

Graduate and Postgraduate Study in Forest Landscape Ecology
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Thanks for your interest in graduate study in the lab. There are several pieces of information that should be useful to you.

First, please review the lab web site <http://landscape.forest.wisc.edu/> to see current information on the kinds of work we do, and the general areas in which I advise students. The department site has additional information on application <http://forest.wisc.edu>.

I generally accept only grad students, postdocs, and pre-doctoral fellows that can be supported financially in their work. This usually means, for grad students, support as a research assistant through one of my grants, or on a fellowship. Postdocs and predocs are usually admitted with their own funding, though I do at times financially support postdocs as well. A fellowship can come from department, campus, or outside sources. Fellowship opportunities need to be investigated well in advance. Note though, that if you would be applying for consideration for a University Fellowship, you should apply before January, and ideally begin contact with a prospective major professor at least a year before a planned fall admission date. A fellowship affords a little more flexibility for admission, since it is not tied to a specific project. Other fellowship opportunities, such as private foundations, NSF, and EPA, also exist. Some of these can be applied for independently, some are on academic criteria, with evaluation as part of the application process; others require advance planning and sponsorship of a faculty member. There are other sources of information on how to apply for these.

Accepting only funded students means two things. I maintain a relatively small group of students in the lab (less than six MS and PhD students, and one or two postdocs, as well as other technical staff). The result is that students come to work on a project in which we have mutual interest, and I can have time to be adequately involved in each project. In addition, a relatively small group keeps a high degree of interaction possible within the lab, which I believe is an important part of the graduate education environment. Most of the work in my lab is now forest landscape ecology, with a field study or two in other aspects of forest ecosystems as well. Field projects I have done have covered community ecology and ecosystem processes, and spatial pattern analysis of forest understorey. I am interested in forest disturbance, simulation modeling, management consequences, and implications for conservation and restoration as well. Generally, I am not interested in advising students interested primarily in wildlife issues per se; my interest in this area derives from the role of wildlife species within the forest ecosystem. Also, I am not able to advise students on research in the tropics.

Because there are many inquiries and applicants, and I accept only funded students, admission is competitive. But I do want to encourage interest. If you believe after reviewing this information and our web page that we may have interests in common, and you are a competitive candidate, I suggest contacting me via email. It would be helpful if you could send a clear statement of research interest, a resume, an unofficial transcript,

and GRE scores. This can be done informally via email. Unless you know you are going ahead and applying anyway, and talking to other potential advisors, this is a less costly approach at an early stage. It will give me something to consider if an opening and funding become apparent in the next few months, and I can advise you whether proceeding with applying seems worthwhile. At the same time, we can correspond and I can answer any questions you may have, and I can give you current information regarding pending research proposals I may have, and likely new projects.

A visit to campus is always valuable for both the potential student and possible advisors. However, because of the uncertainty of whether I will actually be able to admit someone, this is for you to consider financially if it means long-distance travel. Whether there are other faculty on campus you are contacting and interested in meeting may help you decide if this is worthwhile.

Finally, I recommend that you evaluate closely which program to apply under. Forest Ecology & Management offers great flexibility for areas of research interest, and in having few proscribed curriculum requirements. You should consider this when evaluating degree programs, and consider how you will need to apportion your time in a graduate program that has financial support and facilities to do your work, and how a given program will fill the skills and expertise you hope to acquire for your long-term goals.

I hope this is some help in your decision.

Thanks once again for your interest, and good luck.

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