



Position Description Sierra Nevada AmeriCorps Partnership

Inyo County Water Department – Independence, CA	
Position Title:	Type:
Field Assistant – Vegetation Monitoring	<input type="checkbox"/> Full Term <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Half Term

Organizational Background:

The Inyo County Water Department is located in the eastern Sierra Nevada, and monitors the vegetation, soil water, and hydrology within the Owens Valley, CA. It operates in keeping with a Long Term Water Agreement (LTWA) with the City of Los Angeles to manage ground and surface water exportation to supply the city of Los Angeles, while maintaining local environmental conditions in the Owens Valley and the Owens River watershed.

One of the primary LTWA goals is to manage water resources while maintaining vegetation community types in the Owens Valley in the same condition as existed during a ‘baseline’ period (1984-1987). The Inyo County Water Department (ICWD) thus monitors a variety of vegetation types, including within ground water dependent (phreatophytic) and riparian vegetation communities, as well as monitoring hydrologic conditions in subsurface test wells, surface water flows, and soil moisture at sites across the Owens Valley from the Pleasant Valley Dam in the north to Owens Lake in the south. ICWD has participated in cooperative studies to better understand water needs of groundwater dependent vegetation communities and has a substantial long term vegetation community dataset. We also assess mitigation project conditions across the valley including a large scale river re-watering and restoration project on the Lower Owens River through which we work collaboratively and adaptively with several parties to realize project goals. To learn more, visit our website at <https://www.inyowater.org/>.

Number of Member Positions at this Site: 2 Half Term

Site Supervisor’s Name(s) and Title(s):

- Meredith Jabis, Senior Scientist, Inyo County Water Department

Position Description:

The Water Department’s SNAP member will be primarily responsible for field vegetation sampling across the Owens Valley, CA, which spans from just north of Bishop to just south of Lone Pine. Owing to the various types of environmental monitoring data which ICWD collects, the SNAP member will be

exposed to various vegetation, soil, or hydrologic sampling techniques. Primary activities will involve vegetation sampling as part of novel riparian studies or within groundwater dependent vegetation communities.

Riparian studies will involve working in a crew of 2 or 3 with a team leader, locating new transect startpoints, setting up transects, marking start and end locations, recording vegetation along the centerline, recording canopy cover, and identifying and recording riparian tree positions within a 10-m wide belt transect. At these riparian transects, members may also collect soil samples, record fluvial geomorphic surfaces, or assist in collecting tree core samples. Ongoing long-term vegetation monitoring includes revisiting permanent vegetation transects within groundwater dependent vegetation using a combination of GPS and printed maps and identifying and recording plant species present.

SNAP members will also be involved in assessments of riparian tree recruitment sites on the lower Owens River to help identify locations for future restoration work, such as recording riparian sapling size and height measurements, and possible vegetation removals to assess the role of competition in successful tree recruitment. Finally, SNAP members may assist in condition assessment at mitigation sites identified in the Long Term Water Agreement to help determine if goals are being met.

Site-Specific Training Provided:

- Line point vegetation sampling technique
- Vegetation identification skills
- Riparian vegetation sampling techniques including running belt transects, identification of fluvial geomorphic surface types, and riparian tree species
- Assist with tree core sampling
- Use of a spherical densiometer and a GRS tube densitometer for measuring tree canopy
- Training for work in adverse conditions
- ArcGIS data collection and navigation

Things to Note:

Our office is located in Independence, CA, and fieldwork is typically based out of Bishop, CA. This location is adjacent to many hiking trails and outdoor activities in the eastern Sierra Nevada. The work schedule involves 10 hour shifts Monday-Thursday and may start as early as 5:30-6:00 am to manage heat exposure.

Required qualifications:

- Must be a US Citizen, U.S. National or Lawful Permanent Resident Alien of the U.S.
- Bachelor's degree preferred
- Minimum of 18 years or older
- Applicants must have the ability to lift and hike with 30lbs over rough terrain, be outside up to 9 hours a day in summer conditions (maximum temperatures to 105 °F)
- Adhere to any COVID-19 related safety measures required by the State or County

Desired qualifications:

- Principles of botany, ecology, biology, hydrology, and/or soil science
- Principles of data collection; basic mathematics; the environment
- Geography of the Owens Valley
- Basic first aid
- Possess a valid operator’s license issued by the State Department of Motor Vehicles

WORK HOURS		
8-hour days	10-hour days	10+ hour days
0%	100%	0%
Housing Offered through Site: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	Vehicle provided for Placement Site work: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

TYPE OF WORK							
Field Work <i>(field surveys, planting, invasive pulls, maintenance, etc.)</i>	Office Work <i>(lab analysis, data entry, GIS, writing, etc.)</i>	Travel <i>(travel to field work and project Sites)</i>	Restoration and Assessment <i>(water quality monitoring, habitat restoration, fish surveys, etc.)</i>	Education <i>(teaching, citizen science, etc.)</i>	Volunteer Recruitment & Management	Member Training <i>(Site-specific training, conferences, and development opportunities)</i>	Other <i>(gear and equipment maintenance, outreach, etc.)</i>
55%	8%	10%	10%	0%	0%	15%	2%

All members qualify for:

- \$2,318.18 stipend per month
- Standard health, dental, and vision insurance
- Student loan forbearance during the service term
- CA subsidized Childcare stipends are available
- Professional Environmental experience and networking- \$250 Individual Training Budget
- AmeriCorps members who successfully complete a service term will earn an education award; respective amounts are listed below

▪	Estimated Start Date	Total Hours	Hours of Training	Education Award
Full Time	11/1	1700	340	\$10,000.00
3/4 Time	2/1	1200	240	\$4,826.50
Half Time	4/1	900	170	\$3,447.50
Reduced-Half	5/16	675	135	\$2,626.27