Job Announcement: Botanist, Illinois Natural History Survey (Full Time)

The Illinois Natural History Survey (INHS) has been the guardian and recorder of the biological resources of Illinois—the state’s biological memory. With a staff of over 200 scientists and technicians, INHS is recognized as the premier natural history survey in the nation. The mission of INHS is to investigate and document the biological resources of Illinois and other areas, and to acquire and provide natural history information that can be used to promote the common understanding, conservation, and management of these resources. INHS is part of the Prairie Research Institute (PRI) at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign which is centrally located between Chicago, St. Louis, and Indianapolis. PRI houses five large scientific surveys covering a wide range of expertise including biology, water resources, climate, geology, sustainable technology, and archaeology. PRI’s mission is to provide objective, integrated scientific research and service, in cooperation with other academic and research units of the University of Illinois and elsewhere, that allow citizens and decision-makers to make choices that ensure sustainable economic development, enduring environmental quality, and cultural resource preservation for the people, businesses, and governments of Illinois.

INHS is seeking to hire a Botanist in the Critical Trends Assessment Program (CTAP) to conduct research activities essential to scientific programs by providing support in the development of research plans and execution of research including collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data. Additional information regarding CTAP can be found by visiting http://wwx.inhs.illinois.edu/research/ctap/. This position is based in Champaign, Illinois.

Major Duties and Responsibilities: Conduct vegetation surveys in statewide project areas including Illinois forests, wetlands, and grasslands, describing typical and noteworthy plant communities present and their species composition, occurrence and abundance of threatened and endangered species, and the natural quality of the vegetation highlighting areas with outstanding ecological integrity (e.g., natural areas). Existing data sources including literature, herbaria, and databases are reviewed to evaluate known historical and contemporary distribution of occurrence elements. Some projects involve quantitative and long-term assessments. Work closely with both private landowners and public entities and field survey crews and may involve travel, long days, challenging habitat and variable weather conditions at times. Independently complete complex research tasks as required by projects or as directed by supervisor. Record data on characteristics of vegetation, typically involving qualitative assessments. Collect voucher specimens when necessary to verify species determinations and contribute to the botanical collections of the Illinois Natural History Survey. Prepare reports and support the publishing of manuscripts and INHS publications; present findings at professional meetings. Communicate and interact with recipients of services.

Keep abreast of developments in discipline. Provide outreach and service to the public, INHS, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, the University of Illinois, and other professional organizations. Supervise assigned student and hourly staff; this involves overseeing scheduling and task assignment, mentoring, monitoring, and evaluating performance, and training. Must be able to spend extensive time (up to 5 months) traveling during the field season and work in remote areas under adverse field conditions.
Qualifications: Required: Master’s degree in plant biology or related field with an emphasis on plant ecology or systematics. Alternate degree fields will be considered/accepted depending on the nature and depth of the experience as it relates to this position. Must have experience with required technology, such as computer systems, GPS units, data analysis software, etc. Experience using various plant sampling techniques. Extensive knowledge of the flora and botanical communities of Midwestern United States or Eastern United States. Basic knowledge of research techniques in specialized area of research. Must possess appropriate field and laboratory skills including scientific as well as physical skills necessary to carry out work in demanding conditions. Strong verbal and written communication skills. Must have demonstrated the ability for leadership and planning, supervising, and monitoring research activities and progress. Must have the ability to perform effectively in a diverse and fast-paced work environment consisting of multiple and changing priorities, with minimal supervision. Proficiency in commonly-employed software and databases. Must possess strong interpersonal skills and ability to work collaboratively with other scientists, researchers and staff, especially during long periods of time in the field. Must have a valid driver’s license.

Qualifications: Preferred: Experience with relational database management systems such as SQL Server or Microsoft Access. Experience with a statistical software coding language such as SAS or R. Experience publishing research in peer-reviewed journals.

This is a regular full-time contract-funded academic professional position subject to the continued availability of funding and programmatic need. The starting date is negotiable after the closing date. Salary is commensurate with experience. Applications must be received by July 11, 2017. Applicants may be interviewed before the closing date; however, no hiring decision will be made until after this date. To apply, please visit https://jobs.illinois.edu/academic-job-board to complete an online profile and to upload 1) a cover letter that clearly articulates how your qualifications and experience make you a viable candidate for this position and should address the qualifications listed above, 2) a résumé/CV, and 3) the names and contact information (including e-mail addresses) of three professional references. All requested information/documentation must be submitted for applications to be considered. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed.

For further information please contact Lori Walston-Vonderharr, Human Resources, Illinois Natural History Survey/Prairie Research Institute, at lwalston@illinois.edu or 217-244-2401. Technical questions may be directed to Timothy Rye at trye@illinois.edu. The University of Illinois conducts criminal background checks on all job candidates upon acceptance of a contingent offer.

The University of Illinois is an Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action employer. Minorities, women, veterans and individuals with disabilities are encouraged to apply. For more information, visit http://go.illinois.edu/EEO. To learn more about the University’s commitment to diversity, please visit http://www.inclusiveillinois.illinois.edu