

2026 UC ANR Cooperative Extension Position (Advisor)

Developed and proposed by: Forest and Upper Watershed Program Team (Ricky Satomi, Gregory Gilbert), with support from Biobased Products and Bioeconomy PT (Dan Sanchez, Cindy Chen), Climate Science and Ecosystems Impacts Program Team (Tapan Pathak, Andy Lyons), Informatics and GIS Statewide Program, Fire Program Team, and Fire Network, Scott Stephens (UCB Fire Science and Forest Policy Professor), Dave Sapsis (CAL FIRE FRAP Research Manager), Brandon Collins (US Forest Service Regional Ecologist), John Battles (UCB Professor of Forestry), Rob York (UCANR Specialist), Ariel Roughton (Berkeley Research Properties Manager), Matt Dias (California Forestry Association), Kristin Shive (UCANR Specialist), and local directors: Ariel Rivers, Karmjot Randhawa, Dustin Blakey.

Position title: Forestry and Natural Resources Advisor - Southern Sierra

Headquarter location and coverage area: The headquarters for this position would be the University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) Fresno Office, which serves as strategic hub within the Southern Sierra Region and provides efficient access to the proposed coverage area of Mariposa, Madera, and Fresno Counties while complementing the existing regional advisor network. The Fresno office is geographically central, and adjacent to major highway corridors, allowing the advisor to efficiently serve both urban and rural communities. The office hosts administrative and academic presence, and is in close proximity to Whitaker's Research Forest, Teakettle Experimental Forest, and Mountain Home Demonstration State Forest, providing opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration.

Program Area(s): Natural Ecosystems & Working Landscapes, Community & Economic Development

Position overview: The Forestry and Natural Resources Advisor will develop and implement an applied research and extension program addressing forest management, post-fire recovery, forest economics, watershed resources, wildland fire, and forest pest management. The advisor will provide essential leadership and science-based knowledge to support local forest managers, landowners, and agencies in improving forest health, reducing wildfire risk, and strengthening ecological and community resilience across the three counties. Potential collaborators include Southern California Edison, local tribes, the Giant Sequoia Lands Coalition, Sierra Forest Products, Yosemite, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park, Sierra National Forest, Sequoia National Forest, Stanislaus National Forest, CAL FIRE, Reedley College, Berkeley Forests, local Fire Safe Councils, local Resource Conservation Districts, prescribed burn associations, Registered Professional Foresters, and private forest landowners.

A qualified candidate will have a master's degree in forestry, fire ecology, natural resource management, or a closely related field, and familiarity with California's natural resources. Candidates must obtain a California Registered Professional Forester license within 5 years of appointment. The Advisor would report to the Area Director of Mariposa, Madera, and Fresno. The position is supported by the interdisciplinary Forestry and Upper Watershed Systems Program Team, the UC ANR Fire Network, and co-located with Fire, Wood Products, and Community Economic Development Advisors. The position is additionally supported by UC Merced and UC Berkeley Specialists actively engaged in forest and watershed research throughout this region.

Justification: The forested landscapes of Mariposa, Madera, and Fresno counties encompass a diverse mix of ownerships and management jurisdictions, including lands managed by Southern California Edison, CAL FIRE, Yosemite, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, Sierra National Forest, Bureau of Land Management, and nonindustrial family forests. This region increasingly experiences high-severity wildfires, supports a recreation-based economy, and represents the endemic range of giant sequoias, creating a complex balance of ecological, economic, and social management priorities.

UC ANR has limited forestry extension capacity in the region despite sustained demand for post-disturbance recovery following recent destructive wildfire, drought, and insect outbreaks. The region is at the forefront of the most profound impacts from climate change, and serves as an important indicator of future conditions across the broader Sierra Nevada range. Expanded research and extension efforts in this region are therefore necessary to evaluate and demonstrate effective adaptation strategies for resilient forest ecosystems. Concurrently, the region has the most sparse forest products infrastructure in the state, limiting management opportunities despite growing calls for increased harvesting on federal lands. The region is also among the most highly visited forested landscapes in California and subject to frequent public scrutiny. An advisor would play a critical role in bridging the science to policy framework and contribute towards a more informed public.

