



Spokane Conservation District

Position Description for

Spokane Conservation Specialist

Full-Time, At-Will, Non-exempt status;
Salary range \$41,399-\$55,116 (DOE),

The **Spokane Conservation Specialist** proudly serves under the Spokane County Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) to work with landowners, producers, and watershed stakeholders to protect critical areas, promote agricultural viability, and preserve farmlands. The position also supports the development and implementation of policies and programs to maintain sustainable agricultural practices. The position will further provide assistance in the development and delivery of ecological restoration and farmland operation enhancement projects.

The Conservation Specialist reports to the Spokane Conservation District (SCD) Water Resources Manager and will work closely with the VSP Implementation Work Group. The position requires excellent communication skills in working with private landowners in a non-regulatory environment. Applicant should have knowledge of local working agriculture and associated best management practices, policy writing, habitat restoration techniques, conservation practice implementation, and ecological principles.

Must be able to hike for extended period, and carry equipment over rough terrain, at times in inclement weather conditions. General Requirements: B.S. in natural resources, agriculture, or closely related field and minimum of two years experience working in natural resources. Certified planners will be preferred. View complete job description below.

General Description

The primary purpose of the Conservation Specialist position is to provide a connection with the agricultural community in Spokane County and advocate for farmland sustainability and economic viability. The Conservation Specialist organizes the Spokane County Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) for plan implementation, outreach, awareness, and project development. The position will also assist the Spokane Farm Corridor Program.

Duties and Responsibilities

- A. Understand and promote the organization, role, mission and goals of the Spokane Conservation District and the VSP program's responsibilities. Establish new and foster existing relationships and partnerships with local agencies, producers, and operators.
 - Assist with the implementation of the Spokane VSP Work Plan and the development of Stewardship plans. Attend VSP meetings, take minutes and work closely with consultant facilitator.

- Stay up to date with dryland agricultural technology, practices, NRCS/FSA practices and policies, County agricultural programs, local livestock practices and conservation needs. Prioritize conservation practices and areas.
 - Identify agricultural activities within critical areas. Assist with GIS map and database development for VSP.
 - Provide landowner technical assistance and help identify and designate additional entities for landowner assistance.
 - Promote agricultural interests and viability throughout Spokane County.
- B. Develop an Outreach Plan for VSP (with guidance from VSP Implementation Work Group) that contains a suite of outreach tools and strategies to reach farmers and other stakeholders.
- Offer educational workshops and classes to support conservation practices. Increase awareness of rules, regulations and policies.
 - Assist in development of various Spokane Farming Corridor projects.
 - Initiate/assist in grant proposal and report writing.
 - Become familiar with SCD, Ecology, and WSCC project and cost-share contracting process and documentation requirements.
 - Organize and coordinate meetings, workshops and other SCD/VSP sponsored events.
- C. Facilitate and manage the Spokane Farm Corridor Program for the SCD. This program strives to connect people and organizations in the greater Spokane area who are active or interested in urban food production.
- Coordinate/initiate local farm corridors throughout the Spokane region.
 - Conduct meetings, workshops, tours as required.
 - Provide marketing and education.
- D. Develop and implement ecological restoration projects (stewardship plans) as necessary. Responsible for ensuring proper permitting and cultural resources clearance for restoration projects.
- E. Develop/coordinate a Spokane County Farmland Preservation/Acquisition Program that provides multiple options for conserving farmland.

- F. Attend monthly SCD Board Meetings and staff meetings as required. Provide reports and presentations on activities and progress as required.

Supervision

The SCD Water Resources Manager provides direct oversight and supervision of the Spokane Conservation Specialist. The position is also responsible to the SCD Director and Board of Supervisors. The position may include daily technical supervision of volunteers, work-study, interns and other subordinate staff as assigned.

Work Environment

Work will be performed in a split of office setting and in the field with site visits, training, local and out of town travel and occasional extended hours (including some Saturdays) expected. This position is labor intensive, multi-faceted and requires a high level of motivation, versatility, and ability to work independently. This position requires both indoor and outdoor work. Outdoor work includes walking through fields, hiking, wading in streams, carrying equipment, and physical labor such as planting trees and planting maintenance activities. Planting maintenance activities may include use of pesticides, heavy brush mower, gas powered weed trimmers and various hand tools.

Work Schedule

This is a Full-Time position (averaging 40 hours per week). The normal SCD workday schedule is Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM. This position is classified as Non-Exempt under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

Minimum Qualifications:

A bachelor's degree in natural resources, environmental science, agriculture, ecology or a related field and a minimum of two years of supervisory and program management experience is preferred. Additional qualifying experience may substitute year-for-year for the education requirement. The applicant must have a demonstrated ability to manage multiple, diverse issues and a proven commitment to voluntary land stewardship on private lands.

Required knowledge, skills, and abilities:

- Team player who values building partnerships and a non-regulatory approach to natural resource conservation activities, including a proven commitment to agriculture and land stewardship.
- Demonstrated ability to work effectively with diverse groups and individuals.

- Knowledge of agriculture, ecological restoration, with an emphasis on streams, floodplains, and riparian zones.
- Experience in collecting field data, water quality monitoring, and in using GIS and GPS. Must be willing and physically able to lead/assist with field data collection and restoration/revegetation of riparian areas.
- Demonstrated organizational skills and the ability to multi-task effectively.
- Must be able to hike for extended periods, carry equipment over rough terrain, at times in inclement weather conditions.
- Excellent organization and communication skills (both written and verbal).
- Demonstrated skills in public relations, negotiation, coordination and diplomacy.
- Proficient computer skills including Microsoft Office Software: Microsoft Word, Excel, Publisher, PowerPoint, Access.
- Working knowledge of local, state, and federal conservation programs currently available to landowners such as EQIP, CCRP, CD cost-share, DOE cost-share, etc.
- Familiarity with current conservation issues facing local landowner owners in the region.
- Experience with implementation of agricultural and riparian related conservation Best Management Practices (BMPs).
- Working knowledge of FSA and NRCS conservation programs and other local, state, and federal conservation funding programs.
- Working knowledge of NRCS conservation practices, standards, and planning process.
- Ability to meet deadlines, attend meetings and travel as needed.
- Ability to communicate, both written and oral, effectively to a diverse audience.
- Obtain and maintain a valid driver's license, provide their own transportation with proper vehicle insurance and registration upon the first date of hire; be able to travel statewide using all modes of transportation.

Preferred knowledge, skills and abilities:

- A Bachelor's degree in natural resources, agriculture, public administration or a related field and a minimum of two years of supervisory and program management experience.
- A professional knowledge of policies and practices of conservation districts.
- A working knowledge of federal, state and local laws, rules and policies that directly affect natural resource conservation on private lands in Washington.
- Knowledge of and/or experience with conservation planning & implementation.
- Candidates with conservation planning certification is highly desired.
- Knowledge of and/or experience with environmental and cultural resource permitting.
- Available and dependable transportation.

Employment Classification: Regular; Full-Time, At-Will.

Compensation:

Salary range is \$41,399 - \$55,116 (DOE) Medical/Dental & retirement package benefits, paid holidays, plus vacation and sick leave.

All programs and services of the Spokane Conservation District are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis, without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, marital status or disability.