To Ross Boucek,

I am currently a PhD candidate, under the supervision of Dr. Jill Johnstone, at the University of Saskatchewan, in Saskatoon, SK, Canada. I am part of the Bonanza Creek (BNZ) LTER in Fairbanks, Alaska where I have been conducting my field research for the past three summers. My broad research interests are disturbance ecology in northern forests and my PhD research focuses on mammalian herbivory and the effect on tree growth in early post-fire forests in interior Alaska. Being associated with the BNZ-LTER has been instrumental in my research, from accessing data on established sites to the leadership and guidance from multiple PI’s. Furthermore, my collaboration with the BNZ-LTER will continue long after I finish my PhD as I have set up long-term fenced exclosures that will remain on the landscape for decades and further our understanding of how mammalian herbivores can influence secondary succession and shape the northern boreal forest.

I am interested in being an LTER graduate student co-chair for multiple reasons. Being a part of the BNZ-LTER has opened my eyes to the importance of collaboration between researchers within our LTER, and having the experience to network with other LTER sites is very appealing. I believe important skills of any scientist is to be able to effectively disseminate information, as well as organize events and meetings, and I would truly benefit from this experience. Graduate students are essential to science and academia, and I would love to communicate with more students as well as encourage student participation and input at meetings and symposiums. Lastly, the BNZ-LTER has provided me with all of the resources to conduct my research, learn from mentors, and gain valuable skills and I would like to give back to the LTER as a whole by giving my time and help out where I can.

I have had the opportunity to be a student leader at both universities I have attended, as well as local, student-run organizations. During both my MSc and PhD I was the graduate student’s co-chair of the social committee within both departments I was in. Similarly, during my MSc I was the chair of the social committee for the Society for Conservation Biology which was a student-run club interested in promoting conservation within the city of Kingston, Ontario. I am currently on the organizing committee for the Association of Canadian Universities Northern Studies Due North student conference to be held in Calgary, Alberta this November. As part of the fundraising sub-committee I have reached out to local and national companies and businesses to request funding and sponsorship, as well as help to organize the structure of the upcoming conference. I think my experience organizing social events, as well as logistical support for a conference, will be an asset as the LTER graduate student co-chair.

I think my experience, interest in networking and collaboration, and my enthusiasm for this position make me a great candidate; plus I will bring along my Canadian insight!