



Job Announcement

Position: Watershed Conservationist

Status: Full time (40 hrs/week), At-will, Non-exempt Employee

Compensation: \$46,000 – \$56,000 (DOE) starting salary + benefits

Announcement Dates: Open until filled. First interviews September 20, 2023.

The Union Soil and Water Conservation District (USWCD) has assisted private landowners with conservation planning and project implementation in the Grande Ronde Basin for over 70 years, forming in 1946. The USWCD is a political subdivision of state government, considered a municipal corporation, and follows many of the same laws that govern state agencies. As a partner with Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and with guidance from Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA), the USWCD acts as a local leader to coordinate efforts of conservation agencies and tie their programs to local conditions and priorities. In short, the USWCD is the local advocate for landowners and managers to assist with development, protection, and conservation of natural resources.

Position Summary

The Watershed Conservationist is a full time, at-will, non-exempt position with the USWCD located in La Grande, Oregon. This position is essentially an assistant project manager and will work closely with other USWCD staff to assist landowners and agricultural operators in Union County by providing technical assistance and developing project actions to restore and conserve natural resources. The position will also assist in coordinating with other local, state, federal, and tribal natural resources organizations to achieve the USWCD goals and objectives.

The Watershed Conservationist is required to have good communication and organizational skills, a moderate level of field experience completing assessment and monitoring tasks, familiarity with farming and ranching operations and a rural lifestyle, and familiarity with project management. This position requires a self-motivated person able to work independently and as a team member in both an office and field setting. This position represents the USWCD to the public and partner organizations and must effectively communicate with landowners and partner staff.

Position Supervision

The Watershed Conservationist will be directly supervised by the District Manager, who will provide workplans and assign tasks, complete performance evaluations, and develop training plans. Daily tasks and project deliverables will be coordinated with other USWCD staff that include the Senior Project Manager and Natural Resources Conservationist. This position acts on behalf of the District Board of Directors, within the authorities delegated by the Board of Directors and this description and is governed by the policies of the District’s Personnel Policy Manual.

Position Duties

Technical Assistance and Community Outreach

- Assist with scheduling site visits and participate in meetings with landowners, technical partners, community members, students, and volunteers to identify conservation project opportunities.
- Provide technical assistance to landowners for developing project plans and schedules to implement soil and water conservation principles and practices.

- Assist landowners and partner agencies to comply with all local, state, and federal regulations and environmental permitting.
- Prepare and present project updates to landowners, USWCD staff and Board, partners, funders, and the local community. Lead tours onsite for students, community members, and others.
- Assist with organizing and implementing education and outreach events including developing supporting meeting materials and information.

Project Development and Management

- Assist with writing detailed and accurate project grant proposals that include schedules and budgets for funding sources such as Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB), Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA), Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), and Bonneville Power Administration (BPA).
- Serve as contracting officer representative and observer for coordinating with contractors and partnership agencies to implement project construction and restoration activities.
- Schedule, organize and manage work crews for planting and plant protection activities. Engage volunteers where feasible to help with planting and stewardship.
- Assist with identifying project materials and field supplies and organizing procurement.
- Assist with developing planting plans by identifying species, spacing, and establishment details for riparian restoration projects.
- Write detailed and accurate project work statements, monitoring summaries, quarterly and completion reports.

Monitoring

- Assist with monitoring plan development and collect monitoring information that may include topographic survey, vegetation survey, and water quality and quantity data.
- Identify native and non-native plant species as part of monitoring protocols designed to track project effectiveness and progress within riparian and upland habitats
- Assess restoration project efficacy and complete photograph monitoring after project completion.
- Summarize and assess monitoring results to provide management recommendations to other USWCD staff, technical partners, and landowners.

Administrative

- Prioritize and schedule daily work tasks to include meetings, landowner and partner coordination, site visits, monitoring, and construction activities.
- Assist in organizing and participate in USWCD staff and board meetings.
- Complete and submit permits applications, assist in completing invoices and receipts, complete bi-monthly timesheets and expense reimbursements.
- Write and submit post-implementation project reports required by funders and regulatory entities.
- Assist with grant agreement management and reporting using cbfish.org and Oregon Grant Management System.

Other duties as assigned by the District Manager.

Qualifications and Experience

Minimum Requirements

- Bachelor of Science or Arts degree in natural resources management, agricultural or range sciences, fish or wildlife biology, ecology, hydrology or a related discipline.
- A minimum of two years experience working in natural resources or conservation project management which may include employment with a soil and water conservation district, watershed council, non-governmental or government entity with a focus on conservation planning, or similar organization.
- Excellent oral and written communication skills.

- Experience and knowledge with computer use and software typically used in conservation planning including MS Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint), email, GIS/mapping.
- A valid driver's license with ability to qualify for coverage under the USWCD vehicle liability insurance policy.
- The ability to operate and maintain an all terrain vehicle (ATV) is required, and an operator certification card must be in possession or obtained with 6 months of employment.

Preferred Experience and Knowledge

- Experience in technical grant writing to secure natural resource project funding.
- Experience and knowledge of project and construction management that might include irrigation systems, stream restoration, fencing, windbreaks, and off channel watering systems.
- Knowledge and familiarity with farming, ranching, and a rural lifestyle.
- Project management experience should include coordination of NRCS and Farm Bill programs along with the ability to interact with landowners and partnership agency staff in a timely, positive manner.

Working Conditions

- Office work associated with this position will include working at a desk, using a computer and sitting or standing for prolonged periods of time.
- Fieldwork associated with this position requires the ability to walk in potentially hazardous terrain with uneven, steep, and potentially slippery conditions and on properties with agricultural fields, stream channels, dense vegetation and woodlands. Work may occur in inclement weather and require lifting and carrying up to 50 lbs.
- The operation and maintenance of motor vehicles and all terrain vehicles (ATV) is required.
- Travel is required periodically to conferences, workshops, training sessions and daytime or evening meetings outside the office. Travel for training may be outside the normal work schedule and may be as long as one week. Appropriate attire shall be worn for these occasions.
- Operation of a motor vehicle is required to perform the duties of this position, during daylight hours and after dark. In order to carry out these assigned duties, a valid driver's license is required. Although the USWCD has a vehicle, occasional use of a personal vehicle may be necessary (reimbursement based on mileage).

Application Process:

- **REQUIRED APPLICATION PACKET**
 - **Cover letter:** A signed cover letter should describe reasons for your desire to work for the USWCD and how your education, volunteer experience, and professional experience apply to this position's qualifications, duties, and responsibilities.
 - **Application Form (PD200):** Form is available at the Union SWCD office or by email by contacting the District at 541-963-1313 or jwebster@unionswcd.org.
 - **Reference Contacts:** At least three (3) references are required to be submitted with the application. At least one reference should be from an employer pertaining to this position's duties and requirements, preferably this would include current or last employer.
 - **Resumes** will not be accepted alone but may be included with the application packet as an additional item.
- Mail or deliver your completed and signed application materials to:

Union Soil and Water Conservation District
10507 N. McAlister Rd, Rm #7
La Grande, OR 97850

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Union Soil and Water Conservation District will make reasonable accommodations during any and all phases of the selection process for individuals with a disability. Please contact the District office at (541) 963-1313, by the deadline date of this announcement to request accommodations.

Union Soil and Water Conservation District is an Equal Opportunity Employer.