

2015 NSF GRFP Reviews

<u>Intellectual Merit Rating</u>	Intellectual Merit Comments	<u>Broader Impacts Rating</u>	Broader Impacts Comments	Summary Statement
Very Good	The applicant has a good GPA (3.76). The proposed research of studying plant communities in response to disturbances will involve girdling mature trees as part of the experimental design and I wonder how realistic this would be during a dissertation research project. I assume forest succession and plant community dynamics takes a long time so this experiment would focus on the changes over the first couple years of a process that probably takes decades to complete. The three reference letters are very supportive	Good	The broader impacts relevant to the proposed GRFP is weakly developed.	The applicant has an excellent background and has numerous research and outreach experiments during her undergraduate program and in the time since obtaining her degree (May, 2015). The proposed research might be difficult to achieve during a dissertation timeframe and the broader impacts need further development.
Excellent	The applicant has an excellent academic record. The applicant is lead author on one research publication and co-author on another. The applicant has undergraduate research experience and has several scientific presentations. Has international research experience. The applicant has clearly stated academic and career plans.	Very Good	The applicant has worked as a teaching assistant for an Ecology course and mentored an undergraduate student. The student has blogged about sustainability issues on campus. The applicant plans to outreach to Middle School students. The application could be improved by providing a clear and detailed	The applicant has an excellent academic record. The applicant is lead author on one research publication and co-author on another. The applicant plans to outreach to Middle School students. The application could be improved by providing a clear and detailed plan of reach and impacts to a broader audience. The letters of recommendation provide

			plan of reach and impacts to a broader audience.	excellent support for this applicant.
Excellent	<p>The applicant has an outstanding academic record showing strength in courses relevant to the research proposal. Her academic excellence is further shown by her publications and presentations. Her post-baccalaureate research and work as a field and research assistant allowed her to gain valuable research experience and an understanding of the need to forge collaborations. Her proposed research follows on prior work with soil disturbances and forest community ecology. Finally, her Letters of Recommendation from her advisors and mentors, although all from the same institution, attest to the applicant's aptitude for research, creativity, motivation and leadership skills.</p>	Excellent	<p>The applicant seems committed to broader impacts, not only as a result of carrying out research on soil and light disturbance, potentially becoming more common from climate change, but also through her roles in mentoring younger students and making science more accessible using technology. The applicant's broader impacts are further strengthened by her future plans to implement sustainability outreach lessons to a local middle school, allowing students from diverse backgrounds to gain the psychological, behavioral, and physical benefits from interacting with nature.</p>	<p>The applicant aims to quantify how soil disturbance and light gaps can affect herbaceous species richness and abundance. Intellectual merit and broader impact aspects of this application are both excellent. Strong recommendations from her advisors and mentors give confidence that this applicant has the potential to be a high achieving scientist.</p>