Job Title: Pathways Student Intern (Soil Conservationist Trainee)

Department: Department Of Agriculture

Agency: Natural Resources Conservation Service

Job Announcement Number: MT-13-997017-CK

SALARY RANGE: $9.74 to $15.53 / Per Hour

OPEN PERIOD: Friday, November 22, 2013 to Monday, December 30, 2013

SERIES & GRADE: GS-0499-01/03

POSITION INFORMATION: Full Time - Internships

PROMOTION POTENTIAL: 09

DUTY LOCATIONS: 6 vacancies in the following location(s):
Big Timber, MT View Map
Forsyth, MT View Map
Jordan, MT View Map
Kalispell, MT View Map
Shelby, MT View Map
More Locations (1)

WHO MAY APPLY: Student/Internship Program Eligibles

SECURITY CLEARANCE: Not Applicable

SUPERVISORY STATUS: No

JOB SUMMARY:
Be Remarkable, Make a Difference! Join the Natural Resources Conservation Service team and help us conserve our nation’s Natural Resources! Visit our web site (http://www.nrcs.usda.gov) to learn more.

This vacancy announcement is open to U.S. citizens. We expect to fill six positions at the following locations in Montana: Big Timber, Forsyth, Jordan, Kalispell, Shelby and Sheridan. The location will be determined upon hire.

The purpose of the Pathways Student Intern Program is to provide interns with exposure to public service, enhance educational experience and provide financial support to encourage and support educational goals. The program is formally structured to give interns the opportunity to work in positions related to their academic/career goals. Participants will complete assigned duties, tasks, readings, and developmental activities as specified in the program.

Students will work full-time in the summer. Students are normally placed into a non-pay status when they return to school each fall, then returned to work the following summer. Students must be willing and available to be assigned to any of our field or area offices within Montana.

TRAVEL REQUIRED
- Occasional Travel
Some travel is involved during the summer months. The amount of this travel will vary from site to site and is dependent on project workload. This travel may be on improved or unimproved roads.

**RELOCATION AUTHORIZED**
- No

**KEY REQUIREMENTS**
- U.S. Citizenship
- Suitable for Federal Employment, determined by Background Investigation
- Males born after 12-31-59 must be registered with Selective Service
- Must have a valid Motor Vehicle Operators License

**DUTIES:**
As a Soil Conservationist student intern, you will work with staff specialists to assist with various stages of conservation planning, surveying and carrying out resource conservation plans. The internship provided intensified training in soil conservation and is qualifying for a professional position upon graduation from college.

**Duties include:**
- Accompanying soil conservationist to observe methods used in meeting resource conservation needs.
- Gathering and assembling data for use in basic conservation plans.
- Performing surveys used for design and preliminary layout work, participating in inspections of construction and making field notes.
- Be able to use a personal computer, scanner, or other automated office equipment.

**QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED:**

**Qualification Statement:** Applicants must have a complete application package and meet the basic requirements listed below by the closing date of this vacancy announcement. Transcripts (official or unofficial) are required to verify current enrollment. Proof of enrollment is acceptable for college/university students who do not yet have transcripts and are enrolled to attend the next semester/quarter/term.

**Basic Requirements:**
- Be a United States Citizen
- Be at least 16 years old
- Have at cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher
- Be a high school student or a college/university student who is enrolled on at least a half-time basis as defined by your school.
- Must be mobile to all locations throughout Montana upon initial placement and subsequent summers as well as upon graduation. Note: High school students are placed at the nearest field office to their home.
- College/university students must be pursuing a degree in one of the following academic majors or related fields: Soil Science, Crop Science, Plant Science, Agronomy, Natural Resource Conservation, Range (Range Management/Range Ecology & Management/Range Resources), Agricultural or Natural Science related disciplines.
- You must not graduate prior to the spring of 2017, OR if you graduate with a qualifying degree prior to the spring of 2017, you will immediately continue your education with another qualifying degree.
Applicants who expect to graduate prior to the spring of 2017, but will continue their education must document what degree they will be working towards next as well as the anticipated graduation date for that degree in their resume and/or in a cover letter.

**Grade Level Requirements:**
- GS-1: Attending high school or enrolled in a General Education (GED) program.
- GS-2: Completion of high school or GED diploma and enrolled to attend a college/university to pursue a qualifying degree.
- GS-3: Completion of at least 1 full academic year of post-high school study in pursuit of a qualifying degree.

