JOB ANNOUNCEMENT: UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH OPPORTUNITY

Project Title: “Dam Removal, FERC relicensing, and Tribes in the Western U.S.”

Project Advisor: Dr. Brian C. Chaffin

Position Description:

This is an opportunity for (1) undergraduate research assistant to assist in building a GIS database that spatially relates Native American communities with the relicensing of hydropower facilities on rivers in the Western U.S. The purpose of this project is to identify and catalog in a single database, the spatial relationships between Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) dam relicensing and alternative-to-relicensing processes (many of which have culminated in hydroelectric dam removal) and Native American Tribes. In addition, the research assistant will also map the locations of potential future FERC relicensing processes using the online FERC database of federal hydropower licenses. The information gathered in this database will be used to generate hypotheses about the past, current, and future role of Native American communities in hydropower relicensing proceedings and associated river restoration efforts. If interested, there is potential for the undergraduate research assistant to engage in this research beyond the scope of this position.

Scope of Work:

Through the mentorship of Dr. Brian Chaffin, Assistant Professor of Water Policy (College of Forestry & Conservation), the undergraduate research assistant will:

- Use publically available geospatial data to compile a GIS database of Tribal land in the Western U.S.
- Use the online database of FERC hydropower licenses to create georeferenced locations for past, ongoing, and future FERC relicensing proceedings
- Work with external data providers and other organizations (e.g., American Rivers) to compile additional spatial data on non-FERC related dam removal projects and other river restoration efforts in the region
- Analyze the compiled data base for spatial correlation between dam removal projects and Native American Tribal lands in the Western U.S.

Required Work and Compensation:

This position requires approximately 10 hours of work per week during the Fall Semester 2016, but hours and workload are flexible. The proximate duration of the project is 12-15 weeks and students will be paid a $1200-1500 stipend for work performed. Students will be encouraged to take on additional tasks in this research for academic credit, presentation at the UM undergraduate research symposium, and/or potential publication.
Desired Qualifications:

Ideally, the undergraduate research assistant will be of junior or senior standing at the University of Montana, interested in water resources and natural resource policy issues broadly. GIS proficiency is required for this position and a demonstration of skills will be necessary. Students will be able to work in any GIS software program of their choice including, but not limited to ArcGIS or qGIS. Familiarity with western water law and policy is welcomed. This knowledge can be demonstrated by the completion of many UM undergraduate courses including (but not limited to) NRSM 422, NRSM 391, or GEOG 335, as well as a variety of other professional experiences.

If interested, email a resume to brian.chaffin@umontana.edu. You can also direct questions to this email address. In your resume document, please highlight experiences, skills, and coursework relevant to this position description. Please title your email “UNDERGRADUATE JOB – Dam Removal.”