

Marion Soil and Water Conservation District

Urban Conservationist



Job Description

Our mission is to partner with people in support of thriving lands, clean water, and healthy habitats. We do this through planning, technical assistance, funding, and education.

Introduction

The Marion Soil and Water Conservation District (District) is a special district organized under Oregon Revised Statutes Chapter 568 and authorized to implement a broad range of conservation services and programs.

Position Overview

This is a full-time position which serves as the Urban Conservationist of the Marion Soil and Water Conservation District (District). The position acts on behalf of the District Manager and the Board of Directors (Board), within the authority delegated by the Board and this description.

The Urban Conservationist plays a key role in advancing the District's mission to support thriving lands, clean water, and healthy habitats within urban communities. This position provides direct technical guidance to homeowners, residents, and community partners while leading the design and implementation of innovative urban conservation projects. The role builds strong partnerships with municipalities, schools, and neighborhood associations; connects urban and rural communities through shared conservation goals; and inspires residents to actively participate in habitat enhancement, water quality protection, and sustainable land management. By combining technical expertise, education, and outreach, the Urban Conservationist helps expand green spaces, improve habitat connectivity, and strengthen community stewardship of natural resources.

The ideal candidate is highly creative, brings enthusiasm, a positive outlook, a collaborative spirit, and a strong commitment to conservation and the environment. At the District we believe that our greatest successes come from a combination of strong teamwork and individual initiative. Employees are expected to collaborate effectively with colleagues while also taking ownership of their specific roles. We value open communication, mutual respect, and a shared commitment to achieving our goals.

Core Job Duties and Outcomes

An estimated 85% of annual work hours (2080 hrs.) are dedicated to job duties, with up to approximately 15% allocated to support the balance of work and life through company-paid leave.

Technical Guidance (20%)

- Provide technical guidance to urban property owners, residents, and community partners, including municipalities, schools, and neighborhood associations—to support thriving lands, clean water, and healthy habitats through on-site consultations, workshops, and community events.
- Develop, design, and implement comprehensive conservation plans and projects in urban

settings. Translate technical guidance into actionable plans for community gardens, urban green spaces, tree planting, stormwater management, and habitat enhancements. Collaborate with residents and partners to ensure projects are well-integrated, sustainable, and responsive to community needs.

Partnerships & Outreach (20%)

- Collaborate with the Communications and Outreach Specialist to plan and deliver outreach activities that engage urban residents, property owners, and community partners in practices that protect water quality, enhance habitat connectivity, and foster environmental stewardship.
- Inspire urban youth and adults to appreciate nature and its benefits by leading guided tours, facilitating outdoor activities, and coordinating engaging events that build both new and lasting interest in conservation.
- Serve on the Partner Grant Review Team by offering project guidance to partners and assisting applicants with the District's Foundant Grant Lifecycle software.
- Establish and maintain positive working relationships with public and private partners by identifying shared goals and areas of mutual interest. Collaborate on the development of urban conservation programs and initiatives that expand community impact, leverage District resources, and promote long-term partnerships.
- Build bridges between urban and rural communities by engaging residents and landowners in hands-on conservation initiatives that highlight shared responsibilities, connect habitats, and protect water quality.

Urban Conservation Education (20%)

- Collaborate with the Environmental Education Specialist on the District's *Little Habitat Program* by conducting outreach to urban homeowners and residents, providing technical assistance to help participants implement habitat-friendly practices, and certifying enrollees once goals; such as native plantings, pollinator habitat, and sustainable landscaping are achieved.
- Support the District's role as a central resource for urban conservation information by collecting, creating, and maintaining up-to-date digital and hardcopy resources for the District's informational library.
- Maintain a well-organized inventory of materials and resources for the District's urban conservation activities through efficient sourcing, purchasing, and management.

Organizational Support (15%)

- Contribute to the District's strategic planning processes, including drafting reports for the Board of Directors as needed.
- Serve as an appointee to the District's Natural Resources Committee, performing duties in compliance with Oregon's Public Meeting Law and facilitating virtual or in-person meetings.
- Participate in weekly and quarterly staff meetings and contribute actively as part of the Natural Resources Team.
- Assist with onboarding new employees by introducing them to the District's urban conservation activities, materials, and resources.
- Manage records and documents in compliance with Oregon's Record Retention Schedule

by utilizing filing systems, databases, and document management tools.

