

M.S. or Ph.D. Graduate Assistantship- Social and Ecological Aspects of Amphibian Conservation on Private Lands

The Dept. of Fish and Wildlife Conservation at Virginia Tech seeks to fill a M.S. or Ph.D. position focused on coupled sociological and ecological aspects of the conservation of an imperiled giant salamander. The work will take place in Appalachian streams adjacent to agricultural and forested private lands. The student's social science research will focus on private landowner attitudes and stewardship behaviors in Appalachia, how they relate to stream restoration and eastern hellbender conservation efforts, and the role of landowner interactions with conservation scientists in promoting changes in conservation behaviors. The project will build upon our ongoing work using underwater nest boxes as a conservation and restoration tool. The ecological aspect of the project offers flexibility, and can relate to the conservation physiology, reproductive ecology, and/or disease ecology of hellbenders under field conditions. The successful candidate will work as part of an interdisciplinary team of scientists from several Universities and interact with diverse stakeholders including landowners in rural communities, and scientists from multiple state and federal agencies.

The successful candidate will be fully funded (tuition and stipend) on a combination of graduate research assistantships and graduate teaching assistantships. The candidate will be co-advised by Drs. William A. Hopkins <http://www.ecophys.fishwild.vt.edu/> and Ashley A. Dayer <http://www.dayer.fishwild.vt.edu/>.

Qualifications

Applicants should have a strong interest and a prior degree in conservation biology, social sciences (preferably psychology, sociology, or communications), human dimensions, ecology or related discipline. Applicants should have extensive past research experience (preferably social & ecological), an outstanding academic record and GRE scores, and evidence of strong writing and relevant methodological skills. Applicants must show an aptitude for interdisciplinary study and communication with non-scientific audiences; experience with landowner outreach or other extension or public education activities preferred.

Applicants for a M.S. position will have the option to transition to a Ph.D. position after meeting departmental criteria. Applicants for a Ph.D. position must possess a M.S. degree and experience publishing their research. Ph.D. applicants will be encouraged to enroll in the Interfaces of Global Change Interdisciplinary Graduate Program <http://www.globalchange.vt.edu/igc/> which provides additional training on the role of science in society, science-policy, and science communication.

Start date for the assistantship is May 2018. Deadline for applications is January 22nd, 2018. However, applications will be reviewed as they are received.

To apply, please email a single PDF file to Tara Craig (Admin Assistant) at tvipperm@vt.edu containing (1) a one page cover letter outlining your research interests, career goals, relevant experience for this position, preference for M.S. or Ph.D. position, and preferred start date; (2) your CV; (3) undergraduate/graduate transcripts and GRE scores; and (4) full contact information for at least 3 professional references. The subject line of the email must read: *Hellbender Graduate Position*.