



Employment Opportunity for a

WATERSHED RESTORATION PROGRAM SPECIALIST

BACKGROUND:

Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs) across California serve as local hubs for conservation, connecting people with the technical, financial, and educational assistance they need to conserve and manage natural resources. RCDs help landowners, land managers, government agencies, and others to voluntarily protect, restore, and enhance natural resources on private and public lands. A defining characteristic of RCDs is that our assistance is generally non-regulatory, confidential, and free.

The RCD of Santa Cruz County seeks a full-time Program Specialist (PS) to join a dynamic team of conservation professionals. The PS will work closely with RCD staff and partners to help lead watershed coordination efforts and the development and implementation of ecological restoration and stewardship programs throughout Santa Cruz County. The PS will manage a diverse and exciting project portfolio.

The PS will work closely with RCD staff and partners, including the County of Santa Cruz, National Marine Fisheries Service, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Caltrans, State Parks, Regional Transportation Commission, CAL FIRE, the Santa Cruz Mountains Stewardship Network, tribes, neighboring RCDs, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and public and private landowners, to provide technical assistance and planning services for large and small-scale projects that facilitate species recovery and watershed restoration. The work environment is fast-paced, collaborative, and creative.

This position is funded through contracts between the RCD and local, state, and federal agencies. This position will report to the RCD Watershed Restoration Program Manager and will work closely with other RCD staff to fulfill the RCD mission and the scope of work from the local, state and federal contracts, as summarized below:

SUMMARY OF TYPICAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Conservation Planning

- Collaborate with technical advisors, agencies, partners, and stakeholders to identify and prioritize watershed restoration and wildlife recovery goals and projects.
- Assist private and public landowners with conservation planning and project development, including collaboration with State and County Parks.

Project Management

- Plan, permit, and implement conservation projects by working closely with RCD staff, landowners, technical advisors, permitting agencies, funders, consultants and contractors. Example projects include fish passage barrier removal, large woody debris installation, riparian restoration, marsh and lagoon restoration, and wetland creation. Activities include landowner coordination, execution of landowner agreements, project planning and design, permitting, bidding, contracting, and implementation oversight.
- Conduct or oversee monitoring activities, including photo, hydrological, and biological monitoring.
- Manage contracts and budgets with funders, consultants, and subcontractors.

- Write reports, complete and submit deliverables to meet grant requirements.
- Manage communications between project partners and stakeholders.

Outreach and Collaboration

- Participate in and lead watershed coordination efforts with diverse stakeholders to address conservation priorities in the region.
- Conduct outreach to foster and grow collaborative relationships with landowners and community groups.
- Respond to requests for conservation assistance from land managers and community members, including conducting site visits, phone calls, and referrals.
- Deliver educational presentations at RCD and partner events.
- Develop internship opportunities and manage occasional interns in support of watershed restoration activities.
- Represent the RCD, its partners, and funders in a positive and proactive manner.

Development

- Track emerging issues to inform future program development.
- Write grant proposals as part of the RCD Watershed Restoration team. Proactively identify, solicit, and expand upon funding opportunities.

Perform additional tasks or responsibilities as directed by supervisor.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS & EXPERIENCE:

The ideal candidate is an experienced natural resource conservation planner and project manager with a background in ecosystem health, aquatic and/or terrestrial habitat restoration, and landowner collaboration. Experience with grant writing and management, developing budgets, and managing contracts and subcontractors is desired. Additional experience with permitting and construction management is highly desired. Successful applicants will “wear many hats” at the RCD. They will work across many disciplines and therefore must have technical, administrative, communication, and interpersonal skills.

Required

- Knowledge of watershed stewardship and restoration, resource management, working landscapes, basic hydrology, basic soil science, native plant and animal communities, and/or landscape ecology
- Bachelor’s degree or equivalent experience in Environmental Science, Natural Resource Management, or related field. Relevant degrees may include Environmental Science, Environmental Management, Water Resources Management, Soil Science, Hydrology. Equivalent experience may be demonstrated in lieu of a specific degree.
- 3 + years of relevant professional experience, including demonstrated ability in conservation planning and project management or a related field.
- Ability to work independently and as part of a team. Experience working collaboratively within partnerships including landowners, researchers, public agencies, and others.
- Highly motivated, organized, and self-directing with the ability to prioritize and coordinate workload to fulfill deadlines. Project goal oriented with initiative in fulfilling programmatic and grant-related obligations

- Strong oral and written communication skills and ability to work with a variety of people with diverse interests and temperaments
- Strong computer skills, including Word and Excel
- Proficiency with ArcGIS
- Physically able to work in the field (climbing in and out of streams, lifting, carrying supplies and equipment, planting, etc.) during all seasons.
- Creativity, sense of humor, “can do” spirit, collegiality, flexibility, strong desire to learn
- Valid CA driver’s license and current auto insurance

Preferred

- Familiarity with local threatened and endangered species, including habitat needs and legal protections.
- Familiarity with local, state, and federal permits required for restoration projects. Understanding of permit requirements and application processes for conservation projects.
- Construction project management experience.
- Experience working under, writing, and managing grants.
- Effective at communicating scientific information to diverse audiences.

The PS is a full-time position (40 hours per week), based on a Monday through Friday daytime schedule. The RCD offers a flexible office/remote hybrid schedule. Some job-related travel is required and will be billed on a cost reimbursable basis. Salary will be commensurate with experience and qualifications, ranging from \$31-\$41/hour. Benefits package (after three months introductory employment period) includes paid health, dental, and vision. Retirement Plan with employer matching contribution of 1 to 1 up to 4.5% of salary available after one year of employment. Paid holidays and vacation available.

TO APPLY: submit a resume, letter of interest, and names and phone numbers of at least three references to: The Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County, c/o Tangi Chapman via email to tchapman@rcdsantacruz.org with “Watershed Restoration Program Specialist Application” in the subject line. If you would like additional information, please contact the RCD: Phone: (831) 464-2950.

DEADLINE FOR APPLICANTS: Position is open until filled. Application review will begin March 20, 2023

The RCD is an equal opportunity employer.