



Mason-Lake Conservation District Vacancy Announcement Conservation Technician

The Mason-Lake Conservation District is seeking a Conservation Technician to provide technical assistance to landowners and promote holistic management practices on working lands of Mason and Lake Counties. This position will be part of a welcoming team in beautiful western Michigan, where there is a diverse variety of agriculture, including row crops, orchards, dairy, livestock, floriculture as well as silviculture. This project is funded by grants through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

Job Status: Hourly, full-time

Term: Three years; potential to extend dependent on funding

Compensation: \$20 - \$24/hour, dependent on experience and qualifications

Benefits: Paid federal holidays, vacation leave, sick leave, health insurance option and IRA retirement plan with employer match

Schedule: Monday – Friday, 8:00am-4:30pm. Occasional evenings or weekend days

Location: Scottville, MI. Some remote work possible for the right candidate

Start Date: Fall 2021

Closing Date: November 7th, 2021 at midnight

Position Summary:

Conservation Districts and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provide technical and financial assistance for landowners that want to implement conservation activities on their land. The Mason-Lake Conservation District office is co-located with NRCS and this strong organizational relationship generates a fun, charismatic and busy workplace, with over 2,000 walk-in office clients each year. The incumbent will work for the Mason-Lake Conservation District and assist NRCS for the purposes of implementing various conservation activities in Mason and the west half of Lake County.

The Technician will help landowners to better understand, plan, manage, protect, and utilize their natural resources. These efforts will focus on mitigating sediment and nutrient loading in the Big Sable and Lincoln Rivers as well as other conservation efforts in the service area. To help facilitate and fund these projects, The Technician will work directly with NRCS to complete applications through the Agricultural Act of 2014 and 2018, generally referred to as the Farm Bill.

Delivery of these programs will be through multiple phases, including farm or property site visits, developing conservation plans, providing guidance on federal program sign-ups and contracting as well as providing technical assistance to landowners and producers implementing conservation practices. Common conservation practices promoted to landowners include agricultural nutrient management, erosion control, cover crops, field borders, filter strips, sustainable forest management activities and streambank restoration. In addition to agriculture, forestry, wildlife habitat and stream restoration are also a large component of workload in the area. It will be the responsibility of the incumbent to research more holistic management approaches or regenerative agricultural practices and work to integrate those into local management recommendations.

Position Duties:

- Provide, as a public service, on-site technical assistance to private landowners for the implementation of conservation practices. Work closely and maintain a good working relationship with other resource management professionals, both public and private, in support of a holistic approach to the management of natural resources.
- Assist clients with applying for financial assistance through USDA Farm Bill Programs, including application processing, contract development and administration, application ranking and document preparation for program selections, survey, design, and construction inspection.

- Assist the District Conservationist (DC) with monitoring progress of contract implementation, reviews, processing contract modifications and payments, and general correspondence
- Learn program rules and regulations concerning administration of applications and contracting procedures for each Farm Bill program under NRCS responsibility.
- Use agency-specific software related to mapping, planning & contracting (somewhat GIS-based).
- Maintain accurate records of customer interactions and ability to keep the records organized.
- Maintain client confidentiality.
- Organize and promote peer-to-peer learning among producers to incentivize implementation of regenerative agricultural practices through workshops, seminars and farm field days
- Track grant deliverables and compose monthly staff reports. Draft annual grant program report and report deliverables to National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.
- Support Conservation District programs and assist in office with walk-in clients, answering telephones, general office up-keep, events such as tree sale, annual meeting and other duties as assigned by the Mason-Lake Conservation District Manager.
- Develop a weekly work plan in consultation with the District Manager and NRCS DC
- Willingness to obtain conservation certifications through NRCS such as “certified conservation planner”, “certified pest management plan writing”, “nutrient plan writing”
- Promote, District events, Farm Bill programs and general conservation education through website, newsletters, other media, demonstrations and workshops
- Assist in the preparation of District records, reports, and annual & long-range work plans.
- Prepare and provide presentations to groups on soil and water conservation topics as requested.
- Foster partnership-building with local organizations and stakeholders to best facilitate community-based conservation.

Required Qualifications:

- A Bachelor’s of Science Degree in agriculture, forestry, biology or a natural resources-related field
- A minimum of two years of experience in agriculture, forestry, or other conservation fieldwork.
- Excellent computer skills are required. Computer workstation will be provided, including a standard PC, on a shared network with Windows-based software, modeling software and GIS.
- Excellent organizational, time management, written and verbal communication skills.
- Exhibit strong social and interpersonal skills.
- Work cooperatively with district personnel and other agencies.
- Able to work efficiently outdoors in varying conditions and rough terrain; able to lift 50 pounds.
- Must maintain a valid driver’s license and clean driving record.
- Occasional travel for trainings and meetings is required, including overnight.
- Must be able to pass a Federal Background Security Check.

Preferred Qualifications:

- Knowledge of and experience working with agricultural producers and practices OR watershed management and restoration activities.
- Familiarity with agricultural or construction equipment and maintenance.
- Self-directed, able to research regenerative agricultural practices that are applicable to the service area and share that information with the producers in the service area.
- Experience collaborating on, developing, and delivering conservation education programs to a variety of audiences in diverse settings.
- Familiarity with GIS.
- Experience writing grants and related grant reporting.

To Apply:

Send cover letter, resume, unofficial transcripts and three references as a single PDF to Dani McGarry, Executive Director of Mason-Lake Conservation District, at dani.mcgarry@macd.org with “Application – Conservation Technician” in the subject line. Deadline to apply is November 7th at midnight.

If you have any questions, please call Dani McGarry at (231) 757-3707 ext. 102. Learn more at www.mason-lakeConservation.org