

Canine Field Specialist



Job Details:

Site: Missoula, MT and extensive domestic and international travel (up to 6-7 months/year)

Type: full time, exempt

Pay: \$28k- \$33k DOE

To apply, please submit a CV, cover letter, and video sample to application@wd4c.org. Please see attached instructions for the video sample. For videos we are strongly encouraging everyone to choose a dog with higher energy (i.e., traits more similar to that of a working dog).

About WD4C:

WD4C is a 501c3 nonprofit organization that saves wildlife and wild places using conservation detection dogs. Since being founded in 2000, we have helped conserve scores of species around the world, by:

- providing the best-available information for elusive, threatened, and endangered, species;
- addressing and stopping the proliferation of invasive species;
- preventing and resolving human/wildlife conflicts;
- reducing wildlife crime through anti-poaching and anti-trafficking;
- and, advocating for optimal health and welfare of domestic dogs.

(Learn more at WD4C.org)

Position Description and Essential Functions

The Canine Field Specialist (CFS) is a professional, career-track position in the biological sciences, and the essential component of WD4C operations. The CFS will be responsible for field work with conservation dogs, up to approximately 6-7 months per year, in remote locations around the US and international locations. Canine Field Specialists are rare professionals (there are perhaps a couple of dozen worldwide) and therefore the position undergoes an extensive field-going apprenticeship to learn all the functions unique to handling a conservation detection dog, training teams, and completing field assignments. Ultimately the CFS is responsible for independent and careful completion of field projects which includes: preparatory field logistics and study design recommendations; assisting with training curriculum development, and modification for individual projects; training teams; dog preparation; dog daily care, handling, and troubleshooting on searches; field navigation; data and sample collection, management, and organization; mapping and report writing; and possible data analysis and manuscript preparation. The CFS also cares for a conservation dog(s) in his/her own home; is involved with selection, training and conditioning of conservation dogs; and engages in all components of WD4C's Dog Life program. CFS is a professional representative of WD4C and engages with the public, media, and fellow scientists/conservationists. CFS contributes to other operational functions- such as outreach,

project development, proposal writing, IT, and various other programmatic and administrative functions- appropriate to the CFS's expertise.

Responsibilities and Specific Duties (include but are not limited to):

During apprenticeship/probationary period:

- Be trained in the selection, training, handling, proper control and care of conservation detection dogs for a variety of conservation science projects
- Learn scent theory, search strategy, and field first aid
- Care for dog- maintain health and safety and care for dog's daily needs (feeding, exercise, veterinary care, and attention) while in the field, and in your own home when not in the field
- Assist in the care and conditioning of conservation dogs
- Accompany on field projects for *in situ* training and supervised handling
- Assist in team training and support
- Learn project management: logistics, organizing field schedules, data collection and maintenance
- Learn navigation skills and technology specific to conservation dog field work: compass, GPS, mapping software and programs
- Assist in preparation of project reports
- Learn WD4C talking points and programs and media/presentation conduct
- Maintain clear and consistent communication (phone, email, in-person meetings) with other staff
- Assist in other programmatic and operational functions

Following apprenticeship:

- Continually and successfully demonstrate mastery of skills and information learned during apprenticeship and continue to perform all duties described above
- Independently and professionally engage with the public, media, and project personnel
- Deploy on field projects- with minimal supervision successfully orchestrate and complete all dog care, field work, team training, data management, and related project tasks
- Initiate and make meaningful contributions to programmatic and operational functions appropriate to your skill set and expertise

Qualifications:

- Education: B.A. or B.S. in biology, animal behavior, anthrozoology, or related field preferred or equivalent combination of education and experience
- Field experience: 2 years or considerable seasonal experience
- Demonstrated experience in teaching or mentoring
- Interest in long-term (3+ years), committed employment
- Ability to travel away from home for up to 6-7 months per year- often to remote locations
- Comfortable with a range of field housing conditions- rental house, hotel/motel, cabin, RV, tent, communal field stations, and variable internet connection and cell reception
- Able to work and live in close proximity with others while on project
- Willingness to work outdoors and convey positive attitude during challenging conditions- rain, heat, cold, frustration, tedium, and other various forms of discomfort
- Comfortable (safely) collecting animal feces

- Good sense of direction
- Comfortable working with only a dog and no other people in the field
- Comfortable working in the presence of wildlife- bears and other carnivores, snakes, insects
- Interest in working intimately with a detection dog
- Comfortable with strong boundaries and a structured environment when caring for dogs, including using a travel crate, and providing constant supervision and behavior management
- Provide references which corroborate the following personal attributes in a working environment:
 - reliable
 - detail oriented
 - self-starter and independent worker YET a strong team player
 - able to follow detailed instructions
 - able to troubleshoot and think independently
 - able to work collaboratively with diverse and varied interests and personalities
 - manages time well
 - demonstrates follow-through and evaluation of progress
 - able to work under pressure and under deadline
 - fast learner with ability to self-assess and correct
 - strong sense of initiative and able to work creatively and independently with limited supervision but with input from a variety of sources
- Excellent communication skills- both written and verbal
- Professional mannerism when dealing with press, public, and project personnel
- Culturally sensitive to people of other gender, race, religion, nationality
- Ability to thrive under repetition and tedium
- Flexibility- with schedule and adapting to study obstacles
- A good sense of humor and lots of patience
- Eagerness to be an integral part of a small staff of dedicated people
- Driver's license in good standing and clean driving record
- Proficient with Office Suite (Word, Excel, Outlook)
- 18+ years old

