Rangeland Restoration Research

Job Titles: Research Assistants and Research Crew Leader

Locations: North Kaibab Plateau, AZ; Dunphy, NV; Reno, NV

Position Description: We are seeking highly motivated interns and one crew leader to join our research team for Summer 2016 (mid-May through early August). The possibility exists for one applicant to start as early as mid-March or early April.

Millions of hectares in the western United States have been negatively impacted by cheatgrass invasion, which transforms high-diversity ecosystems providing many ecosystem services into low-diversity ecosystems providing few services. Once invasion begins, cheatgrass rapidly causes increased wildfire frequency and extent. Burned sites have reduced soil quality, low plant biodiversity, little forage for livestock and wildlife, and simplified habitat structure. Moreover, burned sites are highly susceptible to further cheatgrass invasion. This project is investigating innovative techniques for reducing fire size and return interval in cheatgrass-invaded landscapes. Our goals are to determine how best to combine seed enhancement technologies, greenstripping, and targeted grazing within the framework of integrated cheatgrass control in the Western US, as well as determine how moderate grazing influences the effectiveness of greenstrips. We hope that a combination of fuel breaks and targeted grazing may be able to prevent the spread of cheatgrass into uninvaded areas and improve the success of restoration projects on already invaded sites. Project collaborators include the University of Nevada, Reno, the USDA-ARS Rangeland Resources Research Unit (RRRU), the Grand Canyon Trust, the Kaibab National Forest, Arizona Game and Fish Department, and others. The position involves considerable travel to some beautiful parts of the western US; research sites are located in remote areas of northern Nevada and northern Arizona.

Selected applicants will collect soil and vegetation data in the field and be responsible for quality assurance/quality control of data collected. They will keep exact, detailed records of experimental data, enter data into computer spreadsheets, and record observations of unusual happenings, phenomena or trends that might influence interpretation of plot or field data.

Applicants will be supervised by Elizabeth Leger (University of Nevada, Reno) with field and logistical support from Lauren Porensky (USDA-ARS) and Ed Grumbine (Grand Canyon Trust). Lodging at the field sites will be provided.

The job includes field trips to remote areas. The work environment is about 50% in the field and 50% in the lab or office. The work involves regular and recurring moderate risks and discomforts associated with working outdoors. Throughout the year, the person may encounter snakes, livestock, insects, dust and extremes of weather.

Qualifications:
--Applicants with a background in environmental science, natural resources, rangeland ecology, botany, or a related discipline are preferred.
--Ability to do efficient and high-quality work without direct supervision. Ability to proactively solve problems, manage tasks adaptively in order to get the job done on time, and provide suggestions for
conducting future research projects. Self-motivated, hard-working, and detail oriented applicants are preferred.

--Technical knowledge of plant taxonomy, structure and function of plant communities. Experience with plant field sampling techniques such as visual cover estimation, line intercept, and line point intercept.

--Plant identification skills and knowledge of Nevada and Arizona plants are highly preferred.

--Communication skills necessary to follow directions precisely and produce positive interactions with scientists, research personnel, and the general public.

--Skill in the use of personal computers to utilized software packages such as: word processing, data entry and manipulation in spreadsheets (e.g., MS Excel and Word).

--Practical knowledge of general vehicle maintenance and repair. Knowledge of safe operating procedures when using equipment or vehicles. A valid driver’s license is required.

--The work requires standing, walking, bending and lifting of objects weighing as much as 50 pounds. Certain phases of the work require extended (such as most of a work day) periods of standing, sitting, squatting/kneeling or walking while accomplishing detailed experimental procedures. Some procedures require stamina and endurance.

Salary and Housing: $12 to $16/hr depending on experience and/or education. Workweek is typically 40 to 50 hrs. Job duration is 12-13 weeks. Housing and utilities are provided at field sites. USDA-ARS is an AA/EOE.

To Apply: Review of applications will begin on February 22. Send letter of interest, resume, three letters of reference, and unofficial transcript by email to Elizabeth Leger and Lauren Porensky with the subject line “Rangeland Restoration Research Internship Application”:

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and copy to:

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