

MS Graduate Research Assistantship: Funded MS on voluntary wildlife protection, policy, and law on oil & gas concessions in the American West

Laramie, WY

Job Title: MS Graduate Research Assistantship, University of Wyoming

Location: Laramie, WY

Overview: Dr. Kelly Dunning & Associate Dean Professor Temple Stoellinger are recruiting a student to join the Wildlife & Wilderness Recreation Lab in the Haub School of Environment and Natural Resources at the University of Wyoming.

The Wildlife & Wilderness Recreation Lab works on sustainable nature-based tourism, hunting and fishing, and outdoor recreation issues in Wyoming and the Intermountain West. Our research focuses on public policy of wildlife, recreation, and natural resources making our research practical and impactful to resource management. The MS student will work on a project studying voluntary conservation activities for species like elk, deer, and grouse on oil and gas concessions. The MS student will have interdisciplinary opportunities to provide support to the Wildlife & Wilderness Recreation Lab as needed (please see: wildlifewildernessrecreationlab.org). Our lab has experience working with students of diverse backgrounds, veterans, and non-conventional students, and all are welcome to apply.

Duties: The Graduate Research Assistant will focus on voluntary conservation activities and relevant conservation laws and policies for species protections on oil and gas concessions on both private land and leases of federal and state public land. This position is ideal for people who want to work in conservation with insights that are valuable to the private sector. This pragmatic focus allows you to follow political priorities of the current administration and be competitive on the job market.

Ideal candidates for this position will possess outstanding written and oral communication skills, an interest in conservation, and a willingness to write research independently.

Candidates should have experience 1) working as part of a team on conservation social science, wildlife, or environmental politics and policy in the United States or similar topics, 2) conducting research or outreach in natural or social science. Students with prior work experience in sectors like service or retail are encouraged to list these experiences on their resume as well as it demonstrates independence and ability to work with the public. Candidates should have an interest in fish and wildlife in the Intermountain West, oil and gas, wilderness recreation, and/or an appreciation for federal land recreation and tourism. Candidates should show in their cover letter examples of their ability to work independently. Preferred candidates will have experience with 1) wildlife science or social science such as hunter or angler surveys, political science/public policy/economics, 2) statistical analysis, 3) social science methods/surveys/human dimensions/interview methodologies, 4) scientific or academic writing. Students must possess a valid drivers license and be willing and able to conduct field work in rural communities that may require significant time spent outdoors and in nature.

Start Date: Fall 2026 in Laramie, Wyoming

End Date: An MS in the Wildlife & Wilderness Recreation Lab requires 5 semesters of field work and courses ending at the conclusion of spring term 2027 (fall '26, spring '27, summer '27, fall '27, spring '28). Dunning and Stoellinger will provide close supervision and career planning support to ensure completion on time.

Degree information: The candidate(s) selected will pursue their MS through the University of Wyoming's Environment, Natural Resources, and Society program (ENRS). A funded MS covers required credits of tuition and fees during the fall/spring/summer semesters and student health insurance.

Qualifications: Preference will be given to applicants with interest and/or experience in hunting/fishing surveys, outdoor recreation, and/or interdisciplinary research. Applicants should have a bachelor's degree and a strong positive professional reference from a few previous supervisors. Applicants who have a BA or BS in any field will be considered, with preference given to social science, fish and wildlife science, natural resources, political science,

business, or interdisciplinary fields. Applicants must have an undergraduate GPA of 3.0 or higher. Standardized test scores (e.g., GRE) are not required although they can be used to supplement weaker applications. Candidates from all backgrounds are encouraged to apply. Veterans and spouse/children dependents are encouraged to apply. Legal right to work in the United States will need to be held by the applicant. Formal application to the UW ENRS program is required subsequent to selection of the successful candidate(s).

Questions: Questions may be asked about the vacancy to Kelly Dunning via email, but all relevant information needed to apply to the vacancies is included in the above description. Due to the extremely high volume of interest of previous positions in the lab, feedback on individual applications is not possible and individual conversations prior to submission of application materials is not possible.

Funding Package: The stipend for Fall 2026 through summer 2026 will be \$23,000 (summer funding is included); the stipend for Fall 2026 through May 2027 will be \$16,938. tuition, and health insurance. Graduation is May 2027.

Application Deadline: March 13, 2026 at 5 p.m. MST, Apply early as review of applications will be on a rolling basis, and positions like this are often filled long before the closing date.

How to apply: Please send the following materials as one PDF document to Dr. Kelly Dunning at kelly.dunning@uwyo.edu with the subject "Your Name MS Position". This packet should include as a single combined PDF:

- (1) Cover letter/narrative (roughly 1-2 pages) that explains your relevant skills and experience identifying specific requirements outlined in this position description, why you want to study at the Haub School, career goals, and your ability to work independently.
- (2) Resume or CV including degree(s) earned, GPA, and contact information for at least three references
- (3) an unofficial copy of your transcript
- (4) a writing sample close to the focus of this MS this can be of any length and on any topic

Next steps: Finalists will be contacted for an interview and an optional short writing task to assess the applicant's writing skills

Contact

Kelly Dunning

kelly.dunning@uwyo.edu (preferred contact method)