UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND EXTENSION

Graduate Student Position for Landowner Survey on Wildlife Management

Description: The University of Maryland Extension is seeking a graduate student to assist in conducting research of private landowner knowledge and actions related to wildlife and habitat conservation. The purpose of this project is to inform future educational and extension initiatives related to wildlife conservation. Because 92% of Maryland's land area is under private ownership, wildlife and habitat conservation in the state relies heavily on the actions of private landowners. The graduate student will work with the principal investigator, Dr. Luke Macaulay, and a postdoctoral researcher in implementing the project.

The graduate student will be focused on the implementation of the survey, analysis, and publishing results. A significant amount of preparation and design work for the survey has been completed, including conducting focus group meetings, establishing a state-wide sample of landowners with both addresses and emails, and pre-testing and piloting the questionnaire. The student will be able to draw on this work in making final adjustments to the survey. The survey will consist of both written and electronic delivery of the survey to maximize response and minimize bias.

Duties and Responsibilities: In collaboration with the PI and a postdoctoral researcher with experience in surveys the graduate student will be able to:

- Assist in design and implementation of both email and paper versions of survey.
- Experiment with various approaches in survey design and administration to maximize participation and response rate.
- Supervise digitization of data (for paper surveys) drawing upon a team of undergraduate research assistants.
- Monitor survey responses to identify problems in survey and correct them.
- Contribute as a co-author in conducting analysis and writing a scientific journal article for submission to a peer-reviewed journal.

Preferred Skills:

- Ability to work independently and research best practices to improve survey design, administration, and analysis, and bring findings to team for discussion.
- Ability to use spatially-explicit land ownership polygons and land cover datasets to connect survey responses to land cover and other land ownership characteristics.
- Knowledge of approaches to increasing response rate, reducing survey error and bias, and controlling for other methodological issues that could affect landowner interest and participation in a study focused on wildlife and conservation.

- Knowledge and experience in quantitative data analysis methods, preferably in R or Python.
- Strong writing skills for drafting materials to be published in peer-reviewed literature and other publications. Co-authorship is welcome and encouraged.
- Experience with creative data visualization.

Compensation and Dates of Employment: Compensation is dependent on experience and qualifications. This position is flexible in its administrative structure and title and can be completed mostly remotely with the possibility for occasional funded travel to Maryland for important meetings. The position is for January 2023 until December 2023, with a possibility to extend the position. We have support to include full time employment for summer of 2023.

To apply: Please send a cover letter and resume to Dr. Luke Macaulay at lukemac@umd.edu by December 2, 2022. We plan to conduct interviews in early December and start the position in January.