



Meet the Scientist!

As a forester, I research the economics and human roles in natural disturbances, such as timing and effects of arson. I also study the effects of international trade policies, including steps to reduce trade in illegal wood.

Dr. Jeff Prestemon Research Forester

Ph.D., University of Wisconsin - Madison
USDA Forest Service scientist



<http://www.naturalinquirer.org>

Important Scientist Characteristics

Perhaps the most important skills for my career include statistical modeling, familiarity with global markets and trade, and my lifelong study of, and exposure to, forests.

Example of a simple research question I have tried to

answer: What impact did the Lacey Act have on trade of illegally-logged wood? The Lacey Act, which prohibits imports of illegally obtained animals and plants, was changed in 2008 to prohibit the import of illegally-logged wood. I used models to show that the Lacey Act reduced, by about half, the United States imports of wood products from countries suspected of illegal logging.

Technology or equipment used in research:

I help develop and use models on computers. One model I helped develop predicts how much money the Forest Service and the Department of the Interior will spend putting out wildfires each year. The models help the Government plan and budget for the upcoming fire season.

Most Exciting Discovery

My colleague and I found that trees and other vegetation can reduce the occurrence of certain kinds of crimes in neighborhoods. The crime reduction is associated with large trees along streets and in yards. This research has resulted in a growing interest in the relationship between trees and crime.

When did you know you wanted to be a scientist?

My interest in science and nature occurred when I was very young. My father, a forestry professor, took me on field trips and showed me the wonders of the outdoors. In sixth grade, my teacher had an "eco-garden" on school property that showcased trees. In high school, I took an amazing hike in the Bob Marshall Wilderness Area in Montana.

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