

Summer Plant Ecology Field Technicians 2025

Wichita State University is seeking up to **five** highly motivated technicians to assist in data collection for a collaborative research project investigating the response of plants, birds, and soils to different cattle grazing practices on Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) grasslands in Kansas and Colorado. Although grazing animals such as bison play an important role in native prairie, grazing is currently excluded or highly limited in many CRP sites related to native prairie. Our study will quantify potential conservation risks and benefits of cattle grazing on CRP sites located in tallgrass (Kansas) and shortgrass (Colorado).

Technicians will collect plant data in three-person sampling crews (two technicians and one lead graduate student). Each crew will be responsible for sampling a subset of sites (36) in our areas of interest in Kansas and Colorado. Reaching sites will require driving a few hours each day over paved and low maintenance (dirt, gravel) roads in relatively remote, rural areas. Duties include but are not limited to: collecting vegetation structural data, plant species abundance, and plant biomass; data entry and quality control; and equipment preparation and maintenance. Candidates must be willing to hike long distances into field sites through tall or short grass prairie while carrying equipment to reach sampling locations. Working hours will be spent almost exclusively in the field and involve early mornings, long hours when necessary, and maintaining motivation during variable weather conditions. Technicians must be able to transport themselves to field housing and ready to begin training and orientation in mid-late May 2025. The field position will end by August 8th, 2025. Shared housing will be provided near field sites in rural Kansas (St. John) and Colorado (Las Animas or Lamar). Rental vehicles will be provided for fieldwork transportation. Technicians will be paid \$16/hour with the possibility for time-and-a-half overtime pay.

Qualifications:

- 1) Academic training in and/or enthusiasm for biology and/or ecology.
- 2) Previous experience with plant identification preferred, but not required.
- 3) Fit to perform and keep up field work while maintaining exceptional work ethic in a variety of conditions, including heat, humidity, rain, biting insects, and poison ivy.
- 4) Eager to work in remote, rural settings for long periods of time.
- 5) Good interpersonal skills and willingness to work and live with other technicians and interact positively with CRP landowners.
- 6) Attention to detail and able to closely follow a detailed data collection protocol.
- 7) Possess a valid driver's license and willing to drive rental field vehicles on gravel and muddy roads.
- 8) Must be available for the entirety of the field season ~mid/late May to August 8th, 2025.

Technicians will gain experience with plant identification and data collection techniques, interact with private landowners, and large-scale ecological research. To apply, email a cover letter, your CV/resume, and the names and contact information of three professional references with the subject line "Summer Plant Ecology Field Technician" to Evalynn Trumbo at evalynn.trumbo@wichita.edu. Application review will begin February 10th, 2025. Positions will remain open until filled.