Southwest Geophysical Consulting, LLC

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Field Technician

Job Description

Southwest Geophysical Consulting is looking for an adventurous, mechanically inclined, and hardworking Field Technician to join our team. We specialize in cave location, cave mapping, and karst characterization using geophysical methods — primarily electrical resistivity imaging, ground-penetrating radar, magnetometry, and drone imagery — mostly in southeastern New Mexico and throughout the Southwest.

This is a hands-on, outdoor-heavy role. You will be a core member of a field team, responsible for the physical execution of geophysical surveys: setting up and maintaining equipment, laying out survey lines, collecting data, moving gear across challenging terrain, and making sure everything runs smoothly in the field. The geologist on your team handles the technical interpretation; your job is to make the field work happen efficiently, safely, and to a high standard of care.

If you like being outside, are good with your hands, care about doing things right, and have any background in caving, outdoor work, construction, survey, military service, or technical field work, we want to hear from you. A geology degree is useful but absolutely not required. What matters most is capability, attitude, and a genuine interest in what we do.

We are based in Albuquerque, NM. Most field work is conducted in and around southeastern New Mexico, with projects occasionally taking teams to other locations in the Southwest. Candidates in the Albuquerque or Carlsbad, NM areas are strongly preferred; candidates willing to relocate at their own expense will be considered.

What You'll Do in the Field

- **Survey line setup and management:** Stake and flag survey lines, place electrodes or sensor arrays, manage cable layouts, and maintain precise spacing and alignment as directed by the Field Lead.
- **Equipment operation and data collection:** Operate geophysical field instruments under the supervision of the Field Lead or geologist. Follow acquisition protocols precisely and consistently. Maintain data quality through careful documentation of field conditions, anomalies, and any deviations from protocol.
- **Equipment care and maintenance:** Field technicians are the first line of defense for SWG's equipment. You will be responsible for daily equipment checks, proper packing and transport, routine maintenance, and flagging any issues to the team lead immediately. Basic small engine maintenance (Honda 2- and 4-stroke) is part of the job.
- **Vehicle and logistics management:** Drive and maintain SWG vehicles, including towing trailers, light off-roading, and managing equipment transport to remote locations. Assist with field logistics — fuel, supplies, site access coordination, and equipment staging.
- **Field documentation:** Maintain clear, accurate field notes. Record equipment settings, site conditions, GPS coordinates, photographs, and any observations relevant to the survey. Your notes are a primary input to the technical report.

- **Site safety:** Identify and communicate hazards. Follow SWG safety protocols. Assist the Field Lead in maintaining a safe working environment, particularly in areas with rough terrain, confined space potential, extreme heat, or remote locations with limited communications.
- **General field support:** Carry gear, set up and break down camp or staging areas, assist other team members, and do whatever it takes to get the job done efficiently. Field work is a team effort and everyone pitches in.

What We're Looking For

We hire for capability and attitude first. Here is what we look for:

Education and Background

- High school diploma or GED required. Associate degree, technical certification, or BS in geology, environmental science, geotechnical engineering, or a related field is a plus — but a degree does not substitute for practical field capability, and lack of one will not disqualify a strong candidate.
- Two or more years of field or outdoor work experience preferred. Relevant backgrounds include: geology or environmental fieldwork, caving, backcountry or trail work, construction or inspection, military field service, surveying, equipment operation, or any other sustained outdoor work in demanding conditions.
- **Cave and karst interest: highly desired.** We specialize in cave and karst studies. You will spend a significant amount of time in and around karst terrain. Candidates who are cavers, who have caving experience, or who have a genuine interest in caves and karst geology will be happier and more effective in this role. Please keep this in mind before applying.

Technical Skills

- Basic to intermediate small engine repair and maintenance, particularly Honda 2- and 4-stroke engines.
- Basic equipment repair and maintenance — willingness to troubleshoot and fix things in the field without waiting for someone else to solve it.
- Route planning, field mapping, and GPS navigation.
- Familiarity with GIS applications (Google Earth, QGIS, or similar).
- Basic proficiency in Microsoft Office (Word, Excel) and comfort learning new software.
- FAA Part 107 sUAS (drone) certification is a meaningful bonus. SWG uses drone imagery on most projects.
- Geotechnical, geophysical, or environmental field instrumentation experience is a bonus — but we can train the right person on specific equipment.

Personal Qualities

- Self-motivated and self-managing. Field weeks often involve long days in remote locations with minimal supervision. You need to be the kind of person who figures things out and keeps moving.
- Reliable and accountable. The team depends on you showing up on time, completing your assignments, and flagging problems early.
- Attention to detail. Data quality in geophysical surveys depends on precise, consistent execution. Corners cut in the field cannot always be fixed in processing.

- Team-oriented. Field work is collaborative. You will spend extended time in close quarters with your team under demanding conditions. Attitude matters as much as skill.
- **Appreciation for unusual critters.** SWG maintains a healthy respect and appreciation for species most people find alarming: bats, snakes, spiders, rodents, scorpions, and insects of all kinds. This is not optional — it is an occupational reality. Please keep this in mind before applying.

Physical Requirements

This is a physically demanding job. Field weeks require:

- Lifting and carrying 30 to 50 lbs regularly, often over rough terrain.
- Walking 8 to 12 miles per day over uneven, rocky, or vegetated terrain — sometimes for multiple consecutive days.
- Working 10 to 12 hour days in the field, including in extreme heat, cold, wind, dust, and rain.
- Spending 3 to 5 consecutive nights away from home during field deployments.
- Driving long distances and beginning physical work on arrival.
- Comfortable operating a manual transmission, 4WD vehicles, and conducting light off-road driving.
- Working in or around karst features including caves, sinkholes, and exposed limestone terrain.

Licenses and Certifications

- Valid driver's license with a clean driving record. **Required.**
- FAA Part 107 Remote Pilot Certificate. Bonus — not required, but valued.
- HAZWOPER 40-hour certification. Bonus. Familiarity with OSHA safety regulations is expected.
- Confined Space Entry certification, SPRAT/SRT, or wilderness first aid. Any of these are a meaningful plus for field work in karst environments.
- If you had to look up what any of these are, you are probably not yet familiar with them — and that is fine, but be honest about it.

Career Development

SWG is a growing company with a deliberate plan to expand its field teams over the next several years. Field Technicians who demonstrate strong performance, technical aptitude, and leadership potential have clear paths for growth within the company:

- **Senior Field Technician:** Increased responsibility for equipment management, training of newer technicians, and more complex field assignments.
- **Operations Foreman:** As SWG establishes a Carlsbad, NM operations hub, an Operations Foreman role will oversee equipment inventory, vehicle maintenance, and field logistics for the region. This is a natural growth path for a senior field technician with strong organizational and mechanical skills.

- **Field Lead track (for candidates with relevant geology/geophysics background):** Field Technicians who hold or pursue a geology or geoscience degree and demonstrate field leadership capability may be considered for the Field Lead track, which leads toward the Geologist Project Manager pathway over time.

Compensation and Benefits

- Pay range: $35,000 to $54,000 per year depending on experience, skills, and certifications.
- Benefits include paid time off, overtime pay, and a flexible schedule. Health and dental insurance are available after a 60-day evaluation period.
- Field per diem provided for overnight deployments.
- Opportunities for professional development, equipment training, and certification support as the role develops.

To apply, submit a cover letter and resume to info@swgeophys.com. In your cover letter, tell us specifically about your outdoor and field experience and why you are interested in cave and karst work. Generic applications without a cover letter will not be considered.