

STATE OF MONTANA

JOB DESCRIPTION

Montana state government is an equal opportunity employer. The State shall, upon request, provide reasonable accommodations to otherwise qualified individuals with disabilities.

Job Title: Biologist 3

Position Number: 33017, 33020, 33021, 33022, 33023, 33037, 33010

Location: Helena

Department: Transportation **Division and Bureau:** Planning/Environmental Services

Section and Unit: Resources

Job Overview:

This is a Biologist 3 position in the Resources Section of the Environmental Services Bureau. The position is commonly referred to as State-wide or District Biologist and is responsible for a large geographical area up to and including the entire state. The position is responsible for conducting in-depth independent biological analyses and technical review to identify, assess, and mitigate environmental impacts associated with MDT's transportation program. This requires preparation of scientifically and legally defensible reports and summary analyses to document findings. This position serves as the Department's authority on all natural resource issues including natural resource management, evaluation, impact analysis, mitigation, and regulatory compliance related to planning processes and all preconstruction, construction and maintenance projects and activities. The position serves as a liaison and negotiator between regulatory agencies and MDT bureaus and involves highly complex, controversial, and precedent-setting environmental issues. The position also serves as liaison to non-governmental organizations and citizens groups with respect to transportation and natural resource related issues, and departmental roles and responsibilities.

The position is involved in all phases of project development, planning, preconstruction, construction, and post-construction maintenance and monitoring. Each project is unique in scope and require the Biologist to apply innovation, professional knowledge, and judgment to develop original approaches to resolving environmental concerns while ensuring the successful delivery of the Department's transportation program.

This position is responsible for developing, evaluating, and negotiating effective means and methods of avoiding, minimizing, and/or mitigating potential project impacts to natural resources. This position is responsible for working with a wide variety of internal and external professionals to ensure the optimization of project design in relation to projected environmental impacts and sound engineering design principles. The position conducts various reviews; organizes and/or participates in meetings; develops reports; recommends design features; evaluates design alternatives; proposes and negotiates avoidance, minimization, and mitigation strategies; determines, prepares, and negotiates necessary environmental

permit applications, conditions, and documentation; provides technical assistance, education, and training; administers projects and monitors contracts; actively manages the work of consultants; prepares special provisions for inclusion in contract plans; and performs various other duties as needed. The position reports to the Resources Section Supervisor and does not directly supervise other agency personnel

Essential Functions (Major Duties or Responsibilities):

BIOLOGICAL EVALUATION, IMPACT ANALYSIS, MITIGATION - 40%

- Designs and conducts comprehensive biological, wetland, stream, wildlife, and other various natural resource investigations, analyses, and field surveys to identify, analyze, document, and evaluate natural resources in consideration of project specific design features and determine potential impacts of proposed construction and maintenance projects, and the Systems Impact Action Process.
- Conducts in-depth biological/impact analysis and mitigation measures unique to each project, including site investigations, sampling, testing and analysis; wetland and stream delineations and functional assessments; wildlife accommodation needs, developing and implementing innovative mitigation measures; providing advanced technical assistance and research services; overseeing contracted services, pre and post monitoring, and performing a variety of other complex; technical duties,
- Comprehensive reviews of transportation design concepts, plans, specifications, and prepares scientifically and legally defensible reports and summary analyses.
- Participates in milestone meetings (Preliminary Field Review [PFR], Alignment and Grade [AGR], Scope Of Work [SOW], Plan in Hand [PIH], Final Plan Review [FPR]), planning, pre-construction meetings, public hearings, design coordination meetings, and other meetings, reviews, and conferences regarding proposed and existing projects as necessary. Records/Research aquatic mitigation and biological data and prepares reports. Organizes and leads environmental discussions and negotiations, provides recommendations, project progress reports, and technical guidance regarding environmental issues and concerns; establishes project priorities, and recommends sound environmental solutions compatible with engineering principles to avoid, minimize, and/or mitigate adverse environmental impacts
- Explains, interprets, and negotiates project design features, engineering design concepts and principles, and environmental issues and concerns with resource professionals within various local, state, federal, and tribal agencies, public interest groups, and the public.
- Conducts or oversees aquatic resource determinations and delineations consistent with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers criteria.
- Communicates scientific and technical information to the public, organizations, or internal audiences through oral briefings, written documents, workshops, conferences, training sessions, or public hearings.
- Works collaboratively and productively with other MDT personnel, consultants, resource and regulatory agency staff, tribal personnel, organizations and the public to advance MDT projects and initiatives.
- Develops, implements, and/or oversees the monitoring of aquatic and terrestrial resources before, during, and after project construction to ensure compliance with permit/authorization requirements

and environmental regulations, to ensure that avoidance and mitigation measures are implemented and functioning, and to assess long-term or cumulative environmental impacts.

