

Job Title: Seasonal Bolson Tortoise Field Technician: Southern New Mexico

Agency: New Mexico State University, New Mexico Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit

Location: Southern New Mexico

Job Category: Temporary/Seasonal Position

Start Date: 04/17/2023

End Date: 9/15/2023 (subject to change)

Salary: \$15/hour plus housing

Description:

Looking to hire a field technician to aid in data collection for studies centered on understanding the ecology of translocated Bolson tortoises. The Bolson tortoise (*Gopherus flavomarginatus*) is the largest tortoise in North America and a federally listed endangered species. Though this tortoise's range once extended throughout the Chihuahuan desert, today the tortoise is extirpated from the wild in the United States and is only found in a small region in Mexico. The Bolson Tortoise Recovery Project, overseen by the Turner Endangered Species Fund (TESF) manages the only ex-situ breeding program for this species, located on the Armendaris and Ladder Ranches in southern New Mexico.

To evaluate the feasibility of reintroducing Bolson tortoises in New Mexico, TESF in collaboration with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, and New Mexico State University released multiple cohorts of juvenile Bolson tortoises to a section of the Armendaris Ranch in 2021–2022. This translocation project on the Armendaris will hopefully pave the way forward for planned translocation efforts in the northern extent of the Bolson tortoise's prehistoric range.

This project will involve data collection for movement, behavior, and habitat-selection studies. A technician will primarily use radio-telemetry equipment to monitor translocated tortoise activity and conduct vegetation surveys. The technician should expect to hike at least 2-5 miles per day while carrying survey equipment and should be prepared to hike up to 8 miles in a day when needed. During the summer, daily temperatures often exceed 100 °F. The technician should be prepared to work in hot temperatures.

For most of the season, the technician should expect to spend 4 to 5 days in the field and then have 2 to 3 days off. On workdays not spent in the field, the technician is expected to perform data entry, identify plant samples, and aid with project logistics. There is cellular service at the field and housing sites, and internet at the housing location. The technician will be compensated with a salary of \$15 per hour for 40 hours per week, paid biweekly, and housing in the form of a trailer. We will provide a 4WD work vehicle to access field sites (to be shared with the graduate researcher) and all necessary field gear. The technician will need to provide their own food. This position is ideal for those with prior field experience in desert environments.

Minimum Qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree in wildlife, conservation, biology, natural resource management, or related fields from an accredited university.
- At least two prior experiences performing biological/ecological fieldwork.
- Strong work ethic and ability to work well both individually and as part of a team, with clear communication skills.
- Demonstrated ability to record field data in a precise and meticulous manner.
- Ability to navigate to points in rugged landscapes using a handheld GPS unit.
- Ability to hike 5 to 8 miles per day and carry a 40 lb. backpack while performing field work in a hot desert environment.
- Ability to tolerate working in areas that have desert wildlife including rattlesnakes, tarantulas, and biting insects.
- Willingness to have a flexible work schedule, learn new skills and techniques, and live in close quarters with other project personnel.
- Valid driver's license with a clean driving record.
- Must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 per New Mexico State University policy.

Preferred Qualifications:

- Extensive prior experience performing biological/ecological fieldwork in hot desert environments.
- Active Wilderness First Aid certification or equivalent qualification.
- Prior experience performing radio-telemetry.
- Experience driving 4-wheel drive vehicles.
- Experience towing trailers.

To Apply:

To be considered, compile a single PDF document comprised of a one-page cover letter, resume (maximum of two pages) and contact information for at least three professional references (including a direct field supervisor). Applications can be submitted through the NMSU job portal [<https://jobs.nmsu.edu/postings/49693>]. Applications are due 03/13/2023.

Contact Person:

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