



## Platte River Whooping Crane Maintenance Trust, Inc. JOB DESCRIPTION

**Job Title:** Lila O. Wilson Biological Monitoring Fellow  
**Location:** 6611 W. Whooping Crane Drive, Wood River, NE 68883  
**Status:** Exempt  
**Reports to:** Director of Conservation Research  
**Date:** 12/20/2024  
**Salary:** \$1,900/month with dormitory-style housing provided  
**Website:** [cranetrust.org](http://cranetrust.org)

### Description

We are currently seeking one Biological Monitoring Fellow to serve as part of our science team at the Crane Trust for the upcoming 2025 field season and 2026 crane season. The Biological Monitoring Fellow will be working on a variety of projects that are a part of our Long-Term Monitoring Plan and duties described below. This Fellowship is a great opportunity to learn the dynamics of wholistic conservation in a declining but biologically important habitat. The position is generously supported by Johanna DeStefano, Professor Emeritus at The Ohio State University, and named after her mother, Lila. O. Wilson, a curious and passionate high school biology teacher from Springfield, Oregon, who shared her love of the natural environment with many.

### Projects and Duties

**Avian-** Assisting with avian point count surveys throughout all seasons as well as helping with Greater Prairie Chicken lek monitoring.

**Vegetation-** Helping record data for the assessment of management strategies for a variety of vegetative communities throughout Crane Trust land. Reading taxonomic keys to identify species. Contributing to our herbarium and plant pressing. Collecting native seeds for Crane Trust prairie restorations.

**Anuran-** Learning and conducting field-based anuran call surveys.

**Butterfly Species of Concern Surveys-** Conducting surveys for Regal Fritillary and Monarch butterflies.

**Small Mammal-** Setting Sherman box traps along long-term monitoring transects to collect species diversity and abundance data. Identifying small mammal species.

**Soil Invertebrate-** Collection and processing of soil invertebrate samples.

**Fish Seining-** Surveying sloughs for fish species and associated community using seining nets.

**Bison Health** - Collecting and processing bison biometric data for long-term genetic and health studies.

**Whooping Cranes** – Assist with behavioral monitoring during migration seasons.

**Sandhill Cranes** – Educating Crane Trust guests during spring crane season at our Nature and Visitor Center along with assisting staff and volunteers with crane season events and tours.

**Data Collection and Entry** – Keeping accurate and organized data for all surveys and entering data into digital databases.

**Scientific Research** – Assisting with scientific manuscripts at different stages of publication (data analysis, writing, etc.) based on interest, skill level, and personal initiative.

**Conservation Storytelling** – Documenting their fellowship experience and producing media content to tell the story of conservation in the Central Platte River Valley.

### **Qualifications**

A college degree with a major or minor in the biological sciences, natural resources, botany, range science, ecology, wildlife biology, agriculture, or a related field. If you do not have a degree or official minor in one of these fields, college credits equivalent to a minor (at least 24 credits in biological sciences) will be acceptable. Field experience is a bonus, whether in class, for work, or for an internship.

A personal connection to and enjoyment of nature is foundational to a successful fellowship experience. The fellow is required to learn and conduct specific protocols associated with above duties. A strong drive to learn, grow and take initiative often sets apart excellent candidates from good candidates.

Our tallgrass prairie system is extremely beautiful and diverse, but you will be exposed to many biting insects, hot humid weather conditions, and poisonous plants. Knowing you enjoy working outside for extended periods of time, despite some basic lack of comfort, is a must. You must also be good at working in close quarters with others.

Housing includes private rooms with shared kitchen, men's bathrooms, and women's bathrooms. These will be the same people you will be working long field hours with and collaborating with on research projects. An ability to get along with others is a must.

Must have the ability to hike moderate distances over uneven terrain and lift up to 50 lbs. Skill in Microsoft Office, Access, Excel, R, ArcGIS, DNR Garmin, and other programs often used in natural resources research is a great benefit, but not mandatory. Must also have proof of personal health insurance and a valid driver's license.

### **Deadline**

The application deadline is February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2025 and interviews will be conducted between February 17<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>, 2025.

### **Application Instructions**

To apply, send one document, preferably a PDF, containing your resume/CV, contact information, at least three references (from at least two different positions/schools/organizations), and a cover letter no longer than one page detailing your interests in our research projects, your skillset, important experiences (educational, volunteer, or work highlights), and a little about your philosophy on conservation and work. Thank you for your interest in this position. Please email applications to the below address and feel free to e-mail with any questions.

### **Contact Information**

Dr. Abraham Kanz  
Director of Conservation Research  
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Wood River, NE 68883