Environmental Studies

Assignment Description Form

Organization/Agency: Research on desert species and climate change
Supervisor/Sponsor: Sarah Skikne Supervisor/Sponsor title: graduate student
Address: Email: sskikne@ucsc.edu
Phone: 650-814-5230 Fax: Website:

# of interns needed/Hours worked per intern: Needed for quarters: Options (choose one)
1/60 hours total (2 units) x Fall x Winter Remove your listing by
x Spring x Summer x Or keep on file for one year

Describe the internship assignment: Brief statement about the agency; role of the intern and specific objectives of the projects assigned to the intern; tasks to be performed.

Climate impacts on species distributions in California desert ecosystem

The changing climate has already caused shifts in species ranges, altering ecological communities. My project investigates species range shifts using records of reptile, mammal and plant distributions collected since the 1970s along an elevational gradient in Boyd Deep Canyon, a UC Natural Reserve near Palm Desert, California. My goal is to test whether species have shifted their elevational ranges in response to recent climate change, and if so, what ecological processes unfold to create these shifts.

To understand what might cause some species to shift ranges and others to stay in place, information on the ecology and natural history of these desert species is needed. Interns will create a database of the important features of each species at the site by researching literature and other sources and summarizing their findings.

I am looking for interns who are independent, highly motivated, detail-oriented, and have good research and writing skills.

Interns will contribute to research that will inform adaptation responses to climate change, practice skills in research and critical thinking, and learn about the natural history of a unique desert community.

Other tasks may be added depending on project development and the intern's interest, with the possibility of extension into additional quarters.

Prerequisites: Outline the skills and background information necessary to participate in this internship.
• Detail-oriented, diligent and responsible
• Good writing skills
• Interest in natural history and basic ecology
• Experience conducting research and interpreting scientific literature; ability to distinguish between reputable / academic sources and those that are less so.