

**Conservation Districts of Iowa
Conservation Wetland Specialists
Atlantic, Iowa**

-or-

Garner, Iowa

Application Deadline: September 4, 2024

Anticipated Start Date: October 2024

Two positions are available, and the successful applicant would work in one of the following areas:

- Housed in the Atlantic USDA-NRCS office covering USDA-NRCS SW Area
- Housed in the Garner USDA-NRCS office covering portions of the USDA-NRCS NE and NW Areas

These positions are funded through an agreement between the Conservation Districts of Iowa and the Iowa Natural Resource Conservation Service. Funding is secured through September of 2027 with the opportunity for extension.

Job Description:

Conservation Wetland Specialists will work to restore, protect, and enhance wetlands on private lands in Iowa by assisting with the delivery of USDA's Agricultural Conservation Easement Program Wetland Reserve Easements (ACEP-WRE) as well as the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Wetlands created using ACEP-WRE and CRP provide habitat for migratory waterfowl and other wetland dependent wildlife, including threatened and endangered species; improves water quality by filtering sediments and chemicals; reduces flooding; recharges groundwater; protects biological diversity; provides resilience to climate change; and provides opportunities for educational, scientific and limited recreational activities.

As a Conservation Districts of Iowa (CDI) employee, you would work in partnership with the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR). You would serve as a member of the NRCS Easement Team, receiving training and daily direction from the NRCS Area Easement Specialist for the effective delivery of the ACEP-WRE program. You would also work closely with the DNR Private Lands Biologist to receive training on wildlife habitat assessment, development, and management to help ensure the intended wildlife benefits of the ACEP-WRE program.

We expect the successful candidate to develop into an integral part of the effective delivery of wetland conservation using ACEP and CRP. This will involve coordinating with landowners and the easement team to develop applications, conservation management plans, compatible use authorizations, and restoration and/or stewardship plans. Additionally, the successful candidate will be responsible for conducting on-site and off-site monitoring and providing technical assistance and consultation to easement holders. At the end of the first year, success would mean that you have developed the skills and relationships necessary to assist landowners and your team members to implement wetland restoration, protection, and enhancement on the landscape using ACEP and CRP.

Required Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:

- Ability to communicate clearly and effectively with landowners and partner agencies.
- Ability to work independently with little supervision and with diverse clientele.

- Ability to work outdoors in wetland environments and associated risks and difficulties, including but not limited to temperature, water, terrain, insects, and others.
- Knowledge of wildlife ecology, wetland-associated threatened and endangered species, and wetland and upland management including the ability to utilize various habitat management tools in the development of management plans.
- Knowledge of basic land survey principles, including use of laser-planes, GPS, and other survey instruments.
- Knowledge of agricultural drainage practices, systems, and moist-soil management.
- Knowledge of basic legal documents as related to land ownership and management.
- Excellent verbal and written communication.
- Proficiency with computer software programs such as Microsoft Office, ArcGIS or USDA Conservation Desktop.
- Strong organizational skills.
- Valid driver's license required; some use of personal vehicle may be required (mileage reimbursement provided).
- Ability to utilize UTV/ATV, including transport of such vehicles by trailer.
- Some overnight and evening work required.
- Able to obtain USDA Federal Security Clearance.

Preferred Qualifications:

Bachelor of Science Degree in Conservation Ecology or closely related natural resources field and 1-year related field experience in wetland or wildlife habitat development and management.

Benefits to the Applicant:

- **Professional Development:** Gain valuable experience and skills in wetland restoration, protection, and enhancement while working alongside experienced professionals in the field.
- **Impactful Work:** Contribute to meaningful conservation efforts that benefit local ecosystems and wildlife, and make a tangible difference in environmental protection.
- **Networking Opportunities:** Build strong professional relationships with landowners and conservation organizations, expanding your network within the industry.
- **Career Growth:** Develop valuable skills and expertise through hands-on experience and professional development opportunities. Previous staff members have successfully leveraged their experience to secure permanent positions within the conservation field, demonstrating the strong potential for career advancement as a result of this experience.
- **Compensation and Benefits:**
 - **Hourly Rate:** \$18.47/hour
 - **Health Benefits:** Comprehensive health insurance coverage
 - **Retirement Package:** Retirement savings plan
 - **Paid Time Off:** Paid holidays and paid leave
 - **Opportunities for Raises:** Potential for salary increases based on performance

Please note that CDI reserves the right to amend or terminate any benefit plans. Participation in these benefits does not constitute a contract or guarantee of future employment.

To Apply: Please include your cover letter indicating which position(s) you are applying for, your resume, and three professional references as one PDF file. Send to Dien Judge at dien@cdiowa.org. CDI is an equal opportunity employer.