



M.S. Assistantship Opportunity



"Producer motivations and influences of soil quality and crop prices: NRCS conservation programs' success at keeping expiring conservation reserve program (CRP) lands in grass"

University of Wyoming (UW) - Department of Ecosystem Science and Management

Project Description: This project works through the University of Wyoming Department of Ecosystem Science and Management, with the Sustainable Rangelands Roundtable and Ducks Unlimited, to survey producers to identify success of efforts to engage producers with expiring CRP contracts in NRCS conservation programs including EQIP and/or CSP, to ensure that the lands stay in grass following CRP contract expiration. Socio-economic characteristics, and motivations for participating in NRCS conservation programs will also be explored. Relationships between soil quality/soil health of associated lands and producers decision-making regarding cropping or maintaining grasslands for conservation may also be assessed, along with influences of crop prices. This effort builds on a previous Ducks Unlimited RCPP initiative. Understanding reasons for participation and longevity of practices, coupled with agricultural capacity of soils and influence of crop prices, are critical elements in enhancing program participation rates and improvements in conservation and rangeland management.

Qualifications: We encourage applications from students with a B.S. degree in Rangeland Management, Natural Resources, Environmental Science, Soil Science, Rural Sociology, Human Dimensions, Ecology, or related fields (<http://www.uwyo.edu/esm/graduate/prospective/apply.html>). Experience with social science and/or survey-based research, extension outreach, soil science, agricultural economics and working with landowners/agencies (conservation practices; rangeland management) desired. We encourage applicants with previous experience and related coursework, and applications from underrepresented groups. Demonstrated proficiency in spoken/written English, a valid US driver's license, and ability to pass Wyoming driving record check required.

Specifics: Position begins Autumn semester 2019. The student will be supported by a 2-year assistantship including summer salary, tuition and fees, health insurance, and monthly stipend. Opportunity to assist with related Sustainable Rangelands Roundtable <http://sustainableangelands.org> projects is also available. The University of Wyoming is a land grant institution and the state's only four-year university. The University is located in Laramie, Wyoming, close to excellent outdoor activities in the Snowy and Laramie Ranges, and cultural and other amenities along the Front Range of Colorado. For more information about the department and the Laramie area, please visit: <http://www.uwyo.edu/esm/> and <http://visitolaramie.org/>. The University of Wyoming is an Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer.

Application: Candidates must apply to the University of Wyoming Graduate Admissions program (<http://www.uwyo.edu/uwgrad/prospective/applying/index.html>). **Before beginning this process, prospective students should contact Dr. Kristie Maczko kmaczko@uwyo.edu for more information.** The following documents are needed: personal statement, CV describing qualifications and experience, unofficial transcripts (official transcripts are required for formal application), unofficial GRE scores (official GRE scores required for formal application), and contact information for three references.