

# **POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT**

## **RESEARCH TECHNICIAN**

USDA ARS Announcement Number: ARS-X4S-0126

**Application Deadline: April 5, 2004**

For more information please contact:

Dr. Sandy Tartowski (startow@nmsu.edu; 505-646-3557)

### **POSITION DESCRIPTION**

The Research Technician participates fully in all phases of the research process as a member of an interdisciplinary team, and assumes full design, technical or operational responsibility for specific phases of research on the ecology, biogeochemistry, management and restoration of rangelands. Current projects include the effect of redistribution of water on soil-plant-animal feedbacks across scales, and the use of drought opportunities to reorganize and remediate arid ecosystems, among others. Diverse new projects will continue to develop over time. This position requires both field and laboratory research, including collecting data, analyzing samples, and maintaining accurate records and quality assurance. The Research Technician will learn, develop, and test appropriate new methods and procedures, as well as install, operate, maintain, and modify specialized equipment and instrumentation for the laboratory and field.

### **QUALIFICATIONS**

We seek highly motivated applicants interested in investigating challenging research questions with application to important issues in rangeland management and restoration. Creative thinking and innovative problem solving are most desirable. The successful applicant must be able to work effectively as a productive team member and independently with minimal supervision. Experience in interdisciplinary team research will be an asset. Enthusiasm and talent for both field and laboratory work are crucial to this position. Experience with field and laboratory instruments, organization, procedures and quality assurance are especially desirable. Graduation from an accredited college or university with a degree in an appropriate field and a background in earth sciences, biological sciences, chemistry, ecology, soil science, or biogeochemistry is required. Applicants must be citizens of the USA.

### **LOCATION and SALARY**

This position is a permanent, full-time Federal USDA-ARS appointment based in Las Cruces, NM, on the campus of New Mexico State University. Field work at Jornada Experimental Range, other sites in NM, and possibly other sites in the USA and other countries may be required. The Jornada Experimental Range is

an internationally-recognized site for rangeland research, and an LTER site with long-term monitoring and experiments dating back to 1912. Salary will be commensurate with experience (\$32,447 -\$51,599 per year, plus benefits).

### **APPLICATION**

The job application can consist of a resume and cover letter, U.S. Government Form OF-612, or Form SF-171. **Please see official announcement below.**

The USDA is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Selection for this position will be based solely on merit and qualifications without regard to race, sex, color, religion, age, marital status, national origin, non-disqualifying handicap conditions, sexual orientation, or any other non-merit factors. Women and members of under-represented groups are especially encouraged to apply. This agency provides reasonable accommodation to applicants with disabilities. We really mean it!

## **OFFICIAL USDA ANNOUNCEMENT BELOW**

### **RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND ECONOMICS AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH SERVICE VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT**

**Announcement Type:** ALL SOURCES/ALTERNATIVE MERIT PROMOTION

**Position Title:** Biological Science Technician

**Series/Grade:** GS-0404-07/08/09

**Promotion Potential:** GS-404-09

**Salary:** GS-7 \$32,447 to \$42,177 per year  
GS-8 \$35,933 to \$46,713 per year  
GS-9 \$39,690 to \$51,599 per year

**Type of Appointment:** Permanent, Full-time

**Location of Position:** USDA, ARS, Southern Plain Area, Range Management Unit, Las Cruces, New Mexico

**Announcement Number:** ARS-X4S-0126

**Opening Date:** March 8, 2004

**Closing Date:** April 5, 2004

**Area of Consideration:** All U.S. Citizens

### **APPLICATIONS WILL ALSO BE ACCEPTED FROM USDA SURPLUS AND FEDERAL DISPLACED EMPLOYEES IN THE COMMUTING AREA.**

**DUTIES:** The incumbent provides technical support for research on the ecology, biogeochemistry, management and restoration of rangelands. The incumbent performs the following in the laboratory or field; participates as a team member with the scientist in all phases of the research process and assumes full design, technical or operations responsibility for specific phases of the research; installs, operates, maintains, and modifies specialized equipment and instrumentation; collects data, analyzes samples, and maintains accurate records and quality assurance of research

projects; prepares, maintains, and disposes of chemicals; selects, locates, and obtains pertinent scientific literature; develops and tests appropriate methods and procedures; and interprets and documents findings through charts, graphs, and reports.

