



Research Assistant - Recreation Impacts on Public Lands Conservation

Organization: The Wilderness Society

Position Type: Research Assistant

Duration: Spring Semester

Time Commitment: 15-20 hours per week

Compensation: contract with TWS at an hourly rate, see below for more information

About the Position

The Wilderness Society seeks a motivated graduate student to conduct a comprehensive review of the scientific literature examining the current state of science regarding recreation impacts on conservation in and of public lands. This position offers an excellent opportunity to contribute to meaningful conservation policy while developing research and synthesis skills.

Project Overview

The research assistant will synthesize existing research on how recreational activities affect conservation outcomes on public lands. The final deliverable will be a comprehensive report summarizing the research submitted to the TWS Director of Research (Dr. Mariah Meek) and shared with TWS state and regional directors to inform organizational strategy and advocacy efforts.

Primary Responsibilities

- Conduct a thorough literature review of peer-reviewed research, agency reports, and other relevant sources on recreation impacts on public lands conservation
- Synthesize findings to document the current state of knowledge in this field
- Identify critical knowledge gaps and areas where research is lacking or contradictory

- Highlight potential "low-hanging fruit" research questions that could be addressed with modest scientific effort
- Prepare a professional written report suitable for organizational leadership and regional staff
- Participate in regular check-ins with the Director of Research to discuss progress and findings

Qualifications

Required:

- Currently enrolled in a graduate program (Master's or Ph.D.) in ecology, conservation biology, natural resource management, environmental science, recreation management, or related field at Montana State University
- Strong research and literature synthesis skills
- Excellent written communication abilities
- Ability to work independently and manage time effectively

Preferred:

- Familiarity with conservation issues related to public lands
- Background in recreation ecology or wildlife management
- Experience with systematic literature reviews or meta-analysis

Compensation and professional development

This position provides hourly pay at a level intended to approximate the total financial support normally associated with university enrollment and living support for one semester. If desired and if time allows, the student may work to also write up the literature review findings as a scientific paper and submit it, along with TWS staff, for publication.

To Apply



Please submit the following materials (as a single PDF) to Mariah Meek, Director of Research at TWS and Affiliate Associate Professor in LRES (email address mmeek@tw.s.org). Include "Graduate research position" in the subject line)

- Cover letter describing your relevant experience and interest in the position
- Current CV or resume, including name and contact info for two references

Application review will begin December 1.