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Wildland Resources

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By Lynnette Harris | April 16, 2026

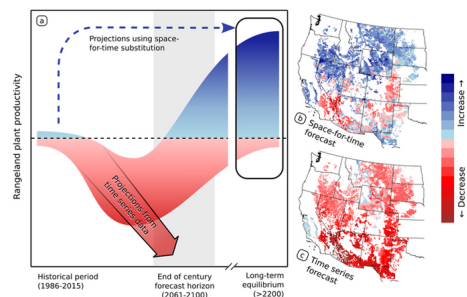


Utah State University researcher Michael Stemkovski has received the prestigious Haldane Prize from the British Ecological Society, an international honor recognizing outstanding early-career contributions to ecological science.

Stemkovski, a postdoctoral scholar in USU's Wildland Resources Department, is being recognized for his innovative work advancing understanding of how ecosystems respond to climate change. His prize-winning paper, published in the society's journal *Functional Ecology*, introduces a new framework for "ecological acclimation" that helps explain why ecosystems don't respond to climate change in a single, predictable way.

In plain terms, the research shows that nature responds to climate change on many different timelines at once—from rapid shifts in how individual organisms function to much slower changes in species composition and ecosystem structure. By bringing these fast and slow processes together into one framework, Stemkovski and

his collaborators show that ecosystems can temporarily fall out of sync with climate conditions, making future changes harder to predict without accounting for these overlapping



responses.

The work provides a clearer roadmap for scientists and land managers trying to anticipate ecological change over years to decades, ultimately helping improve forecasts and decision-making in the face of climate uncertainty.

The open-access paper, "Ecological acclimation: A framework to integrate fast and slow responses to climate change," is available here: [Read the paper](#)

The award adds to a growing list of accolades for Stemkovski, who was recently named Staff Researcher of the Year by USU's S.J. & Jessie E. Quinney College of Natural Resources. In just a few years, he has published 16 peer-reviewed papers with more than 950 citations, reflecting the global impact of his research. Beyond his scholarly contributions, Stemkovski is known for building strong interdisciplinary collaborations, mentoring students, leading workshops, and fostering a culture of curiosity and shared discovery.

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