



COLLEGE of SOCIAL AND
APPLIED HUMAN SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY, ENVIRONMENT
AND GEOMATICS

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Dr. Eric Nost (Geography, Environment and Geomatics – University of Guelph) is recruiting a Master of Arts student with interests in agri-environmental stewardship, geospatial technology, and science-policy interfaces, to start in Fall 2022. The MA student will complete a social science research project on best practices for agri-environmental data management and use, conducting focus groups with and surveying stakeholders including farmers, farmer organizations, Indigenous communities, conservation authorities, conservation NGOs, and governments. The thesis research will support colleagues who are developing a WebGIS platform to enable stakeholders to identify agri-environmental hot spots at a field scale in the Lake Erie Basin and prioritize investments in conservation actions (see [Liu et al. 2018](#)). The research is funded by the [Arrell Food Institute](#) at the University of Guelph via the Canada First Research Excellence Fund.

We will ask different prospective user groups what it would take for them to use the WebGIS platform, including their preferred context of use (e.g. on their own, in a workshop setting, in partnership with a trusted advisor), the analytical functions and interaction operators they need (e.g. data retrieval, saving sessions), barriers to interpretation (e.g. lack of trust due to uncertainties), and the types of output they find most meaningful (e.g. maps, tables, pre-formatted reports). We will also ask prospective users about data privacy, access, and ownership concerns, in light of how agri-environmental data might inform ecosystem services markets, farmland rents, and, possibly, regulation. In distilling what we find into a smaller set of user archetypes or use case scenarios, we will be able to inform development of the platform accordingly and ensure its successful adoption.

The MA student will gain research skills related to focus group and Q survey methods ([Nost et al. 2019](#)). A key component of the research involves knowledge mobilization alongside collaborators - an opportunity for the student to enhance their project management and public communication skills.

The Department of Geography, Environment and Geomatics at Guelph and I aim to foster welcoming and collaborative spaces that value diversity and wellness. I encourage applications from all qualified individuals, including from justice-seeking groups and those underrepresented in higher education. Prospective applicants should contact me via email - enost@uoguelph.ca - and forward an unofficial transcript, resume or CV, and a brief statement outlining their interests as they relate to the project.

More about the Department of Geography, Environment and Geomatics at Guelph:

- Guaranteed funding for all graduate students for the duration of the program
- Comprehensive support for fieldwork and research expenses
- Outstanding faculty dedicated to a collaborative model of graduate education
- Research-intensive, collegial department in one of Canada's top comprehensive universities
- Spacious campus with modern amenities in a vibrant community

For additional details, please see our website: <https://geg.uoguelph.ca/graduate-programs>

Dr. Eric Nost (he/him)

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