



## **Conservation Technical Assistant Position Vacancy Announcement MANISTEE Conservation District**

### **POSITION OBJECTIVE:**

Assist the NRCS District Conservationist in planning, implementing, and processing USDA Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) contracts in Manistee and Benzie Counties.

### **POSITION DESCRIPTION**

This is a three-quarter time position, with potential to become full-time after one year. As an employee of the Manistee Conservation District, employee will assist the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in providing technical and financial assistance for producers and landowners seeking to implement USDA-funded conservation activities on their land. Conservation Technical Assistant will work with landowners in the Mansitee and Benzie County service areas to help them understand, plan, manage, protect, and utilize their natural resources, providing information and technical assistance in implementing conservation practices funded through the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act, the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, and the Agricultural Act of 2014, generally referred to as the **Farm Bill**. Technical assistant will work closely with the NRCS District Conservationist for Manistee and Benzie Counties and will be housed at the Manistee Conservation District and the USDA Service Center in Bear Lake, MI.

Deliverables will involve multiple phases, including farm or property assessments, development of conservation plans, providing guidance with federal program signups and contracting, as well as providing technical assistance to landowners and producers implementing conservation practices. Conservation Technical Assistant's work may include conservation practice implementation activities such as inventory and evaluation, survey, design, lay-out, construction inspection, and/or check-out tasks for conservation practices. The work may also include contract administration activities such as document collection and compilation, application ranking, contract correspondence preparation. Common conservation practices include agricultural nutrient management, cover crops, field borders and filter strips and streambank restoration.

### **ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS:**

1. Assist the USDA District Conservationist in providing on-site technical assistance to private landowners under contract with USDA for the implementation of conservation practices.
2. Work closely, and maintain a good working relationship with, MCD and NRCS staff and other resource management professionals, both public and private, in support of a holistic approach to the management of natural resources.
3. Assist clients with applying for financial assistance through USDA Farm Bill Programs (principally the Conservation Stewardship Program [CSP]), including application processing, contract development, application ranking and document preparation for program selections.
4. Assist contract holders with technical guidance regarding implementation of their practices.
5. Assist the District Conservationist (DC) with monitoring progress of contract implementation, reviews, processing contract modifications and payments, and general correspondence
6. Learn program rules and regulations concerning administration of applications and contracting procedures for each Farm Bill program under NRCS responsibility.
7. Use agency-specific software related to mapping, planning & contracting.
8. Maintain accurate, well-organized records of customer interactions.
9. Maintain client confidentiality.
10. Supply content to the Conservation District website relating to Farm Bill Programs (CSP).

### **OTHER FUNCTIONS:**

1. Assist NRCS office and Conservation District programs such as annual meeting, newsletter, walk-in customers, answering telephones, general office upkeep and other duties as assigned by the Mason- Lake Conservation District Manager or Board of Directors.
2. Develop a weekly schedule in consultation with the Manistee CD Executive Director and NRCS DC.

3. Obtain conservation certifications through NRCS such as “certified conservation planner”, “certified pest management plan writing”, “nutrient plan writing”
4. Assist with and promote, through public relations, Manistee CD events as requested by the Executive Director and District Board of Directors.
5. Assist in the preparation of District records, reports, and annual & long-range work plans.
6. Contribute to news articles of local interest and about general conservation subjects including notices of upcoming events, demonstrations and workshops.

#### QUALIFICATIONS:

1. A Bachelor’s of Science Degree (BS) in agriculture, forestry or natural resources-related field
2. Preferred: one-two years of experience in natural resources, agriculture, forestry or other conservation-related fieldwork.
3. Preferred candidates will have knowledge of and experience working with agricultural producers and practices and/or watershed management/restoration

#### ABILITIES:

1. Excellent computer skills are required. Computer work station will be provided, including a standard laptop, on a shared network with Windows-based software.
2. Mastery of Microsoft Excel and GPS software required.
3. Excellent record-keeping, organizational, time management, written and verbal communication skills.
4. Exceptional social and interpersonal skills.
5. Work cooperatively with district personnel and other agencies.
6. Ability to work efficiently outdoors in varying conditions and rough terrain; ability to lift 50 pounds.
7. Must maintain a valid driver’s license and clean driving record for the past 3 years.
8. Occasional travel for trainings and meetings is required, including overnight.
9. Must be able to pass a Federal Background Security Check.
10. General knowledge, operation or maintenance of agriculture equipment preferred

#### RELATIONSHIPS:

The technician is supervised by, and reports to, the Executive Director of the Manistee Conservation District. Conservation Technical Assistant will work directly with the NRCS DC and as part of a team with all other Mansitee & Benzie Conservation District employees.

#### SALARY, BENEFITS, WORK HOURS, LOCATION:

This position will be based at the Manistee Conservation District in Bear Lake, Michigan, near Manistee, on the west side of the state, where there is a diverse variety of agriculture for the region. Forestry and wildlife habitat are a large component of workload in the area. Hours are 24-30 per week, with time often split between office and field work. This ¾ time position is an hourly position which includes some benefits (paid federal holidays, quarterly medical stipend, vacation and sick leave, after the 90-day probation period). Pay rate will be \$18-\$21/per hour, based on experience. Flexibility in scheduling is possible, with a typical work week being Monday through Wednesday, 9 am – 5 pm. Some evening and weekend work is required. This position is funded by a grant through the National Association of Conservation Districts, with potential for continuation and eventual full-time employment after one year. Start Date: September, 2019.

#### TO APPLY

Please submit **by email only** 1) a detailed, one-page cover letter, 2) resume, 3) 2 letters of recommendation, 4) the names of three additional reference contacts, and 5) college transcripts (unofficial acceptable) by email to Executive Director, Susan Spencer at [susan.spencer@macd.org](mailto:susan.spencer@macd.org) by the close of business on Wednesday, July 31, 2019. Please merge all application materials into **one Word or PDF file for review**. Contact Susan Spencer with any questions related to the position (email preferred) or call (231-889-9666) x3. To obtain further information about the Manistee Conservation District, please visit our website at [www.manisteecd2.org](http://www.manisteecd2.org)

*Manistee Conservation District is an equal opportunity employer and provider.*