The Division of Conservation Biology at the Institute of Ecology and Evolution, University of Bern, Switzerland, offers

1 PhD position in conservation biology

Within the research project:

PROTECTION OF HIGH-ALPINE ALLUVIAL HABITATS RELEASED BY MELTING GLACIERS AS A CONSEQUENCE OF GLOBAL WARMING

The extremely rapid, and even accelerating, melting of glaciers in response to climate warming will pave the way for the formation of proglacial alluvial habitats in the Alps. This project seeks to identify, via predictive spatial models, where these proglacial alluvial habitats will develop, to forecast what their biodiversity values will be and whether the latter could be at risk because of the potential of these new formed landscapes for infrastructure development (e.g., renewable energy). The candidate will also work on the development of a biodiversity indicator for high-alpine alluvial zones and on understanding how values of this indicator change under different environmental conditions (e.g., elevation, microhabitat structure). The main outcome of the project will be a hierarchical ranking of Swiss alpine landscapes based on their conservation value and vulnerability to potential infrastructure development that will serve as a basis for deciding on the future use and management of these alluvial areas. Another goal is to provide guidelines for practical in situ management of these habitats to preserve and promote biodiversity.

The candidate must hold a MSc degree in biology or equivalent, and ideally will show a strong interest in conservation science, environmental management and spatial analyses. Knowledge on alpine or alluvial habitats, advanced statistical techniques or on spatial tools (GIS analyses) will be an advantage but it is not a prerequisite. Good command of English is important, while knowledge of French and/or German can be favourable, notably to deal with stakeholders. Start: October-November 2023. Duration: 3.5 years with a possibility of extension up to 4 years. Salary according to SNSF rules. The PhD student will contribute to teaching (e.g., co-supervising BSc and MSc projects on the same topic) and oversee some minor administrative duties.

Applications must be submitted to alejandra.moran@unibe.ch and should include a motivation letter describing your interests, experience and relevance for this position, a CV (including a list of publications when available), summary of MSc thesis, as well as the names and contact details for two referees (name, surname, institutional addresses, email and phone number).

The application deadline is September 10th, 2023. Interviews in Bern are foreseen on the 26th of September 2023.