



Job Announcement

Associate Vegetation Ecologist or Vegetation Data Specialist (2 positions)

About CNPS (California Native Plant Society)

The California Native Plant Society (CNPS) is a statewide non-profit conservation organization (www.cnps.org) founded in 1965, with 13,000 members in 36 chapters across California and Baja California Norte, Mexico. The mission of CNPS is to protect California's native plants and their natural habitats, today and into the future, through science, education, stewardship, gardening, and advocacy. Native plants are the foundation of California's globally significant biodiversity. CNPS is meeting this critical moment for biodiversity and climate action by supporting and catalyzing statewide efforts to conserve public lands, save sensitive species and habitats, and create thriving native plant habitats in our urban spaces.

Our Commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice

At California Native Plant Society, we have a responsibility to address both structural and cultural barriers to experiencing nature and participating in the native plant community. We do so by integrating the values of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (DEIJ) into every facet of our organization and our work. These values inform who we are and how we operate as volunteers, staff, and partners. To learn more about our vision for DEIJ, we welcome you to read our public facing statement and resources [here](#).

CNPS Vegetation Program

The CNPS Vegetation Program supports vegetation sampling, classification, mapping, and monitoring across California. A statewide system has been developed over the past 25 years by CNPS and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and is used by both governmental and non-governmental institutions to map, categorize, describe, and rank rarity of vegetation. The Vegetation Program collaborates with a variety of other local, state, and national entities on fine-scale mapping, long-term monitoring, and data analysis. At the heart of this effort is *A Manual of California Vegetation*; originally a hard-copy reference, this resource is now available and regularly updated online.

Job Summary

The CNPS Vegetation Program is hiring two full-time positions with varying experience levels directly supervised by the Vegetation Program Manager. The position(s) include at least 12 months of work, beginning in December 2024, and are likely to be extended based upon an expectation of future funding. The positions include a full-time, non-exempt Associate Vegetation Ecologist position and a full-time, exempt Vegetation Data Specialist position. If the applicant pool does not include candidates who meet the additional qualifications for the Vegetation Data Specialist role, CNPS may offer two Associate Vegetation Ecologist positions instead.

Both positions are responsible for supporting regional vegetation inventory, classification, mapping, and monitoring efforts focused on either southwestern or northern California in addition to other areas, through the coordination of field missions and the promotion of the [Manual of California Vegetation](#) and [Sensitive Natural Communities Initiative](#). Areas of focus for field work include a) Santa Barbara to San Diego and b) Mendocino to Lake counties. Areas of focus for office work (data compilation, analysis, and reporting) extend across northern California (including Humboldt to Modoc counties). These are remote positions that require the final applicants live and work in California.

The positions require detail-oriented individuals to coordinate fieldwork and crews in vegetation inventory and mapping efforts, to assist in vegetation fieldwork in key ecological regions, to organize and integrate vegetation data in regional efforts, to analyze/classify and describe vegetation, and to increase training, outreach, and communication on California's vegetation. The positions will typically work independently and have the opportunity to lead teams of 4+ staff, partners, and/or volunteers, in the office or in the field. Other responsibilities include training staff, students, and/or volunteers on data collection, data entry, vegetation community classification, and Geographic Information System (GIS) tasks using CNPS vegetation methods and related work (e.g., range map production & rarity evaluation of vegetation types, plant identification & specimen collection).

Required travel and time in the field will account for 10 - 25% of annualized responsibilities. Field work is seasonal with the concentration of required travel occurring during Spring, Summer, or Fall. Work travel is paid.

To qualify for the Vegetation Data Specialist position, candidates must have at least 6 years of professional experience in a directly related field (excluding college coursework) and prior experience supervising staff. The Vegetation Data Specialist will oversee 2 or more direct reports, providing mentorship and managing their performance.

What You'll Do

Data Compilation, Classification, & Analysis (50-75%)

- Manage, query, analyze and display spatial information using ESRI ArcPro, ArcMap, and other software
- Photo-interpret imagery for vegetation patterns; and perform enhanced lifeform or fine-scale vegetation mapping.
- Use existing vegetation data and literature to research and describe vegetation and environmental factors, and to develop range maps and evaluate threats.
- Assist with vegetation classification of alliances and associations in southern and northern California.
- Assist in vegetation ranking and webinars on classifying, mapping, and evaluating sensitive vegetation.
- Summarize natural communities in *A Manual of California Vegetation* and in written reports.

