

Wheeler Soil and Water Conservation District

Position Description

Job Title: Programs Assistant

FLSA Classification: Non-exempt

Reports to: District Manager

Effective Date: December 19, 2024

Job Summary: This Programs Assistant will assist the Conservation Technicians with programs and projects, provide conservation technical assistance and conduct project management tasks for District programs.

The primary focus of this position during the next five years (2025-2030) will be to work closely with District staff, private landowners, and federal, state, and local partners to implement the Greater Waterman Landscape Resiliency (GWLR) Project through the NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Program. The Programs Assistant will also assist with other federal, state, and local programs sponsored by the District in conjunction with the GWLR Project.

General Requirements:

- Maintains regular and punctual attendance
- Contributes to a positive and productive work environment
- Maintains strict confidentiality
- Support agency partners

Essential Functions/Duties/Responsibilities:

- Coordinate with USDA agencies to deliver program and contract assistance to landowners.
- Coordinate with District staff to ensure incorporation of USDA match funding in grant applications.
- Coordinate with staff, landowners, and partners in planning and implementing conservation measures on private property to meet a multitude of conservation plans and landowner goals.
 - Some examples of existing and planned practices include Brush Management, Forest Stand Improvement, Riparian Buffers, Fence, Prescribed Grazing, and others.
- Coordinate various local, state, and federal conservation programs and grants.
 - Some examples of existing and planned programs and grants include various Endangered Species protection, Landscape Resiliency Strategy, Forest Management Practices, Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Agricultural Water Quality Program, and others.
- Collaborate with District staff in determination of grant application priorities and submissions.
- Assist the District Manager and USDA Lead with overall project management for all District programs and projects to ensure compliance and deadlines are met.
- Assist with District's education and outreach events.
 - A few examples include project tours, education workshops, demonstration events, brochures, social media posts, press releases, and others.
- Participate in staff collaboration for District organizational plans as directed.
- Collaborate in grant reporting through various online portals and original creations.
- Support the District in grant writing from various sources.
- Landowner contacts and communications, including phone calls, follow-up and written correspondence (letters and emails) as needed to coordinate planning, design, implementation, and reporting.
- Attend meetings as directed.
- Participate in trainings as assigned.

- Keep a daily log of work activities and submit monthly Board Reports.
- Other duties as assigned.

Supervisory Responsibilities:

- *None.*

Education and Experience:

- A 4-year degree in agricultural science, natural resources, or a related discipline. Applicable experience in natural resource management may be substituted for minimum education requirements.
- An agricultural background and familiarity with ranching operations is preferred, but not necessary.
- Valid Oregon Driver's License is required.
- ATV/UTV Safety Certification required before operation of any District ATV/UTV.
- CPR/First Aid Certification within 12 months of hire date.

Required Skills and Abilities:

- Excellent written and verbal communication skills.
- Great interpersonal skills to interact with a wide variety of people.
- Ability to proficiently use mobile devices such as tablets, GPS units, and satellite emergency radio.
- Writing, photography and design skills as needed to produce materials for public outreach and education for promoting conservation practices and programs.
- Ability to contribute innovative ideas in conservation projects and marketing.
- Ability to function well in a high-paced and at times stressful environment
- Skills in conducting meetings and educational workshops to facilitate the exchange of information and ideas, confirm decisions, and produce written meeting outcome documents.
- Ability to work safely around open water and remote locations.
- Ability to prioritize tasks to meet deadlines.
- Effective public speaking, particularly in a board setting.
- Preferences may be given to candidates with position appropriate certifications or authority, such as Practice Job Approval Authority or Planning Certification from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Knowledge

- Knowledge or experience in the following computer software programs: Word, Excel, PowerPoint, ArcGIS, virtual meeting platforms, Gmail, and Google Drive
- Knowledge in conservation management practices, programs and principles.
- Knowledge of various state and federal conservation programs such as Agricultural Water Quality Program, Regional Conservation Partnership Program, Environmental Quality Incentives Program
- Familiar with state and federal grant programs through agencies such as Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, Oregon Department of Agriculture, Oregon State Weed Board, Oregon Department of Forestry, Department of Interior, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Farm Service Agency, and others

Minimum Qualifications:

- A 4-year degree in agricultural science, natural resources, or a related discipline. Applicable experience in natural resource management may be substituted for minimum education requirements.

- Valid Oregon Driver's License and reliable transportation due to rural location of office outside of urban areas and personal vehicle may be used at times to complete job duties.
- Great interpersonal skills in order to interact with a wide variety of people.
- Successfully pass a background check.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills.
- Great attention to detail is required for project planning and management objectives. Pre-planning and goal setting skills are needed to ensure deadlines are met.

Physical Requirements:

Stooping, kneeling, balancing, crouching, reaching, standing, carrying, lifting, grasping, talking, hearing and seeing may all be required. Some of these activities may be required on a repetitive basis or for prolonged periods of time. Lifting requirement is 50 pounds on an occasional basis; 10 pounds on a more frequent basis.

Work environment:

The position works both in the field and the office. Limited remote work option if pre-approved by District Manager. Long-term remote work schedule must be approved by Board of Directors.

- Field work includes working in and around such locations as farms, rivers, streams and ponds; properties with dense vegetation; and other areas with steep, slippery, muddy, rocky and potentially hazardous terrain. Appropriate attire shall be worn for these occasions. ATV/UTV operation may be required to reach project locations. Appropriate attire shall be worn for any of these occasions.
- Office work includes working at an office located outside of an urban setting. Prolonged periods of time at a stand/sit desk, using a computer and other office equipment, or standing.

Travel required:

This position requires travel to conferences, workshops, training sessions, and daytime and evening meetings outside the office. Travel for training may be outside the normal workday and may be as long as one week.

Disclaimer

This job description has been designed to indicate the general nature and level of work performed by employees within this classification, which may change as business needs arise. It is not designed to contain or be interpreted as a comprehensive inventory of all duties, responsibilities and qualifications required of employees assigned to the job.

I have read and received a copy of the job description for the **Conservation Technician** position. I further acknowledge that I have read the position description and have been given the opportunity to ask any questions I may have regarding the essential functions, both physical as well as mental, for this position. By signing below, I attest that I can meet the minimum physical and mental requirements of the job as outlined on the position description.

Employee Signature

Date