BU Earth & Environment

Postdoctoral Position: Quantitative Empirical Research in Private Land Conservation

The Department of Earth & Environment at the University of Boston is looking for a highly motivated researcher with strong quantitative skills and an interest in developing novel, original analyses to understand and inform private land conservation in the United States.

The position offers the opportunity to work with a novel, integrated database that allows empirical analyses of private land conservation at unprecedented detail and scale. PLACES (the Private Land Conservation Evidence System) integrates information on property boundaries, tax assessor data, sales, protected lands, conservation investments, land cover change, as well as geophysical and demographic data for a majority of U.S. counties. It is developed at Boston University and designed to reduce researcher effort to acquire and collate such data.

The ideal applicant will have (a) own, original research ideas that are competitive for grant funding and will benefit from the use of large-scale parcel data in the U.S., as well as (b) the analytical capacity to implement those ideas using state-of-the-art quantitative methods. Opportunities exist to become involved with ongoing research efforts, including on 1) the impacts of protection on conservation outcomes, 2) the prediction of protection costs at the parcel level and 3) the analysis of site preferences of conservation organizations.

Required Qualifications:

- PhD in conservation biology, environmental science, economics, computer science, statistics, or a related field with a strong quantitative focus.
- Strong quantitative skillset in at least one of the following: causal inference, operations research, spatial statistics, or machine learning, with evidence of successful application.
- Strong interest in understanding / supporting private land conservation in the United States.

Desirable Qualifications:

- Skillset in more than one of the areas listed above
- Familiarity with key theoretical frameworks in economics / quantitative social science
- Prior experience in working in Python and deploying scripts on Linux servers

Starting date is flexible, but should be no later than July 2019. Initial contract duration is 12 months. Extension is desired, and conditional on the success of grant applications to which the candidate can contribute. Boston University offers a competitive salary and benefits package.

Interested applicants shall contact assistant professor Christoph Nolte (chrnolte@bu.edu) with their CV, a short letter of interest that includes a statement of tentative research ideas, two publications, and contacts of two references. The hiring decision will be contingent on the joint

identification of a promising research project. During this process, the applicant can request information on the data available through PLACES.

Review of applications will begin Aug 1, 2018. Applications will be reviewed until position is filled. Visit www.cnolte.com to check on the current status of this position.

Boston University is an equal opportunity employer and all qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability status, protected veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by law.