

Job Title: Student Contractor, Science Communicator

Who May Be Considered: U.S. citizens and legal residents

Apply By Date: April 1, 2015 **Expected Start/End Date:** June 1, 2015 / May 31, 2016

Type of Services Required

The U.S. Geological Survey's **Western Ecological Research Center (WERC)** provides scientific research and monitoring for habitats and species throughout California, Nevada, and the greater Pacific West—with projects spanning Central Valley wetlands, Southern California chaparral, Sierra national parks, North Coast forests, Southwest deserts, Nevada sagebrush, and the San Francisco Bay estuary. Our scientists produce important findings that help the U.S. Department of Interior and other federal government agencies make public policy and natural resource management decisions.

We are seeking a student contractor to serve as a **Science Communicator** for USGS WERC. This contractor will work with center managers and scientists to summarize and convey research news and information tailored to different audiences, including federal offices, outside partners, and the general public. Expected products and tasks include:

- Compiling and disseminating an electronic newsletter on center research
- Writing, editing, and compiling research summary handouts
- Creating and editing website content on research projects, publications, news, and events
- Writing, editing, and compiling memoranda and slideshows for agency business use
- Responding to and directing inquiries from journalists and the public
- Creating and organizing figures, slideshows, posters, handouts, and other materials for research conferences and outreach events
- Assisting the center director and managers with communications and administrative functions

As a Science Communicator student contractor, you will utilize your writing and creative skills, learn about exciting new wildlife and ecological research, gain experience in federal government affairs, and contribute to the USGS agency mission of providing science for our changing world.

Required Expertise/Skills

- Must have completed or nearing completion of a Bachelor's, or Master's, or PhD degree program. If graduated, must be within one (1) year from date of graduation.
- Must be a skilled writer and clear communicator in the English language, with strong instincts for customer service, public relations, and diplomacy and decorum.
- Must have proficiency in Microsoft Office Suite; Adobe Acrobat; Google Chrome, Calendar, Drive, and related apps; and Internet Explorer.
- The ideal candidate is **a communications, journalism, or public policy major** with strong understanding of ecological, environmental, or natural resources concepts and policy issues. Alternatively, **a science major** with strong communications skills and some experience in media relations, government affairs, or public outreach.
- The ideal candidate can write in the style of news articles, press releases, blogposts, website content, business letters/emails, and memos/briefings, and can tailor explanations of complex concepts to diverse audiences of varying levels of scientific understanding, with consideration of sensitivities and perspectives of each audience, and strong aesthetic/editorial instincts for managing online and print content.

Required Expertise/Skills (Continued)

- The ideal candidate also has proficiency in Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign; and basic knowledge of HTML, Microsoft SharePoint, Drupal, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube.
- Current USGS employees, and spouses/children of current employees, are ineligible to apply.

Description of Working Conditions

- Standard office environment. Travel and outdoor work is minimal or none, but may be assigned.
- Standard office hours, 40 hours per week.

Compensation (Hourly)

- BA/BS degree completed: \$17.62
- BA/BS degree completed, with superior academic achievement: \$21.83
- BA/BS degree with minimum 1 year of MA/MS/PhD enrollment: \$21.83
- MA/MS degree completed: \$26.70
- Contract term is one (1) year, with potential for one (1) additional year, except for PhD graduates
- Student contractors are not eligible for Federal employment or relocation benefits. Rates for student contractors include cost of self-employment taxes for Social Security and Medicare, which is the responsibility of the student to report and pay. Students are paid only for hours worked, with no holiday or leave benefits.
- Student is responsible for all costs of transportation to and from the Principal Duty Station location. The Government does not provide housing, meals, or other living expenses while working at the Principal Duty Station. Travel away from the Duty Station is not expected.

Principal Duty Station

- The workplace is located on the campus of California State University, Sacramento, California

How to Apply

Please send **statement of interest (less than 500 words)**, **resume**, and **copies of college/graduate school transcripts** (unofficial transcripts are acceptable) to Ben Young Landis at blandis@usgs.gov, with subject line **WERC Student Contractor: Science Communicator**. Please send in PDF format only. If possible, combine documents into single PDF file. Documents not in PDF format will not be reviewed.

How You Will Be Evaluated

- Applicants will be evaluated primarily on the strength of their writing and science explanation skills, and prior experience in customer service, public relations, or government affairs settings.
- Additional consideration will be given to graphic design and web content management skills, familiarity with ecological research, and career interest in science communications.
- Applicants may be asked to attend an in-person interview.
- The successful applicant will be required to complete a background check for security access and IT access purposes by the U.S. Government.

For Additional Information

Please email or call Ben Young Landis at blandis@usgs.gov or 916-278-9495.

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) is committed to the principles of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO). All employees, former employees, applicants for employment, and members of the public who seek to participate in USGS programs, activities, and services will not be discriminated against because of race, national origin, sex (including pregnancy and gender identity), religion, color, age, disability, sexual orientation, genetic information, or status as a parent.