



Photo by G. Gonzalez

Meet the Scientist!



<http://www.naturalinquirer.org>

<http://www.scienceinvestigator.org>

An ecologist studies the relationships between living organisms and the environments they live in.

Dr. William Gould Ecologist

Ph.D., University of Colorado, Boulder
USDA Forest Service scientist

Dr. Gould (in back) looks on as Inuit elder Lena Kamoayok demonstrates how to use a hunting blind to the students in Dr. Gould's Arctic Field Ecology class.



Dr. William Gould

Important Scientist Characteristics

- ★ Curiosity—drives scientists to look for answers.
- ★ Creativity—to dream questions that have not yet been asked.
- ★ Thoughtfulness—along with patience and logic

Example of a simple research question I have tried to answer:

I have studied the distribution of animal species in Puerto Rico to learn how biodiversity is related to protected lands. I found high biodiversity in the mountains as well as in the coastal lowlands but the coastal areas are not as well-protected as the mountains. Biodiversity along the coast is at greater risk from development.

Technology or equipment used in research: We use remote-sensing imagery. These images are obtained from satellites and aircraft to see how people use the landscape for development, agriculture, or conservation and how these land uses and land covers change over time. We also use computer modeling to look at future land cover scenarios related to climate change.

Most Exciting Discovery

I found that remote sensing can help us map biodiversity patterns. Even though the satellite imagery cannot distinguish individual plant species—it can distinguish areas that are richer or poorer in the number of species present.

When did you know you wanted to be a scientist?

In my early twenties I realized that a scientist can have a career working outdoors in all kinds of cool places. I hoped I could study plants and animals and learn ways to protect species and habitats—I wanted to make a difference so that natural areas are protected for future generations.