

2023 Conservation Connect Fellowship Practicum Projects

	Practicum project title	Practicum location	Timeline for practicum	Practicum project description*
1	Storytelling: Conservation, Collaboration, and Innovation in the Rocky Mountain Region	Remote, though if the fellow is in Colorado there would be opportunities for face-to-face work and project site visits	Summer 2023	<p>The fellow will assist with storytelling in the Rocky Mountain Region (primarily Colorado and Wyoming). The ideal candidate will be a gifted writer with a keen sense of why something matters and why someone should care. The fellow will be responsible for developing marketing and communications materials, including blogs, social media posts, website copy, maps, and other assets in support of a variety of outdoor recreation, collaboration, and wildfire resiliency projects. The work will entail coordinating with NFF staff from multiple departments, as well as U.S. Forest Service staff, partners, and potentially contracted photographers. The role may be virtual or based in Colorado. Fellows from all educational backgrounds are welcome so long as they are curious and ready to absorb, interpret, and tell the story of the NFF's work in the Rocky Mountains.</p> <p>Excellent written and verbal communication skills as well as experience writing social media posts and enthusiasm for the NFF's work are required. The fellow must be willing to take on a variety of tasks and other duties as assigned. Graphic design, GIS, and marketing skills are a plus.</p>
2	Montana Forest Action Council (MFAC): Facilitation and Reporting	Montana through the summer is preferred; the End-of-Year Report could be completed remotely	Concentrated summer 2023 and then option for remote or in-person work during the fall/winter	<p>The fellow will assist with the Montana Forest Action Council (MFAC) project to help coordinate the cross-boundary implementation of the Montana Forest Action Plan. MFAC consists of representatives from county government, Tribal Nations, timber and recreation industries, non-governmental organizations, and watershed and collaboration groups across the state. MFAC works with an advisory team of agency representatives from the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, the U.S. Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and Natural Resources Conservation Service. This project has two components: 1) creating an End-of-Year Report to synthesize the Council's successes, completed tasks, highlighted projects, next year's goals and objectives, etc. and 2) facilitation support including attending meetings, note-taking, facilitation, meeting follow-up, and assisting with subcommittee meetings and projects.</p> <p>Applicants must possess excellent writing and communication skills as well as meeting facilitation skills or the desire to gain facilitation skills. Long travel days should be expected periodically.</p>



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3	Supporting Implementation of NFF's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan	Remote	Summer 2023	<p>This fellow will support implementation of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) efforts within the NFF. The NFF recently developed a DEI plan to guide its work with external partners and is beginning to implement this plan in 2023. The fellow may support a variety of tasks such as supporting the DEI Working Group, researching DEI best practices, and developing materials to guide DEI-informed work with external partners. At the start of the practicum, the fellow will work with the mentor to identify a specific work plan based on the fellow's interest and the NFF's needs.</p> <p>The fellow should demonstrate an understanding of DEI principles and a keen interest in how these principles can inform contemporary public lands management and decision-making.</p>
4	<p>National Forests in North Carolina: Monitoring and Planning Support</p> <p><i>Project Host: U.S. Forest Service</i></p>	Remote	Summer 2023	<p>The fellow will assist with the Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests' transition into implementing the revised forest plan. Anticipating a final plan signed around the turn of this calendar year, we want to show progress toward key initiatives in the first fiscal year of plan implementation. The individual will work closely with the forest planning staff officer and the resource specialists, developing a tactical guide and outlining plans of action for priority actions that need progress in the first year. Specific deliverables will depend on the skillset of the individual recruited but could include developing a forest plan monitoring implementation guide that describes the methods and data to assist with key monitoring questions, OR working with the forest botanist to developing a strategy to evaluate the sustainability of nontimber forest product sustainability such as ginseng, OR working with recreation and GIS staff to develop a strategy for identifying non-commercial mineral collection sites on the forest.</p> <p>The applicant should have proficiency in Microsoft Word, Excel, and basic GIS skills; education in natural or forest resources such that there is a base language to communicate using ecological concepts; strong communication skills for clear writing and speaking; the ability to work closely with a team of individuals who are working across multiple office locations; and the ability to work independently toward long-term goals after regular check-ins on short-term needs and overall progress.</p> <p>Note: This work will largely take place in an office setting and will involve discussions with specialists across many disciplines. Conservation Connect Fellows interested in careers with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service will be connected with the Bi-Regional Recruitment Team to support their pathway to permanent full-time hire with the USDA Forest Service. Eligible participants will accrue hours towards the Public Lands Corps Noncompetitive Hiring Authority allowing them to apply for jobs with the USDA Forest Service and other federal public lands management agencies with merit status.</p>



