

Eastern Tallgrass Prairie Conservation Delivery Network (CDN) Manager

Overview and Job Duties

This position is jointly administered by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, (DNR), Upper Mississippi and Great Lakes Joint Venture (UMGL JV) and the Wildlife Management Institute. The Eastern Tallgrass Prairie Conservation Delivery Network (CDN) Manager will coordinate actions and communication across the partnership to expand and accelerate grassland conservation in the Eastern Tallgrass Prairie system and associated landscapes as guided by JV science plans and products, including those developed by JV partners. The focus of this position is to support the partnership's ability to restore, enhance, manage, and protect grassland systems to provide benefits for wildlife habitat, ecological goods and services, and society.

Initial focus of the work will be in Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, eastern Kansas, and eastern Nebraska. The position will function as a member of the UMGL JV staff, and will be hired and administered by Wildlife Management Institute (WMI) and physically housed within DNR Central Office in Des Moines.

Administrative supervision will be provided by WMI and daily guidance will be provided by DNR and UMGL JV staff acting on behalf of a CDN steering committee.

The CDN Manager will:

- Work with JV partners to identify, promote, and deliver collaborative grassland conservation programs consistent with the JV Landbird Habitat Conservation Strategy.
 - Convene and facilitate collaborative meetings, both virtually and in person, with various audiences to build support for and coordinate actions associated with grassland conservation.
 - Identify strategic focus geographic areas that have existing conservation estate lands where management and restoration activities are ongoing, including identified bird conservation areas (BCAs).
 - Lead and/or support the development of new or existing habitat programs on public and private lands, including support and implementation of Farm Bill conservation programs via NRCS.
 - Develop and implement appropriate strategies and mechanisms for grassland conservation (such as habitat strike teams) across the JV geography, especially focused on highest priority grassland locations.
- Coordinate and expand professional working relationships and collaborative opportunities within the CDN to increase capacity and support implementation of adaptive wildlife conservation strategies.
 - Coordinate and support the JV Eastern Tallgrass Prairie CDN steering committee; organize and coordinate meetings of the committee.
 - Working with the CDN steering committee, draft and adopt a CDN charter and operations plan, including a conservation implementation plan.
 - Plan and/or support educational and technical conservation workshops. Also, lead or assist in the creation of outreach and technical resources for natural resource professionals.
 - Survey partners to assess implementation gaps and development of tools that aid in effective grassland management.
 - Build strong relationships and establish agreements with NRCS state offices, state agencies, tribes, NGOs, funders, and other partners to expand the partnership.

- Support and facilitate the development of science support tools to inform grassland conservation.
 - Serve as a member of the UMGL JV science team landbird committee.
 - Coordinate with JV staff and science team members to identify priority research and planning tools as identified by the CDN steering committee and partners.
 - Collaborate with the JV spatial analyst to assess existing and new grassland conservation opportunities and develop tools as needed.
 - Identify, utilize, and disseminate the most recent biological, ecological, climate, social, and traditional research and management resources.

- Assist partners to grow resources to support the CDN in proposal and budget development, identify match contributions and support/coordinate multi-party collaborative initiatives.
 - Support the partnership with grant writing/management, program reporting, and project oversight, including with private foundations and government grants.
 - Coordinate and track capacity and monetary contributions and match provided to the CDN by partners and seek ways to leverage resources to the greatest degree.
 - Assist in or lead partners in Federal Farm Bill program applications, such as RCPP, across Track budgets, match, metrics, and deliverables for projects.

- Monitor, track and communicate activities and accomplishments.
 - Use a variety of database management software and GIS applications to assess programmatic success and assist with focal species management and monitoring.
 - Communicate internally with project partners using software such as Asana, SharePoint, and Microsoft Teams.
 - Communicate externally with communities, funders, media, and public using a variety of communications channels to build awareness of and support for grassland conservation.

Qualifications:

- A passion for grassland conservation and/or grassland birds and wildlife.
- Knowledge and experience in grassland ecosystems of the JV region.
- Knowledge of grassland management techniques
- Experience and skills in coordinating and leading teams of people and partners across organizations and geographies
- Bachelor's or master's degree in wildlife biology, ecology, rangeland management, or other natural resources field.
- Strong verbal and written communication skills, and comfort with public speaking and interacting with people at all levels and backgrounds.
- Ability and willingness to work with a network of people in a collaborative, supportive, and respectful manner.
- Strong leadership and organizational skills.
- Ability to work both independently without direct, day-to-day supervision.
- Effective knowledge of common software applications
- Grant writing and administration experience.
- Ability and willingness to travel and spend time away from home for several days per month.
- Valid driver's license.

Application Deadline

The announcement is open until January 17, 2025. The successful applicant can expect to start within 2-4 weeks after a job offer.

Position Duration

This position is part of a regional program designed to support recovery of grasslands. The position is currently funded for two years but may be extended for additional years pending funding.

Compensation

This salaried position pays \$55,000/ year (\$38.54/ hour equivalent). As a limited term employee of WMI, the incumbent will be expected to work no more than an average of 70 hours per two-week pay period. Work vehicles or mileage reimbursement will cover travel requirements. Office space, computers, etc. will be provided. The position will be eligible for WMI 401(k) retirement benefits and WMI will provide workers' compensation, general liability protection, and professional liability protection and unemployment insurance benefits. The position is eligible for health, dental, and vision insurance coverage. The position may also be eligible for vacation pay, sick leave, or disability benefits. WMI will withhold taxes including social security. The incumbent will be entitled to make voluntary contributions to their 401(k)-retirement plan.

Locations

Des Moines, Iowa

To Apply

Please submit your resume, cover letter, and three professional references as one Word or pdf file. Send to MGilbart@wildlifemgt.org. For questions about the duties, location, etc., contact Tyler Harms Tyler.Harms@dnr.iowa.gov at Iowa DNR. Or Douglas Gorby douglas_gorby@fws.gov at the Upper Mississippi/Great Lakes JV. For questions about WMI, contact Scot Williamson at SWilliamson@wildlifemgt.org.