COLORADO NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM
Position Announcement

TITLE: Wetland Ecology Field Technicians
Research Associate I/II – Open Pool (temporary)

NUMBER OF POSITIONS: 6 in total
WORK LOCATIONS: Statewide Colorado
PAY RATE: $2,400 – $3,200/month plus per diem. Health insurance provided.
DURATION: 3 to 8+ months (1 position March – Oct+; 5 positions May/June – Aug)

Summary of All Positions

The Colorado Natural Heritage Program (www.cnhp.colostate.edu), Colorado’s primary biological conservation information center housed within the Warner College of Natural Resources at Colorado State University, seeks experienced field technicians for summer field projects in wetland ecology. Successful applicants will have the opportunity to enhance their field skills working within a variety of wetlands types across the State of Colorado. Standard duties will involve planning logistics for multi-day field sessions; driving and hiking to field sites; identifying wetland plants both in and out of the field; extensive collection of vegetation, water, soil, and other environmental data; detailed completion of field survey forms; and landowner communication. The position involves extensive travel, camping and potential backpacking, and long field days (10+ hours). Field schedule will usually consist of eight 10-hour days per two-week session, although specific hours and days worked are subject to change to accommodate land owner requests and variable weather conditions. Work vehicles are provided, as are accommodations during field work. Per diem is provided when camping or when remote lodging is required. All positions require experience with field botany, field ecology, and/or soil sampling. Experience in wetland ecology and knowledge of the Rocky Mountains is preferred. A valid driver’s license for travel between sites is required, as is the ability to hike and navigate to wetlands. Technicians will provide their own hiking and camping gear and personal field equipment (backpacks, rubber boots, waders, etc.).

Field technicians will be hired for one of two field teams. Four (4) technicians will be hired to spend the summer sampling Colorado wetlands as part of EPA’s National Wetland Condition Assessment (NWCA). Two (2) additional technicians will be hired to split the summer between monitoring wetlands in Great Sand Dunes National Park and sampling fen wetlands along state highways throughout southwestern Colorado.

Specific Project / Position Details

National Wetland Condition Assessment (NWCA): Four (4) technicians hired for the NWCA project will sample randomly selected wetlands across Colorado as part of the second EPA-led National Wetland Condition Assessment. The field team will travel to randomly selected sites across all regions of the state. Sites will be located in both the front and back county and on public and private land. The team will collect data on wetland vegetation, soils, hydrology, water quality, and the condition of buffers. Sampling will follow rigorous protocols used by field teams across the country. Information on NWCA is available at: http://water.epa.gov/type/wetlands/assessment/survey/index.cfm Specific positions available include:
Lead Technician (1) will aid the Principal Investigator with pre-field season logistics and planning, such as securing permission to access survey sites on private land, scheduling site visits, preparing field maps in ArcGIS 10.2, preparing field supplies, etc. During the field season, the Lead Technician will work with Field Technicians to carry out the tasks listed below and will be the point of contact between the Principal Investigator and the field team. The Lead Technician should have experience working in wetlands and expertise in either plant taxonomy or soil taxonomy. Position timeframe: March–October 2016. Opportunity for additional time, contingent of funding.

Field Technicians (3) will work with the Lead Technician to collect data in selected wetland sites. Fieldwork will involve extensive data collection on vegetation, soils, hydrology, water quality, and the condition of buffers. Of the three positions available, at least two must have experience with plant taxonomy and species identification and at least one must have experience describing and sampling soils. Position timeframe: May–August 2016.

Great Sand Dunes / Fen Projects: Two (2) technicians hired for the Great Sand Dunes (GRSA) and State Highway Fen Mapping projects will spend half the summer working at Great Sand National Park monitoring set of wetlands at the base of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. Protocols will follow the National Park Service Rocky Mountain Region’s wetland assessment protocols (http://science.nature.nps.gov/im/units/romn/index.cfm), which include detailed data collection on vegetation, soils, and hydrology. The remainder of the summer will be spent verifying fen wetlands mapped by the Colorado Natural Heritage Program along the state and federal highway network in southwestern Colorado. This project will involve identifying the boundaries of organic soils within mapped wetlands and detailed plant data collection at verified fens. Position timeframe: June–August 2016.

