

VERMONT HOUSING & CONSERVATION BOARD
Job Description

POSITION: Conservation Stewardship Director

REPORTS TO: Conservation Director

Position Description

The Conservation Stewardship Director oversees the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board's portfolio of conservation easement interests in 1,500 properties covering more than 430,000 acres, including approximately 200 conservation easements for which VHCB is solely responsible for easement stewardship. The Stewardship Director manages VHCB's relationships with co-held easement partners and ensures best practices and compliance in stewarding and monitoring of all conservation easements. The position is also responsible for stewardship database management and Geographic Information System work for VHCB, capacity support supervision and managing the Option to Purchase at Ag Value easement program.

Responsibilities:

1. Easement Monitoring/Stewardship (co-held)
 - Manages VHCB's relationship with nonprofit and state agency stewardship partners through the implementation of Stewardship Memoranda of Understanding, maintaining regular communication with partners and participation in collective decision making for approval requests, violations and amendments.
 - Reviews conservation easements, management plans, baseline documentation reports and other pertinent documentation and consults with primary stewards and land owners to ensure compliance with the terms and conditions of the easement.
 - Works with VHCB's General Counsel, Conservation Director and Agricultural Program Director on resolving major stewardship issues.
 - Ensures appropriate documentation and monitoring by stewardship partners of co-held easements and maintains stewardship information and activity in VHCB's database.
 - Updates Stewardship MOU's, conducts annual stewardship meetings with partner organizations, and develops new MOU agreements with stewardship partners as needed.

Easement Monitoring/Stewardship (sole-held)

- Ensures all stewardship obligations are fulfilled prior to a project closing, including creating, or assisting in creating, a Baseline Documentation Report, interim management plan and a shapefile.
- Ensures the annual monitoring of all VHCB's sole-held easements and maintain the sole held easement database for accurate and current information.

- Hires, supervises and trains stewardship intern and any additional help in the form of contractors or employees, as might be deemed appropriate. Develops with intern field and remote monitoring schedule, reviews monitoring reports and contacts landowners about any potential issues.
 - Develops and maintains, with intern assistance, invasive species inventories and prioritizes the management plan development with proposed mitigating measures when invasive species occurrence restricts public access.
 - Works with property owners to write and/or update management plans on sole held easements.
 - Responsible for easement stewarding and monitoring of farms temporarily owned by the Vermont Land Trust, including approval determination, monitoring and addressing violations.
2. Geographic Information Systems
- Responsible for all GIS data management for VHCB, including Conservation, Housing and Viability Programs. Produces maps and conduct data analysis and representation for VHCB staff as requested.
 - Serves as a member of the Vermont Center for Geographic Information's Cooperating Technical Partners Committee in maintaining the Vermont Conserved Lands Database. Responsible for adding GIS data to the Database for sole held VHCB projects as needed.
 - Intakes shapefiles for all conservation projects prior to closing and, in consultation with staff project lead, reviews for accuracy with conservation plan. Adds shapefiles to either VHCB co-held or sole-held geodatabase, using the latest VCGI attribution standards.
 - Creates shapefiles of protected property for monitoring purposes as needed and continues to migrate VHCB GIS data from ArcMap to ArcPro.
3. Option to Purchase at Agricultural Value Program
- Manages Option to Purchase at Agricultural Value process for VHCB farms conserved with the Upper Valley Land Trust that include the affordability option.
 - Responsible for review process of Retroactive-OPAV project applications, including ensuring conformance with eligibility criteria, appraisal process and potential environmental easement enhancements.
4. Database management
- Manages electronic files and maintains and ensures integrity of information in VHCB's database related to projects and associated program work. Works with other staff to develop reports and extract information from the database.
5. Policy Development
- Assists in developing, in conjunction with Conservation Director and other staff, policies and guidelines for VHCB's conservation work and advises development of new or revised template easement language.

6. Other Duties

- Participates in evaluation of organizational capacity grant applications and lead staff in facilitating organizational capacity building of grantees in areas of easement holding and stewardship.
- Assists with underwriting and closing conservation projects, provides stewardship analysis for all new conservation projects and works with VHCB General Counsel and other staff in drafting of conservation easements.
- Contributes to the development of conservation policies and guidelines, including preparing stewardship and policy memos for consideration by VHCB's Conservation Issues Committee's and the Board.
- Represent organization, as appropriate, to non-profit organizations, community groups, municipalities, and state agencies.
- Presents workshops and trainings focusing on stewardship and VHCB's conservation program.

Qualifications:

Experience in managing conservation easement monitoring and stewardship portfolio is required with a minimum 3 years' work experience in a similar position preferred. Applied knowledge and/or training in natural resources, agriculture, land use planning or similar fields required. GIS experience, preferably using ArcPRO, is important. This position requires strong organizational skills and keen attention to detail as well as excellent written and oral communication skills. Managing relationships, problem solving and partner collaboration are key, with supervisory experience preferred. Proficiency with technology including standard office software and experience with data management is required. Being highly self-motivated and adept at managing a full and diverse workload is essential, as is working independently and as part of a team. Experience working with non-profit organizations, municipalities, and state agencies is helpful. Candidate should have a commitment to the broad mission of the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board and diversity, equity, inclusion and justice. Position is based out of Montpelier office with some ability to work remotely. A valid driver's license is necessary as some travel is required.

Salary range is \$60,000 - \$70,000, depending on experience. A generous comprehensive benefits package is included.

To apply: Email jobs@vhcb.org with cover letter and resume by April 28, 2022.