



Job Opening Posted November 2016

Title: Agriculture Programs Specialist (part time)

Program Area: Transforming agriculture systems to protect Illinois waters and wildlife habitat.

Illinois' agriculture system loses substantial amounts of fertilizer nutrients to state waters, which flow to the Mississippi River and the Gulf of Mexico, resulting in increasing nutrient related impacts to water across the Mississippi River Basin, including harmful algal blooms in waters we rely on for drinking, fishing and recreation. Agriculture practices, new crop varieties and conservation are available that improve soil health and reduce nutrient losses to streams and rivers, while supporting wildlife and providing food to communities. Farmers' adoption of these important practices must be accelerated across Illinois. New models of farming that reintroduce expanded crop rotations and livestock pasturing and incorporate perennial cover into landscapes also hold promise to improve soil health, expand on-farm wildlife habitat and protect water quality while increasing farm productivity and resilience.

Prairie Rivers Network (www.prairierivers.org) is working to protect our rivers and streams by advancing new farming systems in key Central IL watersheds and throughout the state. The Agriculture Programs Specialist works closely with our Executive Director and in collaboration with partners to design and implement strategies that advance adoption of conservation cropping systems by Illinois farmers and engage new partners to expand the use of innovative on-farm conservation practices to increase sustainability.

Major Duties: Coordinate planning and implementation of strategies, including communication, outreach collaboration and mobilization in support of our campaigns to expand adoption of conservation cropping system practices in key watersheds targeted for reduction of nutrients lost to waterways as well as other areas of Illinois. Specifically, this position is responsible for:

- Work with Executive Director to manage currently ongoing campaigns, adjusting actions as needed.
- Working directly with partner organizations to develop support for adoption of conservation best management practices that protect water quality.
- Collaborate with partners working to expand innovative farming systems that renew soil health, water quality and wildlife habitat.
- Coordinating outreach and education efforts to broaden awareness of the multiple benefits of conservation agriculture, including economic benefits to farmers and watershed stakeholders.
- Mobilizing our members, partners and supporters to take action as needed in support of conservation agriculture through various outreach means, including meetings, reports and social media.
- Tracking state and federal administrative and legislative actions related to systems needed to support the adoption of conservation agriculture farming practices.

Qualifications:

- B.S. degree or equivalent in agro-ecology, agriculture economics or related field, Masters degree preferred.

- Experience working with agriculture producers, agriculture policy, or diffusion/adoption of agriculture best management practices
- Experience working in diverse settings
- Experience researching and writing about scientific information for non-science audiences a preferred
- Excellent written and oral communication skills
- Ability to work independently and manage time efficiently
- Familiarity with agriculture and conservation issues and clean water advocacy a plus
- Experience planning and coordinating collaborative projects, networks and/or organizing campaigns a plus
- Experience generating earned media coverage of environmental or related issues a plus
- Experience managing social media campaigns a plus
- Requires some travel
- Valid driver's license with either access to own vehicle or eligibility to rent.

Position is half time with the potential to be expanded as new resources become available.

Contact: Please send a cover letter and resume to Prairie Rivers Network, 1902 Fox Drive, Suite G, Champaign, IL 61820 or by email to info@prairierivers.org