



NRCS RANGELAND CONSERVATIONIST PARTNER

Location: Bishop, CA (other Eastern Sierra locations considered)

Salary: \$60,000-\$80,000 DOE **Duration:** Fully-funded 2-year position **Application Deadline:** December 15, 2023

POSITION OVERVIEW

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Eastern Sierra Land Trust (ESLT), and the Intermountain West Joint Venture (IWJV) are seeking to fill a collaborative position to conserve working lands, wildlife habitat, and healthy watersheds in the Eastern Sierra region of California. This is a 2-year, full time position based in Bishop, CA with fieldwork throughout Inyo, Mono, and Alpine counties in the Eastern Sierra region.

The Rangeland Conservationist Partnership Position will add capacity and provide support to local NRCS and ESLT staff. This position will expand and expedite field delivery and partnership development capacity to strengthen and improve private land protection and rangeland improvement in the Eastern Sierra region. This partnership opportunity will leverage current and future conservation funds from the Inflation Reduction Act and the Farm Bill. The position will be hosted by the ESLT but daily instruction and leadership will be provided by local NRCS staff. The IWJV will provide support for the collective partnership.

POSITION RESPONSIBILITIES

- Expand NRCS and ESLT partnerships with private landowners, agencies, and conservation organizations to accelerate the pace and scale of private land protection and rangeland improvement projects in the Eastern Sierra region.
- Encourage landowner participation and provide technical assistance in applicable conservation programs that fulfill NRCS, ESLT and IWJV objectives, including Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), Emergency Conservation Program (ECP), and Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP). Support the application of NRCS Climate Smart Agriculture and Forestry Mitigation Activities within EQIP and CSP programs as appropriate.
- Coordinate with NRCS and ESLT to identify and implement range and habitat improvement projects including: riparian and wet meadow restoration, invasive annual grass treatment, and infrastructure improvement projects to increase the sustainability and economic viability of working lands, while simultaneously improving habitat for sage-grouse, mule deer, waterfowl, shorebirds and other rangeland and wet meadow-dependent wildlife.
- Further develop relationships with landowners, permittees, and Tribes to address resource concerns and leverage conservation funding for conservation easements and rangeland improvement projects.
- Prepare, update, and implement adaptive management plans for NRCS and ESLT projects.
- Coordinate and participate in field work activities for rangeland conservation project implementation.
- Provide assistance to NRCS staff (Bishop and Minden Field Offices) and to ESLT Lands Program staff as needed. Utilize NRCS planning and contracting tools to assist with conservation planning and contract development.
- Perform other related duties as assigned, including public education and outreach.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, ABILITIES, AND EXPERIENCE

- Undergraduate degree (or equivalent), ideally, in a natural resources field (wildlife, range, conservation, forestry, hydrology, environmental science, botany) or related field
- Ability to connect, communicate, and learn from people with diverse perspectives, experiences, and values
- Passionate about wildlife conservation, functioning ecological systems, and working lands
- Strong understanding of natural resource issues in Eastern California preferred
- Experience integrating wildlife conservation principles into range management systems
- Able to obtain USDA Security Clearance and NRCS Conservation Planner certification
- Possess a solid understanding of NRCS plans, conservation programs, and projects
- Excellent verbal/written communication and organizational skills
- Ability to work independently with little supervision
- Valid drivers' license
- 4WD experience

WORKING CONDITIONS

This position requires approximately 50% fieldwork and 50% office work. When working in the field, this position requires working outside in variable outdoor weather conditions, including hot and dry conditions at high elevation, at remote locations, on difficult and hazardous terrain, and under physically demanding circumstances. Requires considerable physical exertion and/or muscular strain including frequent standing, bending, twisting, lifting, and push/pulling, long hours in isolated settings often alone, and hiking over several miles through mud, creeks, desert, and mountain terrain. This position requires work in an environment with the possibility to encounter ticks, mosquitoes, venomous snakes, and bears.

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

This position is full time and exempt. Salary is \$60,000-\$80,000. Employees will be entitled to prorated vacation and sick pay on an accrual basis, and ESLT offers 12 paid holidays annually. Employees will be eligible for ESLT offered medical, dental, and vision coverage beginning on the first of the month, following 30 days from the date of hire. ESLT enforces a mandatory 6-month probationary period, which begins on the first date of employment. Staff are eligible to enroll in ESLT's Simple IRA after 1 year. Opportunities for training and career advancement may be provided by ESLT, NRCS, and IWJV.

All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, protected veteran or disabled status, or genetic information.

HOW TO APPLY

Submit a cover letter and resume to info@eslt.org with Rangeland Conservationist Partnership Position in the subject line. For more information, contact Land Conservation Program Director Amy Sturgill at amy@eslt.org.

PARTNERING ORGANIZATIONS

NRCS

The NRCS supports America's farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners. They deliver conservation solutions so agricultural producers can protect natural resources and feed a growing world. They have a vision of clean and abundant water, healthy soils, resilient landscapes, and thriving agricultural communities through voluntary conservation. The NRCS motto is "help the people help the land."

ESLT

Established in 2001, ESLT works with willing landowners to protect working farms, ranches and wildlife habitat in California's Eastern Sierra, a 14,000 square-mile region rich in natural beauty. Through strategic conservation easements that afford permanent protection for private land, ESLT enters into legal agreements with willing landowners to safeguard their land for scenic, agricultural, recreational, habitat, and watershed values. This healthy balance of sustainable uses ensures a strong local economy and protection for natural areas, wildlife habitat, and migration corridors.

IWJV

The IWJV focuses on wetlands and the waters that support them, sagebrush ecosystems, and forests, habitats that collectively encompass the majority of the Intermountain West and support a multitude of bird species. Threats in these habitats are growing: wetlands are drying, sagebrush ecosystems are being impacted by invasive annual grasses, encroaching conifers, and large-scale wildfires, and forests have degraded structure and function contributing to larger and more severe fires. The IWJV addresses these threats through a consistent, collaborative approach: a commitment to working lands and the people that steward them, and support of land management practices that sustain bird habitat in a voluntary, non-regulatory manner.