Assistant Specialist, Conservation Biology, University of California, Riverside

The Center for Conservation Biology at the University of California, Riverside (UCR) is seeking an Assistant Specialist for ecological research, assessing the climate vulnerability of plant species in the southwestern U.S. The position is a grant-supported position with an initial term of one year (subject to extension). The Specialist will work under the supervision of Dr. Lynn Sweet, and alongside various agency collaborators, including the National Park Service, the U.S. Geological Survey, and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and others, to apply findings to climate adaptation and scenario planning.

The specialist will employ existing datasets to assess the climate vulnerability of Joshua trees and other threatened, endangered, and sensitive species; and collect empirical data to understand the current impacts to the species from climate change and related causes (e.g. increased intensity and frequency of fire, mortality, lowered recruitment). The specialist will work with geospatial data, creating species distribution models, creating displays and presentation materials, analyzing data and leading written and graphical summaries of research including presenting and publishing findings. Empirical data collection will be conducted within Death Valley National Park, Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument, Joshua Tree National Park, Lake Mead National Recreation Area, and Mojave National Preserve. The specialist will perform field surveys, coordinate the support of field staff, install and summarize data from micrometeorological equipment. The specialist will also coordinate with partners, manage field logistics and report progress to partners and funders.

The specialist will develop skills in executing field research, communicating conservation science to both technical and diverse lay audiences, leading publication of peer-reviewed articles and oral presentation of findings. The specialist will have the opportunity to inform the project based on their academic experience and employ these and other long-term datasets towards producing peer-reviewed science. The position is also an opportunity to network with federal agencies and University researchers, as well as to mentor junior field staff.

Initial appointment for the full-time position is for one year with the possibility of extension pending further funding on this, or related projects for which the candidate is qualified. Work will entail multi-day field visits throughout the year to field sites in California with some additional travel to Nevada, Arizona, and Utah. The fieldwork and office work are based at our University offices in Palm Desert or Riverside, California (some office work may be remote upon mutual agreement). One might reasonably expect the starting annual salary to be within the 2024-2025 UC-approved Academic Salary rates for Assistant Specialist at $61,300 - $64,700, or for highly qualified candidates at the Associate Specialist level (starting at $73,000), depending on experience.

Last Updated 12/13/2024

Desired Qualifications

- Experience with the analysis of demographic data
- Experience with creating and interpreting species distribution models
- Experience working with microclimatology equipment (e.g. HOBO, iButton)
- Experience organizing teams, and working effectively with stakeholders, partners and collaborators
- Experience and skill in writing reports and authoring peer-reviewed journal articles
- Knowledge of the ecology and natural history of the Sonoran and Mojave Deserts

Basic Qualifications

- M.S. or Ph.D. in natural sciences/related field, with coursework in botany, plant physiology or plant ecology
- Excellent oral and written communication, and the ability to work well with a diverse team
- Experience with field science projects including demonstrated strengths in problem-solving, creative thinking, tenacity, and independent decision-making
- The ability to collect and organize ecological data, as well as to document protocols and field methods in a thorough and effective manner
- Proficient with statistical and spatial analyses and software (ArcGIS Pro or QGIS, R or similar), and current working knowledge of GIS, spatial datasets describing climatology, topography, and other remote sensing
- Ability to perform fieldwork that requires multi-day overnight travel to field sites across the Mojave Desert, and willingness to work in challenging outdoor conditions (heat, cold, and other environmental hazards)
- Valid US driver's license, and the ability to safely operate 4WD vehicles

Applicants should submit a letter of interest, curriculum vitae and the names of three current, professional references (include: email address and telephone number) to Dr. Sweet via email at lynn.sweet@ucr.edu. Review of applications will begin on a rolling basis on January 10, 2024 and will proceed until the position is filled. Employment offers at UCR are contingent upon meeting systemwide policies for employment.

The Center for Conservation Biology, University of California Riverside has a 35-year history of working with multiple stakeholder agencies and landowners in the southern California desert, including the Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan. We work to integrate field observations and natural history into multiple levels of applied ecological investigation. Our projects span investigations into monitoring aeolian communities on long-term study plots, designing community science projects, vegetation natural community mapping and working on habitat modeling for endangered and threatened species in the region.

The University of California is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, disability, protected veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by law.

Last Updated 12/13/2024