



## McKinney Climate Fellows Program

### 2022 McKinney Climate Fellow – Western EcoSystems Technology, Inc. (WEST)

#### Who We Are

Western EcoSystems Technology, Inc. (WEST) provides environmental and statistical consulting services and contract research nationally and internationally for industry, government, and private organizations. We offer clients a unique combination of ecology and statistics to help solve ongoing and contemporary natural resource problems. Through continual training opportunities and emphasis on professional development, WEST provides the highest level of technical expertise in ecology, wildlife biology, geospatial sciences, and biometrics. WEST's unique focus and combination of skills is a key asset for developing scientifically defensible solutions to natural resource issues. This expertise results in an approach unmatched in the environmental consulting industry. **WEST advocates for good science, establishing the company as an objective and respected consultancy for working with agencies and industry.**

At the heart of WEST's foundation is a collaborative approach. We assemble diverse project teams, including subject matter experts, and we coordinate with staff in relevant geographic regions to provide clients with the most innovative, science-based solutions to evaluate impacts to, and design strategies for conservation of natural resources.

WEST encourages a positive work atmosphere by providing an environment that focuses on respect, integrity, honesty, and accountability. WEST honors diversity, integrity and equity with no tolerance for discrimination or harassment. As an employee-owned company, WEST is committed to providing employees a satisfying and rewarding career. The work force values autonomy, mastery, and purpose. WEST provides employees with the benefits, career opportunities, safe work environment, and team structure to develop a satisfying professional career while still maintaining a focus on personal growth and work-life balance.

#### POSITION SUMMARY

The McKinney Climate Fellow will be placed in the Bloomington, Indiana Office and will be responsible for taking the lead on an initiative to assist WEST with outreach and expansion of our climate services program addressing sustainability, and ecological resiliency projects. WEST is firmly committed to not only our own ESG initiatives as they respond to the need for climate resiliency, but we also see this as an area of urgent and extremely important support to our clients. While most of our current work already serves the renewable energy industry, we see the incorporation of new and additional services as critical to our own and our customer's future success. These may include biodiversity assessment and management, habitat conservation planning and design of land-based impact mitigation to meet future climate conditions, and establishment of in-situ habitat restoration to support natural communities.

To define how we best move forward in this area, we want to learn more about our client's climate-based initiatives and goals, focusing on ecological and analytic strategies to target climate change. We envision pairing WEST senior-level ecologists and statisticians, as well as our CSR and DEI team, with an IU Climate Fellow to develop, deploy, and evaluate responses to a survey on our client's needs related to climate change issues.

This outreach may be directed to renewable and fossil fuels energy developers, power line developers, forest managers, ENGOs, and state and federal agencies with whom WEST has an established relationship. WEST is currently working with a majority of the main global entities in renewable energy, including Avangrid NA, EDF Renewables, EDPR NA, NextEra Energy Resources, Clearway, Southern Power, American Electric Power, AES (including sPower), Orsted, Scout Energy, and others (a full list of our clients is available following a Non-Disclosure Agreement). These renewable energy developers actively seek out ESG/CSR compliance and look to provide it on their projects and to their investors. Questions we seek answers to center on the following elements of our client’s climate resiliency goals:

- Drivers
  - Organizational goals and investor requirements
  - Opportunities for positive change
- Ecological issues
  - Organization status check and roadmap
  - Biodiversity standards as related to United Nations (UN) standards: [UN Sustainable Development Goal \(SDG \)15](#).
  - Project design and compliance (internal CSR, regulatory)
  - Restoration/mitigation needs
- Statistics/data analytic issues
  - Spatial and temporal scales that are relevant for assessment of climate risk
  - How uncertainty should be communicated
  - Interest in average predictions or the probability of rare events (or both)
  - Visualization tools that are most compelling and information rich, while still faithfully representing the analysis/results

We believe that at present we can best gain perspective on our client needs through the use of a poll to explore these and other pertinent issues that will result in a clear set of action items that we can use to refine and grow our business support to the climate sustainability-sensitive businesses that we serve. We recognize that not only is our organization facing new challenges in defining our role in climate sustainability, but also that many of our clients are currently wrestling with these same issues. There is an exciting opportunity to grow to meet this urgent demand by articulating attainable goals that align with the “SMART” acronym: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely. We look to work with a Climate Fellow who sees this as an opportunity to provide information that will be directly and rapidly applied in practice.

