TITLE: Alkali Fly Research Technician
PAY: $20.00 per hour
STATUS: Full-time temporary, hourly non-exempt
DURATION: May–November 2026
LOCATION: Lee Vining, California
SUPERVISED BY: Robbie Di Paolo

MONO LAKE
COMMITTEE

Description:

The Mono Lake Committee is a 16,000-member non-profit citizens' group dedicated to the protection and restoration of the Mono Basin ecosystem; educating the public about Mono Lake and the impacts on the environment of excessive water use; and promoting cooperative solutions that meet real water needs without transferring environmental problems to other areas.

Alkali fly (*Ephydra hians*) productivity at Mono Lake is a valuable indicator for understanding Mono Lake's ecosystem health. With a life cycle that occurs almost entirely within Mono Lake's water and a diet of lake algae, alkali flies and their productivity are directly linked to the lake's environmental conditions. These flies also serve as a critical food source for hundreds of thousands of migratory and breeding shorebirds and waterfowl.

Research on the flies was part of the original ecological study of Mono Lake in 1976, when experiments were done to determine the effects of increasing salinity on the physiology of the flies. This and subsequent studies established an empirical relationship between lake salinity and alkali fly productivity. This relationship was instrumental in the California State Water Resources Control Board's decision to set the ecologically healthy 6,392-foot lake elevation. However, with Mono Lake still nine vertical feet short of this lake level 31 years after it was mandated, there is a need to further understand how elevated salinity impacts the alkali fly population over time.

Alkali fly research at Mono Lake in 2026 is being directed by Dr. David Herbst, one of the original alkali fly researchers from the 1976 study. The selected candidate for the position will receive paid training to acquire the skills and knowledge needed. Most work will be conducted at the Sierra Nevada Aquatic Research Laboratory (SNARL) for the purpose of processing and counting alkali fly samples. Field work will occur intermittently at Mono Lake throughout the term of the position to collect alkali fly samples.

In this role you will:

- Deploy field sampling equipment and collect samples at three sampling sites at Mono Lake, with assistance from Dr. Herbst and/or Mono Lake Committee staff.
- Process, record, and analyze samples at SNARL.
- Organize, maintain, and report on physical and digital data sheets from lab and field work.

Qualifications:

- Enthusiasm for entomology and/or environmental science.
- Strong independent work ethic with the ability to collaborate as part of a team.
- Ability to hike off-trail in waders through tall grass and bushes, marshy soils, and lake water while carrying equipment in sunny exposed conditions.
- Experience with or willingness to learn field sampling and laboratory processing techniques.
- Strong communications skills, both written and verbal.
- Ability to work with diverse management styles and manage multiple priorities with different deadlines.

Benefits:

- Opportunity to gain hands-on research experience under the mentorship of an expert in the field.
- Exposure to ecological research and networking opportunities within the scientific community.
- Paid time off for observed holidays that occur during time of employment.
- Mileage is paid for all job-related travel from place of work in personal vehicle.
- Employee discount on merchandise in the Information Center & Bookstore.

Application process:

The Mono Lake Committee values a diverse, inclusive, and equitable workplace where all employees and volunteers feel respected and appreciated. We are committed to a nondiscriminatory approach and provide equal opportunity for employment and advancement in all our departments.

Applications will be accepted starting December 19, 2025. To apply, please email a resume and cover letter to Robbie Di Paolo at *robbie@monolake.org*. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled.

For more information, contact Robbie Di Paolo at *robbie@monolake.org* or (760) 647-6386 x122.