Other Preferred Qualifications:

- Experience with detection training/handling, and/or other disciplines
- Ability to care for active, high-energy, feisty dog(s) in your home 24/7 when not deployed on projects- fenced yard, landlord approval, non-aggressive personal pets
- Compass, GPS, map skills
- Experience driving manual transmission and 4WD vehicles
- Google Earth/Garmin BaseCamp / ArcGIS experience
- Home with high-speed internet connection, and ability to telecommute
- Demonstrated commitment to conservation
- Other skills, experience, and initiative valuable to operating a conservation nonprofit

Physical Demands:

- The employee will spend considerable amount of time outdoors exposed to heat, cold, direct sunlight, rain, and other inclement conditions

- Physical ability to walk up to 8 miles/day or 8 hours/day off-trail, often up and downhill, while having an active medium-large dog and carrying pack up to 25lbs (occasional backpacking with heavier packs may be required)
- Physical agility to manage unstable footing is required for maneuvering field obstacles such as downfall, uneven ground, rock fields, stream crossings, sand, loose soil, mud
- Position requires stooping, bending, kneeling, crouching, crawling, and reaching on a regular basis to negotiate field obstacles, though these motions are not consistent and repetitive
- Lifting 50lbs waist-high is required on an occasional basis
- This position includes working with dogs and in natural environments and employee may receive insect bites, scratches, bruises, blisters, thorns, and minor cuts on a regular basis
- While performing the duties of this job, the employee is required to be able to talk, hear, type at a computer, grasp, maneuver a leash, throw a ball
- Specific vision abilities required by this job include close vision, distance vision, the ability to adjust focus, and peripheral vision

Terms and Compensation

WD4C policy dictates a probationary period of 6 months for this position. During this time, Canine Field Specialist apprenticeship will be based either in the field, or in Missoula, MT.

Compensation and benefits: \$28k- \$33k/year to start, DOE. Paid leave of 2 weeks/year with opportunity to accrue more with ongoing employment. Flexible working hours. Opportunity for additional unpaid leave if vacation time exhausted. Health benefits (including vision and dental options) begin 60 days after start of employment. Annual stipend for personal field gear goes into effect after the probationary period. Additional benefits include an employer sponsored SIMPLE IRA plan, AAA membership, and Costco membership. All dog care costs for caring for WD4C dogs in your home fully reimbursed. Field transportation, food and incidentals, and lodging costs fully covered while deployed.

All employees are required to satisfactorily perform the essential functions of their positions. The essential duties and responsibilities listed above are not intended to be construed as an exhaustive list of all responsibilities, duties and skills required. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions of the job.

WD4C Dog Video Instructions

Please make a video of yourself doing the following:

With a dog unfamiliar to you, that you have NOT practiced with, and preferably at an area animal shelter, select one dog and perform the following on camera-

1. State your name
2. Put a collar and leash on the dog- any available variety of leash or collar is fine
3. Heel the dog- this means the dog should walk by your left side, its head staying even with your leg while you:
 - a. Walk straight at a normal pace
 - b. Make Right turn
 - c. Jog
 - d. Make Right turn
 - e. Walk at a normal pace
 - f. Make Left turn
 - g. Stop: have dog sit at your side
4. Have the dog come to you (can be done off-leash if the shelter permits it and you are in a secured yard/area) and sit facing you.
5. Have the dog place his front paws up on a wall or other vertical surface, or on a chair.

Please then record yourself answering the following questions:

1. Why did you select the dog that you did?
 2. How do you feel your exercises went?
 3. What, if anything, would you do differently if given another opportunity?
- The dog is expected to be untrained. We are not looking at the dog's performance, but rather your interaction with the dog.
 - Choosing a dog with higher energy (i.e., traits more similar to that of a working dog) is suggested.
 - It will be much easier to have someone help video you. Also this person can call out commands to you, for example in the heeling exercise s/he could say, "walk...right turn...jog" etc.
 - The video will likely be only a few minutes long, and should not be longer than 10 minutes

Submit the recording to: application@wd4c.org

Preferred methods of delivery:

- Post to YouTube and then send link to application@wd4c.org
- Some cloud venue, like Google Drive, or Dropbox
- Any other method that your tech-savvy self knows about that allows for reviewers to receive as an email or link to directly
- You can break it up into smaller segments for ease of download/sharing- just label them accordingly so we go in the right order
- Please don't worry about recording quality, we just need to have you and the dog in the frame most of the time and be able to hear your answers to the questions

THANK YOU!