

Training Announcement for the International Forestry Resources and Institutions (IFRI) Research Program: Fall 2010

Popular and scientific concern over deforestation is at a historically high level. Forest commons also contribute substantially to global plant biodiversity and to human livelihoods, particularly for the poor. Standard macro-level explanations for deforestation such as population growth, poverty, conversion of forest to agriculture, and the penetration of global markets do not consistently account for the variation found in forest condition and forest use at the micro (local) level. The International Forestry Resources and Institutions (IFRI) research program addresses these deficiencies in the literature. With original research published in *Science*, *PNAS* and scores of other journals, the IFRI research program demonstrates the role of forest commons, local resource governance, and small scale initiatives by local communities to address global deforestation, carbon emissions, and livelihoods problems. The program is an interdisciplinary, cross-national effort which uses methods from the social, natural and physical sciences to explore local-level processes and factors affecting forest conditions and forest-community relationships.

In Fall 2010, the nine-week IFRI training course will be offered at the University of Michigan's School of Natural Resources and Environment, with Arun Agrawal and Lauren Persha. Arun Agrawal is Associate Research Dean and Professor at University of Michigan's School of Natural Resources and Environment, and Lauren Persha is the IFRI Postdoctoral Fellow. The course explores theoretical and methodological approaches for exploring human-environment interactions. It focuses on community level forest management, and the interaction of institutional, socioeconomic and ecological factors that influence sustainability. It also specifically exposes students to the IFRI research program and provides training in data collection methods, including participatory techniques, individual and group interviews, and forest measurement. Students apply their field research training in a forest community in Southern Michigan. Trainees also gain first hand exposure to the unique IFRI database and learn how to enter data and use queries to create datasets.

Researchers are currently using the IFRI approach in over 300 forests and communities in more than twelve countries in the Americas, Africa and Asia. This course is designed for graduate students and practitioners who seek to learn theories and methods relevant for social-environmental research, and particularly the approaches of an active, ongoing research program applicable to the human dimensions of environmental change. Interested participants should be aware that this is an intensive course scheduled for the first nine weeks of the Fall semester (early September through early November 2010). It requires several evenings and weekends of fieldwork during the first part of the course. Grades are based in part upon completion of a case study report, which will require additional time beyond the course's nine weeks.

Participants from outside the University of Michigan are accommodated as Visiting Scholars for the duration of the training. Training fees for the nine-week intensive course are \$11,500 (\$5,000 training fee inclusive of access to UM computing, library and recreation facilities; \$6,500 recommended for travel, housing, meals and other living expenses). If you plan to attend the Fall 2010 course or would like additional information, please send a letter of interest to Amanda McAllister (amcall@umich.edu) by **April 1**.