JOB DESCRIPTION

POSITION TITLE: WETLAND ECOLOGIST-SOILS SPECIALIST
JOB LENGTH: 3-4 months
COMPENSATION: $14 per hour
JOB LOCATION: Helena, MT

SUMMARY OF POSITION:

The Montana Natural Heritage Program (MTNHP) serves as the state's principal source of information on species, habitats, and communities of conservation concern. The MTNHP seeks an experienced field ecologist with demonstrated knowledge of soils for summer field projects in wetland ecology. All projects require field ecology skills. Knowledge of soil taxonomy and soil sampling techniques is required. Experience in wetland ecology and knowledge of hydric soils is preferred.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS:

The Wetland Ecologist-Soils Specialist will work with the Project Lead in the field to successfully complete fieldwork. The fieldwork involves extensive collection of vegetation, soil, and environmental data, identification of plant species, and completion of field survey forms. This position will require the ability to identify and describe wetland soils, the collection of soil samples, and the ability to use GPS, aerial photographs, and maps. Willingness to travel extensively during the field season, work unusual schedules, camp, and backpack into remote areas of Montana is expected. Position will begin in June 2011.

KNOWLEDGE/SKILLS:

- Bachelor’s or Master’s degree in ecology, biology, botany, natural resources, or a related field required. Minimum of two field seasons conducting field surveys and assessments.
- Willingness to travel extensively during field season, work unusual schedules (up to 8 consecutive days), backpack, car camp, and live in rustic conditions for extended periods in remote areas of Montana required.
- Good physical condition and ability to work long hours in the field required.
- Careful attention to detail required.
- Comfort and familiarity with the use of computers required.
- Professional and respectful demeanor when communicating with private landowners and agency personnel required.
- Demonstrated experience delineating soil horizons, describing soil texture, and collecting soil samples required.
- Demonstrated experience describing soil color using Munsell Soil Color Charts required.
- Demonstrated experience with the NRCS Field Book for Describing and Sampling Soils Version 2.0 preferred.
- Demonstrated experience with the NRCS Field Indicators of Hydric Soils in the U.S. preferred.
- Experience working in wetlands and knowledge of wetland ecology preferred.
- Knowledge of dichotomous botanical keys and field guides, and the major angiosperm plant families preferred.
- Experience with species identification and vegetation sampling techniques preferred.
- Experience or familiarity with the use of GPS preferred.
• Experience with aerial photograph and topographic map interpretation preferred.
• Demonstrated interest in, and enthusiasm for, conservation preferred.

WORKING CONDITIONS/PHYSICAL EFFORT:

• Ability to work in variable weather conditions in remote locations, often under physically demanding circumstances.
• Valid driver’s license and a safe driving record.
• Ability to hike long distances (5-8 miles) over rough terrain carrying field equipment and field gear.
• Willingness to work occasional long hours or extended periods in an isolated setting.
• Work may require extreme physical exertion and/or physical strain to the point of fatigue. Work environment involves exposure to job hazards (including but not limited to wild and domestic animals, poisonous plants, falling trees/rocks, and loose or unstable ground) where there is a possibility of injury.

ADDITIONAL DUTIES SPECIFIC TO THE POSITION:

• Verify the accuracy of wetland maps and provide professional and technical support for wetland mapping.
• Perform office or field work as assigned relating to wetland assessment, inventory, and mapping.
• Assist in the organization of field data and enter into appropriate spatial and tabular databases.

APPLICATION INFORMATION:

Send cover letter, resume, and 3 references with phone numbers electronically to knewlon@mt.gov. Closing date is March 31, 2011, but suitable applicants will be considered as application materials are received. Contact Karen Newlon by email (knewlon@mt.gov) for any questions.