



Organization: Mississippi Valley Conservancy
Date Posted: September 28, 2021
Location: La Crosse, WI
Position: Land Management Strategic Director
Full-time salaried, 40 hours a week

Position Overview: Mississippi Valley Conservancy is seeking a self-motivated, driven individual with a diverse perspective and strong problem-solving skills for the role of Land Management Strategic Director. The ideal candidate will have a proven track record of project coordination with multiple stakeholders and the ability to integrate science into long-term, strategic conservation planning for habitat management activities at Conservancy-owned nature preserves. This position requires innovative thinking for restoration techniques, including transitional agricultural and grazing strategies. We are looking for a professional with vision, drive, and strong strategic and interpersonal skills. This is an exciting opportunity for a seasoned environmental professional to manage and grow the capacity of the Conservancy's land conservation work. Interacting with public user groups, hunters, private landowners, lessee graziers and farmers, grant funders, volunteers, and regulatory agencies is required.

Mississippi Valley Conservancy is a nationally accredited, 501c3 non-profit, private conservation organization dedicated to the conservation of native habitats and farmlands in nine counties in southwestern Wisconsin. By building relationships with local communities and private landowners, the Conservancy's work permanently protects forests, bluffs, prairies, wetlands, streams and farmlands that enrich our communities for the health and well-being of current and future generations. The Conservancy has protected nearly 22,000 acres, including over 5,000 acres of nature preserves open to the public.

Key Responsibilities:

- Develop, evaluate and share methods and practices for advancing ecological restoration on nature preserves and guiding and directing staff, contractors, intern crews, and volunteers on other habitat restoration projects
- Provide leadership and facilitation in directing an effective land management team, working collaboratively on the planning, coordination, identification, prioritization, and implementation of land conservation projects
- Ensure preserve and project documentation is kept up to date and in accordance with Land Trust Alliance standards and practices, grant funder requirements, and the Conservancy's record-keeping policy
- Develop, research, coordinate, and implement multiple aspects of project development, including habitat management plans, partner agreements, budgeting, agricultural activities, negotiating rental agreements, grazing plans, fuels management, responding to weather events, etc.
- Facilitate engagement with landowners, consultants, partners, agency officials
- Conduct property site visits to evaluate and document natural resources, conservation values, species inventories, land use practices, property boundaries, and boundary encroachments
- Navigate challenging aspects of land ownership, including addressing third party trespass, boundary encroachments, and other issues
- Build successful partnerships with state, federal, and private agencies and organizations to identify and pursue project funding sources, including grant applications, proposals, and reports

- Ecological restoration and management of Conservancy lands including: planning and leading prescribed burns, species inventory, timber stand improvement, invasive species control, fencing, trailhead construction, boundary posting and other management activities

Essential Job Functions and Abilities:

- 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
- Experience and knowledge identifying local habitat types, species and natural communities, and an awareness of general ecosystem principles and habitat management techniques.
- Excellent record-keeping skills and attention to detail
- Possess valid driver's license and dependable vehicle
- Ability and enthusiasm to showcase the Conservancy's restoration effectively to team members, board members, stakeholders, and supporters; strong public speaking skills
- Ability to safely and effectively use chain saws, brush cutter, tractors, mowers, herbicide sprayers, pumper units, backpack pump cans and other tools for extended periods of time
- Ability to manage multiple projects and priorities, and work under tight timeframes
- Ability to take direction, work independently, and to set and adhere to priorities
- Available to work some evening and weekends
- Experience with dispute resolution and project facilitation
- Approximately 40% field work and 60% office work overall
- Ability to function as a cooperative and supportive team member with other Conservancy staff

REQUIRED Qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree or higher in natural resources, planning or related field
- Minimum of five (5) years professional experience in directing land management activities
- Demonstrated ability to independently initiate, structure, negotiate, and manage complex partnerships, long-range habitat management plans, and manage project budgets
- In depth knowledge of the flora, fauna, habitat types, landscape, economy, and people of southwestern Wisconsin.
- Successful track record in motivating staff and volunteers in achieving their maximum potential for the benefit of the organization
- Experience developing and implementing long-range habitat management plans for a variety of habitat types, priorities, and goals
- Ability to manage/navigate/direct complex individuals and group dynamics
- Ability to analyze complex research to inform land management practices and land use policy
- Professional interests that align strongly with the Conservancy'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
- Ability to pass an arduous level work capacity pack test for wildland firefighters (walk 3 miles in fewer than 45 minutes carrying a 45-pound pack)
- High proficiency in all aspects of Microsoft Office and ArcMap 10.8.1 and handheld Garmin usage

Supervisor: Conservation Director

Compensation: Salary range \$55,000 to \$70,000 commensurate with experience. Mississippi Valley Conservancy offers competitive compensation, excellent benefits and a collaborative work environment based in La Crosse, Wisconsin.

This position will remain open until filled. **Only applicants meeting the above required qualifications will be considered.** Email a cover letter and resume to Carol Abrahamzon at carol@mississippivalleyconservancy.org.