



Conservation Technician - Vacancy Announcement Mason-Lake Conservation District

POSITION OBJECTIVE:

To work with the Mason-Lake Conservation District and assist USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS), for the purposes of planning, contracting and implementing various conservation practices in Mason and the west half of Lake County.

Statement of Work

Conservation Districts and NRCS provide technical and financial assistance for producers and landowners that want to implement conservation activities on their land. The Conservation Technician will assist the landowners of Mason-Lake Conservation District better understand, plan, manage, protect, and utilize their natural resources. The goal of this position is to provide information and technical assistance to private landowners in order to implement 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**. The Technician will work directly with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) – Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to complete this work at the Scottville, MI USDA Service Center.

Delivery of these programs will be through 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. The Technician'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. Provide, as a public service, on-site technical assistance to private landowners under contract with USDA 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.
2. Assist clients with applying for financial assistance through USDA Farm Bill Programs, including application processing, contract development, application ranking and document preparation for program selections.
3. Assist contract holders with technical guidance regarding implementation of their practices.
4. Assist the District Conservationist (DC) with monitoring progress of contract implementation, reviews, processing contract modifications and payments, and general correspondence
5. Learn program rules and regulations concerning administration of applications and contracting procedures for each Farm Bill program under NRCS responsibility.
6. Must use agency specific software related to mapping, planning & contracting.
7. Maintain accurate records of customer interactions and ability to keep the records organized.
8. Maintain client confidentiality.
9. Supply content to the Conservation District website relating to Farm Bill Programs.

OTHER FUNCTIONS:

1. Assists 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. Develops a weekly schedule in consultation with the District Manager and NRCS DC
3. Be able to obtain conservation certifications through NRCS such as “certified conservation planner”, “certified pest management plan writing”, “nutrient plan writing”
4. Employee will assist with and promote, through public relations, District events as requested by the District Directors and Manager.
5. Assist in the preparation of District records, reports, and annual & long range work plans.
6. Give prepared presentations to groups on soil and water conservation topics as requested.
7. Prepare 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 in agriculture, forestry or natural resources related field
2. A minimum of two years of experience in natural resources, agriculture, forestry or other conservation fieldwork.
3. Preferred candidates will have knowledge of and experience working with agricultural producers and practices OR watershed management/restoration

ABILITIES:

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

Relationships:

The technician is supervised by, and reports to the Manager of the Mason-Lake Conservation District. The technician will work directly with the NRCS DC and as part of a team with other Conservation District employees.

SALARY, BENEFITS, WORK HOURS, LOCATION:

This position will be based in Scottville, Michigan near Ludington. This location is on the west side of the state, where there is a diverse variety of agriculture for the region, including row crops, orchards, dairy, livestock, and even floriculture. Forestry, wildlife habitat and stream restoration are also a large component of workload in the area. Work time is split between office work and field work. 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 1,000 walk-in office customers each year. This is an hourly position including some benefits (paid federal holidays, vacation and sick leave). Pay rate will be \$20-24, determined based on experience. Typical work hours will be Monday-Friday, 8:00am – 4:30pm. Some night and weekend work will be required. This position is funded by a three-year grant through National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and NRCS with potential for continuation, depending on available funding. Position Starting Date: August 2018

TO APPLY

Please submit a cover letter, resume, three references and college transcripts (unofficial acceptable) by email to District Manager Dani McGarry at dani.mcgarry@macd.org by the close of business on Monday, July 16th, 2018. Please combine all application materials into one PDF file for review. Contact Dani McGarry with any questions related to the position (email preferred) or by calling (231-757-3707) x102. To obtain further information about the Mason-Lake Conservation District visit our website at www.mason-lakeconservation.org.