

Postdoctoral research opportunity: Mainstreaming nature-centric thinking in organizations

Organizations increasingly recognize that their long-term resilience and legitimacy depend on a healthier and more reciprocal relationship with nature. Yet, most corporate sustainability frameworks remain narrowly carbon-focused, risk-driven, or compliance-oriented, often overlooking deeper ecological, ethical, and relational dimensions. This project seeks to mainstream nature-centric thinking in organizations by developing actionable insights, frameworks, and strategies that integrate ecological and ethical perspectives into organizational decision-making, operations, and governance.

We are seeking a postdoctoral researcher for a **two-year appointment** to join this effort. In addition to conducting high-quality academic research, the selected candidate will play a key role in project coordination and practitioner engagement, helping to organize and facilitate multi-stakeholder workshops, manage collaborative projects, and translate findings into outputs that are accessible and actionable for organizations, industry groups, NGOs, and policymakers. This role is ideal for someone who wants to bridge research excellence with real-world application, directly contributing to frameworks, reports, and tools that inform organizational practices.

Key research and engagement themes

This position will support research and practice across several interlinked areas. Candidates will have flexibility to shape their inquiries within, or across, themes such as:

Nature as a stakeholder: Investigating how organizations conceptualize and operationalize nature's interests and agency in strategy, governance, and partnerships.

Ethics and values in organizational change: Exploring how environmental ethics, relational ontologies, and multispecies perspectives drive deeper shifts in organizational cultures and decision-making.

Knowledge integration and frameworks: Developing, refining, and testing tools such as science-based targets for nature, planetary boundary metrics, or relational value frameworks that bridge ecological science and organizational strategy.

Collaborative processes: Designing, facilitating, and formally evaluating workshops and multi-stakeholder engagements that connect business leaders, community groups, and policymakers to co-create actionable, nature-positive strategies.

Translating research into practice: Producing practitioner-oriented outputs such as briefs, guidance documents, and decision-support tools to help organizations operationalize nature-centric principles.

About the position

The postdoctoral researcher will join a collaborative team within the Department of Forest Ecosystems & Society (FES) at Oregon State University. FES is a highly interdisciplinary unit focused on sustainability and the stewardship of natural resources. Oregon State University, located in Corvallis, is an “R-1: very high research activity” institution, with the College of Forestry consistently ranked among the world’s best.

This is a truly transdisciplinary role, offering the opportunity to work closely with Dr. Michael Paul Nelson, an environmental philosopher and ethicist whose work spans relational values, ecological ethics, and conservation leadership, and Dr. Rajat Panwar, a corporate sustainability scholar focused on business-nature relationships, stakeholder collaboration, and bioeconomy. This collaboration creates a dynamic environment where philosophical depth, organizational insights, and applied sustainability expertise intersect.

The position provides opportunities to co-develop practical frameworks, pilot decision-support tools, and contribute to policy and industry dialogues that are shaping the future of organizational sustainability. The successful candidate will also have the chance to help design workshops, synthesize actionable insights for diverse audiences, and foster cross-sector partnerships that drive systems-level change.

The ideal candidate will bring strong conceptual, analytical, writing, and organizational skills, along with a demonstrated interest in working at the interface of research and practice. They will thrive in settings that value intellectual rigor, creativity, and collaboration, and be comfortable managing projects that deliver both scholarly outputs and applied impact. Expertise in qualitative data collection and analysis is required.

Minimum/required qualifications

Doctoral degree in a relevant discipline obtained within the last three years (ABDs will be considered)

Fluency in English

Strong organizational, communication, and interpersonal skills

Preferred qualifications

Peer-reviewed publications in organizational studies, sustainability, environmental social sciences, environmental/conservation ethics, or related fields

Experience managing collaborative or interdisciplinary projects

Demonstrated ability to produce applied outputs for practitioner, policy, or industry audiences

Additional details

Salary: \$64,000–\$67,000 annually, commensurate with experience.

This position is eligible for standard benefits (including medical insurance) available to postdoctoral scholars at Oregon State University

Start date

Flexible, anytime between October 2025 and January 2026

Application review

Rolling, until the position is filled

To apply, please e-mail the following to rajat.panwar@oregonstate.edu and mpnelson@oregonstate.edu :

- Full CV
- Statement of interest (including a brief explanation of how your expertise and interests align with nature-centric organizational research and practice)
- Contact information for two references (letters not required at the time of application)

Inquiries are welcome.