Note: An academic year of undergraduate education is defined as 30 semester hours or 45 quarter hours or the equivalent in an accredited college or university.

**Education Notes:** It is mandatory to submit college transcripts to document your education. Photocopies are acceptable for initial application. Official transcripts will be required if you are selected for this position.

Education must be accredited by an accrediting institution recognized by the U.S. Department of Education in order for it to be credited towards qualifications (particularly positions with a positive education requirement.) Therefore, applicants must report only attendance and/or degrees from schools accredited by accrediting institutions recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. All education claimed by applicants will be verified by the appointing agency accordingly. Applicants can verify accreditation at the following website: http://ope.ed.gov/accreditation/Search.aspx.

Foreign Education: If you are using foreign education to meet qualification requirements, you must send a Certificate of Foreign Equivalency with your transcript in order to receive credit for your education.

**Promotion Potential:** Pathways Student Interns who continue to meet eligibility requirements may be promoted to higher-graded trainee positions when they return to work based on completion of portions of the education and student trainee work experience as follows:
- To GS-04: Completion of 2 full academic years of post-high school study or an associates degree.
- To GS-05: Completion of 4 years of post-high school study leading to a bachelor’s or equivalent degree.
- To GS-07: Completion of 1 full academic year of graduate level education or completion of 4 years of post-high school study leading to a bachelor’s or equivalent degree while meeting the stipulations of Superior Academic Achievement.
- To GS-09: Completion of 2 academic years of graduate level education, or a master’s or equivalent graduate degree.

**Conversion Information:** Student trainee positions may be made permanent within 120 days of graduation if the student is recommended for conversion by their supervisor and meets all qualification, eligibility and educational requirements. To help students determine whether their degree will be qualifying for conversion, the following basic educational requirements must be met upon graduation:

**GS-0457 Soil Conservationist Basic Education Requirements:** Method A or B

Method A: Degree: Soil conservation or related agricultural or natural resource discipline such as agronomy, soil science, forestry, agricultural education, or agricultural engineering. The study MUST have included 30 semester hours in a natural resource or agricultural field, including at least 12 semester hours in a combination of soils and crops or plant science. Of the 12 semester hours, a minimum of 3 semester hours must have been in soils and 3 semester hours in crops or plant science; OR

Method B. Combination of education and experience - at least 30 semester hours in one or more of the disciplines as shown in Method A above, including at least 12 semester hours in a combination of soils and crops or plant science, plus appropriate experience or additional education. Of the 12 semester hours, a minimum of 3 semester hours must have been in soils and 3 semester hours in crops or plant science.

**Physical Requirements:** This work involves regular and physical exertion related to conservation work in an outdoor environment, sometimes under adverse weather conditions. Outdoor physical activities
include walking and climbing for prolonged periods of time over rough and mountainous terrain. This work also involves exposure to operating agricultural equipment.

**Valid Driver’s License**: You may be required to operate a motor vehicle on both public and private roads during daylight hours and occasionally after dark.

**Selective Service**: If you are a male applicant born after December 31, 1959, you must certify that you have registered with the Selective Service System, or are exempt from having to do so under the Selective Service Law. See [http://www.sss.gov/](http://www.sss.gov/).

**Student Agreement**: A written agreement is required between NRCS Montana and the intern.

**HOW YOU WILL BE EVALUATED:**
Your resume must support your responses to the occupational questionnaire. We will review your resume and supporting documentation and compare this information to your responses on the occupational questionnaire to determine if you meet the minimum qualifications for this position. If you are basically qualified for this position, you will be referred to the hiring manager for consideration.

Veterans’ preference eligibles who meet the qualification requirements are placed in the appropriate category and are listed ahead of non-preference eligibles. Veteran preference eligibles who have a compensable service-connected disability of at least 10 percent are listed in the highest quality category, except in the case of scientific or professional positions at the GS-9 level or higher.

**BENEFITS:**
Student interns are eligible for health and life insurance coverage if they are expected to be: employed for at least one year, be in a pay status for at least one third of the total time from initial appointment to completion of program requirements. The premiums costs are split between the student and the agency.


