

2016 Summer Intern Project List

Title: Risk and Resilience

Description: This intern will help several RFF researchers with projects under the Rethinking Risk initiative. It will involve work on the following possible topics: flood insurance, disaster aid, disaster preparedness, green infrastructure, and coastal resilience. The intern will help do literature searches, write summaries of literature, write text for various outreach products, and help with data and analytics as skills permit.

Skills desired: Some familiarity with these topics is a plus. Econometric skills and working knowledge of ArcGIS would be beneficial but not necessary.

Project leader: Carolyn Kousky

Web link to this project: www.rff.org/rethinkingrisk

Title: Network Analysis of the Dynamic Evolution of Fishing Permit Portfolios

Description: RFF seeks to hire an intern to assist in a project exploring the impacts of management policy changes on fishermen's permit portfolios. Tasks include constructing a panel dataset of fishing permit ownership over time, developing a timeline of major fishery regulation changes, constructing network analysis diagrams and statistics to identify and summarize overlap between fisheries, and writing a summary of the analysis and results.

Skills desired: Experience with data management in STATA; experience with network analysis or willingness to learn; ability to work independently

Project leader: Kailin Kroetz

Web link to this project: None

Title: Credit Constraints and the Demand for Fuel Economy

Description: This project aims to understand whether credit constraints play a role in household demand for fuel economy. Credit constraints are considered to be an explanation for the energy paradox, which is the tendency for households to undervalue energy cost savings when buying durable goods. Little empirical evidence, however, supports this claim. In this project we will test this claim using a large sample of new vehicle transactions that include detailed information on purchased vehicles and credit-related information on vehicle buyers. Results from this study will help us understand the energy paradox and provide empirical evidence that can be used to design more effective policies to promote the demand for fuel efficient vehicles.

Skills Required: Data collection and cleaning, STATA.

Project Leader: Benjamin Leard

Title: Economic research to guide the development of ecosystem-based management policies

Description: Natural resource management institutions in the United States and around the world are currently struggling with the implications of connected aquatic species and hydrologic systems. This project involves

collection of background information that can be used to inform the design of policies to manage aquatic species and the watersheds they depend on. The specific tasks of the project are to:

1. Conduct a literature search and summarize existing scientific and policy studies on aquatic ecosystem management;
2. Identify general patterns across aquatic ecosystem management problems;
3. Explore specific case studies that are rich in data availability; and
4. Identify federal, state, and local policies that are promising in terms of potential reform.

Desired qualifications: Current enrollment in an undergraduate or graduate degree program; some background in economics and the environmental sciences; previous experience conducting academic literature reviews; data management skills, preferably using software such as Excel, Stata, and MATLAB; familiarity with aquatic species management issues, water management issues, or both.

Project leaders: Kailin Kroetz and Yusuke Kuwayama

Title: Environmental Regulation, the Permitting Process, and Untangling Red Tape for Increased Efficiency

Description: Federal licensing and permitting processes are a key policy lever for achieving a variety of government goals, including environmental protection, workplace safety, and protecting historical/heritage sites. Licenses and permits establish legally binding terms that govern the construction or operation of major industrial, electricity, and oil and gas production facilities. As a result, licensing and permitting processes can help protect the environment, but they also may have adverse effects on economic activity. This project will explore the extent to which there are differences in approval times across several licensing and permitting programs, and review what evidence exists that such differences lead to differences in levels of economic activity. This project could also include a review of differences in State permitting processes—for example, do permitting times differ by state?

Skills desired: Excel and proficiency in data analysis and management.

Project leader: Art Fraas

Title: Energy Efficiency in Buildings

Description: This project is evaluating energy use in residential and commercial buildings and the role of policy in overcoming the energy efficiency gap. The intern may work on an empirical analysis of energy demand in low income households and use the analysis to evaluate new policies to promote energy efficiency in low income communities under the Clean Energy Incentive Program established in EPA's Clean Power Plan. Research on the effects of energy efficiency on financial performance of commercial buildings is also possible. Summary of the economic literature on the effectiveness of other information policies may also be required.

Skills desired: Proficient in Stata and other statistical packages. Excellent writing ability. Economics major preferred. Understanding of energy use in buildings a plus. Graduate students, college grads, or rising seniors strongly preferred.

Project leaders: Karen Palmer and Margaret Walls