A research forester studies forest composition, structure, and functioning, such as productivity and nutrient cycling.

Dr. Kenneth L. Clark

Research Forester

Ph.D., University of Florida

USDA Forest Service scientist

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Research Forester

Important Scientist Characteristics:
Attention to detail, ability to work with instruments, construct towers and associated infrastructure (think telephone line repairman), and telling a well-constructed story in my publications have helped me conduct and report scientific research.

Example of a simple research question I have tried to answer:
How do disturbances, such as fire, insect damage, or harvesting, affect species composition, productivity, and water and nutrient cycles in forests?

Technology or equipment used in research:
I use high speed wind sensors, called sonic anemometers, and fast-response carbon dioxide and water vapor analyzers to measure turbulence, heating, and flow between forests and the atmosphere—and sometimes during fires!

Most Exciting Project or Discovery
My research shows that mosses and liverworts living in tropical cloud forests absorb the majority of nitrogen in rainfall and cloud water intercepted by the forest canopy. I also found that forests can recover rapidly from some disturbances, with prescribed burning causing fewer impacts than insect infestations.

When did you know you wanted to be a scientist? I knew I wanted to be a scientist in 6th grade. During that year, one of my Christmas presents was a chemistry set. I also measured and reported weather conditions at 6th grade school camp.

https://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/people/kennethclark