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## Laurier biologist named Banting Postdoctoral Fellow

WATERLOO – On September 23, Gordon McNickle was announced as Wilfrid Laurier University's first Banting Postdoctoral Fellowship recipient by the Honourable Greg Rickford, Minister of State (Science and Technology).

The prestigious Banting Postdoctoral Fellowships program provides funding to the very best postdoctoral applicants, both nationally and internationally, who will positively contribute to the country's economic, social and research-based growth. Only 70 Banting Fellowships are awarded annually and valued at \$70,000 per year for two years.

"We are delighted to welcome Dr. McNickle to Laurier as a Banting Postdoctoral Fellow," said Matthew Smith, associate dean: postdoctoral affairs. "Dr. McNickle is a world-class scholar, and this prestigious award will allow him to develop his research profile within the Department of Biology as he prepares for the next stage of his career."

Together with his faculty supervisor, Jennifer Baltzer, Canada Research Chair in forests and global change, McNickle's research examines the boreal forest using game theoretical approaches to predict responses of dominant tree species to global climate change. This research explores the impact of climate change on the boreal forest.

The boreal forest is the largest ecosystem in Canada and is an important resource for Canada's \$60 billion per year pulp wood industry. Globally, the boreal is second only to tropical forests in terms of ecosystem services such as atmospheric carbon capture and sequestration.

"My work will be done under a formal partnership between Wilfrid Laurier University and the Government of the Northwest Territories," said McNickle. "There is substantial potential for impact both from a basic scientific understanding of this important ecosystem, but also for real-world management practices."

"This ability to give a little of my expertise back to society is an important part of taking the fellowship at Laurier."

McNickle will be delivering a public talk on Friday, October 4 at 2:30 p.m. in the Science Building on Laurier's Waterloo campus, room N1044. The talk, titled "Plants, games and foraging behaviour: from nutrients to ecosystems" as part of the Department of Biology's Seminar Series.

For more information on the Banting Fellowship, visit: <http://banting.fellowships-bourses.gc.ca/home-accueil-eng.html>.