



## Graduate Associate Positions Available: The Environmental and Social Sustainability Lab

The [Environmental and Social Sustainability Lab](#) in the School of Environment and Natural Resources at The Ohio State University is seeking high-quality MS and PhD applicants to begin graduate studies during the 2021-2022 academic year. Our curriculum includes foundational training in relevant theoretical areas (e.g., sociology, psychology, political science, communication, human geography) and related research methods and statistics. Our students and faculty engage in research within the U.S. as well as international settings with emphasis spanning both theoretical advancement and application. Our recent graduates have been offered positions in academic and applied settings (e.g., government agencies, nongovernmental organizations).

Several research positions are available in Environmental Social Sciences within the topic areas below. You are strongly encouraged to learn more by visiting our website and individual faculty webpages and then directly contacting faculty before applying.

1. **Environmental policy and agricultural decision-making:** Projects examine the interactions between environmental policy, individual land use/management decisions, and physical landscape outcomes. Examples include:
  - a) Examining how farmers adapt to changing climate and economic conditions, and the impact of those changes on both crop production and ecosystem services (biodiversity, water quality, etc.), with a focus on identifying policies that maximize sustainability and resilience in the eastern corn belt and Great Lakes region. *Faculty advisor:* [Dr. Robyn Wilson](#) or [Dr. Douglas Jackson-Smith](#).
  - b) Examining the development of rural identity, the influence of rural identity on decisions (e.g., support for environmental policies, adoption of conservation behaviors, land use decision-making etc.) and the evolution of this identity within areas of social and environmental change. *Faculty advisor:* [Drs. Eric Toman](#) or [Jeffrey Jacquet](#)
  - c) Examining the impacts of more engaged and participatory approaches to agricultural research on farmer adoption of conservation practices and agri-environmental outcomes: *Faculty Advisor:* [Dr. Douglas Jackson-Smith](#).
  
2. **Psychology of sustainable consumption:** Projects examine social, cognitive, and affective factors involved in promoting a variety of pro-environmental behaviors. Examples include:
  - a) Investigate role of [interpersonal interactions](#) in energy use and other consumer choices. *Faculty Advisor:* [Dr. Nicole Sintov](#). Joint work with [Dr. Grant Donnelly](#) of OSU's Fisher College of Business.
  - b) Examine influences of [identity and individual differences](#) on transportation behavior (e.g., [electric car adoption](#)). *Faculty Advisor:* [Dr. Nicole Sintov](#).
  - c) Examine behavioral spillover in product lifecycle / waste management (e.g., alternative sequencing of packaging/product/disposal choices to [eliminate end-of-life plastics](#)). *Faculty Advisor:* [Dr. Nicole Sintov](#).



3. **Collaborative and adaptive governance in environmental policy:** Projects study how policy stakeholders (governmental and non-governmental actors) engage in collaborative behavior to tackle environmental problems that result from excessive, improper, or controversial use of common-pool resources. Examples include:
  - a) Examining the creation and evolution of institutions designed to protect water access and quality in freshwater bodies in the U.S., South America, and East Africa. *Possible faculty advisors:* Drs. [Ramiro Berardo](#) or [Matt Hamilton](#).
  - b) Evaluating how environmental policy is designed and implemented in the U.S., from passage of bills into law in congress to rule design by federal and state environmental agencies, regarding topics such as climate change and water quality protection. *Faculty advisor:* [Dr. Ramiro Berardo](#).
  - c) Evaluating how political and biophysical risk shapes social interaction in collaborative governance settings. Projects focus on study systems in which environmental and/or demographic change amplifies hazard conditions (e.g., fire-prone landscapes in the western U.S.). *Possible faculty advisors:* Dr. [Eric Toman](#).
  - d) Studying how social and cognitive processes shape local environmental decision-making, through analysis of community-level wildfire risk planning processes. *Faculty advisor:* [Drs. Matt Hamilton](#) and [Eric Toman](#).
  - e) Understanding how policy actors create and sustain collaborative processes in complex governance systems with multiple decision-making forums to prevent the unsustainable use of natural resources. [Dr. Ramiro Berardo](#).
  - f) Understanding how social processes, local advocacy groups and landowners can influence the siting and development of renewable or non-renewable energy resources. *Faculty advisor:* [Dr. Jeffrey Jacquet](#)
  - g) Understanding how the energy transition away from fossil fuels and towards renewable energy can impact communities and residents in rural areas. *Faculty advisor:* [Dr. Jeffrey Jacquet](#)
  
