

Employment Opportunity: Agricultural Project Manager II

Employer: Sonoma Resource Conservation District

Work Location: Main office in Santa Rosa, Sonoma County, California, with option for partial remote work; field work throughout Sonoma County.

Status: Non-Exempt/ 40 hours/week, including some evening and weekend hours.

Compensation: \$41.18 - \$45.00/hour, depending on experience.

Posting Date: March 12, 2024

Estimated Start: Start date flexible, depending on availability.

Organizational Background

The Sonoma RCD (RCD) is a non-regulatory, local government entity empowered to manage soil, water, fish, and wildlife resources for conservation. In existence since the 1940s, RCDs are local grassroots conservation delivery systems that identify local conservation problems and guide solutions on a voluntary basis. The RCD covers 85% of Sonoma County and includes portions of the Russian River, Petaluma River, Sonoma Creek, Stemple Creek, and Gualala River Watersheds. The RCD has a budget of \$3.7MM and is almost exclusively grant and contract funded. The RCD is governed by a board of directors that are local landowners in the District. We offer a friendly and flexible work environment where our team of 14 dedicated professionals work together to benefit our community and its natural resources. Our mission is carried out through four programs: LandSmart® Planning, Water Resources, On-the-Ground, and Education. For more information visit our website at www.sonomarcd.org

Position Summary

The Agricultural Project Manager II is a talented and detail-oriented individual who will work with our technical team to administer several programs from local and federal funding sources. They will engage agricultural producers as ecosystem stewards through the development and implementation of conservation plans, including carbon farm plans, grazing plans, planting plans and designs, and other related types of plans. A strong emphasis of the position will be managing complex grants and projects that implement specific soil health practices, planting plans, and other climate-smart farming practices. This dynamic project manager will also oversee programs such as LandSmart® Grazing for Community Resilience collaboratively led in partnership with Gold Ridge RCD. These climate-smart agriculture programs are designed to provide on-farm ecological benefits, improve agricultural productivity, enhance agroecosystem resilience, and mitigate global climate change through the regional LandSmart program. The Agricultural Project Manager II will work with a variety of partner organizations as well as landowners/ managers to accomplish the RCD's mission. The individual must be highly motivated, enjoy working in a team environment, have strong attention to detail and organizational skills, be flexible to changing workload priorities, have strong written and verbal communication skills, and can execute assignments efficiently and on time. This position allows for a diverse workload both in the office and the field. This position reports to the Agricultural Program Director.

Essential Functions

- Plans, manages, produces, and assists in the implementation of LandSmart Plans, Carbon Farm Plans, and other natural resource management Conservation Plans. This duty includes responsibility as the principal

author/editor of written Plans. These plans include working with landowners to develop their short-term and long-term stewardship goals to identify conservation practices that sequester carbon and reduce GHG emissions, enhance natural resources, and promote sustainability. The work requires building trust through extensive contact with the landowners, land stewards, and community partners to gather information, explain findings, and build consensus.

- Administers complex local, state, and federal grants including construction oversight, following state and federal guidelines, invoicing reporting, and partnership building.
- Serves as a member of an interdisciplinary team to solve complex resource-related issues. Scopes issues, develops resource objectives, monitors programs, and evaluates data and final implementation. Increases regional capacity by participating and contributing to regional conservation efforts.
- Based on well-developed experience and knowledge, significantly contributes to the development of land management practices, by suggesting process improvements to current practices, or suggesting alternative approaches to difficult issues.
- Participates and contributes to soil health monitoring, data collection, and reporting of results to provide adaptation strategies and steward resources in the face of increased wildfire risk, water scarcity, floods, species decline, and soil degradation.
- Strong Geographic Information Systems (GIS) skills and experience including the interpretation and analysis of scientific data.
- Manages Sonoma RCD grants compliance which includes, but is not limited to, preparing bid packages, coordinating fulfillment of District contracts, insurance and licensing for outside contractors and vendors, labor compliance with applicable laws, provisions, codes, regulations, and policies, assisting with negotiation contract terms as needed, and provide long-term monitoring of on the ground conservation projects throughout District.
- Manages grant agreements and contracts, including maintaining funder relationships, reporting, deliverables, and monitoring of budgets. Communicate regularly with management regarding contract needs or issues.
- Leads grant proposal writing, primarily for publicly funded grants.
- Develops and coordinates educational workshops and develops educational materials related to climate-smart agriculture.
- Collaborates with partner organizations to build relationships, establish shared priorities, identify opportunities to leverage each other's work, and develop new initiatives together.
- Conduct outreach to build landowner/manager participation in the Sonoma RCD's programs.
- Represents Sonoma RCD at community events, including networking, tabling, and speaking as needed.
- Communicates and coordinates regularly with other staff regarding outreach, grant deliverables, landowner needs, and priorities for current and future Sonoma RCD projects and programs.

Please note this job description is not designed to cover or contain a comprehensive listing of activities, duties, or responsibilities that are required of the employee for this job. Duties, responsibilities, and activities may change at any time with or without notice.