- Provide courteous and professional customer service by responding to inquiries from the public and partners via phone, email, and in person. Share accurate information about District programs and services and connect individuals to appropriate staff or resources.

Other Duties (5%)

- Complete other duties as assigned to ensure the District's mission is achieved and operations function efficiently and effectively.

Professional Development (5%)

- Pursue opportunities for professional growth and development, including training, workshops, and conferences aligned with job responsibilities and the District's mission.

Experience, Knowledge, and Skills

Experience

- Proficient in or capable of quickly learning Microsoft Office 365, including Outlook, PowerPoint, SharePoint, Word, Excel, Teams, Zoom, and other relevant online educational tools and software.
- Experience providing technical assistance in natural resources, environmental science, urban conservation, or a related field.
- Experience developing, implementing, and evaluating conservation projects such as stormwater management, green infrastructure, habitat restoration, community gardens, or urban forestry.
- Experience collaborating with diverse partners, including municipalities, nonprofits, schools, neighborhood associations, and community groups, to advance conservation initiatives.
- Experience engaging with the public through workshops, field tours, presentations, or community events.
- Experience managing or supporting grant-funded projects, including budgeting, applications, compliance, and reporting.
- Experience working with data collection, monitoring, and reporting tools to track conservation outcomes and program effectiveness.
- Experienced in public speaking with the capability to deliver engaging educational content to in-person and virtual audiences.

Knowledge

- Environmental issues and conservation challenges, with the ability to translate knowledge into educational experiences that enhance environmental literacy.
- Urban conservation principles, methods, and practices, including stormwater management, green infrastructure, soil health, erosion control, urban habitat development, and community gardens.
- Techniques for habitat restoration and connectivity, such as native plant selection, pollinator habitat creation, and urban forestry.
- Water quality protection strategies, watershed management, and practices to reduce

urban runoff and pollution.

- Familiarity with Oregon flora and fauna is desirable.
- Ability to interpret maps, aerial imagery, stormwater, and soil data for conservation planning.
- Conservation planning processes, including resource assessment, plan development, and implementation.
- Community engagement and outreach strategies for working effectively with diverse urban populations.
- Principles of equity and accessibility in program design and delivery.
- Familiarity with regulatory frameworks, permitting requirements, and incentive programs supporting conservation practices.
- Proficiency with Microsoft Office 365, SharePoint, and other digital tools; experience with databases and online research.
- Familiarity with grant administration skills, including budgeting, applications, and reporting.
- Data collection, monitoring, and reporting techniques to evaluate conservation outcomes.

Skills

- Skill in developing and maintaining effective partnerships with municipalities, nonprofits, schools, neighborhood associations, and other community organizations through strong communication, collaboration, and relationship-building.
- Ability to work collaboratively across diverse groups, including urban residents, rural landowners, agricultural partners, and tribes to identify shared conservation goals and foster inclusive, community-wide participation.
- This position requires proficiency in using a computer for email, video conferencing (using platforms such as Zoom or Teams), and document collaboration (via Google Docs or Microsoft Office). Additionally, it involves using a cell phone for personnel and public contact, quick messaging through text or Teams, or making calls when immediate responses are necessary. District laptop and cell phone provided.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills are essential.
- Possess exceptional skills in organization, mindfulness, time management, multitasking, and setting clear priorities.
- Proficiency in languages other than English, such as Spanish and Russian, which are commonly spoken in the Willamette Valley is a plus.
- Strong ability to think ahead, take personal initiative, and effectively collaborate and coordinate with others.
- Flexible and responsive to new challenges and shifting environments, embracing innovative communication and outreach strategies to engage people and inspire a passion for conservation.
- Skilled in analyzing situations to make informed decisions, identifying issues, and creating effective solutions.
- Ability to work effectively with individuals from diverse racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds, tailoring communication styles and creating purposeful outreach that fosters inclusivity by acknowledging and valuing diverse backgrounds.

