

Ranch Steward - Cherry Canyon Ranch

Job Announcement

Overview

The 23,000-acre Cherry Canyon Ranch in Jeff Davis County, Texas is situated in the northern portion of the Davis Mountains. The flora and fauna are typical of the lower and middle-elevation montane habitats of the northern Chihuahuan Desert. The Shield and Ayres families have been the stewards of this land since 1950 when it was purchased by Fred and Vera Shield. The ranch is currently owned by their daughter, Patricia Shield Ayres, and grandchildren, Robert A. Ayres and Vera Ayres Bowen. In recent years, conservation and wildlife management have been the primary activities on the ranch. Numerous rare plants have been identified and wildlife includes whitetail deer, mule deer, elk, aoudad, mountain lion, bear, quail, and golden eagle. The property has a wildlife management tax valuation.

The Ranch Steward, under the supervision of the Director of Land Stewardship, will be responsible for the day-to-day management of the property and part of a team focused on conservation, restoration, wildlife management, and research initiatives.

Responsibilities

- Wildlife habitat and range management
 - Assist in management of hunting operations
 - Assist with determining local market/pricing for leases
 - Interface with TPWD biologist to support deer census, determine harvest recommendations, maintain harvest data, etc.
 - Interface with lease, owners, and guest hunters
 - Guide hunts for lessees, owners, guests
 - Maintain Guest House as hunters camp
 - Assist in control of feral hogs (shooting and trapping)
 - Assist with brush control (Spike applications)
 - Assist with preparations for and execution of prescribed burns
 - Interact with and assist conservation professionals working on the ranch (flora and fauna surveys, wildlife census work, water resource research, etc.)
 - Data collection and monitoring
- Maintenance and repair to ranch infrastructure
 - Maintain roads (routine maintenance of roads, creek crossings and culverts on entrance road; keeping roads clear of brush)
 - Maintain ranch water systems for residential use and wildlife
 - Maintenance and repair of ranch vehicles (4-wheel drive trucks and ATVs)
 - Maintenance and Repairs to large equipment (dozer, backhoe, trailers, etc.)
 - Oversee contract work (fence, road, brush control, repairs and renovations to structures)
 - Maintain fences in collaboration with neighboring landowners to ensure cattle are excluded from ranch (repair small stretches of fence, oversight of fencing contractors, repair water gaps)
 - Maintenance and repairs of houses, barns, and outbuildings

- Lodge and Guest House
 - Mowing and edging (including for fire readiness)
 - Arrange for cleaning ahead of visits by family, staff, guests, lease hunters
 - Monitor propane levels and order when needed
 - Cut and stack firewood
 - Prepare for visits (ensure water tank is full, turn on water heater, fridge, open windows, lay fire, etc.)
 - Close up after visits (remove trash, turn off water heater and fridge, etc.)
- Property Management
 - Manage access to ranch by contractors, utility crews, researchers, guests
 - Monitor property and respond to incidences of trespass
 - Maintain good relations with adjoining and area property owners
 - Fire readiness (maintain sprayer rig in good working condition; mowing, shredding, tree trimming to protect improvements, keep water reservoirs full)
- Supervisory
 - Supervise college intern
 - Supervise temporary labor
- Administration
 - Participate in development of annual budget
 - Manage expenses within parameters of ranch budget
 - Maintain journal with thorough and accurate records (rainfall, documentation of management activities, etc.)

Qualifications

- Passion for range and wildlife management (game and non-game species)
- Interest in and commitment to Shield Ranch conservation objectives
- Experience supporting wildlife and conservation management practices
- Firsthand experience with ranching operations
- Experience riding horses and mules
- Experience managing a lease hunting operation; familiarity with hunting elk, deer, and aoudad; able to guide hunts and interface with hunters
- Experience with operation, maintenance and repair of ranch vehicles, ATVs, trailers, dozer, backhoe, sprayers, chain saws, lawn mowers and other small equipment
- Proficient at basic carpentry, electrical, plumbing, mechanical, and welding
- Personable and able to relate well with owners, other employees, hunters, neighbors, conservation professionals, researchers, guests, etc.
- Desire to live and work in a remote, rural environment (must live on ranch)
- Highly motivated and a self-starter
- Honesty and integrity
- Direct and open communication style
- Sound judgment and pragmatic approach to decision-making
- Prudence in fiscal matters
- Competent in the use of email and Microsoft Word and Excel

- Attentiveness to matters of safety, risk, and liability
- Sensitivity to security of ranch property
- Education and experience
 - High School diploma
 - Some post-secondary education or job-related training preferred
 - Minimum 10 years land management experience (ranch and wildlife management)
- Valid Texas driver's license
- Must be able to occasionally work nights and weekends when required
- Finalists must consent to criminal background and driving record checks

Compensation and Benefits

- Salary commensurate with experience and education
- Position is full time and includes health insurance and retirement plan
- Workman's Compensation insurance
- Housing (3-bedroom, 2-bath) and utilities provided (water, electricity, propane, internet)
- Reimbursement for business cell phone use

How to Apply

Please submit your resume along with a cover letter and three references via email to info@shieldranch.com