**Housing Subsidy**: Depending on budget, a housing subsidy of $1,750 may be offered while working full-time during the summer months. Reimbursement may be provided for certain out-of-pocket expenses that get students from school to the duty station and back to school again at the end of the work period.

**OTHER INFORMATION:**
**Career Assistance Program (CTAP)**: Eligible displaced Federal competitive service employees may be granted selection priority over other candidates for competitive service vacancies. Eligibility begins when you receive: a reduction in force (RIF) separation notice; a notice of proposed removal for declining a directed reassignment or transfer of function to another local commuting area; a Certificate of Expected Separation; or your agency’s certification that you are in a surplus organization or occupation (this could be a position abolition letter, a notice of eligibility for discontinued service retirement, or similar notice). If your agency has notified you in writing that you are a displaced employee eligible for CTAP consideration, you may receive selection priority if: 1) this vacancy is within your CTAP eligibility, 2) you apply under the instructions in this announcement, and 3) you are found well-qualified for this vacancy. You must provide proof of eligibility with your application to receive selection priority. Such proof may include a copy of your written notification of CTAP eligibility or a copy of your separation personnel action form. For more information:


**HOW TO APPLY:**
To apply for this position, you must complete the occupational questionnaire and submit the documentation specified in the Required Documents section below. The complete application package must be submitted by 11:59 PM (EST) on Monday, December 30, 2013 to receive consideration. Mailed or emailed applications will not be accepted.

To begin, click the Apply Online to create or log into your USAJOBS Account. Follow the prompts to select your USAJOBS resume and/or other supporting documents and complete the occupational questionnaire. Be sure to upload the required documents before you submit your application. It is your responsibility to ensure your responses and appropriate documentation is submitted prior to the closing date.

To return to an incomplete application, log into your USAJOBS account and then click Update Application in the vacancy announcement. You must re-select your resume and/or other documents from your USAJOBS account or your application will be incomplete.

Click the Submit My Answers button at the end of the process to submit your application package.

To verify that your application is complete or check the status of your application, log into your USAJOBS account and then select Application Status and click on the More Information link for this position. The Details page will display the status of your application, the documentation received and processed, and any correspondence the agency sent related to this application. Your uploaded document may take several hours to clear the virus scan process.

If you apply online, you may fax supporting documents you are unable to upload:


2. Placing the cover sheet on top of your documents, fax your application materials to: 1-478-757-3144.

3. Keep your fax confirmation sheet in the event that verification is needed.

If you cannot apply online, you may apply via a fax machine:

1. Click the following link to view and print the occupational questionnaire. View Occupational Questionnaire

2. Print the 1203FX form to provide your responses to the occupational questionnaire http://www.opm.gov/forms/pdf_fill/OPM1203fx.pdf. The 1203FX form will serve as a fax cover sheet, so must be placed on top of all materials being faxed.

3. Fax the completed 1203FX form with supporting documents to 1-478-757-3144.

4. Keep your fax confirmation sheet in the event that verification is needed.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS:
To apply for this position, you must provide a complete Application Package which includes:

1. Your Résumé (must show dates and hours per week worked for each period of employment)

2. A complete Occupational Questionnaire
3. High School or College transcripts (official or unofficial) to verify education requirements. Proof of enrollment is acceptable for college/university students who do not yet have transcripts and are enrolled to attend the next semester/quarter/term.


AGENCY CONTACT INFO:
Christina Klima
Phone: (406)587-6869
Email: CHRISTINA.KLIMA@MT.USDA.GOV

Agency Information:
USDA NRCS WEST
10 E Babcock Street
Bozeman, MT
59715

WHAT TO EXPECT NEXT:
Once your Occupational Questionnaire and resume have been received, you will receive an automated acknowledgement email that your submission was successful. All information provided may be verified by a careful review of your resume, questionnaire responses, reference check, background check, and/or verification of education. After a qualification review of your complete application package, you will be notified of the status of your application. If further evaluation or interviews are required, you will be contacted. Any exaggeration of your experience, false statements, or attempt to conceal information may disqualify you for consideration.

Additional Duty Location Info
6 vacancies in the following locations:
Big Timber, MT View Map
Forsyth, MT View Map
Jordan, MT View Map
Kalispell, MT View Map
Shelby, MT View Map
Sheridan, MT View Map