

From: Kirsten Stephan
Subject: MS Graduate Research Assistantship in Forest N Cycling, WVU

M.S. Graduate Research Assistant: The role of understory nitrogen metabolism in watershed-level nitrogen retention in an Appalachian hardwood forest

The Division of Forestry and Natural Resources, in the Davis College of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Design, invites applications for a graduate research assistant (GRA) to conduct research on the role of the herb layer in nitrogen cycling in an Appalachian hardwood forest. The study is situated in and takes advantage of the data-rich environment of the Fernow Experimental Forest operated by the U.S. Forest Service's Northern Research Station. West Virginia University is the state's flagship research-one institution, and is among the top universities in the nation, with demonstrated excellence in teaching and research.

The successful applicant will conduct field work and sample collection, processing, and analyses to: 1) assess whether particular herbaceous species are disproportionally found under tree species associated with either high N or low N availability, 2) assess the relative importance of overstory and understory plants in watershed nitrogen retention, and 3) to assess how the composition of different soil nitrogen compounds is influenced by tree species associated with high vs low N availability. Other duties include (but are not limited to) various field and lab work, maintenance of field equipment, coursework and publication. The production of an exemplary thesis is expected.

Applicants must possess a bachelor's degree completed in natural resources, ecology, biology, environmental sciences, or a closely related field. Experience in forest plant identification, data processing, analysis, and GIS are a plus. Strong verbal, written, and computational skills are mandatory. Successful applicants will work collaboratively and independently, and conduct field work under variable weather conditions in steep, mountainous terrain. Applicants must possess a valid US driver's license.

The preferred start date of the position is May or June of 2017. However, this position remains open until filled. If interested in applying, please forward by email the following documents (incomplete applications will not be reviewed): transcript, curriculum vitae, recent GRE scores, recent TOEFL/IELTS scores (international students), cover letter (including academic, research and professional goals and interests), and the names and contact information of three references to: Dr. Kirsten Stephan, Division of Forestry and Natural Resources, 337D Percival Hall, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV 26506, USA; Tel: (304) 293-0024; Email: Kirsten.Stephan@mail.wvu.edu.