

Beaverhead Conservation District

JOB DESCRIPTION

Southwest Montana Sagebrush Partnership (SMSP)

Invasive Annual Grass Coordinator

August 2023

Hours:	1.0 FTE (40 hours/week)
Location:	Dillon, Montana
Reports to:	SMSP Conservation Coordinator
Salary:	Range \$50,000 to \$55,000 per year
Benefits:	10 paid Holidays per year 2 weeks paid Vacation per year 10 Sick Leave Days per year Health Stipend in accordance with employee policy Employer contribution SIMPLE IRA

Position Overview

The Invasive Annual Grass (IAG) Coordinator is a unique position created to accelerate cross boundary land stewardship in southwest Montana's sagebrush steppe with the specific task of implementing the Southwest Montana Sagebrush Partnerships (SMSP) strategy for addressing invasive annual grasses. It is a fully-funded two-year position with opportunity to extend.

The Southwest Montana Sagebrush Partnership is based out of Dillon, Montana and works throughout the High Divide region of southwest Montana in the Big Hole, Beaverhead, Red Rock, and Ruby watersheds spanning nearly 4,847,000 acres. Across the West, we have already lost 50% of historic sagebrush habitat and continue to lose about 1.3 million acres every year. But right here nestled against the continental divide, southwestern Montana houses some of the most intact, diverse, and productive sagebrush steppe remaining in the American West and therefore the world. This place is home to multi-generational family ranches intermixed with public land that supports a storied sporting heritage vital to recreational economies, all anchored by our sagebrush rangelands.

The Beaverhead Conservation District and the SMSP would like to attract an experienced and capable conservation practitioner to the job – someone able to independently manage cross-organizational relationships, who can coordinate multiple simultaneous projects, and who is motivated to take on new and innovative approaches to address one of the largest threats facing the American west today.

Position Description

The IAG Coordinator is a full-time position who will add capacity and provide support to the SMSP and is based out of Dillon, Montana.

The IAG Coordinator will work with the SMSP Conservation Coordinator (SMSP Coordinator), other partners, and other shared capacity partner staff to develop and implement projects with local communities, private entities, federal and state agencies, and private landowners, to help the SMSP advance a cohesive cross-boundary strategy to address the threat of invasive annual grasses, primarily cheatgrass, in southwest Montana. Examples of opportunities include:

- Further development of a coordinated approach to address the threat of invasive annual grasses in southwest Montana
- Create and implement a public facing campaign to educate our communities of the issue
- Manage and coordinate complex multi-ownership, multi-year projects
- Working closely with federal and state agencies, local government, non-profit organizations, private landowners, and private industry
- engagement and development of local workforce to address resource issues

While the IAG Coordinator will focus on IAG projects, they will also have the opportunity to assist in addressing the other three primary threats affecting the sagebrush steppe ecosystem (i.e., conifer expansion, wet meadow and riparian habitat degradation, and wildlife movement barriers). It is expected that the IAG Coordinator will develop autonomy in their work plan and project development as they become comfortable and more skilled.

Position Duties and Responsibilities

- Further develop and implement the SMSP IAG strategy to address invasive annual grasses
- Serve as project lead to oversee project design and coordinate the implementation of those projects, completing follow-up monitoring and reporting when required
- Build and maintain close and mutually beneficial collaborative relationships among federal and state land and wildlife management agencies and NGO partners
- Build and facilitate a strong partnership with the Beaverhead County Weed District and agency partners such as the BLM.
- Work with partners to support all phases of project development and implementation
- Develop and track project budgets in coordination with the SMSP Coordinator.
- Independently create projects on behalf of the SMSP while working with appropriate land management agency or private landowner.
- Prepare and inspect contracts.
- Assist Beaverhead County with investigating how to increase their ability to apply county and state resources to addressing invasive annual grasses.
- Assist in preparation of grant applications, project completion reports, and grant reports.

Qualifications

Required

- Experience managing conservation projects including project planning or project implementation. Preference will be given to work associated with the focus of the SMSP (especially invasive grass management) with the inclusion of range management work experience and work on private and public lands.
- Strong understanding of natural resource issues in Montana or the Intermountain West.
- Motivated to take on new and innovative approaches to natural resource stewardship.
- Passionate about wildlife conservation, functioning ecological systems, and working lands.
- Collaborative, open-minded, and community-oriented.
- Accountable and transparent, with a disposition to learn from mistakes.
- Demonstrated integrity, and the ability to exercise confidentiality and sound judgment.

- Ability and willingness to work independently, work in outdoor conditions over rough and uneven terrain, and maintain a flexible work schedule if needed.
- Willingness to travel throughout southwest Montana, and occasionally beyond

Preferred

- Experience and proven ability to encourage and nurture collaboration among multiple project partners.
- Ability to think strategically, develop and simultaneously manage multiple complex projects from start-up to completion, and adopt new approaches in response to changing circumstances.
- Undergraduate degree (or equivalent) in natural resources field (wildlife, range, conservation, forestry, hydrology, environmental science, botany, or related field) and 4 years of experience or Master's degree in a natural resource field and two years of experience.

The Beaverhead Conservation District may require a clean background check to begin employment.

About the Beaverhead Conservation District

Conservation districts are units of local government designed to help citizens conserve their soil, water, and other renewable natural resources. They were organized in the 1930s as a response to the "Dust Bowl" days. In 1937, President Roosevelt encouraged Montana to adopt legislation enabling the creation of local soil conservation districts. The state of Montana passed legislation creating its conservation districts in 1939 to provide for local control of natural resource management programs and activities. Montana's conservation districts partner with private landowners to keep our land and water healthy for the next generation. Local conservation districts are led and staffed by area residents to champion balanced conservation solutions for those they serve. Conservation districts are locally led and focus on the needs of their specific area. Montana is a large state with diverse needs. Every conservation district is unique, as are the services and programs they provide. Each conservation district focuses on the needs of its specific area. Some of the services provided by conservation districts include: Stream (310) Permitting, Soil Health Programming, Streambed Restoration, Watercraft Inspection Stations (AIS), and Rangeland Resources.

About the Southwest Montana Sagebrush Partnership

The Southwest Montana Sagebrush Partnership is a network of partners—including federal and state land managers, local government, nonprofits, local businesses, and landowners—dedicated to the responsible stewardship of southwestern Montana's sagebrush sea. The partnership formally began in 2017 with a realization among local land managers that the scope and scale of the threats to the sagebrush steppe ecosystem warranted a deliberate and equal scaling up of efforts and coordination to address these threats. Since then, the partnership has accelerated the pace and scale of science-based restoration work in our region and continues to find ways to further engage and support our rural communities. The [Southwest Montana Sagebrush Partnership](#) is not a new entity doing new work, but rather a name given to a philosophy and collaborative spirit that has existed in southwest Montana for many years.

Supervision

The IAG Coordinator is directly supervised by the SMSP Coordinator for daily activities and program development. They will participate in annual job performance reviews with the Coordinator and the Beaverhead Conservation District. In this unique partnership the IAG Coordinator position is hosted by the Beaverhead Conservation District, the SMSP Coordinator is hosted by The Nature Conservancy's High Divide Headwaters Program. Each position is fully integrated into their host organization and works together with the SMSP to advance cross-boundary on-the-ground collaboration.