

**From:** Melissa Benedetti  
**Subject:** National Ecological Observatory Network - Technician - FL

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Field Technician I- Limnology  
Location: Gainesville, FL  
Worker Category: Regular Full-Time

To Apply: [www.neonscience.org](http://www.neonscience.org)

#### COMPANY OVERVIEW

Battelle and its affiliate, Battelle Ecology, Inc. manages and operates the National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON) project, which is solely funded by the National Science Foundation. A 30+ year project dedicated to understanding how changes in climate, land use and invasive species impact ecology, the observatory's scientists and engineers are collecting a comprehensive range of ecological data on a continental scale across 20 eco-climatic domains representing US ecosystems. Our teams use cutting-edge technology, including an airborne observation platform that captures images of regional landscapes and vegetation; mobile, relocatable, and fixed data collection sites with automated ground sensors to monitor soil and atmosphere; and trained field crews who observe and sample populations of diverse organisms and collect soil and water data. Once structures are completed, a leading edge cyberinfrastructure will calibrate, store and publish this information. The Observatory includes more than 500+ personnel and is the first of its kind designed to detect and enable forecasting of ecological change at continental scales.

#### JOB SUMMARY

The Field Technician reports to the Field Operations Manager.

- Field Technician I - The Field Technician I is a biological sampling lead performing seasonal and periodic sampling activities and sample processing. Seasonal field sampling is conducted with the assistance of temporary field crews under the guidance of the Field Technician.

#### LOCATION

Domain 3 is headquartered in Gainesville, Florida, home of the University of Florida. This is a nice medium sized college town with a lot to do in off hours. The climate is hot and wet during the summer and cool and dry in winter. Frequent thunderstorms occur from late spring through the summer and sometimes into fall. This is also the hurricane season.

We travel frequently since our remote sites are the Disney Wilderness Preserve (about 2.5 hours south), and the JW Jones Ecological Research Center in Georgia (about 4.5 hours north). The Disney site is a wetland project so the ground is frequently wet. Sampling at these sites is usually an overnight trip, sometimes all week. Lodging is provided and expenses are reimbursed. The local site is the Ordway Swisher Biological Field station (University of Florida) in nearby Melrose.

The terrain is generally flat with some rolling hills. The plant

communities vary by site and range from flatwoods matrix with wetlands at Disney and varying degrees of sandhill at both Ordway Swisher (local) and Jones (Georgia). There is a high degree of plant and animal diversity. There are many stinging insects and plants that cause rashes. Since this is the south, there are poisonous snakes, and alligators to contend with, but if you're careful they won't be an issue.

Working schedules are generally straight-forward, except for some split days (off in the middle of the day) for the small mammal team and some evening work for the plant team. Weeks are 40 hours with possible overtime and usually not weekends. Techs will need to be flexible in the hours that they will be asked to work with some days starting before dawn and some ending after dusk. The ratio of field to lab work is about 75% field and 25% lab. There is plentiful housing available in the Gainesville area.

#### ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Monitor and sample aquatic sites for water quality, biological indicators, physical properties of site (e.g. gaging streams, geomorphic mapping, etc.), and leading field crews to perform the aforementioned items.
- Test, troubleshoot and operate instruments, calibration equipment and test fixtures.
- Inspect and maintain aquatic sensors, gear and equipment.
- Assist the NEON Systems Engineering Product Team with instrument installation and testing (approximately the first 6 months).
- Perform aquatic vegetation diversity and primary productivity measurements.
- Sample for aquatic invertebrate and fish diversity and abundance.

General duties include:

- Report activities, completed work, and sampling problems according to Field Operations protocols.
- Inspect, maintain and operate field, safety and laboratory equipment.
- Operate laboratory equipment (e.g. Wiley Mill, drying oven, analytical balance, centrifugal mill, pH meter, microscope, and muffle furnace).
- Assist the Field Operations Manager with recruiting and training of seasonal field personnel.
- Provide instruction and technical guidance to seasonal field personnel.
- Perform plot establishment by locating plots with GPS navigation as well as measuring and marking plots.
- Assist the Field Operations Manager with materials planning, inventory and ordering as well as day-to-day oversight of personnel and scheduling of activities coordinated from the field office.
- Follow Battelle Ecology, Inc. safety and Field Operations policy and procedures.

