



Job Posting

Posting Date: 4-11-2024

Position Title: Soil Health Forester

Employer: Itasca Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)

1895 W Hwy 2 - Grand Rapids, Mn 55744

Immediate Supervisor: Andy Arens, Itasca SWCD District Manager and Water Plan Coordinator

- All Itasca SWCD staff are ultimately accountable to the Itasca SWCD elected board of supervisors (five members).

The Itasca SWCD is a 103c Political Subdivision of the State. It is an independent organization, which receives most of its funding from State and County sources. The Mission of the Itasca County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is to provide a local organization through which landowners and operators, local units of government and state and federal agencies can cooperate to improve, develop and conserve soil, water, wildlife and recreational resources.

Employment Classification: Permanent full-time, hourly, union eligible employee: A person hired to fill a board-approved full-time position, work a 2080-hour work year, 80 hours per 2 week pay period, less holidays, earned vacation and sick leave benefits, and is entitled to all fringe benefits provided by the District. The non-management employees Union available is "THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF STATE, COUNTY AND MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES, AFL-CIO COUNCIL 65, SWCD EMPLOYEES LOCAL council 65 Local 1626A.

Insurance coverage, if accepted by the employee, will begin within 120 days of the first date of eligible employment. Designated paid holidays and leave accrual begins effective the first day of employment. The probationary period is 6 months but can be extended an additional 6 months if performance is not adequate. Paid floating holidays cannot be taken until after successful completion of the probationary period.

Starting pay rate: \$22.50/hour

Minimum Qualifications:

- Forest management related degree from an accredited post-secondary school; two year minimum and 4 year preferred.
- Valid class D Mn driver's license.
- New hire job offers will be contingent a drug test detecting no levels of any Minnesota illegal substances, and a background check detecting no felony convictions.

Preferred Qualifications:

- Forest Management related bachelors degree, and related work experience.
- Current Mn DNR Woodland Stewardship Plan writer certification.
- Mn Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) and USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) authorized Job Approval Authority (JAA) for NRCS Forestry practices standards; in particular 612-Tree and Shrub Establishment and 666-Forest Stand Improvement.

Responsibilities and Essential Duties:

Work with Itasca County landowners, and related public and private partners, planning and implementing forestry related natural resource conservation activities, that maintain or improve soil health:

20% Promote Woodland Stewardship Plans in Itasca County.

- Acquire in the first year, and maintain, Mn DNR Woodland Stewardship Plan writer certification.
- Promote available cost share funding to receive woodland stewardship plans, and process agreement and payment documentation.
- Work closely between Woodland Stewardship certified plan writers, private landowners, and the NE Area DNR Forester, to facilitate the writing of Itasca SWCD cost shared Woodland Stewardship Plans.
- Based on the Itasca SWCD landowner fee schedule, write Woodland Stewardship Plans as needed to maintain certification, and in cases when consultants aren't available.

20% Promote implementation of Woodland Stewardship Plan recommendations, in Itasca County.

- Acquire in the first 18 months, and maintain, Job Approval Authority (JAA) for commonly recommended NRCS Forestry practices standards; at a minimum 612-Tree and Shrub Establishment and 666-Forest Stand Improvement.
- Visit landowners' properties to assess forest health and make recommendations for improvements.
- Promote available cost share funding to implement woodland stewardship plan recommendations, and process agreement and payment documentation.
- Work closely between private landowners and private forestry consultants, to implement Woodland Stewardship Plan recommendations.
- Based on the Itasca SWCD landowner fee schedule, write forestry project plans, as needed to maintain JAA, and in cases when consultants aren't available. Work must be completed by the landowner, or a consultant.
- Work with the NE regional Mn DNR PFM Forester, and the Itasca County USDA NRCS office, to stay current on NRCS and Mn DNR forestry cost share programs, to optimize collaboration and opportunities to woodland owners.

20% Administer the Itasca SWCD Annual Native Tree and Plant Sale Program.

- Pre-order stock and supplies in the fall, take orders January through April, and coordinate an order pick-up event at the Itasca SWCD office.

30% Administer Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Conservation Easement Programs.

- Two programs include the Mn BWSR Wild Rice Lakes program, and the Mississippi Headwaters Board (MHB) Mississippi Corridor program.
- Consider easements upon landowner request, and perform limited targeted out-reach, prior approved by the Manager.
- Visit landowners' properties to assess eligibility.
- Assist in establishing the required management plan, and any necessary restoration planning efforts.
- Work closely between landowners, BWSR easement staff, title companies, and County assessor and recorders office staff, to facilitate the development and filing of necessary easement documents.

10% Forestry planning, professional development, and other activities:

- Participate in Landscape Stewardship (LSP) planning efforts, and 1W1P planning efforts when relevant.
- Complete grant reporting, annual reporting, and other administrative tasks as requested by the Manager.
- Attend necessary and Manager approved training.
- Mn SWCD Forestry Association participation.
- Consider forestry program expansion opportunities and needs, such as agroforestry and silvopasture.
- With Manager support, assist with District educational programs such as 5th grade water summit, Envirothon, workshops, news articles, press releases.
- Assist with other district programs upon request: examples include, adopt-a-river clean-up, and King Lake weir maintenance.
- With any available time, assumption of additional duties and programs upon request by the District Manager.

