

Biological Science Technician: Monitoring of Middle Branch restoration in Baltimore
Deadline: Open until filled. Review of applications will begin immediately.
Employment type: Full-time
Federal position? No
Salary: \$57,532 per year plus benefits
Anticipated start date: Summer/Fall 2026
Duration: 1 year, with the second and third years contingent upon funding and satisfactory performance
Location: Edgewater, MD
Work model: Onsite

Overview

The Smithsonian Environmental Research Center (SERC) is supporting the monitoring and evaluation of ecosystem responses to shoreline restoration along the Middle Branch of the Baltimore Harbor Watershed. The project expands integrated monitoring of the Middle Branch Resiliency Initiative (MBRI) to include wetland sediment accretion and stability, vegetation cover and communities, fish abundance and diversity, diamondback terrapin presence and habitat use, and micro- and macro-organism communities through eDNA sampling. These indicators will be monitored throughout the duration of MBRI project to assess ecological changes at each site post-restoration.

We are hiring a Biological Technician to join our interdisciplinary team. The technician will lead fieldwork, data management, and analysis for the sediment, vegetation, and terrapin monitoring components of the project, with initial compensation of \$27.66 per hour and benefits.

Key Responsibilities

The Biological Science Technician will be jointly based within SERC's Spatial Ecology and Conservation Lab and the Coastal Landscape Ecology Lab. The primary field duties will include monitoring terrapin populations and habitat use with visual surveys and GPS tracking, mapping changes in marsh vegetation cover using field surveys and drone data collection, monitoring coastal wetland surface elevation changes and plant biomass, and collecting soil samples. Laboratory and office work will include performing data management and advanced statistical and spatial analyses using R, performing biogeochemical analyses of soil samples, and assisting with preparation of text and publication quality figures for manuscripts and reports. The technician will coordinate with SERC scientists, project partners, and landowners to accomplish and communicate project activities.

Qualifications and Requirements

Knowledge and Skills

The position requires a master's degree in biology, data science, ecology, marine science, or a related field. Strong data management and carpentry skills are required, including proficiency with office software and the R statistical computing environment. Demonstrated experience working in coastal wetlands and/or urban ecology research is highly desired. Specific experience with biomass and soil sampling; sample processing for organic matter, carbon, nitrogen, and phosphorus determination; GIS; drone data collection and processing; analysis of RGB, multispectral, and LiDAR data; vegetation sampling and mapping; and/or GPS telemetry are all preferred skills but not required. Applicants with some of these skills are encouraged to apply and if hired will receive training in additional skills needed to complete project responsibilities. The applicant must be detail-oriented and an effective communicator. The applicant should have practical knowledge of field research procedures in ecology, such as field orientation using GPS, delimitation of transects and plots for vegetation sampling, sampling of soil profiles, standardized wildlife surveys, etc.

Physical Requirements

About 50% of the work will be performed outdoors, in the field and about 50% will involve sedentary laboratory or office tasks. The role requires prolonged standing, walking over uneven terrain in urban and wetland environments, lifting and carrying loads up to 50 lbs, and operating hand tools and motorized vehicles. The incumbent must be prepared for work in challenging field conditions, including working on boats and within wetlands, extended exposure to heat, cold, and wet conditions, stinging and biting insects, poisonous plants, navigating built areas and partially submerged debris, and similar environmental hazards, and should take appropriate safety precautions. Travel between field sites may be required.

How to Apply

To apply, please send the following as a single PDF document to Justin Nowakowski (NowakowskiA@si.edu) and Andre Rovai (RovaiAS@si.edu): Cover letter summarizing relevant experience, Curriculum Vitae, and the names and full contact information (email, phone, postal address) of three references. Review of applications will begin immediately, and the position is open until filled. Anticipated start date: September/October 2026.

Contact

Justin Nowakowski
Principal Investigator, Spatial Ecology and Conservation Lab
Nowakowskia@si.edu

Andre Rovai
Principal Investigator, Coastal Landscape Ecology Lab
RovaiAS@si.edu

SERC HR
SERC_HR@si.edu

About SERC

SERC is a research center of the Smithsonian Institution, located in Edgewater, MD on the Rhode River estuary on the western shore of the Chesapeake Bay, approximately 10 miles south of the historic seaport of Annapolis, 40 miles east of Washington DC, and 40 miles south of Baltimore. SERC's 2,650-acre campus is a living laboratory for long-term ecosystem research on forests, farmland, wetlands, shorelines, and estuaries. The SERC campus contains a laboratory and office complex, as well as education and waterfront facilities, dormitories for interns, and guest housing for visitors. Our vibrant community of 150 staff includes principal investigators, educators, technicians, postdocs, and graduate and undergraduate researchers, who annually engage and collaborate with interns, 500+ volunteers and 25,000 public visitors.

The Smithsonian Institution provides reasonable accommodation to applicants with disabilities where appropriate. Applicants requiring reasonable accommodation should contact SERC_HR@si.edu. Determinations on requests for reasonable accommodation will be made on a case-by-case basis. To learn more, please review the Smithsonian's Accommodation Procedures.

The Smithsonian Institution is an Equal Opportunity Employer. We believe that a workforce comprising a variety of educational, cultural, and experiential backgrounds support and enhance our daily work life and contribute to the richness of our exhibitions and programs. See Smithsonian EEO program information: <https://www.si.edu/oeo>.