

**Master's Degree Funding Opportunity, Graduate Research Assistantship
Braiding Indigenous Knowledge and Western Science for Native Plant Seed Production in Western
Oregon Forests**

We are looking to fund a Master of Science student interested to work on an interdisciplinary research project combining Indigenous Knowledge (IK) and Western Science (WS) in native plant conservation, focusing on seeds of plants important to ecocultural restoration of forests. Specifically, the student would be studying the factors that influence seed production in native plant populations, including soil characteristics. The student would be advised by Dr. Cristina Eisenberg, Associate Dean of Inclusive Excellence and Maybelle Clark Macdonald Director of Tribal Initiatives in the College of Forestry (CoF), at Oregon State University (CoF), in Corvallis, OR, and a member of the [Traditional Ecological Research Lab](#) and the [Indigenous Natural Resources Office](#) in the CoF and part of the Department of Forest Ecosystems and Society.

The student would be funded by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) *Pacific Northwest Tribal Conservation Corps Pilot Project for Seeds of Success* project. This five-year (FY22-FY27) ethnobotany native plant ecocultural restoration project in western Oregon is implementing the National Seed Strategy and Plant Conservation and Restoration Program (PCRP) by following Seeds of Success (SOS) protocols to help ensure a stable and economical supply of native plant materials for restoration efforts on public lands. Our work takes place in moist and dry forests on BLM O&C lands and Tribal lands, with permission from Tribal Nations. Primary activities consist of establishing forest stand survey plots, within them making SOS collections of native seeds, and studying the ecology of the soils in those plots and other factors that contribute to seed production in a nature. The project supports several Native American graduate students in natural resources in the OSU CoF. Our project is helping strengthen BLM conservation stewardship by expanding public land inter-cultural collaboration to build resilience to climate change and improve pollinator and wildlife habitat. We are helping advance awareness of how IK can help increase forest ecological resiliency, conservation, and sustainability. Our work is benefitting the American public, including Indigenous Peoples, by raising awareness of Tribal sovereignty and self-determination and establishing guidelines for working with Tribal Nations in a fair, equitable, and just manner. We are advancing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (DEIJ) by providing opportunities for underserved young adults and their communities to benefit via STEM education, jobs, and influx of resources.

All work is being done in partnership with Tribal Nations. Fundamental values of our project are cultural humility, reciprocity, and a Seventh-Generation approach. In keeping with Indigenous values, we use research methods that are as respectful as possible of the forest ecosystems in which we work. To qualify for this position, besides academic excellence, field experience working with plants in forest ecosystems, and critical thinking skills, a prospective student will need to embody the values described above. Our research is informed by braiding together IK and WS, with equal respect. Students with previous experience working with Tribal Nations will be prioritized. The graduate student will be expected to conduct fieldwork during seed production season (June – September) within the Coast Range and western slope of the Cascade Range of western Oregon.

This fully-funded, 2-year, MS degree includes full tuition waiver, stipend, and research funding. We need someone able to begin no later than January of 2025.

For further information please contact Dr. Cristina Eisenberg: cristina.eisenberg@oregonstate.edu