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION AND PERMIT APPLICATIONS - 25%

- Initiates biological resource investigations and prepares natural resource reports in order to maintain Department compliance with NEPA/MEPA. Initiates, coordinates, prepares, submits, and/or secures the SPA 124, ESA Biological Assessment and Biological Opinion, and other environmental permits/authorizations necessary for highway construction and maintenance projects.
- Reviews design plans and all associated documentation (e.g., reports, plans, specifications, etc.); works with the design team to determine fill quantities, areas of impact, and quantifies various other factors as required for permit applications; possesses a strong understanding of construction techniques, methods and sequencing for analysis and negotiation of permit conditions; recommends solutions founded on engineering principles to avoid, minimize, and/or mitigate adverse environmental impacts to threatened and endangered species, critical habitat, fisheries, wetlands, streams, and other natural resources. Evaluates permit conditions to determine the practicality of implementation with design and construction personnel. Leads the negotiations between the Department and the resource agencies if modifications to the permit conditions are required.
- Prepares appropriate special provisions for inclusion in the contract plans to ensure that contractors are informed of project specific permit conditions and authorized activities.
- Works with the Project Development Engineers by preparing and providing the Aquatic Resources Findings Report which quantifies the final impacts for wetland and stream resources, documents avoidance and minimization measures, and developing the Stream and/or Wetland Mitigation Plan to be submitted with the Clean Water Act Section 404 application.
- Coordinates on-site field reviews and discussions with MFWP, USFWS, other resource agencies, other stakeholders, the Contractor, and MDT representatives to negotiate and justify project design features, construction practices, maintenance activities, and potential permit conditions.
- Participates in Planning and Corridor studies to identify and assess the potentially affected environment, ensure appropriate communication with the public and resource agencies, consider avoidance and minimization efforts, and produce a planning study that can feed directly into the NEPA/MEPA process and future project nominations that address natural resource concerns or opportunities.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, RESEARCH, AND TRAINING - 15%

- This position serves as the Department's authority on environmental evaluation and mitigation issues to ensure the scientific and regulatory integrity of Department program operations and project activities. This includes providing technical expertise and professional consultation to project managers on a range of environmental compliance issues; serving as designated liaison with various state, federal, and tribal regulatory agencies; directs and coordinates a multi-agency interdisciplinary mitigation design team; researches current technical literature and regulatory publications; provides expert consultation and guidance in interagency wildlife research studies; develops, proposes, and

directs specialized research projects; and participates in a variety of committees and teams to assess and develop resource management policies and procedures.

CONTRACT/CONSULTANT OVERSIGHT - 20%

- Assesses respective current and future workload to determine which activities should be done in-house or by a consulting firm; evaluates and selects consultants based on expertise, availability, and other factors; defines all technical aspects of the project, such as scope, schedules, timelines, budget, work review criteria, and proposal evaluation criteria. Develops project-specific requests for proposals, contract scope of services, cost estimate, schedule, and invoicing. Actively administers and monitors consultant agreements and contractor performance by reviewing and editing consultant reports, environmental documents, permit applications, and compliance with the terms of individual contracts. Monitors project budgets and schedules to ensure that all term tasks are completed on schedule and within budget.
- Directs, coordinates, monitors, reviews, and approves wetland and stream delineations, Biological Resource Reports, Wildlife Accommodation Recommendation Memos, Endangered Species Act Section 7 Biological Assessments, Aquatic Resource Finding Reports, permit applications, mitigation plans, other natural resources investigations and reports prepared by professional consultants. Monitors performance by conducting quality assurance reviews of consultant work before final submission, monitoring adherence to established methods and guidelines, and conducting scheduled reviews and consultant evaluations.

OTHER DUTIES

This position performs a variety of other professional and technical duties in support of Bureau and Division operations.

Supervision

The number of employees supervised is: 0

The position number for each supervised employee is: N/A

Physical and Environmental Demands:

- Field work for up to 10 hours per day in all types of weather
- Lifting up to 50 pounds occasionally
- Operating a personal computer in an office setting for many hours at a time
- Traversing uneven terrain at all times of year alone or with others to conduct field work
- Operating passenger vehicles alone or with others across the state up to 25% of time worked, including travelling with others as a passenger

- Travel statewide up to 25% of the time and/or up to 12,000 miles per year

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (Behaviors):

- Knowledge of the theories, concepts, and principles of environmental resource management; conservation biology, transportation ecology, plant and animal taxonomy, hydrology, soils, groundwater discharge/recharge, ecology, botany, research methods and techniques, scientific documentation
- Knowledge of the methods and practices of highway construction, engineering and design
- Knowledge of state, federal and tribal environmental laws, rules, regulations, policies, orders, and agreements
- Skilled in remaining objective in controversial social and politically sensitive situations; effectively determining impacts by balancing engineering and scientific theories and practices within regulatory requirements; being flexible while coordinating a large number of projects and changing priorities simultaneously
- Skilled in preparing timely, concise professional correspondence and reports

Minimum Qualifications (Education and Experience):

A Bachelor’s Degree in Natural Resource Management, Biology, Botany, Wildlife/Fisheries Sciences, Ecology, or a related natural resources field is required.

This position requires a minimum of 4 years of professional experience with natural resources; preferably with a natural resource professional firm, organization or agency/department. Basic knowledge of engineering principles and civil engineering practices is beneficial, but not required.

Special Requirements:

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Fingerprint check | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Valid driver’s license |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Background check | <input type="checkbox"/> Other; Describe |
| 035 Union Code | Safety Responsibilities |

The specific statements shown in each section of this description are not intended to be all inclusive. They represent typical elements and criteria considered necessary to perform the job successfully.

Signatures

My signature below indicates the statements in the job description are accurate and complete.

