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JOB OPPORTUNITY: PROJECT MANAGER II - AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMS

Employer: Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District

Work Location: Main office in Sebastopol, Sonoma County, California, with option for partial remote work; field work throughout Sonoma County.

Status: Non-Exempt/ 0.8-1.0 FTE (32-40 hours/week) including some evening and weekend hours.

Compensation: Starting pay rate \$42.40/hour-\$49.15/hour, (annual salary for 40hrs/wk \$88,192.00-102,238.70)

Posting Date: December 22nd, 2024

Closing Date: Until filled. First screening of applications is on January 12, 2024.

Start Date: Flexible, January/February

The Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District in Sonoma County, CA, is seeking a Project Manager II - Agricultural Programs to direct and implement programs that support conservation planning and project implementation for landowners and land managers in a variety of agricultural operations, including vineyards, orchards, vegetable crops, ranches, dairies, and diverse farms.

Organizational Background

Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs) are non-regulatory, local government entities organized under state law and empowered to manage soil, water, fish, and wildlife resources for conservation. In existence since the 1940s, RCDs are local grassroots conservation delivery systems that identify local conservation problems and guide solutions on a voluntary basis. RCDs have staff with expertise in a wide variety of natural resource and agricultural disciplines, education and outreach, policy, and fundraising, and are governed by Boards of Directors that are local landowners.

Position Summary

The Project Manager will work with a team to administer several programs from local and federal funding sources totaling more than 5 million to engage agricultural producers as ecosystem stewards through the development and implementation of Conservation Plans like Carbon Farm Plans, Prescribed Grazing Plans, Soil Health Management Plans as well as supporting other programs such as LandSmart Grazing for Community Resilience. These climate smart agriculture programs are designed to provide on-farm ecological benefits, improve agricultural productivity, enhance agroecosystem resilience, and mitigate global climate change through the regional LandSmart program. <http://landsmart.org/>

Carbon Farming involves implementing conservation practices that are known to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and sequester atmospheric carbon in plant material and/or soil organic matter. Carbon farming is

successful when carbon gains, resulting from enhanced land management and/or conservation practices, exceed carbon losses. <http://landsmart.org/programs-services/landsmart-carbon-farm-plans/>

Essential Functions:

The Project Manager II works in partnership with Project Manager II, AmeriCorps Fellow and Executive Director to support programs that promote soil conservation, climate adaptation, water quality improvement, wildlife habitat enhancement and agricultural sustainability. We partner with many individuals and organizations in our district, regionally and statewide. The Project Manager II will be responsible for meeting grant deliverables, writing grants, stewarding partnerships, and working effectively in teams. This position serves as a technical resource and advisor to land users, and the interested public. In addition to doing outreach to support farmers in accessing programs, you also support farmers and other landowners who have already secured financial assistance in overcoming any barriers to implementing these practices. Project Manager II will also contribute to outreach and educational event planning to promote awareness and interest among the farming community in practices that have climate benefits. The ideal candidate will have existing connections within the farm community and will have experience working with a wide variety of farm types and with diverse populations. You will use your real-world experience on farms to provide actionable assistance to farmers seeking to implement conservation practices on their land.

- Plans, manages, produces, and assists in implementation of LandSmart Plans, Carbon Farm Plans, and other natural resource management Conservation Plans ([USDA NRCS Field Office Technical Guide for California \(Section 3\)](#)). This duty includes responsibility as the principal author/editor of written Plans. These plans include working with landowners to develop their short-term and long-term stewardship goals to identify conservation practices that sequester carbon and reduce GHG emissions, enhance natural resources, and promote sustainability. The work requires GIS experience (ArcGIS Pro) and the collection, interpretation, and analysis of scientific data. The work requires building trust through extensive contact with the landowners, land stewards and community partners to gather information, explain findings, and build consensus.
- Administer complex local, state and federal grants including oversight of construction, following state and federal guidelines, invoicing reporting and partnership building.
- Serves as member of an interdisciplinary team to solve complex and/or controversial resource-related issues. Scopes issues, develops resource objectives, monitors programs, and evaluates data and final implementation. Increases regional capacity by participating and contributing to regional conservation efforts.
- Based on well-developed experience and knowledge, significantly contributes to the development of land management practices, by suggesting process improvements to current practices, or suggesting alternative approaches to difficult issues.
- Participates and contributes to soil health monitoring, data collection and reporting of results to provide adaptation strategies and steward resources in the face of increased wildfire risk, water scarcity, floods, species decline and soil degradation.
- Performs a wide range of professional and administrative duties associated with the RCD's grant-based funding.

Minimum Qualifications:

- Demonstrated verbal and written communication skills to communicate with private landowners, private contractors, government agencies, public, and news media. References required.

- Professional knowledge of a wide range of sustainable agriculture and natural resource management principles, concepts, and theories sufficient to develop and evaluate the effectiveness of land management prescriptions covering diverse situations.
- Applicants must have demonstrated technical expertise in the implementation of agricultural conservation practices that are included in any proposed plans for farmers and ranchers. Applicants will also provide justification of how their education, experience and certifications make them qualified for developing the plans indicated.
- Maintain extensive documentation of work with farmers, establish and maintain program files and documents for program delivery, and support the maintenance of program contract files.
- Maintain workload registers with information from contracts for needed follow-up, and perform follow-up tasks.
- Proven track record in developing and maintaining relationships with others and supporting them in achieving their goals, ideally in a farming or land management context.
- Success in roles requiring simultaneous management of multiple priorities under tight timelines.
- Professional knowledge required to modify or adapt standard processes; to assess, select, and apply appropriate precedents; and to devise strategies needed to overcome significant resource problems.
- Practical and applied field experience in natural resource management principles.
- A working knowledge of related disciplines to integrate the views and findings of other professionals into the planning process.
- Knowledge of ecological processes to evaluate and assess the environmental responses of the ecosystem to various management practices on a variety of ecosystems.
- Consensus-building skills sufficient to address differences among diverse affected interests.
- The work requires some physical exertion such as long periods of walking, digging, bending over for data collection, carrying field study equipment, standing, crouching, often over rough, uneven, or rocky terrain.
- Bachelor's degree in related science field (Master's preferred) or equivalent experience.
- Seven (7) years' professional experience working in the field of natural resource management including managing projects.
- Strong organizational and coordination skills.
- Experience working with private agricultural landowners.
- Possession of, or ability to obtain, an appropriate, valid CA Class C driver's license and automobile insurance.
- Proficient in ArcGIS Pro.

Desired Qualifications

- Experience with budget management, grant, and other funding proposal writing.
- Knowledge of soil and principles of "healthy soil".
- Familiarity with USDA NRCS conservation practices, particularly in rangeland, vineyard, and crop management
- Knowledge of coastal California flora and fauna
- Proven ability to work as a team player in collaboration with diverse groups of people.
- High level of integrity as well as a positive, can-do attitude.
- Goal oriented and self-directed, works well independently.
- Action-oriented, adaptable, and innovative.
- Passion for conservation and a great teammate.

Position Information:

The Project Manager II position is a permanent, flexible part to full-time (32-40 hours/week) hybrid position. It is expected this position will require 30% fieldwork and 70% office hours. The work schedule can be somewhat flexible based on incumbent availability, but the Project Manager II will be expected to maintain regular hours once a schedule has been established. The work schedule will frequently require coordination with other staff or project partners or will be dictated by field/weather conditions. Occasional commitments on weekday evenings and weekends may be necessary to attend community events, meetings, and conferences. Local job-related travel is required, and some weekend and overnight travel may be necessary. Approved travel expenses incurred while conducting official RCD business will be paid on a reimbursable basis at the current federal rate. A valid California driver's license and proof of insurance is required. Must be at least 18 years of age at the time of employment.

Work Environment

The Gold Ridge RCD is located outside of the small towns of Sebastopol and Graton. We have 15 experienced, kind, and thoughtful staff. Our office is in an old farmhouse situated on an orchard and vineyard property down a gravel road. There is no regular public transportation to our office, but many staff enjoy biking to work. The work will be split between the outdoors and in an office preparing plans and attending meetings. The work performed outdoors is sometimes in remote areas. The work involves regular and recurring exposure to moderate risks and discomfort.

Work is performed in an indoor/outdoor setting to include:

- Field settings that include various terrains, including work in flowing streams, dense vegetation (with possible exposure to poison oak, ticks, and mosquitos); and hot, cold, and/or wet conditions.
- A professional office environment in a rural location not easily accessible by public transportation.
- Partial remote work is optional as work responsibilities allow.

Compensation:

Financial compensation will be \$42.40/hour-\$49.15/hour depending on experience. The incumbent will be eligible for enrollment in the RCD group health insurance and dental/vision plan with an annual employer contribution equivalent to 100% employee-only coverage for full time employees, of an RCD selected medical plan. After 1000 hours of work employees will also be enrolled in an RCD sponsored retirement plan through CalPERS and can enroll in an optional Nationwide 457b retirement account. Additional benefits include 104 paid-time-off hours equal to 13 days which accrue uniformly throughout the year, and 11 paid holidays.

Application Procedures: Please submit cover letter, resume, and three references to Rebecca@goldridgercd.org with the title "Project Manager II, Ag" in the subject line. The first round of **applications will be reviewed January 12th, to be considered applications must be received no later than 5:00 PM Pacific Standard Time on January 11, 2024. No phone calls.**

The Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District is an equal opportunity employer. Employment is based on qualifications and competency. We prohibit discrimination based on race, color, religion, religious creed (including religious dress and grooming practices), national origin, ancestry, citizenship, physical or mental disability, medical condition (including cancer and genetic characteristics), genetic information, marital status, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding, or related medical conditions), gender, gender identity, gender expression, age, sexual orientation, veteran and/or military status, and any other status protected by state or federal law.