POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP: 2020

The role of fire, climate, and land use change as drivers of forest-fynbos dynamics in the western Cape and implications for Fire Management and Ecosystem Services

Value: R220 000 pa. for 12 months, renewable for up to 1 year. This award does not include any benefits and is normally exempt from taxation.

Closing date: 8th January 2020

We are seeking a palaeoecologist for a postdoctoral position to investigate the interactions between fire, climate, vegetation and herbivory on the Cape Peninsula, and the consequences for Fynbos-Forest dynamics.

The project will utilise palaeoecological techniques (e.g. analysis of fossil pollen, charcoal, stable isotopes, fungal spores and radiocarbon dating) in order to reconstruct fynbos-forest dynamics. We will collect sediment cores from Table Mountain National Park or the vicinity thereof and will extract fossil pollen, charcoal and dung fungal spores from these using standard methods. Data will be plotted and interpreted in terms of an age-depth model based on AMS radiocarbon dates and Pb210 dates where appropriate. Changes in vegetation, fire and herbivory will be interpreted in terms of known climatic and anthropogenic factors from the literature and will be assessed in terms of the implications for ecosystem services and fire management.

The position is part of a larger multi-disciplinary project investigating vegetation dynamics and ecosystem services over long-time-scales, funded by the NRF Competitive Programme for Rated Researchers (Grant Number CSRU180503325814/118538), African Origins Platform and Global Change Grand Challenge.

The fellowship is open to any eligible person, South African or otherwise, who can carry out its objective. Possession of a PhD degree in palaeoecology, which has been obtained no more than five years ago, is a minimum requirement. Eligible candidates may not have previously held any academic or professional permanent positions. Experience of pollen analysis is essential and familiarity with pollen and vegetation from the Cape Floristic Region is advantageous. There will be opportunities for teaching and co-supervision of postgraduate students.

The research to be conducted will be based at the Plant Conservation Unit, Department of Biological Sciences, University of Cape Town under the primary supervision of A/Prof Lindsey Gillson and the co-supervision of Professor Timm Hoffman. As part of the successful candidate’s professional development, the opportunity to participate in limited teaching and supervision of senior students in the Department will be offered.

The tenure of the position is 12 months, with the commencement date in March 2020 and a possibility for renewal for a further 12 months on satisfactory progress. Applications must include the following, combined into a single pdf document:

1. A 1-page proposal including a motivation and a description of how you will materially contribute to the project,
2. Your full curriculum vitae and list of publications,
3. Certified copies of all academic transcripts and degree certificates
4. In addition, please ask 3 referees to email references directly to the Lindsey Gillson at the email address below.

Applications must be submitted electronically to the Lindsey Gillson, Plant Conservation Unit, Department of Biological Sciences, University of Cape Town (lindsey.gillson@uct.ac.za) by no later than 8th January 2020

Information on faculty structure and academic departments can be found on the UCT website at http://www.uct.ac.za

All applicants are subject to the policies surrounding the postdoctoral sector at the University of Cape Town.

Further information is available from: Ms Claire Khai, Department of Biological Sciences, University of Cape Town, Private Bag X3, Rondebosch 7701, South Africa

Email: Claire.Khai@uct.ac.za Telephone number +27 21 6503604 Fax number +27 21 6503301

The University of Cape Town reserves the right to:

- disqualify ineligible, incomplete and/or inappropriate applications,
- change the conditions of award or to make no awards at all.

Our Mission is to be an outstanding teaching and research university, educating for life and addressing the challenges facing our society.”