Responsibilities and Effort

- Commitment to ongoing professional development to stay current with environmental and conservation trends.
- Ability to manage multiple tasks, adapt quickly to changing priorities, and effectively oversee daily and annual coordination for urban conservation activities.
- This position involves significant public interaction, requiring all communication to be consistently professional, respectful, authentic, and courteous.
- Responsible for ensuring that materials distributed through the course of work comply with Americans with Disabilities Act standards and are readily accessible to the public.
- The locations for this role vary widely, from riverside settings to college conference rooms and farm fields, requiring the individual to be highly adaptable and comfortable working across a diverse range of locations.
- Follow all guidelines outlined in the District's Safety Handbook to ensure safety for all. Participate every two years in First Aid training.
- Responsible for tracking urban conservation activities outputs and outcomes to meet performance measures.
- Adheres to District policies and procedures, including the Personnel Policy Handbook, and performs duties in accordance with all applicable state and federal laws. Employees must also comply with the Oregon Government Ethics Law, which establishes standards for the conduct of public officials. Each public employee is responsible for ensuring adherence to these guidelines.
- Responsible for managing files and documents in compliance with the State of Oregon's Public Records Retention schedule for special districts.
- All staff share responsibilities for responding to phone calls and emails from the public and participation at public events. Excellent customer service and commitment are required.
- This position requires an individual who values and maintains consistent and punctual attendance.
- Must successfully complete annual assigned online training such as defensive driving, anti-harassment, wildfire smoke safety, and professional workplace.
- Professional, respectful, and courteous to clients and partners.

Qualifications

- A minimum of six years of education and/or relevant work experience related to the core responsibilities of the position is required, including:
 - o A bachelor's degree is preferred plus,
 - o At least two years of related work experience tied to the core responsibilities of the position, or
 - o An equivalent combination of education, training, and experience sufficient to successfully perform the essential duties of the position.
- Applicants will be required to operate a vehicle for District business and must hold and maintain a valid, acceptable Oregon driver's license.
- To be considered for employment, all applicants must successfully complete a pre-employment background check.

Working Conditions

- Mixed office and moderate outdoor work. A balanced combination of office-based tasks and regular fieldwork in outdoor settings such as farms, riversides, and community sites.
- This position works from a shared office space at 408 N 3rd Ave, Stayton, OR.
- Most District positions offer the option for teleworking. Arrangements can be made through an annual Telework Agreement with the District Manager, and all teleworking must adhere to the established teleworking policy.
- Work activities may require off-site setup and you must be able to lift at least 35 pounds and for extended periods of time may be required to stand and walk, as well as stooping, squatting, bending, and kneeling.
- This position may involve outdoor work, which may include environments such as dairies and farms; rivers, streams, and ponds; areas with dense vegetation or woodlands; and terrains that are steep, slippery, muddy, rocky, or otherwise hazardous.
- Work is performed both in the office and in the field, with potential exposure to pesticides, chemicals, dust, fumes, dirt, noise, heat, vibration, cold, and water. Personal protective equipment is provided as needed or upon request.

Position Details

- Full-Time, at will. Introductory period is six months.
- Exempt (Fair Labor Standards Act Status)
- Work Hours: 40 hrs. Monday to Friday, including occasional weekends and evenings.
- This position reports to and is supervised by the District Manager. This position does not include any supervisory responsibilities.

Compensation and Benefits

- Starting Annual Salary: \$58,313
- We offer comprehensive dental and health insurance, which includes medical, vision, and prescription coverage. Additionally, we provide a 125 Flexible Spending Account Plan for healthcare and dependent care.
- The District provides sick leave, vacation leave, and ten paid holidays annually, along with two additional personal days (8hrs. each day) per year.
- A \$20,000 life insurance policy.
- The District's retirement program includes a 457 Deferred Compensation Plan, Roth IRA, and 401(a) Employer Deferred Compensation Matching Program.

Equal Opportunity Employer and Provider

Marion Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) prohibits discrimination against its employees, applicants for employment, Directors, partners, customers, clients, contractors, and visitors on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, expunged juvenile record, performance of duty in a uniformed service, physical or mental, disability, citizenship, genetic information, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, prior civil rights activity, victims of bias, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state, or local law, regulation, or ordinance. Marion SWCD is prepared to make appropriate arrangements and/or accommodation for people with disabilities. If special physical, language, or other accommodation is needed, please contact the District Manager at 503-391-9927 as soon as possible, and at least 48 hours in advance of any needed accommodation.

