



Postdoctoral Researcher Position on Invasive Forest Insects and Diseases

The USDA Forest Service, Southern Research Station invites applications from highly motivated and enthusiastic potential postdoctoral researchers to work on the invasion ecology of forest insects and diseases starting in Summer/Fall 2023. This collaborative work is being conducted with Drs. Frank Koch (USDA Forest Service), Kamal J.K. Gandhi (University of Georgia), and Kier Klepzig (Jones Center at Ichauway). The postdoctoral project will focus on creating effective detection, delimitation, and assessment processes for a future high impact non-native pest or disease on southern pine trees. Work will integrate data from USDA-FS Forest Inventory and Analysis, the USDA-FS Experimental Forests and Ranges network, and from many private, state, and university partners. This project is linked closely with the community-driven Pine Pandemic Preparedness Plan (P4), a recently developed initiative to proactively prepare for and manage new invasive insects and diseases causing significant injury to pine trees in the southern U.S. Implementation of the P4 will allow forest health specialists and scientists to work with extension agents, land managers, and landowners to address emerging invasive insects and diseases rapidly and efficiently. Extensive community engagement in the southeastern region, along with computing and field work, will be required. The ideal candidate will possess strong communication skills, a quantitative background in statistical modeling, remote sensing, and ecology, and knowledge of programming languages such as Python or R. An independent spirit to develop, conduct, and publish research is highly desired. A Ph.D. (in ecology, forestry, or a related field) is a prerequisite for this position, which will be located at the USDA-FS Forestry Sciences Laboratory in Research Triangle Park, NC. A competitive salary and benefits package will be provided for two years.

Interested personnel should submit a statement of interest, current CV along with contact information for three references to Dr. Frank Koch (frank.h.koch@usda.gov; 919-549-4006).

The USDA Forest Service, Southern Research Station's Eastern Forest Environmental Threat Assessment Center (EFETAC) is part of a network of early warning activities established by the Forest Service nationwide. The mission of EFETAC is to generate knowledge and tools needed to anticipate and respond to environmental threats. The most serious threats to forests involve complex factors interacting across multiple spatial and temporal scales. The challenge for EFETAC is to maintain a comprehensive and integrated research program to tackle these complex issues, while delivering knowledge to forest landowners, managers, decision-makers, scientists, and other interested audiences in a timely, useful, and user-friendly manner. EFETAC staff members are in Asheville and Research Triangle Park, NC, and have regional, national, and international responsibilities (<https://forestthreats.org>). It is housed within the Center for Forest Assessment and Synthesis, together with aligned research work units focused on topics such as forest economics and policy, watershed research, and integrating human and natural systems.

The [Southern Research Station](#) is a great place to work! SRS is a regional unit of the USDA Forest Service Research and Development organization. The Station collaborates extensively with Region 8 (Southern Region), state partners, universities, and the private sector to develop science-based knowledge and technology to inform decisions about natural resource management, use, and sustainability. SRS maintains 15 research units and 19 experimental forests across a 13-state footprint. SRS has a diverse, highly trained cadre of employees, including 100+ research scientists. Long-term studies combined with 21st century innovations provide the foundation for a responsive, forest-based research program. SRS science is expanding into new fields and addressing emerging challenges, including the effects of climate and land use change, population growth, invasive plants and pathogens, and fire on the provisioning of timber, wildlife, clean air and water, recreation, and many other ecosystem services.

The Forest Entomology Laboratory (<https://kjgandhi.wixsite.com/gandhi-lab>) at the Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources, University of Georgia is a dynamic group that works on a broad range of disturbance ecology issues across the country. The Warnell School (<http://www.warnell.uga.edu/>) is the oldest forestry school in the South, has >70 faculty working in diverse fields, and provides exemplary training of students in the fields of forestry, ecology, and conservation biology. The School is housed in a four-building complex on campus, and has >23,000 acres in the state for research, teaching, and service activities. The University of Georgia (<http://www.uga.edu/>) is a “land-grant and sea-grant university, and is also the state's oldest, most comprehensive and most diversified institution of higher education”. Its motto is: "to teach, to serve and to inquire into the nature of things”.

The Entomology Laboratory at the Jones Center at Ichauway focuses on functional roles and diversity of insects in open pine systems (<https://lab.jonesctr.org/klepzig/>). Spanning nearly 30,000 acres of woods, water, and wildlife, The Jones Center at Ichauway (www.jonesctr.org) provides a unique combination of place, people, and processes to better understand, demonstrate, and promote effective management of natural resources through research, conservation, and education. It is located within an environment of pristine longleaf pine savanna and features modern laboratories and facilities. The Center is currently home to 3 postdoctoral researchers as well as over 30 graduate students and 7 PhD scientists.