**OUTREACH NOTICE**

**Pacific Northwest Research Station**

**Research Social Scientist**

**GS-0101-12/13/14**

**La Grande Range and Forestry Sciences Laboratory**

**1401 Gekeler Lane**

**La Grande, OR 97850**

Or

**Wenatchee Forestry Sciences Laboratory**

**1133 N. Western Ave**

**Wenatchee, WA 98801**

**About the position**

The U.S. Forest Service’s Pacific Northwest Research Station is seeking to hire a Research Social Scientist with a duty station in either La Grande, Oregon or Wenatchee, Washington in the near future. The full performance level of this Research Social Scientist is either GS-101-12/13/14. A Ph.D. in one of the social science fields (e.g., anthropology, sociology, geography, political science, human dimensions of natural resources) may be preferred.

The Incumbent will reside in the Station’s Goods, Services and Values Program (PNW 2665). The mission of the Programis to conduct and communicate research to advance understanding of relationships among people and forest and rangeland ecosystems. The unit conducts interdisciplinary research in five problem areas:

**1:** Improve knowledge of fundamental social and economic processes and their interactions with the natural environment.

**2:** Examine the roles of policies, programs, and other institutions in interactions between people and natural resources.

**3:** Describe and analyze the implications of changing demographics, socioeconomics, and technology on natural resources and their management.

**4:** Describe the capacity of dynamic landscapes to provide for evolving human wants and needs.

**5:** Conduct and use integrated multidisciplinary research to support development of management approaches that account for interactions among socioeconomic, ecological, and physical factors.

Program scientists conduct research that is regional (Alaska, Washington, and Oregon), national, and international in scope, and work in partnership with other Forest Service researchers, university scientists, policy makers and managers. The ultimate goal of this research is to improve understanding of the effectiveness, efficiency, and equity of government natural resource management policies, decision-making processes, and programs; and to contribute to the scholarly literature and theory about human and natural resource interactions. To achieve these goals, researchers work closely with policymakers, managers, and the public to help them understand a variety of available options associated with natural resource management and policy decisions, and their implications for people and natural resources. They also work closely with scientists inside and outside the Forest Service, and are active participants in university activities and professional associations.

The areas of research focus for the scientist, while broad, will cover these areas of particular interest to stakeholders in eastern Oregon and Washington: forest restoration, fire social science, community resilience, and collaborative governance.

Forest health is a major problem, and the need to address this problem while maintaining and creating jobs in local communities means that engaging these communities in the restoration process is critical. In addition to job creation, understanding what the effects of forest restoration are on other values, goods and services that communities derive from the national forests; the challenges of forest restoration at the landscape scale across ownership boundaries; and institutional barriers to forest restoration within federal agencies is also important.

Fire is a critical disturbance factor in the fire-prone forests of eastern Oregon and Washington and their management. Decades of focus on fire suppression have led to significant shifts in ecosystems away from their historic range of variability, which has contributed to increasing wildfire impacts. There is a need to restore natural processes, fire in particular, to help landscapes be more resilient to disturbance, particularly given expected impacts from climate change. Given that land and fire management are fundamentally social processes, re-introducing fire while minimizing potential adverse impacts (loss of life or property, damage to habitat, increased firefighting costs) requires an in-depth and accurate understanding of diverse social dynamics across a range of interests and land ownerships. A clear understanding of social concerns and dynamics is critical to developing programs and policies that effectively engage the public and account for their concerns.

Community resilience is a third area of focus. National forest lands in eastern Washington and Oregon make an important contribution to socioeconomic well-being in rural communities.  Policy changes, market conditions, and environmental disturbance factors over the past few decades have resulted in a transition away from commodity production on federal lands – e.g., logging, grazing, and mining – and associated revenue-producing industries.  As a result, many communities east of the Cascades have undergone significant transformation.  For some, these changes have increased economic vulnerability and reduced community capacity.  Others have weathered these changes and restructured their local economies.  In addition to economic relations, many rural residents maintain important social and cultural relations to national forest lands, which form an important element of their social and cultural identity by playing a role in family history, social bonding, harvest of culturally-important products, rural competence, and inter-generational exchange.  Changes in policy or in natural resource conditions that affect public access to or use of national forests can transform these legacy relationships and result in shifts in place attachments, identity, and rural culture that may affect community well-being.  Social science is needed to better understand the relations between forest-based communities and national forest management and policy; factors that contribute to the long-term sustainability of rural communities having ties to national forest lands; and the role of forest and range management in maintaining and increasing community resilience in the context of dynamic social, economic, and environmental change.

Conservation collaboratives have become an essential component of forest and rangeland governance on the eastern sides of Oregon and Washington. Yet, although collaboration is critical, many collaboratives are comprised of a core group of people that may not adequately represent the broader public. What makes collaboratives functional? Do they meet the public’s desires to engage in forest management and do they represent the public’s interests? Do they attract rural community members and local landowners as participants in the process? Research is needed to understand the ebb and flow of internal and external trust relations, how collaborative groups form and change over time, what factors lead to successes and failures of collaboratives, the barriers to effectiveness, and the tradeoffs between integration of science and political considerations in decision making.

