Position Summary: The Department of Forestry and Environmental Resources at NC State University is seeking applicants for a full-time, Extension specialist position in integrated pest management of mountain conifers with emphasis on insects and diseases associated with the intensive culture of Fraser fir Christmas trees. The successful applicant will be a part of the department's 10-person Extension Forestry team of 4 faculty and 6 staff, which includes a Christmas tree production and marketing specialist and a Christmas tree geneticist. The position will play a key role with the premier Christmas tree Extension and research team in the nation. This highly collaborative team includes research scientists, Extension specialists, county agents, program directors, and county technicians. The position will have impacts nationwide and is based in beautiful western North Carolina focused in Ashe, Alleghany, Watauga, Avery, Mitchell, and Jackson counties. Office space will be either in Extension or NC Department of Agriculture facilities in western North Carolina, the second largest Christmas tree producing region in the country. The successful applicant will provide leadership in determining, implementing and evaluating educational programs consistent with the philosophy, policy, and overall educational objectives of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension. They will be responsible for developing and delivering educational programming to county Extension personnel, Christmas tree producers and workers, and other stakeholders in mountain conifers. The successful applicant will have ample opportunity to travel throughout North Carolina (4WD state vehicle provided) working in Christmas tree fields, collecting samples, and interacting with Christmas tree growers. Western North Carolina’s Blue Ridge and Smoky Mountains are popular destinations for their natural beauty and in proximity to lively cities and towns known for culinary delights, outdoor recreation, and regional arts and crafts.

Responsibilities:

- Develop an innovative extension program in integrated pest management of mountain conifers with emphasis on Christmas trees that is consistent with the philosophy, policy, and overall educational objectives of North Carolina Cooperative Extension and NC State University
- Perform, design, and support applied research relevant to Extension needs related to Fraser fir Christmas trees and other mountain conifers
- Seek external funding that expands the impact of their extension program
- Publish written extension articles/videos, and maintain the Extension Forestry Christmas Tree website (https://christmastrees.ces.ncsu.edu)
- Provide professional development opportunities for county Extension personnel working within the Christmas tree industry
- Provide current research-based information about mountain conifers through traditional media (e.g., interviews with reporters and television) and social media to diverse audiences
- Provide timely field observations on current pest issues to the Christmas tree industry by employing various teaching methods, traditional formats, and social media communication tools
- Cultivate and develop inclusive and equitable working relationships with county Extension personnel, Christmas tree producers, farm workers, faculty, staff, students and others including from relevant state and federal agencies to meet subject matter needs
- Work closely with county Extension personnel, producers, farm workers, grower commodity organizations, agribusiness, community leaders, other state and federal agencies and others to identify and prioritize issues, problems and opportunities
- Determine educational needs and impacts by assessing and evaluating educational programs and services on a regular basis
- Extensive work with microscope and other appropriate lab equipment is required
- Conduct pesticide trials and other field-based demonstrations of IPM practices and provide IPM pest management recommendations
Obtain/maintain a current North Carolina pesticide license within 60 days of hire date
Obtain/maintain a valid NC driver's license. Travel connected with official duties is required
Work necessary hours to fulfill job responsibilities, including some evenings and weekends
Work outdoors in all seasons under all types of weather conditions, and frequently in very steep mountain terrains
Collaborate with other faculty as appropriate to conduct applied research and to mentor students around IPM, Christmas trees and other mountain conifers
Actively take part in service to the department, college, Cooperative Extension, university, and profession.
Perform other duties as assigned

Qualifications and Skills:
Required Qualifications and Skills
- A Ph.D. in Entomology, Plant Pathology or similar area
- Strong oral and written communication skills
- Excellent time and resource management skills
- Self-directed and self-motivated with the ability to multi-task and set priorities
- A general knowledge of pesticides including pesticide modes of action
- Ability to secure external funding in support of Extension programs
- Ability to plan, organize, work, teach, and interact with diverse audiences, including stakeholders from different socio-demographic groups and with different levels of background knowledge

