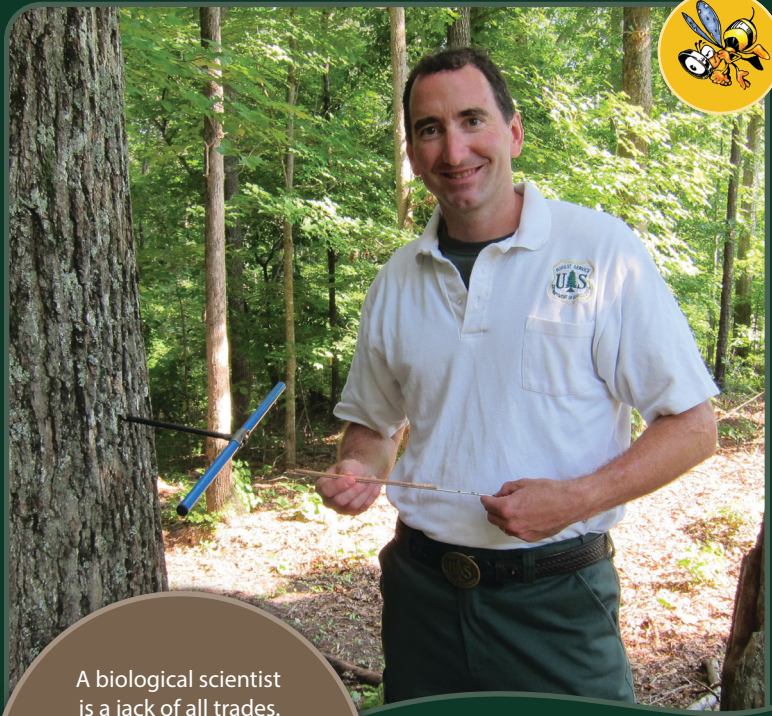

A biological scientist is a jack of all trades. I work with other researchers in diverse disciplines to study forest ecosystems response to prescribed burning, climate change, and natural and man-made disturbance.

Michael Gavazzi

Biological Scientist

M.S., Virginia Tech

USDA Forest Service scientist

Michael Gavazzi

Important Scientist Characteristics

An ability to troubleshoot is a must in my field. I work with many types of scientific equipment in remote research sites. Keeping the equipment running and protected from the elements, as well as bears and ants, takes creativity, ingenuity, and critical thinking.

Example of a simple research question I have tried to answer: Do forest management activities, such as cutting down some or all of the trees, increase the amount of carbon dioxide released from the soil to the atmosphere?

Technology or equipment used in research: I use many tools, but my favorite is the increment borer used to collect tree cores. I am holding an increment borer on the front of the card. This simple tool is easy to use and the information from a core can tell you a tree's age, growth rate, fire history of the area, and past climate conditions.

Most Exciting Discovery

My coworkers and I discovered several large bald cypress trees growing in a young pine plantation we were studying. I was excited to simply find these relic trees in such an unexpected area, but thrilled when I collected a tree core and discovered that they were over 600 years old.

When did you know you wanted to be a scientist? I have always loved nature and been curious about how things work. After taking forest biology and dendrology in college, I was hooked. I knew I wanted to continue learning about natural ecosystems and how they function.

http://www.forestthreats.org/about/who-we-are/raleigh-team/bios/michael-gavazzi