



Rural Lands Conservation Specialist Job Description

Reports to: Conservation Program Manager

Employment Status: At Will Employee

Starting Pay: \$56,372 - \$64,330

Work Location: District Office in Eugene, Oregon, Hybrid

Eligible for Overtime Pay: No, this is an exempt position. However, per District policy, overtime is eligible for compensatory time if pre-approved.

FTE: 1.0

The District's work will only be successful if we can truly partner with all facets of the community, engage with respect, authentically listen, and have the courage to share decision-making, control, and resources with others. The District is committed to continuously evaluating and updating our programs to better serve people and communities of color. In recognition of the need to address unconscious bias, remove cultural barriers in our programs, and eliminate disparities in our work, the District's Board of Directors is working toward a vision for racial equity, the need for it, and how the District will hold itself accountable.

This position supports diversity, equity, and inclusion by incorporating the principles of equity and inclusion in all job aspects and participating in provided, self-directed, or self-initiated diversity, equity, and inclusion training.

General Position Summary

The UWSWCD is seeking a Rural Lands Conservation Specialist whose role is vital in engaging private agricultural, working lands, rural, and timber landowners and managers interested in implementing voluntary conservation practices. This position primarily focuses on assisting the Oregon Department of Agriculture with implementing local agriculture water quality plans, highlighting the importance of the role in the community. It often involves working with landowners and managers who have horses or horse operations, as well as livestock, to provide conservation technical assistance and ensure compliance with water quality regulations. By conducting conservation planning, project development, design, and implementation with rural residents, the Conservation Specialist plays a key role in rural conservation efforts within the boundaries of the Upper Willamette Soil and Water Conservation District. Additionally, the Specialist offers technical assistance and outreach on natural resources to all rural district residents, thereby improving the community's quality of life. The Specialist also provides on-site support for a wide range of conservation practices, methods, and procedures applicable to various conditions, aiming to reduce resource loss due to soil erosion and water pollution, enhance wildlife habitats, and improve farm, ranch, or forest operations. The Conservation Specialist builds and maintains partnerships with local, state, Tribal, and federal agencies and organizations to assist landowners with enrolling in programs and services. They participate in meetings, tours, and workshops, further promoting collaboration and community engagement.



Essential Functions:

Technical Assistance and Outreach (40%)

1. Provide technical assistance to private agricultural and rural landowners, focusing on soil and water conservation practices.
2. Work with the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) Strategic Implementation Area (SIA) team to implement the Agricultural Water Quality Plans.
3. Respond to the landowner's requests for technical assistance to ensure they comply with the ODA Ag Water Quality rules.
4. Conduct landowner site visits to assess resource conditions and identify opportunities.
5. Build and maintain working relationships with private landowners and managers within the District.
6. Recommend conservation practices for farmers and rural landowners by incorporating principles and techniques informed by recommendations of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), the UWSWCD's conservation planning methodology, other federal, state, and local conservation agencies' regulations and standards, and Indigenous or other traditional approaches.
7. Work with the Conservation Program Manager and conservation Partners, especially the Working Lands program, to ensure outreach and project collaboration across the district community, prioritizing historically underserved groups.
8. Collaborate with conservation partners and agencies to plan and deliver projects and programs.
9. Identify outreach needs and opportunities.
10. Design, plan, facilitate, and coordinate activities, workshops, and events to promote voluntary conservation activities.
11. Coordinate with the UWSWCD Outreach Specialist to develop program brochures, mailings, handouts, and other promotional materials.
12. Perform outreach and build relationships with a wide range of agricultural and forestry stakeholders in the district, including specific attention to Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities.

Conservation Planning, Project Design, and Management (40%)

13. Develop voluntary conservation plans for farmers, ranchers and rural landowners by incorporating principles and techniques informed by recommendations of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), the UWSWCD's conservation planning methodology, other federal, state, and Tribal, local conservation agencies regulations and standards, and Indigenous or other traditional approaches.
14. Participate with partners and other stakeholders in significant regional conservation initiatives involving program evaluation and project development.
15. Work with the Conservation Program Manager, other conservation partners, and UWSWCD staff to identify local resource concerns and promote programs to meet landowner objectives.
16. Serve as project manager on designated projects aligned with District mission, vision, and equity goals.
17. Write grants to obtain funding for projects determined as UWSWCD priorities and in which landowners need funds to implement conservation or restoration projects.
18. Develop and submit grant proposals as needed.
19. Solicit and recommend consultants and contractors for project work as needed.
20. Prepare and submit all reports to fulfill grant or other agreements, contracts, and other obligations to various local, state, and federal agencies.
21. Perform project monitoring and evaluations.
22. Procure necessary tools/equipment for specific project use.



