

David L Nieland

Subject: M.S. Position Available for Spring 2015 to Study Thornscrub Forest Revegetation for Ocelot Use

I am seeking a MS-level graduate student to conduct research on revegetation efforts and ocelot use at the Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge (LANWR) in deep South Texas. The student will join a collaborative team of researchers, including scientists from the University of Texas – Brownsville (UTB) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The student will work to (1) map and digitally document all previous revegetation efforts at LANWR, (2) groundtruth revegetated areas to photodocument their current status and measure attributes of vegetation status, including size and composition, (3) overlay GPS locations of collared ocelots on revegetation maps to determine if revegetated areas are being used as corridors and to what extent, and (4) delineate potential corridors to target for future revegetation. Findings will be used to determine the effectiveness of previous revegetation efforts for creating habitat and corridors for ocelots and as an aid to prioritize areas for the revegetation of potential high use areas as new corridors.

The position will begin in spring 2015, and the student will be employed as a Teaching Assistant (TA) in the Department of Biological Sciences at UTB (<http://www.utb.edu/biology/>). The successful applicant will be expected to enroll full time in the UTB Biology Master's program pursuing the thesis option. This is a unique opportunity to join a young and expanding department located in one of the fastest growing, culturally diverse regions in the nation situated minutes from Padre Island, Laguna Madre, and the Gulf of Mexico. The Department of Biological Sciences offers degrees at the B.S. and M.S. level and is expanding its graduate programs. By fall 2015, UTB will be fully merged with UT Pan Am (UTPA) in Edinburg as UT Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV), with a combined undergraduate enrollment of over 30,000.

Applicants must have a Bachelor's degree in biology, ecology, or a related field. Successful candidates must demonstrate an aptitude for research and ability to work independently. Prior experience in fieldwork related to plant and ecosystem ecology is preferred, as are data analysis and scientific writing experience. The applicant must be able and willing to travel internationally and be field capable. A current, valid U.S. driver's license and good driving record is also required.

As a TA, the student will be expected to work 19 hours/week as assistant instructor in undergraduate biology laboratory classes, assist his/her faculty teaching mentor with laboratory preparation and grading, and participate in departmental outreach events. The successful applicant will be expected to enroll full time in the UTB Biology Master's program pursuing the thesis option. The available teaching assistantship has a \$1,100 per month stipend during the academic year, is benefits eligible, and includes a waiver for in-state-tuition for out-of-state students. Please note that tuition is the student's responsibility and is ~\$2500/semester. There is a strong likelihood that this student could receive a summer internship at LANWR and have the opportunity to work closely with biologists at USFWS.

Interested applicants should send to Dr. Heather Alexander (heather.alexander@utb.edu) a copy of their CV or resume, unofficial transcripts and GRE scores, a written statement of graduate research interests, and letters of recommendations from two referees. Application materials are due by December 1, 2014.