Applicant Qualifications

The ideal candidate will have previous experience in conservation project management, including permitting, CEQA, and contractor oversight. The Agricultural Project Manager II works in partnership with the Climate-Smart Agricultural Team to support programs that promote soil conservation, climate adaptation, water quality improvement, wildlife habitat enhancement, and agricultural sustainability. We partner with many individuals and organizations in our district, regionally and statewide. The Agricultural Project Manager II will be responsible for

meeting competing grant deliverables, writing grants, successfully stewarding partnerships, and working effectively in teams. This position serves as a technical resource and advisor to land users, and the interested public. In addition to doing outreach to support farmers in accessing programs, this position supports farmers and other landowners who have already secured financial assistance in overcoming any barriers to implementing these practices. The Agricultural Project Manager II will also contribute to outreach and educational event planning to promote awareness and interest among the farming community in practices that have climate benefits. The ideal candidate will have existing connections within the farm community and will have experience working with a wide variety of farm types and with diverse populations. They will be adept at managing both the big picture (e.g., partner relationships and watershed-wide priorities) and the details (e.g., contractual requirements). They will enjoy working with people of all different backgrounds and be motivated to develop new projects and procure grant funding. This position reports to the Program Director.

Required Qualifications

- Bachelor's or advanced degree in soil science, rangeland management, agriculture, physical, biological, or environmental sciences, or related.
- At least five years of education and on-the-job experience in conservation planning and implementation, including contractor oversight and contract administration.
- Working knowledge of and interest in production agriculture and natural resource conservation principles and science, specifically soil erosion processes, water quality, stormwater runoff and native plant communities.
- Highly experienced in carbon farm/regenerative agricultural practices and their significance to reaching climate goals and the ability to write Carbon Farm Plans.
- Background and understanding of dairy and rangeland systems.
- Competent with Geographic Information Systems tools and functions.
- Experience with CEQA analysis (e.g., NOE, Neg Dec, MND) and permit applications for conservation projects.
- Experience working with private landowners on working lands (e.g., agriculture, forestry) and understanding of producer needs.
- Highly organized, motivated self-starter with the ability to prioritize and consistently meet deadlines.
- Exceptional interpersonal skills and ability to work with a variety of people with diverse interests and temperaments.
- Ability to design and facilitate effective workshops, demonstrations, and seminars for producers.
- Ability to exercise professional judgment in planning, designing, and implementing of program objectives.
- Personal and professional commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace.
- Creativity, sense of humor, “can do” spirit, collegiality, and flexibility in a dynamic and team-oriented work environment.
- Ability to communicate effectively in English, both verbally and in written form, sufficient to convey information and instructions to the public, colleagues, and Board members.
- Flexible hours are required, including some weekday nights and weekends, to attend community events, meetings, and conferences.
- Must be at least 18 years of age at the time of employment.
- A valid driver's license, vehicle, and proof of auto insurance is required at the time of hire.

Desired Qualifications

- Experience working under state and federal grants, including budget management and reporting.

- Experience with Department of Industrial Relations requirements regarding contractor requirements and prevailing wage.
- Experience working on multi-stakeholder collaborative planning processes.
- Experience working with dairy and rangeland agricultural systems.
- Knowledge of video and audio editing and production, utilizing Adobe or other related software.
- Ability to communicate effectively in Spanish, both verbally and in written form, sufficient to convey information and instructions to the public.

Work Environment

Work is performed in an indoor/outdoor setting to include:

- Field settings that include various terrains, dense vegetation (with possible exposure to poison oak, ticks, snakes, and mosquitos), and hot, cold, and wet conditions.
- A professional office environment that includes the operation of standard office equipment such as computers, phones, copiers, calculators, and filing cabinets.

Physical Requirements

Work in the field requires prolonged standing, walking long distances across rugged or uneven terrain in all weather conditions, climbing, jumping, stooping, kneeling, crouching, crawling, and recurring bending, lifting, reaching, and carrying of items weighing up to 30 pounds. Changes in lighting such as alternating bright sunlight and dark shade are encountered. Noise levels constantly vary. Work in the office requires frequently remaining in a stationary position, operating a computer and other standard office equipment, and conversing by telephone and in person. Work in the field and in the office requires near and far visual acuity for expansive reading, computer operation, editing of documents, map interpretation, and data collection. Driving is required for local travel.

Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

The Sonoma Resource Conservation District is committed to incorporating justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion to evaluate, enhance, and expand our programming, deepen our connections with community partners, and strive to better serve our entire District. We recognize the importance of working to build and sustain an inclusive and equitable culture within our organization to effectively serve our District, improve access to economic opportunity, and create landscape-scale resilience for our current and future generations. We strive to ensure that water, soil, working lands, and wildlife habitats are conserved for all as we promote collaboration, employ innovative solutions based on science, respect our diverse communities and their connections to land, and empower members of our community to be active stewards of our natural and cultural resources.

Compensation/Benefits

The starting compensation for this position is \$41.18 per hour, depending on experience. Benefits for this position include 100% employer-paid medical, dental, and vision insurance; dependent coverage at 100% employee cost; \$50,000 employer-sponsored life insurance policy; a SIMPLE IRA retirement plan with 3% employer match; paid time off and holiday leave; and an employee assistance program. No relocation assistance will be provided.

How to Apply

Please submit a cover letter, resume, and three (3) references in one PDF document to afairbrook@sonomarc.org with "Agricultural Project Manager II" in the subject line. **Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until the position is filled, with an initial review of applicants to begin on March 25, 2024. No phone calls, please.**

Sonoma Resource Conservation District is an equal opportunity employer. Employment is based on qualifications and competency. We prohibit discrimination based on race, color, religion, religious creed (including religious dress

and grooming practices), national origin, ancestry, citizenship, physical or mental disability, medical condition (including cancer and genetic characteristics), genetic information, marital status, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding, or related medical conditions), gender, gender identity, gender expression, age, sexual orientation, veteran and/or military status, and any other status protected by state or federal law.