

Columbia Land Conservancy Public Lands Associate

Position Status: Full-time (35 hours per week, excluding lunch break)/Non-Exempt

Reports to: Public Lands Manager

Starting Salary: \$35,000

About the Columbia Land Conservancy: The Columbia Land Conservancy works with the community to conserve the farmland, forests, wildlife habitat and rural character of Columbia County, strengthening connections between people and the land. For more than thirty years, CLC has worked to inspire our community to more deeply connect with, respect, and protect the natural world. We collaborate with partners and volunteers to improve the health of the land, ensure a thriving farm economy, create environmental education opportunities, provide access to outdoor experiences, and support municipal leaders in conservation-minded decision making. Columbia County is located on the ancestral homelands of the Mohican people, who are the Indigenous peoples of this land.

Position Summary:

The Public Land Associate works as part of a team to manage the Columbia Land Conservancy's fee and trade lands in a manner that enables safe and inclusive public access, sound natural resource decisions, and positive community relationships. Associates conduct routine maintenance, design, and repair hiking, multiuse, and access for all trails, address issues as they arise, draft management plans, and assist with GIS mapping.

Goals and Objectives:

- Design infrastructure and conduct routine maintenance on CLC's over 30 miles of public trails with independent contractors, volunteers and staff
- Build positive community relationships, and work from a Diversity and Inclusion lens to make public conservation lands more welcoming, navigable, and accessible
- Assist with protecting and restoring ecological resources present on CLC owned and managed lands

Essential Duties:

- Monitor, maintain, and develop infrastructure projects as needed for CLC's public trail network. This includes but isn't limited to: Clearing downed trees, building bridges, boardwalks, benches, repairing gazebos, installing wayfinding, mowing grass trails, weed whacking trail heads, snow plowing, and trash removal. Work includes supervising trail crews, working with contractors. Balance the needs of public access with protecting and preserving natural resources. Training and support is provided.
- Keep CLC owned tools, equipment, and field office facilities serviced and in good working order. Possess or have strong interest in operating tractors, snowplows, gator, brush hog, and zero turn lawn mowers.
- The public lands associate is the first point of contact for most of the community. Cultivate strong relationships with PCA neighbors, town officials, CLC supporters and the public to build community support for CLC. Recruit and utilize volunteer trail monitors to expand capacity.

- Use sound judgment in enforcing conservation area use guidelines and educate the community on the reasons for them. Assist with expanding outdoor opportunities for BIPOC, LGBTQIA+ and disabled communities.
- Assist with work planning, project management, and use strong time management skills in the field to support projects with grant deadlines.
- Work to update and monitor natural resource inventories and implement ecological protection and invasive species control in fee land management plans.

Minimum Qualifications:

Qualifications required to excel in this position can come from a range of both professional and lived experiences. Below we describe what we believe to be important qualifications for a candidate to have while remaining open to the diversity of experiences that can lead to these skill sets. Position descriptions are often presented in a way that leaves qualified candidates feeling unwelcome, intimidated, uncomfortable and/or unqualified to apply. Recognizing that, we strongly encourage anyone who feels passionate about this work and believes they have what it takes to thrive in this role to apply.

- Minimum high school diploma or GED and/or 2 years' experience in land management, parks or an ecological-related field. B.S. Degree or progress towards a B.S. Degree in biological science, botany, ecology, land use planning or a related field preferred,
- A valid driver's license and an insurable driving record (documentation to be provided upon request), comfort with driving large pickup trucks and trailers.
- Proof of full COVID vaccination required prior to start of employment. Ability and willingness to implement best public health COVID practices in public facing role.
- Must be comfortable working in variable weather conditions, under physically demanding circumstances and/or at remote locations.
- Experience or willingness to learn to operate and maintain various types of equipment in a safe and efficient manner (e.g., lawn mower, chainsaw, string trimmer or similar equipment).
- Ability to listen and genuinely engage with diverse public concerns and comfort with productively addressing conflict.
- Ability to function productively as a member or leader of a work team.
- Demonstrated ability to work with diverse stakeholders, including staff, contractors, volunteers, and conservation area visitors
- Ability to obtain related licenses or certifications as required (e.g., First Aid, CPR, herbicide application, chainsaw certification).
- Comfort with learning new technology, and interest in or familiarity with GIS Software.

Preferred Qualifications:

- Working knowledge of natural systems in New York; ability to identify

invasive plant species common to New York and have experience with controlling and monitoring restoration projects;

- Knowledge of current trends and practices in conservation, land management and natural resource conservation;
- Knowledge of impacts of climate change and interest in implementing on the ground mitigation projects;
- Experience with small engine repair, woodworking, and/or Campbell Scientific Weather Stations.

Physical Demands: The job requires significant amount of strenuous activity in the out-of-doors, including the ability to lift 75+ pounds on an occasional basis, and work outdoors in a variety of weather conditions. Employee must have full range of motion for strenuous activities such as: hiking, sawing, use of power and manual tools, and hauling. The hikes through properties may or may not have developed trail systems and occasionally consist of steep terrain. Some customary office duties as performed at a desk (may require periods of sitting and computer typing).

Work Environment: Predominantly outdoors, with some indoor office work. Office work is primarily sitting at a desk with a computer or in meetings. The position requires regular and frequent travel throughout Columbia County with occasional travel within the region and beyond for meetings, conferences, and trainings; driving to sites may, at times, require use of personal vehicle.