

Town of Halifax

Conservation Agent

Job Description

Grade 5

24-32 Hours per week

Summary of Position Responsibilities:

The Conservation Agent exercises independent judgment and initiative in the performance of highly responsible work of a complex and technical nature relative to the interpretation and enforcement of applicable laws, codes, regulations and policies, relative to environmental management and land conservation. The Agent assists the Conservation Commission in the discharge of the Commission's statutory and regulatory duties. Errors could result in injury to or loss of protected resources, could have legal and financial repercussions, and/or cause adverse public relations.

Description of Supervision/Supervisory Responsibilities:

The Conservation Agent is appointed by the Board of Selectmen, and reports to the Town Administrator. The employee is required to work independently, within established policies and procedures and the requirements of federal, state and local law (as applicable), with minimal direct supervision.

Essential Functions of Job:

- Provides support, coordination, and professional management for, and technical assistance to, the Conservation Commission in carrying out its statutory obligations, including preparation and administration of department budget
- Assists the Commission in the administration and enforcement of the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act and the Town's Wetlands Protection Bylaw; primarily responsible for initiating and/or overseeing enforcement actions under the WPA and/or local bylaw
- Assists the Commission in planning, acquisition, administration and management of municipal conservation land
- Reviews and analyzes Notices of Intent/other filings and associated documents for accuracy, completeness and compliance with the law and regulations; ensures filing fees are calculated correctly
- Assists the Conservation Commission in planning, posting, and holding meetings and public hearings; attends Commission meetings and public hearings.
- Assures legal requirements are met including postings, timeframes, minutes and other records
Prepares required reports, including inspection reports, correspondence, presentations, other written material for Commission review; maintains Department files and information
- Prepares draft decisions for Commission review and adoption

- Participates on Commission's behalf in DEP proceedings and court appeals, as directed by Commission
- Works with the Commission to draft or amend wetlands bylaw/associated regulations, town meeting warrant articles, and Commission policies
- Serves as an information resource, researches issues, provides data; interacts and provides assistance to other town boards and departments, state and federal agencies, on issues related to wetlands, conservation and environmental matters as required
- Performs similar or related work as required or assigned

Minimum Competencies:

- Thorough knowledge of all federal, state, and local laws, rules, regulations and policies pertaining to matters under the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission, including but not limited to the Wetlands Protection Act
- Thorough knowledge of principles and practices relating to land management, protection and conservation
- Working knowledge of Open Meeting Law, Public Records Law, State Ethics Law
- Ability to communicate effectively and professionally with, and establish and maintain cooperative relationships with, Town officials, employees and staff, governmental representatives, contractors, project applicants, attorneys, engineers, and/or the public
- Ability to enforce and interpret laws and regulations firmly, tactfully, and impartially
- Ability to communicate effectively in written and oral form
- Ability to work in high pressure situations, as necessary
- Good organizational and analytical skills; detail oriented, takes initiative, and able to work independently
- Ability to handle multiple tasks, prioritize effectively, and meet deadlines
- Ability to interpret technical data, read engineering maps and plans, critically analyze information
- Ability to plan and effectively manage Department budget
- Proficiency in the use of word processing, database and spreadsheet computer applications (such as MS Word and Excel)
- Honesty, reliability, discretion, and good judgment essential

Education and Experience/Other Requirements:

- Bachelor's Degree in Public Health, Environmental Health, Biology, or other related science field
- At least 4 years technical or professional experience in the areas of wetlands protection, land conservation, environmental management or related field, preferably in a municipal environment; or any equivalent combination of education, training and experience which provides the required knowledge, skills and abilities to perform the essential functions of the job
- Valid Massachusetts Driver's License, and satisfactory driving record, required

Physical Requirements/Work Location:

The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

Town Hall;

This position splits its duties between an office-based job in a dynamic municipal setting, and off-site field work to conduct inspections, initiate enforcement actions, and the like. Field work is conducted under varying conditions with exposure to some occupational risks, and requires local travel. Moderate physical effort required while conducting field work; must be able to access all areas of inspection site, which frequently includes hard-to-reach areas or areas of limited space. Lifts/moves objects and weighing up to 25 pounds.

While performing the duties of the Conservation Agent, the employee is required to: interact and communicate frequently with the public, government officials, other staff members and boards, contractors and/or third parties transacting business with the Town; operate standard office equipment including computers and keyboards, at efficient speed; operate various equipment, such as digital camera, projector, and field tools; and move throughout the municipal office and off-site properties/facilities. Ability to distinguish fine color variations needed. Will be required to work outside of normal business hours to accommodate evening office hours, seasonal fluctuations, and off-site appointments; will be required to attend night meetings as needed.

FLSA status

This position is not exempt under the Fair Labor Standards Act

The above statements are intended to describe the general nature and level of work being performed by individuals assigned to this position. They are not intended to be an exhaustive list of all responsibilities, duties, and skills required. This job description does not constitute an employment agreement between the employer and employee, and is subject to change by the employer as the needs of the employer and/or requirements of the job change.