Field Research Positions: Biodiversity and Change in Nebraska’s Forests for late Spring, Summer, and Fall 2019

We are hiring 4-6 field technicians and one field crew leader to assist in data collection for the establishment of permanent forest monitoring plots in Nebraska, a 21-ha plot in the Niobrara River valley and a 32-ha plot in Indian Cave State Park, associated with the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and part of the Smithsonian ForestGEO global network of permanent forest monitoring plots (https://forestgeo.si.edu/).

Nebraska's forests house a diversity of herbs, grasses, and trees, but they are rapidly changing due to environmental stresses, such as altered fire and climate regimes, invasive species, and drought. The goal of this project is to census plant diversity along environmental gradients and monitor forest demographic and community changes in order to understand responses to these stressors and to develop effective conservation and management strategies (for more information on the project, see: http://russolab.unl.edu/research_decomposition.html).

Technicians will use surveying equipment to map trees, tag them individually, and take measurements on them. Herbaceous communities of the forest understory and adjacent prairie areas will also be censused, and soil samples will be collected. Technicians will work in teams and should be self-motivated, enjoy working outside for long hours and in variable weather conditions, be physically fit and able to hike on hillsides, and be able to pay attention to detail to ensure accurate data collection. Training and on-site group housing will be provided. Salaries range $12-15/h, depending on experience.

We are seeking 2-3 technicians who can start on April 1, with the rest starting on May 6, 2019. Work will continue until August 20, but we are also seeking 2-3 technicians who can work into late fall 2019. Technicians will work a minimum of 40 hours/week, and weekend work may be required.

Qualifications:

- Previous field work experience and academic training in or enthusiasm for biology and/or ecology
- Ability to perform field work in a variety of conditions, including on steep slopes, in heat, humidity, or rain, and with biting arthropods
- Ability to maintain a strong work ethic, flexibility, and a cooperative team attitude in working and group living settings
- Ability to take initiative, solve problems, pay attention to detail, follow a detailed data collection protocol, and collect the highest quality data
- Possession of a valid driver’s license, good driving record, and willingness to drive field vehicles in unpaved areas
- Experience with using a compass and GPS for field navigation preferred, but not required
- Experience with tree and herbaceous plant sampling and Midwestern plant species identification preferred, but not required
Experience with geographic information systems preferred, but not required

To Apply: Please assemble the following into a single PDF file and email it to Sabrina Russo at srusso2@unl.edu with the subject line “Forest Field Technician” – 1) a one-page cover letter describing your reasons for applying, specific dates of availability (including any planned mid-summer absences, or a statement that you plan none), 2) a resume, no longer than two pages, 3) unofficial transcripts, and 4) names, phone numbers and email addresses of three references. The application deadline is February 15, 2019, but applications will be reviewed beginning immediately. We try to make staffing decisions by early March. Exceptional candidates will be selected earlier.

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