PhD Position Available in Plant Evolutionary Ecology in Dr. Erika Hersch-Green’s Lab at Michigan Technological University, Houghton MI

A PhD position is available in my lab at Michigan Technological University to join a multi-year NSF-funded project. In general, research in my lab seeks to understand the origin, maintenance, and changes of genetic, phenotypic and species diversity patterns and current projects are related to plant genome size evolution and ecology, species interactions (plant-herbivore-pathogen-pollinator-plant interactions), and invasive species biology.

The overall premise of this funded project is to examine whether and how nutrient availabilities, disturbances, and plant genome size together contribute to the structuring of terrestrial biodiversity patterns from the molecular and functional attributes of organisms to multispecies assemblages. PhD student will combine field data from across the United States with phylogenetic modelling approaches to examine how changes in nutrient conditions, disturbance regimes, and species interactions affect functional traits and multispecies biodiversity patterns across sites that vary in multiple environmental factors. Student will also have the opportunity to work with national and international teaching and research collaborators, be involved in teaching workshops/activities to enhance scientific teaching and communication skills, and to develop complementary research projects.

Funding for this position is provided for 4 years (stipend and tuition; including 3 years of GRA and 1 year of GTA). Candidates must have prior research experience in plant ecology and/or evolutionary biology and in working in field settings. Desired qualifications also include: an M.S. in ecology, evolutionary biology, plant sciences or a related discipline, an excellent academic record, a good quantitative background (including statistics), and strong writing and computing skills; skills in flow cytometry, with a Li-Cor machine, and/or in community phylogenetic methods are highly favored.

Interested candidates should contact Dr. Erika Hersch-Green by email (eherschg@mtu.edu) and include a statement of research interest, an updated CV, and contact information for 3 references. Review of applicants will begin November 1st and preferred candidates will be contacted for an interview and encouraged to submit a formal application. I anticipate student starting mid-May to early June, although the start date is flexible.

Michigan Tech is located in Houghton, MI on the south shore of Lake Superior. Houghton was recently named one of the 100 best small towns in America and the area is known for its natural beauty, pleasant summers, abundant snowfall, and numerous all-season outdoor activities. The University maintains its downhill and cross-country ski facilities adjacent to campus and a nearby golf course. Numerous cultural activities and opportunities are available on campus and in the community.

Links for more information about the university and its surrounding area:
Michigan Tech Home Page (http://www.mtu.edu)
Michigan Tech Graduate School (http://www.mtu.edu/gradschool)
Michigan Tech Department of Biological Sciences (http://www.mtu.edu/biological/).
Recreation (http://www.mtu.edu/recreation)
Webcams (http://www.mtu.edu/webcams)