Funded PhD Research Assistantship – Social Science

Position Description: Dr. Brian Chaffin and Dr. Alexander Metcalf (Society & Conservation) and Dr. Theresa Floyd (Management & Marketing) at the University of Montana seek applicants for an exciting opportunity to pursue a PhD while engaging cutting edge quantitative social science methods to address pressing conservation challenges in the American West and beyond. The successful candidate will join a multi-institutional (U. Montana, U. Nebraska-Lincoln), transdisciplinary team of social and biophysical scientists collaborating on a NSF EPSCoR-funded research project titled "Resilience Informatics for the Convergence of Critical Capacities to Address Regional-scale Environmental Change." This research leverages large-scale spatial data to better understand landscape-scale social-ecological transitions in near real-time. The successful applicant will engage as a member of the social science team working on a wide range of research objectives, including: (1) analysis of spatial patterns in large-scale social data; (2) social network analyses of nested case studies in Montana and Nebraska aimed at better understanding local conservation practices and decision-making; and (3) advancement of microtargeting research to enhance conservation initiatives and technology adoption toward conservation-oriented land management. The PhD student will have significant flexibility within this project to pursue dissertation research leveraging diverse methodological approaches such as quasi-field experiments, microtargeting, delivery of in-person conservation workshops, and/or ethnography. This research assistantship provides a stipend for three years (12-month/year) including tuition, as well as opportunities to engage in extended field work, professional trainings, and mentorship in interdisciplinary, team-based, social-ecological research.

Desired Qualifications: The ideal candidate will have a strong academic background (BS or MS) in quantitative social, biophysical, and/or spatial sciences, and interest or experience working in conservation social science. M.S. or previous graduate degree preferred, but not required. Applicants with diverse backgrounds and/or previous job or life experiences in a conservation field are encouraged to apply. Applicants must be able to clearly communicate complex ideas in writing and be willing to learn in a fast-paced, self-directed environment. Working knowledge of a statistical software package, familiarity with R or Python, and proficiency with ArcGIS (or open-source GIS software) is preferable. The successful candidate must meet the admissions criteria for and enroll in one of the following programs at the University of Montana: PhD in Forestry & Conservation Sciences; or PhD in Systems Ecology.

To Apply: Interested applicants should send a single PDF with the following to Dr. Brian Chaffin (brian.chaffin@umontana.edu) for immediate consideration: (1) a cover letter that includes a well-articulated statement of research interests, goals, and previous research and/or relevant experiences; (2) a resume or CV; (3) unofficial transcripts and GRE scores; and (4) contact information for three references. The selected candidate will apply to the University of Montana for admission. Graduate degree program requirements can be found at http://www.cfc.umt.edu/grad/ and http://www.umt.edu/grad/Apply/. Potential start dates include January, June, or August 2020.

W.A. FRANKE COLLEGE OF FORESTRY & CONSERVATION
UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

32 Campus Dr., Forestry 109 | Missoula, Montana 59812 | 406-243-6575 | www.cfc.umt.edu