

THOMAS JEFFERSON SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
JOB DESCRIPTION
Agricultural Conservation Specialist

The Agricultural Conservation Specialist provides technical services related to soil and water conservation within the counties of Albemarle, Fluvanna, Louisa, and Nelson. This position is under the supervision of the Conservation Programs Manager. A bachelor's degree in agriculture, conservation, environmental science, natural resources, or equivalent education/work experience is required. At least two years of experience in a conservation or agriculture related field is required. An agricultural background with knowledge of farming economics and pasture management is desirable. The Conservation Specialist 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 federal mileage rate.

Responsibilities:

1. Recruit participants for the Virginia Agricultural BMP Cost-Share and Tax Credit Programs and provide administrative support and technical assistance for the program.
2. Independently support the Ag team with technical assistance for the planning, design, and installation of best management practices on agricultural lands. This assistance may be for cost-share or tax credit participants or non-participants.
3. Complete all Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Tracking Program input for all conservation assistance provided to landowners.
4. Independently conduct annual spot checks in accordance with DCR guidelines.
5. Promote the District's Programs by attending farm-related meetings, networking with the farm community, preparing press releases, and other effective methods.
6. Develop farm conservation plans and grazing plans for landowners within the TJSWCD.
7. Maintain required certifications and Engineering Job Approval Authority.

Knowledge, Skills, Abilities, and Certifications:

1. Extensive knowledge of agricultural operations and conservation issues related to agriculture.
2. Extensive knowledge of agricultural best management practices.
3. Surveying skills.
4. Knowledge of construction activities and conservation practice installations. Must have the ability to oversee conservation practice construction activities, design conservation projects, and verify projects meet standards and specifications.
5. Technical knowledge of hydrologic computations and the design and installation of conservation practices.
6. Ability to utilize computer/technology application tasks – Geographic Information Systems, Global Positioning Systems.
7. Knowledge of other soil and water resource concerns and conservation practices.
8. Ability to utilize standard computer software – word processing, spreadsheets, email, database programs.
9. Map reading skills.
10. Ability to communicate effectively both orally and through writing.
11. Functional knowledge of Spanish a plus.
12. Ability to work independently and schedule time in an efficient manner.
13. Ability to maintain effective working relationships with others.
14. Ability to interpret technical standards and program policies and guidelines.
15. DCR or NRCS Engineering Job Approval Authority is desirable.
16. DCR or NRCS Conservation Planner Certification is desirable. If not certified, prior District, NRCS, or farm-related experience may qualify.

Personal Characteristics:

- Approachability – Is easy to approach and talk to; spends extra effort to put people at ease; can be warm, pleasant, and gracious; is sensitive to and patient with interpersonal anxieties of others; builds rapport well; is a good listener.
- Interpersonal Skills – Relates well to all kinds of people, inside and outside the organization; builds appropriate rapport; listens; builds constructive and effective relationships; uses diplomacy and tact; truly values people; can diffuse even high- tension situations comfortably.
- Planning Skills – Accurately scopes out length and difficulty of tasks and projects; sets objectives and goals; breaks down work tasks into steps; develops schedules and task/people assignments; anticipates and adjusts for problems and roadblocks; measures performance against goals; evaluates results.
- Perseverance – Pursues everything with energy, drive, and a need to finish; seldom gives up before finishing.
- Problem Solving – Uses rigorous logic and methods to solve difficult problems with effective solutions; probes all fruitful sources for answers; can see hidden problems; conducts honest analysis; looks beyond the obvious and doesn't stop at the first answers.
- Action Oriented – Enjoys working hard; is full of energy for the things he/she sees as challenging; not fearful of acting with a minimum of planning; seizes more opportunities when appropriate.
- Results Oriented and Accountable – Can be counted on to exceed goals; is constantly and consistently one of the top performers; steadfastly motivates self and others to obtain results.
- Written Communication – Is able to write clearly and succinctly in a variety of communication settings and styles; can get messages across that have the desired effect.
- Discretion and Sound Judgement – Is able to deal with sensitive issues and information in a professional and, as required, confidential manner.
- Team Oriented – Works effectively with others; actively contributes to the achievement of group and organizational goals; accepts shared responsibility and ownership of projects.
- Integrity – Is widely trusted and seen as direct, truthful individual; keeps confidences; admits mistakes and uses them as a learning opportunity; doesn't misrepresent her/himself for personal gain.
- Practicality – Balances creativity with the ability to accomplish practical application of creativity to real world situations.

Temporary COVID-19 Job Modifications: TJSWCD is presently implementing full-time remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic whenever possible, with limited office time scheduled as needed with strict adherence to our COVID-19 Policy. Most meetings are scheduled via video and phone conferencing including Microsoft Teams and Zoom. Employees are provided with a work-issued laptop for remote work. If employees do not have adequate equipment, TJSWCD will provide the resources to accomplish duties and responsibilities. TJSWCD is conducting all field visits as outlined in the TJSWCD COVID-19 policy. Employees are generally expected to return to the office when social distancing protocols have been reduced, following state and local guidelines. Moving forward TJSWCD will be enacting a hybrid approach that combines teleworking with in-person office work.

Physical Conditions and Nature of Work Contacts: Tasks involve frequent walking over difficult terrain, lifting and carrying moderate weight (25 lbs.), and exposure to adverse weather conditions. Operation of survey equipment is required. Tasks require alertness to avoid potentially hazardous conditions. Responsibilities require regular contact with contractors, farmers, public officials, District Board members and the general public, while using judgment and tact to resolve complex issues.

Salary: TJSWCD Pay Grade 15

FLSA Status: Exempt