



Vacancy Announcement: Ag Environmental Assurance (MAEAP) Technician



Mason-Lake Conservation District is hiring a Technician to carry out the Michigan Agricultural Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP). MAEAP is a process to assist farms and forest landowners in managing their land using best management practices and accepted environmental standards. It is a voluntary, confidential, non-regulatory program. The Technician is responsible for delivering on-farm technical assistance in Mason, Manistee and the west half of Lake Counties. As part of the Conservation District Team, the MAEAP Technician will also be involved in projects that support sustainable forestry, habitat management, ground and surface water protection and related activities that educate the public and conserve natural resources of the District. There are many opportunities for learning and growth in this position, as part of a team that is enthusiastic, passionate, supportive, good-humored and working in a fast-paced office that provides services to over 3,000 clients per year.

Mason-Lake Conservation District is based in Scottville, Michigan, near Ludington and along the shores of Lake Michigan. Mason-Lake Conservation District strives to be the regional leader providing professional consultation, education and outreach to a variety of stakeholders in conserving, improving and sustaining our natural resources and environment. The climate of the area lends itself to a very diverse mix of agriculture, including orchards and small fruit, vegetables, row crops, floriculture, dairy and livestock operations. The natural landscape is a valued aspect of the local community and economy, and the rivers, lakes, dunes and forests lend themselves to ample opportunities for hiking, fishing, hunting, paddling, beachcombing, boating and more for the outdoor enthusiast.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES

- Coordinate all aspects of MAEAP in Mason, Manistee and western Lake Counties and be fully familiar with, and adhere to, the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) grant agreement and guidelines for conducting the program at a local level.
- Promote conservation activities to farms and forest owners; conduct on-farm risk assessments for farmstead, cropping, livestock, and Forest Wetlands and Habitat Systems, assisting with improvements necessary to obtain verification and be recognized as a top environmental steward.
- Assist landowners in developing emergency management plans for their farmsteads and action plans to address any environmental risks identified.
- Conduct at least one on-farm field day for the public that highlights MAEAP, qualifies for MAEAP Educational Credit and promotes farm-to-farm learning. The educational event should highlight the program, address potential agricultural risks, and introduce sustainable farming practices to reduce risk to the environment.
- Promote MAEAP cost-share to assist farms in making upgrades necessary to reach verification.
- Assist producers in responding to Right to Farm complaints if they arise, to bring them into conformance with Michigan's Generally Accepted Agricultural Management Practices (GAAMPS).
- Maintain accurate records, in an online database as well as on paper, and a well-organized filing system for those records.
- Work closely with the United States Department of Agriculture-Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS) and other partners to leverage federal, state and local resources for farmers.

- Collaborate with Conservation District staff and external partners to promote MAEAP and educate diverse audiences on the importance of resource protection in Mason, Manistee and western Lake Counties.
- Promote other stewardship practices and program aspects through displays and booths, newsletter articles, group presentations, demonstrations, public service announcements, news releases, radio programs, social media, and other means.
- Provide timely monthly reports and updates to the Mason-Lake and Manistee Conservation Districts Board of Directors and MDARD.
- Promote and conduct pesticide container recycling and water testing events, and assist producers with water sampling, equipment calibration and abandoned well closures
- Support Conservation District programs and activities, such as Clean Sweep and Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Collection, beachgrass and tree seedling sales, as needed.
- Promote the use of and help maintain the no-till grain drill which the District has available for rent.
- Perform other essential activities as required by the MDARD grant agreement or as assigned by the Executive Director of the Conservation District.

STANDARDS OF PERFORMANCE

Success is measured by the degree to which:

- MDARD grant requirements are met, including training, reporting, goal setting and achievement and on-farm assistance
- Written reports are complete and on time and database records are maintained to high quality
- Program promotional materials or articles are of high quality and distributed in a timely manner
- Public awareness of the MAEAP program increases along with awareness of the importance of sustainable agriculture
- The reported level of farmer satisfaction averages good or better
- The number of farms and forests engaged in MAEAP increases
- Local and regional agricultural initiatives benefit from the contributions and leadership of the MAEAP technician

WORKING LOCATION AND CONDITIONS

The position will be based in Scottville, Mason County, Michigan with weekly visits to neighboring Manistee and Lake Counties. Workdays are generally Monday-Friday, 8:00am-4:30pm and time is split between office work and field work on farms or private lands. Occasional evenings or weekends will be required for workshops, meetings or major events. The Mason-Lake Conservation District office is co-located with a federal sister agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and this position will work collaboratively with NRCS to support conservation. The MAEAP Technician will frequently be on farms, which may involve traversing uneven terrain, wetlands or working around livestock in a wide range of weather conditions. The MAEAP Technician may occasionally be in the vicinity of agriculture crews using hand tools, power equipment, and harvest machinery which may require hands-on assistance from the technician in the field.

REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE

Formal Education:

A minimum of a Bachelor's Degree in agriculture or natural resources management from an accredited college or university. In lieu of educational requirements, a candidate may be considered if they can

demonstrate ample knowledge and experience working on farms and an understanding of different systems of agriculture and habitat management.

Related Work Experience:

- Minimum of two years of experience in agriculture or natural resource fieldwork is preferred.
- Knowledge of and experience working with agricultural producers and practices is preferred.
- Experience collaborating on, developing, and delivering agriculture education programs to a variety of audiences in diverse settings.

Skills and Abilities:

- Strong organizational skills
- Excellent work ethic
- Expert use of PC and Microsoft Office Suite
- Working knowledge of databases and computer networks preferred
- Able to work independently without direct supervision and as part of a team
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills in the English language
- Exhibit excellent social and interpersonal skills; relates effectively to diverse clientele and groups
- Working knowledge of ArcMap preferred
- Able and willing to work efficiently outdoors in varying conditions and terrain
- Able to lift and handle materials up to 30 pounds without assistance
- Able to work flexible hours, including some evenings and weekends
- Maintain a valid driver's license and safe driving record
- Selected candidate must pass a federal background check, must have a reliable personal vehicle to get to work and occasionally use for work activities when a District vehicle is unavailable

COMPENSATION

The MAEAP Technician is a full time, hourly position starting at \$22/hour with increases dependent on experience and completed trainings. Benefits include 13 paid federal holidays, 13 days each allotted for vacation and sick leave, IRA option with matching employer contribution, a health plan with employer-matched premium and shared use of a Conservation District vehicle. Personal vehicle use will be reimbursed at the IRS mileage rate. Flexible schedules and some remote work will be available for the right candidate.

TO APPLY

Provide a cover letter, resume, transcripts if using education to qualify (unofficial are acceptable), and list of three references, all combined into one PDF, and email to Dani McGarry, Executive Director of Mason-Lake Conservation District at dani.mcgarry@macd.org . Please state "MAEAP Technician application" in the subject line. Any questions pertaining to the position may also be directed to Dani McGarry by calling (231) 757-3707 ext. 102.

Applications accepted by midnight Monday, January 16th, 2023, or until filled.

PREFERRED START DATE is February 13th, 2023.