JOB ANNOUNCEMENT

Fossil Prep Lab Manager

The Bighorn Basin Paleontological Institute is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization dedicated to paleontology and earth science research, education, and outreach. We seek to collaboratively study, preserve, and interpret the paleontological treasures of the Bighorn Basin and the surrounding region, as well as to promote paleontology and the natural sciences to life-long learners, wherever they may be.

The BBPI is pleased to announce a 1-year, full time, grant supported Fossil Prep Lab Manager position. The BBPI’s Fossil Prep Lab is a publicly viewable workspace within the Academy of Natural Science of Drexel University - the oldest continuously operating museum in the Northern hemisphere - in Center City, Philadelphia.

As a BBPI employee, you have a unique opportunity to help build a young but growing and ambitious organization. As our Fossil Prep Lab Manager, you will be instrumental in helping us build our research program, while also strengthening our education and outreach programs, touching thousands of lives throughout the tri-state Philadelphia region.

The Fossil Prep Lab Manager is primarily responsible for the supervision, management, and safety of the personnel and activities in the fossil preparation laboratory. Secondly, the lab manager is responsible for facilitating research on fossils, including the preparation and casting of specimens, training and managing volunteers, assisting with educational and outreach programming on and off-site, assisting in the organization and execution of field work pertaining to the collection of fossil specimens, and assisting in the curation of fossil specimens. The Lab Manager must be able to communicate the BBPI’s mission, vision, and values throughout every aspect of his/her duties.

Previous experience with fossil preparation is required. Fossil Prep training will not be provided, and the new Fossil Prep Lab Manager is expected to be able to work successfully with a range of techniques and on a variety of fossil specimens and matrix on the first day of employment.
Duties and Responsibilities

1. Lab Management: Works with senior BBPI staff to:
   
   a. Maintain a safe and healthy workplace and work environment.
   
   b. Develop and maintain health and safety protocols, maintaining compliance with all Drexel University/Academy guidelines.
   
   c. Lead training sessions appropriate to ensure personal safety and safety of lab staff.
   
   d. Be able to recognize and mitigate physical and chemical hazards and have a basic knowledge of emergency response and first aid
   
   e. Serve as a Safety Warden for the paleontology lab and paleontology collections areas.
   
   f. Manage the chemical and hazardous materials in the laboratory, making sure they are properly labeled and that all MSDS sheets are available.

2. Manage daily Fossil Prep Lab operations.
   
   a. Oversee the daily operations within the laboratory and keep all associated specimen records.
   
   b. Work with the Executive Director to develop and implement protocols and standard procedures designed to most efficiently conduct fossil preparation activities, including post-preparation curation, to produce a reference for laboratory staff (employees, volunteers, and students).
   
   c. Communicate in a timely manner with the Executive Director about needed purchases, including for equipment and supplies, necessary for uninterrupted lab operations. Fossil Preparation training and supervision of paleontology
laboratory staff. Maintain and communicate lab-related expense reports, budgets, etc.

d. Develop, assign, and monitor fossil-based projects for employees, volunteers, and students who use the fossil lab.

e. Assign and manage schedules for employees, volunteers, and students who use the fossil lab, including interns.

f. Monitor the skill level of employees, volunteers, interns, and students who use the fossil lab and determine suitable assignments and the appropriateness of further training.

g. Provide training in fossil preparation, conservation, and curation for laboratory staff (employees, volunteers, and students).

3. Facilitating Research on Fossil Specimens:

a. Fossil Preparation

i. Possess the knowledge, skill, and experience to prepare fossils using whichever methods will allow for scientific information to be best accessed, including information contained in the surrounding matrix.

ii. Have an up-to-date understanding of the techniques, adhesives, and solvents that are used during the preparation of fossil specimens, and the experience to select the most appropriate material for each task.

b. Collections Management

i. Maintain records of the history of each fossil as it passes through the fossil preparation laboratory.

ii. Before each fossil specimen leaves the laboratory, the paleontology lab manager must ensure its suitable housing and archival labeling.

iii. Possess skill and experience with collections management software or willingness to be trained in order to maintain necessary records of specimen preparation and curation.

c. Professional Development and Outreach
i. Keep abreast of developments and new materials and techniques in the specialty of fossil preparation through professional journals and networking with colleagues.

ii. Be willing and able to present innovations to concepts and techniques of fossil collection, preparation, conservation and laboratory or volunteer management to colleagues at professional meetings.

