

Qualified Biologist Language for Term Agreements (may be used in other documents)

E6. Biological Studies

(E6 is not a category by itself. At a minimum you need to apply for and be qualified under E6a. Categories E6b, E6c, and E6d include specialized experience and will be approved on a project-by-project basis.)

When working on an ITD project where biological resources are present and may be impacted, work must be completed by an individual or individuals who meet, at a minimum, the qualified biologist (E6a) requirements. Some ITD projects may require more specialized experience in botany (E6b. Qualified Botanist), fisheries (E6c. Qualified Fisheries Biologist), and wildlife biology (E6d. Qualified Wildlife Biologist).

E6a. Qualified Biologist

Successful completion of a full four-year course of study in an accredited college or university leading to a bachelor's or higher degree in general biology, zoology, ecology, wildlife or fisheries biology, natural resource or land management, environmental science, plant biology, botany, or related disciplines. Professional knowledge and competence in the science of wildlife and fisheries biology and/or plant biology to perform work in evaluating the impact of construction projects or maintenance activities that present potential or actual adverse effects on wildlife, fish or plant resources and their habitats.

Experience may include but is not limited to: field experience in the identification of Idaho flora or fauna, particularly rare, threatened, and endangered species; general Endangered Species Act (ESA) species habitat evaluations, Idaho Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN), ESA, and sensitive species surveys, ESA compliance, surveying for native and invasive plant species, migratory birds and migratory bird nests, and biological monitoring. Professional knowledge and competence in preparing simple biological evaluations to complex "no effect" and "may affect" biological evaluations, including Biological Evaluations and Biological Assessments, and other technical reports for environmental compliance.

A combination of education and professional experience (courses equivalent to a major as described above, plus appropriate experience or additional education) totaling a minimum of four years may be substituted for education or experience requirements as approved by a District or Headquarters Senior Environmental Planner. The education or combined education and experience must be comparable in type, scope, and thoroughness to that acquired through successful completion of a 4-year course of study as described above.

E6b. Qualified Botanist

In addition to meeting the qualifications in E6a, a qualified botanist must also have at least 2 years of relevant experience in Idaho, or similar environment. A qualified botanist must have knowledge of plant taxonomy and natural community ecology; familiarity with natural communities of Idaho, including sensitive natural communities; have experience conducting botanical surveys; and have experience analyzing the impacts of projects on botanical resources. A qualified botanist must have the ability to follow federal established rare plant protocols, project monitoring, and prepare botanical reports for environmental compliance.

E6c. Qualified Fisheries Biologist

In addition to meeting the qualifications in E6a, a qualified fisheries biologist must also have at least 2 years of relevant experience in Idaho, or similar environment, performing surveys and inventories of aquatic species, including listed, native, and invasive fish species and their habitats. Professional knowledge and competence in evaluating the impact of construction projects or maintenance activities, including fish passage projects, that present potential or actual adverse effects on fish resources and associated aquatic habitats. A qualified fisheries biologist must have the ability to prepare fishery technical reports and impacts analyses for environmental compliance.

All individuals participating in fish capture and removal operations will have the training, knowledge, skills, and ability to ensure safe handling of fish, and to ensure the safety of staff conducting the operations. According to current US Fish and Wildlife Services or National Marine Fisheries Services protocols, if electrofishing is proposed as a means of fish capture, the directing biologist will have a minimum of 100 hours electrofishing experience in the field using similar equipment, and any individuals operating electrofishing equipment will have a minimum of 40 hours electrofishing experience under direct supervision. A Scientific Collecting Permit issued by IDFG is required to handle captured fish.

E6d. Qualified Wildlife Biologist

In addition to meeting the qualifications in E6a, a qualified wildlife biologist must also have at least 2 years of relevant experience in Idaho, or similar environment, performing surveys and inventories of rare, candidate, proposed, and federally listed species, Idaho Species of Greatest Conservation Need, and habitat assessments. Experience in surveying for migratory birds, migratory bird nests, bats, and bat roosts and conducting nest monitoring and bat acoustical monitoring may be necessary. Demonstrated knowledge of conducting wildlife crossing studies, landscape level connectivity assessments, or migration studies may be required. A qualified wildlife biologist must have the ability to prepare biological technical reports for environmental compliance.

With regards to species focused surveys, the qualified biologist must meet regulatory agency protocol qualifications and possess or obtain appropriate state and/or federal permits prior to conducting the survey, where necessary.