Life Scientist / Physical Scientist

Environmental Protection Agency

Open & closing dates

2017-08-07 to 2017-08-25

Salary

$90,023 to $117,028 / per year

Pay scale & grade

GS 13

Series

0401 General Natural Resources Management And Biological Sciences

1301 General Physical Science

Appointment type

Permanent

Work schedule

Full-time

Job announcement number

RTP-R4-MP-2017-0035

Control number

476193400

Locations

Athens, GA
1 vacancy

This job is open to

Federal employees

Current or former competitive service employees. Includes merit promotion, CTAP, ICTAP, transfer, and internal to the agency positions.

Job Summary

About the Agency

Earth Day is every day at EPA! At EPA, you can protect human health and the environment of all Americans, and you'll discover that EPA is one great place to work! We offer great benefits and work flexibilities, and our diverse workforce connects to more than just a career--we share a common passion to promote a cleaner, healthier environment.

This position is located in Region 4, Science and Ecosystem Support Division, Field Services Branch, Ecology Section, Athens, GA. For more information on this office, visit their website: http://www.epa.gov/region4

Duties

You will:

- Serve as a technical authority on biological processes associated with aquatic systems with emphasis on biological conditions and indicators of impairment.
- Serve as project leader in planning, developing, organizing, and executing broad-based environmental and biological studies.
- Provide technical assistance and training to local, state, tribal, EPA, and other federal agencies, and non-governmental organizations involved in biological assessment, especially those related to water programs.
- Participate as a senior scientist and/or project leader on bioassessment and/or water quality project teams to assure accomplishment of project objectives.

Supervisory Status

No

Promotion Potential

13

Relocation Authorized

- No

Key Requirements

- If you are selected, a pre-employment background check is required.
- You must submit resume and required documents (See How to Apply).
- Position has educational/degree requirements (See Qualifications Section).
- EPA and non-EPA applicants must submit transcripts/course listings.
- You may be required to travel 1 to 5 days per month.

Qualifications

You need a degree or combination of education and experience as described below to qualify for this position. You must have a bachelor's degree from an accredited or pre-accredited college or university in one of the following:

For Life Scientist: Biological sciences, agriculture, natural resource management, chemistry, or related disciplines appropriate to the position; OR a combination of education and experience with courses equivalent to a major, as listed.

For Physical Scientist: Physical science, engineering, or mathematics that included 24 semester hours in physical

science and/or related engineering science such as mechanics, dynamics, properties of materials, and electronics; OR a combination of education and experience with education equivalent to one of the majors listed that included at least 24 semester hours in physical science and/or related engineering science.

As part of the application process, you are required to submit college transcripts or a list of courses as described in the Required Documents section of this announcement. However, if you are selected, you must provide official educational transcripts before you start work with EPA. More information on verification of education can be found here: http://www.epa.gov/careers/epa-job-vacancy-announcements-policies-and-procedures

In addition to the educational requirements, we are looking for at least one year of specialized experience related to this position as described below:

To qualify for the GS-13 level, you need to have at least one year of full time experience equivalent to the GS-12 level defined as working with aquatic systems on environmental and biological studies, and participating on project teams to assess water quality.

Your answers to the on-line assessment will be used to evaluate your competencies in the following areas: 1) Knowledge of monitoring and sampling methods for the assessment of biological conditions and related scientific investigations; 2) Knowledge of the Clean Water Act as it relates to impaired waters assessment and Total Maximum Daily Loads; 3) Skill in planning and executing field investigations related to biological and other ecological assessments; 4) Skill in written communication; 5) Skill in oral communication; 6) Ability to work with teams on issues of water quality.

Experience refers to paid and unpaid experience, including volunteer work done through National Service programs (e.g., Peace Corps, AmeriCorps) and other organizations (e.g., professional; philanthropic; religious; spiritual; community, student, social). Volunteer work helps build critical competencies, knowledge, and skills and can provide valuable training and experience that translates directly to paid employment. You will receive credit for all qualifying experience, including volunteer experience.
This position is designated as Low Risk and requires a background investigation. Unless an appropriate background investigation is already on record with the Office of Personnel Management, you must undergo a background investigation.

You must meet time in grade requirements no later than 30 calendar days after the closing date of this announcement.

