



# Northwest Connecticut Land Conservancy

PROTECTING LAND AND WATER FOR PEOPLE, FOR WILDLIFE, FOREVER.

## SENIOR LAND PROTECTION SPECIALIST

### **About Northwest Connecticut Land Conservancy (NCLC)**

Northwest Connecticut Land Conservancy is a nonprofit, regional conservation organization working with the communities of Litchfield and northern Fairfield Counties to safeguard natural and working lands, public recreation areas, and drinking water resources forever. Founded in 1965, NCLC is the largest land trust in Connecticut, protecting 13,000 acres (and growing) of vast, connected natural areas. NCLC's conserved lands include 21 public hiking preserves, 48 working farms, and over 3,000 acres of habitat for rare and endangered species.

NCLC believes in connecting people to nature through public access to wildlands and free educational programming for all ages. NCLC is also a dedicated conservation partner and service provider, assisting the work of local land trusts and regional partners through funding and technical assistance for acquisitions and stewardship, as well as providing shared staff. To strengthen the region's capacity to conserve high-quality conservation lands and ensure the permanence of those conserved lands for the future, NCLC merged with Brookfield Open Space Legacy in 2019 and Naromi Land Trust in 2020.

In recognition of its exceptional work, NCLC is a nationally accredited land trust, and has received the state's highest land trust award for land preservation from the Connecticut Land Conservation Council, an EPA Environmental Merit Award for its outstanding commitment to protecting the natural environment, and a Working Lands Alliance Pathfinder Award for its significant contributions to educating the public about the importance of farmland preservation.

### **Position Description:**

The Senior Land Protection Specialist is a key leader on NCLC's acquisition team, responsible for overseeing new land acquisitions, consistent with NCLC's policies and conservation objectives. The Senior Land Protection Specialist's responsibilities include fee land and conservation easement transactions, educating the public and partners about land protection, developing innovative partnerships and methods for leveraging protection by other entities, helping to leverage impact capital and conservation investor capital for land protection, and identifying creative ways to ensure long-term land and water protection.

The Senior Land Protection Specialist will collaborate with NCLC and partners to identify priority projects, develop relationships with property owners (individuals, organizations, and public entities), arrange for the

acquisition of legal interests in land and water, and create strategic objectives to ensure long-term protection. Securing funding is crucial to success, and the Senior Land Protection Specialist works with other team members and partners to help identify and secure funds for NCLC's acquisition program and transactions, including state and federal grants, and other funding sources. The position will also provide technical support to partners in land protection efforts around shared priorities.

## **Duties and Responsibilities**

### *Land Protection*

- Identify and evaluate tracts of land primarily in Litchfield County and northern Fairfield County to be protected based on their ecological, recreational, and natural landscape significance according to NCLC's conservation criteria.
- Negotiate with private landowners, public agencies, and other organizations concerning the acquisition of land and easements.
- Work with counsel to draft legal documents such as purchase and sale agreements, option agreements, and conservation easements.
- Plan and direct work on protection projects and lead in obtaining NCLC committee and board approvals for land protection projects.
- Oversee NCLC's farmland conservation program, including identifying farms eligible for Connecticut's Farmland Protection Program, completing all relevant program and funding applications, and serving as a staff liaison to the State of Connecticut Department of Agriculture.
- Oversee NCLC's transaction due diligence and recordkeeping in accordance with NCLC's policies and Land Trust Standards and Practices.
- Use GPS, GIS, and a wide range of technical data to analyze and document conservation values and create conservation maps.
- Work within a budget to complete projects, negotiate and contract with vendors, and assist with budget development.
- Take a lead role in identifying funding opportunities and drafting grant proposals for financial support of acquisition projects. Implement, track, and report on awarded funding. Help raise funds from individual, corporate and foundation donors, in conjunction with other NCLC staff.
- Perform site visits and collect baseline documentation data to satisfy legal and Land Trust Accreditation Commission requirements and facilitate future property stewardship. Complete fee management plans and baseline documentation reports as needed.
- Complete applications for tax-exemption for all fee land transactions, and complete other corporate

and tax filings as needed.

- Serve as an NCLC representative on a statewide Regional Conservation Partnership Program grant with the Connecticut Land Conservation Council, other partners, and the State of Connecticut.
- Ensure program compliance with internal policies and external requirements, including Land Trust Alliance Standards and Practices.

#### *Outreach and Partnerships*

- Present and represent NCLC at public events, partner meeting, and trainings.
- Work in partnership with colleagues, partner organizations, members, and the community at large to build a welcoming, successful, and respected community institution.
- Support the organization's philanthropic efforts by participating in member events, visits, communications, and gift solicitations.
- Support the promotion and communication of land preservation projects by assisting with the creation of press releases, outreach, and development materials.

#### *Organizational Sustainability*

- Make recommendations for policy and procedure improvements.
- NCLC's staff operates as a close-knit team and the Senior Land Protection Specialist will be expected to perform other duties as needed or assigned.
- Maintain familiarity with the organization's governing documents (mission, bylaws, strategic plan, policies, etc.).
- Keep current on all aspects of Land Trust Standards and Practices as they apply to job function.
- Travel (primarily within Connecticut) as well as some evening and weekend hours is required.

#### **Reports to:**

Executive Director

#### **Salary and Benefits:**

NCLC is a collaborative and supportive work environment that encourages and inspires professional growth. NCLC offers a competitive salary and comprehensive benefits package. The annual salary range for this position is \$80-95,000 depending on experience. NCLC offers full-time employees paid vacation, holidays, personal, and sick leave. NCLC pays 95% of health, life, vision, and dental insurance for full-time employees

and contributes to a retirement plan.

This is an equal opportunity, full- time, exempt position located in Kent, CT.

## **Qualifications**

### *Preferred Qualifications*

- Masters' degree or higher-level degree in related field (e.g., law, science, etc.)
- Experience working with public agencies in land protection transactions.
- Experience tapping innovative financing for land protection work.
- Knowledge of current trends and practices in conservation, land management, and natural resource preservation.
- Supervisory experience.

### *Minimum Qualifications*

- Three (3) years of direct land acquisition experience.
- Knowledge of land management conservation practice and conservation science.
- Ability to explain conservation practices to technical and non-technical audiences.
- Exceptional writing and in-person presentation ability.
- BA/BS degree in related field (law, natural resource management, science, education etc.)
- Proficiency using Arc GIS.
- Experience negotiating legal agreements and overseeing multiple, complex acquisition projects.
- Experience communicating with the public and/or media both in writing and verbally.
- Experience using applications such as Microsoft Office Suite.
- Valid Drivers' License.