



Playa Lakes Joint Venture Conservation Design Director

Position Summary

The Conservation Design Director is an outreach-focused leadership position that works to coordinate PLJV conservation priorities with existing partner work and to design new programs that effect change on the conservation status of species and habitat. This position works across all PLJV disciplines and directly with conservation delivery partners in designing and implementing programs and initiatives to support wildlife at stated goals while also benefiting humans. The Conservation Design Director will pioneer and lead science-to-implementation efforts that integrate biological, ecological, and social science into habitat conservation delivery approaches, tools, practices, and programs, and also serve as a bridge between the research and habitat conservation delivery communities.

The primary focus of this position is to translate species needs from science into actionable and measurable on-the-ground conservation, all of which is maintained in PLJV's Implementation Plan. Among the first duties will be to hire GIS staff to support spatial planning needs under the Implementation Plan.

Major Duties

- Support conservation partners in applying science to address key conservation gaps through voluntary, proactive conservation delivery. Specifically cultivate relationships with federal and state partners (e.g., NRCS, FSA, FWS, state wildlife agencies) to identify gaps in available programs for playa, riparian, and grassland conservation and build coalitions that work in these landscapes.
- Identify and develop programs and initiatives that address the broad priorities emanating from PLJV's biological planning and maintained in PLJV's Implementation Plan.
- Work to understand drivers of landscape scale changes and craft spatial targets to inform implementation of habitat conservation that meets the needs of both humans and wildlife.
- Develop, lead, and support workshops and landscape-based collaborations to help partners apply science in conservation delivery.
- Direct development of partner-based conservation planning tools to inform conservation planning, habitat targeting, and evaluation.
- Track and evaluate the conservation outcomes within key landscapes.
- Collaborate with and support communications staff in the work of providing access, interpretation, and application of key findings, decision-support tools, and other prominent science via digital platforms, success stories, videos, and workshops.
- Supervise multiple staff.

Required Qualifications

- Master's degree or higher in wildlife biology/management, range science, restoration ecology, conservation social science, or related field and 10 years work experience
- Basic understanding and ability to use Geographic Information Systems
- Basic understanding and appreciation of conservation social science
- Understanding of Farm Bill programs
- Excellent oral and written communication skills—both in receiving and sharing information – and ability to connect with individuals and audiences by recognizing preferred communication formats and accommodating accordingly
- Experience working with farmers, ranchers, and agency biologists and social scientists
- Demonstrated ability to leverage expertise, programs, and tools from a variety of sources to fulfill project objectives
- Demonstrated ability to work with a multitude of partners including, but not limited to private landowners, Tribal Nations, researchers, conservation organizations at multiple scales (e.g., local/national), funding entities, industry partners, state and federal agriculture and conservation agencies
- Ability to connect and communicate with, and listen and learn from people with diverse perspectives, experiences, and values
- Ability to forge lasting relationships and build partnerships to find common ground among those with diverse perspectives on issues involving natural resource conservation and management
- Since this position will supervise other staff, experience with supervision and mentoring is desired

Additional Desired Qualifications

- Ability to synthesize science and technical information in a meaningful way and translate that information through spatial tools and other means to inform and effect change
- Detailed knowledge of Geographic Information Systems, spatial modeling, and other science tools, as well as their role, utility, and application in characterizing, analyzing, and assessing ecological processes, systems, and conditions, and conducting integrated landscape-level planning
- Detailed knowledge of landscape and/or wildlife ecology, and other facets of ecological science utilized in strategic habitat and landscape conservation
- Demonstrated ability to collaborate with academia, habitat managers, conservation administrators, and the public
- Excellent writing skills with proven ability to translate complex concepts into succinct, clear, accessible language for a variety of audiences
- Proficient in Google Workspace applications

Other Requirements/Physical Demands

- Must possess and maintain a valid state driver's license.
- While much of the work is sedentary, the Conservation Design Director may need to conduct off-site meetings and evaluations that may include traversing wet, rough, uneven, or rocky surfaces in hot, cold, dry, or humid environments.

Travel Required

- Travel requirements may be as much as 50% or greater depending on the nature and scope of a project.
- Frequent travel by various means of surface and air transportation is required to attend meetings and to conduct field work.

About Playa Lakes Joint Venture

PLJV is a regional partnership of federal and state wildlife agencies, conservation groups and private industry dedicated to conserving bird habitat throughout portions of Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas. Our mission is to conserve the playas, prairies and landscapes of the western Great Plains through partnerships for the benefit of birds, other wildlife, and people. The Joint Venture facilitates cooperation among a broad coalition of partners on the national, regional, state and local levels to fund and implement habitat conservation. We provide regional planning, value-added efficiency and implementation approaches, while our partners provide financial, technical and local expertise to develop conservation projects. In addition, PLJV supports local conservation partnerships, state agencies and other partners by developing various decision support tools, as well as providing education about how to use the tools to target and deliver the most effective habitat conservation. PLJV also works with a variety of partners to inform landowners about conservation programs and to target conservation efforts in areas that will provide the most benefit.

Supervisor

This position reports directly to and is evaluated by the PLJV Coordinator. Job performance is reviewed in the context of responsiveness to objectives and priorities as determined by the Coordinator, and based on input from the Management Board and partners. Annual work plans for the position will be developed by the position incumbent in consultation with the Coordinator. Beyond a work plan, the incumbent is largely self-directed in accomplishing objectives.

Salary, Benefits, and Start Date

Starting salary is commensurate with education, experience, and location with an expected range of \$80,000-\$110,000 (GS-12). PLJV offers a generous benefits package, including full medical and dental coverage, HSA with annual contribution to defray medical deductibles, and a 7% salary match toward our retirement plan. We anticipate this position will begin working on or around September 1.

PLJV's Commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

People are essential to realizing our mission to conserve birds and wildlife across the western Great Plains. At PLJV we are committed to including all voices within our landscape in order to implement conservation work by collaborating with a wide variety of individual and community stakeholders and ensuring that our work is reflective of their values, beliefs, and ways of knowing. We commit to building more equity into our programs and services by improving our awareness and understanding of the unique perspectives of people, engaging in dialogue with communities of all backgrounds, and taking actions that support our combined interests in a meaningful way.

Job Location

The job location can be anywhere with convenient access to the PLJV region, or anywhere where location supports job effectiveness, with priority given to those candidates who are willing to live in the Denver metro area.

To Apply

Playa Lakes Joint Venture is an Equal Opportunity Employer and seeks a diverse applicant pool. Please email your application documents as one complete PDF file to jobs@pljv.org. All applications should include a resume, a one-page cover letter, and any first-author applied conservation publications. In the cover letter, please include salary requirements and desired location. The deadline for all applications is 5:00PM MST, on Monday, July 18.