Summer 2026 Call for Applications

Work Alongside Fire Scientists from Different Regions

Gain Competencies in Transdisciplinary Research Methods

Participate in EFNet Workshops and Activities

Contribute Solutions to Wildland Fire Management

Gain Professional Experience in Diverse Career Pathways

To apply scan QR Code

https://tinyurl.com/EFNet-Application

GRADUATE RESEARCH

EXPERIENCE IN TRANSDISCIPLINARY EASTERN WILDLAND FIRE SCIENCE

Coexisting with fire in the wildland-urban interface

The Eastern Fire Network (EFNet) is a collaborative research and training network to advance understanding of wildfire dynamics and risk in eastern U.S. landscapes, helping to inform fire management and decision-making. As part of a structured program in transdisciplinary science, students will work in interdisciplinary teams and practitioners to co-design solutions to local wildland fire science challenges, linking research to implementation.

Complete the application form by **March 6, 2026**.

For questions, please contact:

Shannon Ranio (application logistics),
srr12@psu.edu

Erica Smithwick (program overview),
smithwick@psu.edu

Kevin Robertson (local host),
kroberston@talltimbers.org

EFNet is funded through the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) Fire Science Innovations through Research and Education (FIRE) program, a collaboration among NSF,NASA, DOD SERDP/ESTCP and the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation to advance wildland fire research.

Training Program Requirements

Program Overview

Student teams will work with local host(s) and stakeholders to co-design solutions to a wildland fire science challenge tailored to the local context. Students will live and work at the host institution for a period of ~9 weeks. During this time, student teams will conduct creative, interdisciplinary research, iterate with local partners, and produce deliverables to be shared back with stakeholders. Students will participate in weekly discussions/seminars with EFNet team members and be provided opportunities to participate in an EFNet workshop. Students will receive a stipend to cover living expenses (up to $8,000, inclusive of food and local transportation). Travel (up to $900 airfare) and accommodation will be provided by the EFNet project. The 2026 team will be based at Tall Timbers Research Station (Tallahassee, Florida; Kevin Robertson, local host).

Orientation

A required orientation will be conducted prior to [2-3 virtual meetings] and during the program's stay. The orientation will (1) introduce students to key principles in transdisciplinary science and related research methods, (2) provide a broad overview of eastern wildfire dynamics, and (3) present an overview of potential scopes to guide student projects. The orientation will also present an opportunity for students to meet each other and EFNet team members to enhance team building.

Deliverables & Learning Outcomes

By the end of the experience, students will be able to:

1. Analyze a partner-relevant challenge in wildland fire science [systems thinking] by evaluating multiple perspectives and potential alternative solutions [design thinking]
2. Facilitate discussions among peers and interested parties to find common understanding and purpose [group facilitation]
3. Effectively communicate to a diverse audience through in person workshops and virtual meetings [communication]
4. Think creatively to find solutions by taking risks and integrating knowledge [innovation]
5. Recognize the importance of different value systems and local contexts [ethical dimensions]

Anticipated Timeline (June 1 - July 31)

Weeks 1-2–Orientation and introduction to project scope(s)
Week 3–Facilitated discussions and project planning
Weeks 4-6–Data collection and analysis
Weeks 7-8–Data analysis and report preparation
Week 9–Report out and delivery of results
Note: we anticipate opportunities for additional virtual or in-person report-outs beyond this period, as needed

Requirements

- Accepted or enrolled at a graduate-degree granting institution in the U.S.
- Ability to travel away from home for ~ 9 weeks and be based at Tall Timbers
- Ability to work independently and in diverse teams
- Willingness to work in remote field locations and hot/humid conditions during research activities
- Applications are sought from students seeking degrees in a broad range of disciplines that can be related to the central project theme, including ecology, fire science, forestry, social sciences, geography, engineering, modeling, atmospheric sciences, etc.

To Apply

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