



## Conservation Districts of Iowa

### **JOB ANNOUNCEMENT: Water Quality Specialist**

Job Title: Water Quality Specialist  
Hours: Full time  
Start Date: August/September, 2016  
Duration: Dependent on funding –  
2 years secured,  
potential to continue strong  
Pay: \$19.24/hour, health insurance,  
retirement plan  
Location: Ankeny, Iowa - ability to check in at Ankeny Office weekly and attend meetings in Des Moines as needed (2-3 times a month)

#### **About Conservation Districts of Iowa (CDI) & Iowa's Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs)**

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Soil and water conservation is crucial to the state of Iowa because healthy soil is necessary to allow for continued agriculture production in Iowa. Iowa's farmers will play a significant role in producing the 70% increase in food needed to feed the world's population by 2050. Because it takes 500 years for 1" of topsoil to form, conserving Iowa's soil, which is some of the best in the world, is vital. In addition to food, crops producing ethanol decreases our nation's dependence on foreign oil. Agriculture production is essential to Iowa's economy because the industry employs many Iowans. Clean water is important to Iowa as well, for drinking and recreation. Clean water and natural areas for wildlife are valuable to Iowans and important for Iowa's tourism industry. Also, what we do in Iowa impacts our downstream neighbors.

Soil and Water Conservation Districts were formed across the nation in response to the devastation of the 1930's Dust Bowl, which brought ecological, economic, and social misery to tens of thousands of Americans as a result of farming the land without conservation. Districts were charged with restoring and protecting the soil to ensure continued productivity, and they did so by encouraging the use of an array of conservation practices. Today, there are 3,000 Soil and Water Conservation Districts and 17,000 Commissioners across the nation. In Iowa alone, there are 100 Soil and Water Conservation Districts and 500 Commissioners. Every county has a Soil and Water Conservation District and all Iowans, urban as well as rural, are served by them. Soil and Water Conservation Districts provide Iowans with education, technical assistance and funding to put conservation on agricultural and urban land.

Conservation Districts of Iowa is a 501(c)3 whose mission is to *inform, educate and lead Iowans through our local soil and water conservation districts to promote conservation of natural resources*. CDI implements its mission by providing SWCDs and Iowans through numerous programs, projects and events.

The organization is managed by a paid Executive Director and a volunteer Board of Directors. CDI also employs a full time Office and Projects Manager and 8 field staff that work in offices across the state to assist with wildlife and wetland conservation work.

## Position Description

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The Districts have had and continue to have a history and deep rooted tradition in soil conservation. Before the 1970's, today's Soil and Water Conservation Districts were just Soil Conservation Districts. Attention on watershed planning and water quality at this time expanded the District's focus on water resources beyond what it had been in the past. Even more, in 2013, Iowa rolled out the Nutrient Reduction Strategy and Iowa legislature funded it through the Water Quality Initiative in 2014. The Nutrient Reduction Strategy is a framework to guide our state in assessing and reducing nutrients to Iowa waters and the Gulf of Mexico, both nitrogen and phosphorus loading by 45 percent. The Water Quality Initiative is the implementation of the Nutrient Reduction Strategy and is implemented, largely, through the Soil and Water Conservation Districts through watershed projects and cost share incentive for conservation practices.

As CDI works through the Districts to protect and improve Iowa's natural resources, we seek a candidate to assist us in enhancing the District's capacity to address water resources by providing better support through various projects, programs and communication. CDI seeks a dynamic, self-motivated employee who can help us implement and expand on our existing water quality projects and programs while seeking new opportunities to fund additional work to protect Iowa's water resources. This position is ideal for an individual with a degree in ag journalism/communications or someone with experience in agriculture or environmental studies with a strength in communications who is looking to gain experience in the soil and water conservation arena.

Responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- Travel to Iowa's Soil and Water Conservation Districts, overnight travel rare, access to a vehicle at times or mileage reimbursement
- Listen, survey, understand and communicate with the Soil and Water Conservation Districts
- Lead and expand CDI's Water Quality Projects and Programs including:
  - retainN- gives farmers the tools and information they need to make the best conservation decisions on their land, starting by helping farmers test for, understand and retain their nitrogen through testing kits. Staff would assist Districts in effectively distributing kits, expand website and seek new funding opportunities to expand program.
  - Conservation Media Library – development of a library of media to spread the story of soil health and water quality and increase the adoption of conservation in Iowa. Staff would write content for project and assist Districts in demonstrating and providing feedback on library materials.
  - Des Moines Lobe - build the capacity of Districts to implement water quality projects and programs in the Des Moines Lobe by allowing for the employment of specialists to assist field office staff in the Des Moines Lobe to adopt soil health and water quality practices through activities including conservation planning, nutrient management, cover crops, bioreactors, drainage water management, vegetated subsurface drain outlet, no till/strip till with federal and state programs. Staff would assist Districts with holding meetings, promoting practices and conservation planning.
  - Nutrient Stewardship Campaign – brings together stakeholders to development and implement a campaign.
  - Source Ag Water Collaborative- CDI chairs the newly formalized collaborative which seeks provide Iowans information and resources to protect their drinking water. The collaborative is an accumulation of Iowa agriculture, farm and water operating organizations. Staff would chair collaborative and seek funding to develop an Iowa Source Water Meeting Toolkit and demonstrate it in a local community with the collaborative members.
- Develop content for projects and programs

- Create and deliver information
- Lead meetings with partners
- Understand the needs of the Districts; listen to and survey the Districts to gain this understanding
- Engage and lead Districts through water quality projects and programs and through the use of water quality technologies, education materials
- Provide Districts with trainings, resources and support
- Assist Districts to conduct effective water quality meetings
- Support Conservation Planning
- Understand the benefits of Soil Health to Water Quality
- Research opportunities for grants; grant writing, implementation and reporting
- Investigate the organization's ability to enter into private ventures
- Display at events on behalf of CDI
- Report to CDI Board
- Other office and event coordination duties as needed
- Understand CDI and partner missions
- Find content for and contribute to CDI press releases and publications
- Contribute to CDI website and social media presence

### **Qualifications:**

- A bachelor's degree in marketing, communications, or public relations preferred, or someone in agriculture or environmental studies with a strength in communications
- Familiarity with/ interest in agriculture and conservation practices, programs, technologies, etc.
- A conservation ethic
- Past experience in sales, particularly of agricultural products or services, would be viewed favorably
- Proficiency with Microsoft Office
- Strong attention to design and detail
- Self-starter; ability to work independently and take initiative
- Ability to prioritize tasks and work on multiple projects simultaneously
- Clear and concise oral and written communication skills
- Comfortable speaking to groups and engaging with diverse audiences
- Cool

### **Benefits of position:**

CDI is dedicated to making this experience as valuable to the employee as the employee is to CDI! Some of the benefits of this position include:

- An opportunity to work with a statewide organization in agriculture and conservation
- Opportunity to meet many leaders in Iowa agriculture and conservation
- On the job training
- Interaction and training opportunities with specialists in the industry
- Flexibility in work location and hours

### **To Apply:**

Please submit the following materials to [admin@cdiowa.org](mailto:admin@cdiowa.org) by August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016.

- Resume
- Cover letter
- 1 writing sample (3 pages max) that best illustrates your qualifications for this position