

Role Description: Calumet Animal and Pathogen Training Urban Research Experience (CAPTURE) Project Volunteer

March 2023

Overview

Volunteers will help with on-the-ground, small mammal sampling efforts for the Walder Foundation Biota Award Project entitled “Small Mammal and Pathogen Diversity in South Side Parks in Chicago: Implications for Human Health and Wellbeing”, hereafter referred to as CAPTURE (Calumet Animal and Pathogen Training Urban Research Experience). Major activities include assisting FMNH staff and students in running capture-mark-recapture trapping grids on various parks and forest preserve sites in Chicago’s South Side to estimate small mammal diversity, vector abundance, and pathogen prevalence across different land-use and management practices. Field sampling occurs April – September, under the supervision of project PI Adam Ferguson, Negaunee Collection Manager of Mammals at the Field Museum of Natural History.

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Assist with small mammal trapping and processing (volunteers do not have to directly handle rodents if they do not wish to but will need to assist others with processing both live and dead rodents).
- Work closely with project leaders to help set traps, process animals, record data, and release animals under field conditions (2 full days/month).
- Assist project personnel with trap washing/sterilization between trapping bouts (1 full day/month).
- Assist with recording data under field and lab conditions.
- Assist with museum work related to project (e.g., specimen preparation, data curation, and sample management).

Volunteer qualifications/skills required:

- Willingness to work outside under non-optimal weather conditions for up to 7 hours.
- Hiking and checking traps off of paved surfaces.
- Familiarity with small mammals of Illinois.
- Ability to work well with others.
- Ability to work in outdoor environments.
- Ability to lift up to 30-35 lbs.
- Attention to detail.
- Familiarity with data collection in the field.
- Flexibility in regards to activities related to different project goals and objectives.

Education/ Experience

- Bachelors of Science degree in biology or related field.
- At least some experience working outdoors under variable weather conditions.
- Willingness to work with/around live animals under field conditions.

Volunteer Time Requirements:

- April - September 2023; 3 days per month **minimum**: dates and times vary but could include weekends and weekdays for up to 7 hours each day.
- Priority placement will be given to those applicants who have the best skills set, experience and availability.
- Number of Volunteers needed: 5-10.