Preferred Qualifications and Skills
- Curiosity about and passion for the field of IPM
- Working knowledge of different insect feeding guilds and modes of pathogen infection
- Demonstrated ability to lead groups, plan, implement, facilitate, teach, and evaluate educational informational programs
- Demonstrated success engaging with diverse audiences (e.g. with varied educational backgrounds and levels of knowledge about Christmas tree production, and from different demographic groups)
- Knowledge and experience planning, implementing, and evaluating participatory Extension or non-formal education programs
- Basic knowledge of educational technologies and their appropriate use in the development and delivery of educational programs
- Knowledge of Southern Appalachian forests, including native conifers and the insects and pathogens that impact them
- Experience with Christmas tree production and associated integrated pest management activities
- Demonstrated ability to conduct applied research and collaborate with interdisciplinary teams
- Ability and interest in supervising student participation in applied research and Extension
- Verbal and written communications skills in both English and Spanish

Application Procedure: Cover letter stating the applicant’s motivation for the position, unofficial transcripts, curriculum vita, contact information for three professional references, a one-page statement of extension experience and philosophy, and a one-page statement that describes their contributions to advancing equity, inclusion, and diversity. The equity, inclusion, and diversity statement should include an explanation of what advancing each of these areas means to you, how you encouraged or promoted these areas in your professional career, and/or your future goals for advancing each of these areas if hired for this position. To be considered for this position, an on-line application must be submitted at https://jobs.ncsu.edu/postings/148486.

Initial screening of applications will commence October 15, 2021 and continue until the position is filled. The anticipated start date is March 1, 2022. Inquiries about the position may be directed to Dr. Justin Whitehill (Assistant Professor), Department of Forestry and Environmental Resources at jwhiteh2@ncsu.edu.

About the Department of Forestry and Environmental Resources: The Department of Forestry and Environmental Resources (FER) is part of NC State University’s College of Natural Resources and is one of the oldest and largest departments of its kind in the nation. We are home to over 90 full time faculty and staff, more than 750 undergraduate and 150 graduate students. We are based in Raleigh, North Carolina and our activities include teaching, research, and extension. Inclusiveness and diversity are integral to our mission and commitment to excellence in education, extension, and research. The department offers comprehensive undergraduate programs in Environmental Science; Environmental
Technology and Management; Fisheries, Wildlife and Conservation Biology; Forest Management; Natural Resources Ecosystem Assessment; and Natural Resources Policy and Administration; graduate non-thesis programs in Environmental Assessment; Forestry; Fisheries, Wildlife and Conservation Biology; and Natural Resources; as well as the traditional thesis degrees of MS and PhD in Forestry and in Fisheries, Wildlife and Conservation Biology. We are recognized worldwide for our cutting-edge research of systems and issues that impact landscapes, populations, economics, policies, and cultures at local to global scales. Our research project teams are cross-disciplinary and are often comprised of experts from a variety of fields within FER, the broader College of Natural Resources, other colleges at NC State and representatives from government agencies, the private sector, industry or other universities. We support NC State's land grant mission by maintaining a robust extension and outreach program. We believe in sharing our knowledge with the people of North Carolina and supporting the economic prosperity of NC communities by enabling North Carolinians to make informed decisions concerning the management, enhancement, and enjoyment of their forest and other natural resources through sound, research-based information and education.

To learn more about the Department of Forestry and Environmental Resources please visit: https://cnr.ncsu.edu/fer/

Why you should apply: NC State University is one of the largest Universities in the Research Triangle and is ranked as one of the best employers in North Carolina. Our team embodies a culture that values collaboration, creativity, innovation, diversity, and teamwork. NC State University provides work/life balance, a team-oriented culture, and work that makes a difference in our community.

NC State University is an equal opportunity and affirmative action employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity, age, sexual orientation, genetic information, status as an individual with a disability, or status as a protected veteran.

Individuals with disabilities requiring disability-related accommodations in the application and interview process, please call 919-515-3148.

Final candidates are subject to criminal & sex offender background checks. Some vacancies also require credit or motor vehicle checks. Degree must be obtained prior to the start date.

NC State University participates in E-Verify. Federal law requires all employers to verify the identity and employment eligibility of all persons hired to work in the United States.