

**Title:** Ph.D. Assistantship – Improved Biodiversity for Native Grass Pastures

**Agency:** University of Tennessee, Center for Native Grasslands

**Location:** Knoxville, TN

**Duration:** May 1, 2020 – December 31, 2023

**Position Description:** Ph.D. research assistantship available for graduate student studying strategies for enhancing biodiversity within native grass pastures. Native grasslands provide numerous benefits (e.g., forage, biomass, soil health, wildlife habitat) that may be improved upon by developing higher diversity planting mixes that include native forbs and legumes. However, such diverse plantings may also present challenges, including weed control and establishment of the diverse mixtures. Student will conduct two grazing studies and a small plot trial, among other responsibilities. These three field experiments will, collectively, address the establishment, persistence, and contribution to forage quality and beef production from enhanced native grass pastures, all within a forage production setting. The Center for Native Grasslands Management (<http://nativegrasses.utk.edu/>) at the University of Tennessee is conducting this work in partnership with a research team at Virginia Tech and the Smithsonian Institution. Funding is provided through the USDA-NRCS' Conservation Innovation Grants program. Degree for successful candidate will be a Ph.D. in Natural Resources.

**Qualifications:** Applicants must be highly motivated with a good attitude and a strong work ethic. Well-developed oral and written communication skills are desired and the ability to work cooperatively within a team setting is required. Students with an interest in and/or experience with native grasses and forage production with a strong interest in agro-ecology are preferred. Applicants should possess a M.S. in agronomy, range science, forestry, wildlife, or related field and a valid driver's license. A minimum GPA of 3.0 and GRE scores (Q+V) of 302 are required. A demonstrated track record/ability to publish in the peer-reviewed literature is also important.

**Salary:** \$20,500 - \$24,000 per annum, plus tuition waiver and health insurance.

**Last date to apply:** Until qualified applicant is found.

**Application Procedure:** Interested applicants should send a cover letter explaining their interest along with a CV, and GRE scores to the e-mail address below. Information on formal application as a Ph.D. candidate can be found at the Department's web page (<https://ag.tennessee.edu/fwf/Pages/default.aspx>).

**Contact:** Patrick Keyser, Professor  
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