

**CIRES/NOAA Western Water Assessment:  
Climate Assessment Specialist/Professional Research Assistant**

Western Water Assessment ([WWA](#)) is seeking a full-time Professional Research Assistant to serve as the Climate Assessment Specialist, supported by a grant from NOAA. This 2-year position will be located within the Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Science (CIRES) at the University of Colorado Boulder campus but will collaborate widely with researchers and stakeholders throughout the southwestern United States. WWA, a NOAA Regional Integrated Sciences and Assessments (RISA) program, conducts innovative research in partnership with decision makers in the Rocky Mountain West, helping them make the best use of science to manage for climate impacts. WWA works extensively with researchers and stakeholders in fields of water management, natural hazards management, and municipal planning, among others.

**Responsibilities**

The Climate Assessment Specialist (CAS) will help research, design and inform ongoing climate assessment activities in the Southwest National Climate Assessment (NCA) region. Climate assessment is the process of evaluating, synthesizing, and communicating knowledge about climate risks and impacts to support decision-making. The CAS will collaborate with our fellow Southwest NCA RISA teams, CLIMAS and CNAP, and with climate assessment specialists at CCRUN, SCIPP and Pacific RISAs. They will be responsible for working with partners and stakeholders throughout the region to co-design and support processes that share best practices of and pilot new climate assessment activities, and provide feedback on the effectiveness of tools, processes and data for sustained climate assessments. Activities will focus especially on sustained climate assessments as an alternative to the model of producing a large, national climate assessment report at multi-year intervals. The position will focus on one or two sectors, such as water resources, agriculture, infrastructure, etc. We envision the following outcomes at the end of this 2-year position:

- Given that climate services and assessments serve stakeholders with a broad range of capacity levels, develop a robust categorization of the types of organizations involved in providing climate information across the region, taking into account size, institutional structure, funding, technical capacity, relationships with scientists and stakeholders, etc.
- Canvass the Southwest NCA region to identify 10-20 examples of successful organizations that are innovating in the area of connecting science to decision making and sustained assessment. These examples would be analyzed and written up into a series of case studies to begin to build an online repository of 'best practices' emphasizing the key elements for providing ongoing assessment to stakeholders and identifying what practices work for what type of context.
- Lead the production of a report for the regional, and potentially national, audience on key elements of building a sustained assessment function that is relevant, trusted and credible, and tailored for a variety of decision contexts in the Southwest. This report will be paired with the creation of a regional web portal linking to existing assessment products that provides direct benefit to users and entities providing climate services in the region.
- Help to coordinate the technical inputs and assist regional partners for the 4th National Climate Assessment Report as that process evolves over the next 2 years.

## **Duties**

- Work with staff of CLIMAS, CNAP, the National Climate Assessment and other RISA Climate Assessment Specialists to identify ongoing, successful climate assessment activities with particular focus on sustained assessment processes
- Identify opportunities for WWA to participate in local, regional, or national climate assessment activities
- Develop a robust categorization of the types of organizations involved in providing climate services across the region
- Identify examples of successful organizations that are innovating in the area of connecting science to decision making and sustained assessment
- Lead the production of a report on key elements of building a sustained assessment function that is relevant, trusted and credible
- Help to coordinate the technical inputs and assist regional partners for the 4th National Climate Assessment
- Collaborate with partners at CLIMAS and CNAP to advance the sustained climate assessment capacity in the Southwest NCA region
- Understand and apply the WWA model for stakeholder interaction and usable science across the region

## **Required**

- Excellent communication and networking skills
  - Demonstrated ability to speak to diverse audiences about complex science issues
  - Strong writing skills
- Facilitation and organizational skills necessary to identify and convene interdisciplinary climate projects, stakeholder and scientist workshops, and related activities
- Demonstrate general understanding of climate processes, whether through formal education or collaboration with climate and weather scientists
- Master's or PhD in environmental studies, social sciences, geography, hydrology, meteorology, climatology, geosciences or related field
- Self-motivated and able to work independently
- Willingness to learn and adapt to different perspectives
- Ability to frequently travel throughout the US Southwest and some trips to Washington, DC, about 25% travel

## **Desirable**

- Experience working with communities, organizations or agencies related to climate adaptation planning
- Strong understanding of the principles of producing actionable or usable science to support decision making
- Demonstrated experience working at the interface between research and decision making

The position will be filled as a Professional Research Assistant through the University of Colorado at Boulder, and will be eligible for a generous employee benefit package.