This position would directly advance UC ANR Public Values by increasing the ecological sustainability and stability of working natural ecosystems; enhancing stewardship across a diverse range of public, private, tribal, and industrial landowners; and improving community disaster preparedness and resilience to extreme weather and climate change. This position has potential to complement the Woody Biomass and Forest Products Advisor in ongoing wood product economic development efforts, and the local Fire Advisor in wildfire prevention, fuels management, and post-fire restoration efforts. This position strengthens UC ANR's presence and impact in the southern Sierra Nevada, improving management for the region's forests and the water resources, ecosystem services, and economic opportunities they provide.

Extension: Located at the gateway to one of California's most visited national parks and located adjacent to major private forestlands, this position is uniquely situated to support science communication and public engagement efforts, helping improve public understanding of forest management, post-fire recovery, wildfire management, and natural resource conservation. Extension activities include educational workshops, seminars, and field trips to extend education on forest stewardship, prescribed fire, forest products, forest health, and invasive species management. Potential clientele groups include Southern California Edison, local tribal communities, the Giant Sequoia Lands Coalition, Yosemite National Park, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park, Sierra National Forest, Stanislaus National Forest, local Fire Safe Councils, prescribed burn associations, resource conservation districts, Registered Professional Foresters, and private forest landowners.

Research: Key research areas include forest resilience, climate change adaptation, post-fire recovery, silviculture, and wildfire impacts on giant sequoia regeneration and stand dynamics. This position is well positioned to support ongoing collaborative projects with UC Berkeley faculty and specialists examining ecosystem responses to wildfire and strategies to restore resilient giant sequoia habitat and

structure. This position offers opportunities for collaboration with the U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, US Geological Service, UC Berkeley Whitaker's Forest, Giant Sequoia Lands Coalition, Mountain Home Demonstration State Forests, Teakettle Experimental Forest and University of Nevada Reno to develop applied research that informs management of these critical ecosystems. The advisor has the opportunity to collaborate across forestry, fire science, engineering, economics, and community development to bridge these disparate partners and deliver research outputs including peer-reviewed publications, US Forest Service General Technical Reports, articles in California Agriculture, technical reports, and extension factsheets.

UC ANR network: Currently, UC ANR has limited forestry and natural resources program capacity in the Southern Sierra Nevada, despite the region's ecological significance and increasing management challenges. The Forestry and Upper Watershed Program Team has assumed additional statewide responsibilities to extend limited service to this critical watershed through partnerships with local natural resource agencies, and community organizations; but local stakeholder demand exceeds capacity. In addition, the existing network of forestry advisors lacks dedicated expertise focused on the Southern Sierra Nevada, particularly in the management and conservation of giant sequoia ecosystems and the growing wildfire threats these unique groves face. This position fills a critical gap by providing regional leadership, research, and expertise to support forest health and wildfire resilience in this watershed.

The Advisor would collaborate closely with multiple UC ANR Program Teams, including Fire Management, Policy, and Resiliency; Climate Science and Ecosystem Impacts; Biobased Products and Bioeconomy; Disaster Preparedness and Response; Biodiversity Conservation and Stewardship; and Labor and Workforce Development. The position would be supported by UC ANR Forestry, Fire, and specialists with active programs addressing natural resource challenges in the region.

Network external to UC ANR: External collaborators and partners include Southern California Edison, Sierra Forest Products, Local tribes, Reedley College, Berkeley Forests, the Giant Sequoia Lands Coalition, Yosemite, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park, Sierra National Forest, Stanislaus National Forest, UC Merced, CAL FIRE, resource conservation districts, Fire Safe Councils, prescribed burn associations, Registered Professional Foresters, and private forest landowners.

Support: The position will be headquartered in Fresno County. The County Director has confirmed office space for the advisor, including access to meeting space and standard office amenities. The advisor will have access to a county vehicle for local travel within the service area, with additional UC ANR fleet vehicles available as needed. Standard office supplies, computer equipment, and administrative support will be provided through the county office. Research and extension program costs will be supported through a combination of UC ANR resources, competitive grant funding, and local partnerships as opportunities arise.

Other Support: Robust funding opportunities are available to support applied research and extension programs addressing forest health, wildfire resilience, watershed management, and community adaptation. Potential funding sources include the USDA, CAL FIRE, and the California Natural Resources Agency, as well as programs such as the Wildfire Prevention Program and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Conservation Partners Program.