

ELEMENTARY SILVICULTURE: PRESENTING FOREST SCIENCE TO CHILDREN THROUGH THE NSF'S GK-12 FELLOWSHIP

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The National Science Foundation's GK-12 Fellowship Program provides a link between science education at the graduate and primary/secondary school levels. The program grants 12 fellowships to University of Maine graduate students in a variety of science or math departments. Fellows each work with three or four local teachers in grades 3-12 to design and implement demonstrations, laboratory projects, and field trips. Fellows use their areas of expertise to demonstrate the scientific method, the use of specialized equipment, and the fun and excitement of science.

This program, and others like it (there are 73 similar programs at other universities in the U.S.), provide an excellent opportunity for forestry education. The future of Maine's forests depends on an informed and scientifically literate public. As an NSF fellow, I will be able to work with schoolchildren to create an awareness of the importance and complexity of forest ecosystems. I plan to accomplish this by focusing on four main themes throughout the school year: diversity, growth, competition and change. I hope that my participation in this program will both facilitate science education and inspire young students to pursue careers in science.