Title: Landowner Services Coordinator

Position Summary

The Prairie Enthusiasts (TPE) is a regional non-profit conservation organization whose mission is restoring, managing, protecting and educating about prairies, oak savannas and other fire-dependent natural communities in the upper Midwest. TPE is an accredited land trust and is highly volunteer based, with eleven local chapters in Wisconsin, Minnesota and Illinois.

The organization is seeking a full-time staff person to provide a range of technical support services to private recreational and working landowners. This position is initially funded through a grant from the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) Monarch Butterfly & Pollinator Conservation Fund, with the goal of increasing the acreage of high-quality pollinator habitat throughout TPE’s service area, with a particular focus on monarch, Karner blue butterflies, and rusty-patched bumblebees.

Essential Responsibilities

- Assist the TPE staff, other NFWF grant partners and local TPE chapters in developing and executing a targeted outreach and education program in cooperation with local chapters to generate interest among landowners for restoration and management projects, as well as TPE’s general mission.

- Make initial contact with interested landowners to provide information and perform onboarding screening for the program.

- Schedule and make visits to landowner properties to help them assess the potential for new and improved pollinator habitat restoration and management projects. Provide a written report for each visit summarizing the findings for the property and making recommendations for potential projects and funding sources.

- When possible, invite local chapter members along on the visit. Facilitate contact between local landowners and the local chapter. Involve the chapters when there is interest in landowner relationships and projects when appropriate.
• For projects with strong landowner interest, high conservation value and good potential for funding, provide significant assistance to the landowner in writing an appropriate management plan for habitat restoration and management. Plans will need to meet NRCS or other funding agency requirements when necessary.

• Develop and maintain a database of potential funding sources for landowner habitat restoration and management projects, including USDA Conservation Programs (CRP, EQIP, CSP, etc.), other federal, state, county and local grant and cost share programs as well as private foundation grants. Understand requirements and applicability of each funding agency. Develop and maintain personal relationships with agency contacts.

• For projects with management plans in place, assist the landowner in applying for funding where needed.

• Develop and maintain a database of locally available, qualified habitat restoration and management resources to assist in project execution. Resources should include professional ecological restoration services for burns, brush and invasive removal and planting, as well as suppliers of seeds. Consult with local chapters about their experience with resource providers and their interest in direct involvement.

• Develop and maintain a database of landowner contacts, information about their land and management projects and assistance provided. This database may be integrated into GIS to provide mapping information and should be tied to and coordinated with the TPE membership database.

• Work with experts from the chapters, academic institutions and outside agencies and organizations to develop recommendations for planting seed mixes appropriate for various kinds of pollinator habitat restoration projects across the region based on ecological and economic considerations.

• Provide information, contacts and recommendations for restoration and management resources to landowners and chapter volunteers.

• Provide information to landowners about land protection options such as conservation easements with TPE or other qualified local land trusts.

• Facilitate execution and funding of land protection projects sponsored by local chapters and approved by the TPE Land Protection Committee and Board. Coordinate all TPE easement and fee title property monitoring and legal defense activities.

• Work with other NFWF grant partners to coordinate and facilitate all aspects of the landowner services program.
Required Qualifications

- A thorough understanding of prairie and savanna ecology, including knowledge of plant and insect identification, experience conducting ecological assessments and preparing management plans that prioritize and recommend activities to increase native habitats.

- Excellent verbal and written communications skills, interpersonal skills and proven experience working with private landowners and producers about conservation programs is essential. Must be able to work effectively with private landowners, governmental agency staff and conservation organization representatives.

- Ability to work independently with little supervision, communicate with diverse personalities, and work at times under adverse weather conditions.

- Good working knowledge of conservation program funding opportunities, including USDA Conservation Programs (CRP, EQIP, CSP, etc.), other federal, state, county and local grant and cost share programs as well as private foundation grants.

- Availability for extensive travel within the TPE service area. Valid driver’s license required with an acceptable driving record and history.

- Good computer skills including knowledge of Microsoft Office programs.

- Bachelor of Science degree or higher in ecology, resource management or related field.

- 2 – 4 years’ experience in a land trust or other conservation agency or organization.

Preferred Qualifications

- Experience with prescribed burning and preparing burn plans as well as experience in preparing native seed mixes for prairie plantings.

- Experience working on land protection activities including property acquisitions, conservation easements, monitoring or legal defense related activities.

- Experience with Arc View and/or other GIS mapping programs is desired.

Interested applicants should email a resume and cover letter to Chris Kirkpatrick, Executive Director via email at ExecutiveDirector@ThePrairieEnthusiasts.org.