

NORTHAMPTON COUNTY NOTIFICATION OF POSITION VACANCY

07/28/17

Resource Conservation Specialist

The Human Resources Department is accepting applications for a full-time position for Northampton County Local Government. The Resource Conservation Specialist is responsible for providing technical assistance to agricultural and non-agricultural landowners and land managers as well as residential and commercial land users, utilizing the NRCS 9 step conservation planning process to evaluate and formulate plans to insure that the natural resource base will be maintained and enhanced. Duties include supporting the District Conservationist in meeting the soil conservation objectives for the county. Assisting and advising representatives of local units of government, groups, and land users on soil and water conservation practices, methods, and procedures applicable to areas experiencing soil erosion and other resource problems.

Education/Requirements: Employee will be required to attend training provided by the NC Division of Soil and Water as well as the Natural Resource Conservation Service. The position requires a 2-year associate degree in a natural resource field and training by the NC Division of Soil and Water, as well as the Natural Resource Conservation Service. Must obtain and maintain a NC Public Operator Pesticide License or higher, Cultural Resource Training & Certification, Equal Opportunity Employment Training, Environmental Education Training, National Incident Management System Training, Security Awareness Training, Wetland Training, Basic Surveying & Documentation C, Craze-Pasture Training, RUSLE II Soil Loss Prediction & Condition, Basic Conservation Planning, NC Ag Cost Share Training, Job Approval for AgWRAP, Community Conservation and must possess a NC Driver's License.

SEE COMPLETE DESCRIPTION ONLINE

Apply at the Division of Employment Security (DES), Becker Village Mall, Roanoke Rapids NC
or at the Northampton County HR Department, 107 Thomas Bragg Drive
or mail application to: HR, PO Box 367, Jackson NC 27845

NORTHAMPTON COUNTY APPLICATION REQUIRED

Available @ www.northamptonnc.com

DEADLINE: OPEN UNTIL FILLED

Normal Hiring Salary Range: Grade 68 (\$35,701 to \$37,506)

Northampton County is an Equal Opportunity Employer and hires only US citizens and lawfully admitted aliens and complies with ADA requirements. Northampton County is a drug-free workplace.

Resource Conservation Specialist

A. Primary Purpose of Organizational Unit

The Soil Conservation Office is comprised of a mix of county, state and federally funded employees who are charged with the responsibility of assisting county residents with solving existing and preventing soil and water problems. Soil erosion, water quality improvement, animal waste management and wildlife habitat enhancement are addressed through proper natural resource planning and installation of best management conservation practices. Services include both technical planning and financial assistance for needed practices.

B. Primary Purpose of Position

An employee in this position provides detailed technical assistance to agricultural and non-agricultural landowners and land managers as well as residential and commercial land users. The Resource Conservation Specialist will utilize the NRCS 9 step conservation planning process to evaluate the many resource concerns and formulate plans to insure that the natural resource base will be maintained and enhanced. The employee will work on a variety of local, state and federal programs while concentrating the majority of his/her efforts to managing the North Carolina Agricultural Cost Share Program.

The purpose of the work is to assist the district conservationist in meeting the soil conservation objectives for the county. Assisting and advising representatives of local units of government, groups, and land users on soil and water conservation practices, methods, and procedures applicable to areas experiencing soil erosion and other resource problems. The work of the incumbent reduces potential soil loss, contributes to the education of the public on resource conservation, affects the productivity and economic resources of those serviced and contributes to the achievement of planned conservation systems.

C. Work Schedule

The employee will work as standard Northampton County employee schedule from 8:30 am to 5:00 pm Monday through Friday (with one hour lunch period).

D. Change in Responsibilities

The employee has primary responsibility for the operation of the North Carolina Agricultural Cost Share Program. This includes a wide range of activities from developing an annual strategy plan for funding, conservation plan development, cost share contract development, practice design, practice field layout, construction supervision and final survey construction check and contract payment request documentation.

The employee has responsibilities in the usage of several technical software programs such as ARC View and Geographical Information Systems (GIS), three forms of the Universal Soil Loss Equation (RUSLE, RUSLE I, RUSLE II), North Carolina Animal Waste Management Software, US Geographic Topo Software, USDA Soil Data Mart and others.

Duties and Other Position Characteristics

1. Makes initial contacts with landowners and operators who have indicated an interest in the District program; gathers factual data for the development of a conservation plan; makes observations as to what problems are similar to those previously encountered; and applies and installs appropriate practices. Develops basic plans and fully utilizes toolkit.

Inventory sites on farmland to assess the condition of the natural resource base to begin the conservation planning process.

Develop conservation plans based on county, state and federal guidelines consistent with the USDA NRCS certified conservation planning standards.

- a. Inventory of farms and construction sites
- b. Collection of slope ranges and existing ground cover and farm rotations
- c. Utilize soil loss and soil condition to estimate existing and allowed soil loss by tonnage per year
- d. Prepare soils maps and soil descriptions for each tract or area where plans are developed
- e. Devise a cropping rotation sequence and related conservation practices to treat the land to maintain the soils in a positive condition

Conservation practice recommendation and design as provided in the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide – approximately 138 practices available.

Provide overall management for the NC Agricultural Cost Share Program within the local office.

- a. Develop a Strategy Plan to acquire state funding from the NC Division of Soil & Water

2. Plans and lays out a wide variety of conservation practices. Representative practices are field borders, strip cropping, diversions and grass waterways, grassland establishment and maintenance, woodland and wildlife management, critical area treatment, and other related practices. Incumbent initially determines need and feasibility of routine or non-routine, complex practices; selects sites for practices; makes surveys for engineering practices; determines size of contributing watershed; maintains jobs within job approval authority; and supervises construction.

3. Performs all steps necessary to accomplish cost-share referrals including determining need and feasibility of practices, checking completed practices for compliance with specification, and certification of completed practices.
4. Contacts landowners and operators with current conservation plans, encourages them to apply practices as scheduled and provides them with technical assistance in applying planned practices. Advises on proper maintenance, and makes revisions in plans or develops new plans where no major land use change is involved.
5. Assists in carrying out an educational and informational program for the field offices in order to facilitate the district program; gathers data and prepares regular news articles; compiles and documents photographic material; works jointly with District(s) in coordinating and conducting field days, tour, and demonstrations; and makes presentations to schools, civic clubs, and other groups.
6. Prepares necessary records and reports on work accomplished and maintains field office records and case files as required. Participates actively in the development of plans of operations, work plans, and workload analyses. Develops own work schedule, Utilizes available office automation including FOTG and Engineering Field Manual etc.
7. Performs all steps necessary to accomplish cost share referrals including determining needs and feasibility of practices, selecting site and laying out practices, advising on construction of practices, checking completed practices for compliance with specifications, and certifying completed practices.
8. Works with various local units of government and District Board, attends meetings, and advises on proper land uses, soil interpretations, and proposed subdivisions; and makes recommendations on drainage and septic systems.
9. Provides guidance to other soil conservation technicians and aids, and assists with training student trainees or soil conservationists, as assigned. Responsible for updating individual Training Plan and informing supervisor of training needs. Actively involved in training activities for self-development.
10. Demonstrates an understanding and application of program assistance with regard to outreach to underserved potential customer groups. Employee is familiar with civil rights issues related to the prevention of any kind of potential discrimination as it relates to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age or physical or mental handicap.
11. Provides input into the design, development, and maintenance of administrative procedures to assure the delivery of programs and services are carried out without regard to race, color, national

origin, religion, sex, age, or disability. Reviews the implementation of civil rights policies to determine that they are translated into appropriate actions consistent with annual plans of operations.

12. Practices safety and health in all areas of work assignments and stays abreast of safety rules and regulations.

13. Operates a motor vehicle as an incidental element in performing official duties. Driving will be principally performed on public highways/roads during daylight hours. Types of motor vehicles operated generally are passenger cars or pickup trucks.

14. Performs other duties as assigned.

Accuracy Required in Work

This position requires a high degree of accuracy in the actual topographical engineering survey work for conservation practice design layout and construction check. The position involves the utilization of planning for conservation practice work involving 80,000 – 100,000 dollars annually with the North Carolina Agricultural Cost Share Program.

