

## Isanti Soil and Water Conservation District

### Job Description

#### LAND PROTECTION CONSERVATION TECHNICIAN

Job Status: Non-Exempt, Full-Time

Reports to: Isanti SWCD District Manager

#### Summary:

If you are passionate about conservation, looking to work in a positive and fun office environment and want to take part in the unique opportunity to develop and implement conservation programs to protect natural resources this position may be right for you!

The Land Protection Technician will take the lead in coordinating and implementing actions including but not limited to conservation Easements and forest management to achieve the goals laid out in the Rum River Watershed Management Comprehensive Watershed Plan, Rum River Watershed Landscape Stewardship Plan and other plans as identified.

This position will be based in Isanti County but will assist in the administration of Programs within Isanti and Mille Lacs Counties. The position will also support and collaborate with other Federal, State, local and tribal government staff in the watershed.

This position is grant funded to specifically support the work of the Rum River Watershed Partnership. The Partnership includes but is not limited to SWCD, tribal and county members located within the watershed.

This position is under the general supervision of the Isanti Soil and Water Conservation District Manager.

#### **Essential Duties and Responsibilities:**

*These examples are intended to describe the general nature and level of work being performed by people in this position. They are not to be construed as an exhaustive list of all duties performed by personnel in this position.*

#### **Conservation Easement Programs (50%)**

- Coordinate with Outreach staff to complete mass easement mailing and outreach in prioritized easement locations.
  - Create maps, payments, estimates, and program information handouts.
  - Field landowners' questions about the easement program.
  - Determine landowner eligibility based on plan priority and Board of Water and Soil Resource requirements.
- Attend Conservation Easement Technical Committee meetings to present easements for approval.
- Prepare the BWSR Easement Application Package according to the BWSR Handbook.
- Work with landowner and title company to attain clear title on land deals

- Interpret orthophotography, analyze natural resource data layers in ArcGIS applications, and use professional skills (e.g., ecological, biological) to evaluate existing and potential vegetative cover/habitat.
- Manage individual habitat improvement projects, including coordinating with, consultants, partners, and landowners; developing and reviewing ecological restoration or planting plans; developing scopes of work, bid materials, and project specifications for contractors; tracking budgets and schedules; and overseeing work of contractors.
- Assist in tracking and reporting budgets and accomplishments.
- Assist in the regular monitoring and management of Isanti and Mille Lacs County existing portfolio of permanently protected lands.

### **Forestry Programs (40%)**

- Communicate regularly with the Watershed Organizer/Forestry Coordinator and the local forestry technical team to coordinate, develop policies and administer forestry programs.
- Partner with other SWCD staff, federal and state agencies as well as the private sector (private foresters and contractors) and nonprofits to support forestland protection efforts with a focus on water quality and soil health.
- Complete site visits and connect landowners with private consultants to write woodland forest stewardship plans and/or write individual Woodland Stewardship Plans with a focus on water quality and soil health for landowners based on MN DNR or Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) requirements.
- Provide direct support to private forested landowners through consultation and perform site visits to assess forest conditions and other resource concerns. Provide site specific recommendations to landowners based on conservation goals, site specific needs, and resource concerns.
- Guide landowners with stewardship plans or management plans on implementing projects/Best Management Practices (BMP's) in their plans. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Job Approval Authority is needed to design these projects and practices.
- Work closely with the Outreach staff on education and outreach to develop opportunities to foster the relationship between healthy forests and good water quality.
- Take phone calls, emails, and walk-in office questions from the public and answer their questions about forestry programs such as 2c managed forest land, Sustainable Forestry Incentive Act (SFIA), MN DNR Cost-share programs, as well as SWCD and NRCS programs.

### **Additional Responsibilities (10%)**

- Administration of Isanti SWCD annual tree sale program.
- Assist with writing grant applications for any grants that could be utilized by the watershed/districts for related conservation projects.
- Pursues and enrolls landowners in various programs to meet plan goals including State and Local Cost-Share Programs, Conservation Reserve Program, Environmental Quality Incentive Program, etc.
- Other duties as assigned

## **Knowledge, Skills and Abilities**

- Excellent interpersonal communication skills and relationship-building skills to effectively work with a diverse variety of people and personalities, including developing relationships with SWCD and NRCS staff, private landowners, and consultants/contractors.
- Creativity to develop new innovative ways to engage landowners to enroll in conservation programs.
- Able to work unsupervised, plan, prioritize, coordinate, and manage own work.
- Able to make decisions and solve routine problems independently, effectively, and creatively.
- Knowledge of trees, grasses and forbes for identification
- Understand and display high levels of internal and external customer service.
- Possess good communication skills both in writing and verbally
- Seasonal field work required in all weather conditions.
- Occasional weekends and nights as needed (meetings and events).

## **Minimum Qualifications:**

- A Bachelor's degree in Natural Resources Management, Forest Management, Environmental Studies, Earth Sciences similar field of study or combination of two year degree and equivalent work experience.
- Experience with GPS, GIS, and other data collection applications and tools
- Computer skills, including Microsoft Office (Excel, Word, Outlook, PowerPoint); Adobe Acrobat Reader and Canva preferred.
- Able to obtain USDA Federal Security Clearance and pass a background check.
- A vehicle and a valid Minnesota class D Drivers' License

## **Desired Qualifications:**

- A minimum of two years of experience working in a forestry related position doing field work such as inventory, plan writing, and providing professional consultation.
- Approved plan writer of the ability to obtain Woodland Stewardship Plan Certification within one year. MN DNR requirements include:
  - A Bachelor's degree in Forest Management or 2-year Forestry degree from a Society of American Foresters recognized institution.
  - Completed College courses in: Dendrology (or botany/plan taxonomy), Silviculture, Ecology, and Wildlife management.
- Job approval authority for conservation practices in the NRCS program.
- Experience and/or knowledge with SWCD, State, USDA programs, eligibility requirements, and the implementation of conservation practices.

## **WORK ENVIRONMENT**

- Regularly withstand Minnesota's hot and cold weather conditions to perform outdoor responsibilities.
- Travel within Isanti and Mille Lacs County required.
- Work a flexible schedule that may include evenings and weekends, as needed.

**EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY:**

Candidates will be considered without discrimination for any non- merit reason such as race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital or familial status or membership or non-membership in an employee organization.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENT:** I have reviewed this job description and understand that this job description does not necessarily list all the functions or accountabilities of the job. Management may ask employees to perform additional duties and tasks, and employees are expected to continually assess where their assistance would benefit their coworkers and the organization and step in to fill those gaps. Management reserves the right to revise and update job descriptions at any time. Employment at the SWCD is “at-will,” meaning either I or the SWCD Board may terminate my employment at any time.

Employee Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Employee Signature Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_