



Benton Soil and Water CONSERVATION DISTRICT

RESOURCE CONSERVATIONIST I

Employee Name: Teresa Matteson
Reports to: Natural Resources Conservation Program Manager
Employment Status: At Will Employee
FLSA Status: Non-Exempt
Salary Grade: **
FTE: 1.0

General Position Summary

The Resource Conservationist I (RC) conducts conservation planning, project development, design, and implementation for voluntary landowner projects in Benton County. The 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, the RC researches local and regional natural resource issues, provides guidance to the District in addressing priority resource concerns, and develops outreach goals. The RC builds and maintains working relationships with District stakeholders. This position does not have supervisory responsibilities.

Essential Functions

1. Technical Assistance and Outreach (30%)

- Provide conservation technical assistance to agencies, watershed councils, organizations, BSWCD Board/staff and local residents on protecting and enhancing natural resources, including: soil, water, air, plants, animals, and humans.
- Serve on Technical Advisory Committees to provide natural resource advice and/or participate as a stakeholder in various meetings representing the District.
- Work with the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) Strategic Implementation Area Team. Respond to landowner requests for technical assistance to comply with ODA Ag Water Quality rules. Assist with the ODA Scope of Work and Focus Area tasks to promote the implementation of conservation practices.
- Collaborate with conservation partners and agencies to plan and deliver projects and programs
- Identify outreach needs and opportunities. Design, plan, facilitate, and lead activities, workshops, and events.
- Develop brochures, handouts and other promotional materials.
- Program lead for BSWCD Soil Health Program.

2. Conservation Planning and Project Design (20%)

- Assess and analyze impacts to natural resources and give best management practice recommendations.

- Develop conservation and restoration plans for property owners and operators by incorporating the principles and techniques of USDA NRCS Conservation Planning methodology.
- Participate with partners and other stakeholders in larger regional conservation planning to facilitate program evaluation and project development.
- Assure that plans and/or projects meet technical, legal and regulatory requirements.
- Work 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.

3. Project Development, Funding, and Management (13%)

- Identify funding sources and project match. Develop and submit grant proposals. Grant administration: oversee and track timelines, deliverables, expenditures and budgets.
- Serve as project manager on designated projects. Successfully implement grants and projects.
- Perform monitoring/evaluation.
- Certify conservation practices related to NRCS contracts.
- Prepare reports to fulfill agreements, contracts, and other obligations to various local, state, and federal agencies.
- Develop and manage contracts. Approve contract work. Solicit and recommend consultants and/or contractors.

4. Organizational Support and Professional Development (22%)

- Attend and participate in staff and Board meetings and other events, as designated; provide monthly staff reports and timesheets.
- Support planning processes, as needed, including Annual Budget.
- Procure tools, equipment, supplies.
- Recruit, train, mentor, and supervise interns and volunteers.
- Pursue professional development opportunities on current natural resources issues and maintain proficiency in conservation planning techniques.

Work Relationships (15%)

- 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.
- Work collaboratively with staff on the Annual Budget, Annual Work Plan, Strategic Plan and other planning processes.
- Develop and maintain cooperative relationships with local, state and federal agencies, non-governmental organizations, nonprofits, volunteers, and local landowners to develop conservation projects and opportunities. Communicate to coordinate work and avoid duplication.
- Perform other duties as assigned.

Working Conditions & Physical Demands

- This position works out-of-doors. Fieldwork involves working out-of-doors at farms and dairies. Landscapes include hills, wetlands, rivers, streams, and ponds. Properties may have dense vegetation or woodlands and other areas with steep, slippery, muddy, rocky, or other hazardous terrain. Appropriate attire shall be worn for these occasions. RC must carry equipment and supplies; set up tables and displays at various events.

- 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.
- The office work includes working at a desk, using a computer, or standing at a table.
- Must have the ability to carry 25 - 50 lbs.

Specific Job knowledge and Skills

- Must possess excellent verbal and written communication skills.
- Use of personal 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.
- Understand, interpret and use various maps, ortho photography and soils information. Has a working knowledge of the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide along with related manuals and computer programs. Familiarity with USDA Farm Bill Programs is a plus.
- Experience in natural resources outreach that includes working one-on-one, in group settings and/or public speaking is beneficial.
- Ability to understand English, make presentations, maintain emotional control during difficult exchanges, and negotiate and influence others.
- Experience with volunteer recruitment and management.
- Excellent social skills including networking, teamwork, and the ability to establish and maintain good working relationships.
- Grant writing/grant management experience.

Minimum Qualifications

- A Bachelor's degree with the 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 collecting field data, especially soil and water-related data, and maintaining field notes.
- 2 years of experience in outreach program development and implementation.
- Computer proficiency in Word, Excel, Publisher, PowerPoint, Outlook. Access a plus.
- 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.

Desired Qualifications

- NRCS Certified Conservation Planner training preferred.
- Working knowledge of ArcView and/or ArcGIS preferred.