



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Pacific Northwest  
Research Station

P.O. Box 3890  
Portland, OR 97208-3890  
Phone (503) 808-2100  
Fax (503) 808-2130

# OUTREACH NOTICE

Pacific Northwest Research Station  
Goods, Services, and Values Program

Research Social Scientist, GS-0101-12/13  
Juneau, AK

**Response Deadline: March 13, 2023**

## About the position

The U.S. Forest Service's Pacific Northwest Research Station is seeking to hire a Research Social Scientist with a duty station in Juneau, Alaska in the near future. The grade at hire is anticipated to be GS-0101-12 or 13. We anticipate the ideal candidate would have a Ph.D. in the social sciences (e.g., anthropology, sociology, geography, political science, rural or community development, economics, psychology, human dimensions of natural resources) or a related field.

The incumbent will reside in the station's **Goods, Services and Values Program**. The mission of the program is to conduct and communicate research to advance understanding of relationships among people and forest and rangeland ecosystems. The unit conducts interdisciplinary research in five problem areas:

1. Improve knowledge of fundamental social and economic processes and their interactions with the natural environment.
2. Examine the roles of policies, programs, and other institutions in interactions between people and natural resources.
3. Describe and analyze the implications of changing demographics, socioeconomics, and technology on natural resources and their management.
4. Describe the capacity of dynamic landscapes to provide for evolving human wants and needs.
5. Conduct and use integrated multidisciplinary research to support development of management approaches that account for interactions among socioeconomic, ecological, and physical factors.

The goal of this research is to improve understanding of the effectiveness, efficiency, and equity of government natural resource management policies, decision-making processes, and programs; to



conduct research that seeks to understand socio-ecological systems to inform planning processes; and to contribute to the scholarly literature about human and natural resource interactions. To achieve these goals, researchers work closely with policymakers, resource managers, tribal officials, community leaders, and the public to help them understand a variety of available options associated with natural resource management and policy decisions, and their implications for people and natural resources.

The areas of research focus for the scientist, while broad, will inform the governance, use, and management of natural resources in Alaska. Alaska communities are highly dependent on natural resources. Changes in land management and natural resource policy in Alaska affect local and regional economies, forest products and their use, cultural practices of indigenous peoples, subsistence and food security, recreation and tourism, and healthy habitats for salmon and other fish species. Further, there are complex linkages and interactions between resource management at landscape scales, ecosystem function, and the values, goods, and services that various human communities and institutions derive from natural resources. Additional complexity is contributed to this coupled human-natural resources system by mixed-ownership landscapes and institutional barriers to natural resource management within federal, tribal, and state agencies and Alaska Native communities. These issues are further complicated by the effects of a changing climate, which has implications for how, where, and when resources are managed, harvested, or used by the public.

The ideal candidate will have experience conducting research in one or more of the following areas.

#### Resource connections and rural livelihoods

Many rural Alaskans depend on natural resources to maintain their livelihoods, lifestyles, and lifeways, including cultural practices. Forest products, fishing, and tourism are all important to the rural economies of southeast and southcentral Alaska. Being able to hunt, fish, harvest, and recreate close to home is an important driver for rural Alaskans. Understanding the importance of resource-based activities and industries for households and communities is important for this position. Tourism, logging, and fishing provides opportunities for seasonal employment. Communities need help planning for and managing economic development and understanding how to maximize local benefits from the industry while protecting important cultural and natural resources.

#### Community resilience

National forest lands in Alaska make an important contribution to socioeconomic well-being in rural communities. Policy changes, shifting market conditions, and large-scale environmental disturbances during the past few decades have resulted in a transition away from reliance on commodity production on Alaska's federal lands to a more diverse economy that includes tourism, specialty forest products, and niche markets. Some communities have weathered these changes through economic diversification, re-branding, and capacity-building. Others have seen sharp declines in employment and population. Developing and applying theory and methodological approaches to identify factors that enhance community resilience and reduce vulnerability will be important for this position. Social science is needed to better understand the relationships between forest-based communities and national forest management and policy; factors that contribute to the long-term sustainability of rural communities

having ties to national forest lands; and the role of forest and range management in maintaining and increasing community resilience in the context of dynamic social, economic, and environmental change.

#### Food security and subsistence

Alaskans rely on public lands as a source of food and an opportunity to engage in subsistence harvest of game, fish, and forage foods. For Alaska Natives, subsistence is also a matter of cultural survival. Rural Alaskans maintain important social and cultural relations to federal lands, which form an important element of their social and cultural identity by playing a role in family history, social bonding, harvest of culturally-important products, rural competence, and inter-generational exchange. Moreover, subsistence harvest is an important strategy to enhance food security and reduce dependence on external goods. Changes in policy or in natural resource conditions that affect access to public lands can transform these legacy relationships and result in harmful effects to tribes, communities, households, and livelihoods, as well as shifts in place attachments, identity, and rural culture. Understanding of the state of scientific knowledge about subsistence systems and how subsistence is managed and regulated by federal and state agencies is critical for this position.