4. **Human-wildlife interactions:** Projects examine the socio-psychological factors (e.g., values, wildlife value orientations) that influence human-wildlife interactions and more broadly, wildlife conservation and management. Students with experience using ArcGIS or QGIS are ideal, though such experience can be acquired at OSU. Examples of projects include:
  - a) An examination of what influences shifts in wildlife value orientations across the United States due to the modernization of contemporary society, including what such a shift means for wildlife management and conservation. *Faculty advisor(s):* [Dr. Alia Dietsch](#), in collaboration with Colorado State University, see: [www.wildlifevalues.org](http://www.wildlifevalues.org)
  - b) Investigating spatial components of human-wildlife conflict, particularly conflict associated with large mammals (e.g., wolves, bears, elk, moose, deer). *Possible faculty advisors:* Dr. [Alia Dietsch](#).
  - c) Examining management of endangered species in the context of environmental change. *Faculty advisor:* [Dr. Eric Toman](#)



5. **Public lands and visitor use management:** Projects examine factors that influence decision-making related to management of visitors on public lands (e.g., national wildlife refuges, parks, or forests; state or local metro parks). Examples include:
  - a) A nation-wide assessment of visitors to National Wildlife Refuges. This project, funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, is aimed at understanding visitor satisfaction with current refuge offerings and predicting future recreation demand across the Refuge System given changes in social-ecological conditions. *Faculty advisor:* [Dr. Alia Dietsch](#): [go.osu.edu/NVSresults](http://go.osu.edu/NVSresults)
  - b) Exploring methods for detecting and addressing non-compliant/illegal behaviors at national parks. This project, funded by the National Park Service, will use a social marketing campaign aimed at reducing visitor feeding of wildlife. *Faculty advisor:* [Dr. Alia Dietsch](#), in collaboration with Dr. Katie Abrams, CSU: <https://wildlifedistance.org/>
6. **Environmental inequality:** Projects investigate how social processes create and sustain environmental inequalities by race and class, and/or how these unequal exposures are linked to various disparities (e.g., health, access). *Possible faculty advisors:* Drs. [Alia Dietsch](#), [Jeffrey Jacquet](#) or [Eric Toman](#). Example projects include:
  - a) Exploring how recreational access differs by race and class, and what that access (or lack thereof) means for the future of the environment and natural resource profession. *Faculty advisor:* [Dr. Alia Dietsch](#).
  - b) Exploring how identity contributes to polarization and beliefs about and support for environmental policies. *Faculty advisor:* [Dr. Eric Toman](#)
7. **Sustainable development and community well-being:** Projects exploring the relationship between human well-being, sustainable development and consumption, and the built and social environment in both urban and rural as well as national and international contexts. *Possible faculty advisors:* Dr. [Kristi Lekies](#).
8. **Social and Economic Well Being in Agriculture:** Projects exploring the social sustainability of farmers, farm families, farm businesses and rural communities. Current opportunities focus on farm stress, intergenerational transitions, community and economic development through food and agriculture, and access to childcare and health care by rural and farming populations. *Possible faculty advisors:* Dr. [Douglas Jackson-Smith](#)
9. **Environmental Experiences, Education, and Outreach:** Projects focus on aspects of outdoor experiences, outdoor recreation, environmental education, program evaluation, and community outreach in Ohio, the United States, and international contexts. *Possible faculty advisor:* [Dr. Kristi Lekies](#)

**Qualifications:** Applicants should have a record of academic excellence (preferred GPA of 3.56). Strong oral and written communication skills are required. *Preferred, but not required qualifications include:* demonstrated coursework in social science theories, and/or research and writing experience using quantitative (e.g., survey/experimental design, multivariate statistics) and/or qualitative (e.g., interviews, focus groups, and analysis) methodologies.



**Support:** Positions include a stipend of \$21K+ per year plus tuition payment and health benefits. Qualified students will be considered for college and university fellowships, research associateships, and/or teaching associateships.

**To Apply:** Prospective applicants are encouraged to reach out to individual faculty before applying. You may submit an online application to Environment and Natural Resources at [gpadmissions.osu.edu](http://gpadmissions.osu.edu), including a statement of purpose (with a description of interest areas and relevant faculty), CV, and email addresses for 3 references. Send transcripts to Ohio State. To receive full consideration for funding, all materials must be received no later than December 1, 2020. For full details on application requirements, see [senr.osu.edu/graduate/admissions](http://senr.osu.edu/graduate/admissions).

**Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion:** Ohio State values diversity in people and ideas. We're an inclusive, supportive community where you can comfortably join in or confidently stand out. Please join us!