

Life as an economist at an environmental non-profit organization

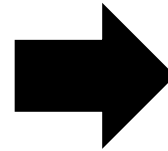
Jesse Gourevitch, Postdoctoral Fellow
Economics Team, Environmental Defense Fund

April 15, 2024

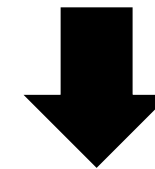
A bit about my background and experience



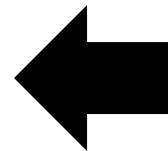
Research Scientist at the
Natural Capital Project
(2014 – 2016)



PhD at the University of
Vermont (2016 – 2021)



Postdoc on the Economics Teams at
Environmental Defense Fund
(Sept 2022 - Sept 2024)
Economist (Sept 2024 -)



Postdoc at the Wharton Risk Center at the
University of Pennsylvania (2021– 2022)



My role within the Economics Team at EDF



(Unique) features of working as an economist at EDF

- Working with smart, passionate people who want to make the world a better place
- Novel scientific and economic research is core to theory of change
- Flexibility in research agenda, but needs to be policy relevant
- Working closely with policy advocacy staff & incentives to engage in non-research-related activities
- No teaching, but opportunities to mentor and collaborate with masters and PhD students
- Remote work
- Less job security than tenure-track or federal government positions, but post-docs have the opportunity to transition into permanent positions

Advice for those interested in the non-profit sector

- Do all the normal things that you need to do to be a successful academic economist, plus...
- Practice communicating your work and ideas to non-economists and people without PhDs
 - Present at non-economics conferences, non-academic professional conferences, etc.
 - Blog posts, comment letters, white papers, reports, policy briefs, op-eds, etc.
- Research is more likely and most often decision-relevant when co-developed with decision-makers; who is the audience for your work (apart from other academics)?
 - Collaborate with staff at NGOs, government agencies, multilaterals, businesses, etc.
- Be interdisciplinary; take classes and collaborate with faculty and students outside of your department
 - Climate science, engineering, ecology, computer science, natural resources, urban planning, etc.
 - Develop expertise in a range of skills and methodologies (not just econometrics)

Thank you!

Please feel free to contact me at jgourevitch@edf.org