#### Tribal partnerships

Alaska is home to over 200 federally-recognized tribes and Native corporations, which represent the economic interests of tribal members. Approximately 20 percent of Southeast Alaska's population are members of Tlingit, Haida, or Tsimshian tribes and in some coastal villages, these rates are much higher. Likewise, Southcentral Alaska encompasses dozens of tribes and Native Corporations, and inter-tribal entities that play a role in governing resources and their use and shaping regional dialogues about sustainability. Awareness of and sensitivity to Alaska's cultural and environmental history and socio-political landscape is essential for the scientist's success.

#### Climate change

With increases in temperature and changes in precipitation patterns, Alaska communities are facing dramatic changes to their landscape with implications for recreation and tourism, harvest of natural resources, and employment. These changes are especially felt by Alaska Native communities with longstanding cultural practices and harvest strategies that may be at risk. While some coastal communities and tribes are deeply engaged in discussions about climate change planning, others are only beginning these dialogues. A focus on human dimensions of climate change is important to this position. The social scientist will need a strong grasp of ecological effects of climate changes and be willing to work with rural communities and tribes to develop adaptive approaches to these changes.

The research is accomplished independently and on teams formed for specific research studies. In some cases, the scientist will supervise agreements with academic specialists who assist the scientist in specifying the research problem, assessing alternative research methodologies, implementing research, analyzing data, and publishing and presenting findings. The scientist employs a range of qualitative and quantitative approaches to conducting research. These approaches may include surveys, ethnographic approaches, qualitative interviews, focus groups, cognitive approaches, statistical analysis, quantitative modeling, demographic analysis, or rural participatory research methods. The scientist is expected to

establish a research agenda, develop critical partnerships, and implement an independent social science program that is responsive to the needs of regional resource agencies and institutions.

### **Pacific Northwest Research Station**

The PNW Research Station is one of five research stations in the USDA Forest Service. The USDA Forest Service conducts the most extensive and productive program of integrated forestry research in the world. The scientific information produced by the station has application on public, private, and tribal lands across the Pacific Northwest (Alaska, Oregon, and Washington) and elsewhere in the United States and other parts of the world. The station's programs reflect the changing character of the questions that science is being asked to help answer.

#### **Mission Statement**

*The Pacific Northwest Research Station is a leader in the scientific study of natural resources. We generate and communicate impartial knowledge to help people understand and make informed decisions about natural resource management and sustainability.*

The station has approximately 325 permanent and temporary employees in professional, administrative, research, technical, and clerical positions. Program managers oversee program organizations across eleven laboratories and research centers in Oregon, Washington, and Alaska. The Station Director's Office is located in Portland, Oregon. The station is also involved in international relations with foreign governmental agencies and universities across many research areas. The work activities of the station attract considerable interest from US Congress, special interest groups, land managers, and the general public. Additional information regarding the Pacific Northwest Research Station can be found at:



[Pacific Northwest Research Station | PNW - US Forest Service \(usda.gov\)](https://www.fs.fed.us/pnw/)

### **Duty Station**

The duty station for this position is Pacific Northwest Research Station's Forestry Sciences Laboratory located in Juneau, Alaska. This position is telework-eligible but is not classified as remote or virtual. The Juneau Forestry Sciences Laboratory houses researchers and support personnel from several research programs within the Pacific Northwest Research Station and the University of Alaska Southeast. Researchers focus on topics relevant to the management of coastal and interior Alaska forest ecosystems, including climate change, soils, hydrology and fisheries research, landscape and vegetation ecology, and wildlife biology. The lab also hosts The Alaska Coastal Rainforest Center as well as a forest entomologist and pathologist from the State, Private, and Tribal Forestry branch of the USDA Forest Service. The lab is adjacent to the campus of the University of Alaska.

**Community Information:** About Juneau, AK: <https://beta.juneau.org/>.

## **Outreach Response**

The purpose of this Outreach Notice is to identify the potential applicant pool for this position. Responses received from this outreach notice will be used to assess the potential application pool and design a formal recruitment to be posted at a later date. We will automatically send the position announcement when it opens to those who respond to this Outreach Notice.

Interested applicants should complete the attached form and submit, along with a resume or curriculum vitae, to **Shawn Menorath, Program Assistant [shawn.menorath@usda.gov] by March 13, 2023**. Those desiring further information about the position may inquire via this email address.

*To be considered, applicants must be United States citizens.  
Thank you for your interest in this position.*

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**OUTREACH RESPONSE**  
**Pacific Northwest Research Station**  
**Research Social Scientist, GS-0101-12/13**

If you are interested in this position, complete this form and submit a resume or curriculum vitae to Shawn Menorath at [shawn.menorath@usda.gov](mailto:shawn.menorath@usda.gov) by March 13, 2023.

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**EMPLOYMENT**

Are you currently a Federal Employee? Yes  No

If Yes:

Name of your Agency & Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Current title/series/grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Appointment: Permanent  Term  Temporary

If No:

Current Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Position Title & Salary: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Appointment: Permanent  Term  Temporary

Are you eligible for appointment under any of the special hiring authorities?

- Former Peace Corps
- Person with Disabilities
- Student Employment Program
- Veteran with 30% Compensable Disability
- Veteran's Employment Opportunities Act of 1998
- Veteran's Readjustment
- Reinstatement Eligibility
- Other

*Thank you for your interest in this position.*