



Meet the Scientist!



<http://www.naturalinquirer.org>



A social scientist studies people including individuals, groups, and organizations.

Dr. Erika S. Svendsen Social Scientist

Ph.D., Columbia University
USDA Forest Service scientist

Important Scientist Characteristics:

I like to learn about people which helps me be a good listener during interviews, surveys, and focus groups. I also like to explore new places which helps me hone my observation skills as I document all types of landscapes using maps and photography.

Example of a simple research question I have tried to answer:

How do people care for the environment in their local communities? I've found that people take care of the environment in all sorts of ways including by planting trees, gardening, and becoming active in their community. Throughout my career, I have worked to visualize the many different ways that people can make a difference in improving the environment.

Technology or equipment used in research:

I use voice recording equipment so that I can document interviews with people. When I am back in my office, I convert that recording into a transcript of their words. I review this transcript carefully to learn from people and what they are saying and feeling about nature and their environment.

Most Exciting Project or Discovery

My most exciting discovery is that there are thousands of community groups from cultures throughout the world that actively care for both people and the environment.

When did you know you wanted to be a scientist?

I knew that I wanted to become a scientist when I discovered that many people already know a lot about their environment but sometimes their knowledge is unknown to others. I knew that I could help share their important stories in order to help improve the environment in other places.

<https://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/people/esvendsen>