

SUNY COLLEGE OF ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE AND FORESTRY

Department of Environmental Biology | [Camp Fire Conservation Fund Program in Wildlife Conservation](#)
252 Illick Hall • 1 Forestry Drive • Syracuse, NY 13210 • 315-470-6500 • www.esf.edu

Join the Team: Graduate Student and Postdoctoral Opportunities

Dear Prospective Student or Postdoctoral Researcher,

Thank you for your interest in joining our lab at the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF). We are always looking for curious, motivated, and collaborative people who want their science to make a difference for wildlife and the landscapes they depend on.

What We Do

Our group conducts applied research at the interface of wildlife management and conservation policy. We aim to do work that advances science and deepens our understanding of natural systems, while also directly informing the decisions made by managers and policymakers. Our projects typically combine rigorous field data collection with quantitative ecology, including population and movement analyses, resource selection, and decision-support tools, to answer questions that matter on the ground.

We accomplish this through close collaboration with state and federal agencies, private organizations, and industry partners. These partnerships shape the questions we ask, give our students real-world experience, and help ensure our findings are used. Students in the lab learn not only how to do excellent science, but how to communicate it to the people who manage wildlife and set conservation policy.

Our Partnerships at Syracuse

Our lab is the home of the Camp Fire Conservation Fund Program in Wildlife Conservation. The Camp Fire Conservation Fund endowed our program and its long-standing commitment to wildlife conservation makes much of our research, training, and outreach possible.

We also maintain a relationship with the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University, one of the nation's leading schools of public policy. This connection gives our students opportunities to engage with policy scholars, explore coursework in public administration and environmental policy, and build the interdisciplinary skills needed to bridge science and decision-making.

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) is also an important contributor, collaborator, and supporter of our program. Through our collaboration with NYSDEC, students gain important real world experience, address research topics of great interest, and ground our work in practical terms.

Who We Are Looking For

Successful lab members tend to share the following qualities:

- **Motivation and independence:** a strong work ethic and the drive to develop and lead your own research questions.
- **Interest in applied conservation:** a desire to see research influence wildlife management and conservation policy.
- **Quantitative curiosity:** comfort with, or eagerness to learn, statistical modeling and programming (e.g., R).

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- **Field readiness:** willingness to work in demanding field conditions, often in remote locations.
- **Collaboration and communication:** the ability to work respectfully with peers, partners, and stakeholders, and to share results through publications and presentations.

We value a supportive, inclusive lab culture and welcome applicants from all backgrounds. Prior experience is important, but enthusiasm, reliability, and a willingness to learn matter.

What You Can Expect

Lab members receive strong mentorship, opportunities to work on partner-driven projects, and encouragement to publish, present at professional meetings, and build professional networks. Graduate positions are generally tied to funded projects, so openings vary from year to year. Postdoctoral researchers are encouraged to develop their own lines of inquiry and to mentor students. Funded openings will be posted on the lab website as they become available, but I am happy to hear from strong candidates at any time, including those interested in pursuing fellowships. Often knowing a student is interested in working with us allows me to notify you should an opportunity develop.

How to Apply

If you are interested in joining the lab, please email me the following materials as a single PDF:

- **Cover letter:** describing your research interests, relevant experiences, and skills, and explaining why our lab is a good fit for your goals.
- **Curriculum vitae (CV):** including education, research and field experience, publications or presentations, and contact information for three references.
- **Unofficial transcripts and GRE scores:** from all undergraduate and graduate institutions attended along with GRE scores. Please do not send official transcripts or GRE scores.

Please include “Prospective Graduate Student” or “Prospective Postdoc” in the subject line and send materials to JJMillsp@esf.edu. Prospective graduate students are also encouraged to review the ESF Graduate School admission requirements and deadlines. Because of the volume of inquiries, I may not respond immediately to every message, but I will reach out to applicants whose interests match current opportunities.

I look forward to hearing from you and learning how your interests might contribute to our work.

Sincerely,

Joshua J. Millspaugh, Ph.D.

Camp Fire Conservation Fund Professor of Wildlife Conservation

Department of Environmental Biology

SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry

