



## Conservation Project Specialist/Manager

<b>Location:</b>	Rhinebeck, NY, but the position also may work remotely within the Hudson Valley with weekly visits to the main office.
<b>Salary:</b>	\$55,000 - \$78,000 dependent on years of experience and qualifications
<b>Benefits:</b>	Health insurance, 2% IRA contributions in next calendar year, generous vacation, medical/family leave, 11 holidays/year
<b>Hours:</b>	Full-time, Exempt Employee
<b>Reports To:</b>	Director of Environmental Programs
<b>Deadline:</b>	Applications accepted until the position is filled. For first consideration, apply by December 23, 2022

### Summary

The Winnakee Land Trust (WLT) is seeking a highly motivated, detail-oriented, and personable Conservation Project Specialist/Manager to join our growing team. The determination of the position title and associated salary as a “Specialist” or “Manager” are dependent on the applicant’s level of experience, expertise, and qualifications. The position works with the Environmental Program Director and other members of the WLT team to advance the organization’s mission by helping to implement its Strategic Conservation Plan, as well as responding to and evaluating other potential conservation opportunities as they arise. Using a suite of conservation tools and techniques, this position is responsible for building effective working relationships, and negotiating and managing complex land transactions with private landowners and/or other partners in the Hudson Valley and Catskill Regions. The Conservation Project Specialist/Manager coordinates the due diligence and closing of these projects collaboratively with other WLT staff and programs. The ideal candidate will possess a strong conservation ethic, exceptional attention to detail, and excellent interpersonal and communication skills.

### Organizational Profile

The Winnakee Land Trust ( [www.winnakee.org](http://www.winnakee.org) ), founded in 1984, is a private, nonprofit, nationally accredited land trust dedicated to helping people and communities conserve land in New York’s Hudson Valley and Catskill regions.

Together with our landowner partners and other supporters, WLT permanently protects more than 50 properties, 25 miles of trails, and 3,000 acres on 42 properties, including land now managed as public parks, nature preserves, wildlife habitat, and working forests.

WLT—a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization—is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors and currently employs 9 full-time staff. Headquarters are in Rhinebeck, NY. WLT is not affiliated with any government agency and does not receive direct tax revenue. Financial support comes from the voluntary contributions of more than 3,000 individuals, families, and private foundations.

Our **MISSION** is to:

- PROTECT the natural beauty, vital ecosystems, and unique character of the Hudson Valley and Catskill Regions for future generations,
- RESTORE ecosystem function where it has been impaired by prior land use, and
- CONNECT people to nature, to each other, and to the Winnakee Land Trust.

### **Responsibilities**

- Coordinating with the Environmental Program Director on all aspects of new conservation projects, including responding to and vetting inquiries and moving active projects forward through the WLT process.
- Utilizing ArcGIS spatial mapping software to help evaluate the conservation values of potential project areas and how they may fit within the Strategic Conservation Plan.
- Coordinating and conducting initial site visits on proposed project areas with landowners and stewardship staff.
- Drafting conservation easements from the WLT template and consulting with outside legal counsel.
- Negotiating with landowner(s) for the donation or purchase of a conservation easement or other interests in land. Working with agencies and/or other partners as opportunities arise.
- Obtaining and reviewing appraisals, environmental assessments, cultural resources assessments, surveys, title reports and closing documents.
- Working with the Environmental Program Director to contract for legal services related to title review of legal documents, including but not limited to conservation easements, purchase and sale agreements, options, leases and cooperative agreements.
- Coordinating with stewardship staff on his/her/their completion of the Baseline Physical Inspection Report and its continuity with the conservation easement.
- Tracking and maintaining complete files on active projects to document due diligence and other activities and actions. Maintaining necessary records to comply with the requirements of the Land Trust Alliance's Standards and Practices, as well as Accreditation and Re-accreditation. Working with the other Conservation Program staff and the appropriate land steward once a transaction is recorded to ensure a smooth transition of the completed project to the Stewardship Program.
- Applying for and managing publicly funded grants. In addition, coordinating with philanthropy staff and the Environmental Program Director to assist with project-specific private funding opportunities where knowledge of the project and relationships with donors are crucial.
- As a project lead, collaborating with other programs during project kickoff and pre-closing meetings to ensure cross-program awareness of timelines and any anticipated requests for support.

- Assisting the Conservation Program team with annual conservation easement template updates.
- Monitoring annual work plan with the Environmental Program Director.
- Participating in Land Protection Committee meetings, requesting board recommendations from the committee for preliminary and final project approvals.
- Occasionally attending Board of Directors meetings, requesting preliminary and final project approvals.
- Participating in the WLT annual meeting, board retreat, and staff retreat(s), providing support as needed.
- Participating in monthly Land Protection Committee meetings and bimonthly all-staff meetings.
- Supporting other WLT staff and program areas as requested by the Environmental Program Director
- Seeking out and participating in professional development opportunities including webinars, conferences, and other training to stay well-informed of conservation practices and partnership opportunities.
- Cultivating and fostering collaborative partnerships and trusting relationships with community members and other partner contacts to further WLT's mission and goals.

#### **Knowledge, Critical Skills, and Competencies**

- Knowledge of the practices, principles, and techniques of private land conservation.
- Knowledge of conservation easements and/or other real property interests.
- Knowledge of spatial mapping programs such as ArcGIS.
- Ability to work with diverse partners to achieve shared goals.
- Strong organizational skills and attention to detail.
- Dedication to driving projects and other assignments to completion.
- Ability to manage stringent timelines with competing priorities.
- Ability to work independently and effectively in a team setting.

#### **Required Qualifications**

- Bachelor's degree in environmental studies, conservation biology, forestry, natural resources management, pre-law, real estate studies, or another related field.
- Excellent written and interpersonal communication skills.
- Knowledge and competence in Microsoft Office Suite (especially Outlook, Excel, Word, and PowerPoint).
- A strong belief in land conservation.
- High standards for adherence to organizational policies related to conflict of interest, confidentiality and privacy, and shared values of diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Ability and willingness to work nonstandard hours on occasion, including evenings and weekends.

### **Additional Qualifications**

Preference will be given to candidates with the following professional qualifications:

- Advanced Degrees in related fields (e.g., Masters or Juris Doctorate).
- Experience with real estate transactions.
- Experience with private land conservation.
- Experience in fundraising with government and other grant-making entities.
- Experience working collaboratively and effectively with private landowners, government agencies, community groups, and conservation organizations.
- Experience creating and implementing project budgets.
- Experience working in a small nonprofit office environment and collaborating in a team environment.

### **HOW TO APPLY**

Send resume, cover letter, and how you learned about this position via email to: [jobs@winnakee.org](mailto:jobs@winnakee.org)

*We recognize that conservation is best advanced by the leadership and contributions of people with diverse backgrounds, experiences, and identities. WLT encourages individuals from all backgrounds to apply and join our engaged community that is committed to environmental conservation.*

*All qualified applicants will receive consideration without regard to race, color, religion, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, national origin, genetics, disability, age, or veteran status. WLT strives to live our value of respecting and welcoming diversity in all forms, which undoubtedly advances our mission to conserve land, care for land, and connect people with land.*