

Position Opening

Senior Conservation Manager

Who We Are

In 2001, a group of farmers, farm business owners, agricultural policy experts, environmentalists, and conservation-minded philanthropists met over a common concern about the loss of Connecticut's family farms. Connecticut Farmland Trust (CFT) was created a few months later with a concise mission to preserve Connecticut farmland for current and future generations of farmers.

CFT is now a nationally accredited farmland conservation organization, and the only nonprofit land trust in Connecticut exclusively focused on farmland. Since 2002, CFT has protected more than 6,100 acres of farmland and helped our partners conserve over 1,500 additional acres. CFT also has a robust Farmland Access program, working with beginning farmers around the state to get secure tenure on farmland. CFT is a leader in Connecticut on farmland conservation and access, and its growth in recent years has set the stage for more innovation.

CFT is undergoing an exciting period of programmatic and organizational development. The Board and staff are undertaking an extensive planning process with a racial equity lens, which will result in comprehensive 5-year strategic organizational and conservation plans.

What You Will Do

The Senior Conservation Manager leads all aspects of CFT's Farmland Conservation and Stewardship Programs, while working cooperatively with CFT staff and Board to influence CFT's strategic direction. The Senior Conservation Manager supervises a junior-level Conservation Associate and reports to the Executive Director. This position has the opportunity for advancement.

CFT's conservation work is deeply entwined with the work of our partners. In this role you will work closely with the USDA and the Connecticut Department of Agriculture, as well as peer land trusts, municipalities, and other partners, to accomplish CFT's conservation goals. You will need to build trusting relationships with farmers and farm owners throughout the conservation process, including monitoring and stewarding CFT's preserved farms. You will be part of a small team of conservation leaders shaping State of Connecticut policy and piloting innovative conservation tools.

Your Specific Responsibilities

- Overseeing all aspects of CFT's Farmland Conservation Program, from project evaluation to due diligence, to closing.
- Managing all aspects of CFT's Stewardship Program, including conducting in-person monitoring visits and enforcing easement terms.
- Providing oversight, guidance, and training for the Conservation Associate.
- With the Executive Director, providing guidance to the CFT staff and Board in developing and implementing a 5-year strategic organizational plan.

- Developing and implementing a strategic conservation plan (in its final stages of development) with the Executive Director and CFT Board.
- Piloting and implementing new conservation tools, including Buy-Protect-Sell and Option to Purchase at Agricultural Value.
- Engaging in learning, reflection, and relationship-building activities to bring a racial equity lens to CFT's work.
- Collaborating with the Conservation Associate and Farmland Access Coordinator on outreach to farmers and farm owners to grow CFT's conservation programs and increase access for new farmers.
- Designing and executing special projects such as the Soil Health Stewards Program and the Land Trust Alliance's Land and Climate Programs.
- Participating in statewide organizations, working groups, and initiatives, providing legislative testimony, and giving input on laws and policies that impact agriculture and conservation in Connecticut.
- Assisting Executive Director and CFT Board with developing and implementing policies in alignment with Land Trust Alliance accreditation standards.

Qualifications of the Ideal Candidate

The Senior Conservation Manager must be a creative, motivated, and detail-oriented leader with a passion for farming and land conservation. The ideal candidate is an experienced land conservation professional with the knowledge and confidence to lead CFT's efforts to pilot new, innovative conservation tools. Project management experience and strong organizational skills are essential to this position. At a small nonprofit like CFT, being a team player is also an essential asset. The ideal candidate is comfortable working with farmers and understands the unique challenges facing farmers in New England. The ideal candidate must be committed to dismantling racism in the food system and contributing to CFT's journey to build a more equitable and inclusive organizational culture.

Minimum Qualifications

- A passion for working with farmers and preserving farmland in Connecticut.
- At least 4 years of work experience in a professional setting in the fields of land conservation, food systems, land use planning, or related fields. A college degree or master's degree in a related field may substitute for 1 year of work experience.
- Expertise in topics such as land conservation, land use, farmland access, real estate law, regional land use planning, conservation planning, farming, food systems, and/or related issues.
- Experience using GIS mapping software as well as database software.
- Fastidious attention to detail and strong organizational and communication skills.
- Technology savvy and proficiency with Zoom, GIS, Microsoft Office products, and Office 365 programs.
- Demonstrated commitment to anti-racism, food justice, and the values of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- Knowledge of issues facing New England farmers and New England geography.
- Reliable internet connection for remote work.

- Ability to provide own car, insurance, and valid driver's license for travel in Connecticut. Mileage for work travel is reimbursed.
- Ability to carry and lift up to 25 lbs. over short distances, tolerate inclement weather for field visits, and traverse uneven and sometimes hilly ground. Must be comfortable spending several hours outdoors on farm visits and navigating in remote areas.

Salary and Benefits

The salary range is \$65,000 - \$75,000.

The position is based in Hartford, CT, with opportunities for hybrid/remote work. Frequent travel around Connecticut is required.

CFT offers a genial, dog-friendly work environment. Generous benefits package includes:

- Comprehensive health insurance
- Paid short-term and long-term disability insurance
- 5% employer retirement match, after 6 months
- Paid sick leave – 8 days first year, 10 days thereafter
- Paid personal leave – 3 days
- Paid vacation leave – 10 days first year, 15 days 2-4 years, 20 days 5 years
- Paid holiday leave – 11 Federal holidays, week between Christmas and New Year, and 2 floating holidays

CFT provides equal opportunity and prohibits discrimination against all employees and applicants for employment based upon race, color, sex, gender, religion, creed, national origin, ethnic origin, age, citizenship, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, veteran status, or any other legally protected status.

To Apply

- Please submit a cover letter and resume *combined in one PDF document* to CFTApplicant@gmail.com. *Please put your name in the document title.*
- Please include in your letter where you learned about the job.
- No phone inquiries, please.

Applications received by Sunday, May 5, 2024, will be reviewed first. Applications will be accepted and reviewed until the position is filled.