# Conservation Districts of Iowa
# Land & Water Conservationists
# Spirit Lake, Iowa
## **Application Deadline:** Open until filled
## **Anticipated Start Date:** Upon successful background check

The successful applicant would work in one of the following areas:

- Housed in the Spirit Lake USDA-NRCS office

These positions are funded through an agreement between the Conservation Districts of Iowa and the Iowa Natural Resource Conservation Service. Funding is secured through September of 2027 with the opportunity for extension.

**Job Description:**

Land & Water Conservationists will work to promote conservation practice adoption on private lands in Iowa by assisting with the delivery of USDA's conservation programs including the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), and other federal, state, and local private lands conservation initiatives. Your efforts to promote and implement conservation practices will help to ensure that Iowa's landowners and agricultural producers have the technical and financial assistance necessary to address natural resource concerns on their land. This will create positive environmental impacts to water quality, soil health, and wildlife habitat.

As a Conservation Districts of Iowa (CDI) employee, you would work in partnership with the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR). You would serve as a member of the NRCS Resource Team, receiving training and daily direction from the NRCS Resource Team Lead and District Conservationists for the effective delivery of conservation programs. You would also work closely with the DNR Private Lands Biologist to receive training on wildlife habitat assessment, development, and management for the delivery of wildlife-oriented initiatives.

We expect the successful candidate to develop into an integral part of the effective delivery of conservation programs. This will involve coordinating with landowners and the resource team to promote conservation practice adoption to landowners and to develop conservation program applications, and create long-term conservation plans. Additionally, the successful candidate will be responsible for providing technical assistance and consultation to landowners for the successful implementation of these practices. At the end of the first year, success would mean that you have developed the skills and relationships necessary to assist landowners and your team members to promote and implement conservation practices using various conservation programs across the landscape.

**Required Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:**

- Ability to communicate clearly and effectively with landowners and partner agencies.
- Ability to work independently with little supervision and with diverse clientele.

- Knowledge of water conservation and wildlife ecology, wetland and grassland management including the ability to utilize various habitat management tools in the development of management plans.
- Knowledge of water conservation and wildlife programs provided by federal (i.e. Farm Bill, US Fish and Wildlife Service), state, & local entities. In addition, knowledge of how these programs are implemented in an agricultural landscape is desired.
- Excellent verbal and written communication.
- Proficiency with computer software programs such as Microsoft Office, ArcGIS or USDA Conservation Desktop.
- Strong organizational skills.
- Valid driver's license required.
- Some overnight and evening work required.
- Able to obtain USDA Federal Security Clearance.

**Preferred Qualifications:**

Bachelor of Science Degree in Conservation Ecology or closely related natural resources field and 1-year related field experience in conservation related positions.

**Benefits to the Applicant:**

- **Professional Development:** Gain valuable experience and skills in conservation program delivery while working alongside experienced professionals in the field.
- **Impactful Work:** Contribute to meaningful conservation efforts that benefit local ecosystems and wildlife, and make a tangible difference in environmental protection.
- **Networking Opportunities:** Build strong professional relationships with landowners and conservation organizations, expanding your network within the industry.
- **Career Growth:** Develop valuable skills and expertise through hands-on experience and professional development opportunities. Previous staff members have successfully leveraged their experience to secure permanent positions within the conservation field, demonstrating the strong potential for career advancement as a result of this experience.
- **Compensation and Benefits:**
    - **Hourly Rate:** $18.47/hour
    - **Health Benefits:** Comprehensive health insurance coverage
    - **Retirement Package:** Retirement savings plan
    - **Paid Time Off:** Paid holidays and paid leave
    - **Opportunities for Raises:** Potential for salary increases based on performance

Please note that CDI reserves the right to amend or terminate any benefit plans. Participation in these benefits does not constitute a contract or guarantee of future employment.

**To Apply:** Please include your cover letter indicating which position(s) you are applying for, your resume, and three professional references as one PDF file. Send to Dien Judge at dien@cdiowa.org. CDI is an equal opportunity employer.