



COLORADO WEST LAND TRUST

Conserving Land. Connecting People. Enriching Lives.

WATER PROGRAM MANAGER

STATUS	Full time, regular, exempt
REPORTS TO	Conservation Director
LOCATION	Grand Junction or Montrose, CO – this is not a remote position
SCHEDULE	Monday-Friday with some evenings and weekends required for meetings and special events
TRAVEL	Regional travel required; urban, rural, and backcountry
SALARY RANGE	\$60,000-\$78,000 annually

Colorado West Land Trust (CWLT) is the leading Land Trust in Western Colorado, serving a seven-county region from Grand Junction south to Ouray and Gunnison west into Grand County, Utah. CWLT has conserved 150,000 acres through more than 400 conservation agreements over its 40-year history. CWLT is a private, charitable non-profit organization, accredited by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission and governed by an active Board of Directors. CWLT has offices in Grand Junction and Montrose, Colorado.

CWLT's professional staff work together cooperatively to achieve CWLT's mission: *To protect and enhance agricultural land, wildlife habitat and scenic lands in western Colorado to benefit the community at large, enrich lives, provide opportunities for outdoor recreation, and ensure our connection to the land for generations to come.* CWLT's professional staff are flexible, solutions-oriented, collaborative workers who have a passion to fulfill the organization's mission.

JOB SUMMARY

The Water Program Manager identifies, develops, and implements projects that advance the Land Trust's Water Plan. The goals of this Plan include land and water protection, habitat restoration, promoting soil health and water-conserving agricultural practices, and building community capacity to address challenges posed by increasing water scarcity. The Water Program Manager will play a key role in the Land Trust's Risk to Resilience Initiative, a water-focused buy-innovate-protect-sell effort. The Water Program Manager will collaborate with other CWLT staff to complete real estate transactions including fee acquisitions and conservation easements and to implement projects to restore habitat, conserve water in agricultural operations, and improve soil health. They will oversee agricultural leases on farms acquired by CWLT and work with lessees to advance CWLT water program objectives.

The Water Program Manager will work with landowners, service providers, water management entities, and funders and must be able to build and maintain positive relationships with a diverse variety of constituents and stakeholders. This position requires knowledge of Western water rights and their management, and an understanding of real estate transactions; the ability to manage multiple priorities while meeting deadlines; and effective relationship building skills. The Water Program Manager is personable, detail-oriented, and flexible with the ability to respond well to changing circumstances.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

As a key member of the Colorado West Land Trust team, the Water Program Manager contributes to a cooperative and supportive work environment. Work is in alignment with the overarching goals and priorities defined through organizational planning, ensuring that progress is consistent with CWLT's mission and strategic direction.

Land Conservation & Water Protection

- Develop and manage land & water transactions, including fee title acquisitions and conservation easements.
- Establish a pipeline of real estate acquisitions aligned with CWLT's Water Plan objectives.
- Oversee the sale of properties owned and conserved by the CWLT.
- Manage farm leases for properties owned by CWLT.
- Identify and implement water protection strategies for conservation easements and land owned by CWLT; stay informed of new strategies and innovations and make recommendations to the Conservation Team.

Agricultural, Habitat, and Water Improvements

- Partner with agricultural producers to implement on-farm efficiency projects (e.g., piping ditches, automated gates) and soil health projects.
- Work with agricultural producers and partners to implement water-conserving farming practices.
- Identify restoration projects on CWLT owned properties and collaborate with CWLT Restoration staff for implementation.

Stakeholder Engagement & Partnerships

- Represent CWLT in Basin Roundtables, regional water planning efforts, and with irrigation districts/ditch companies.
- Develop and maintain collaborative relationships with private and public sector stakeholders involved in agriculture, habitat restoration, recreation, water management, and watershed health.
- Communicate complex technical concepts to diverse audiences, including landowners, policymakers, and the public.

Program & Grant Management

- Oversee a portfolio of project funds and grants including identifying and pursuing funding opportunities; prepare and submit grant applications; and build and maintain relationships with funding agencies, partners, and grantors as appropriate.
- Manage grants throughout the award lifecycle, including budget tracking, compliance with federal/state regulations, performance monitoring, and reporting as required.
- Manage consultants and subcontractors for project design and implementation.

Professionalism and teamwork

- Work collaboratively with members of the Conservation Team and Development Team and CWLT staff at large.
- Establish and sustain cordial, productive, and trustworthy relationships with landowners, funders, and external partners.
- Communicate professionally, courteously, and effectively with colleagues, board members, landowners, attorneys, service providers, funders, and other partners.
- Demonstrate problem solving skills. Proactively develop and recommend solutions as needed.
- Accept feedback in the spirit of growth and continuous improvement.

- Maintain productivity when working remotely and in an office setting.

Other responsibilities

- Participate in Conservation Program planning and team meetings.
- Prepare and submit reports, and give presentations to the Lands Committee, CWLT Board, funders and partners.
- Assist the Conservation Director with the development of the Water Program annual budget.
- Attend Board meetings, events, and professional development opportunities as requested by the Conservation Director.
- Update LOCATE database with water information, status, and communications.
- Complete other duties assigned by the Conservation Director.

REQUIRED EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE

- A bachelor's degree (or comparable experience) in natural resources conservation, science, agriculture, or a related field.
- Minimum of 3 years' experience in water resources management, agricultural conservation, land conservation, natural resource management, or related field.
- Experience working with agricultural producers and managing agricultural lands, leases, water rights, or conservation projects.
- Experience related to real estate transactions or conservation easements, strongly preferred.
- Experience with budget management, grant writing, and grant administration.

REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES

- Knowledge of Western water law, water policy, water rights administration, and water resource management.
- Ability to work effectively with farmers and ranchers.
- Ability to build effective collaborations with a diverse set of public and private partners.
- Demonstrated interpersonal skills required to accomplish the duties listed in "Professionalism and teamwork" including communication, collaboration, problem solving, and time management.
- Demonstrated ability to communicate effectively, negotiate solutions, and find common ground with diverse constituencies.
- Willingness and ability to speak in public, experience in public speaking preferred.
- Proficient with Microsoft Office applications (Excel, Power Point, Word, Publisher).
- Experience with database applications or demonstrated proficiency in learning to use software.
- Experience with ArcGIS or similar mapping applications.
- Valid driver's license and ability to drive safely in urban, rural and some backcountry environments requiring 4-wheel drive.
- Personal qualities of integrity, reliability, and commitment to the mission.

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

- Prolonged periods at a desk and working on a computer.
- Ability to traverse outdoor terrain such as gravel, packed dirt, and uneven ground, and navigate around obstacles.

WORK ENVIRONMENT

- The environment for office work is temperature-controlled.
- Outdoor activities may expose individuals to weather elements such as rain, snow, wind, heat, and cold.
- Field work may require employees to be alone in remote, backcountry locations, possibly without cellular service.

BENEFITS

Current employer paid benefits package includes employer paid health insurance; short- and long-term disability; life insurance; employee assistance plan; 15 days paid vacation, 10 days paid sick time, 11 paid holidays; 403(b) retirement plan with company match after 1 year. Additional employee paid supplementary insurance plans available: dental, vision, life, accident, critical illness, and hospitalization.