

# **PSNT Technician Position Overview**

## **What does a Typical Day entail for a PSNT Technician:**

A typical day for this position would entail the employee showing up at the office at 8:00am or before as the team often likes to get an early start to beat the heat. You would gather up the needed supplies and equipment and head out to the field with the team. PSNT Technicians/Employees use our office vehicles to travel to the various farms where the PSNT samples (soil samples) are collected using soil probes. The summer PSNT team usually consists of 3-4 PSNT Technicians who travel either as a team of 3-4 or in two teams of 2. The crew is given a set of farms to visit (provided with farm address and maps) and are expected to navigate themselves to the farm and to the individual fields outlined on the maps provided. They walk through each of the fields identified on the maps and collect soil samples using soil probes and buckets. They properly label each sample using materials provided. Samples are packed into a cooler and the team travels to the next farm to collect additional samples.

After all the assigned farms for the day have been visited, the Team travels back to the office to "run the analysis on the samples". The analysis consists of preparing the soils samples (measuring, mixing) and analyzing each sample using the PSNT meter. Following analysis, the results are entered into a spreadsheet, printed and saved. There is some other note taking and administrative work that is completed to round out the day. The crew then cleans up the work area and prepares for the next day's travels by reviewing the maps and gathering up needed supplies and materials.

Most days we try to make the schedule so that the team is only out in the field half of the day (usually the morning half) and spends the other half (afternoon) in the office running the samples. We provide all of the supplies needed and we provided detailed training. We have written notes, checklists and procedures for our PSNT Technicians to follow. This is not a 40 hours a week job for the entire season, rather hours vary throughout the season. Typically, the start of the season (last week of May and early June) consists of 8-24 hours a week for the first 1-3 weeks then increases to 16-40+ a week for 2-3 weeks (June) and then tapers back down to 8-24 hours a week for the last 2-3 weeks of the season (July). On average a seasonal employee works around 175 hours for the entire PSNT season.

## **A few more things to know about the position:**

- It is often very hot while you are out in the field. We certainly allow you to take breaks and rest as needed, but this is hard work- walking through corn fields collecting samples in the summer sun and heat.
- You will get dirty doing this work. We encourage Technicians to wear "old" clothes while doing this work. Typically, we encourage folks to wear long pants to prevent their legs from getting "cut" or irritated by the corn plant's leaves. Oftentimes, folks

will change out of their field clothes into shorts and a clean t-shirt when they arrive back to the office for the afternoon office work.

- You will need to wear old tennis shoes or boots while working in the fields. No crocs or flip-flops allowed for field work.
- It is best for you to pack your lunch each day, as you may need to eat lunch while you are in the field.
- There are often days during the peak of the season where you will be asked to work 8-10 hours a day.
- You will receive overtime if you work more than 40 hours in 1 week.
- There will be several staff who work closely with the Technicians to guide and support their work during the season.
- You will be working across a 2 county service area - Rockingham & Page Counties.
- Employees will be paid bi-weekly via direct deposit.
- Work Schedule would be Monday - Friday; we do not work on Saturdays or Sundays.
- This position isn't 40 hour a week for the entire summer, and therefore, it likely wouldn't provide enough money for you to live off of for the summer if you were having to pay rent and cover other living expenses. With that said, we are willing to work with you as best we can to accommodate your schedule if you have another job or other commitments.

### **Use of Microsoft Programs:**

With regards to use of Microsoft programs, you would mostly be using Excel and Word and potentially PowerPoint. We would certainly train you on how to use them to perform the required tasks. Assuming you have some experience with Google Docs, Google Sheets and Google Slides, you should do fine picking up how to use the Microsoft programs.

### **Can I learn more about the other conservation work that the SWCD does while working as a PSNT Technician:**

This position is not an internship position per-se, rather a seasonal position. There is the potential for some unpaid "internship-ish" opportunities that we can offer in association with the seasonal position - as the employee's time allows. The Conservation District implements and administers a large selection of conservation program and activities ranging from various outreach and educations programs to urban and stormwater program implementation to working with agricultural producers to design and install a diverse array of best management practices. Interested PSNT technicians may be given the opportunity to shadow and work with Conservation District and partner agency staff outside of their paid work as a PSNT Technician. If one is interested in these "un-paid internship" type opportunities they should consult with Megen Dalton, SWCD District Manager.