

## Research Opportunity: Grassland invasion and changes in the abundance of ticks

### **Project overview and goal:**

This project represents an exciting opportunity at the intersection of invasion biology and disease ecology: we seek to understand whether biological invasions not only affect native plant communities, but whether invasions also affect the abundance of organisms that can cause human disease. The goal of this project is to determine whether invasive plants change the abundance of ticks, *Ixodes pacificus*, in the invaded grasslands of California.

### **Location and timing:**

The student will spend approximately one month collecting field data (May 10-June 10) at the Sedgwick Reserve near Santa Ynez, California as part of a larger project on grassland invasions. After June 10, the student will return to St. Louis to analyze project results, assist with related projects, and write a report that describes the student's findings until early August.

### **Logistical and financial details:**

The student's housing costs in California will be paid, and the student will also receive a stipend of \$1400 a month for the duration of the project.

### **Benefits:**

The project will provide first-hand experience in ecological research and give the student exposure to a variety of projects germane to invasion biology, disease ecology, and spatial ecology. The project also provides a competitive stipend (\$1400 a month), and research credit may also be available.

### **Expectations and qualifications:**

Ecological research is exciting and rewarding, but it can be grueling. The successful applicant must be able to work long hours under challenging field conditions and be committed to using this opportunity to develop their research and writing skills. In addition to participation in the field, the student is expected to participate in field- and campus-based work in St. Louis for the final two months of the project. Past field experience is preferred but not necessary. Applicants must be working towards earning a bachelor's degree in ecology, biology, or a related field.

### **To apply:**

Send a cover letter describing your qualifications and motivation for applying to the position, a current resume, and full contact information for 3 references to: [orrock@wustl.edu](mailto:orrock@wustl.edu)

**Application deadline:** April 20, 2008

### **Questions?**

Contact Dr. John Orrock at: [orrock@wustl.edu](mailto:orrock@wustl.edu)

For more information regarding the research in the Orrock Lab, see:  
<http://biology4.wustl.edu/faculty/orrock/>