

Henricopolis Soil & Water Conservation District
Conservation Specialist
Job Description

General Definition of Work

The Conservation Specialist position is a professional position responsible for the management of urban and agricultural conservation programs. This position reports to the Board and will assist with the development of programs addressing urban conservation and best management practices for homeowners administering the Virginia Conservation Assistance Program (VCAP), and the Virginia Agricultural Cost Share (VACS) program. The Specialist must also provide leadership and assistance in carrying out objectives outlined in the Strategic Plan and the Annual Plan of Work of the District. This position is considered “Exempt” under the Fair Standards Labor Act.

Important Program Definitions:

1. **Virginia Conservation Assistance Program (VCAP):** VCAP is a cost-share and technical assistance program available to all homeowners and commercial and public landowners in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. Twelve conservation best practices are available within the program to help landowners manage the unique and problematic features of their property.
2. **Virginia Agricultural Cost Share Program (VACS):** VACS is a cost-Share Program that offers more than 60 conservation practices that endeavor to create healthy soils and protect our water-based ecosystems. Whether a producer grows crops, raises livestock, or produces poultry, there are BMPs that can benefit them.

Essential Responsibilities

Urban Conservation

- Promotes and manages HSWCD urban conservation programs, including the Virginia Conservation Assistant Program (VCAP.)
- Identifies soil and water quality concerns and schedules field visits with landowners and homeowners to address opportunities to resolve erosion, sediment, and nutrient problems.
- Participate-in trainings that will promote proficiency in the planning and application of soil and water quality conservation principles, theories and practices.
- Verifies and documents cost-share allocations are being spent as approved and in accordance with program priorities and administrative guidelines.
- Coordinate the evaluation of VCAP Cost-Share applications for the Board in accordance with VCAP ranking protocols.
- Attend Virginia Association of Soil & Water Conservation District VCAP-related meetings and webinars.

Agricultural Conservation

- Provide technical assistance to localities in the implementation of the agricultural BMPs.
- Develop Soil and Water Quality Conservation Plans and/or Assessments to meet the needs of the individual land.
- Develop other conservation plans, including those for land conversion, and perform field visits to provide conservation plan assistance.
- Assist with the implementation of the Agricultural Best Management Practices (BMPs) Cost-Share for the District, conduct technical inspections, make recommendations for conservation measures, and certify completed cost-share BMPs.
- Assist with agricultural BMP spot checks as required by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR).
- Provide data entry into the Agricultural BMP Tracking Program-
- If not already achieved, acquire Conservation Planner Certification within two years of hire (approximately 140 hours).
- Coordinate and lead the annual producer meetings.

Combined

- Regularly monitor possible grants and present viable grants to the Board for review and consideration
- Prepares monthly reports of progress, issues, and opportunities to the Board at board meetings.
- Maintains effective working relationships with District directors and staff, county staff, partner agencies (local, state and federal), and organizations staff, other SWCD agencies, and community stakeholders and partners.
- Assists the Staff and Board with the development of programs and presentations addressing urban conservation and best management practices.
- Serves as the District's primary technical resource to stakeholders and customers.
- Attends and participates in monthly and called HSWCD meetings as well as special meetings outside the district as requested by the Board (e.g. training) and serves on District committees.
- Prepares, maintains, verifies and retains all documents and records according to the current year manual (paper and electronic documentation).
- Performs other duties as assigned.

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

- Knowledge of agriculture and rural land issues.
- Knowledge of urban development issues.
- Knowledge of stormwater management issues.
- Environmental awareness and understanding of soil and water conservation issues.

- Excellent computer skills with the ability to use common programs, including Word, PowerPoint, ARC/GIS, Excel, and Internet navigation, and ability to learn/use new programs and systems.
- Ability to maintain appropriate program records, prepare related documentation and reports, and ensure compliance with funding source requirements.
- Interpersonal skills inherent in establishing and maintaining effective working relationships with a diverse audience of stakeholders in the community, other SWCD agencies, other partner agencies, regulatory agencies at the local, state and federal levels, and with District staff, Board and Committee members. Maintain effective working relationships with others in a team environment.
- Ability to multi-task with excellent customer service skills, time management and problem solving skills.
- Physical ability to perform tasks involving frequent walking over difficult terrain, lifting and carrying moderate weight (25 lbs.), and exposure to adverse weather conditions. Assigned duties require mental, auditory and visual acuity for alertness to avoid potentially hazardous conditions.
- Must have a valid Virginia driver's license and must be willing to provide his or her own transportation on the job if District vehicles are not available. (Mileage will be reimbursed at the current mileage rate.)
- Must be able to work a flexible work schedule to attend programs, events, meetings and other activities as required that may be outside of normal working hours. Position is eligible to earn compensatory time.

Education and Experience

- Previous relevant work, internship, or volunteer experience in agriculture, natural resources, conservation, environmental management, outreach, or program (or project) management preferred.
- Or: Any equivalent combination of experience and training which provides the required knowledge, skills and abilities.

Other Requirements

- **Have or attain DCR Conservation Planner certification.**
- Valid driver's license and a good driving record as verified by the VA DMV.
- Ability to travel independently throughout Henrico.
- Ability to carry supplies up to 25 lbs.
- Must pass a criminal and federal background check to the satisfaction of the employer.

Starting salary will range \$58,700 - \$70,000 commensurate with experience. HSWCD offers an excellent benefits package including paid sick and annual leave, paid holidays, participation in the Virginia Retirement System, and employer-supported healthcare coverage. This is also a hybrid position with remote and in-office days.