Duties for All Position

1. Assist Principal Investigator with securing access to randomly selected survey sites, contacting private landowners and coordinating with agency personnel – NWCA Lead Technician
2. Plan logistics for 8-day work sessions and prepare field packets for each site, including several site maps in ArcGIS 10.2 – NWCA Lead Technician
3. Attend field trainings, read field manuals, learn to follow detailed field protocols to identify wetlands and assess their condition – All positions
4. Using GPS and provided maps, drive to and from sites and navigate to plot locations via paved roads, dirt roads, hiking trails, and off-trail travel through dense vegetation and across long distances – All positions
5. Communicate with public and private land managers when performing field surveys – All positions
6. Collect data on vegetation, soils, hydrology, water quality, and the condition of buffers efficiently, with attention to detail, and following set protocols – All positions
7. Reliably identify plants (either in-field or with a microscope) within Colorado wetlands and riparian areas, and classify wetland ecosystems – At least two NWCA positions and both GRSA/Fen positions
8. Collect and prepare unknown plant specimens for later identification and storage – At least two NWCA positions and both GRSA/Fen positions
9. Collect water samples and process/analyze water quality, accurately following detailed sampling documentation and quality assurance protocols – At least two NWCA positions and both GRSA/Fen positions
10. Dig and describe soil profiles (texture, color, presence of redox feature, etc.) – At least two NWCA positions and both GRSA/Fen positions
11. Organize and maintain field gear in preparation for surveys and throughout the field session. Organize and adapt travel schedules as needed to successfully complete each site survey – All positions
12. Data entry and other duties as needed – All positions
Qualifications for All Positions *(Required qualifications in italics)*

1. A B.S. degree in botany, ecology, natural resources, range management, forestry, or related field **required** for all positions. M.S. degree preferred for NWCA Lead Technician.

2. Experience collecting data on vegetation, soils, water, and/or other environmental data **required** for all positions. Knowledge of wetland ecology and experience working in wetlands and/or riparian areas preferred.

3. Willingness and ability to work long hours and unusual schedules, travel extensively during the field season, share living quarters in rustic field housing, bunkhouses, and car camping, and potentially backpack and hike long distances (up to 10 miles / day) while carrying a heavy pack (up to 40 lbs) **required** for all positions.

4. Willingness and ability to work with a positive attitude in field conditions that include exposure to inclement weather, rugged terrain, hot or cold weather (30 to 100 degree F), mosquitos, and poisonous plants, all while maintaining a strong commitment to team safety **required** for all positions.

5. Careful attention to detail, strong oral communication skills for professional landowner interaction and crew teamwork, and strong written and organizational skills to complete lengthy field forms **required** for all positions.

6. Experience with aerial photography, topographic map interpretation, and use of GPS preferred for all positions.

7. Experience with various vegetation sampling techniques preferred for appropriate positions.

8. Experience using dichotomous botanical keys and field guides, familiarity with the major angiosperm plant families, and knowledge of Colorado flora and/or wetland species preferred for appropriate positions.

9. Experience with soil taxonomy and describing soil profiles preferred for appropriate positions.

10. Experience collecting and processing water quality samples preferred for appropriate positions.

Reflecting departmental and institutional values, candidates are expected to have the ability to advance the Department’s commitment to diversity and inclusion.

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First consideration of applicants will begin February 26, 2016. Applications will continue to be accepted until all positions are filled or until July 31, 2016, whichever comes first. Applicants for the NWCA Lead Technician Position are encouraged to apply early.

To apply, submit resume, cover letter, and three references (with phone numbers) online at the following address: [http://jobs.colostate.edu/postings/30897](http://jobs.colostate.edu/postings/30897). Please indicate the specific position you would like to be considered for. If no position is specified, you will be considered for all positions.

Question can be directed via email to Joanna Lemly, CNHP Wetland Ecologist: joanna.lemly@colostate.edu.

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