Terrestrial Monitoring Technicians, O'Connor Center for the Rocky Mountain West

The University of Montana (UM) O'Connor Center for the Rocky Mountain West (OCRMW) is partnering with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to implement their Terrestrial Assessment, Inventory, and Monitoring (AIM) strategy. This protocol is targeted at collecting standardized inventory and long-term vegetation and soils data at multiple scales across BLM Districts in the Western U.S.

We are currently recruiting **Technicians** with experience in botany, ecology, and soil science for data collection in **Idaho, Montana, South Dakota, and Wyoming** from **April/May through August/September** (exact dates vary by project).

The Technician will work with a Crew Lead to collect vegetation and soils data in desert, sagebrush-steppe, and grassland ecosystems. Crews of 2-3 people work eight-day hitches: 10-hours/day, from Tuesday-Tuesday, with a six-day break between hitches. All positions are field-based and require working and camping in isolated regions. We ask seasonal staff to commit to the entire field season, practice safety awareness, safe driving policies, and contribute to building a healthy, productive and enjoyable work environment.

Applicants should understand that this is physically demanding work. Crews often work and camp in inclement weather conditions, frequently navigating rough, unpaved roads in 4x4 vehicles, and carrying heavy loads (40 lbs.) by foot over rugged desert and mountainous terrain. Sampling locations are occasionally near a small town, but these towns often have few amenities. Primitive camping is required. Cell phone service is limited.

UM supplies all necessary monitoring equipment, including vehicles, to carry out the work. We provide some group camping gear (stoves, coolers). Individuals are responsible for their personal camping gear (tents, sleeping bags) but UM has camping gear available to borrow.

The University of Montana is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity employer and has a strong institutional commitment to the principle of diversity in all areas. Applicants with diverse backgrounds, experiences, ability and perspectives are encouraged to apply.

Position Details

- Position is full time, temporary (< 4 months).
- Compensation is $17-19 an hour, based on qualifications and experience.

- All positions include (tax-free):
    - $244 meal per diem per 8-day hitch
    - $300 one-time equipment stipend
    - $300 additional stipend upon completion of season
- Benefits include Worker's Compensation coverage, three paid holidays and accrual of sick leave.

Qualifications

Education and Experience

- Minimum three years of undergraduate coursework. Bachelor's degree in biology, botany, soil science, range ecology, natural resources management, or related subject preferred.
- A minimum of one season of field data collection.
- Coursework and experience in plant taxonomy or systematics OR in soil morphology and soil classification preferred.

Preferred Technical Skills

- Experience using dichotomous botanical keys and field guides, familiarity with the major plant families, and knowledge of western flora.
- -OR- Ability to describe soil horizons, textures and stability and collect soil samples for analysis.
- Careful attention to detail.
- Experience following established field protocols to conduct sampling and field data collection.
- Experience with data entry and management using electronic devices.
- Experience navigating off-trail with compass and GPS.
- Experience with Microsoft Office (Word, Excel) and preferably with Field Maps and Survey123.
- Experience driving 4WD trucks, especially on rough and unmaintained roads. Valid driver's license and clean driving record (DUI or other serious convictions need not apply).
- Certification in CPR and Wilderness First Aid.

Professional Skills

- Ability to maintain good working relationships with crew members and managers.
- Ability to accept guidance and constructive criticism from peers and supervisors; willingness to learn and incorporate suggested changes.
- Demonstrated ability to resolve interpersonal conflict during stressful situations.
- Ability to interact with stakeholders and partners in a professional manner.
- Demonstrated ability to work productively as part of a team to accomplish mutual goals and to work independently as required.
- Commitment to an entire field season.

Physical Requirements

- Ability to carry 40 pounds in a backpack over rugged mountainous terrain, off-trail, for up to eight (8) miles a day, gaining up to 2000 ft. of elevation per day.
- Ability to dig soil pits in rocky and dense clay soils (70 cm deep).
- Willingness and ability to maintain a positive attitude in field conditions that include exposure to inclement weather, hot or cold weather (20°F–110°F), rugged terrain, mosquitos, venomous

snakes, bears and other wildlife, lightning, wildfire, etc., all while maintaining a strong commitment to team safety required.
- Willingness to work irregular hours in harsh environments and challenging weather conditions.

Training

These positions are ideal for people who are committed to ongoing learning and development. You will receive paid training on AIM protocols and associated methodology. UM ecologists will also provide additional training on protocols and plant identification for the area in which you will be working, and ongoing field-based support and training from specialists during the field season. You will have the opportunity to interact with seasoned staff scientists from both the BLM and UM throughout training and field work.

Location

Base locations for crews are as follows:

- **Idaho** – Missoula, MT or Boise, ID
- **Montana** – Helena, MT
- **South Dakota** – Spearfish, SD
- **Wyoming** – Bozeman, MT

How To Apply

Applications review will begin December 7 and will continue until the position is filled.

Please submit the following documents to Lauren Sinclair (lauren.sinclair@mso.umt.edu). The subject line of the email should read "**2023 Terrestrial AIM Application**".

Please combine all application materials into 2-3 documents.

1. Letter of Interest – Please ensure it addresses the following:
    a. Your ability to meet the stated required skills for the position.
    b. Your preferred location.
    c. Your earliest start date.
2. Detailed resume listing education and describing work experience
3. Names and contact information for three (3) professional references
4. Transcripts (Unofficial Transcripts are acceptable)

Application review will be ongoing and will continue until all positions are filled. All applicants will be notified of receipt of their application and the results of the preliminary review (rejected due to failure to meet minimum qualifications or transmitted to hiring team). If you qualify for an interview, you will have the opportunity to speak with staff who worked as AIM crew members in previous years.

About UM and the Ecological Mapping, Monitoring and Analysis group

The University of Montana is flagship, research institution with approximately 10,000 undergraduate and graduate students. The Ecological Mapping, Monitoring and Analysis group (EMMA) is part of

the O'Connor Center for the Rocky Mountain West, a regional studies and public education program. EMMA staff are engaged in mapping wetlands across the western US, including Alaska; and in carrying out inventory and monitoring projects for federal state and tribal agencies.

To learn more about the University of Montana, please visit the link below.

- University of Montana

Criminal Background Investigation is required prior to Offer of Employment.
In accordance with University policy, finalists for this position will be subject to criminal background investigations.
ADA/EOE/AA/Veteran's Preference.
Reasonable accommodations are provided in the hiring process for persons with disabilities. For example, this material is available in alternative format upon request. As an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer, we encourage applications from minorities, veterans, and women. Qualified candidates may request veterans' or disabilities preference in accordance with state law.
References *References not listed on the application materials may be contacted; notice may be provided to the applicant.
Testing Individual hiring departments at UM may elect to administer pre-employment tests, which are relevant to essential job functions.

Employment Eligibility. All New Employees must be eligible and show employment eligibility verification by the first date of employment at UM, as legally required (e.g., Form I-9).