



Mississippi Valley Conservancy Job Posting

Position Title: Conservation Manager

Full-time salaried, 40 hours a week

Salary Range: \$65,000-\$75,000

Location: La Crosse, WI

Join Our Team!

Are you passionate about making a positive impact on the environment? Do you enjoy working with people, spending time outdoors, and contributing to a meaningful mission? If you are passionate about permanent land protection, detail-oriented, organized, and collaborative, we have an exciting opportunity for you!

About Us

Mississippi Valley Conservancy is dedicated to conserving protects forests, bluffs, prairies, wetlands, streams, and farmlands that enrich our communities for the health and well-being of current and future generations. Our service area includes the Wisconsin counties of Buffalo, Crawford, Grant, Jackson, La Crosse, Monroe, Richland, Trempealeau, and Vernon. Founded in 1997, the Conservancy has experienced tremendous growth and achievement of the successful conservation of over 27,000 acres, including over 7,000 acres of nature preserves available to the public for nature-based outdoor recreations. Mississippi Valley Conservancy is a nationally accredited, 501c3 non-profit, functioning as a hybrid organization with offices in La Crosse, WI.

Position Overview

Mississippi Valley Conservancy is seeking a highly experienced, self-motivated individual to join our dynamic team in working directly with landowners and community groups. The Conservation Manager is an experienced conservation project manager and real estate professional who will manage a variety of land conservation projects including both fee title and conservation easements. This position is directly responsible for landowner engagement and evaluating reserved rights reviews for conservation easements on both agricultural and natural lands. This position contributes to the Conservancy strategic planning, represents the organization throughout the service area, and builds and strengthens the systems, processes, and recordkeeping practices that support the Conservancy as it grows. The Conservation Manager will have the ability to work effectively with people of diverse backgrounds and interests, to comfortably coordinate and communicate with landowners, staff of public agencies and private foundations, legislators, and municipal leaders.

Reports to: Conservation Director

Essential Responsibilities

- Work collaboratively with land protection and stewardship teams to develop projects to meet conservation goals including fee simple, conservation easement, partner assists, land transfers and land donations.
- Conduct property site visits to evaluate and document natural resources, conservation values, species inventories, land use practices, property boundaries, and boundary encroachments.
- Develop and negotiate legal documents (conservation easements, leases, easement amendments, purchase offers, closing statements, and others) in close collaboration with the Conservation Director, Conservation Paralegal, and outside legal counsel.

- Complete project due diligence including site assessments and evaluations, review of title encumbrances, appraisals, legal descriptions, and property rights.
- Ensure all project documentation complies with Conservancy policy, grant funder requirements, and Land Trust Alliance standards and practices.
- Supervise, coach and support a limited number of staff, volunteers, and interns.
- Track project timelines, budgets, and reporting requirements.
- Review agricultural conservation plans, habitat management plans, forest management plans, grazing plans, building proposals, and other reserved rights/permitted use approval requests for compliance with conservation easement restrictions.
- Provide public outreach through presentations, guided hikes, workshops, social media and newsletter content and other methods.
- Build successful partnerships with state, federal, and private agencies and organizations to identify and pursue project funding sources, including grant applications, proposals, and reports.
- Serve as an expert voice for land conservation with partners, groups, funders, and committees.
- Other duties as assigned.

The above list is intended to describe the general nature and level of work being performed by the person in this position. It is not intended to be an exhaustive list of all responsibilities and duties required for this position.

Requirements

- Ability to traverse 400+ acre sites on foot, through steep, rugged terrain in a timely manner in remote areas all four seasons of the year.
- Ability to synthesize and communicate technical and complex information for non-technical audiences.
- Working knowledge of Land Trust Alliance Standards and Practices and accreditation requirements.
- Experience and knowledge in identifying local habitat types, species, and natural communities, and an awareness of general ecosystem principles and best practices for habitat and agricultural management.
- High proficiency in GIS technology.
- Possess a valid driver's license and dependable vehicle.
- Ability to manage multiple projects and priorities, and work under tight timeframes.
- Ability to work independently and to set and adhere to priorities.
- Availability to work occasional evenings and weekends.
- Commitment to and passion for working with the community to advance the Conservancy's mission.

Qualifications and Skills:

- Bachelor's degree or higher in natural resources, law, planning, or related field. Legal experience preferred.
- 5+ years of experience in conservation land acquisitions, conservation easement development, and real estate transactions in a land trust or comparable setting.
- Demonstrated ability to independently initiate, structure, negotiate, manage, and close complex land transactions and manage project budgets.
- Experience negotiating and relationship building with a wide variety of landowners, partners, federal and state agencies, county, and municipal partners.

- In-depth knowledge of the flora, fauna, landscape, economy, and people of southwestern Wisconsin.
- Knowledge of current tax and conservation laws.
- Professional interests that align strongly with MVC's vision, values, and conservation goals.
- The successful candidate will be self-directed, highly motivated, flexible, and detail-oriented.
- Outstanding verbal and written communication skills.
- Desire and demonstrated ability to identify and address personal knowledge gaps; to learn on the job; and to cultivate sources of knowledge, expertise, and skill.
- Able and willing to travel frequently among the nine counties in MVC's service area and occasionally beyond the service area.
- Proficient in all aspects of Microsoft Office and ArcPro.

Compensation and benefits:

- **Salary range:** \$65,000-\$75,000 commensurate with experience and specific expertise.
- Full-time, exempt position, working 40 hours per week. The Conservancy is committed to being a supportive, collaborative and flexible work environment.
- Benefits include:
 - In the first year, 10 days of vacation (increases with years of employment), 12 days medical leave per year, 5 days of personal leave, and 12 paid holidays.
 - Medical insurance, and 4 percent of annual salary match contribution to a retirement plan
 - Opportunities for continuing education through professional workshops and conferences

Application and hiring process

- To apply, please email a resume and brief cover letter, including where/how you first found out about this position, in one PDF to Senior Director of Conservation Abbie Church at achurch@mississippivalleyconservancy.org. Position is open until filled.