

TITLE: Information Officer (Land Acquisition Specialist)

EMPLOYER: NEIWPCC, Wannalancit Mills, 650 Suffolk Street, Suite 410, Lowell, MA 01854.

LOCATION: New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), Division of Water (DOW) – 625 Broadway, Albany, NY 12233

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: NEIWPCC is a regional commission that helps the states of the Northeast preserve and advance water quality. We engage and convene water quality professionals and other interested parties from New England and New York to collaborate on water, wastewater, and environmental science challenges across the regions, ecosystems, and areas of expertise.

The primary goal of the next generation of Source Water Protection in New York State is to develop and implement source water protection measures for public water systems throughout the State. Source water protection strategies are most effective when implemented at the local community level. As such, NEIWPCC professionals will team with staff from NYSDEC to support the implementation of the Water Quality Improvement Project (WQIP) Program – Land Acquisition for Source Water Protection by reviewing and developing various real property materials for potential applicants, awardees, and the public. The candidate will be expected to provide review, guidance, leadership, and input on the program's resources.

JOB SUMMARY: The candidate will work on the statewide WQIP – Land Acquisition for Source Water Protection project type. The primary function of the position will be to review appraisals of real estate, survey maps, and title reports, for: 1) DOW WQIP - Land Acquisition for Source Water Protection projects; and 2) grant project compliance. The incumbent will assist with completing real property reviews in collaboration with other Bureaus and Divisions of NYSDEC, ensure grant recipients are aware of program standards and guidance, and update and/or develop program resources. Infrequent overnight travel may be necessary. The incumbent may be required to go through a traineeship program that involves coursework including passing final exams.

Duties will be performed largely in an office setting but may require travel.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Technical Review and Compliance

- Review and provide edits to land acquisition documents to confirm all submittals meet Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) program standards and requirements of the WQIP program. Reviews will include, but are not limited to:
 - Performance of administrative reviews of appraisal reports prepared by certified general appraisers
 - Baseline Documentation Reports
 - Phase 1 Environmental Assessments
 - Forestry Management Plans
 - Deed Drafts
 - Title reports aka Title Commitments
 - Survey maps
 - Post Closing Title and Certified Deeds
- Perform ownership and real estate title research of properties recommended for land acquisition.
- Review valuations for easements and land acquisitions.
- Ensure compliance with relevant state and federal regulations.

- Review the Conservation Easement template and work with NYS DEC Division of Lands and Forests, Office of General Counsel, and the NYS Land Trust Alliance to update as needed.

Program Coordination and Management

- Support DOW's contract managers and grant awardees during initial contract outreach to walk awardee through program resources and standards found on the WQIP Land Acquisition for Source Water Protection Toolkit webpage (e.g., appraisal standards).
- Analyze land acquisition document completeness when materials submitted by grant recipient and determine if updates or additional resources are needed on the WQIP Land Acquisition for Source Water Protection Toolkit webpage.
- Utilize an online platform to track and complete all reviews in a timely manner. Ensure data is accurately entered in the platform/systems, communicate with program staff, and maintain systems.
- Assist with preparing criteria for program funding, identifying opportunities to improve the program, responding to questions from potential awardees and participants.
- Identify potential issues and work with supervisor and related program areas to collaborate on recommended solutions. With supervisor support, implement recommendations.

Communication and Outreach

- Give presentations on the program to interested parties.
- Provide supervisor with general program overview and status of the land acquisition program.
- Develop a thorough understanding of DEC programs, organization, and policies to exercise initiative and resourcefulness.
- Provide background materials or write articles for various NEIWPCC, or other, publications. Present work products and programs to stakeholders and the general public.
- Work with NEIWPCC's Quality Assurance Program Manager to review Quality Assurance Project Plans as needed, with the opportunity to become a QA Designee if appropriate.
- Other duties as assigned.

SUPERVISORY CONTROLS: Incumbent operates with some independence of action and delegation, and under the general supervision of a NYSDEC supervisor, who provides instruction on new work, guidance, and review of completed work to assure accuracy and adherence to established policy and requirements. Job performance is evaluated by the NEIWPCC Headquarters program contact, in consultation with the NYSDEC supervisor.

The incumbent will rely on their ability, expertise, and commitment to excellence. They will also build NEIWPCC's culture which focuses on honesty, ethical behavior, personal integrity, respect for others, transparency, hard work, and collaborative teamwork.

Based on assignment, incumbents of positions at this level may exercise direct supervision (i.e., not through an intermediate level supervisor) over, assign work to, and review the performance of 1-5 technical or professional personnel; may exercise indirect supervision (i.e., through an intermediate level supervisor) over 6-15 technical or other personnel; and/or may exercise functional supervision (i.e., over certain but not all work activities, or over some or all work activities on a temporary basis) over 1-5 technical or professional personnel.

Requirements

- A valid driver's license and access to own transportation required.
- Attendance is mandatory in the Lowell office for orientation and at the annual All Staff Meeting (held the last Thursday and Friday in March each year).
- This is a full-time position. This position requires incumbent to be in the office or at the assigned work location Monday – Friday for the first six months of employment. After six months of employment, this position may be eligible for a partial telework schedule, subject to approval and determined by program and office needs. Telework schedules are authorized by the Executive Director.

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS: A bachelor's degree. Three years of experience in real estate work, including one year performing at least two of the following: inspection and appraisal of real property, legal research related to the sale of real property, title search, survey work in a responsible position determining property lines, and appraisal negotiations or related work with a public acquisition agency.

Substitutions

- I. The following can be substituted for the education above:
 - a. Two years of experience performing appraisals of recreational, vacant, residential, or commercial lands which include writing detailed original appraisal reports or appraisal reviews; OR writing detailed original appraisal reports or appraisal reviews in connection with land acquisition for a public land acquisition agency, utility companies, or not-for-profit conservation organizations.

Special Knowledge and Skills

- Knowledge and experience with general certified appraisers and real property reviews
- Knowledge and experience with land acquisition documents (e.g., baseline documentation reports, environmental site assessments, survey maps, title reports)
- Familiarity with NYS land conservation programs at local and statewide levels
- Familiarity with NYS or federally funded grants for land acquisition
- Familiarity with real property procedures relating to land acquisition
- Ability to write concisely, to express thoughts clearly, and to develop ideas in logical sequence as well as communicate well verbally
- Proficiency working with GIS, database management and design, and in Microsoft Excel, Word, Outlook, and PowerPoint
- Ability to concisely disseminate technical information (presentations, correspondence)
- Excellent organizational skills
- Ability to work effectively with scientists, engineers, and managers, the public and regulated community and to establish professional credibility
- Ability to work independently, and as part of a team
- Ability to maintain accurate records

Personal Characteristics

- Naturally prone to action with a focus toward continuous improvement and is committed to contributing to the overall success of NEIWPCC.
- Ability to build collaborative relationships across NEIWPCC and our partners.
- Approachable and diplomatic in all interactions.
- Able to manage change and articulate the "value case" for it.
- A team player who is inclusive and willing to help others.
- Dependable and capable of fostering trust.
- Accepts responsibility and is accountable for results.

- Ability to write concisely to express thoughts clearly and to develop ideas in logical sequence.
- Ability to exercise discretion in handling confidential information.
- Excellent organizational skills and the ability to prioritize key deliverables.

SALARY: Salary dependent on level of education and experience

BENEFITS: Generous benefits package provided, which includes vacation, personal and sick leave, paid holidays as determined by office location; health, dental, disability and life insurance; retirement plan. This position requires the incumbent to work five days a week, 7 ½ hours per day, except for approved compensatory time.