Security Clearance

Other

What To Expect Next

You can track the progress of your application package via your USAJobs account. You will receive an acknowledgement from USAJobs that your submission was successful, once we have received your on-line occupational questionnaire, resume and any supporting documentation. You will be notified of the status of your application via your USAJobs Account after we conduct a qualification review of your complete application package. You will be contacted if further evaluation or interviews are required. Any exaggeration of your experience, false statements, or attempt to conceal information may disqualify you for employment consideration. We may verify all information you provide in your resume and questionnaire responses, through reference and/or background check, and/or verification of your education. If you are selected, you will be contacted personally by the human resources office posting this announcement.

BENEFITS

Review our benefits

Benefits will not change for current permanent EPA employees.

Other Information

This information is used to determine your qualifications for employment. The use of this information is authorized under Title 5 USC, Sections 3302 and 3361.

Position has portable work and selectee may be eligible to telework.

Are you a Displaced Federal Employee? If so, please read the Required Documents and visit the EPA website for additional information: http://www.epa.gov/careers/epa-job-vacancy-announcements-policies-and-procedures

If you are selected, travel, transportation, and relocation expenses **will not be paid** by EPA. Any travel, transportation, and relocation expenses associated with reporting to work in this position will be your responsibility.

This position is in the bargaining unit.

If you have part-time work experience, read this: EPA Announcement Policies and Procedures.

You are strongly encouraged to read the entire announcement before you submit your application for this position.

To begin the application process, click the Apply button to the right on this screen, follow the prompts to log-in/register, submit all required documents, and complete the assessment questionnaire. To be considered, you must submit a complete application package by 11:59 PM Eastern time on the day the announcement closes.

All required supporting documents will be collected electronically via the USAJOBS document portfolio feature.

If you cannot apply on-line, you must contact the Human Resources Office listed to the right for assistance no later than three business days prior to the closing date of this announcement. You must provide complete application materials by the day the announcement closes.

For detailed instructions to assist you in ensuring your application package is received, go to EPA Announcement Policies and Procedures.

How You Will Be Evaluated

We will review your resume and required documents to ensure you meet the basic qualification requirements. Your resume must address the knowledge, skills, and abilities listed in the Qualifications section. If you meet basic qualification requirements, your application will be further evaluated based on your answers to the online assessment. Your responses to the online assessment will be used to measure the degree to which your background matches the requirements for the position and an applicable score assigned.

We will compare your resume and supporting documentation to your responses on the assessment questionnaire. If you rate yourself higher than is supported by your application materials, your responses may be adjusted and/or you may be excluded from consideration for this job. We will evaluate your qualifications and eligibility and notify you if you meet minimum qualification requirements. If you are referred for consideration, you may be subject to additional assessments.

NOTE: We do not require a separate statement responding to the competencies, also referred to as Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs). However, your resume should clearly show possession of these competencies.

To preview questions please click here.

Documents to be submitted on-line:

-- **Resume** clearly stating your experience related to this position as described in the Duties Section and

Qualifications Required Section. In describing your experience, you need to be clear and specific. We may not make assumptions regarding your experience.

-- **Responses** to the on-line assessment questionnaire.

-- **College transcripts** - required to submit either unofficial transcripts or a list of courses that includes school(s) attended, school address, course title, grades earned, completion dates, department, and quarter or semester hours earned.

-- **Displaced Federal employees** under CTAP - copy of your most recent performance appraisal, proof of eligibility, and your most current SF-50 noting position, grade level, tenure, and duty station.

-- **Current EPA Employees**: You are encouraged to submit a Notification of Personnel Action (SF-50). If you fail to provide an SF-50, we will access your Federal employment records in e-OPF to verify your eligibility to be considered. If your eligibility for consideration cannot be determined, your application will be rated ineligible.

