Research Assistant IV

Re: Research Assistant on Grassland Ecosystem Services and Climate Resilience, Archbold Biological Station

Position Overview: Archbold Biological Station’s Buck Island Ranch (BIR; www.archbold-station.org) seeks a full-time research assistant to work on a funded project that will address how land management and grazing regime interact to affect grassland ecosystem services under future precipitation scenarios.

Main Responsibilities:

1) Maintain and operate 32 rainout shelters and 32 irrigation plots and collect data on aboveground net primary productivity (ANPP), forage nutritive value, and plant species composition in response to precipitation and grazing treatments. The RA will maintain the rainout shelters and ensure functionality - these include solar panels, batteries and float switches, tank and irrigation system.

2) Manage grazing treatments. The RA will manage the implementation of the grazing intensity treatments (low and high based on animal use day targets). Rainout shelters and irrigation will have to be removed when plots are grazed (~2x per year). The RA will also care for and manage 10 steers that will be used to graze the plots. These steers are gentle and used to being around people, but experience with large animals would be helpful.

3) Data collection, processing, and data management. ANPP will be measured using the moveable exclosure method. Lab work will include weighing and drying biomass, grinding biomass and preparing samples for tissue analysis. The research assistant may also assist with measurements of belowground processes (root biomass, decomposition, net N mineralization/nitrification).

4) Supervisory role. The RA will also manage one 6-month intern per year that will assist with RA duties.

Location: The position is located at Archbold’s Buck Island Ranch, in Lake Placid, FL, a full-scale working cattle ranch at BIR, which provides a unique platform for long-term agroecology research. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y6_WhY3aZB0

The successful research assistant will be supervised by Dr. Betsey (Elizabeth) Boughton (BIR; www.archbold-station.org), and will interact with Dr. Jiangxiao Qiu (http://jiangxiaoqiu.weebly.com) and students from University of Florida

Required qualifications: A bachelor’s degree in biology, environmental science, ecology, or related field; basic computer skills (MS Word, Excel).

Preferred qualifications: experience in field ecology research – preferably plant related; experience working on ranches or farms; experience working with environmental monitoring equipment (solar panels, batteries, soil moisture probes, etc). Some experience with building or
carpentry or willingness to learn. Experienced team leader and good written and oral communication skills. Demonstrated problem solver. Experience with animal management, trailer skills (e.g. backing up).

**Anticipated start date:** April/ May 2021

**Deadline:** Review of applications will begin as applications are received.

The position is located at BIR, a 10,500-acre cattle ranch near Lake Placid, FL, with shared housing available on site. This is a full-time position for 1 year, but can be extended to 2 years if performance is satisfactory. Competitive salary with full benefits. Applicants should send 1) a letter of application, 2) a resume or CV with relevant coursework and experience, and 3) names, phone numbers and e-mail addresses for three references to Dr. Betsey Boughton at eboughton@archbold-station.org. Please put “RA for climate resilience” in the email subject line. Application deadline is March 25, 2022, and the position will remain open until filled. Contact Dr. Boughton via e-mail for more information.