



Coastal Ecology Research Technician – Gopher Tortoises

Application Link: <https://www.ugajobsearch.com/postings/208893>

Hourly pay rate: Commensurate with experience (\$11.00-12.50/hr)

Commitment: up to 40 hrs/week

Closing Date: Open until filled

FLSA: Non-Exempt

Minimum Qualifications: This position will operate both in independent and team settings at mine and recipient sites. There will be opportunities for leadership and coordination in certain capacities and for working cooperatively as good team player in others. Given the dynamic nature of our field work and a potential need to be flexible with pandemic-imposed adjustments in work environments, character skills and integrity will be considered alongside professional measures of competencies. These include, but are not limited to:



- A high-level of organization and professionalism and pride in quality performance.
- A philosophy for direct, honest and efficient communication with co-workers and supervisor, and a willingness to offer constructive feedback to both.
- Flexibility with scheduling and physical and mental resiliency as the nature of field ecology, conservation planning, and the state of the world around us changes constantly.
- An ability to uphold and model a positive attitude, even in thorny patches, literally and figuratively.
- A sense of mindfulness and gratitude for the people and opportunities around you.

Position Summary: This position is part of an on-going field research and monitoring project in multiple counties in South Georgia. We work with Southern Ionics Minerals (SIM)/Chemours to conduct pre-mining species (animal and plant) surveys to assess impacts and develop plans for the avoidance or relocation of impacted species. Specifically, we focus on gopher tortoises and other priority and listed species in upland sandhills habitats. We conduct research on the post-translocation success of gopher tortoises on protected conservation lands. Additionally, we initiated new research in fall 2020 on the colonization and succession of reclaimed lands that involves broader ecological sampling of plant and soil communities but focuses largely on wildlife and reptile activity. This technician position will be expected to contribute intellectually to project execution and management, and where appropriate, design and implementation of novel research designs in the field.

If re/translocations are necessary, we excavate and move tortoises to off-site conservation lands or on-site reclaimed mine lands where we conduct post-translocation monitoring research. Our research program uses GPS and VHF telemetry and wildlife camera monitoring to explore the integration of translocated and resident gopher tortoise populations. Hence, the researcher also will be trained on radio tracking, checking game cameras, and trapping tortoises.

The technician will undergo specific task training with current project researchers for compliance with UGA and partnering protocols. MSHA safety and first aid trainings will be required as a new employee working on mine sites.

Our lab is located at the UGA Marine Extension facility in Brunswick. This position involves office work to transfer and manage datasets associated with the projects, and to conduct basic summary and analysis of data as necessary for adaptive project management and for use in reports for the sponsor, natural resource agencies, and scientific communities. The technician will produce maps of field data in ArcGIS and may do some spatial data analysis.

As our lab has a strong mission for community engagement and public education, the technician also will assist with public communications via content development for social media and project promotion; public or classroom education events (field, classroom, tabling); and staff trainings for new miners on wildlife identification or other types of workforce development. Also, the individual will participate in husbandry of captive education and research animals at the Marine Extension facility in Brunswick.

Typically, the technician will be expected to work 5 days a week (M-F), which will involve 3-4 field days and 1-2 office days; however, the work schedule may require slightly shorter or longer days or a weekend depending on the task schedule and mine plan. We may have to adapt our schedules to those of the animals, but we make up for the occasional long days and weekends with time off! Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays, along with vacation requests (within reason), will be accommodated but as unpaid leave.

Since this position is temporary and cannot exceed the federal restriction of a maximum 1300 hours in one year, health and retirement benefits are not provided by the University of Georgia. The technician will be required to provide their own housing, computer, cell phone, and transportation for work commute and occasional fieldwork (the latter of which is reimbursable). Living location is based on the candidate's preference for commutes to the office and field sites. This seasonal technician position is guaranteed for the remainder of 2021, with a possible extension based on job performance and funding availability.

Relevant/Preferred Education, Experience, Licensure, Certification in Position:

Undergraduate degree in Biology, Ecology, Wildlife Management or related field OR Minimum of 3 years relevant experience in field research and wildlife



Knowledge, Skills, Abilities and Competencies:

- A dedicated interest in the conservation and management of wildlife and ecologically viable habitats that interface with human activities is an absolute must.
- Field experience with ecological survey and monitoring methods, including wildlife visual encounter surveys and trapping is required.
- Knowledge of southeastern habitats and upland sandhills plant and animal communities is strongly preferred.
- Experience driving 4WD trucks on muddy, sandy and challenging unpaved roads is strongly preferred.
- Working knowledge of GIS, statistical analysis and data management software is highly preferred.
- Field experience with surveying for *Gopherus* spp., including experience with burrow cameras and scoping burrows is highly preferred.
- Field experience in the collection and management of field data, sometimes in large amounts such as wildlife camera data, will add to candidate competitiveness.

Physical Demands: Good physical condition and a patient temperament are absolutely required, whether by yourself or with co-workers in the field. Some long days in the field in hot, buggy conditions, and surveys in thick, thorny vegetation. Physical exertion may involve walking up to 10 mi/day for surveys, sometimes carrying up to 15 lbs of equipment and bulky burrow scopes. Scoping burrows requires continuous bending over and squatting. Tortoises can be challenging to capture and handle and occasional capture and safe handling of venomous snakes will be expected. Driving multiple hours round-trip to field sites. Maintaining compliance with UGA COVID monitoring and safety protocols.

Applicant Documents (to upload on the UGA application site)

Resume/CV, Cover letter, Contacts for three references

Project Supervisor: Dr. Kimberly Andrews, Faculty & Coastal Ecology Specialist – UGA Marine Extension and Georgia Sea Grant

For more information on our program, please visit us at:

<https://coastalecologylab.wixsite.com/gacoast>

<https://www.facebook.com/CoastalEcologyLab>