



## **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 providing technical guidance to landowners for implementation of various conservation activities 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 and help them to 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 and 2018, 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 site visits, 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 practice implementation activities such as inventory and evaluation, survey, design, lay-out, construction inspection among others. The work may also include contract administration activities such as document collection and compilation, application ranking, contract correspondence preparation. Common conservation practices promoted to landowners include agricultural nutrient management, erosion control, cover crops, field borders, filter strips, forest management activities 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 work plan in consultation with the District Manager and NRCS DC
3. Willingness 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. Prepare and provide 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
4. Preferred candidates will have familiarity with agricultural or construction equipment

#### 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, modelling software and GIS.
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. Able to work efficiently outdoors in varying conditions and rough terrain; able 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.

#### 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 2,000 walk-in office clients each year. This is an hourly position including some benefits (paid federal holidays, vacation and sick leave). Pay rate will be \$20-24, based on experience. Typical work hours will be Monday-Friday, 8:00am – 4:30pm. Some evening and weekend work will be required. This grant-based position is funded by National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and NRCS through 4/30/21 with potential for continuation, dependent on available funding. **Preferred position starting date: November 2019**

#### 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](mailto:dani.mcgarry@macd.org) by midnight on Sunday, October 20<sup>th</sup>. Please combine all application materials into one PDF file for review and state “Application – Conservation Technician” in the email subject line. Contact Dani McGarry at the above email address with any questions related to the position. To obtain further information about the Mason-Lake Conservation District visit our website at [www.mason-lakeconservation.org](http://www.mason-lakeconservation.org).

*Mason-Lake Conservation District is an equal opportunity employer and provider.*