



Four-year PhD research assistantship: Southeastern U.S. freshwater species conservation

Description: We seek a PhD student to help develop a landscape risk-assessment tool to assist U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologists evaluate imperilment of southeastern freshwater mussels while providing analytical support for the Species Status Assessment of a petitioned freshwater mussel under the Endangered Species Act. The hired candidate will work directly with Drs. Corey Dunn (U.S. Geological Survey, Mississippi State University) and Mike Colvin (Mississippi State University) while learning in-demand skills transferable to broader applications in natural resources decision making. The project will mainly use existing distributional data, but there may be opportunities for fieldwork if supporting project objectives.

Qualifications: Completed master's degree in natural resources, ecology, or closely related field before start date and interest in freshwater mussel conservation. Candidates should have interests in R programming, Geographic Information Systems, species distribution modeling, and communication. The hired candidate must be willing to learn emerging species status assessment methods and work collaboratively with project partners.

Note – this project could be adapted to support a postdoctoral or post-master's research associate depending on applicants. Project could be adapted for crayfish depending on applicant expertise.

Salary and benefits: Fully funded four-year Graduate Research Assistantship worth \$23,500 per year + free health insurance, waived tuition, and support for professional travel (professional development, conference attendance). Student may have opportunity for a Pathways position potentially leading to employment with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service post-graduation.

Start date: We encourage applicants to submit materials as soon as possible and by May 1, 2022, at the latest. The position will be readvertised if unfilled. Start date is negotiable, but the target dates for enrollment are August 2022 (fall semester) or January 2023 (spring semester).

Apply: Email with the subject line “freshwater conservation PhD” to Dr. Corey Dunn (corey.dunn@msstate.edu) in a single, merged PDF: (1) brief cover letter describing experiential background, career goals, and project interest; (2) resume/cv; (3) email addresses and phone numbers for three professional references; (4) updated official or unofficial transcripts (PhD applicants only). A hired PhD applicant will eventually submit official transcripts to MSU before admission. We welcome informal inquiries about the position.

Helpful links:

USGS MS Cooperative F&W Research Unit: <https://www1.usgs.gov/coopunits/unit/Mississippi>
Dept. of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Aquaculture: <https://www.cfr.msstate.edu/wildlife/>