

Position Opening Conservation Associate

Connecticut Farmland Trust (CFT) is seeking a detail-oriented, self-motivated team player with a passion for farming and land conservation to join our team. This is an entry-level position with room for growth. Candidates of diverse backgrounds are strongly encouraged to apply.

The Conservation Associate will work with the Senior Conservation Manager and the Executive Director. The full-time position is based in Hartford, Connecticut.

Organization Overview

Connecticut Farmland Trust is a nationally accredited farmland conservation organization. CFT is the only nonprofit land trust in Connecticut dedicated to the protection of farmland. Since its founding in 2002, the land trust has protected more than 5,700 acres of farmland and has helped its partners protect over 1,100 additional acres.

Position Description

The Conservation Associate will assist the Senior Conservation Manager with all aspects of CFT's farmland conservation and stewardship program, as well as providing support for fundraising, publicity, and administration functions to help achieve CFT's mission and vision.

Duties and Responsibilities

CONSERVATION

- Assist CFT staff and Board in developing and implementing a strategic vision for CFT's farmland conservation work.
- Work with Senior Conservation Manager to identify priority properties, evaluate possible projects, and identify funding for projects.
- Work closely with CFT's state and federal partner agencies to assist with joint land conservation projects.
- Respond to farmer requests, including requests for information, project updates, and grant programs and other resources.
- Visit farms and meet with farmers to discuss conservation programs, take photos to document property conditions, and build a trusting relationship between the farmer and CFT.
- Coordinate due diligence for conservation projects including: contracting surveys and appraisals; preparing Baseline Documentation Reports; requesting Conservation Plans, Forest Management Plans, and other required land management plans; and coordinating any other requirements of state or federal programs or other funding partners.
- Prepare and revise GIS maps for farmland conservation projects.

STEWARDSHIP

- Conduct in-person visits to CFT's 80 preserved farm properties, with assistance from the Senior Conservation Manager, to evaluate compliance with conservation easement terms.
- Report landowner requests, as well as potential easement violations, to Senior Conservation Manager for follow-up.
- Submit easement monitoring reports to partner agencies as needed.
- Assist Senior Conservation Manager with maintenance and management of CFT-owned farms.

OUTREACH

- Assist Senior Conservation Manager and FarmLink Associate with outreach to farmers and landowners to grow CFT's conservation programs.
- Assist with developing written outreach materials for farmers and landowners, such as brochures, slideshows, info sheets, etc.
- Assist with live outreach events for farmers and landowners, including webinars, in-person workshops, farmer mixers, tabling events, etc.

ADMINISTRATION

- Assist Senior Conservation Manager with preparing project reports for CFT Acquisition Committee and CFT Board of Directors.
- Maintain filing system of easement documents and stewardship records.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

- Assist with writing press releases, newsletter articles, and blog postings.
- Photograph and/or video tape farmers and working land to promote land conservation and CFT.
- Staff CFT table at conferences and events.
- Assist in maintaining and enhancing CFT's website, Facebook page, and other media efforts.
- Represent CFT at meetings and events of conservation/agricultural related organizations and government agencies.

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

- Opportunities to learn from fellow land trust professionals by attending Land Trust Alliance webinars, conservation and stewardship workshops, and CT Land Conservation Council annual conference.
- Opportunities to network with fellow agricultural service providers at farming events, farmland mixers, CT Farm Bureau annual meeting, and other events.
- Opportunities to learn about state and federal ag policy and legislation by attending events such as Ag Day at the Capital, Working Lands Alliance annual meeting, and other events.

Qualifications

Minimum qualifications

- A passion for working with farmers and preserving farmland in Connecticut
- One or more years of work experience in a professional setting, preferably nonprofit or government (may be the same work experience in an agricultural or food systems field)

- Strong written and verbal abilities and experience with professional communications (phone, email, letters, etc.)
- Familiarity with topics such as land use, land conservation, farmland access, real estate law, regional land use planning, conservation planning, farming, food systems, and/or related issues
- Public speaking skills, including giving public presentations to a variety of audiences and one-on-one interactions with farmers and members of the public
- Ability to work independently with little supervision; ability to follow up or ask questions when needed to proceed with a task
- Fastidious attention to detail; strong organizational skills
- Ability to manage multiple project timelines at once
- Technology savvy and proficiency with Zoom, Teams, Microsoft Office products (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Office 365 programs)
- 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

Preferred qualifications

- Bachelor's degree in planning, agriculture and natural resources, environmental studies, or a related conservation field
- Familiarity with Connecticut and US agricultural policy
- Experience with GIS mapping software
- Experience with database software
- Experience working with land trusts or other conservation organizations
- Field skills including map reading, orienteering, using a GPS, etc.
- Experience with property management
- Demonstrated commitment to anti-racism, food justice, and the values of justice, equity, diversity and inclusion

Salary and Benefits

The salary range is \$46,000 - \$50,000.

CFT offers a collegial work environment and a comprehensive health plan, paid vacation/sick/holidays, long-term disability, and a retirement plan for its full-time employees with up to a 5% employer match.

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

To Apply

Please submit resume and cover letter to CFTApplicant@gmail.com. No phone inquiries, please.

Applications will be accepted until June 5, 2023, or until the position is filled.

Position posted: April 26, 2023