Applying to Grad School - Timeline

So you’re thinking about applying to graduate school in ecology. That’s great! Keep in mind that it is totally acceptable to take time off between undergrad and graduate school. This is a suggested timeline for applying to graduate school. You can always start earlier.

**SPRING JUNIOR YEAR**

- **Pick Recommenders:**
  Think about which professors, research mentors, etc would make good recommenders. If you don’t have anyone, make a point to fix this (get to know a current professor, find research opportunities, etc)
- **Schedule your GRE:**
  Sign up online for general test. Leave enough time to retake it before applications are due (usually December-Feb). Decide how you will study (sign up for a class, buy a book, practice tests, find friends etc).
- **Schedule GRE Subject Test (if applicable)**

**SUMMER AFTER JUNIOR YEAR**

- **Take/Re-take GRE General Test:**
- **Take GRE Subject Test**
- **Participate in summer research programs (if possible)**
- **Revamp your CV**
- **Investigate grad programs:**
  What interests you? Masters or PhD? What is required for the application? When are apps due? Meet with friendly professors/mentors for advice if unsure.
- **Begin contacting potential advisors:**
  Look for interesting faculty/research, provide CV and other info as necessary
- **Begin Writing Personal Statements**

**FALL SENIOR YEAR**

- **Contact potential advisors via email (Summer-Oct/Nov)**
- **Obtain letters of recommendation (x3):**
  Provide recommenders with information for submitting. Remind them of deadlines if necessary.
- **Write Personal Statements:**
  Have peers, mentors, labmates, professors provide comments
- **Maintain Contact with Potential Advisors as necessary**
- **Apply (Nov-Feb):**
  Apply early! Have CV, Transcripts, statements, recommender contact info ready. Be organized! Is there a separate financial aid application? Let your potential advisors know you applied and are excited!
- **Confirm Applications are complete and received**
- **Prepare for Phone/Skype interviews**
- **Apply to NSF pre-doc fellowship or others (if applicable)**

G. McCormick 10/24/11
**SPRING SENIOR YEAR**

- Attend interviews/visits/recruitment weekends (if applicable/possible)
- Email/call potential advisors and their graduate students with additional questions:
  Learn about funding, research, housing, teaching/class requirements, potential summer research, etc
- Make a decision!
- Thank your recommenders:
  Let them know your final decision
- Contact potential advisors of programs that you will not be attending.
  Thank them for their time and understanding. You may see them at conferences!
- Get in contact with your new advisor!
  Thank them for opportunity, etc. Think about summer research!