

**Opportunity Title:** EPA Aquatic Resources Impacts Internship

**Opportunity Reference Code:** EPA-REG6-2021-01

**Organization** U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

**Reference Code** EPA-REG6-2021-01

**How to Apply** *Connect with ORISE...on the GO!* Download the new ORISE GO mobile app in the [Apple App Store](#) or [Google Play Store](#) to help you stay engaged, connected, and informed during your ORISE experience and beyond!

A complete application consists of:

- An application
- Transcript(s) – For this opportunity, an unofficial transcript or copy of the student academic records printed by the applicant or by academic advisors from internal institution systems may be submitted. All transcripts must be in English or include an official English translation. Click [here](#) for detailed information about acceptable transcripts.
- A current resume/CV, including academic history, employment history, relevant experiences, and publication list
- Two educational or professional recommendations. Click [here](#) for detailed information about recommendations.

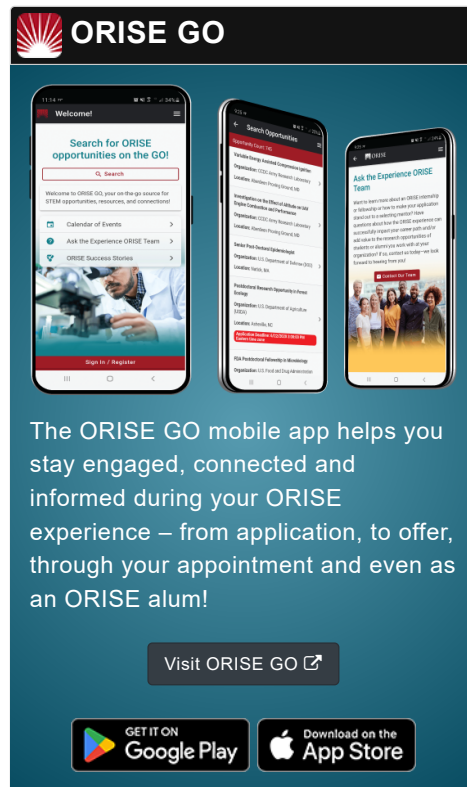
All documents must be in English or include an official English translation.

**Application Deadline** 10/20/2021 3:00:00 PM Eastern Time Zone

**Description** **\*Applications may be reviewed on a rolling-basis and this posting could close before the deadline.** Click [here](#) for information about the selection process.

**EPA Office/Lab and Location:** A research associate opportunity is available at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 6, Dallas, Texas in the NPDES/Wetlands Review Section. The Wetlands Section is responsible for administering EPA's wetland protection program within the region. Program responsibilities are mainly related to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, and related regulations by EPA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, EPA is charged with oversight of the COE permitting program which regulates the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States.

**Research Project:** Research, review, summarize and compile meaningful ecological performance standards for compensatory mitigation banks and recommend improvements to existing approaches to established standards. The assessment would include an evaluation of the various aquatic resource habitat types found in the Texas and Louisiana Gulf Coast Region. Mitigation bank types evaluated may include a combination of restoration, establishment, enhancement and preservation of marsh, wetland, stream and riparian areas. The effort would include the evaluation of existing performance standards, monitoring reports, and potential field verification within the TX/LA Gulf Coast Region and nationwide as appropriate.



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Existing databases and similar studies may also be utilized to guide the effort along with existing models, tools, methods, or protocols, for assessing aquatic resources. The effort would address a critical need to identify and develop robust mitigation bank performance standards to help ensure successful compensatory mitigation projects in support of Clean Water Act Section 404 Compensatory Mitigation Bank Program. The effort will include coordination with the appropriate resource agencies (e.g., Corps of Engineers, Texas Parks and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality) to solicit input regarding aquatic resource criteria.