Field Work Coordination & Support (25-50%)

- Support ongoing fieldwork of field staff and partners on vegetation classification and mapping efforts.

- Coordinate logistics and track progress on regional sampling and mapping projects in the Southern California Mountains & Valleys Ecoregion or Northern California Coast Ecoregion, or other regions across California.
- Conduct vegetation sampling and training in regional projects across California.
- Recognize patterns and stands of vegetation; identify them using ecological factors and diagnostic keys.
- Identify plants using taxonomic keys, hand lens, and dissecting microscope.

Supervisor/Manager support (5-15%)

****These responsibilities are only applicable to the Vegetation Data Specialist position***

- Mentor and supervise (2 or more) staff on field and office-based tasks, including conducting annual performance evaluations.
- Execute and coach employees to perform lead responsibilities on tasks, projects, or areas of expertise.
- Communicate and coordinate with staff, partners and stakeholders to build and facilitate consensus on collaborative projects.
- Develop vegetation classification analyses and supervise others on community classification.
- Design, manage, and analyze spatial information using ArcGIS, AGOL, and Survey123.
- Develop GIS and data management workflows to streamline work and supervise others on GIS and data analysis tasks.
- Supports ongoing fine-scale vegetation monitoring, classification, and mapping efforts.

Location

- These are both full-time (40-hour week) remote office, at-home positions, for residents of California.

Additional Information

- Fieldwork schedules may be rigorous (e.g. 10 hours/day during 4- or 7-day stints, with camping remotely or staying at motels/home rentals overnight).
- A valid driver's license is required.
- Periodic travel to locations throughout California will be required. (Work travel is reimbursed.)

Physical Requirements

This job requires prolonged sitting, use of computer and mouse, and the ability to participate in fieldwork including standing, hiking, driving, carrying gear (up to 1/3 of your body weight), and traveling off-trail in sites with variable grade. We are committed to providing reasonable accommodation to ensure that all individuals can thrive in these roles.

Who You Are

Data & Office Skills:

- Strong organizational, verbal and written communication, analytical, and computer skills (Windows Operating System, Microsoft Word, Excel, and email).
- Experience communicating with staff, partners, landowners, and stakeholders to build relationships, obtain land access, and facilitate consensus on collaborative projects.
- At least 2 years of experience coordinating field work for at least 2 to 4 staff across project areas that span broad areas (e.g., across multiple park units or > 1 million acres).
- Experience collecting surveys, conducting mapping and describing California's diverse vegetation.
- Ability to work independently, communicate effectively, and coordinate daily tasks of others.
- Ability to maintain and manage accurate records in digital and hard-copy formats.
- Skill at describing and summarizing ecological data and vegetation classification and mapping efforts in written reports.
- Proficiency with databases and/or spreadsheets to quality control, manipulate, and manage data, with at least 2 years of data management experience.
- At least 3 years of experience with geodatabases and GIS, such as ESRI ArcPro, ArcGIS Online, Field Maps, and Survey123 to implement GIS tools, and to provide outputs for display and querying online.
- Data analysis experience using PC-Ord, R, or Python to assist in classification and GIS analyses.

Field Skills:

- Strong background in California plant identification and plant communities throughout California with an emphasis on southern California (e.g., Santa Barbara south to San Diego) or northern California (e.g., Mendocino to Humboldt or Tahoe to Modoc), with ability to sight identify >250 CA plants.
- At least 3 to 6 years of experience conducting vegetation sampling, such as the CNPS vegetation rapid assessment/relevé protocol.
- Ability to identify live and pressed plants, using the Jepson Manual and other flora.
- Experience in training staff on vegetation sampling methods and ArcGIS Online functions.
- Ability to use GPS (Global Positioning System) or other mobile units and field gear (e.g., compass, rangefinder, binoculars, tape measures, camera).
- Ability to interpret hard copy and digital topographic / aerial maps and perform field sampling missions.
- Ability to work individually and in teams on field data collection in varied conditions, including inclement weather, rugged terrain, poison oak, and other potentially toxic plants.
- Ability to drive 4X4 vehicles over variable terrain and to ride in and/or drive ATV/OHV.

