



US Department of Agriculture  
**Forest Service**  
Southern Research Station



## Position Outreach Notice

### **Research Ecologist/Botanist, GS-0408/0430-12**

Restoring and Managing Longleaf Pine Ecosystems Research Work Unit

<https://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/longleaf/>

Duty Station: Auburn, AL

The Restoring and Managing Longleaf Pine Ecosystems (hereafter, Longleaf Pine) Research Work Unit (RWU) (SRS-4158) of the Southern Research Station plans to advertise a vacancy for a permanent, full-time, Research Ecologist/Research Forester position. The position will be filled at the GS-12 (\$77,488/yr to \$100,739/yr) level, plus standard Federal benefits. The duty station is the G. W. Andrews Forestry Sciences Lab in Auburn, AL. The lab currently houses researchers and support personnel from several work units in the Southern Research Station (SRS). In addition to the Longleaf Pine RWU, the lab houses individuals or teams from the Forest Operations RWU; the Utilization of Southern Forest Resources RWU; Forest Inventory and Analysis; and Partnerships and Strategic Initiatives.

The Longleaf Pine RWU's mission is to provide knowledge and strategies for restoring, managing, and sustaining longleaf pine ecosystems in the southeastern United States. The Unit operates as a part of the SRS's Center for Forest Restoration and Management under the broader Science Area of Resource Management and Use. Our web page (<https://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/longleaf/>) provides more information about the research unit.

#### **Duties**

The scientist develops studies that address needs related to the mission of SRS-4158 across the range of longleaf pine, potentially including understory community assembly, invasion ecology, management impacts on restoration, fire and fire effects, carbon dynamics, nutrient cycling, vegetation-water relations, amongst other possibilities. Geographically, this encompasses research on the longleaf pine-dominated ecosystems of the Atlantic and Gulf coastal plains, Sandhills, Piedmont, and southern Appalachian Mountains. The scientist will work with other researchers in SRS-4158 and the rest of the SRS, National Forest System staff, and collaborators in the academic community to develop appropriate research initiatives for new work in these longleaf pine-dominated ecosystems. More specifically, the scientist plans and conducts research on longleaf pine ecosystems in the southern U.S., focusing on fruitful avenues of botanical and ecological investigations. There is great interest in research into the factors influencing community assembly and function of the longleaf pine ecosystem. Longleaf pine-dominated open forests, with their substantial understory richness and complex community relationships, have become a public lands restoration priority across its distribution. The scientist will develop a research program focused on the diverse plant communities associated with longleaf, which could include studies on system biodiversity, complexity, spatial patterns and processes, distributions, invasive species, fire history,

**USDA is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer**

regime, or fire effects, competition, regeneration, community interactions, herbivory, past land use, desired future conditions, understory community restoration, and/or climate change. In addition, the scientist will work with colleagues to better understand the impacts of conventional silvicultural and restoration treatments on understory communities (and vice versa) and will contribute to the refinement of these manipulations. It is expected that this work will require integrating spatial information from individual plants to populations to stands to landscape mosaics across multiple scales using observational and experimental research. These data may also be used to develop, and test models related to longleaf pine restoration and management, with fire as one of many variables to manipulate. Other fire-related research themes could include studies on local- to landscape-scale prescribed burning or research into fire behavior in unrestored and restored longleaf pine ecosystems.

This research program, which should address basic and applied questions concerning the complex relationships between the under- and overstory, community dynamics, natural disturbances (especially fire), stand management practices, and landscape dynamics to support the goals of the SRS, Region 8 of the National Forest System, the Forest Service, and the USDA. This research should also support the needs of a diverse assemblage of agency collaborators, from the timber industry and the Southern Group of State Foresters to university partners, NGOs, other state and local agencies, and support efforts such as America's Longleaf Restoration Initiative. The full cycle of research, from concept development to securing support to implementing studies to publication and dissemination of the work, will be required. The scientist will have responsibilities for determining key aspects of the experimental design and will serve as an expert in the fields of botany and ecology of longleaf pine for the SRS, the Forest Service, practicing foresters and land managers, and the scientific community in general. Additionally, the scientist will be an active liaison with the other federal researchers, university faculties, the National Forest System, other federal and state agencies, non-governmental organizations, forest industry and non-industrial private forest landowners involved in improving forest management practices, to disseminate research findings and obtain guidance concerning research that promotes scientific forestry. A key component of this research program will include contributions to improve the ability of land managers to restore longleaf pine ecosystems across multiple spatial and temporal scales using information derived from integrating retrospective and experimental research. Studies of the scientist will support the agency's objectives for longleaf pine restoration, including Region 8 initiatives to increase the scope of longleaf pine restoration.

The scientist may also exercise the full range of supervisory duties for a Research Support Team and provide additional administrative support; these responsibilities will constitute 10% or less of the scientist's time. In addition to helping the Research Support Team with the operations of the Escambia Experimental Forest, a public-private partnership located in Brewton, Alabama, the successful applicant will also be an active contributor to the Experimental Forest Network (EFN) of the SRS, working with other Station scientists and staff to further develop this effort. This will include work to integrate the EFN into programs of study, the development of new approaches to networked research areas, and the expansion of collaboration and integration of EFN studies with colleagues within and outside of the SRS. The duties of the scientist may also involve activities related to the administration and governance of the EFN.

