PhD Assistantship - Effects of Prescribed Fire and Silviculture on Terrestrial Salamanders

Contact: Robert Swihart Professor of Wildlife Ecology (rswhart@purdue.edu; 765-494-3590) or Mike Saunders, Associate Professor of Hardwood Silviculture (msaunder@purdue.edu; 765-430-1440)

Purdue University’s Department of Forestry and Natural Resources in West Lafayette, Indiana, is seeking applicants for a Ph.D. assistantship in wildlife ecology starting ideally in January 2019. The successful candidate will use new experiments and long-term monitoring data to examine multi-scale effects of forest management on woodland salamander species diversity and population dynamics. Field work will be conducted the Hardwood Ecosystem Experiment (HEE; www.heeforeststudy.org), a large multidisciplinary research project examining the relationship of silvicultural practices to changes in plant and animal species within forests across Indiana.

Specifically, this research project will use over a decade of monitoring data collected from over 20 sites in the HEE that have been subjected to clearcut, shelterwood, single-tree selection, and patch cut treatments (along with unharvested controls). In addition, the student will investigate the effects of recent prescribed fires at 12 sites across HEE. Spring and fall mark-recapture studies using visible implant elastomers will be conducted over a minimum of three successive years to facilitate estimation of population processes via spatial capture-recapture.

Department assistantships are awarded at $23,420 per year and include a subsidized insurance plan. The position will be based at Purdue University’s West Lafayette campus, while the HEE field sites are located near Bloomington, Indiana. Therefore, the position will require travel between campus and the field throughout the year; the amount of travel substantially depending on field needs. The individual will occasionally be expected to collect field data in adverse environmental conditions typical of southern Indiana.

Qualifications:
1. M.S. in Wildlife Ecology or closely-related field
2. Minimum GPA of 3.2 in B.S. and M.S. programs
3. GRE scores above the 50th percentile on verbal and quantitative sections and above 4.0 on the writing section
4. One year of ecological research field work experience
5. Strong oral and written communication skills
6. Valid driver’s license with a good driving record
7. Demonstrated technical and scientific writing (i.e., management plans, reports or manuscripts)

Interested individuals should contact either Dr. Robert Swihart or Dr. Mike Saunders before submitting a formal application to Purdue’s Graduate School (http://www.purdue.edu/gradschool/). Application deadline is September 15, 2018.

Purdue University is an equal opportunity/equal access/affirmative action employer, fully committed to achieving a diverse workforce.