



PHEASANTS FOREVER & QUAIL FOREVER

The Habitat Organization



JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Interior Plateau Ecoregion Coordinator Tennessee and Kentucky Southeastern Grasslands Initiative / Quail Forever

Application Deadline: March 1, 2019



Anticipated Start Date: March 2019

Overview:

The southeastern region of the U.S. was one of the most diverse grassland regions of North America, yet more than 90% has been lost due to such factors as conversion to row crop agriculture, fire suppression, forest succession, and wetland drainage. Our objective, in conjunction with other entities in a regional public-private partnership, is to use funding from the National Resources Conservation Service's (NRCS) Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) funds to work with willing landowners to improve native grassland habitat on private lands in a manner that compliments existing conservation efforts, especially near protected landscapes also under, or planned for, restoration. More specifically, the work we proposed to NRCS focuses on efforts needed to recover populations of three species of grassland bird species deemed in need of conservation attention, i.e. Northern Bobwhite, Henslow's Sparrow and Eastern Meadowlark, as well as other components of the native biodiversity associated with the historic grassland landscapes of central and western Kentucky and Tennessee.

Habitat improvements for the bird species of concern, which are more dependent on vegetation structure than on species composition and diversity, can be accomplished by opening up suppressed native grasslands with removal of woody cover and application of prescribed fire, conversion of cropland or fescue pastures to native grasses and forbs, changing grazing intensities and haying regimes. These efforts can involve somewhat low-diversity seed mixes, but restoring both vegetation structure and increasing native biodiversity will generally require more diverse seed mixes. This strategy will be employed in cases where higher native plant diversity is important to maximize benefits to a wider variety of organisms.

This position is one of 3 Quail Forever (QF) Biologists to be deployed in service to our objectives in Tennessee and Kentucky. Two positions, one for Tennessee and another for Kentucky, will be responsible primarily for working with interested landowners to implement those NRCS practices our partnership has deemed valuable in recovering the key species of grassland birds. This position, an Ecoregion Coordinator, will work in both states with farm bill biologists and landowners interested in restoring/recreating more diverse native grasslands, recommending locally-adapted seed mixes appropriate for each particular site, and working with seed companies to develop seed sources. These positions will be employees of, and supervised by, Quail Forever, with additional instruction and leadership provided by our regional partnership.

This specific position as Interior Plateaus Ecoregion Coordinator for the Southeastern Grasslands Initiative & Quail Forever is a full-time, nontenure-track, 4.5-year staff position commencing by January 7, 2019. The position will be physically based out of Austin Peay State University, Clarksville, TN with some allowances for working remotely. The successful candidate's primary role will be to serve as the ecoregion coordinator for the Interior Plateaus Ecoregion which covers parts of central and western TN and KY, parts of northern AL, southern IL and IN, and southwestern OH. Approximately 50-60% of the individual's time will be dedicated to managing/implementing a 5-year grant from the USDA NRCS. The other 40-50% of their time will be spent on duties specific to SGI. The position term may be extended should additional revenue lines be secured.

Duties:

- Provide verbal, written and on-site technical assistance (wildlife biology and habitat focus) to interested landowners.
- Coordinate the implementation and application of select farm bill practices in cooperation with the local NRCS District Conservationist, NRCS Area Biologist, TWRA/KDFWR Private Lands Biologist, PF/QF staff, and others.
- Complete wildlife conservation plans, contracts, applications and other required documentation for conservation programs (i.e. ACEP-WRE, EQIP, CSP, etc.) requiring biological expertise in cooperation with the listed partners.
- Communicate program requirements, complete site visits to determine eligibility, develop contracts and plans for applicants enrolling in USDA conservation programs or other state and local conservation programs, and approve completed practices.
- Coordinate and assist in fieldwork related to Southeastern Grasslands Initiative projects, including working with various individuals, organizations, and agencies.

- Design and implement research projects in collaboration with University faculty, staff, and students concerning the biology and management of rare species and natural communities, communicating results through publications and presentations.
- Establish and maintain regular communication with private, state, national, and international conservation agencies and organizations.
- Procure, assemble, and maintain germplasm collections (including seed) of native grassland plants for conservation, research, and display collections in greenhouse and botanical garden and supervise activities pertaining to these collections conducted by students, volunteers, and staff.
- Develop educational programming and curricula related to grassland conservation
- Write grant proposals and assist in other fundraising efforts.
- Publicize the program through presentations, blog and social media posts, articles in popular and professional publications, and brochures.
- Organize and train volunteers and student research assistants.
- Coordinate/organize regional meetings/field trips among various conservation partners.
- Inventory/Assessment/Research: conduct ecological research and biological inventories related to grassland communities and species; set deadlines for research results and reports, and gather permits and background literature for project partners.
- Project Management: Provide technical assistance/manage habitat restoration projects on private and/or public lands throughout the ecoregion (may include contract preparation, supervision, coordination)
- Perform other related duties as assigned.

Required Knowledge Skills and Abilities:

- Must have very good interpersonal skills and ability to communicate with a wide variety of audiences from laymen to professionals (Should have experience in communicating science and conservation concepts into plain language).
- Ability to work independently with little supervision and with diverse clientele.
- Knowledge of wildlife ecology, grassland management, including the ability to utilize various habitat management tools in the development of habitat management plans.
- Knowledge of conservation and wildlife programs provided by Federal (i.e. Farm Bill), State and PF/QF. Also, knowledge of how these programs are implemented in an agricultural landscape.
- Excellent verbal/written communication and organizational skills.
- Valid driver's license and personal vehicle required (mileage reimbursement provided).
- Able to obtain USDA Clearance and NRCS Conservation Planning certification
- M.S. preferred in Ecology, Botany, Wildlife or Conservation Biology, or related field, but candidates with bachelor's degree are eligible with a minimum of 3 years of work experience in related field work.
- Must have good skills with plant and bird identification at the species, genus, and family levels, (preferably east-central U.S).
- Should have a good understanding of basic natural history, ecology, and vegetation of east-central U.S.
- Must be proficient in ArcGIS, PowerPoint, Word, Excel, and related computer programs.
- The preferred candidate should have experience coordinating on-the-ground projects, including projects focused on species-level conservation and broader community restoration.
- Experience or willingness to learn best practices in procuring seed and/or living plants, basic horticultural techniques, and growing and managing living plants and/or seed collections in greenhouse setting, seedbank facility, and/or botanical garden.
- Should have experience coordinating projects, motivating volunteers, and empowering others to dedicate themselves to this work with diverse individuals and groups, including the general public, private landowners, agency personnel, volunteers, non-profit staff, undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, staff.
- Evidence of good character, mature attitude, and professional integrity.
- Must be fluent in English.
- Must be able to drive a wide variety of vehicles, including 4WD, ATV, and UTV.
- A background check will be required of the successful candidate.

Salary: \$50,000 – \$60,000+ Health and Retirement Benefits.

To Apply: Visit our Recruitment website at: www.pheasantsforever.org/jobs

Only ONLINE applications will be accepted. Please include your cover letter and resume as a single Word document or PDF file on the Recruitment website.

For More Information: Contact Tim Caughran, Director of Field Operations for Quail Forever at tcaughran@quailforever.org, Dwayne Estes, Executive Director, Southeastern Grasslands Initiative at dwayne.estes@segrasslands.org, or Andy Edwards, Regional Biologist and Representative, Quail Forever at aedwards@quailforever.org

Pheasants Forever & Quail Forever are an EEO Employer/Vet/Disabled.