

East Dakota Water Development District & Big Sioux River Project



Vacancy Announcement Agricultural Conservation Specialist (Full-time)

****Position open until filled****

Applicants should send a cover letter, resume, and list of three (3) references with contact information to:

Jay Gilbertson, Manager, edwdd@brookings.net
East Dakota Water Development District, 132B Airport Ave, Brookings, South Dakota 57006
605-688-6741

About the East Dakota Water Development District and Big Sioux River Project:

The Big Sioux River Project (BSRP) leads water quality improvement throughout the entire Big Sioux River watershed. The BSRP is a non-government project of the East Dakota Water Development District (EDWDD) and Minnehaha Conservation District (MCD) that implements Best Management Practices (BMPs) on agricultural land adjacent to or nearby the Big Sioux River and its tributaries. This is accomplished by providing technical and financial assistance to landowners and operators to improve existing livestock feeding operations, manage pastureland through our riparian buffer programs, and improve water retention and infiltration on cropland. The BSRP also raises public awareness of water quality issues and informs the public on the health of the river and its tributaries through outreach activities. Learn more about the BSRP at bigsiouxriver.com.

Position Summary:

The Agricultural Conservation Specialist performs administrative and technical tasks on specific project(s) as authorized by EDWDD and the BSRP Senior Watershed Coordinator. The Agricultural Conservation Specialist will provide direct assistance to landowners, farmers, and ranchers in South Dakota to help them plan, design, and implement various agricultural BMPs for the BSRP. The Agricultural Conservation Specialist must have a strong understanding of resource conservation practices, and be technologically literate, self-motivated, and able to work independently and as a member of a team.

Strengths of a Successful Candidate:

- Post-secondary degree or commensurate experience in a relevant field of study, such as environmental, biological and soil sciences, agronomy, and natural resources management.
- Possession of a valid driver's license and ability to maintain a safe driving record.
- Ability to comply with and maintain a smoke-free and drug-free work environment.
- Competency with and understanding of basic computer skills and applications.
- Proficiency in project planning, organization, and management.

- Ability to take initiative and prioritize tasks.
- Excellent time management and proactive problem-solving skills.
- Competent and professional written and oral communication skills.
- Familiarity with GIS ArcMap and/or ArcGIS Pro.
- Familiarity with basic accounting principles.
- Ability to maintain confidentiality of sensitive information.

Duties of a Successful Candidate:

- Provides support to ensure project(s) goals are met.
- Completes and reviews project implementation plans, prepares reports on project(s) and related activities, and utilizes agency reporting systems as appropriate.
- Initiates and develops positive working relationships with agricultural producers.
- Advises and works with producers to contract, design, install, and maintain technically accurate and adequate conservation practices and measures.
- Conducts follow-up visits with agricultural producers to further assist on the installation and maintenance of conservation practices, to recommend adjustments or revisions to conservation plans, and to determine acceptability of cost-share installed practices.
- Monitors and documents appropriate water quality, resource condition, and/or economic data to evaluate the impact of the applied conservation measures.
- Supports regular communication between EDWDD, United States Department of Agriculture – Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA–NRCS), and other BSRP partners.
- Favorably represents BSRP and EDWDD in issues relevant to the assigned project area(s) by meeting with state and federal agencies and industry groups and speaking at public meetings on related subjects.
- Establishes general work priorities and prepares work schedule requirements in consultation with the Senior Watershed Coordinator. Maintains all required time and activities records and prepares reports as required.
- Performs other work as assigned.

Preferred Abilities and Knowledge:

- Ability to work with others, including Watershed Coordinator and Project partners to complete projects, provide training, and facilitate partnerships in addressing local natural resource concerns.
- Ability, with minimal day-to-day direction, to effectively plan and organize work activities and prioritize task completion to meet schedules and deadlines, both long- and short-term.
- Ability to organize and analyze available information and draw sound and reasonable conclusions.
- Ability to apply policies and procedures consistently and objectively.
- Knowledge of general farming or ranching operations, conservation practices, and land use and management.
- Knowledge of current conservation programs, procedures, and principles to provide technical advice and effectively deliver appropriate resource management systems.
- Knowledge of federal, state, and local laws and regulations pertaining to agriculture, natural resources management, and water quality.
- Knowledge of topography, soil types, aerial photography, geography, ecosystems, vegetative features, and seasonal influences.

Pay and Benefits:

Hourly wage and benefits commensurate with experience and education (\$25 -\$30/hour). Position benefits include paid personal and sick leave, enrollment in the South Dakota Retirement System, health insurance, supplemental insurance, and job-related travel reimbursement.

Work Environment:

EDWDD, City of Sioux Falls, County Conservation Districts, and USDA-NRCS are partners associated with the BSRP. EDWDD will employ the Agricultural Conservation Specialist while working with sponsoring Conservation Districts and NRCS to supply office space and project resources. Workstation is negotiable within the Big Sioux River watershed (e.g., Sioux Falls, Brookings, Watertown). Many duties will be in a typical office environment. However, some activities will involve outdoor work on farm/ranch sites (including being exposed to farm machinery), around lakes and streams, and over rough terrain. These activities may occur in all weather conditions and include lifting and carrying. The applicant will also be expected to have access to the internet and the ability to work from home.

East Dakota Water Development District is an Equal Opportunity Employer. EDWDD complies with all applicable federal, state, and local laws regarding hiring and employment. Qualified applicants are considered for employment without regard to age, race, color, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or veteran status.

Applicants should send a cover letter, resume, and list of three (3) references with contact information to:

Jay Gilbertson, Manager, edwdd@brookings.net
East Dakota Water Development District, 132B Airport Ave, Brookings, South Dakota 57006
605-688-6741

****Position open until filled****