

Vegetation Technician on an experimental Mule Deer Habitat project

Description: We seek an eager-learner who will work as a bio-technician on our team assessing effectiveness of a targeted herbicide (OpenRangeG©) in reducing cover of non-native, invasive grasses occurring within mule deer grassland habitat patches. Already a large threat to habitat for many species, the continuing shift in seasonal moisture and type is increasing the rate of community displacement by non-native, invasive annual grasses. This project is unique in having paired treatment-control plots within known home ranges for GPS-collared deer. Duties in the field will include field sampling of vegetation (e.g., vegetation species identification, biomass clipping, line transects, Daubenmire cover), sample processing, and data entry. Successful applicant must be able to work constructively and professionally with others in sometimes-challenging field conditions but also work independently during sample processing and data-entry. This position's work demands a flexible attitude: Days may include long hours into the evening or weekend. Applicant may occasionally be asked to sample vegetation without direct supervision in rugged terrain with little cell service. Technician must be comfortable driving a 4x4 vehicle and UTV to sample locations. Field housing will be a (dry) trailer in a campground setting that offers showers, etc. During multi-day trips to LaGrande 1-2 times across the season to process samples and enter data, housing can be provided. Sample processing will involve drying biomass samples in a drying oven, weighing the dried vegetation samples, and entering data. Once dried, samples must be processed and the data entered in a very prompt and highly accurate manner, so there will be pulses of effort required. Demonstrated abilities to work well in the field, especially with others, and skills in accurate data recording, sample labeling, data entry, and similar tasks will be very strongly favored. Experience and existing certification in safe operation of UTVs would be a plus! Food, personal gear, and living sundries are the responsibility of the technician. Adherence to Oregon's Covid19 requirements at all times is compulsory: Failure to do so is grounds for immediate dismissal.

Location: Field sampling for the duration of the position will be performed near Heppner, Oregon. Vegetation processing (dry, weigh, and grind samples) will be conducted at the noted U.S.F.S. Starkey Experimental Forest facility in LaGrande, OR.

Hourly Wage: \$15/hour

Dates of Employment: Expecting 5-6 weeks of 20-40 hours of work per week. Once hired, employee is responsible for reporting hours as instructed.

Minimum Qualifications:

Abilities/Knowledge/Skills: Hardworking, motivated, and passionate about the outlined job duties. Basic knowledge of ecological principles and systematic data collection as well as basic computer skills, especially experience with accurately entering and cleaning data in Microsoft Excel. Must have the ability to lift 25-30 pounds, move samples by cart between lab-dryer-and-back to lab. Ability to follow directions, ask questions as needed, and work independently and accurately in an isolated lab setting to dry and then weigh and enter biomass data. The technician must commit to regularly and professionally communicating with project personnel and cooperating units whether on the field site or in campus facilities, including paying close attention to accessing and re-securing buildings that are otherwise secured during the COVID-19 pandemic. A valid driver's license will be required to enable use of state vehicles to transport samples between field and Starkey. Abiding by Oregon requirements regarding mask-wearing, social distancing, frequent handwashing, and surface decontamination is an absolute requirement regardless of setting while employed in this position. Successful applicant will be required to complete ATV safety training.

Preferred Qualifications: Experience with vegetation sampling and plant identification of rangeland species. Demonstrated organizational and communication skills enabling independent management of multiple tasks. Demonstrated skill in being resourceful in development of practical solutions to daily challenges. Experience working with GPS units and tablets to locate sample points; Experience with using digital datasheet to accurately record vegetation attributes.

How to Apply: Please send a brief cover letter of interest, resume/CV, and three references to Dana.Sanchez@oregonstate.edu. Review of applications will begin March 1st and be open until filled.