

Internship in Restoration Ecology and Extension in Pinyon-Juniper Ecosystems

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Extension Mentors: Retta Bruegger (Retta.Bruegger@colostate.edu), CSU Extension, Grand Junction, Colorado

Location: Southwest Colorado, but the student will be based in Fort Collins, Colorado

Internship Goals and Scope: This position is an awesome opportunity to spend the summer in beautiful and remote locations in the southwest and gain invaluable experiences as a field scientist. The intern will also gain familiarity with natural resource extension and have the opportunity to visit Extension in western Colorado, and attend extension activities, pending COVID. Motivated students will also have the opportunity to conduct an independent research project over the summer and into the Fall semester. Finally, students will have the opportunity to gain communication experience synthesizing research into accessible formats for managers.

Specific goals of this internship are to: 1. Provide valuable field experiences in ecological restoration research; 2. Learn about the management challenges in managing understory vegetation in pinyon-juniper woodlands; 3. Work with researchers and extension to develop materials that translate research into management oriented outreach materials (such as Facebook posts, info graphics, and/or fact sheets).

Field sampling will include various stand structure and understory measurements where the intern will be expected to work long hours, sometimes in inclement conditions including hot or cold weather, insects, or rain. Overnight travel and camping for up to 10 days will be common throughout the field season. These travel expenses will be covered, and all field work will occur with other members of a field crew. Given the nature of the field experience, applicants must demonstrate their ability to work outdoors under inclement conditions and camp for extended periods. Applicants with interest in soils, botany, range science and/or wildlife habitat are preferred. This is an excellent opportunity for anyone who loves to explore unique ecosystems and is interested in a career in wildlife, range, or natural resource management.

Project Team Details: The two faculty members (Ocheltree and Redmond) and extension agent (Bruegger) have been working together on research and outreach in pinon-juniper woodlands in the southwest Colorado as part of a USDA grant and through collaborations with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

Stakeholders and Professional Development: The Intern will have exposure to stakeholders who are responsible for managing western ecosystems, such as the BLM, and have the opportunity to present to managers via a poster session at the CO Section for Society for Range Management in October. In addition to stakeholder exposure, the intern will gain experience in ecological fieldwork, a greater understanding of ecosystem change in piñon-juniper ecosystems, and experience translating research into outreach materials, and hands-of exposure to extension.

Travel Funds: Student will be based in Fort Collins (and will need to find/maintain their own housing) but all travel to southwest Colorado will be covered. Most overnight accommodations will be via backcountry camping.