If you want to know more about submitting documentation to our office, visit EPA's web site: http://www.epa.gov/careers/epa-job-vacancy-announcements-policies-and-procedures

Environmental Protection Agency

Contact

Latera Marks
Phone: 800-433-9633
Email: marks.latera@epa.gov

Address

Environmental Protection Agency
US Environmental Protection Agency
Human Resources Management Division
Research Triangle Pk
North Carolina
United States
919-541-2186

Vacancy Questions Preview

Grade: All Grades

* 1 I have experience in assessing the level of structure and functionality of aquatic ecosystems in the following ways:

- Performing hydric soil determinations using the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Field Indicators of Hydric Soils in the United States
- Using water-monitoring wells to determine hydroperiod
- Delineating wetlands using the Corps of Engineers Wetlands Delineation Manual
- Performing wetland assessments using an approved rapid assessment method
- Performing pebble counts in streams
- Identifying bank full indicators in streams
- Collecting and identifying macroinvertebrates in stream habitats
- Using an approved methodology for determining flow regimes in headwater streams
- Collecting and identifying fish in rivers and streams
- Collecting and identifying mollusks and bivalves in wetlands or streams
- Identifying many common wetland plant species
- Developing research plans, goals, objectives and timelines to address ecological data relative to wetland ecosystems
- My experience is not reflected in the choices above

* 2 Use taxonomic sorting and identification techniques for freshwater aquatic organisms, including vertebrates, fish, aquatic plants, and/or algae.

- I have not had experience, education, or training in performing this task.
- I have completed formal education or training in performing this task, but have not yet performed this task on the job.
- I have performed this task on the job under close supervision by a supervisor, manager, or senior employee to ensure compliance with correct procedures.

I have performed this task as a regular part of a job, independently and usually without review by supervisor, manager or senior employee.

This task has been a central or major part of my work. I have performed it myself routinely, and I have trained others in performance of this task and (or) others have consulted me as an expert for assistance in performing this task.

* 3 I have experience managing, integrating and/or analyzing the following types of data:

Fishery-dependent harvest and/or effort data.

Aquatic vertebrate or invertebrate monitoring data.

Water quality monitoring data.

Remote sensing data.

Human demographic or socio-economic data.

I do not have experience with any of these data types.

* 4 Manages work on highly complex water quality/biological projects where numerous tasks are involved.

I have not had experience, education, or training in performing this task.

I have completed formal education or training in performing this task, but have not yet performed this task on the job.

I have performed this task on the job under close supervision by a supervisor, manager, or senior employee to ensure compliance with correct procedures.

I have performed this task as a regular part of a job, independently and usually without review by supervisor, manager or senior employee.

This task has been a central or major part of my work. I have performed it myself routinely, and I have trained others in performance of this task and (or) others have consulted me as an expert for assistance in performing this task.

* 5 I have the following experience related to hydrology, water quality, and/or ecological data:

- Performing data analysis to prepare documents (reports, statistical summaries, etc.) that explain findings
- Entering and extracting data from information systems to collect, organize and/or analyze data for project planning or reports
- Using database programs to compute, compile, summarize and/or present data in tabular, graphic and/or narrative form
- Using spreadsheets to compute, compile, summarize and/or present data in tabular, graphic and/or narrative form
- Using standard techniques to gather, organize and/or interpret data to inform decisions about environmental issues
- Using quantitative tools or techniques to collect, measure and/or analyze environmental data
- I do not have any of the experience above

* 6 Develops experimental designs, standard operating procedures (SOPs) or quality assurance project plans (QAPPs):

- These tasks have been a significant part of my work, and I have trained others in these tasks, and/or have been consulted for my expertise with these tasks.
- I have developed experimental designs, SOPs or QAPPs, but under supervision of an advisor/supervisor.
- I have followed, but not developed, experimental designs, SOPs or QAPPs.
- I do not have experience in this task.

* 7 I have prepared technical or scientific written correspondence, documents and/or reports for the following:

- Peers and/or teams
- Supervisors and/or managers
- High level officials

State, local and/or tribal agencies

None of the above

* 8 I have made science-based decisions or recommendations about:

Water quality

Habitat restoration

Fisheries management

Ecosystem restoration

None of the above

* 9 I have made presentations or conducted briefings for the following individuals and groups:

Team members in my organization

Supervisors and managers in my organization

High level government officials

Business/industry officials

Non-technical audiences

Scientists and researchers

Congressional delegations

Foreign officials

Tribal officials

I do not meet any of the choices above

* 10 Work with teams to address issues of water quality.

I have not had experience, education, or training in performing this task.

I have completed formal education or training in performing this task, but have not yet performed this task on the job.

I have performed this task on the job under close supervision by a supervisor, manager, or senior employee to ensure compliance with correct procedures.

I have performed this task as a regular part of a job, independently and usually without review by supervisor, manager or senior employee.