**QUALIFICATIONS:** Applicants must meet the following experience or education requirements:

For GS-7 Level: 1 year of specialized experience equivalent to the GS-6 level OR 1 year of directly related graduate education.

For GS-8 Level: 1 year of specialized experience equivalent to the GS-7 level OR 1\_ years of directly related graduate education.

For GS-9 Level: 1 year of specialized experience equivalent to the GS-8 level OR 2 years of directly related graduate education.

Specialized Experience: Experience that equipped the applicant with:

1. Knowledge of basic theories and practices of ecology, chemistry, earth science or biogeochemistry.
2. Ability to operate and maintain laboratory equipment and instruments.
3. Ability to collect, analyze and summarize data.

Education: Successful completion of a 4 year course of study leading to a bachelor's degree with major study in an appropriate field of biological science or that included at least 24 semester hours in any combination of courses such as biology, chemistry, statistics, physics, ecology, geology, soils, or mathematics meets the basic requirements. At least 6 semester hours must have been directly related to the position.

YOUR EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE WILL BE EVALUATED AGAINST THE KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES (KSAs) AS OUTLINED UNDER SPECIALIZED EXPERIENCE. A SPECIFIC RESPONSE TO THE REQUIREMENTS OUTLINED UNDER SPECIALIZED EXPERIENCE FACTORS IS HIGHLY RECOMMENDED TO ENSURE ADEQUATE CONSIDERATION IN THE EVALUATION PROCESS.

### **APPLICATION INFORMATION**

**HOW TO APPLY:** Send a resume, Curriculum vitae, Optional Application for Federal Employment (OF-612), or SF-171, to the Contact address listed below. The following information is required to evaluate applicant qualifications and to determine if applicants meet legal requirements for Federal employment:

- Announcement number, title, and grade(s) for the position
- Full name, mailing address (including zip code) and day and evening phone numbers (with area code)
- Social security number
- Identify country of citizenship (**U.S. citizenship is required**)
- Veterans' Preference (If applicable--see "Veterans' Preference" below for required forms and documentation)
- Highest Federal civilian grade held (if applicable)

- Current Federal employees **must** submit their most recent performance appraisal.
- Current Federal employees and reinstatement eligibles should submit an SF-50, Notification of Personnel Action, to verify competitive eligibility.
- Highest education level achieved. Specify:
  - Name, city, state, zip code (if known)
  - Date or expected date (month/year) of completion of degree requirements
  - Type of degree received
  - Graduates of foreign universities must include proof of foreign education equivalency to an accredited U.S. college/university
- Copy of college transcripts or list of college courses (if required under **QUALIFICATIONS** or if applicable to the position).
- Paid and nonpaid work experience related to the position. For each work experience include:
  - Job title
  - Series/grade (if Federal employment)
  - Duties and accomplishments
  - Employer's name and address
  - Supervisor's name and address
  - Starting and ending dates
  - Hours per week
  - Salary
  - Indicate if we may contact current supervisor/employer
- Job-related:
  - Training courses (title and year)
  - Skills (e.g., other languages, typing speed, computer software/hardware, tools, etc.)
  - Certificates/licenses (current)
  - Honors, awards, and special accomplishments

**OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION:**

**- All status candidates who wish to be considered under both alternative merit promotion and non-status competitive examining must submit two (2) complete applications. When only one (1) application is received, it will be considered under the alternative merit promotion procedures if the applicant is a current or former Federal employee with reinstatement eligibility.**

- Applicants will be evaluated based on the quality and extent of their experience, education, and accomplishments. This may include factors such as number of credits in directly related subjects, grade point average, relatedness of work experience, and any other evidence of ability to do the work of the position. For current and former Federal employees, the performance evaluation may also be taken into consideration. Please be sure that your application or resume contains all of the information we need to determine if you are well qualified.

- This position is being filled in accordance with the Alternative Merit Promotion system. All merit promotion principles remain in effect.

- **Relocation Expenses:** Payment of relocation expenses will be determined in accordance with P&P 412.5 Recruitment and Retention Incentives and Other Special Pay, Sections 6 and 7, which may be found at [www.afm.ars.usda.gov/divisions/hrd/hrdhomepage/empopp.htm](http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/divisions/hrd/hrdhomepage/empopp.htm) and click on Policy on Payment of Relocation Expenses under General Information.

