May 9, 2016

University of California, Berkeley

Christine O’Connell

This letter is to express my interest in your posting for tropical forest field technician position for the UC Berkeley. I am available to start work as early as May 17th. I graduated from the University of Missouri in Columbia in 2012 with a BS in Fisheries & Wildlife. For the past several years I have had the opportunity to work on various studies across the continental US. I have just finished working as a scientific aid for the California Department of Fish & Wildlife, in cooperation with North Carolina State University, on the Northern Sierra Fisher (*Pekannia pennanti*) Reintroduction project. Additionally I have been trained as a type 2 wildlands firefighter, have passed a state sponsored defensive driving course, am an avid outdoorsman, and a former lifeguard and Eagle Scout.

As a scientific aid on the fisher project my duties involved a range of activities aimed at conserving fisher habitat and furthering reintroduction goals across large areas of the Northern Sierras, owned and managed by Sierra Pacific Industries for timber. Primarily we used radio telemetry and GPS equipment and GIS and LOAS mapping systems to capture fisher’s daily movements and home range activity. Infrequent use of fixed-wing radio telemetry was also part of the study protocol. Camera traps are used to estimate litter size and hair snares for DNA analysis and track plates for species identification. Concurrently a small mammal study runs at this time, with the aim of indexing available fisher prey species as well as vegetation surveys to establish prey species habitat preference. The fall is when fishers are live-trapped (and incidentally many other species like fox, raccoon, and skunk), and any new adults that meet the size criteria are radio collared. This process involves sedating the animal and taking measurements and genetic samples. Work hours are typically long, irregular and in remote areas (dependent on fisher activity), making extensive use and maintenance of large 4x4 trucks and ATVs/UTVs. Use of basic navigational equipment like compass and topographical maps was essential. Interactions with local hunters, loggers, and law enforcement personnel are a common occurrence. Close encounters with black bears was also common and safety protocols were closely followed. Effective communication with an off-site supervisor was essential.

Previous work for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources involved surveying a wide range of habitats across southwest Iowa and identifying and monitoring distribution of the wide range of organisms that occur there. This primarily concentrated on herps, odonates, birds, butterflies and small mammals as part of the state’s Multiple Species Inventory Study, making extensive use of small mammal and aqua-traps as well as GPS and Anabat systems. We also did extensive water quality sampling as well as freshwater muscle and vegetation surveys. Before Iowa, my work involved surveying for endangered shorebirds/nest sites along the Padre Island National Seashore and reptile surveys in the Sonoran Desert. Both of these also involved a fair amount of habitat surveying, for soil, vegetation, and water content.

As I have progressed in field work experience, particularly this as I’ve been back volunteering in Hawaii, I have become more interested in tropical ecosystems. For this reason I am extremely interested in any opportunity to become involved with this project. I intend to spend another year gaining field and lab experience before further pursuing graduate school options. I believe I’d be an excellent resource for this project and look forward to hearing from you.

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Education

**2002-2006 Mililani High School**

Marching Band Leadership Corps, Lacrosse Team

**2006-2012 University of Missouri, Columbia**

BS Fisheries & Wildlife (Graduated May 12, 2012)

Professional Experience

**2014-Present Scientific Aid**

California Department of Fish & Wildlife

**2013 Wildlife Biologist (April - Nov)**

Iowa State University & Iowa Department of Natural Resources

**2012-2013 Research Technician (Dec-Feb)**

Coastal Bird Conservian, Laguna Atascosa, TX

**2012 Herpetology Technician (1 June-31 July)**

American Conservation Experience & Bureau of Land Management

El Centro Field Office, CA

**2011 Research Technician (June)**

University of Texas, Ashville, NC

**2011 Research Volunteer (July)**

FWCO-USFWS, Columbia, MO

**2010 Research Volunteer**

University of Missouri, Columbia, MO

Relevant Volunteer Experience

2016 **Research Volunteer**- Oahu VINE Project

Dr. Patrick Kelley - University of Hawaii

As part of a team of wildlife technicians I participate in vegetation surveys to collect data on native vs. non-native plant diversity. Additionally, bird and small mammal trapping is done with the aim of collecting fecal samples for seed dispersal calculation and habitat analysis. Use of GPS and radio telemetry systems is essential, as is in field identification of diverse plant and animal species. We make extensive use of mist nets and bird bands as well as bird radio trackers.

2011 **Research Volunteer**- University of Texas, Ashville, NC

Assisted in transect surveys of threatened plethodontid salamanders in Appalachian Mountains as part of a broader study seeking to measure climate change.

2011 **Research Volunteer**- FWCO-USFWS, Columbia, MO

Assisted in aquatic surveying along Missouri river in conjunction with Pallid Sturgeon reintroduction efforts.

2010 **Research Volunteer**- University of Missouri, Columbia, MO

Assisted in trapping and radio tracking of Black Rat Snakes as part of a bird nest predation study.

Work Experience

**2012 Deputy Field Organizer**

Obama for America, Davenport, IO

**2010-2012 Line Cook**

Houlihans, Columbia, MO

**2010 Warehouse Worker**

MBS Textbook Exchange, Columbia, MO

**2009 Factory Technician**

Midway USA, Columbia MO

**2009 Line Cook**

Chipotle, Columbia, MO

**2008-2009 Political Phone-banking and Fundraising**

Integral Resources Inc., Columbia, MO

**2008 Catering**

Jack’s Gourmet, Columbia, MO

**2007-2008 Telephone Surveyor**

Center for Advanced Social Research

School of Journalism, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO

**2004-2006 Lifeguard**

Mililani Town Association, Mililani, HI

References

**Richard Callas**, Biologist [Professional Reference]

California Department of Fish & Wildlife

(530) 340-5977, Richard.Callas@wildlife.ca.gov

**Rob Swiers**, Biologist [Professional Reference]

Wildlife Conservation Society

(530) 643-1598, rcswiers@gmail.com

**Kevin Smith**, Biologist [Professional Reference]

Wildlife Conservation Society

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**Gregory L. Fox**, PhD, Acting Laboratory Director [Character Reference]

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