

ECOLOGICAL MONITORING TECHNICIANS and CREW LEADS: **Montana and Idaho**

OVERVIEW

The Montana Natural Heritage Program of the University of Montana collects and disseminates reliable, objective information and expertise to support stewardship of our native species and habitats, emphasizing those of conservation concern. Our staff scientists and data managers work in Montana and adjacent states to assist our state and federal partners in identifying and managing public lands. We are a part of the NatureServe network, a network of over 80 similar programs in states, provinces and nations throughout the Western Hemisphere, bringing decision makers “big picture” information on the true status of species and habitats (www.natureserve.org).

In 2019, we are partnering with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to implement their terrestrial and aquatic Assessment, Inventory, and Monitoring (AIM) strategy, which is targeted at collecting standardized inventory and long-term vegetation data at multiple scales across BLM Districts in the Western U.S. Our work will be in Central and Eastern Idaho (Idaho Falls/Salmon/Challis) and in North-central Montana. Crews working in Idaho will be based out of Missoula, MT and crews working in Montana will be based out of Helena, MT.

Terrestrial data collection (both Idaho and Montana) will include all core methods within the *Monitoring Manual for Grassland, Shrubland, and Savanna Ecosystems – Second Edition*, specifically (1) plot characterization, (2) plot observation, (3) photo points, (4) line-point intercept, (5) vegetation height, (6) gap intercept, (7) soil stability), and (8) species inventory. Supplemental data collection will include (1) sagebrush shape, (2), forb diversity, and (3) basal area for forested systems. **Additional evaluations of pollinator suitability and biological soil crusts will be conducted at sites in Montana.**

Currently, we are recruiting the following field positions:

1. Ecological Monitoring Field Technician 2 (Higher Level Position)
2. Ecological Monitoring Field Crew Lead

All positions are field-based and require camping. Crew members must be willing to practice safety awareness, including vehicle safety procedures, and work in remote areas for extended periods of time. Work will begin with trainings in May 2019 and will continue until September 2019, with the exact end date being flexible to accommodate those with academic commitments. The work schedule typically follows an eight 10-hour day schedule, and runs from Wednesday to Wednesday. MTNHP supplies all equipment, including vehicles, necessary to carry out the work.

QUALIFICATIONS

ALL POSITIONS REQUIRE THE FOLLOWING:

- Experience following established field protocols to conduct sampling and field data collection on new and existing monitoring sites;
 - Experience with data entry and management using paper or electronic devices;
 - Experience navigating and collecting coordinates with hand-held GPS units;
 - Experience with Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, Access);

- Experience driving and maintaining 4WD trucks and other vehicles, especially in off-road situations. Valid driver's license and clean driving record (DUI or other serious convictions need not apply);
- Demonstrated ability to work productively as part of a team to accomplish mutual goals and to work independently as required;
- Experience in and willingness to spend multiple days camping in the field where multiple hazards may be encountered;
- Willingness to work irregular hours in harsh environments and challenging weather, and carry 40-50 pounds in a backpack over uneven terrain;
- CPR and First Aid Certification required; Wilderness First Aid is a plus.

Additional qualifications are specific to each position, and include:

1. Ecological Monitoring Field Technician 1 (Terrestrial) – (*Filled all positions – not recruiting*)

- A Bachelor's Degree in Botany, Soil Science, Range Ecology, Natural Resources Management, or related subject. Experience may be substituted for up to two years of education on a one-to-one basis;
- A minimum of one season vegetation or soils field data collection;
- Coursework or equivalent experience in plant taxonomy or systematics OR in soil morphology and soil classification;
- Experience identifying rangeland plants in the field and using a dichotomous key OR in describing soil horizons, textures and stability.

2. Ecological Monitoring Field Technician 2 (Terrestrial) (Higher level) – (*OPEN POSITIONS*)

- A Bachelor's Degree or higher in Botany, Soil Science, Range Ecology, Natural Resources Management, or related subject. Certified Soil Technicians with an Associate's Degree will be considered;
- A minimum of one full year or two full seasons of vegetation or soils field data collection;
- Coursework and experience in plant taxonomy or systematics OR in soil morphology and soil classification;
- Ability to identify the full suite of rangeland plants, including grasses, in the field to species using a dichotomous key OR to describe soil horizons, textures and stability and collect soil samples for analysis;
- Experience collecting field data with electronic devices (e.g., IPad, Galaxy Tab, Toughbook, etc.).

3. Ecological Monitoring Field Crew Lead - (*OPEN POSITIONS*)

- The Field Crew Lead will have all the qualifications of an Ecological Monitoring Field Technician 2, with a minimum of one full field season collecting BLM Terrestrial or Aquatic AIM data.

OR

- will have all the qualifications of a Field Botany Technician (Riparian) with specific experience identifying riparian and wetland plants in Montana or Idaho and in carrying out field-based assessments similar in scope and scale to AIM.
- The Field Crew Lead must have demonstrated experience carrying out data quality checks.

- Demonstrated ability to interact with BLM Field Office staff in a professional manner is required. Previous experience leading crews or groups is preferred.

POSITION LOCATIONS

Montana Field Crews will be based out of our offices in Helena, MT.

Idaho Field Crews will be based out of our offices in Missoula, MT.

TRAINING

These positions are ideal for people who are committed to ongoing learning and development. You will receive extensive, paid training on the AIM protocols and associated methodology; plant identification training for the area in which you will be working, and ongoing field-based support and training from specialists during the field season. You will also have the opportunity to interact with seasoned staff scientists from both, the BLM and MTNHP, throughout training and field work.

COMPENSATION

Salary is based on qualifications and experience, with the Ecological Monitoring Field Technician 2 starting at \$15 an hour and the Ecological Monitoring Crew Lead starting at \$18 an hour. All positions include a tax-free meal and lodging stipend, which varies depending on duty location. While the University of Montana does not provide health insurance to seasonal employees, we do offer Worker's Compensation coverage and other benefits.

HOW TO APPLY

Please submit the following to cwestfall@mt.gov:

1. Letter of interest, including your reasons for pursuing this opportunity and your preferred location;
2. Curriculum vitae, including all degrees and related coursework
3. Names of three (3) professional or academic references.

Application review and hiring will be ongoing until all positions are filled. All applicants will be notified of receipt of their application and the results of the preliminary review (rejected due to failure to meet minimum qualifications or transmitted to hiring team).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Additional information on the Montana Natural Heritage Program can be found on our website at www.mtnhp.org.

Additional information on the AIM strategy, including the protocols, can be found at <http://aim.landscapetoolbox.org/introduction-to-aim/>