The Department of Natural Resource Ecology and Management is pleased to announce this week's seminar speaker:

Dr. Gavin Jones

Assistant Professor

School of Earth, Environment, and Sustainability

University of Iowa



Conservation, Extra Crispy: How to Conserve Wildlife in the Pyrocene

Friday, October 2, 2026

220 Science Hall II & Online

3:10 pm – 4:00 pm

All are welcome!

Seminar Description:

Welcome to the Pyrocene – an epoch of human-induced changes to fire regimes. It's an era of extreme fire behavior with significant impacts to ecosystems and society. Yet for hundreds of millions of years before humans arrived, plants and animals co-existed with fire and even developed clever adaptations not just to survive but thrive in burned landscapes. So, does the Pyrocene pose an existential threat to biodiversity conservation, or a welcome return to a longed-for fiery past? In this talk I will review the important ways fire and biodiversity are intertwined, discussing how fire can act both as a threat and a solution to modern conservation issues. Though I will discuss biodiversity conservation issues broadly, I will draw substantially on my experiences working with spotted owls (Strix occidentalis) throughout the western US over the past ~13 years, as the issues this species faces embody many of the challenges that biodiversity face in the Pyrocene.

Speaker Background:

Gavin is an Assistant Professor in the School of Earth, Environment, and Sustainability at the University of Iowa. Prior to joining the Iowa faculty, Gavin was a Research Ecologist with the US Forest Service's Rocky Mountain Research Station from 2020-2026. Gavin was a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Florida and completed his Bachelor's, Master's, and PhD degrees at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He currently serves as an Associate Editor at Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment and Fire Ecology. Gavin is a Kavli Fellow with the National Academy of Sciences and has received early career awards from the Association for Fire Ecology (2025 Early Career Award), the American Ornithological Society (2024 Ned K. Johnson Early Investigator), and the USDA (2022 Early Career Scientist).