To address this opportunity, Climate Fellow duties will include:

- Design, implementation, analysis, and summary reporting (to include suggested action items) of a client outreach poll/questionnaire to help WEST best understand emerging client needs to meet their CSR and ESG goals. Most of our clients are in the private renewable energy sector, and have core values that reflect regulatory compliance, conservation of biodiversity and climate resiliency, and decision-making based on sound scientific principles. WEST seeks to work with an IU Climate Fellow to identify specifically how we best engage and meaningfully support our clients that are committed to improving their own sustainability and climate change response services.
- Attend the Boot camp May 16 – 20, 2022
- Attend weekly (virtual) “Lunch and Learns”, Wednesdays from 12:00pm-1:30pm
- Submit weekly Canvas reports over the course of the fellowship

### Qualifications

- The foremost qualification is enthusiastic interest in and strong commitment to evaluating strategies that WEST can use to help our clients advance and achieve their climate change resiliency goals in support of corporate CSR and ESG initiatives.
- Our team personnel work individually, as well as with other natural resource specialists, scientists and biometricians. A successful team member must be a self-starter who possesses:
  - Minimum of a bachelor's degree in natural resources studies, biostatistics, or climate sciences with a focus on life sciences, natural resource conservation, and/or energy generation and sustainability studies.
  - Effective communication (verbal and written) skills; computer literacy
  - A strong desire to interact with and understand the perspectives and goals of energy and natural resource companies to support and enhance climate resilience initiatives.
  - A history of maintaining positive relationships with coworkers and clients.
- Experience with statistical design and analysis, data compilation, analysis, and visualization, public canvassing/polling using various media platforms, business/financial planning, and customer outreach are all desirable, but we do not expect an applicant will possess experience in each of these areas.
- Knowledge and/or experience or coursework in data tracking on projects that summarize a broad spectrum of data types and input, to recognize, evaluate, and communicate measurable outcomes that can lead to action.
- Understanding of the renewable energy market.
- Self-motivated, with an ability to work independently while managing multi-faceted (complex) tasks.
- Personal integrity, a collaborative approach, and an equity mindset/lens and other critical indicators related to DEI in climate work are required to make this effort successful.

### Compensation

Compensation will be in the form of a scholarship through the Environmental Resilience Institute. The Fellow will work full time for 10 weeks, beginning May 30th, and ending August 5th.

### Feedback and evaluation

The Fellow will be given regular feedback from staff on progress and performance. Success in the fellowship will be determined by the completion of specified projects in a professional and timely manner. The Fellow should learn how this organization identifies its sustainability priorities, effective principles of communication, and how to develop and maintain professional relationships.

### Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

The McKinney Climate Fellows Program supports the continual advancement and development of diverse, inclusive and equitable spaces. Indiana climate change solutions should be equitable in implementation, and projects with equity considerations are encouraged to reduce climate change impacts on marginalized communities in the state.

### Application instructions

To apply for this position, complete an application on the Environmental Resilience Institute's website. If you have questions about the program or any of the positions available, email Danni Schaust, MCF Program Manager, at danmcpe@iu.edu, or Sarah Miller, MCF Project and Outreach Coordinator at sjm8@iu.edu. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis (first come, first serve) until Monday, February 14, 2022.

**Fill-in box on the online form:** How will your organization and this placement directly address climate action and sustainability? Describe in detail how hosting a McKinney Climate Fellow will positively impact your organization and its sustainability program. \*

WEST is currently developing and expanding our internal CSR program to include sustainability and climate action targets and practices. We recognize the critical need for our clients to do the same, both because many of our clients' business is specifically tied to renewable energy generation and ecological resource management. Therefore, we have both significant intrinsic and extrinsic (business development) goals and opportunities related to climate resilience and ecological sustainability. We believe that in this case, "standing still" is not an option for meeting our own corporate goals of environmental stewardship and community support, nor it is a tenable position for future business growth. We encourage the participation of a McKinney Climate Fellow to help us chart the course for building upon our established base of outstanding environmental consulting expertise and strong relationships to help identify and solve the challenges our clients face in meeting their own emerging climate response goals.

We believe that we are very well positioned to expand our CSR/ESG/climate service support to clients to provide scientifically based information and products to enhance client knowledge and respond to the impacts of climate in their decisions and actions, and to design and implement solutions to improve climate resilience and decrease degradation.