

**PhD assistantship in ecology at Utah State University under supervision of
[Dr. Kari E. Veblen](#)**

Conservation and restoration of big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*) is priority for scientists and managers working in severely threatened sagebrush-dominated ecosystems. The goal of this project is to understand the mechanisms behind why sagebrush thrive or die in the southern portion of its range, the Colorado Plateau. Factors related to soils, large ungulate herbivory, and climate have previously been investigated. The PhD student will be expected to further these lines of inquiry, as well as

develop new ones, by using existing datasets and generating new field data. New lines of inquiry may include, but are not limited to, aspects of hydrology, biogeochemistry, and genetics. The student will have freedom to develop their own research projects with the support of Dr. Veblen and project collaborators from the USGS Southwest



Biological Science Center ([Dr. Sasha Reed](#) and [Dr. Mike Duniway](#)), and the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources ([DWR](#)). The PhD student will be housed in the [Dept. of Wildland Resources](#) at USU, and the home base for field work will be the [Canyonlands Research Center](#), in southern UT. Field sites will be located primarily on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands.

Desired start date: between June and August 2021. **Minimum qualifications:** Degree in ecology, rangeland ecology, soil science, or related field. Ability to work in remote field conditions, independent field research experience, excellent written communication skills, ability to work productively with land managers, and at least minimum qualifications for admission to USU's [PhD program in Ecology](#). **Desired qualifications:** experience collecting field vegetation and soils data; analyzing, presenting and publishing ecological data; proficiency in GIS. Applicants should email the following materials, *as a single pdf file*, with the subject line "Sagebrush PhD Assistantship" to kari.veblen@usu.edu: (a) one-page cover letter describing relevant experience, interests, and professional goals, (b) CV, (c) scientific writing sample (an academic paper or report written primarily by the applicant), and (d) contact information for three professional references. Review of applications will begin Nov. 9 and continue until position is filled. We particularly welcome applications from **under-represented groups**, including (but not limited to) Native/African/Latinx Americans, LGBTQ+, women, and first-generation college students.

[Utah State University](#) is a Research I land-grant institution with 42 departments, 8 academic colleges, and diverse research programs. The main campus is located in [Logan](#), 85 miles north of Salt Lake City in scenic Cache Valley, a semi-rural mountain basin with nearby ski resorts, lakes, rivers, and mountains providing many recreational opportunities. The area has a low cost of living and provides a high quality of life.