United States Department of the Interior

U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

Great Lakes Science Center
1451 Green Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48105-2807
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March 20, 2023

Position: Research Assistant (Student Services Contractor) – Microbial ecology (1 position available).
Location: Ann Arbor, MI
Salary: $26.54 – 32.47/hr depending on education and experience

Duration of position: This is a contract position that will begin by May 30, 2023. The intended duration is May 2023 – May 2024, with extension dependent on future funding.

Project: Impacts of plant-microbial interactions on restoration success

Position Description: The student contractor will serve as a Research Assistant in microbial ecology with a focus on plant microbial interactions and their impacts on restoration in the Great Lakes basin. The contractor will be based at the Great Lakes Science Center in Ann Arbor, MI and assist on several projects focused on improving restoration success through microbial intervention, including restoration of wild rice (*Zizania palustris*) and improving restorability following invasive species removal. They will play a support role for researchers in the Restoration and Conservation Sciences branch of the USGS-GLSC by assisting with a variety of duties. Major duties include, (1) collecting plant, water and soils samples from degraded, natural and restored sites across the Great Lakes Region, (2) performing various molecular lab techniques including DNA meta-barcoding, qPCR, and meta-transcriptomics to characterize the diversity, abundance and functions of microbial associates, (3) rearing plant material in greenhouse and growth chamber conditions and conducting controlled experiments to identify impacts of microbes on native plant growth. Additional duties include but are not limited to field assistance with other active wetlands research, reviewing the relevant scientific literature, bioinformatics, data analysis, and/or help preparing text for technical reports and publications on project-related topics.

Education/Experience Requirements: The successful candidate *must* be currently enrolled as a student or must have received a degree within one year prior to beginning the contract.

The ideal candidate would be a recent graduate with an M.S. in microbiology, molecular ecology, microbial ecology, environmental science or a related field, but current students will also be considered. Experience and comfort with common molecular techniques (DNA extraction, PCR, qPCR) is required. Experience working with microbes is preferred. Working knowledge of plant care and comfort with fieldwork is strongly desired. Strong verbal and written skills are important. The student contractor should have a keen attention to detail and a strong desire to learn. S/he also should be highly motivated and comfortable working both as a member of a close team and independently.

Other Details: This contract covers a 12-month period, with an anticipated start date of May 30, 2023. The student contractor will not receive holiday pay, annual leave, or health care benefits, nor will they receive overtime pay for hours worked in excess of 80 within a two-week period. Hours in excess of the established 80 per two weeks are not expected and will be paid at the regular hourly rate. Office/lab work will occur in a room equipped with a computer workstation, in a laboratory, or in the greenhouse. Field work will occur outdoors in the Great Lakes basin, often during challenging weather conditions. Paid travel may be required for multiple days at a time. Moving expenses will not be paid. Lodging will only be provided when in travel status.

The successful candidate will be hired as an independent contractor. This is not a government position, and time does not count toward time-in-service.

Application packages must be submitted by April 2, 2023. To ensure consideration of your application, please send a cover letter, resume or CV, and a list of three references to Wes Bickford (wbickford@usgs.gov).