- **USDA surplus/Federal displaced employees must** submit documentary evidence of eligibility. Well qualified surplus and displaced employees within the local commuting area will receive selection priority as provided by OPM regulations. Well-qualified means the applicant meets the basic qualification and eligibility requirements and all selective placement factors; is rated above minimally qualified against the knowledge, skills, and abilities or quality criteria; and is able to satisfactorily perform the duties of the position upon entry. Applicants **must** submit the following:

- a copy of their RIF Separation Notice (for displaced employees) OR Certification of Expected Separation or other documentation identifying you as surplus;
- evidence of full performance level of current position;
- a copy of their most recent performance appraisal; and
- a copy of their most recent SF-50, Notification of Personnel Action, to verify reassignment eligibility.

- Males over age 18 who were born after December 31, 1959, must have registered with the Selective Service System (or have an exemption) to be eligible for a Federal job.

- **Financial Disclosure.** Federal employees are subject to prohibitions against officially dealing with outside organizations in which they have a financial interest. The incumbent of this position:

- will be required to submit a financial disclosure report within 30 days of their effective date of appointment and annually thereafter.

may be required to submit a financial disclosure report.

- **If applications do not contain all of the requested information, applicants may lose consideration for the job.**

- **If applicants make a false statement in any part of their application, they may not be hired; may be fired after they begin work; or may be fined or jailed.**

- Applicants will not be notified of the status of their application until a final selection has been made.

- Applications submitted via Government envelopes will not be accepted.

- **APPLICATIONS MUST BE**

**POSTMARKED, E-MAILED OR FAXED BY THE CLOSING DATE OF THE ANNOUNCEMENT**

**RECEIVED BY THE CLOSING DATE OF THE ANNOUNCEMENT.**

**SPECIAL HIRING AUTHORITIES:** If you meet the basic eligibility requirements and you are eligible for a noncompetitive appointment (a list of who may be eligible for noncompetitive appointments can be found at [www.usajobs.opm.gov/a1.htm](http://www.usajobs.opm.gov/a1.htm), please indicate the type of special appointment you are seeking on your application and follow all other instructions in this announcement. If you do not indicate the type of special appointment you are seeking, you will be considered under competitive procedures. If you wish to be considered under both noncompetitive and competitive procedures, please submit two (2) complete applications.

**VETERANS' PREFERENCE:** If applicants served on active duty in the United States military and were separated under honorable conditions, they may be eligible for veterans' preference. To claim 5-point veterans' preference, you must attach a copy of your DD-214, Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty, or other proof of eligibility. To claim 10-point veterans' preference, attach an SF-15, Application for 10-Point Veterans Preference, plus the documentation required by that form. For further details, call the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) at 912-757-3000. Select "Federal Employment Topics" and then "Veterans." Or, dial OPM's electronic bulletin board at 912-757-3100 or visit their VetGuide web site: [www.opm.gov/employ/html/vetguide.htm](http://www.opm.gov/employ/html/vetguide.htm).

**EEO STATEMENT:** The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice or TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202)720-5964 (voice or TDD). **USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.**

**ACCOMMODATION:** This agency provides reasonable accommodations to applicants with disabilities where appropriate. If you need a reasonable accommodation for any part of the application and hiring process or have questions/concerns regarding reasonable accommodation and/or accessibility for any part of the application and hiring process, please contact Sue Dixon, ARS, Civil Rights Staff, 202- 690-0372 or DC Relay Service: 202-855-1234 (TDD). The decision on granting reasonable accommodation will be on a case-by-case basis.

**CONTACT:**

For a copy of this vacancy announcement and/or applications forms, call 301-504-1482.

For specific questions regarding this vacancy only, call: JoAnn Fernandez at 505-646-6316

Submit applications to:

USDA, Agricultural Research Service  
Human Resources Division  
ATTN: Kathy Asmussen  
5601 Sunnyside Avenue  
Beltsville, MD 20705-5105  
PHONE: 301-504-1520

FAX applications to: 301-504-1535

E-MAIL applications to: [scirecruit@ars.usda.gov](mailto:scirecruit@ars.usda.gov) **(If submitting applications via E-mail, be sure to mail or fax other required documentation such as college transcripts, SF-50, most recent performance appraisal, and/or DD-214/SF-15 separately and include the vacancy announcement number of the position.)**

For employment information and current job opportunities:

**INTERNET ADDRESS: [www.ars.usda.gov](http://www.ars.usda.gov)**  
**DIAL-A-VACANCY: 301-504-1482**  
**DC RELAY SERVICE: 202-855-1234 (TDD)**