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5	<p>Southern Appalachian Subregion Climate Resiliency Planning Support</p> <p><i>Project Host: U.S. Forest Service</i></p>	Remote	Summer 2023 and/or throughout the academic year	<p>The Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest (Georgia), the National Forests in North Carolina, the Cherokee National Forest (Tennessee) and the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests (largely Virginia and portions of West Virginia and Kentucky) now comprise the Southern Appalachian Subregion (SAS). Tackling all lands, large-landscape, and collaborative watershed efforts to prepare for climate change impacts is the number one priority of the SAS. The SAS is seeking a fellow to provide spatial data management and general project data support for the development of action plans for priority watersheds. The fellow would assist the Watershed Resiliency Project Coordinator in organizing and digitizing watershed spatial data including past, ongoing, and planned projects within identified priority watersheds to inform climate resiliency action plans. The fellow would also participate in interdisciplinary planning teams (which will include partners external to the Forest Service) across the four Forests in the Subregion to assist in communication and data-sharing support.</p> <p>The applicant should possess GIS skills with the ability to manipulate and manage spatial information and create maps; proficiency in Microsoft Office products; education in hydrology, ecology, climate science or natural resources such that there is a base language to communicate using ecological concepts; strong communication skills for clear writing and speaking; the ability to research, read, understand and apply peer-reviewed articles; the ability to work closely with a team of individuals who are working across multiple office locations; and the ability to work independently toward long-term goals after regular check-ins on short-term needs and overall progress.</p> <p>Note: This work will largely take place in an office setting and will involve discussions with specialists across many disciplines as well as partners external to the Forest Service. Conservation Connect Fellows interested in careers with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service will be connected with the Bi-Regional Recruitment Team to support their pathway to permanent full-time hire with the USDA Forest Service. Eligible participants will accrue hours towards the Public Lands Corps Noncompetitive Hiring Authority allowing them to apply for jobs with the USDA Forest Service and other federal public lands management agencies with merit status.</p>
6	Supporting Partnership Capacity in the Forest Service	Remote	Summer 2023	<p>NFF is working with the U.S. Forest Service to strengthen partnerships between National Forests and communities, nonprofits, businesses, and local governments. This practicum may include conducting assessment interviews; preparing and presenting results; researching and documenting partnership lessons, challenges, and opportunities; coordinating partnership training events; and assisting in the development of a partnership strategy. The applicant should have strong interviewing, writing, and analytical skills.</p>



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7	<p>Support and Facilitation of Forest Planning Decision Support Systems in California</p> <p><i>Project Host: Watershed Research and Training Center (WRTC)</i></p>	<p>Many of the tasks can be accomplished remotely, but some level of local engagement will be necessary over the summer.</p>	<p>Spread over the 3 summer months and a portion of the academic year</p>	<p>California's Forest and Wildfire Resilience Taskforce has facilitated a significant investment in geospatial information systems to address the forest climate crisis. There is a rapidly growing body of data products that are being developed to support climate adaptation processes. Successful integration of these tools will require overcoming significant technical transfer hurdles across multiple agencies and organizations. Working at the intersection of forest data science and active forest climate mitigation, WRTC's NFF fellow will apply Agile methods to support building regional technical capacity within the community of implementation partners spanning six National Forests in Northern California. The fellow will work with partners facilitating communication and feedback processes between local, regional, and state programs and strategies. The fellow will develop and facilitate best data management practices and accelerate delivery of mission-critical decision support tools.</p> <p>Knowledge and practice in contemporary open data practices like the Software Carpentries is encouraged. Skills in R, Python, Knowledge Graphs, RDF, PostGRESQL, and experience with point cloud analytics will be useful for this role. Experience with environmental compliance and federal shared stewardship authorities is desirable. The fellow must be willing and able to engage with diverse stakeholders.</p>
8	<p>Planning, Organizing, and Supporting Collaborative Conservation for Forestry and Recreation</p>	<p>Near the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison (GMUG) National Forests in Colorado</p>	<p>Summer 2023 and/or throughout the academic year</p>	<p>The fellow will assist with the development of a coordinating council that will provide a venue for community engagement in land management activities with the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison (GMUG) National Forests of the U.S. Forest Service. The ideal candidate will know how to approach advanced meeting/process preparation, be an effective communicator, and have active listening skills. The fellow will be responsible for supporting the NFF in collaborative planning through coordination, documentation, meeting design, and facilitation. This will include developing contact lists, coordinating schedules, building meeting agendas, partnering with subject-matter experts or resource specialists for presentations or dialogue with stakeholders, note-taking, leading group discussions, and researching supplemental questions or finding datasets to inform the collaborative process.</p> <p>This fellowship requires an understanding of interest-based negotiation and conflict resolution in multi-party settings, as well as the ability to communicate in different modes and media to different kinds of groups.</p>



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9	Diversifying Partnerships Through Grantmaking	Remote	Spread over the 3 summer months and a portion of the academic year	<p>In 2023, the NFF is implementing new criteria in its competitive grantmaking programs, and this fellow will have a central role in creating tools and strategies to publicize these programs and measure implementation. Project work will include analyzing existing partners and communication strategies, researching potential organizations to connect with, compiling resources to measure diversity, coordinating an internal task force of NFF staff on the topic, and creating tools to track partner outreach and diversity.</p> <p>The applicant should possess independent research and analysis skills as well as good internal and external communication skills. Experience with diversity/equity/inclusion/justice topics preferred.</p>
10	Diversifying Partnerships Through Conservation Contracting	Remote	Summer 2023 and/or throughout the academic year	<p>Much of NFF's on-the-ground conservation work is completed through contracts with local businesses and organizations, making this a key area to consider as the NFF takes steps to ensure that its funding is deployed equitably. This fellow will take an active role in researching and implementing strategies for the NFF to diversify its conservation partners through contracting. Project work will include analyzing existing outreach methods, implementing a central database of potential implementation partners, establishing appropriate metrics, compiling resources to measure diversity, coordinating an internal task force of NFF staff on the topic, and creating tools to track partner outreach and diversity.</p> <p>The applicant should possess independent research and analysis skills as well as good internal and external communication skills. Experience with diversity/equity/inclusion/justice topics preferred.</p>

**Projects could be further customized based on applicant skills and interests. Additional projects may be developed for highly qualified applicants.*

