



POSITION DESCRIPTION

Winter 2023

NPS UNIT: Joshua Tree National Park

Position #: 1268

Position Title: Biology Assistant

Number of positions available: 1

Primary natural resource discipline: Biological Sciences

Position Keywords: Botany, Vegetation, Climate Change, Desert, Wildflowers

Location: TWENTYNINE PALMS, California

Can this position be fully remote: No

POSITION DESCRIPTION AND WORK PRODUCTS

Project Description: The biology assistant will play a key role in Joshua Tree National Park's vegetation monitoring program, working in collaboration with NPS staff and biologists from University of California Riverside's Center for Conservation Biology. The biology assistant will collect data on 24 shrub and tree monitoring plots in the fall, 25 wildflower plots in the spring, and establish up to 40 additional vegetation plots throughout the year. The biology assistant will also assist with rare plant monitoring and fuels treatment monitoring efforts on a regular basis. Perennial plant plots involve detailed surveying and identification of selected target species, collecting abundance data on a wide variety of shrubs and trees, and line-point intercept data collection. Annual plant monitoring requires detailed identification of all wildflowers found in the target area as well as nested frequency data collection. The biology assistant will be occasionally responsible for leading small teams of 2-6 volunteers or staff, usually alongside a biologist from JOTR or UCR. Plots are located randomly across JTNP's rugged landscape, resulting in plots that are accessed only via long hikes and occasional rock scrambling or working on talus slopes. This is remote work in spectacular landscapes where park visitors are rarely seen. The biologist will also assist with data processing, quality control, and specimen processing for the vegetation monitoring program to ensure high quality data is available to the park and to interested researchers. The biology assistant will also assist with seed collection for vegetation restoration projects, restoration effectiveness monitoring, invasive plant mapping, and vegetation planting efforts.

Work Products: Completed monitoring plots--data collection will be completed for 24 perennial plant plots and 25 annual plant plots. Data completed on paper datasheets and transferred to electronic systems. Transect photos sorted and stored on park server.

Completed MINERVA Plot Electronic Datasets - With assistance from the program lead, the biology assistant will produce quality-controlled datasets for all vegetation data collected in the project from 2021-2023. This will include a line-point intercept dataset, annual plant frequency data and perennial plant demographic data. Office-based data entry and quality control will be completed during the hot summer 2023 season when field work can be dangerous due to heat and most plants are dormant. These will then be provided to park partners at UCR Center for Conservation Biology for analysis.

NATURAL & PHYSICAL WORK ENVIRONMENT

This is a primarily field based position in a harsh desert environment. Applicant will need the ability to hike up to 12 miles per day across difficult terrain including steep slopes and boulder fields, carrying a pack containing field equipment up to 25 pounds. Field work is primarily completed October to May, with occasional short summer field days in temperatures exceeding 100 F. Park headquarters is in the town of Twentynine Palms, CA, with all services available.

QUALIFICATIONS

Successful applicants should have coursework or equivalent experience in ecology or environmental science. Preference given to applicants with botanical experience or familiarity with desert plants, either from coursework or field experience. Applicants must be comfortable working on rough terrain and in a strenuous outdoor environment.



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The applicant must be a U.S. citizen or U.S. permanent legal resident (“green-card-holder”). Prior to starting this position, a government security background clearance will be required.

VEHICLE AND DRIVER LICENSE REQUIREMENTS

Applicant must have a valid driver's license to drive a government vehicle.

A personal vehicle is recommended for this position.

If the SIP is required to drive a park vehicle for their position, Stewards will perform a driving records search, and the SIP's ability to drive a park vehicle during work hours will be contingent upon the results. SIPs will have to have had their license for 3 years or be over the age of 21 to be insured as drivers under Stewards insurance policy. Examples of things that will preclude a SIP from driving a park vehicle include: SIP under the age of 21 years old that has been licensed less than three years, DUIs, multiple moving vehicle violations, suspended or revoked license, or three or more accidents (regardless of fault) in the last 3 years. If the driver's search is favorable, Stewards will provide driver's liability insurance while the intern is driving a NPS vehicle for their SIP position. If the SIP is denied coverage by Stewards, they will not be permitted to drive during work hours.

HOUSING

Park housing is available and will be provided at no cost to the participant. Housing will be provided at the Dr. James Buckner Luckie Study Center near Indian Cove in Twentynine Palms. This is an older two bedroom house with an adjoining bunkhouse that will be routinely occupied by visiting researchers from other NPS units or collaborating universities. The property is fully furnished and has utilities and wifi and is a 15 minute drive from park headquarters. As part of internship duties, the SIP intern will be occasionally tasked with checking researchers in and out of the bunkhouse when other NPS staff are unavailable, and conducting basic care around the property (ie. rodent trapping, etc).

INTERNSHIP DATES

Start Date: 10/03/2022

Number of Weeks: 52

Flexible Start Date: Yes

LIVING ALLOWANCE

52 Weeks (\$480.00/week =\$24960.00)

RELOCATION ALLOWANCE

350.00

AMERICORPS PROGRAM



AmeriCorps

AmeriCorps is a program that engages individuals in intensive community service work with the goal of “helping others and meeting critical needs in the community”. The SIP Program is supported through AmeriCorps by providing a Segal Education Award in addition to the SIP's living stipend and relocation allowance.

Upon successful completion of the SIP position, the SIPs (AmeriCorps members) are eligible for a \$1,638 - \$6,195 pre-tax education award that can be used for paying back student loans or for continuing their education. The amount of the education award is based on the length of the position.

AmeriCorps limits the number of terms an individual can serve to 4 terms. If an applicant has previously completed 4 SIP or other AmeriCorps positions, they will not be eligible to apply for an additional SIP position.

Partners



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This position is offered through the National Park Service's Scientists in Parks (SIP) Program in partnership with various organizations.

