



Forest Conservation Manager Job Description

The Tennessee Wildlife Federation Forest Conservation Manager position has been created through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) grant from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and a partnership between Agricenter International, the University of Tennessee Extension Service and Tennessee Wildlife Federation. The position is responsible for facilitating the enrollment of private landowners in West Tennessee into Farm Bill Programs to improve habitat for wildlife with an emphasis on restoring forestland and grassland habitats.

This position will work with landowners to develop forest management plans that support wildlife habitat, sequester carbon, reduce wind and water erosion, and build forest health and resilience by reducing the risk of habitat loss. Private, non-industrial landowners account for 83% of the state's forests. Improved forest health will also result in improved water quality of the Lower Hatchie forest floodplain to the Memphis Sands aquifer – a major source of drinking water in the region.

Lastly, we will support landowners in converting non-productive land into grassland or forests. More than 95% of Tennessee's grasslands have been lost to development, and forests are highly fragmented in the predominantly agricultural and urban areas of West Tennessee. This permanent vegetative cover will provide wildlife habitat, mitigate climate change through carbon sequestration, and improve water quality through reduced soil erosion. We will use environmental and social outcomes as defined within the RCPP grant as metrics for this project.

Job type: Full-time

Location: Remote

Geographical work area: West Tennessee

Reports to: Director of Conservation

Summary: The Forest Conservation Manager will prepare RCPP compliant forest management plans for private landowners in a 21-county region in West Tennessee. With an emphasis on Tennessee River and Hatchie River watershed counties. Each plan will focus on restoring native open habitats and promote healthy forest structure and composition.

Primary Responsibilities: Under the general supervision of the Director of Conservation, the Forest Conservation Manager will complete the following duties:

- Conduct outreach efforts to engage private landowners interested in enrolling in Farm Bill Programs to improve forest health and habitat for wildlife. Outreach and education activities may include direct mailings, networking, conducting site visits, and attending events
- Conduct landowner interviews and collect forest and grassland data to prepare RCPP compliant management plans
- Develop forest or grassland management plans that focus on best practices to achieve the objectives outlined in the RCPP grant

- Provide technical assistance related to the pre-application process to private landowners in regards to all aspects of the Farm Bill Programs funds, such as the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)
 - Including assisting in connecting private landowners to NRCS staff
- Develop a network of forest and grassland management professionals including NRCS, TN Division of Forestry, TWRA, private consultants, and other nonprofits to facilitate implementation of prescribed activities
- Assist private landowners and other grant partners with securing contractors to complete prescribed management activities including: timber harvest, invasive plant control, native seed planting, stand thinning, prescribed burning, and planting native trees and shrubs
- Maintain a database to track progress on each project and overall program accomplishments
- Review data sets using GIS and online resources

Other Duties: The Forest Conservation Manager is required to perform the following tasks:

- Provide support to habitat conservation program staff
- Attend meetings to represent the Federation on projects and initiatives
- Travel as directed to cover assignments across the West Tennessee region
- Other duties as assigned by supervisor

Key Qualifications: As a prerequisite, the successful candidate must believe in the core values of Tennessee Wildlife Federation and be driven by the mission. The following attributes and experience describe the best candidate for this role:

- A degree in forestry or closely related field with 3+ years of professional experience. A graduate degree in forestry or closely related field can substitute for professional experience
- In-depth understanding of forest and grassland management practices including native seed plantings, invasive plant species control, silvicultural systems, management plan preparation, forest inventory, GPS data collection, and prescribed burning
- Experience with plant identification in Tennessee
- Ability to make connections between land management and wildlife habitat needs
- Ability to use ArcGIS mapping software to delineate project boundaries
- Proven ability to manage multiple projects, produce effective results and meet deadlines. Applicant must be self-motivated, responsible and have ability to solve problems
- Working knowledge of Microsoft Office and G Suite
- Knowledge of NRCS landowner cost-share programs, especially EQIP is preferred
- Experience in prescribed fire and burn plan preparation is a plus
- Experience working with private landowners as well as federal and state agencies is desired

Personal Characteristics:

- Must have a passion for the Federation's mission
- Professional and friendly, able to handle the day-to-day ups and downs with efficiency and a sense of humor
- Strong work ethic with the ability to reject setbacks and enthusiastically persist until goals are achieved
- Results oriented-team player who is accountable for their own performance
- Approaches work from the Federation's point of view rather than personal

Ethical Hunting and Angling Practices: Federation staff know and respect the game hunted and fish caught, follow all related laws, familiarize themselves with wildlife in the area and behave accordingly. As an employee of the Federation, all employees are expected to follow all state and federal hunting and fishing guidelines and practice ethical and fair chase practices while executing or assisting with program events or in your personal outings afield.

Tennessee Wildlife Federation offers a competitive benefits package and is an equal opportunity employer committed to workplace diversity.