Professional Masters of Science (M.S.) Assistantship in Wildlife Biology

The Avian Science Center (ASC; http://www.cfc.umt.edu/asc/), part of a top-ranked Wildlife Biology Program at the University of Montana (UM), invites applications for a two-year Professional Masters of Science (M.S.) assistantship focused on studying private lands conservation in collaboration with the Bitter Root Land Trust (https://bitterrootlandtrust.org/). The successful applicant will work within the ASC, while gaining career experience with Bitter Root Land Trust's (BRLT’s) work to protect natural resources on private lands in Montana’s Bitterroot Valley.

The Professional M.S. requires 36 credits of coursework, applied work experience with BRLT, and a professional paper/project advised by a 3-member committee. The professional paper/project will be designed to assist BRLT with their prioritization framework for land conservation, with possible project topics that could include (but are not limited to) using new geospatial tools to assess conservation and habitat value across a diverse landscape, and evaluating restoration activities using in-the-field grassland bird monitoring. The successful applicant will work closely both with the faculty advisor (throughout the year), as well as with BRLT (particularly in the summer and fall seasons). In addition to producing a professional paper, the successful applicant will gain significant experience assisting BRLT with practical private lands conservation work, including resource baseline inventories for new conservation easement projects and annual monitoring of existing conservation easements.

The assistantship will begin summer 2022 and provides a stipend while covering graduate school tuition, health insurance, and fees for an anticipated 4 semesters and 2 summers. The successful applicant will pursue their Professional M.S. through UM’s Wildlife Biology Graduate Program under the supervision of Dr. Victoria J. Dreitz, Professor of Avian Conservation and Director of Avian Science Center. This Professional M.S. provides invaluable direct experience working with a conservation organization that creates positive impacts by implementing conservation on the ground, thus preparing the student to pursue a professional career that advances natural resources conservation.

Qualifications
Applicants must have a Bachelor’s degree in wildlife biology, or a related field, prior to summer 2022. Applicants must also have well-developed written and oral communication skills, experience with fieldwork and specific experience with GIS and GPS-enabled fieldwork, a strong work ethic and an ability and willingness to work independently both in the office and in the field, interest and capacity to work collaboratively with the Bitter Root Land Trust on conservation activities in Montana’s Bitterroot Valley, and a desire to pursue a professional conservation career.

How to apply
Interested individuals should email Dr. Victoria J. Dreitz (asc@umontana.edu) the information below as one attached PDF file with “Professional MS” in the subject line.

1) Cover letter: Include a well-articulate statement of interest that highlights career goals, relevant experiences, and desire to work with private landowners in implementing conservation (max 2 pages).
2) Curriculum Vitae or Resume
3) Names and contact information for 3 professional references
4) Transcripts (unofficial are acceptable)

Applications will be reviewed as received until the position is filled. The selected candidate will be asked to apply to UM’s Wildlife Biology Program and Graduate School for admission; note that differing application materials may be required.