

**The Vital Ground Foundation**  
**Job Description**  
**Land Steward**  
July 18, 2016

**PRIMARY FUNCTION**

The Land Steward ensures that The Vital Ground Foundation's conservation projects are adequately documented, monitored and stewarded according to the organization's adopted Policies and Procedures, Land Trust Alliance Standards and Guidelines, and all applicable agreements, contracts, and approved management plans, to provide enduring benefits to wildlife and the public, and to maintain compliance with applicable Internal Revenue Code rules and regulations. The Land Steward will also undertake GIS analyses and prepare various types of maps and reports at both regional and parcel scales. The position will also support and participate in other Vital Ground activities such as strategic planning, community events, publications, communications, and outreach as needed.

**SPECIFIC DUTIES**

**Conservation Easement Monitoring and Stewardship**

Maintain Vital Ground's conservation easement stewardship program in accordance with the organization's *Conservation Easement Stewardship Policies*. Primary duties include:

- conduct physical inspections and landowner interviews for each property under conservation easement at least once (1x) per calendar year;
- respond to landowner inquiries in a timely manner and maintain good communication and relationships with the landowners of Vital Ground conservation easement properties throughout the year, and;
- report on and adequately document all conservation easement monitoring activities.

**Fee Title Monitoring and Stewardship**

Maintain Vital Ground's fee-title stewardship program in accordance with the organization's *Fee Land Stewardship Policies and Principles*. Primary duties include:

- monitor or manage 3rd party monitoring of all holdings at least twice (2x) per calendar year;
- report on and adequately document all fee property monitoring activities;
- recommend and conduct stewardship actions as necessary such as managing farm agreements, contracts, forest restoration activities, weed control and 3rd party contracting for certain stewardship actions, and;
- engage and educate project partners, stakeholders and the public about Vital Ground's stewardship activities.

**Recordkeeping, Administrative & GIS**

- coordinate with Vital Ground's Administrative Assistant to maintain project stewardship files including all digital photography in accordance with Vital Ground's adopted *Records Management Procedures*, and;
- write occasional topical updates or articles for Vital News or other outreach materials.
- obtain appropriate GIS spatial information and undertake spatial analyses or prepare project maps to support planning and execution of Vital Ground's land conservation program.

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**QUALIFICATIONS**

- At least two (2) years stewardship and/or land management experience with a land trust, conservation organization, natural resource management agency, or equivalent experience.
- Experience with land management and/or conservation easement monitoring program for a nonprofit or government organization focused on wildlife habitat, land conservation, habitat enhancement, habitat connectivity, and/or stewardship.
- Experience working/meeting/interacting with rural landowners, with preference given to candidates with a history of work in forestland or other agricultural-based communities.
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills.
- Analytical and strategic thinking skills.
- Demonstrated experience with GIS (ArcMap, ArcGIS) at parcel or landscape scale.
- Knowledge of the Land Trust Alliance's "Standards and Practices".
- Undergraduate or graduate degree in natural or environmental science, resource conservation, agriculture, law or communications.
- A working knowledge of wildlife biology, wildlife habitat ecology, botany, forestry, ecosystems and conservation tools and strategies.

**WORKING CONDITIONS**

This is a full -time, exempt position with significant flexibility in the work schedule, anticipated to require approximately 40 hours per week. Travel is required throughout northwest Montana, North Idaho, and periodic out-of-state travel for meetings, trainings or seminars.

The ideal candidate will be located in or in close proximity to Missoula, however, the position could be based in the Flathead Valley, Swan Valley, or other northwest Montana locations depending on extent of the candidate's prior experience.

**REPORTS TO:** Conservation Manager