

The Vital Ground Foundation
Job Description
Land Steward
2021

PRIMARY FUNCTION

The Land Steward ensures that The Vital Ground Foundation's conservation projects are adequately documented, monitored and stewarded according to the organization's adopted Policies and Procedures, Land Trust Alliance Standards and Guidelines, and all applicable agreements, contracts, and approved management plans, to provide enduring benefits to wildlife and the public, and to maintain compliance with applicable Internal Revenue Code rules and regulations. The Land Steward will also undertake GIS analyses and prepare various types of maps and reports. The position will also support and participate in other Vital Ground activities such as strategic planning, community events, publications, communications, and outreach as needed.

SPECIFIC DUTIES

Conservation Easement Monitoring and Stewardship

Maintain Vital Ground's conservation easement stewardship program in accordance with the organization's *Conservation Easement Stewardship Policies*. Primary duties include:

- conduct physical inspections and landowner interviews for each property under conservation easement annually.
- respond to landowner inquiries in a timely manner and maintain good communication and relationships with the landowners of Vital Ground conservation easement properties.
- report on and adequately document all conservation easement monitoring activities.

Fee Title Monitoring and Stewardship

Maintain Vital Ground's fee-title stewardship program in accordance with the organization's *Fee Land Stewardship Policies and Principles*. Primary duties include:

- monitor or manage 3rd party monitoring of all fee title properties.
- report on and adequately document all fee title property monitoring activities.
- recommend and conduct stewardship actions such as managing contracts, forest and wetland restoration activities and noxious weed control.
- engage project partners, stakeholders and the public about Vital Ground's stewardship activities.

Programmatic, administration & GIS

- oversee grant agreements and contracts for stewardship related activities on fee title properties.
- coordinate with Vital Ground's Administrative staff to maintain Lands and Conservation project files including all digital photography in accordance with Vital Ground's adopted *Records Management Procedures*.
- maintain the Lands and Conservation Program database files.
- write occasional topical updates or articles for Vital News or other outreach materials.
- obtain appropriate GIS spatial information, prepare project maps to support planning and execution of Vital Ground's land conservation program and conduct GIS analysis for the organization as needed.
- support program staff on acquisitions including grant applications, due diligence and transactional matters.

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QUALIFICATIONS

- At least two (2) years stewardship and/or land management experience with a land trust, conservation organization, natural resource management agency, or equivalent experience.
- Experience with resource management and/or conservation easement monitoring program for a nonprofit or government organization focused on wildlife habitat, land conservation, habitat enhancement, habitat connectivity, resource management and/or stewardship.
- Experience working/meeting/interacting with rural landowners, with preference given to candidates with a history of work in forestland, wetland or agricultural-based capacity.
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills.
- Analytical and strategic thinking skills.
- Demonstrated experience with GIS (ArcMap, ArcGIS).
- Knowledge of the Land Trust Alliance's "Standards and Practices".
- Undergraduate or graduate degree in natural or environmental science, resource conservation, geography, wetland ecology or restoration science.
- A working knowledge of wildlife biology, wildlife habitat ecology, botany, forestry, ecological services, climate science and conservation tools and strategies.

WORKING CONDITIONS

This is a full-time, exempt position with significant flexibility in the work schedule, anticipated to require approximately 40 hours per week. Regular travel is required throughout northwest Montana, North Idaho, and periodic out-of-state travel for meetings, trainings or seminars.

The position is based in Missoula, Montana, but a remote work situation will be considered for a qualified candidate based in areas where Vital Ground's work is focused.

REPORTS TO: Director of Conservation