



Job Title: Natural Resource Conservationist

Organization: American Farmland Trust

Reports to: AFT Midwest Director

Application Deadline: October 16, 2016

Overview

The mission of American Farmland Trust (AFT) is *Saving the Land That Sustains Us* by protecting farmland, promoting sound farming practices, and keeping farmers on the land. The Natural Resource Conservationist (NRC) is responsible for representing the organization in advancing its mission in the Midwest Region, which includes the states of Illinois, Indiana and Iowa; initially most work will occur in Illinois. The successful applicant can work from a home office as long as it is centrally located in the State of Illinois. The NRC will work under the general supervision of the AFT Midwest Director in Bloomington, Indiana, but will also work very closely and collaboratively with the Associate Midwest Director located in Platteville Wisconsin.

The NRC's primary responsibility will be coordinating two major watershed partnerships: the Upper Macoupin Creek watershed in Macoupin County, Illinois, and the Vermilion Headwaters in Livingston/Ford Counties, Illinois. Both of these watersheds are the recipients of USDA cost-sharing programs where farmers are eligible for assistance for implementation of best management practices to save soil and improve water quality.

The NRC will also assist AFT on major initiatives including accelerating adoption of conservation cropping systems, development of advanced soil health curriculum and training, developing environmental markets, promoting farmland protection and engagement of non-operator landowners who lease farmland and farmers.

Primary responsibilities include:

- Leading watershed partnerships in Illinois, and strategic development of new watershed projects in the Midwest Region.
- Working directly with farmers and farmland owners to improve natural resource conservation management and best management practices application to farmland;
- Working collaboratively with farmers, farmland owners, agricultural leaders, partner organizations, public agencies in the region and federal, state and local governments;
- Engaging with stakeholders to identify barriers to the adoption of best management practices and strategies to overcome barriers to improved conservation adoption;
- Serving as a facilitator to advance common ground solutions with both the agricultural and environmental communities on soil, water, climate and habitat issues;
- Advocating for practices which improve soil health, maximize nutrient efficiency and agricultural profitability (e.g. conservation cropping systems).

Additional responsibilities include:

- Works with AFT staff to facilitate project development, funding, implementation and evaluation;
- Represents AFT at public meetings, field days and natural resource educational events;
- Develops and makes public presentations to groups and organizations;
- Assists in the development of compelling proposals to secure funds for priority projects;

- Provides input and assistance for reporting to funders and AFT leadership;
- Cultivates relationships with media to enhance AFT brand recognition;
- Expands and maintains a network of progressive farmers, farmland owners, university experts, agricultural organizations, commodity groups, agricultural consultants, farm supply and services businesses and conservation-oriented nonprofits working together to foster accelerated conservation among farmers in the Midwest Region.

PERSONAL SKILLS REQUIRED

- Ability to conduct research, analysis, and write reports;
- Clear and effective written communication of complex subject matter;
- Ability to work independently;
- Ability to make effective public presentations;
- Strong interpersonal communication skills;
- Basic computer skills;
- Highly developed project management skills;
- Attention to details, deadlines and priority setting;
- Sound judgment, discretion and ability to maintain confidentiality.

REQUIRED EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE

- College degree in a field relevant to the position; Master's degree preferred.
- At least five years background in a related field to natural resource conservation, with a special emphasis in:
 - Agriculture: Extensive work experience in or with the agricultural industry and knowledge of issues of concern to agricultural producers and landowners, particularly as they relate to natural resource conservation; and/or
 - Environment: Work with or in the environmental community and knowledge of issues, concerns and perspectives of the environmental community with regard to agriculture.
- Preferred: Experience or knowledge of land use issues, geographic information systems, conservation easements, and facilitation skills regarding agricultural or ecological topics.

COMPENSATION AND CONTACT

Compensation is based on qualifications and experience. AFT offers an excellent package of benefits. Send resume, with cover letter, three references and salary history by October 16, 2016, to Teresa Bullock at tbullock@niu.edu.

No Farms No Food[®]

American Farmland Trust

Center for Agriculture in the Environment

P.O. Box 987 • DeKalb, IL 60115 • www.farmland.org