



University of Idaho
College of Natural Resources

Position Announcement –Graduate Research Assistant (Masters)

Graduate Research Assistant

Policy Analysis Group/Department of Natural Resources and Society
College of Natural Resources

University of Idaho

Moscow, ID

Major Area: Public Lands Management and Policy

Level: Masters

Position Description: The Policy Analysis Group at the University of Idaho is seeking a graduate research assistant to work under the direction of Dr. Chelsea Pennick on a project investigating shared stewardship initiatives between the US Forest Service and various partners. The project will involve both qualitative and quantitative methods, providing the graduate research assistant with opportunities to learn/practice a variety of social science skills including: developing and following IRB protocols, conducting in-depth interviews, assisting with qualitative data analysis, and analyzing and interpreting quantitative data. The research assistant will gain professional skills by presenting research findings to and writing for practitioner and academic audiences. This is a great opportunity for anyone interested in the tools of government and public action and how they are applied in the context of national forest management with community-based organizations and other partners.

Qualifications: Applicants from a range of disciplinary backgrounds will be considered, with social science training and some coding experience strongly preferred. Familiarity with US policies and laws governing public lands, and the US Forest Service specifically, will also be weighted heavily. More generally, applicants should possess an enthusiasm for social science research and policy, strong communication skills, and enjoy “getting into the weeds” on a topic.

Compensation:

- **GRA (Stipend, Tuition and Fees, Health Insurance):** This position will begin Spring semester (January 13, 2027) with funding dedicated through December 31, 2027 (Fall semester and Winter session). There is an option to extend through Spring 2028. As a GRA, the student will work 20 hours/week during the academic year and receive a stipend of \$8,593/semester. The student will be expected to work 40 hours/week during the summer of 2027 (hourly rate DOE). In addition to a stipend, the student will receive an in-state tuition waiver for up to 3 semesters. Supplemental funding for field work,

conference travel and presentations is available. Opportunities in the department, including teaching assistantships, may be available as well.

Travel: Some travel will be required for this position. The assistant will be expected to travel and participate in one or more field trips and field work for case studies and present at conferences and meetings.

About Dr. Pennick: Dr. Chelsea Pennick is a recent (2023) graduate of the University of Idaho with 20+ years of experience working in the public lands policy and governance space. She is a native of rural Idaho and began her career with the National Forest Foundation as a funder and technical assistance provider for emerging and established collaborative groups. She then spent 10 years with the Forest Industry Research Program at the University of Montana conducting benchmark studies of forest product manufacturing capacity across the West, using that information to develop planning support tools for the USDA Forest Service. After completing her PhD, she joined the faculty as a research assistant professor and associate director of the Policy Analysis Group. Her work draws heavily on public administration and public management, applying frameworks and theories of government action and bureaucratic behavior to public lands agencies. She also studies rural entrepreneurship and social enterprises and their evolving role in national forest management.

For more information or to submit an expression of interest, email chelseap@uidaho.edu. Expressions of interest should include a brief statement describing your interest in the position, a copy of your academic transcript and a resume outlining both your academic and work experience.