The research approach will involve integrating theory and methods from a number of inter-related social science disciplines, including anthropology, sociology, cultural geography, political science and economics. The Incumbent will also be expected to have or to develop a basic understanding of the relevant biophysical science, and to interact with natural scientists in addressing integrated research questions. Research is often accomplished in partnership with university scientists who collaborate with Forest Service scientists in specifying the research problem, questions, and hypotheses; assessing alternative research methodologies; pilot-testing methods; analyzing data; and publishing and presenting research findings. A range of techniques for eliciting data are used including surveys, ethnographic approaches, focus groups, cognitive approaches, and participatory research methods. The Incumbent will be responsible for final decisions on the appropriate research approach and methods for transferring knowledge to scientists, managers and citizens.

The duty station for this position will either be the Forestry and Range Sciences Laboratory located in La Grande, Oregon or the Forestry Science Laboratory located in Wenatchee, Washington. The two laboratories currently house researchers and support personnel from four different research programs within the Pacific Northwest Research Station. Researchers primarily focus on topics relevant to the management of dry interior forest ecosystems, including fire science and fuels management, hydrology and fisheries research, landscape and vegetation ecology, and wildlife biology. The labs also host forest entomologists and pathologists within the State and Private Forestry Branch of the Forest Service and Wild life biologists from the State government. Research is frequently conducted in cooperation with the nearby National Forests.

**We are looking for an individual who:**

* Is interested in conducting research to help inform forest management and policy
* Has in-depth experience with empirical/qualitative social science research methods
* Has an interest and ability to work well with diverse groups of people from a variety of disciplines
* Has a demonstrated ability to publish in peer-reviewed journals, obtain external funding, and communicate effectively with diverse audiences
* Is a team player who enjoys working with others to accomplish a common goal
* Is able to develop partnerships and work collaboratively with multiple agencies and organizations at various levels of governance

**IF YOU’RE INTERESTED...**

The purpose of this Outreach Notice is to determine the potential applicant pool for this position. Responses received from this outreach notice will be relied upon to make this determination.

**Interested applicants should complete the attached form and return to Simon Kihia at smkihia@fs.fed.us. Those desiring further information about the position may inquire via the email address listed above.**

**About the Pacific Northwest Research Station**

The PNW Research Station is one of seven research units in the USDA Forest Service’s Research and Development Branch. The USDA Forest Service conducts the most extensive and productive program of integrated forestry research in the world. The scientific information produced by the Station has application on public, private, and tribal lands in the Pacific Northwest (Alaska, Oregon and Washington) and elsewhere in the United States and other parts of the world. The Station’s programs reflect the changing character of the questions that science is being asked to help answer.

The PNW Research Station has approximately 300 permanent and temporary employees in professional, administrative, research, technical, and clerical positions. There are six Program Managers that oversee research program organizations, and nine laboratories that provide research. The laboratories are located in Oregon, Washington, and Alaska. The Station is also involved in international work with foreign governments, agencies and universities in many research areas. The research activities of the Station attract considerable interest from Congress, special interest groups, and the public. The Station Director’s Office is located in downtown Portland, OR.

**Community Information:**

**About La Grande** <http://www.cityoflagrande.org/muraProjects/muraLAG/lagcity/>

About Wenatchee Click here <https://www.wenatcheewa.gov/>

*To be considered, applicants must be U.S. citizens.*

*Thank you for your interest in this position*

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| **If you are interested in this position, complete this form together with a copy of your resume and send to Simon Kihia at** [**smkihia@fs.fed.us**](mailto:smkihia@fs.fed.us) **by February 27, 2015** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **PERSONAL INFORMATION** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Name:** | | |  | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | **Date:** | |  |
| **Address:** | | | |  | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **City:** |  | | | | | | | | | | | | **State:** | | |  | | | | |
| **E-Mail Address:** | | | | | |  | | | | | | | | | | | **Phone:** | | |  |
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| **EMPLOYMENT** | | | | | | |  | | | | | |  | | | | | |  | |
| **Are you currently a Federal Employee?** | | | | | | | | | | | **Yes** | | | | **No** | | | | | |
|  | **If Yes:** | | | | | | | | | | | |  | | | | | |  | |
|  | | **Name of your Agency & Location:** | | | | | | | | | | | |  | | | | | | |
|  | | **Current title/series/grade:** | | | | | | | |  | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | | **Type of Appointment:** | | | | | | | **Permanent**  **Term**  **Temporary** | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | **If No:** | | | | | | | | | | | |  | | | | | |  | |
|  | | **Current Employer:** | | | | | |  | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | | **Current Position Title & Salary:** | | | | | | | | | |  | | | | | | | | |
|  | | **Type of Appointment:** | | | | | | | **Permanent  Term  Temporary** | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | | **Are you eligible for appointment under any of the following special authorities?** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | |  | | | **Former Peace Corps**  **Person with Disabilities**  **Student Employment Program**  **Veteran with 30% Compensable Disability**  **Veteran’s Employment Opportunities Act of 1998**  **Veteran’s Readjustment**  **Reinstatement Eligibility**  **Other** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

*Thank-you for your interest in the position!*