

2026 Seasonal Field Research Team:
Endangered Amphibian Recovery
Sierra Nevada, California

<http://mountainlakesresearch.com>

Position summary: The Mountain Lakes Research Group, based at the University of California Sierra Nevada Aquatic Research Laboratory (SNARL) in Mammoth Lakes, CA, USA, is seeking applications for up to four seasonal research crew members for the Summer 2026 field season. Successful applicants will work in the Sierra Nevada mountains as part of a team restoring populations of the endangered mountain yellow-legged frogs (*Rana muscosa* and *R. sierrae*) in the presence of the amphibian chytrid fungus, a widespread amphibian pathogen. We will:

- Conduct capture-mark-recapture surveys to assess the status of frog populations established via translocation or reintroduction in previous years.
- Reintroduce captive-reared frogs.
- Translocate wild frogs.
- Conduct amphibian visual encounter surveys.
- Collect diagnostic skin swabs from frog populations to quantify frog-pathogen dynamics.
- Other research tasks vary as determined by dynamic collaborations and funding, but have recently included studying frog and pathogen genomics, frog immunology and microbiome, alpine soundscapes and lake ecology, work with Yosemite toads (*Anaxyrus canorus*), California red-legged frogs (*Rana draytonii*), and other Sierra herpetofauna.

The research will take place at remote backcountry locations in Yosemite and Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks and adjacent national forest wilderness areas. The team will work a variable and flexible schedule, but backcountry stints are typically 5-8 days (2-4 days off). We primarily survey in daytime, but occasional night surveys are required. This research is part of a multi-decade research program funded by federal and state agencies and private foundations.

Mountain Lakes Research Group fosters a supportive work environment that relies on open and honest communication and strong mentorship. We welcome diversity in experiences, values, and perspectives that arise from differences in race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, language, abilities/disabilities, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic status, veteran status, geographic region, and more.

Information about Mountain Lakes Research Group, including scientific publications, is available at:
<http://mountainlakesresearch.com>.

Eligibility and requirements: The ideal candidate will have extensive backpacking experience in mountain environments, previous experience conducting field research in remote locations, and experience directly handling amphibians. The ideal candidate will have strong leadership and communication skills and demonstrated ability to work individually and as a team member.

- To be considered for this position, you **MUST** have extensive backpacking experience, which fulfills all of the following conditions:
 - More than an occasional short trip.
 - Trips of multiple consecutive nights.

- Substantial consecutive daily mileage (10+ miles per day).
- Carrying one's own overnight gear and food.
- You should have experience backpacking or traveling at high elevations (>10,000ft) and understand your abilities in alpine environments.
- You MUST be able to navigate off trail using a paper map, and a GPS device. Off trail travel includes rocky third class terrain.
- You MUST be comfortable working alone in remote areas for hours at a time and feel comfortable collecting data independently while managing the challenges of a montane or alpine environment (inclement weather, altitude, mosquitos).
- You MUST have a passion for conducting field research, under all conditions.
- You should have experience capturing and handling amphibians, and ideally, inserting PIT tags.
- Employees generally have completed BA/BS (or higher) degrees in ecology or wildlife biology.
- You should have personal backpacking equipment in functional condition (we do not provide backpacking gear).
- Although not required, training history or current certification in wilderness medicine (ex.: Wilderness First Aid, Wilderness First Responder) is an asset.
- A personal vehicle is an asset for work and for remote field-station life; work-related mileage will be reimbursed.
- You must be available for the duration of the position, approximately early June to late September.

Compensation: \$22.94 per hour. Benefits are available through UCSB but vary with duration of service; duration of service varies annually, depending on preceding winter snowpack. Mileage and meal costs are reimbursed for field days. Shared employee housing is provided at SNARL.

How to apply: The application period is **December 26, 2025, to January 19, 2026**. Applications MUST include:

- (1) **Cover letter** that states why you are interested in the position, and why you would be an asset to the project. Please detail your backpacking experience (mileage, elevation, duration, locations) and research experience (e.g., work with amphibians, PIT tagging, small vertebrates, listed species).
- (2) **Resume** that includes current contact information (email addresses and phone numbers) for three professional references who are familiar with your research and/or backpacking experience.
- (3) **Transcripts** from undergraduate and graduate (if applicable) institutions. Unofficial copies of transcripts are acceptable.

TO APPLY:

Email applications (formatted as a *single* PDF document) to Thomas Smith and Alexa Lindauer (mountainlakesresearchgroup.jobs@gmail.com) by January 19, 2026. Our selection process typically takes 4-6 weeks and may conclude in late February.

