

SHENANDOAH VALLEY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT CONSERVATION TECHNICIAN POSITION DESCRIPTION



GENERAL

The Shenandoah Valley Soil & Water Conservation District (SVSWCD) is a self-governing political subdivision of the state governed by an eight-member Board of Directors and covers the counties of Rockingham and Page, and the City of Harrisonburg. Under the direction of the SVSWCD Board of Directors and under the supervision of the District Manager, the employee will be responsible for performing a wide range of technical and administrative duties that pertain to the implementation of the SVSWCD's activities, services and programs. The work of the SVSWCD focuses on water quality, soil health, best management practices, implementation of special projects and education and outreach to a broad spectrum of stakeholders. Responsibilities include regular contact with farmers, contractors, public officials, District Board members and the general public, requiring judgement and tact in all interactions. Assignments and some supervision are given by other members of the SVSWCD and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) staff. This position is a full time position with regular work hours of 8:00am to 4:30pm Monday through Friday and occasionally includes extended work hours, evening and weekend hours, and overnight travel for training and meetings. This position is considered non-exempt under the Fair Labor Standards Act. The SVSWCD office environment is collaborative, supportive and flexible. The SVSWCD's small staff is forward-thinking, innovative, motivated and dedicated.

PRIMARY DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Conservation Technician

- Administer the Agricultural BMP Cost-Share program (VACS Program)
 - Promote the program and recruit participants through: site visits, phone calls, mailings, etc.
 - Assist with the development and implementation of public relations campaigns to make landowners aware of conservation goals and financial assistance programs
 - Initiate contact and meet with landowners to discuss and examine agriculture-related water quality concerns and conservation needs
 - Perform on-site inspections and recommend appropriate conservation practices to address identified concerns
 - Provide technical assistance and services for conservation needs as necessary before, during and after the installation and construction of BMPs
 - Prepare, evaluate and manage agricultural cost share applications
 - Complete all necessary paperwork associated with implementation of conservation projects
 - Assist with survey and design of project components
 - Complete necessary planning and technical documents for projects
 - Maintain accurate and current files for cost-share participation and conservation practice implementation
 - Complete data entry in the required State and District database programs
 - Monitor and ensure adherence to Cost Share Program guidelines and specifications
 - Maintain regular correspondence with program participants to ensure project implementation in accordance with timelines and adherence to program standards and specifications
- Assist with coordinating, conducting, and completing the District's annual verifications
- Assist with administering the SVSWCD's Cover Crop and PSNT programs
- Assist with the SVSWCD's PSNT Soil Sampling Program
- Assist with conservation related outreach and educational activities
 - Attend farm-related meetings, network with the farm community, provide presentations, etc.
- Assist with and provide support for additional grants that pertain to conservation practices
- Be familiar with and adhere to the SVSWCD's current Cost Share grant
- Provide suggestions and recommendations for modifications to the VACS Program for submission to the BMP TAC in accordance with established guidelines
- Assist with the administration of the Clean Water Farm Award Program
- Work to obtain appropriate DCR Engineering Competency/Job Approval Authority
- Obtain and maintain DCR Conservation Planner Certification

OTHER DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

- Attend monthly SVSWCD Board Meetings, staff meetings, and inter-agency meetings, trainings, and workshops as directed and when deemed appropriate
- Obtain appropriate certifications as directed by the SVSWCD Board and the District Manager
- Represent the SVSWCD on job-related committees and natural resource related functions and events as requested
- Be familiar with and adhere to deliverables outlined in the SVSWCD's Operational grant agreement
- Inform landowners/residents of Virginia's conservation goals
- Organize and present educational programs to the public as needed
- Maintain accurate and current files and filing system for SVSWCD projects, programs, etc.
- Assist with SVSWCD reports and data management
- Cooperate with federal, state and local partners (NRCS, FSA, DEQ, DCR, VCE, CBF, VDACS, etc.)
- Support SVSWCD staff in the administration of programs and services as appropriate and necessary
- Work with staff to complete and submit quarterly reports as well as other relevant reports
- Be an active participant in working with the SVSWCD interns and volunteers to ensure a varied experience for the interns/volunteers
- Assist with the development of grant applications and the administration of grant projects and funds
- Offer assistance to callers and walk-in clients as needed
- Support educational programs and special projects
- Adhere to all District policies and guidelines
- Assist with the preparation and development of SVSWCD reports and publications (Annual Report, Annual Plan of Work, Strategic Plan)
- Assist with and complete other duties and tasks as assigned by the SVSWCD Board and the District Manager

