



Employment Opportunity for a

FOREST HEALTH 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 to join our expanding Forest Health and Wildfire Resiliency Program and our dynamic team of conservation professionals. The Program Specialist will work closely with RCD staff and partners to lead forest health and wildfire resiliency projects throughout Santa Cruz County, providing technical assistance and planning services for large and small-scale projects to facilitate fire resiliency, fire prevention/preparedness, and improved watershed function.

The Program Specialist will work closely with partners including CAL FIRE, State Parks, tribes, neighboring RCDs, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and public and private landowners and land managers. 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 district staff to fulfill the RCD mission and the scope of work from the local, state, and federal contracts, as summarized below:

SUMMARY OF DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Collaborate with partners and stakeholders to plan and implement priority forest health, fuel reduction, and post-fire recovery projects such as strategic fuel breaks, pile burning, forest stand improvement, invasive species removal and management, reforestation, and habitat restoration. Specific tasks include:
 - Coordinate the development of project designs and logistics for project implementation.
 - Coordinate with project partners and consultants to develop environmental documentation and permits.
 - Execute Landowner Agreements.
 - Conduct or oversee monitoring activities, including photo, biological, and archaeological monitoring.
 - Manage contracts with funders, consultants and subcontractors.
 - Provide oversight of implementation activities.
 - Manage budgets, invoicing and reporting.
 - Manage communications between project partners and stakeholders.
- Respond to landowner requests for technical assistance as appropriate.
- In collaboration with landowners, support contracted Registered Professional Foresters with development of Forest Management Plans and prescriptions.
- Contribute to grant proposals as part of the RCD team.

- Write reports and complete and submit deliverables to meet grant requirements.
- Conduct outreach and build relationships with landowners and community groups.
- Deliver educational presentations at RCD and partner events.
- Represent the RCD, its partners and funders in a positive and proactive manner.
- Contribute to additional RCD projects as appropriate based on skills and interests.
- Perform additional tasks or responsibilities as directed by supervisor.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS & EXPERIENCE:

The ideal candidate is an experienced forest ecologist, forester, or related natural resource conservation project manager with a background in forest and watershed health and a solid history of landowner collaboration. Successful applicants will “wear many hats” at the RCD. They will have experience developing, planning, implementing, and monitoring conservation projects. They will work across many disciplines and therefore must have technical, administrative, communication, and interpersonal skills.

Required

- Knowledge of watershed stewardship and conservation, resource management, basic hydrology, basic soil science, native plant and animal communities, and forest ecology
- Bachelor’s degree or higher in forestry, natural resource management, watershed science, conservation planning or a related field
- 3 + years of relevant professional experience
- 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
- Experience developing and managing project budgets
- 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

- Graduate degree in natural resources management, forestry, watershed science, or related field
- Minimum 5 years of relevant work experience
- Registered Professional Forester or related certification
- Familiarity with local threatened and endangered species, including habitat needs and legal protections.
- Familiarity with local, state, and federal permits required for vegetation management and restoration projects. Understanding of permit requirements and application processes for conservation projects.

- Familiarity with regional fire behavior, local fire ecology, and history of fires in the Santa Cruz Mountains.
- Construction project management experience
- Proficiency with ArcGIS and GPS
- Experience developing and writing grant proposals

The Program Specialist is a full-time position (40 hours per week), based on a Monday through Friday daytime 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 \$27-\$38/hour. Benefits package (after three months probationary employment period) includes paid health, vision, and dental. 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, please 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 "Forest Health 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 October 27, 2021

The RCD is an equal opportunity employer.