Field activities may include:

- Follow established, standardized field protocols for sample collection and handling; record and verify accuracy of data from sample collections; process samples in the laboratory; send samples to external analytical labs. Train and lead field crews performing the aforementioned items.

- Perform other field sampling activities as assigned including: ground beetle collection (pitfall trapping), mosquito collection (CO<sub>2</sub> light traps, tick collection (dragging and flagging) and soil core collection.
- Test, troubleshoot and operate tower, soil and aquatic instruments, calibration equipment and test fixtures.
- Inspect and maintain civil infrastructure including boom arms, sensor mounts, towers, boardwalks and instrument huts.
- Monitor and sample aquatic sites for water quality, biological indicators and physical properties of site (e.g. gaging streams, geomorphic mapping).

**Physical demands:**

The work is physical and involves walking, hiking, prolonged standing, walking and bending. Heavy items (e.g. equipment and packs up to 40 pounds) must be lifted and carried on a routine basis.

**Work environment:**

Field work includes exposure to extreme weather conditions and terrain, pesticides, poisonous plants, biting insects, and wild animals. Tower work involves performing work on instrument towers ranging in height from 24 feet to 300 feet which will include ascending and descending multiple flights of stairs.

**REQUIRED: EDUCATION, EXPERIENCE, KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS**

**All Technician Levels:**

- Ability to work in a team environment.
- Experience should include performing scientific data entry and data management.
- Ability to hike off-trail to assigned field site for long distances carrying field equipment (pack weighing up to 40 lbs.) for extended periods of time.
- Ability and willingness to travel overnight frequently (e.g. semi-monthly for 3-4 nights).

Battelle Ecology, Inc. will be selecting an individual for a Field Technician I level. Equivalent education and experience may be considered.

**Field Technician I**

- Bachelor's degree in ecology, environmental sciences or related scientific discipline.
- One (1) or more years' of related experience.

Battelle Ecology, Inc. will take into consideration qualifications for specific and diverse experience in the following areas:

**Leadership:**

- Effective leadership skills and the ability to motivate others.
- Effective problem solving skills and the ability to determine and act on changing priorities in a fast paced dynamic environment.
- Ability to organize and execute multiple activities and priorities.

Skills:

- Ability to perform minor troubleshooting, calibration, and repair of field equipment.
- Ability to follow written and verbal instructions.
- Ability and willingness to learn and adopt new technologies as needed.
- Ability to work independently and as part of a team.
- High level of attention to detail and accuracy.
- Ability to make effective decisions that take into consideration safety and operational standards.

Working conditions:

- Ability and willingness to work varied field operations schedules (up to 12+ hours per day), including split-shift, part-time, pre-dawn early mornings, evenings and weekends.
- Ability and willingness to work on towers ranging in height from 24 feet to 300 feet including ascending and descending multiple flights of stairs on instrument towers.
- Perform field assignments in a variety of terrain and of weather conditions including cold and wet winter weather and extreme heat.
- Ability to withstand exposure to fumes, dust, and noise.
- Ability and willingness to travel overnight frequently (e.g. semi-monthly for 3-4 nights) is required.

Must possess a current and valid State issued driver's license with insurable Department of Motor vehicle record (parking violations, minor driving offenses excluded) as determined by Battelle Ecology, Inc.'s insurance provider.

Must have permanent authorization for US employment. Battelle Ecology, Inc., will not provide any kind of visa sponsorship.

This position offers competitive total rewards including 401(k), health, vision and dental insurance, generous paid time off and the opportunity to work at an organization with a great mission.

Battelle Ecology, Inc. provides employment and opportunities for advancement, compensation, training, and growth according to individual merit, without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, age, genetic information, or disability. Our goal is for each staff member to have the opportunity to grow to the limits of their abilities and to achieve personal and organizational objectives. We will support positive programs for equal treatment of all staff and full utilization of all qualified employees at all levels within Battelle Ecology, Inc.