LEUPHANA
UNIVERSITÄT LÜNEBURG

As a humanistic, sustainable and action-oriented university, Leuphana University of Lüneburg stands for innovation in education and science. Methodological diversity, interdisciplinary cooperation, transdisciplinary cooperation with practice and an overall dynamic development characterise its research profile in the core topics of education, culture, management/technology, sustainability and state. Its international study model with the Leuphana College, the Leuphana Graduate School and the Leuphana Professional School is unique in Germany and has won many awards.

The University is looking for a responsible, motivated and committed person for the School of Sustainability as soon as possible.

Doctoral Researcher (m/f/d)
(salary group EG 13, TV-L 65%, for a limited period of 36 months)

You will join the Vegetation Ecology and Biodiversity Conservation Group within the Institute of Ecology. We are an international group with the heart of our work lying in the study of vegetation ecology and functional biodiversity. The position will be part of the Climate future lab DIVERSA "Forest disturbances under climate change in Lower Saxony – understanding drivers and impacts to enhance forest adaptability" (https://zkfn.de/en/diversa/; SP3), within the framework of the Lower Saxony Center for Climate Research (ZKfN; https://zkfn.de/en/).

Project description:
The drought from 2018 to 2022 highlighted the vulnerability of Lower Saxony's forests to climate change, emphasising the need for better understanding of its effects on forest ecosystems and for developing management strategies to enhance their adaptability. The DIVERSA project aims to address this by establishing a trans- and interdisciplinary research unit with eight subprojects. Overall, we aim to (1) analyse the vulnerability of forests by studying disturbance factors like storms, droughts, and pests, (2) to assess ecosystem resilience and biodiversity responses to disturbances, particularly in unmanaged and managed forests, and (3) to explore the perspectives of forest owners, stakeholders, and the public to support participative decision-making. The project's findings will refine monitoring tools and guide forest management, serving as a model for sustainable climate adaptation in Lower Saxony and beyond. The successful candidate will be responsible for conducting fieldwork using mobile laser scanning to capture high-resolution individual tree architecture and to investigate how tree structure influences stress-related changes in forest ecosystems. In addition, a greenhouse experiment is planned to analyse the combined effects of multiple global change drivers on the functional characteristics and growth of young trees.

Tasks:
- Collection of data on individual tree structure in selected forests in Lower Saxony using mobile laser scanning
- Setup and implementation of a greenhouse experiment
- Laboratory analyses of functional leaf and root traits, as well as measurement of physiological traits
- Statistical data analyses
- Preparation and publication of scientific papers and submission of a PhD thesis

Requirements:
- A completed scientific University degree (Master or equivalent) in a project-related field (e.g. ecology, environmental sciences)

- Very good knowledge of (forest) ecology and a strong interest in global change research
- Experience with 3D measurement techniques (laser scanning) is an advantage
- Experience with functional traits of leaves and wood is an advantage
- Experience in the design and implementation of ecological experiments under controlled conditions is an advantage
- Strong quantitative skills and solid experience with statistical analysis in R are essential
- Experience with laboratory work is an advantage
- Excellent written and spoken communication skills in English
- High motivation to work as a proactive team player within a research consortium
- Flexibility, strong organisational skills, and a hands-on mentality
- Willingness to work under sometimes challenging field conditions and to spend up to 10 weeks per year outside Lüneburg within Lower Saxony; prior fieldwork experience is an advantage
- A valid driving licence recognised in Germany and willingness to drive an institute vehicle are essential

Our offer:

- an inspiring working environment as part of the university community of researchers, teachers, students and staff in technology and administration,
- a workplace at one of the most beautiful university locations in Germany in a true campus university with an internationally acclaimed central building by Daniel Libeskind and the directly adjacent Wilschenbruch nature reserve,
- a high level of job security as part of the public service,
- an additional company pension scheme through the Versorgungsanstalt des Bundes und der Länder (VBL),
- flexible and family-friendly working hours within a flexitime framework from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m.,
- flexible and family-friendly opportunities to alternate between presence work and mobile work,
- an extensive internal and external continuing education programme,
- a wide range of sporting activities sponsored by the university, which employees can take part in for one hour per week during working hours to promote their health,
- a university-sponsored catering service for lunch and dinner in the refectory,
- a Germany ticket sponsored by the university as a job ticket

Your application:

For questions regarding the content of the positions, please contact Prof. Dr. Sylvia Haider (sylvia.haider@leuphana.de) or Prof. Dr. Andreas Fichtner (andreas.fichtner@leuphana.de).

Leuphana University of Lüneburg promotes professional gender equality and heterogeneity among its members. Applications from people with severe disabilities will be given preferential consideration if they have the same qualifications.

Please upload your application documents (consisting of a cover letter in English describing motivation for the project, research interest and relevant experience; CV, including a list of publications if applicable; digital copies of MA/BA/Diploma certificates; contact details of at least two scientific references; please without photo) by **20.02.2026** to our application portal. We are looking forward to receiving your application!