REQUIREMENTS

- High school diploma or equivalent
- Proficient in Microsoft Office computer programs: Word, Excel, PowerPoint
- Ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing
- Show initiative, accept responsibility and initiate appropriate actions for work projects
- Ability to speak comfortably before large groups
- Ability to work independently as a self-starter and manage time in an efficient manner and meet deadlines
- Ability to multitask, prioritize, and stay organized in a fast-paced environment
- Ability to maintain effective working relationships in a team environment
- Ability to interpret and apply program policies, procedures and guidelines
- Ability to interpret technical standards and specifications and engineering drawings
- Ability to coordinate work with other staff, agencies, and organizations
- Ability to work outside during adverse weather conditions
- Valid driver's license
- Successful federal and state background check
- Regular attendance at work

PREFERRED KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

- Associate's or Bachelor's degree in field related to agriculture, agronomy, natural resources, environmental science or closely related field and/or equivalent experience or combination of education and equivalent experience
- Customer service and public relations experience
- Knowledge of construction and excavation activities/Understanding of basic construction/excavation principles
- Farm Background/Agricultural Experience-highly desirable
- Knowledge of agricultural operations and conservation issues related to agriculture
- Knowledge of agricultural Best Management Practices
- Experience with/ability to utilize Geographic Information Systems-(GIS)-ESRI products and Global Positioning Systems (GPS)
- Ability to understand, interpret and use various maps, aerial photography and soils information-map reading skills

- Technical knowledge of design and installation of conservation practices
- Knowledge of conservation issues related to non-point source pollution and the Chesapeake Bay; agricultural operations, soil and water conservation issues, agricultural best management practices and the effects of land use practices on the environment or general knowledge of soil and water conservation issues, policies and technologies
- Knowledge and understanding of soils and agronomic principles
- Understanding and appreciation of environmental and conservation matters

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

This is operative work requiring the exertion of up to and exceeding 30 pounds of force occasionally and a negligible amount of force frequently or constantly to move objects. Regular required tasks include sitting; talking or hearing, in person and by telephone; using hands to finger, handle, feel or operate standard office and maintenance/field equipment; and reaching with hands and arms. The employee is frequently required to walk and stand sometimes on uneven surfaces; in addition, occasionally required to climb or balance; stoop, kneel, crouch, or crawl with potential exposure to adverse weather conditions. In addition the employee is regularly required to use written and oral communication skills; read and interpret complex data, information and documents; analyze and solve problems; observe and interpret people and situations; use math and mathematical reasoning; learn and apply new information or skills. Visual acuity is required for preparing and analyzing written data, determining the accuracy and thoroughness of work, and observing general surroundings and activities. Specific vision abilities required by this job include close vision and the ability to adjust focus. Tasks require alertness to avoid potential hazardous conditions/situations.

OTHER

- Employee evaluations will be conducted to review employee performance
- The SVSWCD follows Rockingham County's Personnel Policy in addition to approved SVSWCD policies
- Employee is expected to provide own transportation on the job if an SVSWCD vehicle is not available; employee is reimbursed at the current SVSWCD approved mileage rate for job-related personal vehicle mileage when an SVSWCD vehicle is not available
- Drug testing may be required
- Opportunities for merit increases are based on SVSWCD funding availability and job performance

The above statements are intended to describe the general nature and level of work performed by this position. They are not intended to be constructed, as an exhaustive list of all responsibilities, duties and skills required of this position. Management retains the discretion to add to or change the duties of the position at any time.

Updated 3/8/22