Postdoctoral Researcher Mentorship Plan

This project will fund one postdoctoral research associate (Miriam Johnston, Ph.D. expected April 2021). She is funded for two years through my NASA grant (#80NSSC20K1805), and the proposed EPSCoR project will provide her an additional six months of funding, allowing her to expand her research in new directions and to develop new collaborative relationships with researchers at UCLA, particularly the primary collaborator (Dr. A. Park Williams). Having had a postdoctoral appointment myself, I am especially aware of the long-term benefits of the position. My postdoc mentoring goal for this project is to facilitate development of the skills and experience necessary for Ms. Johnston to excel in her chosen scientific career. To accomplish this, the mentoring plan will consist of four specific activities:

1. Developing and implementing an Individual Development Plan (IDP).
IDPs are useful tools for identifying and planning career goals. I will work with the postdoc to develop an IDP focused on scientific careers through http://myidp.sciencecareers.org/ in the first two months of starting the position. This IDP will guide all subsequent elements of the postdoctoral mentorship plan and will be used to assess the progress and success of the mentorship.

2. Participating in regular lab group meetings at the host institution.
The postdoc will attend and participate in all meetings with the host collaborator's lab group. These meetings will focus on both research collaboration and professional development. Dr. Williams has ample experience mentoring both graduate students and postdoctoral researchers, and these meetings will provide a valuable forum for Ms. Johnston to develop new collaborations and professional skills.

3. Collaborating on the proposed EPSCoR project.
As part of her NASA-funded postdoc, Ms. Johnston will lead development of a new global remote sensing-based gross primary production product specifically calibrated for dryland ecosystems. For the proposed EPSCoR project, this product will be perfectly suited for assessment of drought effects on vegetation during the 2012-2015 California drought. Ms. Johnston will also lead an analysis on the effects of the 2012 Midwest drought and will directly collaborate on the California drought analysis (with co-authorship).

4. Attending and presenting at a major national conference.
In addition to her participation in the fellowship activities, the EPSCoR fellowship will provide funding for Ms. Johnston to attend the annual meeting of the Ecological Society of America (ESA), where she will present her own research conducted during the fellowship period. The ESA annual meeting is the premier conference for ecological disciplines in the U.S., providing a perfect opportunity for her to disseminate her research and to further develop her professional network.