

This is Dr. Evan Mercer.



Photo: Evan Mercer, Forest Service

Dr. Mercer is a scientist who studies people and **forests**.



Photo: Forest Service, Northern Region

These students enjoy walking in the forest.

By the time he was in high school,
Dr. Mercer knew he wanted to be a scientist.



Photo: Forest Service, Northern Region

This high school student wants to be
a scientist, too.

Dr. Mercer is **curious**.



These students are also curious.

Dr. Mercer likes to ask questions about our world.



Dr. Mercer, on the right, talks with another scientist about his questions.

Dr. Mercer asked a question about
rural and **urban communities**.





Photo: Babs McDonald

Rural communities are areas with fewer people and more land.



Photo: Babs McDonald

Urban communities are areas with more people and more buildings.



Dr. Mercer wanted to learn more about these areas and their **climate**. The climate of an area is the most typical **weather** it has over many years.



Hawai`i has a hot climate, but it may have days of cool weather.



Photo: Daniel A. Leiffheit,
National Park Service

Alaska has a cold climate, but it may have days of warm weather.

Scientists have observed that Earth's climate is changing. Dr. Mercer asked, "How does climate change **affect** rural and urban communities?" He **observed** that a climate can change over many years.



As less rain fell over time, the forest pond became a forest stream.



Dr. Mercer used a computer to answer his question.

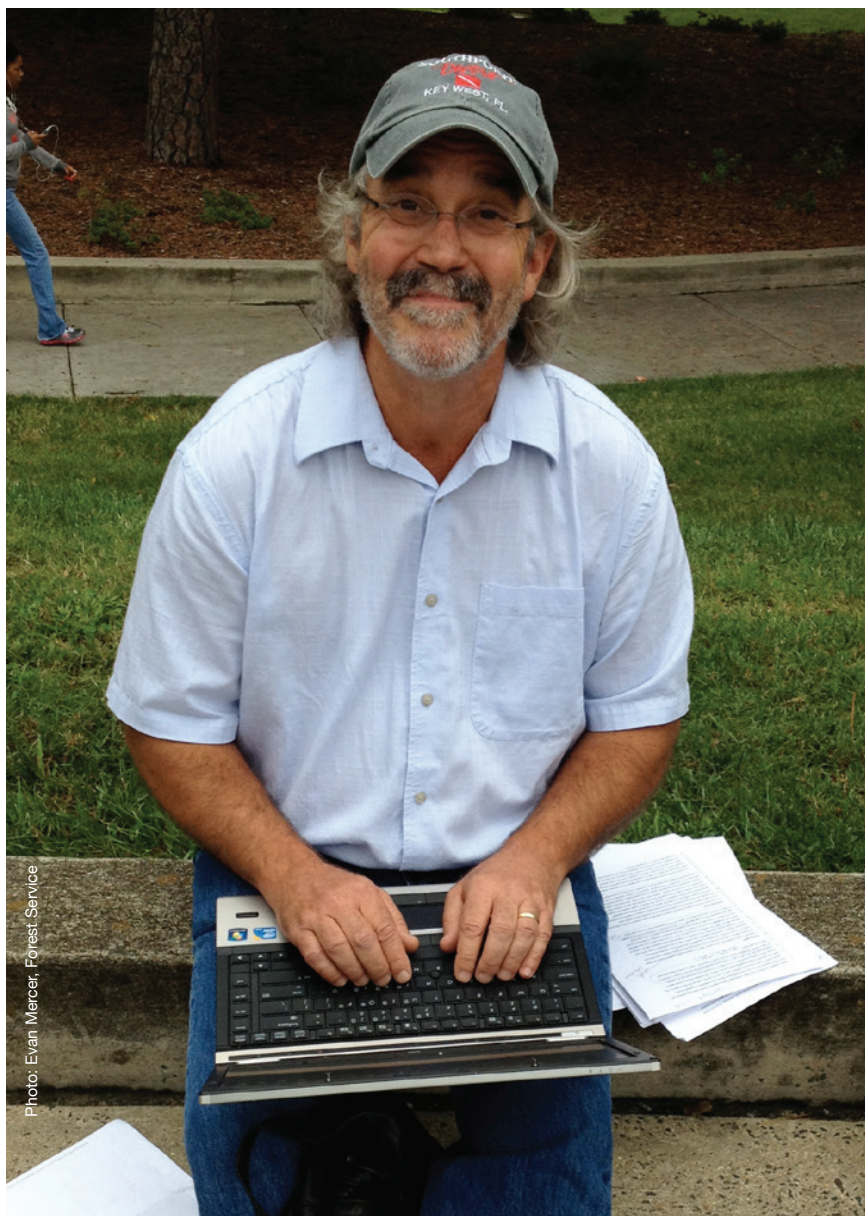


Photo: Evan Mercer, Forest Service

Dr. Mercer discovered that rural communities are affected by climate change differently than urban communities.



Scientists ask and answer questions about changes that they have observed. What is one change that you have observed in the world? What is one question that you have about this change?



What change might this boy be observing?

Critical Thinking Questions:



- Why is it important to study changes in the climate?
- Do you live in a rural community or an urban community? How do you know?
- Dr. Mercer likes to ask questions. Why do you think it is important to ask questions?

Glossary:



affect (a-**fekt**): To make something or someone different.

climate (**kli**-mæt): The most typical weather a place has over many years.

community (kə-**myü**-nə-tē): A group of people who live together in the same place.

curious (**kyoŭr**-ē-əs): Eager to find out about things.

forest (**fôr**-əst): A very large area of trees.

rural (**rur**-əl): About farms and the countryside, country people, or country life.

urban (**ər**-bən): About the city, city people, or city life.

weather (**we**-thər): The condition of the atmosphere at a certain place and time, such as the air temperature and whether or not it is raining.