Field technicians needed for work on wild horse and burro ecology - please share widely

The United States Geological Survey (USGS) and Colorado State University (CSU) are conducting scientific research to assist the BLM in management of free-roaming wild horses and burros on public lands. Research projects are led by Dr. Kate Schoenecker (USGS/CSU) and Dr. Sarah King (CSU). We are seeking field technicians to work on projects involving radio telemetry and behavioral observations of wild horses and burros in remote sites in the western United States. These positions provide a great opportunity to learn and polish wildlife monitoring techniques and assist with research on wild horses and burros. More information about our research projects can be found at https://www.fort.usgs.gov/wildhorsepopulations

Description:
Field work in 2019 is part of several five-year studies examining the demography and behavioral ecology of wild horses and burros in the American west. The successful applicants will use radio telemetry to locate wild horses or burros to determine demographic parameters, and/or conduct behavioral observations. Positions available will focus on behavior and demography of either wild horses or wild burros.

Due to the remote desert and mountain habitats of the Herd Management Areas where the animals are located, the field work is rigorous – it requires extensive hiking across rugged terrain, frequently off-trail on high slopes. Large amounts of time are also spent in work vehicles locating radio marked animals. Work may be conducted under variable weather conditions at elevations above 6,000 feet, with the potential for both extreme heat and temperatures below freezing (even within the same week). Independence and a tenacious work ethic are essential at all sites. Behavioral observations require a great deal of patience and ability to spend many hours watching animals simply graze or rest. The positions are located in remote field sites, necessitating excellent teamwork and flexibility, good communication skills, and a positive attitude. Basic housing is provided at the field sites. This consists of small shared trailers, some of which do not have constant electricity. There may be extended tent camping, which would require periods without access to electricity or running water. No internet service is available in the housing, and cell service is patchy in most locations.

We have openings for field technicians that can commit for the entire field season: mid-March through September 2019. We may also have availability for a position in Arizona starting in December. Please state your availability in your application, as well as your desire to work with wild horses versus wild burros if you have a preference. We are unlikely to accept applicants who would start after April.

Field technicians will be employed by Colorado State University. Fieldwork is conducted in 10 day field sessions (salary is $14/hr, equating to $1,120 per 10-day field session). Each field session is followed by a 4 day break which allows time to explore the spectacular scenery near field sites or simply rest up thoroughly. Due to the nature of field work there may be long work
days. These positions are not eligible for paid sick leave, paid vacation, or paid holidays. Field technicians are eligible for health insurance through CSU under the Affordable Care Act, with some options at no cost to the employee. We can only hire candidates with legal permission to work in the United States, unless currently registered as a student at a foreign university.

Duties and responsibilities (depending on position):
Locating radio-collared or radio-tagged individual animals using radio telemetry.
Collecting demographic data, recording data, and entering it into a database.
Collection of behavioral data using an ethogram, recording data, and entering it into a database.
Maintaining databases and proofing data that has been entered.
Participation in related field research projects as needed (this may entail travelling to a different HMA).

Skills needed:
• Familiarity with use of GPS and/or map and compass.
• Maintaining and safeguarding personally assigned and project equipment.
• Assistance in routine maintenance of lodging.
• Ability to drive 4WD vehicles across varied and rugged terrain.
• Ability to complete necessary USGS safety courses and certifications once hired.
• Excellent communication skills required to maintain contact with remote supervisor during protracted fieldwork.

Minimum qualifications:
• One year of laboratory or field research, or any equivalent combination of experience, training and/or education.
• A state driver’s license valid during period of employment (any US state).
• Ability to hike in backcountry covering 4-5 miles each day while carrying a 35lb pack.

Preferred qualifications (in addition to above):
• Bachelors degree in wildlife science, biology or related discipline.
• Experience with radio telemetry in field conditions.
• Experience with behavioral observations of mammals under natural conditions.
• Understanding of animal behavior and ecology.
• Experience driving 4WD vehicles in the back country.
• Ability to manage and maintain a computer database.

To apply send both a letter of interest and CV with contact information for two references to Sarah King at sarah.king@colostate.edu. Clearly state how your experience qualifies you for this position, and your availability.

Deadline for receipt of applications is November 9, 2019.