This task has been a central or major part of my work. I have performed it myself routinely, and I have trained others in performance of this task and (or) others have consulted me as an expert for assistance in performing this task.

* 11 I have experience performing field studies, including sample collection and prep, in the following areas:

Comprehensive baseline assessments

Enforcement

Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs)

Wasteload allocations

Ecological support (i.e. studies of fisheries, periphyton, benthic macroinvertebrates, and/or habitat assessment)

None of the above

* 12 I have routinely conducted the following statistical analyses:

Water quality statistical analyses

Biological statistical analyses

Environmental statistical analyses

None of the above

* 13 Where did you learn about this EPA Position?

Job Fair/Career Conference

Referral from a Professional Organization

Referral from a College/University Career Placement Office

Referral from a Professor or Academic Advisor

Referral from a current EPA employee

Referral from a friend or family member

EPA Internet Site

Office of Personnel Management (OPM) USA Jobs Internet Site

Referral from a State or Local government

Referral from another Federal Agency/Employee

Twitter

Facebook

LinkedIn

USA Jobs iPhone/iPad Application

Other (w/Branch)

* 13.1 If you answered Other please tell us how you learned about this position. (Maximum length of 250 characters.)

* 14 Please look at the qualification requirements (both experience and/or education) that are stated in this vacancy announcement. Does your resume clearly contain this information in order to determine you are qualified for the position?

Yes

No

* 15 For each position listed on your resume, did you include the position title, company, salary, weekly hours worked, and your actual beginning and ending dates of employment?

Yes

No

* 16 Have you reviewed the vacancy announcement "How to Apply" and required documents section to determine what supplemental material that you must provide?

Yes

No

* 17 Are you aware that all applicants, including current EPA employees, must submit transcripts as part of your application package as outlined in the vacancy announcement? Failure to submit transcripts will be considered an incomplete application and it will be rated ineligible.

Yes

No

Grade: 13

* 1 To meet the Basic Qualifications Requirements for Biologist/Life Scientist, select the option that best describes your education and/or experience background:

I have a BACHELOR'S DEGREE in biological sciences, agriculture, natural resource management, or chemistry.

I have a BACHELOR'S DEGREE in a related discipline appropriate for THIS POSITION.

I have a combination of EXPERIENCE appropriate for THIS POSITION and EDUCATION LEADING TO A BACHELOR'S DEGREE with courses equivalent to a major in biological sciences, agriculture, natural resource management, chemistry, or a related discipline appropriate for THIS POSITION.

I do not meet any of the above.

* 2 GS-13: To meet the Additional Qualifications Requirements for Biologist/Life Scientist, GS-13, select the option that best describes your experience background:

I have 1 YEAR OF SPECIALIZED EXPERIENCE equivalent to the GS-12 level in or related to the work of THIS POSITION that provided the specific knowledges, skills and abilities to perform successfully the duties of THIS POSITION.

I do not meet the specialized experience requirement described above.

* 3 To meet the Basic Qualifications Requirements for Physical/Environmental Scientist, select the option that best describes your education and/or experience background:

I have a BACHELOR'S DEGREE in PHYSICAL SCIENCE with 24 semester hours in physical science and/or related engineering science such as mechanics, dynamics, properties of materials, and electronics.

I have a BACHELOR'S DEGREE in ENGINEERING with 24 semester hours in physical science and/or related engineering science such as mechanics, dynamics, properties of materials, and electronics.

I have a BACHELOR'S DEGREE in MATHEMATICS with 24 semester hours in physical science and/or related engineering science such as mechanics, dynamics, properties of materials, and electronics.

I have a combination of EXPERIENCE appropriate for THIS POSITION and EDUCATION LEADING TO A BACHELOR'S DEGREE with courses equivalent to a major in one of the above that included at least 24 semester hours in physical science and/or related engineering science.

I do not meet any of the above.

* 4 GS-13: To meet the Additional Qualifications Requirements for Physical/Environmental Scientist, GS-13, select the option that best describes your experience background:

I have 1 YEAR OF SPECIALIZED EXPERIENCE equivalent to the GS-12 level in or related to the work of THIS POSITION that provided the specific knowledges, skills and abilities to perform successfully the duties of THIS POSITION.

I do not meet the specialized experience requirement described above.

VIEW VACANCY DETAILS