



Gopher Tortoise Research Technician

**University of Georgia
Odum School of Ecology
Applied Wildlife Conservation Lab**

Hourly pay rate: \$11.50

Commitment: 40 hrs/week

Start date: 4 June 2018

End date: Funding guaranteed through 31 January 2019

Description of Duties: This field work for this position will be located at Penholoway Wildlife Management Area (WMA, Jesup, GA) and the Southern Ionics Minerals, LLC. (SIM) Mission Mine (Charlton Co., GA). The Research Technician I will focus largely on an on-going research project assessing behavioral interactions of relocated tortoises with residents at the WMA. Additionally, the technician will assist with all aspects of gopher tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*) and other priority wildlife species surveys and relocation tasks on a site scheduled for heavy mineral sand mining in 2017 and 2018.

Responsibilities will include, but are not limited to: deploying and maintaining stationary wildlife cameras at burrows, tracking gopher tortoises through use of GPS and VHF technology, spatial data collection with a handheld GPS unit, gopher tortoise transect burrow surveys, burrow scoping, nest searching, burrow excavations (both by hand with a shovel as well as supervising mechanical excavator excavations), morphometric processing of priority species, scute marking for identification, assisting with research sample collection (e.g., disease swabs, blood draws, ectoparasites), recipient site preparation, starter burrow digging, and other supporting field tasks as needed. Additional responsibilities include winter surveys for eastern indigo snakes along with seasonal species and habitat surveys for other priority animal and plant species (e.g., flatwood salamanders, striped newts, hairy rattlesnake).

Our office is located at the UGA Marine Extension in Brunswick. Office tasks will vary, but are certain to include data entry and management, reviewing and organizing camera trap images, GIS mapping and analysis, and basic report preparation and activity summaries for SIM, analysis for conference presentations and publications.

The technician will also assist with the occasional education event (field, classroom, tabling) or SIM staff training on wildlife identification.

The technician will undergo specific task training with current project researchers. MSHA safety and first aid trainings will be required as a new employee working on Mission Mine. Much of the field research at Penholoway will be conducted independently once trained, but all relocation and survey effort at the Mission Mine site will be conducted with 1 or more of the research staff.



The Schedule: Typically, the Technician will be expected to work 5 days a week (M-F) and will involve 3-4 field days and 1-2 office days; however, the work schedule may require slightly shorter or longer work weeks depending on the weeks' task schedule and mine plan.

Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays will be accommodated but as unpaid leave.

Skills:

- Undergraduate degree in Biology, Ecology, Wildlife Management, or related field
- Knowledge of southeastern herpetofauna and a dedicated interest in conservation.
- Field experience with *Gopherus* spp. on research and mitigation projects, including use of a burrow camera, is highly preferred.
- Field experience in the deployment and management of wildlife cameras and photo data.
- Working knowledge of GIS and data management software is highly preferred.
- Ability to work well with others, operate independently, good communication skills, and have an overall positive attitude.
- Flexibility with scheduling and physical and mental resiliency are key to achieving our work plan goals in an efficient manner.
- Capacity to work independently and be a good team player.
- A high-level of organization and professionalism, quality performance, and direct and efficient communication.
- Good physical condition and a patient temperament - this job will be physically demanding, requiring long days in the very hot and sometimes very buggy south Georgia summer.

Benefits: Pay rate is \$11.50/hr for up to 40hrs/week. Since this position is temporary and will not exceed the maximum 1300 hours in the timespan of this job, benefits are not provided by the University of Georgia. The technician will be required to support housing and transportation expenses and will also need to use their own computer. Living location can be negotiated based on the candidate's preference.

Project Supervisor: Dr. Kimberly Andrews

Apply through the UGA iPAWS website: The postings are labelled as “Temporary Lab/Research-Andrews” through Dept 551 (School of Ecology). Posting #: [T00387P](#).

Inquiries for additional details can be directed to Kimberly @ kma77@uga.edu.

Please use the subject line: TORTOISE TECH