



CITY OF EASTHAMPTON

Personnel Department

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NOTICE OF POSITION VACANCY

SHARED CONSERVATION AGENT FOR CITY OF EASTHAMPTON AND TOWN OF SOUTHAMPTON

GRANT FUNDED PART-TIME POSITION
WAGE RANGE \$21.30 - \$26.98 PER HOUR
19 HOURS PER WEEK

Issued: 09/26/2017
Closing Date: 10/11/2017

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The City of Easthampton and the Town of Southamptom seek a Shared Conservation Agent to serve their respective municipalities on a part-time basis. Easthampton is a small city of approximately 16,000 people governed by a mayor and city council, and neighboring Southamptom is a small rural town of approximately 6,000 people governed by a Board of Selectmen. Both are located in the Pioneer Valley of Western Massachusetts in close vicinity to the scenic Manhan River and Mt. Tom State Reservation, with convenient access to Interstate 91 and the Five College area.

The Shared Conservation Agent will provide support, coordination, and professional management for the Conservation Commissions in Easthampton and Southamptom in carrying out their respective mandates and missions to protect the community's natural resources. This is a joint, part-time position with 19 weekly hours divided between the City and Town (11 hours in Easthampton, 8 hours in Southamptom). The qualified candidate will be contracted for employment with the City of Easthampton (the host municipality) and supervised in Easthampton by the City Planner and in Southamptom by the chair of the Conservation Commission. This position is funded for state fiscal year 2018 through a grant made available by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Administration and Finance. Throughout the grant year, Easthampton and Southamptom will seek to allocate local funding to sustain the shared cost for this position beyond the grant period, starting July 1, 2018.

The Shared Conservation Agent will serve as an agent both of Easthampton Conservation Commission and Southamptom Conservation Commission, in accordance

with applicable laws and regulations in the respective municipalities. The agent will provide professional oversight for the two Commissions' respective work and projects. The agent will occasionally consult with consultants hired by the respective Commissions, oversee volunteers working on municipal conservation land or Commission projects, and will serve as advisor/liaison to other boards/departments as directed by the respective Commissions, as well as other projects assigned on an individual basis.

The agent will use professional expertise, critical thinking and interpersonal skills to accomplish varied functions that range in nature from routine to complex. These require considerable judgment and initiative in determining courses of action not clearly defined by precedent, statute or established guidelines. The agent will possess considerable independence, confidentiality, and responsibility and work with minimal supervision, as well as demonstrate commitment to the values and principles of environmental conservation. In addition, the agent will identify opportunities where shared conservation interests of the City and Town can be achieved through increased streamlining, coordination, and efficiency in project review.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- ❖ **Wetlands Protection:** The agent will assist the respective Commissions in the administration and enforcement of the Massachusetts Protection Act (MGL Chapter 131, Section 40), and the Southampton Wetlands Protection Bylaw [proposed as of May 2017] in Southampton specifically, as well as other related duties as assigned.
- ❖ **Open Space and General Resource Protection:** The agent will assist the respective Commissions in planning, acquisition, administration, and stewardship of municipal conservation land. These activities could include grant preparation and administration, land management practices, volunteer oversight, invasive species management, mapping, landowner outreach, and other tasks as needed.
- ❖ **Additional Responsibilities:** Maintains regular office hours for public; attends all public meetings and hearings of the respective Commissions; interacts and provides assistance to other Town and City boards and departments and state/federal agencies on issues related to wetlands, conservation, and environmental issues as required; fosters good relations with abutters and catalyzes community involvement in and awareness of local conservation and open space issues. The agent should seek opportunities for coordination and cooperation between the two municipalities to meet shared conservation goals when possible.

WORK ENVIRONMENT

Some work is performed under typical office conditions. Other work is performed in the field, in thick woods, and in wet areas. There is exposure to various weather conditions, including heat, high wind, rain and deep snow. There may be exposure to potential health hazards, such as Lyme disease and West Nile virus, plant irritants such as poison ivy, and the hazards associated with site work and construction such as noise and heavy equipment.

Good physical condition and access to a car is required. Often required to stoop, bend, reach, dig and lift. Physical agility needed to access all areas of conservation lands, potential acquisitions, and project sites. The agent may spend several hours at a time walking or standing. An ability to distinguish fine color variations is needed. 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. The agent's work schedule is largely during business hours, but also includes monthly evening meetings in the respective municipalities, and some early morning, evening, and weekend field work and site visits. Attendance at relevant training sessions and professional meetings/conferences is expected.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

Education and Experience

Associate's degree in environmental science or related field and a minimum of two years experience in wetlands protection, land conservation, environmental management or related field; or equivalent combination of education, training, and experience. Training or certification in wetlands soils identification and in implementing the MA Wetlands Protection Act and Conservation Commission Act preferred. Municipal experience is highly desired.

Knowledge, Ability, and Skill

The Shared Conservation Agent should have an understanding of and dedication to the importance of biodiversity, water resources, and open space protection; an understanding of municipal governance and operations and state/federal environmental laws (including the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act); and demonstrated experience performing public duties diplomatically, authoritatively, and respectfully. The agent should have working knowledge of relevant areas of pure and applied wetlands science such as vegetation communities, values, replication and wetlands boundary identification/verification based on plant species, and indicator status identification of hydric soils using Munsell or similar charts. The agent should also have working knowledge of rare species requirements, vernal pools, and the vernal pool certification process, as well as geology/hydrology, erosion control techniques, and retention/detention ponds. Good written and verbal communication skills are essential. Additional knowledge in strategies to address the impacts of climate change on protected lands, or to combat invasive species, is desirable. Experience in trail maintenance, and in recruiting and/or managing volunteers or citizen groups, is a plus.

Special Requirements

Valid Massachusetts Class D Motor Vehicle Operator's License and a readily available car. Must be a Notary Public if required by one or both of the Commissions.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER