



Job Description

Position Title: Wildlife Assistant

Reports To: Wildlife Biologist

Department: Natural Resources

FLSA Status: Part-time/Non-exempt (Hourly)

Salary: \$16.50 per hour

POSITION SUMMARY

The Wildlife Assistant provides part-time support to the Wildlife Biologist and the Natural Resources Department in implementing wildlife monitoring and habitat management projects within the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County. This position assists with field surveys, data collection, and habitat restoration activities. The Wildlife Assistant helps ensure that projects supporting native and rare species are conducted efficiently, safely, and in accordance with District policies and conservation best practices.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES include the following. Other duties may be assigned.

Wildlife Monitoring & Research Support

- Assists with field surveys of birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, fish, and insects.
- Helps monitor and maintain nest boxes, game cameras, and other wildlife monitoring equipment.
- Collects, records, and organizes field data under the direction of the Wildlife Biologist.

Habitat Management Support

- Aids in habitat restoration activities such as invasive species removal, seeding, and tree planting.
- Assists with prescribed burning under supervision (after required training).
- Helps with routine trail and site maintenance related to wildlife habitat projects.

Volunteer & Community Science Support

- Provides logistical support for community science projects and volunteer workdays.
- Assists in orienting volunteers and helping with basic training on monitoring equipment or field methods.

General Operations

- Operates and maintains field equipment including GPS units, hand tools, and small power tools.
- Maintains a safe and organized work environment by following all District safety procedures.
- Completes other duties as assigned in support of wildlife and habitat projects.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES REQUIRED FOR THE JOB. Must have knowledge of wildlife management programs, principles of biology and ecology conservation, general knowledge of methods used for surveying and sampling wildlife. General knowledge of the flora and fauna of northern Illinois.

EDUCATION and/or EXPERIENCE. Associate's degree in Biology, Environmental Science, Natural Resources, or related field preferred; current students working toward a degree may be considered. Some field experience in wildlife monitoring, ecology, or natural resource management preferred. Must be at least 18 years of age and possess and maintain a valid driver's license. Must obtain within six (6) months of hire: Illinois Pesticide Operator/Applicator License and S130/S190 prescribed burn training (if assisting with burns).

LANGUAGE SKILLS. Ability to read and understand data sheets, instructions, and safety manuals. Ability to record accurate field notes and assist in preparing basic summaries. Ability to communicate effectively with staff, volunteers, and the public.

MATHEMATICAL SKILLS. Ability to calculate simple proportions, percentages, and measurements. Ability to apply basic math skills to data collection, mapping, and habitat restoration tasks.

REASONING ABILITY. Ability to follow instructions and complete tasks under supervision. Ability to solve basic problems encountered in fieldwork. Ability to adapt to varying field conditions and unexpected changes.

MACHINES, TOOLS, AND EQUIPMENT. Operates GPS units, game cameras, and basic monitoring equipment. Uses general hand tools (pruners, loppers, saws) and small power tools as needed. May assist with the safe use of backpack sprayers, brush saws, and small vehicles (ATVs, utility vehicles) after training.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS. Regularly required to stand, walk, bend, stoop, kneel, or crouch during fieldwork. Must be able to lift and carry up to 40 pounds. Specific vision abilities include close and distance vision, color vision, peripheral vision, depth perception, and the ability to adjust focus.

WORK ENVIRONMENT. Frequent outdoor work in diverse weather conditions, including extreme heat, cold, and inclement weather. Exposure to dust, smoke, pesticides, insects, wildlife, allergens, zoonotic diseases, and other environmental hazards. Fieldwork often occurs in remote locations and may require evening, weekend, or early morning hours. Noise levels range from moderate to loud depending on field activities such as prescribed burns or equipment use.

FPWC will provide reasonable accommodations, in accordance with applicable law, to enable qualified individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions of the position.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER. The Forest Preserves of Winnebago County is an Equal Opportunity Employer and is committed to diversity and inclusion in the workplace. We prohibit discrimination and harassment of any kind and do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state, or local law. All employment decisions are made on the basis of qualifications, merit, and business need.