

Land Protection Specialist III

POSITION SUMMARY

Flathead Land Trust (FLT) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting northwest Montana's spectacular land and water legacy through community-based conservation. As the Flathead regions local-based land trust for over 39 years, our organization plays a critical role in the protection of the natural beauty, clean water, prime wildlife habitat, and recreational access that is vital to our natural heritage and fundamental to our community's prosperity.

The Land Protection Specialist III position will primarily implement land protection strategies and manage projects involving both purchased and donated conservation easements, and possibly some fee acquisitions. The position will also implement landowner and community outreach, and stewardship and monitoring of easements. This is a professional level position that requires independence, strategic thinking, ability to work in partnership and ability to communicate effectively with private landowners and the public. In addition, the position requires at least some knowledge of conservation theories, practices, and principles. This is a full-time non-exempt position under the supervision of the Executive Director and in coordination with FLT's two other Land Protection Specialists.

AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITIES

Land Protection (70%)

- Develop, negotiate and manage land conservation projects including donated conservation easements, purchased conservation easements and potentially some fee title acquisitions.
- Initiate and maintain landowner outreach in priority areas for conservation in coordination with land protection specialist staff.
- Meet with landowners to discuss potential conservation options, and outline costs and basic financial implications and benefits of conservation easements.
- Conduct site visits and evaluations of conservation values on lands under consideration for conservation employing all appropriate documents and forms.
- Negotiate and complete complex conservation easement transactions in consultation with land protection specialist staff, executive director, legal counsel and appropriate partners.
- Prepare and review acquisition and transfer documents (e.g. deeds, title documents, escrow instructions, purchase agreements, etc.) in collaboration with legal counsel.
- Manage due diligence work related to conservation easement acquisitions including contracting and managing consultants with a range of expertise (e.g. appraisers, attorneys, realtors, environmental scientists, geologists, surveyors, etc.)
- Manage project approvals both internally with FLT staff and board, and externally with our state and federal partners.
- Develop funding proposals and write grant applications for the purchase of conservation easements through public and private funding sources, especially the

NRCS Agricultural Land Easement Program and North American Wetlands Conservation Act.

- Develop and manage budgets for individual projects including documentation of partner funding participation.
- Maintain beneficial relationships with partners and land-related professionals in the community (e.g., federal and state agencies, non-profit organizations, realtors, real estate attorneys, accountants, agricultural groups, etc.).
- Conduct geographical information systems (GIS) analysis of lands in order to prioritize future conservation outreach and evaluation of projects.
- Maintain complete files on projects and create permanent paper and digital files once a transaction is recorded. Ensure all conservation transactions are adequately documented, including written reports and GIS maps.
- Provide project proposals and staff support for Flathead Land Trust's lands committee and board of directors.
- Learn and stay current on all aspects of conservation easements and other conservation issues.

Stewardship (20%)

- In coordination with Land Protection Specialist I, implement annual monitoring activities, including landowner contact, for selected conservation easements held by Flathead Land Trust and administrative duties such as monitoring reports and filing.
- Maintain complete records for the selected easements consistent with Land Trust Alliance's Standards and Practices.
- Provide initial identification of any potential enforcement or follow-up activity necessary to maintain compliance with easement terms and conditions.

Administration and Outreach (10%)

- Assist communications and outreach coordinator with external communications related to conservation projects including press releases, newsletter articles, web content, photos, maps, etc.
- Help cultivate relationships with community members and partners to further Flathead Land Trust's mission and goals.
- Assist with other administrative duties as needed.
- Participate in staff meetings, board meetings, trainings, and partner meetings such as Flathead River to Lake Initiative, Montana Association of Land Trusts, etc.
- Participate in outreach events, fundraising events and other activities as necessary.
- Perform other miscellaneous tasks as needed under the direction of the Executive Director.

ESSENTIAL SKILLS & COMPETENCIES

- Ability to develop positive working relationships with a diversity of people including landowners, co-workers, partners, and the public.
- Familiarity with northwest Montana's natural resources, wildlife, agriculture, water and lands with high conservation value.
- Strong speaking, writing and listening skills.

- Strong desire to help accomplish the conservation goals and mission of Flathead Land Trust.
- A self-starter with the ability to initiate and follow through on projects and engage with new people.
- Ability to self-manage, meet tight deadlines and juggle multiple tasks.
- Experience and proficient with Microsoft Office Suite software, databases, and other computer skills.
- Basic knowledge of practices and theories of land conservation.
- Some knowledge of conservation easements and private land conservation.

PREFERED EDUCATION & EXPERIENCE

- Minimum BA/BS in natural resources management, conservation, law, science or other related field of study.
- More than two years' experience in land conservation, natural resources, real estate, law, or related experience, or an equivalent combination of education and experience.
- Experience with conservation easements or other similar real estate transactions.
- Experience using ArcGIS.

COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

Flathead Land Trust is an equal opportunity employer offering this full-time, hourly position (40 hours/week). The rate of compensation will start at between \$23 - \$25/hour, depending on experience and qualifications. Benefits include a matching contribution towards Simple IRA Plan, partial payment toward employee health insurance, as well as ten paid holidays and fifteen days of paid vacation per year with increases after four years of employment.

Interested candidates can send their cover letter, resume and three references to:
Paul Travis, Executive Director at ptravis@flatheadlandtrust.org or mail to Flathead Land Trust, P.O. Box 1913, Kalispell, MT 59903.

Deadline for receipt of application is September 27, 2024.