



Playa & Water Conservation Outreach Specialist New Mexico

Position Summary

Playa Lakes Joint Venture (PLJV) is seeking a Playa & Water Conservation Outreach Specialist to engage local communities across eastern New Mexico and help them support the integration of playa restoration into local and regional water planning efforts as part of Kansas Water Office's Tomorrow's Water grant from NFWF America's Ecosystem Restoration Initiative. This position will build on previous water conservation efforts and Tomorrow's Water models used in Kansas, New Mexico, and Texas by using and adapting existing messages, products, and tools. It is one of eight outreach positions working to expand Tomorrow's Water across five states, with guidance from a project coordinator and in collaboration with the other positions.

Tomorrow's Water is an adaptive, collaborative process that helps local communities, including agricultural producers in the surrounding counties, partner with conservation organizations to create an actionable plan to ensure a clean and sustainable water supply by incorporating playa conservation as part of broader water quantity and quality efforts. The Outreach Specialist will play a central role in advancing this model at the community level by engaging stakeholders, building relationships, and translating conservation goals into on-the-ground actions. Using this plan, landowners in the community use conservation programs to voluntarily restore playas near municipal and domestic wells and reach sustainable levels of irrigation. Learn more at TomorrowsWater.org.

The Outreach Specialist is responsible for 1) expanding Tomorrow's Water to communities over the Ogallala Aquifer that also have a high density of playas to provide water for current and future generations, and 2) working with existing playa conservation delivery networks to use funding from local, state, and Farm Bill conservation programs to restore playas and surrounding grassland buffers to provide groundwater recharge that supports those communities including agricultural producers in the surrounding counties.

Tomorrow's Water relies heavily on a large partnership throughout the region; thus, the successful candidate will have the skills to work with a large variety of partners across state agencies, water management districts, wildlife-focused nonprofits and local communities – including government, conservation districts and landowners – and be able to bring them all together to achieve playa and water conservation goals. The successful candidate will be an effective communicator, highly organized, and able to oversee many moving pieces and tracking results while meeting various deadlines and goals.

Major Duties

Engagement and Outreach

- Establish and maintain relationships with landowners and other stakeholders within local communities, public and private organizations, state agencies, and wildlife-focused nonprofits.
- Identify and leverage existing and potential community engagement channels.
- Organize and host informational and one-on-one meetings to educate local community members about playas and the role they play in providing future water.
- Create and manage campaigns to increase public awareness of Tomorrow's Water and the importance of including playas in water planning efforts.
- Support landowners in navigating and applying for local, state, and federal conservation programs, including Farm Bill funding.
- Maintain an efficient and effective schedule of travel to support the implementation of Tomorrow's Water by engaged communities.

Coordination and Communication

- Develop and implement strategies to engage stakeholders in activities that promote Tomorrow's Water.
- Work with partners to adapt and apply communication tools and messages that support Tomorrow's Water.
- Collaborate with other Outreach Specialist positions to ensure a coordinated effort across the region and learn from other successful engagement strategies.
- Monitor progress toward goals, ensuring deliverables are met and reports are submitted on time.

Preferred Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree in communications, social science, community organization, environmental science, conservation biology, or related field and 5 years related experience.
- Minimum of 5 years' experience in a related field with progressive responsibility and demonstrated success.
- Demonstrated ability to work independently, take initiative, multitask efficiently, and coordinate with a broad team of partners.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills including both interpersonal interactions and group presentations.
- Proven ability to translate complex concepts into succinct, clear, accessible language for a variety of audiences.
- Ability to work effectively and communicate with a variety of people in both rural and urban situations.
- Exhibit a professional and resourceful style that includes tact, sensitivity, flexibility and the ability to listen to and understand different perspectives.
- Able to think creatively and develop innovative solutions.
- Knowledge of community engagement tools and techniques.
- Proven ability to prioritize and manage projects with strong organizational, planning and time management abilities.
- Strong attention to detail while still maintaining an eye on the big picture.

- Demonstrated ability to leverage expertise, programs, and tools from a variety of sources to fulfill project objectives.

Additional Desired Qualifications

- Experience in community organizing, particularly at the grassroots level.
- Knowledge of and experience with agricultural operations, particularly irrigated systems.
- Experience in grant writing or interest in developing grant proposals.
- Ability to co-brand Tomorrow's Water with PLJV and partner organizations, while maintaining brand consistency.
- 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 habitat managers, conservation administrators, and local communities.
- Proficient in Google Workspace applications, Adobe InDesign, and Basecamp or other project management software is an asset.
- Bilingual and able to read, write and speak Spanish proficiently.

Other Requirements

- Must possess and maintain a valid state driver's license.
- This position 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.
- Must be comfortable traveling independently across rural landscapes and meeting in a variety of community settings. Travel requirements may be as much as 50% to engage communities and conduct in-person meetings and presentations to support Tomorrow's Water throughout the position's coverage area.

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.

People are essential to realizing our mission to conserve birds and their habitat across the region. At PLJV, we are committed to implementing conservation work in collaboration with a wide variety of individual and community stakeholders to ensure our work is reflective of their values, beliefs,

and ways of knowing. We commit to improving our awareness and understanding of the unique perspectives of people in our region, engaging in dialogue with communities of all backgrounds, and taking actions that support our combined interests in a meaningful way.

Supervisor

This position reports directly to and is evaluated by PLJV's Tomorrow's Water Coordinator. Work plans for the position will be determined by the Playa & Water Conservation Outreach Specialist, in consultation with the Tomorrow's Water Coordinator, based on the objectives of the Tomorrow's Water grant from NFWF America's Ecosystem Restoration Initiative including methods and techniques most appropriate for accomplishing those objectives. Beyond a work plan, the Outreach Specialist is largely self-directed in accomplishing objectives.

Salary, Benefits, Term, and Start Date

This is a full-time, term-limited position – funded through a NFWF grant – that ends April 30, 2029. Starting salary is commensurate with education, experience, and location with an expected range of \$70,000 to \$74,000. 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 in October 2025.

Job Location

The job location can be anywhere within eastern New Mexico that allows for easy travel within the region, with priority given to those candidates in Clovis.

To Apply

Playa Lakes Joint Venture is an Equal Opportunity Employer and seeks a diverse applicant pool. The deadline for applications is 11:00 p.m. MT on September 1, 2025. Please send the following items, in order, as one PDF document to Lily Abromeit at lily.abromeit@pljv.org.

- Cover letter (include location and available start date)
- Resume
- Two writing samples focused on outreach and engagement