



Field Botanist Lead (Biologist) (Natural Resources and Environmental Consulting)

Overview

The Field Botanist Lead (Biologist) plays a critical role in overseeing and conducting botanical surveys and vegetation mapping for various environmental projects in and around San Luis Obispo County, California. This position combines technical expertise in plant identification, vegetation sampling, and geospatial analysis with field lead responsibilities, including managing field teams of up to six botanists and providing clear communication with project managers and clients. The Field Botanist Lead (Biologist) ensures high-quality data collection, adherence to safety and compliance standards, and the preparation of accurate biological reports. By integrating field observations, research, and collaboration, this role contributes to impactful environmental assessments and project solutions. Strong organizational skills, technical proficiency, and the ability to lead and adapt in dynamic field conditions are essential for success in this position.

Essential Duties

Technical Expertise

- Conduct reconnaissance to protocol-level botanical surveys.
- Use dichotomous keys to identify plants to subspecies/variety using the Jepson Manual 2nd edition and other published flora across the state.
- Collect and process voucher specimens.
- Map vegetation habitats using geospatial software (points, lines, polygons, etc.).
- Perform various vegetation sampling methods including (but not limited to) line-point intersect, transects, and quadrat sampling.
- Conduct vegetation sampling using the CDFW-CNPS Protocol for the Combined Vegetation Rapid Assessment and Relevé Field Form.
- Document daily observations in a database for GIS and statistical analysis.
- Study biological resources and environmental conditions affecting plants and wildlife.
- Identify, classify, and study distribution, abundance, ecology and behavior, physiology, as applicable, of plant and animal species.
- Research environmental effects of proposed projects and identify methods of improving or maintaining environmental conditions.
- Work with designated project biologists and outside experts to produce publishable research papers based on field data collected.
- Assist with data management and analysis.
- Implement quality assurance/quality control plans to ensure the data collected and products prepared meet all standards and regulations.
- Keep accurate daily field notes.
- Adhere to safety and environmental compliance rules and report any violations.

Field Lead

- Lead field teams of up to six (6) botanists during full-coverage botanical surveys.
- Report field survey updates to the Project Manager to inform scheduling and field team strategies.



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- Communicate observations to associates, client representatives, contractors, county, and other trustee agencies as appropriate.
- Assist with report writing.
- Provide clear communication with onsite clients and become the point of contact for project questions and clarifications.
- Review project plans and assist project managers.
- Prepare summaries of biological constraints.
- Gather project data and prepare biological reports on various projects.

Additional Duties

- Conduct preconstruction surveys for special status plants and animals.
- Monitor construction areas for wildlife, especially avian species, mammals, reptiles, as well as common wildlife species.
- Conduct observations for wildlife that may be present in construction zones.
- Capture and relocate wildlife, including snakes, as needed (can be trained).
- Assist with permit package development.
- Perform other related duties as assigned.
- Help with scheduling staff and fieldwork.

Minimum Required Qualifications

Education: Bachelor's degree in Biology, Botany, Environmental Sciences, Natural Resources or Wildlife Management or related experience. Master's or PhD is a plus.

Experience: At least 5 years related progressive experience in field botany in California and endangered species management.

Knowledge: Advanced field experience and knowledge in recognizing local plants and flora throughout San Luis Obispo County.

Skills: Proficient analytical and writing skills required. Must be able to keep precise, accurate and legible filed notes. Has acquired field data organization skills.

Abilities: Able to write clear and concise reports, and able to keep accurate notes during monitoring and field work. Ability to function well in a high-paced and at times stressful environment. Accomplished leadership skills. Organized in managing multiple projects.

Licenses/Certifications: Licensed or certified to handle or survey for applicable endangered species a plus. Must also have a valid California Driver's license.

Working Environment

Physical Requirements: Occasionally able to lift, pull or push up to 40 lbs. Will sit, stand, crouch, bend, walk, and hike short and long distances for up to the entire duration of a shift. Able to wear personal protective equipment (including but not limited to; steel toed shoes, gloves, safety glasses, hearing protection, respirator, and backpacks).



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Working Conditions: Must be able to walk or hike 5 to 10 miles per day through various terrain with day pack, water, supplies in variable weather conditions (windy, rainy, cold to 10 °F, heat to 110 °F). Typically, 10-hour days are the norm, though shorter or longer days may occasionally be required.

Other: Work in an office environment at a computer station at least 8-10 hours per day as assigned.

Pay Range

\$35.00 – \$55.00 per hour, depending on experience and qualifications.

Submit Your Application

When applying, please answer the following question in your email and/or cover letter.

- How many years of experience do you have working as a field botanist in California?

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