Research Assistant IV

Research Assistant on Grassland Ecosystem Services and Climate Resilience, Archbold Biological Station

Position Overview: Archbold Biological Station’s Buck Island Ranch (BIR; www.archbold-station.org) seeks a full time research assistant to work on a recently funded project that will address how land management and grazing regime interact to affect grassland ecosystem services under future precipitation scenarios.

Main Responsibilities: The research assistant will assist with the set up of the several rainout shelters and collect data on aboveground net primary productivity (ANPP), forage nutritive value, and plant species composition in response to precipitation and grazing treatments. ANPP will be measured using the moveable exclosure method. Lab work will include weighing and drying biomass, grinding biomass and preparing samples for tissue analysis. The research assistant may also assist with measurements of belowground processes (root biomass, decomposition, net N mineralization/nitrification). The research assistant will assist with the set up of an automated rainfall manipulation system (Gherardi and Sala 2013) and shelters will be removable to allow cattle grazing. The RA will maintain the rainfall shelters and ensure functionality - these include solar panels, batteries and float switches. The RA will manage the implementation of the grazing intensity treatments (low, medium, and high) defined on the basis of target post-grazing stubble heights and will close gates when target vegetation heights are reached. The RA will also manage one 6-month intern per year that will assist with RA duties.

Location: The position is located at Archbold’s Buck Island Ranch, in Lake Placid, FL, a full-scale working cattle ranch at BIR, which provides a unique platform for long-term agro-ecology research.

The successful research assistant will be supervised by Dr. Betsey (Elizabeth) Boughton (BIR; www.archbold-station.org), and will interact with Dr. Jiangxiao Qiu (http://jiangxiaoqiu.weebly.com); and students from University of Florida

Required qualifications: A bachelor’s degree in biology, environmental science, ecology, or related field; basic computer skills (MS Word, Excel).

Preferred qualifications: experience in field ecology research – preferably plant related; experience working on ranches or farms; experience working with environmental monitoring equipment (solar panels, batteries, soil moisture probes, etc). Some experience with building or carpentry or willingness to learn. Experienced team leader and good written and oral communication skills. Demonstrated problem solver.

Anticipated start date: January 2021

Deadline: Review of applications will start on Dec 17, 2020.

The position is located at BIR, a 10,500-acre cattle ranch near Lake Placid, FL, with shared housing available on site. This is a full-time position for 1 year, but can be extended to 3 years if...
performance is satisfactory. Competitive salary with full benefits. Applicants should send 1) a letter of application, 2) a resume or CV with relevant coursework and experience, and 3) names, phone numbers and e-mail addresses for three references to Dr. Betsey Boughton at eboughton@archbold-station.org. Please put “RA for climate resilience” in the email subject line. Application deadline is Dec 17, 2020, and the position will remain open until filled. Contact Dr. Boughton via e-mail for more information.