



**Conservation Specialist – Whatcom Land Trust**

412 N. Commercial Street, Bellingham, WA 98225 [www.whatcomlandtrust.org](http://www.whatcomlandtrust.org)

**Mission:** The mission of the Whatcom Land Trust is to preserve and protect wildlife habitat, scenic, agricultural and open space lands in Whatcom County for future generations by securing interests in land and promoting land stewardship.

**Position Summary:** The Conservation Specialist supports Whatcom Land Trust's land protection and stewardship work. The position assists with activities related to monitoring, maintenance, and acquisition of conservation easements, including the preparation and review of legal documents, records and reports. This includes assisting in planning, research, due diligence, mapping, filing, database entry, reports and grants. The Conservation Specialist is responsible for building and maintaining positive relationships with landowners under each easement and completing annual on-the-ground monitoring in the field. The Conservation Specialist will work closely with the Stewardship Director and Conservation Director, and / or field assistants to implement stewardship work.

**Duties and Responsibilities:**

**Conservation Easement Stewardship** (60 percent)

- Landowner relationships: Initiate and sustain positive working communication with landowners under each easement and build relationships to enhance compliance.
- Legal interpretation: Provide interpretation of conservation easement terms as requested by landowners in consultation with other staff and legal counsel, and comply with legal requirements for responding to requests to exercise reserved rights.
- Annual monitoring: Manage and ensure annual on-the-ground monitoring of every conservation easement property in compliance with LTA Standards and Practices and Whatcom Land Trust policy.
- Recordkeeping: Refine, implement and maintain meticulous recordkeeping system for conservation easements in compliance with LTA Standards and Practices and Whatcom Land Trust policies and procedures.
- Work with Whatcom Land Trust's public partners, which Whatcom Land Trust holds conservation easements on, to coordinate and implement with volunteer stewardship events, including weekend public work parties.
- Conservation easement amendments: Provide support to Conservation Director for conservation easement amendments, including due diligence research and landowner negotiations.

**Land Protection** (20 percent)

- Assist with acquisition process for land trust projects.
- Under Conservation Director's direction, conduct or contract due diligence activities for land transactions.
- Prepare background and baseline documentation (maps, aerial photographs, zoning, land use, mineral and water rights information)
- Order title reports, appraisals, and legal descriptions and other pertinent documents.
- Coordinate timely completion of environmental hazard assessments (EHAs) for land transactions including conducting records search for potentially contaminated sites in vicinity of each property.
- Prepare requests for proposals (RFPs) and review bids for non-real estate and professional service contracts associated with land transactions including: appraisals, EHAs, boundary survey, legal description/acreage verifications. Draft and track progress of associated contracts. Complete post-closing tasks for all land protection projects: ensure grant agencies have received copies of necessary documents, close files.

### **Conservation Project Support** (20 percent)

- Assist Stewardship Director with site management of Land Trust owned properties, including developing and implementing stewardship and restoration activities.
- Assist with organizing, training, and supervising stewardship volunteers for projects and work parties on reserves and conservation easements.
- Maintain organizational systems for tracking projects and associated paperwork. Manage transaction files, assist with organizing and maintaining stewardship records, maintain both a land project and stewardship database.
- Provide organizational GIS support including creation of project maps and updating GIS database, and field GPS data collection.
- Assist with updating Whatcom Land Trust policies and procedures.
- Grant Support including writing and making presentations, implementing and completing scope of work of awarded grants, assisting with maintaining grant tracking system, partnership agreements, applications statuses, and deadlines.
- Assist with public outreach including newsletter articles, website updates, educational materials, presentations, tours, and other outreach and fundraising events.
- Administrative and Organizational support by scheduling and attending meetings, taking minutes, providing assistance to other staff with projects and events as required, and responding to immediate needs in the field.

### **Required Qualifications:**

- Bachelor's Degree in conservation, ecology, or natural resource related field.
- Excellent verbal and written communication and presentation skills.
- Ability to be flexible, multi-task, perform under pressure, and work independently and as part of a team.
- Ability to work with diverse people and develop positive working relationships with co-workers, landowners, agencies, and other partners and stakeholders.
- Practical problem-solving and organizational skills with attention to detail and record-keeping.
- Ability to walk up to two miles over rough terrain and navigate in remote areas. Access remote areas of the sometimes involving traversing rugged terrain and dense vegetation.
- Ability to work independently under physically demanding conditions, including cold and wet weather and be able to lift 50 lbs.
- Must be able to work some non-standard hours including some evenings and weekends.
- A demonstrated commitment to land conservation.
- Competent with standard computer software including MS Word, MS Excel, ESRI ArcGIS or other mapping tools, internet and email.
- Valid insurable driver's license.
- Excellent photography skills and experience working with databases.

### **Desired Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:**

- Understanding and experience working with Conservation Easements.
- Knowledge of real estate, protection techniques, and land conservation easement principles.
- Demonstrated knowledge of natural history (specifically natural communities) of northwest Washington, or a strong willingness and ability to learn.

**COMPENSATION**

This position is currently full time, based in Bellingham.

Hourly start is 40 hours per week at \$20/hour DOE.

Whatcom Land Trust provides competitive health benefits, retirement match, and vacation leave.

Reports to Stewardship Director and works with staff team.

**To Apply**

Email a letter of interest and resume (PDF only), and contact information for minimum of three references to [officemanager@whatcomlandtrust.org](mailto:officemanager@whatcomlandtrust.org) with "Conservation Specialist" in the subject line.

Applications are only accepted electronically. You will receive an email confirming receipt of your letter and resume. No calls please.

Whatcom Land Trust is an equal opportunity employer that welcomes all applicants and does not discriminate in its hiring practices. This position was posted on April 11, 2019 and is open until filled.