



Benton Soil and Water CONSERVATION DISTRICT

RESOURCE CONSERVATIONIST

Working Title:	Habitat Conservationist
Reports to:	Executive Director
Employment Status:	At Will Employee
FLSA Status:	Non-Exempt
Pay Range:	\$24.50-\$27.50/hour, 40 hours per week
FTE:	1.0
Work Location:	Corvallis, OR; potential for hybrid telework/office work option

General Position Summary

The Habitat Conservationist conducts conservation planning, project development, design, and implementation for voluntary landowner projects in Benton County. This position provides natural resource technical assistance to Benton County residents and local, state, and federal partners and the BSWCD Board of Directors. In collaboration with partners and team members, Resource Conservationists research local and regional natural resource issues, provide guidance to the District in addressing priority natural resource concerns, and develop outreach goals. Resource Conservationists build and maintain working relationships with District stakeholders. This position does not have supervisory responsibilities of staff but may supervise volunteers and/or interns.

Essential Functions General Duties – Resource Conservationist

Technical Assistance and Outreach (30%)

- Provide conservation technical assistance to rural and urban residents, agencies, watershed councils, organizations and BSWCD Board/staff on protecting and enhancing natural resources, including soil, water, air, plants, and animals.
- Collaborate with conservation partners and agencies to plan and deliver projects and programs
- Serve on Technical Advisory Committees to provide natural resource advice and/or participate as a stakeholder in various meetings representing the District.
- Focus technical assistance and outreach on topics aligned with Benton SWCD mission, goals, and strategies and where necessary, research new, relevant information for cooperators in disciplines outside of normal expertise.
- Identify outreach needs and opportunities. Design, plan, facilitate, and present at workshops and events.
- Assist Communications staff in developing brochures, handouts and other promotional materials.

Conservation Planning and Project Design (25%)

- Assess and analyze impacts on natural resources and give best management practice recommendations.
- Develop conservation plans for property owners and land managers by incorporating the principles and techniques of USDA Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) Conservation Planning methodology.
- Participate with partners and other stakeholders in larger regional conservation planning,

program evaluation and project development.

- Assure that plans and/or projects meet technical, legal and regulatory requirements.
- Coordinate with NRCS and Farm Service Agency partners to actively promote and implement federal farm programs; work with NRCS District Conservationist to identify local resource concerns and promote programs to meet landowner objectives.
- Achieve and maintain NRCS Certified Conservation Planner certification
- Certify conservation practices related to NRCS contracts

Project Development, Funding, and Management (30%)

- Provide leadership at the District in managing large-scale, multi-year grants or program funding. Examples include the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) Scope of Work, ODA Strategic Implementation Areas, Natural Resources Conservation Service Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), and other complex programs or funding sources.
- Develop grant proposals; identify funding sources and project match; develop budget, timeline and grant scope and submit proposals. Coordinate with partners as appropriate.
- Prepare reports to fulfill agreement, contract and other obligations to various local, state, and federal agencies.
- Serve as project manager on designated projects; develop contracts, successfully implement grants and projects.
- Grant administration: oversee contracts and track timelines, deliverables, expenditures and budgets. Write project reports; perform required photo monitoring and post-grant reporting.
- Solicit and recommend consultants and contractors. Develop and manage contracts and approve work.

Organizational Support and Professional Development (10%)

- Demonstrated commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice in servicing residents of Benton County, collaborating with partners, Benton SWCD staff, and directors.
- Support planning processes including Annual Budget, Annual Work Plan, Strategic and/or Long-Range Plans.
- Pursue professional development opportunities on current natural resources issues and maintain proficiency in conservation planning techniques.
- Attend and participate in staff and Board meetings; provide monthly staff reports and timesheets.
- Procure tools, equipment, and supplies.
- Collaborate with interns and volunteers on various projects.

Work Relationships (5%)

- Maintain strong collaborative and supportive work relationships with BSWCD staff members.
- Promote the role of BSWCD in the community; develop positive relationships and partnerships; represent BSWCD, as needed, at meetings and events, on committees, etc.
- Develop and maintain cooperative relationships with local, state and federal agencies, non-governmental organizations, non-profits, volunteers, and local landowners to develop projects and opportunities.
- Performs other duties as assigned.