Education:

- An undergraduate degree in biology, botany, forestry, plant ecology, environmental science, or a related field is required.

Additional Criteria for the Vegetation Data Specialist:

- Advanced-level scientific and/or software skills.
- 4+ years of experience coordinating and multi-tasking on vegetation projects in northern California
- 6+ years of experience with GIS, data analysis, fine-scale mapping, data management, or related duties such as:
 - Advanced, specialized experience with GIS, including ESRI ArcGIS Desktop (Pro), ArcGIS Online, Field Maps, and Survey123 to implement GIS tools for self, other staff and volunteers, and to provide outputs for display, querying online, and fine-scale mapping.

- Advanced skills with databases (e.g., Access), spreadsheets, and python or R to quality control, manipulate, manage, and summarize data.

Nice to Have

While CNPS recognizes that not every individual will exhibit all these characteristics, the successful candidate will possess at least one – and ideally more than one – of the following:

- A graduate degree in a relevant field.
- Fluency in Spanish or other language(s) spoken in California.
- Knowledge of CNPS, familiarity with native plants and plant communities throughout California.
- Ability to manage complex projects independently and efficiently.
- Enthusiasm, positive attitude, and ability to work well in dynamic, team settings.
- A commitment to the values of diversity, equity, inclusion and justice.
- Live close to, or within convenient driving distance of, Sacramento (CA).

*We encourage applicants with a range of experiences to apply and will consider candidates whose skills align with either role.

What You'll Get

- **Compensation:** Reflecting CNPS's commitment to competitive, fair, and transparent compensation, we publish the full potential starting pay ranges for new hires and do not negotiate hiring bonuses.
 - The Associate Vegetation Ecologist has a starting hourly rate between \$31.51 - \$33.96.
 - The Vegetation Data Specialist has a starting hourly rate between \$36.96 - \$39.83
- **Performance Based Compensation Increases:** Employees may receive up to a 3.8% performance-based annual rate increase.
- **Health Insurance:** 100% coverage of employee premiums for health (Kaiser or Anthem), life, dental, and vision insurance.
- **Retirement Plan:** 401(k) plan with up to 6% matching contributions, available immediately upon employment.
- **Flexible Spending Accounts:** Options for a Flexible Spending Account (FSA), Health Savings Account (HSA), Dependent Care Account (DCA), and Transportation Savings Account (TSA).
- **Paid Leave:** 13 holidays, 12 sick/wellness days, and 10 vacation days.
- **Parental Leave:** 16 weeks (about 3 and a half months) of paid parental leave, after one year of employment.
- **Work-from-Home Support:** CNPS-issued laptop, a \$750 home office stipend, and a \$60/month telework stipend.
- **Employee Assistance Program (EAP):** Comprehensive support for employees and their families.
- **Professional Development:** Annual budget of \$1,000 and 32 hours for professional development opportunities.
- **Team Building:** Attendance at semiannual staff team-building events.
- **Membership:** Complimentary CNPS Society membership.

- **Bragging Rights:** "Superhero to the Planet" status for your contributions to conservation.

Equal Opportunity Policy

CNPS's policy is to afford equal employment opportunity to all persons, regardless of age, ancestry, color, disability, gender, gender expression, gender identity, marital status, medical condition, military or veteran status, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation. This policy demonstrates CNPS's commitment to creating a diverse and inclusive environment that values different perspectives and fosters belonging. To better understand the demographic profile of applicants, CNPS requests candidates to fill out the volunteer questionnaire that is part of the application form. Your responses will remain confidential, anonymized, and not shared with the hiring committee. We are committed to building a workplace where employees of all identities feel they belong and are valued for their unique contributions.

How to Apply

To apply, please submit both a cover letter and resume through our [online application portal](#). Be sure to include all relevant professional and personal experiences that align with the position.

As part of the application process, you will be asked to answer several questions designed to help us better understand your skills and experience. At CNPS, we use anonymized screening techniques, which redact identifying information from resumes and cover letters during the initial stages of review. Therefore, your responses to the application questions are especially critical. Please provide thorough answers, even if the information is included in your resume or online profiles. We are targeting an early December (2024) start date.

For more details about our hiring process, you can review additional information from the application page.

Applications will be accepted until October 27, 2024.