

Graduate Research Assistantship (PhD): Woodland restoration in chestnut oak-heath communities of Pennsylvania

A doctoral Graduate Research Assistantship is available in the School of Natural Resources, University of Missouri with advisor Dr. Benjamin Knapp (Associate Professor of Silviculture). The successful applicant will develop and lead research on oak woodland restoration in north-central Pennsylvania. The project will include a large field experiment evaluating effectiveness of restoration treatments that include prescribed burning, herbicide, mastication, timber harvest, and deer fencing, with interest in how treatments affect understory plant communities, tree populations, and fire behavior/fire effects associated with prescribed burning. The project will also characterize structure and composition across stands with different treatment histories to refine management targets and develop realistic desired conditions of oak woodlands in this region. This project is in collaboration with the Pennsylvania Game Commission and will provide opportunity for close collaboration with Game Commission foresters.

Applicants must have a Masters of Science degree in Forestry, Ecology, Natural Resources, Environmental Sciences, or a related field. Applicants must have a strong desire to work in the field and be capable of traveling between Pennsylvania field sites and the University of Missouri campus in Columbia, MO (travel costs covered by the project). The candidate will be responsible for publishing results in peer-reviewed journals and management guides to the Pennsylvania Game Commission. Applicants should have strong skills with field work, data management and analysis, and written and oral communication. To apply, submit the following to Dr. Benjamin Knapp (knappb@missouri.edu):

- 1) personal statement of career goals
- 2) resume or curriculum vitae
- 3) transcripts (unofficial)
- 4) contact information for three references

The GRA will provide an annual stipend of \$28,000, a tuition waiver, and the option of health insurance coverage. The position will start May 2026. Applications will be reviewed as they are received until the position is filled. Additional information about the University of Missouri School of Natural Resources graduate program can be found at <https://snr.missouri.edu/graduate-studies/>.