Additionally, there is an opportunity to participate in the development of regional streamflow duration assessment methods (SDAMs), an ongoing project. EPA HQ is currently testing the Pacific Northwest and New Mexico methods and several additional indicators at sites across the Arid Southwest and Western Mountains. The team is concurrently working to identify regionally specific indicators, and intermittent and ephemeral sites for field testing in the Northern and Southern Plains. The effort will include coordination with the appropriate state resource agencies to obtain the necessary expertise for development of information about assessments. Based on the outcome of this research and assessments, a collection of models, methods, or protocols will be developed for Clean Water Act Section 404 permit applicant use in identifying the appropriate impact assessment method for stream flows. The assessment will also consider the extent to which the tools are appropriate for identifying impacts, in the context of Clean Water Act Section 404 permit evaluations which will address the resource factors identified in the Clean Water Act 404(b)(1) Guidelines.

**Learning Objectives:** Under the guidance from a mentor, the research participant will gain experience in any or all of the following areas

- Develop knowledge about the Clean Water Act 404 and Compensatory Mitigation Banking programs.
- Understand the habitat and impact assessment tools utilized for various aquatic resources.
- Understand how Clean Water Act programs are implemented between the federal, state, and regulated communities.
- Gain experience in Public Service and obtain professional contacts through the Mitigation Banking Interagency Review Teams.
- Gather, analyze, review, and present results to their mentor and internal/external audiences through briefings, fact sheets and presentations

**Mentor(s):** The mentor for questions about this opportunity is Paul Kaspar ([kaspar.paul@epa.gov](mailto:kaspar.paul@epa.gov)). If you have questions about

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the nature of the research please contact the mentor(s).

**Anticipated Appointment Start Date:** **September 2021.** All start dates are flexible and vary depending on numerous factors. Click [here](#) for detailed information about start dates.

**Appointment Length:** The appointment may initially be for one year and may be renewed up to three additional years upon EPA recommendation and subject to availability of funding.

**Level of Participation:** The appointment is full-time.

**Participant Stipend:** **The participant will receive a monthly stipend ranging from \$3,176 up to \$3,972 which is commensurate with educational level and experience.**

**EPA Security Clearance:** Completion of a successful background investigation by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is required for an applicant to be on-boarded at EPA.

**ORISE Information:** This program, administered by ORAU through its contract with the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) to manage the Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education (ORISE), was established through an interagency agreement between DOE and EPA. Participants do not become employees of EPA, DOE or the program administrator, and there are no employment-related benefits. Proof of health insurance is required for participation in this program. Health insurance can be obtained through ORISE.

ORISE offers all ORISE EPA graduate students and Postdocs a free 5 year membership to the National Postdoctoral Association (NPA).

**Questions:** Please see the [FAQ section](#) of our website. After reading, if you have additional questions about the application process please email [ORISE.EPA.REG@orau.org](mailto:ORISE.EPA.REG@orau.org) and include the reference code for this opportunity.

## **Qualifications**

The qualified candidate should be currently pursuing or have received a bachelor's, master's or doctoral degree in one of the relevant fields. Degree must have been received within the past five years.

Preferred skills:

- Impact assessment and evaluation and the methodologies used in that process (Rapid Assessment methods, habitat evaluation procedures, etc.)
- Knowledge of Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, including stream and wetland mitigation strategies
- Experience in measurement of environmental variables,

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stream functions, ecosystem components

- Natural resource modeling, basic stream and wetland functions, and experience in field measurements/data collection
- Willingness to work outdoors, in the Texas summer heat

**Eligibility  
Requirements**

- **Citizenship:** LPR or U.S. Citizen
- **Degree:** Bachelor's Degree, Master's Degree, or Doctoral Degree received within the last 60 months or currently pursuing.
- **Discipline(s):**
  - **Computer, Information, and Data Sciences** (1 👁)
  - **Earth and Geosciences** (4 👁)
  - **Engineering** (3 👁)
  - **Environmental and Marine Sciences** (12 👁)
  - **Life Health and Medical Sciences** (6 👁)
- **Veteran Status:** Veterans Preference, degree received within the last 120 month(s).