National Park Service Research Assistant - Job Description

North Central Climate Adaptation Science Center (NC CASC)

Background: The NC CASC is part of a network of nine regional and one national center and has a mission of generating the science to help resource managers in the North Central United States adapt to a changing climate. The NC CASC works directly with DOI bureaus, state fish and game agencies, and Tribes in the seven states of Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota. The NC CASC is interested in hiring a recent or soon to be Master’s graduate as a student contractor to assist with National Park Service Climate Change Response Program (NPS CCRP) scientific and support activities.

Position Description: The NC CASC seeks the services of a full-time student contractor that will soon finish a Master’s degree or will be within one year of completing a Master’s degree upon the start date. An anticipated start date is July 1, 2020 (after hiring paperwork is completed). The NC CASC anticipates that the contract will initially be awarded for one year, with a second option year available based on contractor performance and conduct. Full-time is defined as up to 40 hours per week and up to 1,928 hours per year.

The NC CASC proposes to hire, on a non-permanent basis, an individual with expertise and technical skills related to ecological responses to climate, who will serve as a resource for the NPS CCRP in the development of climate-resource scenarios. This individual will be expected to help schedule, plan, and facilitate relevant calls and meetings, and complete at least two of the following tasks, depending on their skills and expertise:

Synthesize relevant scientific literature on the climate sensitivities of particular priority resources for a given NPS unit. If appropriate and possible (given park-identified priority resources and data availability), develop and apply species distribution models or related ecological response models that:

Identify the most influential climate predictors for a given species (to provide a quantitative basis for identifying the climate metrics that are then used to structure the identification and selection of climate futures). Project changes in suitable habitat under different climate futures (to serve as an input into the participatory development of climate-resource scenarios).

Evaluate the efficacy and potential trade-offs of utilizing “regional” scenarios in lieu of individualized park-level scenarios.

Scenario planning would be undertaken by teams involving the appropriate NPS staff and climate science experts from NC CASC, with oversight from Brian Miller and operational support from the new hire. NC CASC proposes to mentor her/him in engaging in the scenario planning activities used by CCRP. CCRP will work closely with the new hire, facilitating conversations with other NPS staff and providing data necessary to complete the work in a timely manner. Work performed by the new hire (syntheses or quantitative analyses) will be completed within a timeframe suitable to inform the scenario planning processes for individual NPS units.
**Required skills include:**

Ability to interact with scientists and managers to identify and gather needed information
Excellent writing skills
Ability to work collegially within a research environment
Ability to meet deadlines
Self-starter with a willingness to take initiative with minimal guidance

**Desired skills include:**

Experience developing and applying species distribution models
Proficiency in R or other programming language(s)
Familiarity with scenario planning

**Recommended/Desired degree type:**

Master's degree in ecology or related discipline

**Working Conditions and Location:** The student contractor will maintain desk space at both the NC CASC (2150 Centre Ave # C, Fort Collins, CO 80526) and the NPS CCRP (1201 Oakridge Drive, Suite 200 Fort Collins, CO 80525). Hours are flexible and telework for some of the hours is an option. Starting this position remotely may be required, depending on the status of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the student should have access to a home computer and internet connectivity that can be used until normal operations resume.

**Compensation:** This engagement would be structured as a contract between USGS and the student as an individual. Compensation is commensurate with the level of education and based on the standard USGS pricing table for student services. For calendar year 2020, the rate for CO-Denver locality for an MA/MS research position is $36.20 per hour.

The student is responsible for all costs of transportation to and from the principal duty station location. The Government does not provide housing, meals or other living expenses, nor does this contract provide annual leave, medical, or other benefits. The student is responsible for payment of federal and state income taxes. The student does accrue one hour of sick leave for every 30 hours worked.

**Request for Resumes**: Respondents should submit a resume and cover letter describing their education and work experience to Brian Miller, NC CASC Research Ecologist at bwmill@usgs.gov. Review of applications is anticipated to begin on May 4, 2020. Applications received after review begins may not receive full consideration. Diverse applicants are encouraged.