University of Idaho

COLLEGE OF NATURAL RESOURCES
Natural Resources & Society Department

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Graduate Teaching Fellowship Program

Department of Natural Resources and Society

Program Overview

The Department of Natural Resources and Society (NRS) at the University of Idaho believes that the value and quality of higher education require professionals who are competent and confident teachers. We also believe that higher education professionals trained to develop curricula for and deliver instruction to students are needed to address contemporary social-environmental challenges. To do so requires concerted and intentional effort to teach graduate students how to be effective teachers.

We seek **2 PhD students** to form our inaugural **Graduate Teaching Fellowship Program** (GTFP). The Fellowship prepares PhD students who aspire to a teaching-focused career in higher education or who intend to become well-rounded university educators and researchers. The Fellowship is a 3-year training program that supports PhD students to develop pedagogical knowledge and skills under faculty guidance through active participation in the teaching of undergraduates.

The GTFP offers Natural Resources (NR) and Environmental Science (ENVS) PhD students (a) teaching assistantships (TA) and stipend each fall and spring semester, (b) faculty-led pedagogy training seminars in each fall semester, and (c) summer TA. Fellows may also choose to spend their summer focused on dissertation research, self-funded or funded through their dissertation advisor or committee members.

Sample Courses

Teaching fellows will assist NRS faculty in the delivery of lecture, discussion, and field-based undergraduate coursework. Classes include but are not limited to *ENVS 1010: Introduction to Environmental Science*, *ENVS 1020: Field Activities in Environmental Science, NRS 2350: Society & Natural Resources*.

Applicant Qualifications

- Must be an incoming, first-year doctoral student with an application to either the Natural Resources or Environmental Science PhD program.
- Dissertation chair (major professor) must be a NRS department faculty member.
- Should be pursuing a career in higher education that includes teaching.
- Must have or obtain a valid US driver's license before the start of fellowship
- Previous teaching experience is desired, but not necessary.

Additional Program Requirements

In addition to the requirements and expectations of their respective graduate programs, GTFP Fellows are expected to:

- Demonstrate the ability to effectively provide course instruction and design curriculum.
- Actively participate in the university's teaching and learning community.
- Identify and engage with faculty mentors to facilitate pedagogical growth.
- Create and implement an evidence-based teaching philosophy statement.
- Participate in a 1-credit teaching seminar each Fall semester.

The University of Idaho is an equal opportunity employer.

Application Materials

In addition to application materials required by the University of Idaho's College of Graduate Studies, applicants to must also submit the following to nrs@uidaho.edu and their intended major professor:

- Statement of intent (1–2 pages) that explains interest in teaching in higher education, previous teaching experience (if any), and knowledge, skills, and abilities relevant to the position.

Application Deadline

All application materials must be received by December 15, 2026. For questions, contact NRS Department Chair, Dr. Jaap Vos, jvos@uidaho.edu

Research Areas for NRS Major Professors

Fellows are expected to complete their PhD dissertation with the assistance of one or more faculty within NRS. Preference will be given to fellows working with junior faculty. Topical areas for participating/potential major professors, include the following:

Land Stewardship and Education

The department is conducting several ongoing projects exploring land stewardship education. Current projects include working with local, national, and international communities to research and build curricula around connecting youth, especially Indigenous youth, with land, culture, and heritage to promote continued land stewardship. Projects include collaboration with Idaho Tribal partners, US National Park partners, and UNESCO. For more information, contact Dr. David EK Smith, davideksmith@uidaho.edu

Environmental Social Science

Study environmental, conservation, and natural resource issues through the lens of human behavior, social processes, and socio-ecological patterns. Develop skills and produce actionable research via the human dimensions of natural resources, conservation psychology, and environmental sociology inquiry that uses quantitative, qualitative, mixed, and experimental methods to explore the nature of and reasons for environmentally significant actions. For more information, contact Dr. Kenneth E. Wallen, kwallen@uidaho.edu.

Aquatic Pollution, Resilience, Water Quality & Quantity

Current research focuses on tire related pollution in aquatic ecosystems. Current projects include assessment of BMP effectiveness, pollution hazard mapping, and field and laboratory characterization of 6PPD-Q. For more information, contact Dr. Mary Engels, engels@uidaho.edu.

Shared Stewardship Capacity

This research investigates the distribution of private donor demand and its effects on the emergence and growth of nonprofit and voluntary organizations available to engage in shared stewardship of public and private lands. The project will employ data science techniques (i.e. computational text analysis) and organizational economics frameworks. For more information, contact Dr. Chelsea Pennick, chelseap@uidaho.edu | 208-264-8500.

Public Land Management

Currently recruiting researchers to support several public land visitor use management studies focusing on the interactions between land management agencies, visitors, and service providers. Specifically, the responses of visitors to changes in public land access, as well as the relationships between outdoor recreation service providers and land management agencies. For more information, contact Dr. Iree Wheeler, iree@uidaho.edu.