Specialized Duties – Habitat Conservationist

- Serve as lead for all habitat related inquiries with an emphasis on Oregon white oak habitat, but also including wetland, upland forest, Willamette River ecosystems, floodplain forests, prairie, streamside, and other habitats
- Coordinate the Willamette Mainstem Cooperative, a group of several partners interested in the Willamette River from Corvallis to Albany.

- Build relationships with landowners and managers along the Willamette River for engagement in conservation projects
- Collaborate with Willamette Valley Oak and Prairie Cooperative and associated members such as US Fish and Wildlife Service Partners Program, Greenbelt Land Trust, Upper Willamette Stewardship Network, and several others.
- Propose and evaluate projects for BSWCD Community Conservation Programs to provide District funds for local landowner projects.
- Participate in OWEB Small Grants Review Teams. Train and oversee volunteers who review OWEB small grants for the District.
- Develop projects, design project elements, develop budgets and apply for grants to fund projects. Serve as project manager on several projects at any given time, develop contracts, oversee and inspect contracted work, track budget, request funds and submit status, completion and monitoring reports.
- Coordinate with NRCS and Farm Services Agency partners to actively promote and implement federal farm programs; work with NRCS District Conservationist to identify local resource concerns and promote programs to meet landowner objectives.
- Assist with Native Plant Sale and Native Bulb and Seed Sale including planning through the year, set up, take down, and staffing of the sales.

Equity

The District's goal is to make equity a part of our everyday operations. To that end, this position requires:

- Knowledge, interest, and commitment in working in a diverse and inclusive work environment that places a high value on equity.
- Participation in promoting a positive workplace culture of collaboration, innovation, accountability, and respect.
- Excellent interpersonal skills and ability to establish effective working relationships in a multicultural, gender-diverse, and multiethnic environment.
- Engagement in diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice training and workgroup participation as needed.

Working Conditions & Physical Demands

- This position works both in the field and in the office; must be able to lift 25 pounds and carry equipment and supplies in the field or set up tables and displays at various events.
- Fieldwork involves working out-of-doors in farms and dairies; rivers, streams and ponds; properties with dense vegetation or woodlands; and other areas with steep, slippery, muddy, rocky, or other hazardous terrain.
- The office work includes working at a desk, using a computer, or standing at a table. Dexterity and hand-eye coordination are 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.

Specific Job Knowledge and Skills

- Excellent oral and written communication skills are required.
- The ability to use a computer for information entry and retrieval, correspondence, development of data spreadsheets, graphs, and maps, and conservation practice design is required.
- Knowledge of local resource concerns.
- Basic knowledge of ArcGIS with ability to make maps for projects importing multiple data layers.
- Basic to moderate knowledge of native plant and noxious weed identification
- Experience working in Oregon white oak habitat
- Understand, interpret and use various maps, ortho photography and soils information.

- Familiarity with USDA Farm Bill Programs and the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide is a plus.
- Ability to understand English, make presentations, maintain emotional control during difficult exchanges, and negotiate and influence others.
- Grant writing/management experience.
- Excellent social skills including networking, teamwork, and the ability to establish and maintain good working relationships.

Minimum Qualifications

- A Bachelor's degree with major course work in natural sciences, natural resource management, agriculture sciences, soils, water quality, or a related discipline is required.
- 2 years of experience working for a natural resource agency or organization.
- On-the-ground experience working with landowners and doing project design and implementation.
- Experience in collecting field data, especially soil and water-related data, and maintaining field notes.
- Experience in natural resources outreach that includes working one-on-one, in group settings and public speaking.
- Computer proficiency in Microsoft Excel, Word, Outlook, and PowerPoint; working knowledge of ArcGIS.
- NRCS Certified Planner training is preferred. Must gain certification within 18 months of employment at BSWCD (or as training schedules allow.)
- Must have a current Oregon Driver's License, vehicle insurance, and access to a personal vehicle to use for work purposes
- Any combination of education and experience that prepares the applicant to perform the duties and responsibilities of the position will be considered.