

Job Title: Conservation Ecologist

Employer: Warren County

Department: Warren County Conservation Board (WCCB)

Reports To: WCCB Director

Job Summary:

The Conservation Ecologist will support the Warren County Conservation Department in managing and restoring the county's habitats and ecosystems, including remnant and reconstructed prairies, wetlands, forests, and oak savannas. This role involves collecting ecological data, implementing habitat restoration projects, writing habitat management plans, and engaging the public through educational outreach. The ideal candidate will have a strong background in Ecology and Conservation. Must have excellent field skills, the ability to collaborate, partner with the WCCB Director, staff, volunteers, community members, and other conservation organizations.

This role is ideal for a passionate ecologist who wants to actively contribute to preserving and restoring Iowa's natural heritage while fostering community involvement and appreciation of the natural world.

Primary Duties in order of priority:**1. Habitat Management & Restoration:**

- Help develop and implement habitat management plans for WCCB parks and natural areas. Habitat Compositions include reconstructed and remnant prairies, forests, oak savannas, wetlands, and riparian zones. Developed management plans will be approved and aided by the WCCB Director.
- With WCCB staff, conduct controlled burns and other management activities to promote biodiversity and ecological sustainability.
- Lead habitat restoration projects such as native prairie reseeding, invasive species control, timber stand improvement, oak savanna enhancement.
- Monitor vegetative communities to incorporate vegetative dynamics into habitat management plans.
- Design and conduct ecological surveys to inform management practices and restoration strategies.
- Collect, analyze, and report ecological data using GIS and other software.
- Aid WCCB staff with other duties as assigned by the Director.

2. Public Education & Outreach:

- Per request and approval, work with WCCB's Environmental Education to help present programs for the public, schools, and community groups.
- This position will assist with older student programs and advanced ecological education media.
- Lead habitat management workshops, volunteer training sessions related to ecology and conservation, and assist with seed harvest programs.
- Create educational content, such as brochures, reports, and social media updates, to raise awareness of bigger picture conservation efforts, such as Habitat Management Plans for county properties or local landscape mosaics. Content must be understandable for public citizens seeking habitat management guidance.

3. Collaboration & Coordination:

- Must be a great team player.
- Attitude and communication methods must be professional.
- Reports directly to the WCCB Director.
- Partner with Park Superintendent and Environmental Education Coordinator on projects.
- Collaborate with local agencies, conservation organizations, and volunteers to advance county-wide conservation initiatives.
- Represent the WCCB at community meetings, training workshops, and conferences.
- Assist with grant writing and project funding applications.

Qualifications:

- **Education:** Bachelor's or master's degree in Ecology, Environmental Science, Natural Resources, or a related field.
- **Experience:** Must have at least 2 years of experience in habitat management, ecological assessment, or conservation planning outside of academia. Academic experience, alone, will not be sufficient. Must have experience running equipment, such as skid loaders and tractors.
- **Technical Skills:** Proficiency in GIS and/or ecological data collection strongly preferred.
- **Certifications:** Prescribed Burn Certification: S-130/190 and Pesticide Applicator License preferred or must obtain within 6 months of the hire.
- **Physical Requirements:** Ability to work outdoors in various weather conditions, conduct field surveys, lift up to 50 lbs., sit and stand for extended periods of time, and must maintain composure for public speaking.

Key Competencies:

- Strong knowledge of Iowa's flora and fauna, particularly tallgrass prairie and woodland ecosystems.
- Ability to identify native and invasive plant species and assess ecological conditions before and after management practices occur.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills for writing management plans, grants, reports and public engagement.
- Strong project management, scheduling, and organizational skills.
- Public speaking for education program support.
- Action and observation towards safety of the self and those around you.
- A positive attitude, optimism, and ambition for objectives is a priority.
- Must be able to work well as a team and on your own.

Salary & Benefits:

- \$26.92-29.16/hour (\$56,000-\$60,000) starting, depending on experience; with pay matrix increases.
- Warren County comprehensive benefits package including health insurance, dental, and vision with an elective Health Savings Account, IPERS retirement plan, and professional training opportunities.

Application Process:

Interested candidates should submit a cover letter, resume, and three professional references to the Warren County Conservation Board. Resources must include examples of past conservation ecology experience or restoration projects.