

Job opening: Research assistant in Colorado wildfire risk decision-making



Photo credit: National Interagency Fire Center, M. Thonhoff

Timeframe: Spring semester 2021, with possible continuation; positions will remain open until filled.

We are seeking 2 research assistants (RAs) to join a National Science Foundation funded project on wildfire risk and decision-making in Colorado. The RAs will join an interdisciplinary team from the Departments of Human Dimensions of Natural Resources and Forest and Rangeland Stewardship, the Colorado Forest Restoration Institute, Ohio State University, University of Michigan, and Portland State University. The project aims to understand how people and groups make decisions to minimize wildfire risk and implement mitigation actions.

Graduate and undergraduate RAs will be considered. Candidates must be CSU students.

Job description: This is a data science and analysis position. The CSU RAs will work closely with teammembers from CSU and Ohio State to analyze and code documents describing formal wildfire planning processes. Document analysis requires reading and synthesizing text describing wildfire risk and risk mitigation, coding of text within a spreadsheet database, and processing data for quantitative analyses. Interested students will have opportunities to learn and conduct spatial data processing, social network analysis, automated text analysis, and other computational tasks.

The RA positions start at 5 hours/week and \$15/hr. The positions extend through spring semester 2021, with the possibility of extension through summer and beyond. Future opportunities may exist within the project for fieldwork in the Front Range and Western Slope.

Job duties/Responsibilities: The URAs will work under the direction of Drs. Jonathan Salerno and Tony Cheng. Workflow is currently entirely online and will involve close remote interaction with PIs and Ohio State teammembers during training, followed by URAs working independently on data processing with weekly team meetings. Students may set their own hours for independent work. The following skills and capacities are required:

- Critical reading and thinking
- Proficiency with MS Excel or similar database software
- Excellent verbal and written communication
- Ability to work independently from project supervisors while collaborating with other URAs
- Current status as a CSU student

The following skills and capacities are desired:

- R programming
- Spatial data processing and analysis
- Experience with data collection, entry, and processing
- Independent or guided research experience

To apply: Email a cover letter, resume/CV, and contact information for 3 professional references to Jonathan Salerno (jonathan.salerno@colostate.edu). First review of applications will begin 25 January. The positions remain open until filled. Colorado State University may conduct background checks on all final candidates.