Organizational Support (17%)

23. Attend and participate in Staff and Board meetings and other events as designated; provide monthly staff reports and timesheets.
24. Support District planning processes as needed, including annual budget input, annual work plan, and District Strategic plan.
25. Work as a team member with peers, District staff, and the Conservation Program Manager to represent and forward the District's Vision, Mission, Organizational Values, and Strategic Goals; Assist team members as needed.
26. Support district outreach to historically underrepresented communities to assure broad representation and input from a diversity of community participants.
27. Represent the District at partner meetings, events, and conferences as schedules permit.
28. Participate in District Committee meetings and membership as appropriate and schedules permit.
29. Non-discrimination: Deliver and ensure all services are provided without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. Perform all job duties in a manner that consistently demonstrates fairness, cooperation, and respect for co-workers, office visitors, landowners, and all others in the performance of official business.
30. Perform other duties as assigned.

Professional Development (3%)

31. Pursuing professional development opportunities on current natural resources issues and maintaining proficiency in conservation planning techniques.
32. Participate in Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Trainings.

Working Conditions and Physical Demands:

- This position involves a mix of indoor office and outdoor work, as well as conducting site visits to private properties. Office work includes long periods of computer use, sitting at a desk or standing at a table. Outdoor work involves using a motor vehicle and may require walking long distances across sloped and uneven terrain. Landscapes include, but are not limited to, crops, animal pastures, hills, forests, wetlands, and rivers and streams. Sites may have dense vegetation or woodlands, as well as other areas with steep, slippery, muddy, or other hazardous terrain. Appropriate footwear and attire shall be worn for these occasions. The Rural Lands Conservation Specialist may need to carry equipment and supplies in the field, exercise discretion to determine condition safety whenever possible, and observe safety protocols to protect themselves and others from injury.
- This position requires travel to conferences, meetings, training sessions, and workshops during the daytime and evenings outside the office. Travel may occur outside the workday and may require multiple overnight stays.
- To perform the duties of this position, the Conservation specialist must serve as an incidental motor vehicle operator. This requires operating a motor vehicle on public and private roads during daylight hours and occasionally after dark, including in inclement weather. A valid driver's license and current insurance are required. The District has two vehicles that can be used to fulfill job duties.

Supervisory Responsibility

The position is not responsible for any supervisory functions or responsibilities. However, it may occasionally require managing outside contractors and orienting and training new employees.

Minimum Qualifications



UPPER WILLAMETTE

SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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- Knowledge of various conservation principles, methods, and techniques necessary to assess, analyze, and evaluate natural resources and recommended practices.
- Practical experience collaborating with rural landowners, farmers, and ranchers, including project design and execution.
- Experience with or interest in learning about horse and livestock management or operations.
- Experience in collecting field data, particularly soil and water data, and maintaining detailed field notes.
- Understanding the roles of SWCDs, Watershed Councils, conservation organizations, natural resource agencies, and community organizations is highly valued.
- All district staff must commit to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion principles.
- Two years of experience as a conservation planner developing conservation management plans for private landowners and agricultural operations (conducting inventories, identifying action steps, writing implementation plans). An ideal candidate will be certified as a conservation planner by the NRCS or willing to become certified.
- Experience in writing grant proposals.
- Experience in project planning and execution.
- Experience with ArcGIS desktop and field apps/devices.
- Experience, knowledge, or equivalent training in conservation-related agricultural techniques such as cover cropping, no-till farming, intensive rotational grazing, and agroforestry systems like silvopasture, riparian forest buffers, and tree intercropping systems.
- Strong interpersonal communication skills, diplomatic attitude, and cultural awareness.
- Two years of experience in outreach, program development, and implementation.
- The ability to relate to the needs of local producers and align them with conservation priorities and available resources.
- The most qualified candidates for this position will either have at least a bachelor's degree in Agronomy, Agroecology, Soil Science, Horticulture, Agricultural Education, Environmental Science, or another degree related to natural resource management. Alternatively, if they do not possess a degree in one of these fields, they should have significant work experience in a related area.
- Must have a valid Oregon driver's license and willingness to work early mornings, evenings, and weekends occasionally is desired.
- Any combination of education and experience that prepares the applicant to perform the duties and responsibilities of the position will be considered.
- Ability to listen, work collaboratively within a "team" framework, network, and establish and maintain good working relationships.

The UWSWCD strives to create an inclusive environment that welcomes and values the diversity of the people we serve. We foster fairness, equity, and inclusion to create a workplace environment where everyone is treated with respect and dignity. Studies have shown that women and people of color are less likely to apply for jobs unless they meet every single qualification listed. We are most interested in finding the best candidate for the job, and that candidate may come from a less traditional background. We encourage you to apply for open positions, even if you don't meet every qualification listed. If you are unsure whether you meet the qualifications required for an open position, please feel free to contact us to discuss your application.