

Job Title: Community Ecologist

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At the State of Indiana, we don't just talk about diversity and inclusion – Our goal is to create a welcoming, accessible, and equitable workplace, with a workforce that is representative of the State of Indiana population. We are proud to be an equal opportunity employer.

About the Indiana Department of Natural Resources:

The mission of the Indiana Department of Natural Resources is to protect, enhance, preserve, and wisely use natural, cultural, and recreational resources for the benefit of Indiana's citizens through professional leadership, management, and education.

Salary Information:

This role traditionally starts at a base salary of \$42,692; however, pay may be commensurate with education and experience.

About the Job:

Join the Indiana Natural Heritage Program as a Community Ecologist and you will have the opportunity to work in the diverse array of ecosystems distributed across our beautiful state--from coastal dunes to bogs and cypress swamps to sandstone cliffs. Your work will contribute to the programmatic mission of cataloging the plants, animals, and ecosystems of Indiana and prioritizing their conservation needs.

You will play an integral role in protecting Indiana's biodiversity. Specifically, you will maintain a statewide natural community classification, conduct surveys to identify high-quality examples of those ecosystems, develop ecosystem conservation priorities, nominate sites to the statewide system of nature preserves, and assist DNR programs and external partners in meeting their conservation objectives.

Your work will take you across Indiana into varied landscapes, including rough terrain without trails, and in a variety of weather conditions. From April through September, you will typically spend a significant amount of time in the field, including multi-day overnight trips. However, this can vary depending on the projects we are working on. During the rest of the year, field work and/or travel are much less frequent while time spent on data management, data analysis, and report / proposal writing increases.

In this position you will also use your excellent verbal and written skills to communicate, advise, collaborate, and network with our conservation partners within DNR, other state agencies, federal agencies, land trusts, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders interested in the conservation of Indiana's biodiversity. You should be analytical and collaborative with a passion for raising awareness about environmental concerns and natural area conservation. To succeed you should be knowledgeable and thorough with excellent research, communication, and interpersonal skills. This position is based out of the Indiana Government Center in Indianapolis.

A Day in the Life:

The essential functions of this role are as follows:

- Identify conservation status of native ecosystems by using Natural Heritage methodology for assigning conservation status ranks to natural community and botanical elements and conduct natural community surveys.
- Develop an in depth understanding of Indiana's rare species, including their taxonomy, biology, and conservation status, and use this knowledge to help prioritize information needs for Indiana plant and animal conservation.
- Compile field inventory data into suitable format for entry into the Natural Heritage information system and assist with data entry, QC, and reporting.
- Identify rare species, collect field data on vegetative structure and composition, and distinguish vegetative communities using standard Natural Heritage methodology field protocols.

- Coordinate the review of proposed research projects and prepare research and collecting permits and programmatic coal mine permit applications and evaluate for impacts to native ecosystems.
- Disseminate information to the stakeholders, partners, educational institutions, scientific organizations, and the public regarding the Indiana Natural Data Center through illustrated lectures and written literature.
- Complete technical reports and manuscripts.

The job description is not designed to cover or contain a comprehensive listing of activities, duties or responsibilities that are required of the employee. Other duties, responsibilities and activities may change or be assigned at any time.

What We're Looking For:

- Advanced degree in botanical, geological, entomological, environmental, or other natural sciences with course work and field experience indicating knowledge of community ecology and rare plants of Indiana, or comparable work in another state, or research experience. Substitute extensive field experience for advanced degree
- Must have a valid driver's license and two years of driving experience.
- Experience with ArcGIS software for analysis and map creation.
- Willingness to travel throughout Indiana and work with others on uneven terrain in all weather conditions
- Experience creating species distribution or habitat suitability models.
- Experience with the Natural Heritage Methodology.
- Experience using community/ecosystem classifications specific to Indiana.
- Working knowledge of Indiana 's natural regions and landscapes and the natural and human disturbances that can impact their ecosystem processes.
- Experience making conservation recommendations based on vegetation community quality for land acquisitions and management decisions and activities.

What You'll Need for Success:

- Field inventory skills desired -- both ecological field methods and plant species identification.
- Familiarity with mapping tools and techniques, field inventory methods, and vegetation monitoring protocols
- Ability to understand and use technical dichotomous keys
- Familiarity with the Natural Heritage Methodology
- Ability to work on a diverse team and with a variety of partners and cooperators
- Excellent interpersonal, research, problem-solving, and verbal and written communication skills
- Ability to communicate scientific information effectively to other scientists, land managers, policy makers and others
- Ability to organize and handle multiple different projects concurrently
- Understanding of endangered, threatened, and rare species conservation

Supervisory Responsibilities/Direct Reports:

This role does not provide direct supervision to direct reports.

Benefits of Employment with the State of Indiana:

The State of Indiana offers a comprehensive benefit package for full-time employees which includes:

- Three (3) medical plan options (including RX coverage) and vision/dental coverages
- Wellness program (offers premiums discount for the medical plan)
- Health savings account (includes bi-weekly state contribution)
- Deferred compensation account (similar to 401k plan) with employer match
- Two (2) fully-funded pension plan options
- Group life insurance
- Employee assistance program that allows for covered behavioral health visits
- Paid vacation, personal and sick time off
- Competitive leave policies covering a variety of employee needs
- 12 company paid holidays, 14 on election years
- Qualified employer for the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program
- New Parent Leave
- Free Parking
- Free LinkedIn Learning

Equal Employment Opportunity:

The State of Indiana is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