- Commonly utilized computer software will include, but not be limited to Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint, and ARC GIS mapping software.
- This position focuses heavily on special grants, so duties may vary depending on grant starting and expiration dates, workload voids, and funding needs. Position may work in other focus areas in addition to forestry, if forestry funding is not adequate; examples include, but are not limited to shoreland stabilization, riparian buffers, and storm-water management.
- Position involves both office and field work, and often working alone.

The above statements are intended to describe the general nature and level of work being performed by people in this position. They are not to be constructed as an exhaustive list of all duties performed by personnel in this position.

Work Schedule and Resources:

- Year around, Monday through Friday, 8am to 4:30pm (40hrs/wk); two 15-minute breaks and 30-minute lunch daily.
- Occasional evening hours and weekend days, on flex schedule.
- A tele-work policy is in place; staff can expect to predominately work from the office, but have the option to periodically work from home, with manager approval; common examples include if you're sick but still want to work, and inclement weather conditions. District owned equipment and transportation will be used, in the office, while working at home, and while in the field (first reporting to the office is typically necessary for a District vehicle).
- Occasional travel out of the County, and at times over-night, for meetings, public engagement events, and training. Expenses are covered by the District.

Benefits and Terms:

- 3.08 hours per two week pay period annual leave accrual (equivalent of 80 hrs or ten days per year).
- For the first 12 months of service, 1.847 hours of Earned Sick and Safe Time (ESST) leave accrual per two week pay period, effective starting the first pay period; 3.693 hours per pay period thereafter.
- 11 paid holidays per year.
- 6-month probationary period, which may be extended to 1 year upon discretion of SWCD Board.
- After completion of probationary period, 3 floating Holidays per year are available.
- Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA) 6.5% employee contribution and 7.5% SWCD contribution, each two week pay period, starting immediately; employee contribution is deducted from gross pay, but SWCD contribution is in addition to. SWCD contributions are not refundable to employee even after vested status, but employee contributions are refundable regardless of vested status. Participants have the option to retain both employee and employer contributions in PERA long term, once vested status is achieved; neither employee nor employer contributions can be retained in PERA long term prior to achieving vested status.
- Employee individual health insurance coverage, if accepted by employee, will begin within 120 days of starting day. Full premium, up to a \$900.00/month limit, is paid by the SWCD. A family plan is available, at full premium cost to the employee, for non-employee immediate family members.
- A \$20.00/month dental premium contribution is offered by the SWCD, for employee participation; premium balance must be paid by employee. A family plan is available, at full premium cost to the employee, for non-employee immediate family members. Employees who decline SWCD individual health insurance coverage have the option to receive individual dental insurance coverage at full cost to the SWCD.
- Mandatory for all union employees: Contribute 2% of their base rate of pay earned during each biweekly pay period into a post employment health care savings plan (HCSP) via payroll deduction each pay period.
- Employees are eligible to participate in a SWCD life insurance plan, at full premium cost to the employee.

Condition of Announcement:

The Itasca County SWCD reserves the right to make changes to the content of this position announcement without notification and may at any time withdraw the announcement.

Equal Employment Opportunity:

Candidates will be considered without discrimination for any non- merit reason such as race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital or familial status or membership or lack thereof in an employee organization.

Veteran's Preference:

Veterans and disabled veterans wishing to claim veteran's preference, must indicate such to Andy Arens, in writing, either on their resume or via cover letter/e-mail notification accompanying their resume submission; those claiming veteran's preference must also provide a DD214 or DD215 Veteran verification form. A 100-point system will be used to rank all applicants, based on education, experience, and any relevant certifications. Applicants receiving a minimum qualifying score, and requesting Veteran's preference, will receive an additional 10 Veteran preference points, or 15 Disabled Veteran preference points.

Tennessee Warning:

The information requested in this application process is intended to be used by the Itasca SWCD in determining suitability of employment for the position you are currently seeking. If hired, the information may later be used for consideration for other positions, verification of employment history, or disciplinary action in the event that the information provided is not truthful. You are not legally required to provide any of the information requested in this form at this time. However, failure to provide complete, accurate information may result in the Itasca SWCD being unable to offer employment to you. With respect to any special accommodation necessary for completing your application or the interview process, the Itasca SWCD may be unable to provide the necessary reasonable accommodations if you do not provide this information. The information you provide in this application process, that is classified as private data under the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act (MGDPA), will not be released outside the Itasca SWCD without your consent, except as necessary for tax purposes or as otherwise required by state or federal law, or court order. Information that is classified as public data will be released pursuant to the terms of the MGDPA.

- See page five for signature page -



Job Application Signature Page

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To Apply:

Provide resume including relevant job experience and professional references, a signed and dated copy of this document (only page 5 is necessary), and a copy of your college transcripts (official or un-official) to:

Andy Arens
District Manager and Water Plan Coordinator
Itasca Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)
1895 W Hwy 2 - Grand Rapids, Mn 55744
andy.aren@itascaswcd.org
218-999-4431

Application Deadline: Day end Wednesday May 8th, 2024.

By signing below you acknowledge:

- Review of this 4-11-24 dated 5 page job posting document.
- Certify that application materials submitted for this position are accurate to the best of your knowledge.
- Authorize the Itasca SWCD to contact any listed professional references.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____