



# Meet the Scientist!



As an ecologist, I study interactions among species in ecosystems, including how introduced species can change ecosystems.

## Dr. Talbot Trotter

Ecologist

Ph.D., Northern Arizona University  
USDA Forest Service scientist



<http://www.naturalinquirer.org>

### Important Scientist Characteristics:

I think the key traits for conducting research are curiosity, creativity, and critical thinking. There are many tools that can help a great deal with specific fields (e.g., math and chemistry). Those specific skills can be picked up along the way as long as you are driven by the key traits.

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

I am interested in how species interact with their environment, including how they move, grow, or interact with other species. For example, how does the Asian Longhorned Beetle (a species which eats trees) move across the landscape? How does the Asian Longhorned Beetle change the forest when it arrives?

### Technology or equipment used in research:

I use a number of technologies in my research, including computer models. Using computer models enables us to better understand and explore problems in our environment. We can play "What If?" games at a speed and scale that we can't easily do in the real world.

### Most Exciting Discovery

My most exciting discovery has been that we can predict some of the landscape impacts of invasive species in complicated environments. We can use pretty simple data to understand how species may move around on landscapes.

### When did you know you wanted to be a scientist?

I have always been curious about how things work, whether it is how a steam engine runs or how natural systems work. Sometime around high school, I realized that scientists and engineers do this for a living!

<http://www.fs.fed.us/research/people/profile.php?alias=rttrotter>