4. Education and Engagement

a. Interact with the public (museum visitors, school groups, university classes, and others) in the Fossil Preparation Lab spaces.

b. Communicate the BBPI’s mission, vision, values, and goals, as well as the importance of field work and paleontological research.

c. Present to the public both general paleobiological and geological information and information specific to the specialty of fossil preparation and the specimens being worked on and the nature and importance of the tasks being performed.

d. Coordinate with the Executive Director and relevant Academy exhibits and public programs staff when the preparation of fossils is to be part of a public event.

e. Internally and externally assess the nature and importance of finds made by the public and provide information.

f. Help prepare and repair fossils and casts for display and exhibit at off-site public events, as needed.

g. Attend and help staff occasional public outreach events throughout the Philadelphia region.

h. Contribute to BBPI social media channels, including but not limited to posts, live feeds, Q&A, etc., as well as virtual outreach events, such as tours of the lab space, etc.

5. Fieldwork Management: The Fossil Lab Manager may be asked to join the Field Expedition staff for part of the summer field season. In support of that work, the Lab
Manager will work closely with the Executive Director and other Field Expedition staff to:

   a. Provide training on proper fossil collecting techniques in the field and ensure their safe collection and return to the Lab.

   b. Possess the knowledge to ensure the stability of the specimens and the preservation of the greatest amount of scientific information.

   c. Have the knowledge, willingness and ability to live and work out of doors in varying climatic conditions.

   d. Help manage logistical arrangements to ensure a safe and efficient field expedition.

   e. Provide training to field staff and volunteers to ensure effectiveness in safely extracting fossils from the field.

   f. Ensure that all work in the field is properly documented and archived as part of the permanent BBPI and research records.

Requirements:

Candidates must be highly organized, self-motivated, and eager to take initiative to complete necessary tasks, including but not limited to those listed above, without prompting. Requirements for this position include:

➢ Previous experience in vertebrate fossil preparation and curation.

➢ BS in Biology, Geology, Paleontology or related field OR at least four years of relevant work experience in a paleontology lab or museum collections environment.

     ○ Equivalent education/experience will substitute for all minimum qualifications.

➢ Must have a reliable mode of transportation, a valid driver's license, and proof of insurance.

➢ Good physical condition, including:

     ○ Job requires, among other activities, sitting, standing, bending over, moving and lifting fossils, detailed hand/eye work (using air scribes and dental picks), and pulling pallets. Ability to regularly lift and carry at least 40 lbs.
➢ Excellent communication, interpersonal, and organizational skills.
  ○ Ability to hold professional, friendly and informative interactions with laboratory visitors of all ages, volunteers, visiting scientists, and participants.
  ○ Experience with a wide range of social media platforms. High level of proficiency with Instagram, Facebook, live broadcast, Zoom, etc.

➢ Proficiency with Google Docs, Google Sheets, and other records management software, etc.

➢ Flexible availability, and able to work on occasional weekends, as needed. The Academy is open seven days a week and the Fossil Prep Lab must be staffed by an employee and/or volunteer each day, whenever possible.

➢ COVID-19 vaccination

Desired Qualifications:

➢ B.S. in Biology, Geology, Paleontology or related field OR at least four years of equivalent experience in a paleontology lab or museum collections environment.

➢ At least 24 years old.

➢ Would be willing to conduct minor fossil preparation activities at home or at an off-site storage unit if pandemic-related shutdowns of the Fossil Preparation Lab reoccur.

➢ In case of closures, would be willing and able to adapt to an unconventional physical working location, including conducting minor fossil preparation activities at home or at an off-site facility.

Conditions of Employment:

➢ Appointment to this position is contingent upon obtaining satisfactory results from criminal background checks

➢ Independent research projects, completed in coordination and communication with BBPI staff, are encouraged.
Compensation for position

➢ $18/hr, 40hrs/week
➢ Reimbursement for off-site work-related travel expenses
➢ Funds may be available for relocation expenses.

Additional Information

This is a grant-supported, 1-year (52 weeks) position. Longer-term employment is dependent on both performance and additional successful grant support, and cannot be guaranteed.

BBPI is an equal opportunity employer. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, religion, national or ethnic origin, disability or protected veteran status.

Unfortunately, at this time, we are unable to hire international applicants.

Please send inquiries to Jason Schein (JSchein@BBPaleo.org).

Applications should include a cover letter, resume/CV, and names and contact information for at least two (2) references. These documents must be submitted via our online Application Submission Form. Applications are due no later than 5pm, Sunday, August 22nd, 2021.