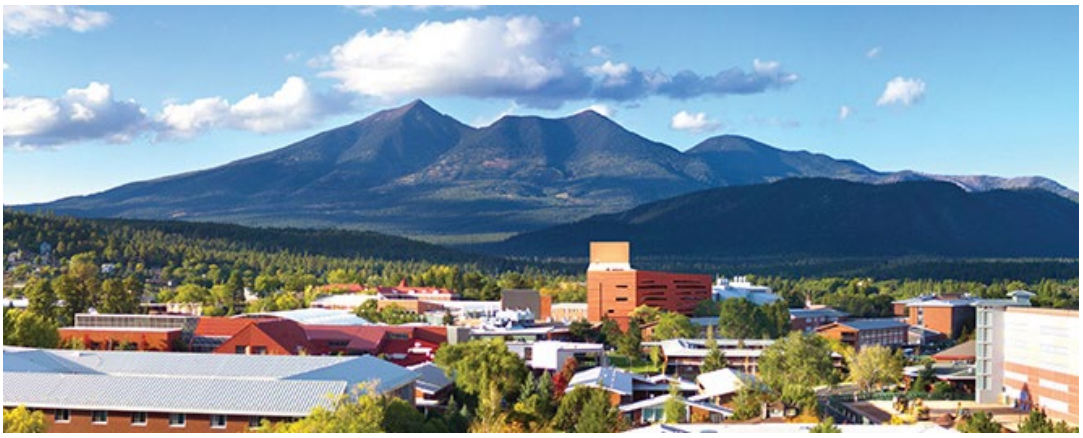
PhD Graduate Research Assistantship – Post Fire Recovery with Historical Datasets



Northern Arizona University School of Forestry seeks to fill one PhD position funded through a research assistantship focused on post-fire recovery and reburns using historical datasets from the Sierra Nevada Range in California and from Northern Arizona Grand Canyon Trust lands. The PhD student will conduct field and remote-sensing based investigations of fire effects and changes in vegetation structure and composition in southwestern ecosystems. With over 700 historical plots in post-fire settings across the Sierra Nevada and over 600 plots in N. Arizona, we are interested in post-fire recovery during times of drought, altered disturbance regimes, and changing climates. Work will include the publication of results in peer-reviewed journals, fact-sheets and sharing of results through webinars and conference talks.

The position will be supervised by Dr. Andrea Thode (andi.thode@nau.edu) and Dr. Clare Aslan (clare.aslan@nau.edu).

The start date is Fall of 2025. The recipient of this position will have a research assistantship position and will receive an annual stipend, university health insurance and a tuition waiver. The student will also be part of a multi-institutional graduate cohort through the Southwest Climate Adaptation Science Center, which will provide additional training opportunities. Funding is available for four years.

The ideal candidate will have:

- All of the requirements for admission to the School of Forestry PhD program
- A genuine interest and experience relevant to fire ecology and climate
- Strong interest in working independently and creatively
- Experience conducting ecological research, including collecting, managing, and analyzing robust datasets
- Ability to implement modern applied statistical analyses
- Experience acquiring and managing large datasets, including metadata documentation
- Experience with field sampling, including logistics and off-trail navigation and an ability to perform strenuous physical activity
- Experience with GIS and geospatial software, data, and analytical methods

- Excellent written and oral communication
- Excellent time management skills and self-direction
- A research-based MS degree in forestry, ecology, natural resources, biology, climate change or a related field (strongly preferred)

How to apply:

- Please send the following documents to Dr. Andrea Thode via email (andi.thode@nau.edu by the end of the day on January 17th, 2025 (applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis after that)
- A one-page letter clearly stating experience, qualifications and research interests
- An up-to-date resume
- Contact details for three references (at least one academic reference)

After discussing interest with Drs. Thode and Aslan, applicants will need to apply to the NAU School of Forestry Program. You can access the application portal and view graduate school requirements here: http://nau.edu/GradCol/Admissions/Application/. Please note that the successful applicant must be based on the Flagstaff campus for the duration of the degree.

About Northern Arizona University

Northern Arizona University (NAU) sits at the base of the San Francisco Peaks, on homelands sacred to Native Americans throughout the region. We honor their past, present, and future generations, who have lived here for millennia and will forever call this place home. NAU is a 28,000 student-institution with its main campus in Flagstaff, a city of about 70,000 people at the base of the San Francisco Peaks. Flagstaff is known for its year-round recreation opportunities, including skiing, hiking, and rock climbing, as well as its proximity to the Grand Canyon, four National Forests, and numerous State Parks and Wilderness Areas. More information about NAU's graduate programs in Forestry, including eligibility requirements, can be found at https://nau.edu/forestry/degrees-and-programs/phd-forest-science/. Our graduate student handbook can be found at: https://nau.edu/forestry/internal-resources/graduate-student-handbook/

