

JOB ANNOUNCEMENT

Conservation Coordinator

*Protecting Land and Water for People and Wildlife forever.
(Middle Rio Grande, New Mexico)*

Application Deadline: 11:59pm MST on Feb 21, 2022

Anticipated Start Date: Apr 1, 2022

Location: The ideal candidate will be based in the Middle Rio Grande.



Position Overview:

The Rio Grande Agricultural Land Trust (RGALT) is seeking a Conservation Coordinator with the goal of accelerating the pace of land and water protection within the Middle Rio Grande watershed. The selected candidate will be responsible for working with a portfolio of conservation easements while continuing to develop and expand the existing portfolio. The candidate will work with private landowners in collaboration with conservation partners to implement landscape level conservation in the Middle Rio Grande, NM.

The Middle Rio Grande is located in Sandoval, Bernalillo, Valencia, and Socorro Counties. This area is NM's most populated area, consisting of urban and rural communities and New Mexico's largest metropolitan center, Albuquerque. It includes 60,000 irrigated acres of private farmland and over 20,000 acres of private riparian land that provides critical habitat and linkages between five wildlife refuges. The area is threatened by conversion of farmland to development, agricultural water transfers to development, invasion of non-native species, catastrophic wildfires, and drought that impacts surface water quality and quantity and the viability of agriculture and natural habitat. The Rio Grande is one of the iconic rivers of the Southwest, an international river spanning from its headwaters in the Rocky Mountain forests of Colorado, through the high deserts of New Mexico and into Texas and Mexico. For thousands of years both human settlements and wildlife have depended on the river for their survival. Protecting and restoring this highly threatened agricultural land and natural habitat is critical for both people and wildlife now and in the future.

About the Rio Grande Agricultural Land Trust (RGALT):

RGALT's Mission: We protect land and water for people and wildlife in New Mexico.

RGALT's Vision: Our vision of the middle Rio Grande, New Mexico—urban and rural—is a landscape rich with vegetation and wildlife, water in the river and ditches, and thriving farms.

RGALT was founded in 1997 with the mission of protecting land and water in the MRG. We implement land conservation in urban and rural communities through diverse public and private partnerships. We protect land and water using voluntary conservation easements; legally binding deed restrictions that remain with the land in perpetuity. We undertake the stewardship of these protected lands through annual monitoring. We adopt a community-based approach to achieve landscape-scale conservation. We forge and maintain partnerships with diverse private and public landowners, non-profits, government agencies, and Native American tribes to accomplish land conservation.

Position Description:

The Rio Grande Agricultural Land Trust (RGALT) Conservation Coordinator will be dedicated to permanent land and water protection, land stewardship, and landowner/public outreach. This position is responsible for implementation of land and water conservation working with private landowners, conservation organizations, federal, state, and local entities and other partners on private land conservation including conservation easements, conservation planning, habitat restoration, water efficiencies, and other associated conservation opportunities. This is a unique position with the opportunity to implement protection of farmland and natural habitat with a focus on riparian habitat and associated wetlands within the Middle Rio Grande, NM. This position will have significant support from the RGALT team and conservation partners. However, day to day activities will be self-directed. The successful candidate will be driven to accelerate the pace of land conservation through creative thinking, successful partnerships, and an ability to work with and communicate effectively with landowners and partners while pursuing opportunities to increase land protection and restoration.

Key Responsibilities:

- Work in coordination with the Executive Director (ED) and conservation partners to develop and implement conservation projects including conservation easements and other conservation opportunities.
- Conduct landowner outreach, identify land conservation projects and appropriate funding mechanisms, develop projects and grant funding applications, including budgets and timelines, and coordinate with funders and partners through their processes.
- Manage projects and coordinate with contractors and consultants to complete project due diligence including site assessments and evaluations, title review, conservation easement development, independent appraisals, legal descriptions, surveys, water rights, mineral assessments, environmental conditions assessments, and baseline documentation reports.
- Coordinate document review with RGALT's Executive Director, RGALT legal counsel, and funding agencies to ensure documents meet grant requirements and Land Trust Alliance Standards and Practices.
- Fulfill conservation easement stewardship requirements such as property documentation, monitoring compliance, and provide information about partners' programs to enhance conservation values.
- Provide outreach in the forms of presentations, tours, use of demonstration sites, workshops and other needs as assigned.
- Support the writing of news articles, press releases, and reports on conservation opportunities and achievements.
- Identify and pursue opportunities to expand conservation and assist with grant applications.
- Other duties as assigned.
- The position is approximately 25% field work and 75% office work.

Essential Abilities:

- Ability to engage with private landowners in an effective manner to support landowner conservation needs and communicate conservation objectives including an awareness of trigger topics.
- Ability to work with racially diverse, rural, agricultural landowners as well as urban landowners.
- Ability to work independently and adhere to multiple priorities and deadlines.
- Ability to track project budgets and independently initiate, structure, negotiate, manage, and close complex land transactions.
- Ability to work a flexible schedule that may include some evenings, weekends, and travel within the region as needed.
- Ability to function as a cooperative and supportive team member with RGALT staff and partners.

- Ability to identify local habitat types, species and natural communities, and an awareness of general ecosystem principles and habitat management techniques.
- Desire and demonstrated ability to identify and address personal knowledge gaps; to learn on the job; and to cultivate sources of knowledge, expertise, and skill.

Qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree or higher in natural resources, planning, or related field.
- Minimum of two years of experience in conservation land acquisitions, conservation easement development, and real estate transactions in a land trust, agency, or comparable setting preferred.
- Experience negotiating and relationship building with landowners, private partners, federal and state agencies, county, and other partners.
- Experience developing and managing grants and grant reporting.
- Knowledge of landscape, economy, culture, and people of the Middle Rio Grande, NM.
- Outstanding verbal and written communication skills.
- Proficient in all aspects of Microsoft Office and ArcMap and handheld Garmin usage.
- Professional interests that align strongly with the vision, values, and conservation goals of the funding entities and the Rio Grande Agricultural Land Trust.

Additional Information: The funds for this position are supported by local agencies, federal, and private origin, managed through Agreements with the Rio Grande Agricultural Land Trust. Funding has been secured for two years with intent to secure additional funds and/or transition to a permanent position. Compensation is commensurate with experience. The work week will be approximately 40 hours/week.

Salary: Up to \$60,000 per year, based on education and experience.

Vehicle Use: Personal vehicle and valid driver's license will be necessary for work related travel with standard mileage reimbursement.

Benefits: The position will be eligible for benefits as indicated in the Rio Grande Land Trust's Personnel Policy.

Duration: This position is funded for 2 years with partners actively pursuing funds for additional years.

To Apply: Send a cover letter, resume and three references with contact information.

Email: Send application materials to cecilia@rgalt.org by the application deadline.