TYPE OF APPOINTMENT: One permanent full time position

DUTY STATION: Auburn, AL

TELEWORK ELIGIBILITY: Possible

WORK SCHEDULE: Full-time 40 hours per week

QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS: Those who are interested must meet the qualification requirements for the 0408 or 0430 series for scientist positions. The OPM Qualification Standards Handbook Manual is

**USDA is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer**

available at <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/classification-qualifications/general-schedule-qualification-standards/>. **Current U.S. Citizenship is required for employment in this position with the USDA Forest Service.**

### **Community Information**

The city of Auburn is conveniently located in Lee County in eastern Alabama along the Interstate 85 corridor, less than 60 miles northeast of Alabama's capital city of Montgomery; about 30 miles northwest of Columbus, Georgia; and 100 miles southwest of Atlanta. Alabama's Gulf Shores can be reached in less than four hours. The Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport is 1.5 hours away. The population of Auburn is 66,259, the city of Opelika (pop. 30,908) is immediately to the east of Auburn, and when the surrounding area is included, the Auburn metro area population climbs to nearly 160,000.

Auburn is home to Auburn University, one of the largest in the South and a member of the Southeastern Conference. Auburn remains in the educational forefront with its traditional blend of arts and applied science, and the university offers a number of continuing education, professional development and community outreach courses. The university is also Auburn's largest employer. Nearby Opelika is home to Southern Union State Community College, and there are many other colleges and universities within a 50 mile radius. Auburn City Schools consists of eight elementary schools, one middle school, one junior high school and one high school. The system is recognized as a trailblazer among public schools, not only in Alabama, but in the US—several of the Auburn schools have received national recognition.

In 2019, Forbes listed Auburn in its top 20 best small places for businesses and careers, and in 2020 Auburn was listed among the top 100 places to live by livability.com. The Auburn area boasts unique dining, a variety of shopping choices, several golf courses, historic sites, museums, and parks. The area is known for both large and small game hunting, with spring turkey hunting opportunities attracting enthusiasts from across the U.S. There are opportunities for fishing, hiking, bicycling, horseback riding, camping, picnicking, and most other forms of outdoor recreation. Most religious denominations can be found locally. A variety of housing types and prices are available across the area. Industrial parks within Lee County include businesses such as large distribution centers, vitamin manufacturing, and automotive manufacturing. East Alabama Medical Center in Auburn serves as the principal source of primary and referral services for the residents of Lee County. This 340-bed hospital consistently receives awards of excellence and frequently ranks in the top 10 percent of hospitals when it comes to patient satisfaction. Fort Benning is in nearby Columbus, Georgia and offers additional educational, cultural, recreational, and shopping venues.

### **How to be Considered**

The purpose of this outreach notification is to determine the potential applicant pool that may be interested in the position. Current Forest Service employees are encouraged to respond. If interested, please complete the attached Outreach Response Form and send it to Dr. Don C. Bragg, Project Leader, USDA Forest Service, P.O. Box 3516 UAM, Monticello, AR 71656 or email it to [Don.C.Bragg@usda.gov](mailto:Don.C.Bragg@usda.gov) by July 10, 2021. If you wish, please include a brief narrative, or resume, describing your experience and/or qualifications for the position. Those interested will be sent a copy of the announcement with duties, qualifications required, and application instructions. We anticipate officially announcing the position in the near future, with an anticipated (and negotiable) starting date of after October 1, 2021. For more information, contact Dr. Bragg at (870) 308-0134.

\* \* \*

**USDA is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer**

### **Non-Discrimination Statement**

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

**USDA is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer**

# Outreach Response Form

## Research Ecologist/Botanist, GS-0408/0430-12

*Duty Station: Auburn, AL*

If you are interested in this position, complete this form and send it via email, by **July 10, 2021**, to [Don.C.Bragg@usda.gov](mailto:Don.C.Bragg@usda.gov). If you are not a current Forest Service employee or do not have access to e-mail please complete this form and mail to: Dr. Don C. Bragg, Project Leader, USDA Forest Service, P.O. Box 3516 UAM, Monticello, AR 71656.

### PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

### EMPLOYMENT

Are you currently a Federal Employee?       Yes       No

If Yes:

Name of your Agency & Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Current title/series/ grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Appointment:       Permanent       Term       Temporary

If No:

Current Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Position

Title & Salary: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Appointment:       Permanent       Term       Temporary

If you are not a current permanent federal (career or career conditional) employee, please indicate below if you are eligible for other appointments under any of the following special authorities:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Former Peace Corps/Vista Volunteer      | <input type="checkbox"/> Veteran's Employment Opp. Act of 1998 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Person with Disabilities                | <input type="checkbox"/> Veteran's Readjustment Act            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student Employment Program              | <input type="checkbox"/> Reinstatement Eligibility             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Veteran with 30% Compensable Disability | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                          |

**Thank you for your interest!**

**USDA is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer**