



Orleans County Conservation District Position Description

Position Title: Lake Watershed Program Specialist

Who we are The Orleans County NRCD was established in 1947, after Vermont passed the [Soil Conservation Act](#), with an original purpose to drive locally-led voluntary conservation through contacts with farmers. In 1968, the Vermont State Legislature amended the Soil Conservation Act broadening our scope to conserve all natural resources. The mission of the Orleans County Conservation District is to protect and enhance the waters of Orleans County by providing leadership, education and services for implementation of sound land stewardship practices in order to improve the quality of all of the county's soils and waters.

We are seeking to fill a full time Lake Watershed Program Specialist to serve the Orleans County community. Orleans County contains more lakes and ponds than any county in the state of Vermont. There are 90 inventoried lakes and ponds in the Memphremagog watershed covering 17,660 acres or over five percent of the basin. The Shoreland Protection Act (Chapter 49A of Title 10, §1441 et seq.), regulates shoreland development within 250 feet of a lake's mean water level for all lakes greater than 10 acres in size. There are 58 lakes and ponds in Basin that are ten acres or greater.

With shared historical roots with NRCS, we are non-regulatory subdivision of Vermont state government with a five-member board which means that landowner engagement with the district is voluntary and incentive-based. We function much like a non-profit and our work is done by coordinating available resources to promote the conservation of natural resources through education, conservation programs and technical services.

Job summary: Orleans County NRCD lake restoration project manager requires an outgoing, dynamic conservationist and innovator with both field and administrative experience who can build a program and community and can deliver implementation of restoration projects. This is a dynamic position that will be driven by conservation science, high quality service and a passion for conservation. The ideal candidate will possess technical knowledge and/or work experience in ecological restoration, landscapes design and natural resources management to provide support to landowners in addressing and meeting their conservation goals. This position will require the applicant to successfully write grants and develop projects to maintain funding for this position, alongside the entire OCNRCD team.

The bulk of the work will be working with state and local partners and lakeshore landowners in four priority watersheds to address land use impacts to surface waters from sediment and nutrients from individual lakeshore properties, stream bank erosion, forest and municipal roads, and other high priority areas in a lake's watershed. Primary duties are:

1. Work to implement the recently completed four Lake Watershed Action Plans (LWAPs)
 - a. Conduct outreach and education activities
 - b. Complete Lakewise Assessments
 - c. Serve as a project manager to support interested landowners in project implementation on lakeshores.
 - d. Deliver program navigation services in these priority lake watersheds.
2. Serve as the point of contact for lake restoration in the Newport USDA office.
3. Carry out special project related to Orleans County NRCD Lakes program and project needs.

This position is grant funded and is under the general supervision of the OCNRCD Manager. Incumbent will also be working to increase conservation district general operational functions, financial sustainability, community engagement and coordination with partners.

Minimum Qualifications:

Bachelor's degree in environmental sciences or a related degree with at least 2 years of work experience. Ideal candidate will have knowledge of current water quality issues in Vermont, knowledge of basic lake science, have hands on work experience, map making skills, familiarity with development pressures and the ecological impacts and ability to work with a variety of stakeholders like lakeshore residents, farmers, funders, partners, and community members, and municipal officials.

Qualified applicants will be highly motivated, flexible, able set work priorities and management a moderate to heavy workload. Can work in indoor and outdoor environments and can effectively work independent and with direction of a supervision and in collaboration with multiple partners. Will have excellent communication, organization, administrative, and project management skills. Proven success with grants administration and record keeping is required. It is essential for the person occupying this position to pass a federal background check to be able to use the NRCS computer network and maintain confidentially.

Wage and Benefits:

This is a non-salaried position with a starting wage of \$26 per hour. Full time staff receive paid holidays, HSA medical benefits, 2% retirement match, annual and sick leave. This position is funded through grant sources and is an at-will position.

Work schedule: Full time 35 - 40 hours a week

Office Location: USDA office at 59 Waterfront Plaza in Newport VT with some remote work possible

Target Start Date: January 20th, 2025

Duties and Performance Requirements

- Competently, work with lake associations, partners and landowners to implement the recently completed four (LWAPs) on Caspian, Willoughby, Shadow, and Echo-Seymore Lakes.
 1. Successfully develop outreach plans and conduct outreach activities 2 workshops per year
 2. Successfully complete Lakewise assessments at approx. 15-20 per year
 3. Successfully complete Lakewise lakeshore project 4-6 per year
 4. Provide referrals to restoration programs managed by conservation network partners to successfully support the completion of watershed restoration projects approx. 2-4 per year
- Conduct Grant Management Activities
 - Apply for project and program grants to build revenue streams.
 - Manage program budgets for lake restoration OCNRCD programing and stay within established project budgets.
 - Successfully complete grant deliverables
 - Complete grant reporting deadlines and requirements
- Serve as the point of contact in the Newport USDA office for lakeshore restoration.
 - Respond to requests for technical assistance in priority watersheds and requests related to lakeshores in Orleans County.
 - Successfully develop relationship with contractors working on lakeshores.
 - Professionally, effectively, and efficiently provide and respond to OCNRCD lake programs primary customers and partners meaningfully and timely.
 - Utilize the strength and connection to the National and VT NRCDs network and resources.
 - Host bi-annual Memphremagog lakes workgroup meetings and attend other related partner meetings.
 - Stay up to date on current Vermont lake restoration related topics.
- Perform additional related responsibilities for special lakes projects as need arises including working with the District Manager and other OCNRCD staff to expand and diversify relevant lake restoration services to best serve the community.

- Professionally represent the Orleans County NRCDC at all times.

Skills Needed for Success

Professional project management skills and qualities including:

- Working technical knowledge of watershed issues, non-point source pollution and restoration remediation strategies;
- Competencies with administrative tasks including grant management, execution, and reporting both planning individually and with others via share documents.
- Can identify opportunities, program needs, community engagement, funding and develop avenues and revenues to meet needs and opportunities.
- Can scope, identifying and develop restoration projects including developing budgets, deliverables, and work plans that include projected time frames and sequencing of tasks and work with engineers and contractors.
- Experience shepherding complex projects from start to finish including successful oversight of project installations – with support and oversight from the district manager and other OCNRCDC staff.
- Can think big picture and can think about all the needed details of the project while successfully multi-tasking to manage many projects.
- Can think creatively- come up with good ideas, follow through with them.
- Have an interest and ability to anticipate and identify obstacles and create solutions.
- Applies critical thinking in problem solving and decision making and is willing and able to do what's needed to competently execute a task exceptionally well.
- Flexibility and willingness to figure it out - does the work to answer technical and administrative questions before and in preparation to reaching out to partners and or District Manager.
- Possesses leadership skills, is comfortable in a leadership role and can work in a shared leadership model.
- System thinking mindset.
- Able to take on and manage individual responsibilities and program responsibilities.
- Self-motivated and takes initiative.
- Has a mind for program development.
- Can work coordinate and collaborative with partners and individuals from many different organizations across the state and region.
- Can relate to the needs of landowners, town officials and of agency staff & state programs.
- Entrepreneurial spirit, comfortable with a level of risk and experiential learning.
- Demonstrated success with working on grant funded programs and delivering grant results.
- Experience with Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software and management programs including Global Positioning Systems (GPS);
- Familiar with relevant state, and federal programs, laws, standards and specifications;
- Strong computer literacy including experience with Windows, MS Office, Google Drive, and social media platforms;

Professional communication and public relations skills and qualities including:

- Strong and consistent written communication and public relations skills including program related communication campaigns.
- Can deliver online communications and printed materials to communicate project accomplishments, district mission etc
- Ability to create and maintain positive relationships is critical.
- Can effectively and professional converse and communicate program goals with variety of audiences, stakeholders and reluctant landowners.
- Can communicate information on BMPs, ecological science concepts and natural resource issues.

- Understands the significant importance of ensuring solid, thoughtful communication, especially about implementation of project standards and requirements, so that certification and payment can be smooth. Thinks though written and verbal communications before communicating.
- Comfortable and successful at public speaking
- Is willing to conduct cold calling outreach campaigns.
- Excellent customer service skills and is personable and friendly.
- Likes to and can manage event logistics.
- Skilled at organizing, planning and presenting public presentations to citizen groups, organizations or committees.
- Strong interpersonal skills and self-awareness
- Open and actively working on continuous improvement process especially in terms of communication skills, types and approaches.

Professional organizational and workload management skills and qualities including:

- Ability to plan and carry out a range of tasks independently and managing time effectively for administering and installing multiple projects.
- Skilled at methodically approaching all work tasks, capturing and documenting the range of program delivery steps and developing and implementing program delivery systems.
- Can follow and conduct internal best practices for program services, workload and informational management on behalf of the organization.
- Recognizes that success involves teamwork- checks with others before making significant moves.
- Understands the need for projecting and sequencing of tasks.
- Conducts sufficient tasks and in office preparations for efficient and effective field work.
- Conducts sufficient tasks and in office processing for efficient and effective documentation of post field work information processing, assessment, planning and communications.
- Uses techniques to manage tasks - outlook calendar, setting hours for buckets of work and scheduling out projected tasks to meet project deliverables.

Helpful Skills but Not Required

- Knowledge of Conservation Districts and of local, state and federal conservation programs
- Comfortable with operation of equipment and machinery is a plus;
- Ability to understand and interpret scientific concepts and data, and communicate these effectively with the public;
- Experience with study design and data tracking, monitoring and analysis;

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

The employee frequently is required to sit, walk, stand and reach with hands and arms. The employee is occasionally required to climb or balance, and kneel, crouch or crawl. The employee must frequently lift and/or move up to 10 pounds and occasionally lift and/or move up to 50pounds.

You will have an assigned desk, telephone, and computer at the OCNRCD office. The position involves computer work that may include long periods sitting, typing and reading from a computer screen.

TO APPLY

Please e-mail sarah.damsell@vt.nacdnet.net a cover letter and resume (PDF or Word format) with "Lake Watershed Program Specialist" in the subject line. Deadline to submit is Monday December 30th. Direct any questions to this email address. No phone calls, please.