

Postdoctoral Researcher
Stakeholder Perceptions of Environmental Adaptive Management
Washington Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit
University of Washington

POSITION: Postdoctoral Researcher

SALARY: \$61,688/year + benefits

EMPLOYMENT PERIOD: Jan. – Dec. 2022 (12 months, with possibility of extension)

APPLICATION DEADLINE: October 17, 2021

LOCATION: University of Washington, Seattle, Washington

TRAVEL: Occasional travel in Washington state

POSITION SUMMARY:

The postdoctoral researcher will conduct social science research examining how stakeholders and policymakers perceive the outcomes, uncertainties, and risks of a 20-year long adaptive management program. The postdoctoral researcher will lead all aspects of the project while working closely with the principal investigator, Dr. Alex McInturff of the USGS Washington Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit at the University of Washington, and with scientists and managers at the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

BACKGROUND AND DUTIES:

This position will examine Washington's Forest Practices Habitat Conservation Plan (FP HCP), which covers 9.3 million acres of commercial forestlands and has the following goals:

1. Comply with the Endangered Species Act for aquatic and riparian dependent species.
2. Support a harvestable supply of fish by restoring and maintaining riparian habitat.
3. Meet the requirements of the Clean Water Act for water quality.
4. Keep the timber industry economically viable in the state of Washington.

When the rules underlying the FP HCP were agreed to by private stakeholders, tribal governments, and state and federal natural resource agencies, there were multiple scientific uncertainties regarding their expected effectiveness. As a consequence, the FP HCP included an adaptive management program (AMP), which has grown to be perhaps the largest nonfederal adaptive management program in the United States. Two decades of AMP research have yielded substantial findings about the effects of forest practices on wildlife, fish, and water. However, differing risk perceptions and uncertainties among participating groups, as well the decision-making process itself, have made translating findings into policy a complicated and contentious process.

The postdoctoral researcher will lead research with the goal of understanding how participating groups perceive the AMP's outcomes, and how these perceptions weigh in policy decisions. The postdoctoral researcher will consider the influence of scientific uncertainty, risk, and the AMP's formalized decision-making process on driving these perceptions. Ultimately, this research will not only improve the AMP, it will also serve as a major case study for understanding how stakeholder perceptions influence environmental policy outcomes.

MINIUMUM REQUIREMENTS:

1. Ph.D. in environmental social science or a related field.
2. Experience conducting research with diverse stakeholder groups around contentious environmental problems.
3. Demonstrated proficiency in both qualitative and quantitative social science methods, including conducting and analyzing interview data.
4. Demonstrated desire and proven ability to publish in peer-reviewed journals.
5. Excellent written and personal communication skills.
6. The ability to work both independently and collaboratively, and the ability to meet deadlines.

DESIRED ABILITIES:

Competitive candidates will have a strong background in environmental social science, especially using a Q-methodological approach to study contentious environmental management challenges. Experience in research on applied environmental problems, environmental conflicts, or stakeholder perceptions is preferred. The research process will entail primary data collection via interviews and focus groups, reviewing management and research products, qualitative and quantitative analysis synthesizing both primary and secondary data, and leading publications and reports based on the findings of the research.

TO APPLY:

Applicants should email (in a single pdf document): (1) a letter (no longer than a page) describing background and interests – the letter should address specifically how the applicant meets both the minimum requirements and the desired abilities, (2) curriculum vitae, (3) a research writing sample, and (4) the names and contact information (phone and email) for 3 references to Dr. Alex McInturff (amcintur@uw.edu). For further information, contact: Alex McInturff (amcintur@uw.edu).