field research and will be comprised of hiking around within the plot to collect field data, standing for extended periods, and may require occasional lifting of field gear containers weighing up to 40 pounds. Data entry in the field utilizes rugged computer tablets and QGIS software. Housing costs and round-trip air travel from Hawai’i or Guam will be provided. The project coordinators are in the process of securing furnished shared housing near the site for the field crew that has the appropriate amenities. The project will begin in early September 2026 and will continue through early March 2027. Training will occur on site by project leaders. You will be based in Palau and will be mentored by project leaders on-site and remotely.

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

- Standardize ForestGEO forest monitoring protocols used across the Smithsonian global forest research network.
- Measure tree diameters and collecting high-quality ecological field data for long-term monitoring studies.
- Apply navigation, plot-based sampling, and data collection in hot, wet, and humid rainforest environments.
- Describe how conservation and research partnerships operate among government agencies, local conservation organizations, and international scientific networks.
- Use rugged field tablets and QGIS software for ecological data entry, management, and spatial analysis.
- Apply field safety, endurance, and logistical practices associated with extended ecological research in remote tropical environments.

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

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

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Appointment Length: The appointment will initially be for 6 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 commensurate with educational level and experience. **The anticipated stipend range is \$3,813.33 - \$4,506.66/monthly.**

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

Qualifications The qualified candidate has a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution in one of the relevant fields. Degree must have been received within the past five years. Bachelor's degree is in a field related to Ecology, Forestry, Environmental Science, or the Biological Sciences.

Preferred Skills:

- Experience in the field collecting biological data and basic computer skills.
- The ability to engage effectively and positively as a member of a diverse larger team.
- The ability to demonstrate cultural sensitivity and awareness.
- A willingness and ability to participate in long field days in rugged terrain under inclement weather conditions is also important.

Stipend \$3,813.33 – \$4,506.66 Monthly

Point of Contact [Michele](#)

- Eligibility**
- **Degree:** Bachelor's Degree received within the last 60 month(s).
- Requirements**
- **Discipline(s):**
 - **Chemistry and Materials Sciences** ([12](#) )
 - **Communications and Graphics Design** ([2](#) )
 - **Computer, Information, and Data Sciences** ([17](#) )
 - **Earth and Geosciences** ([21](#) )
 - **Engineering** ([29](#) )
 - **Environmental and Marine Sciences** ([14](#) )

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- **Life Health and Medical Sciences** ([51](#) 👁)
- **Mathematics and Statistics** ([11](#) 👁)
- **Physics** ([16](#) 👁)
- **Science & Engineering-related** ([2](#) 👁)
- **Social and Behavioral Sciences** ([29](#) 👁)
- **Veteran Status:** Veterans Preference, degree received within the last 120 month(s).