Consequences of Error

Errors in planning could result in the incorrect practice selection, which will cause large natural resource projects to fail resulting in landowner or land user damage and potential large-scale pollution from fertilizer loss, animal waste spills or improper land application, and damage to valuable cropland, wetlands, forestland, pastureland and potential residential and commercial property.

Instructions Provided to Employee

The employee receives instructions from the North Carolina Division of Soil and Water Conservation for the NC Agricultural Cost Share Program, which comes in the form of a program manual and cost list. Instructions are also provided by USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service in the form of Technical Conservation Practice Guides and various program manuals.

Guides, Regulations, Polices and References Used by Employee

The employee is expected to develop a thorough working knowledge of the following items:

- North Carolina Agricultural Cost Share Program Manual with program guidelines and cost list
- Natural Resource Conservation Service Practice Technical Guides
- Engineering Field Manual
- Universal Soil Loss Equation (Rusle)

- Universal Soil Loss Equation (Rusle I)
- Universal Soil Loss Equation (Rusle 11)
- NC Division of Water Quality Wetland Regulations
- US Army Corps of Engineers Wetland Regulation
- NC Division of Land Quality Erosion and Sediment Control Manual
- NC Animal Waste Management Planning Tool
- USDA Soil Data Mart for Soil Survey Information
- C-Graze Livestock Pasture Planning Tool
- PLAT -Phosphorous Loss Assessment Tool
- GIS Geographic Information System Operation
- USGS Geological Survey Data Maps
- NRCS Toolkit/ArcGis Planning System Software

The Resource Conservation Specialist is required to select, interpret, and apply the appropriate guideline for the particular practice being installed or problem observed. The incumbent must consider conditions present relating to land use, topography, soil types, erosion rates, and develop suitable alternatives for the consideration of land user. The incumbent may adjust minimum specifications in technical guides to deal with more severe problems. Incumbent is also expected to suggest or recommend needed changes in standards and specifications to the supervisor.

Supervision Received by Employee

The Resource Conservation Specialist position receives a minimum of day-to-day supervision from the Northampton Soil & Water Conservation District Chairman and technical supervision from the NRCS District Conservationist.

Work is assigned in terms of broad objectives and basic priorities as stated in the Plan of Operations, which is developed, jointly by the incumbent and the supervisor. The incumbent is responsible for independently carrying out the daily work including assistance to land users, planning and laying out practices, information work, and assisting local units of government.

The incumbent communicates with and keeps the supervisor informed as the work progresses. The incumbent is expected to resolve unfamiliar technical problems for which precedents and guides are not available. Specific instructions are available from the supervisor, other specialists and guidelines on assignments involving unusual situations or techniques new to incumbent and for which precedents do not exist. Completed work and practices installed are not reviewed in detail but are spot-checked for technical adequacy.

Variety and Purpose of Personal Contact

Contacts are with agency personnel both within and outside the immediate office. Contacts are also with land users and landowners, developers, contractors, other federal and county agencies, schools, and other local agencies and units of government.

The purpose of contacts is to gather data for conservation planning; advise on and recommend installation and feasibility of practices; make follow-up visits to land users to encourage continued application of conservation practices; provide technical assistance in applying and maintaining practices; gather information for news articles field tours, and provides general soil and water information.

Physical Efforts

The assigned work requires regular and recurring prolonged walking over rough terrain. The work also requires bending, stretching, stooping, crossing ditches, climbing fences, wading water, lifting and carrying equipment and instruments and performing other strenuous activities.

Work Environment

The work requires regular exposure to and working around heavy equipment and other farm machinery. Incumbent is also exposed to insects and chemicals at times. Weather conditions vary from extremely hot to extremely cold and work is performed in these varying temperatures as well as in humid, damp, or rainy weather. Safety precautions are required.

Machines, Tools, Instruments, Equipment and Materials Used

- Computer
- Copier –Printer - Scanner
- Laser Level
- Hand Level
- Measuring Wheel
- Hand held GPS
- Read Rod –tapes
- Soil Survey Book
- Topo Maps
- Soil Maps
- Aerial Photos
- GIS Maps
- NCDA & CS Soil Samples
- NC Ag Cost Share Program
- EQIP Rules
- NRCS Rules
- Electronic Field Office Technical Guide
- Soil Data Mart
- USDA Web Soil Survey
- Cultural Resource Review

Visual Attention, Mental Concentration and Manipulative Skills

- Topo Maps
- Aerial Photos > Pay close attention to details on maps
- Soil Maps
- NC Ag Cost Share Program
- Ag Wrap - Community Conservation
- NRCS Programs > Keep up with changes
- EQIP
- CSP
- Review Cultural Resources
- Become knowledgeable of Field Office Technical Guide, Soil Data Mart, and Web Soil Survey.
- Must be able to locate data and information when requested by landowner.
- FSA Programs > Keep up with changes
- CRP
- CREP

Safety for Others

Safety considerations are very important when planning and designing conservation practices. Most conservation practices involve the use of heavy equipment for earth moving which involves overhead and under-ground power lines, gas lines, water lines, etc. Failure to properly plan and account for those utilities can be deadly to machine operators and by standers. It can also be very expensive regarding damages from loss of service.

Knowledge Required by the Position

Practical knowledge of a variety of specialized conservation practices, methods, and techniques in order to assist others in meeting the conservation objectives defined for farms in a county by advising landowners on the use of one of several single alternative practices for which the methods are well-established such as grass waterways, terraces, tree planting, field windbreaks and seeding.

Practical knowledge of conservation, surveying, and engineering in order to survey and prepare layout and technical requirements; site selection, methods and sequence of installing practices used; schedules installation of work; and adjusts plan to site facts such as poor drainage and stream bank erosion.

Skill in surveying and the use and maintenance of engineering tools as levels and rods to measure slope steepness and in designing and laying out a variety of conservation practices.

Knowledge of cost sharing programs sufficient to determine need and feasibility of requested practices, advise land users on conditions needed to qualify and certify completed practices.

Ability to communicate with others in order to advise landowners on feasibility of various conservation practices.

The incumbent provides assistance to the County and advises land users on corrective conservation measures; gathers data and makes recommendations on appropriate practices; designs and lays out a wide variety of conservation practices; prepares specifications and cost estimates; writes plans on single operating units; assists in carrying out an information and education program for the field office; and performs all steps necessary to accomplish cost share referrals. The incumbent must consider the land user's needs and economic resources, time needed to complete practices, and recommend appropriate practices and a variety of alternatives for consideration and installation by the land user. The practices installed require attention to the topography, soils, size of farm, economic feasibility, and classes of cropland in the county.

Care and skill in scheduling is required in order to provide needed assistance on priority work. Follow-up work is necessary to effect minor revisions to conservation plans and to assure completed installation of adopted conservation measures.

Manipulative Skills

Take great care in mapping cultural resources for Cultural Resource Specialist.

Insure measurements in surveying tasks and distances from streams for Conservation Reserve Program are accurate.

Required Minimum Training

The position requires a minimum of a 2-year associate degree in a natural resource field.

Employee will be required to attend training provided by the NC Division of Soil and Water as well as the Natural Resource Conservation Service.

Additional Recommended Experience

- Agricultural Experience
- Computer Training
- Air Photo Interpretation
- Soils Education
- Related Agricultural Design - irrigation - livestock
- Land Surveying
- Forestry Experience
- Possess ability to meet and work with customers & general public

License or Certificate Required by Statue or Regulation

- Employee must obtain and maintain a NC Public Operator Pesticide License or higher
- NC Driver License
- Cultural Resource Training & Certification
- Equal Opportunity Employment Training
- Environmental Education Training

- National Incident Management System Training
- Security Awareness Training
- Wetland Training
- Highly Erodible Land Training
- Basic Surveying & Documentation
- C Craze -Pasture Training
- RUSLE II Soil Loss Prediction
- Basic Conservation Planning
- NC Ag Cost Share Training
- Job Approval for AgWRAP,
- Community Conservation
- Job Approval for local conservation practices, Engineering & Non-Engineering