Seeking a Director for the Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative

The Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts is seeking a full-time Director for the Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative (CCSI). The successful candidate will have a passion for conservation and helping to improve the sustainability, profitability, and soil health of farmers and farms in Indiana. The individual will value the history and culture of the partnership that has formed CCSI while being a visionary leader who is skilled at managing a complex program. The Director of CCSI works with the CCSI Oversight Committee to develop and achieve long-term goals and objectives. For day-to-day operations, the Director reports to the IASWCD Executive Director. This is a 3 year full-time position, with additional years contingent upon further funding.

About the Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative (CCSI)

The CCSI project began in 2009 with the mission that a sustainable cropping system and management strategy can protect our natural resources and actually improve our soils. This strategy allows a farmer to efficiently produce food, feed and fiber in an environmentally sound manner. Using the CCSI philosophy, a farmer disturbs the soil as little as possible allowing plants, microbes, insects and Mother Nature to do the work. The result is healthier, more productive soil. Healthy soil has a balanced biological community and high organic matter with the capacity to retain and cycle nitrogen through a living and functioning ecosystem. This is particularly important in much of our Midwestern, systematically drained, croplands. In 2012, the project applied for and received a USDA NRCS Conservation Innovation Grant that is helping to further demonstrate, implement, encourage, and evaluate the adoption of these conservation systems that improve soil health. These systems include practices such as no-till, cover crops, crop rotation, nutrient and pest management, precision-farming technology and buffers focusing on the systematic approach to farming.

Overall objectives of the program include: 1) Provide training and technical information to Indiana Conservation Partnership (ICP) staff, farmers and other agriculture professionals in the latest technology of conservation cropping systems; 2) Demonstrate and quantify the impacts of conservation systems on improving soil health; 3) Achieve unified support among the ICP, and other agriculture organizations and industry for CCSI and the Soil Health Strategy; and 4) Educate the general public on the benefits of conservation cropping systems and the value to the environment for supporting producers who adopt these systems.

Currently, a Soil Health Manager and a Conservation Cropping Systems Agronomist are employed by IASWCD/Purdue and work specifically on the CCSI project. An additional array of agency partnership staff provides dedication to the project at the field level. An Oversight Committee made up of the primary partners supporting CCSI develops long-term goals and provides direction for the project.

The CCSI project has won awards over the years including the 2015 No-Till Innovator award, the Merit award from the International Soil and Water Conservation Society, the Ag Conservation Award from the Indiana Wildlife Federation, and an Exceptional Conservation award from the Upper White River Watershed Alliance. The project has seen success through collaboration with many different partners, a significant increase in the number of cover crops applied, and as a model that is being replicated in other states. For more information on this project please visit our website at www.ccsin.org. For more information on IASWCD, please visit www.iaswcd.org.
**Director Job Responsibilities**

**Fundraising**
- Leads a strong fundraising effort, developing strategy, effectively communicating and ensuring implementation that continues to build financial resources from public and private funders.
- Develops fundraising programs and goals annually.
- Develops options to broaden income sources for CCSI.
- Writes grant proposals.

**Strategic Planning**
- Leads the strategic planning process, keeping strategic planning in tune with the vision and mission of CCSI.
- Works with the CCSI staff to develop a work plan to achieve the goals defined in the strategic plan.
- Regularly updates the CCSI Oversight Committee and CCSI partners on progress towards goals.

**Financial Management**
- Ensures sound fiscal and administrative management of CCSI in consultation with IASWCD Executive Director.
- Works with the CCSI staff and CCSI Oversight Committee to develop fiscal year budgets, monitor compliance with those budgets, provide regular financial reporting, and update CCSI partners on CCSI’s financial status.

**External Relations and Networking**
- Builds and develops effective strategic relationships with new and existing partners to ensure achievement of CCSI’s vision and mission.
- May serve on other committees of organizations where strategy aligns with CCSI goals.
- Along with CCSI staff, regularly attends field days, workshops and trainings, representing CCSI to the public.
- Represents and promotes CCSI’s mission and progress to the IASWCD members (92 local soil and water conservation districts).

**Oversight Committee Relations**
- Leads at a minimum quarterly Oversight Committee meetings.
- May work with a smaller Executive Committee in order to facilitate decision making as needed.

**Staff Supervision**
- Supervises CCSI positions. Currently these positions consist of a Soil Health Manager and Conservation Cropping Systems Agronomist. Future position includes a Communications Specialist.
- Works with the IASWCD Executive Director to set and ensure high program quality and a positive work environment.

**Qualifications**
The ideal candidate will possess the following skills and experience:
- Minimum of a Bachelor’s degree in Agriculture/Agronomy/ Agri-Business/Ag Economics or related field with agriculture experience.
Agricultural experience required including working knowledge of the issues, leaders, and trends in conservation cropping systems and soil health. Good understanding of the challenges affecting agriculture.

Demonstrated experience navigating complex projects in a collaborative partnership environment. Minimum of 2 years (prefer 4) required.

Ability to develop and retain staff, while maintaining a high level of performance, and effectively utilizing their talents.

A management style that is empowering, consensus and team building, and an appreciation and respect for the value of the contribution of CCSI staff.

Effective communication skills, including public speaking, writing, meeting facilitation, and consensus building.

Financial and/or business management skills including budgeting, compliance and reporting abilities.

Agreement with and support of CCSI’s vision and mission, and a desire to work and live in Indiana.

In addition, candidates must be able to:

- Interact with a variety of agency staff, farmers, researchers, and private agricultural advisors.
- Effectively utilize information technology, social media, office applications, and the Internet, as needed for the successful performance of the duties of the Director.
- Set annual work goals that support the implementation of the above outline job responsibilities.
- Work outside normal hours as needed to support CCSI events which includes a 25% minimum travel (in and out of state).
- Work location is negotiable within Indiana.
- Pass a background check.
- Possess a valid driver’s license

Compensation and Benefits
Salary is commensurate with experience. Benefits include Paid Time Off, holidays, a Health Reimbursement Arrangement, and Retirement Benefits.

Start Date/Location
Tentative start date is mid-May
Location is negotiable within Indiana

Deadline for Applications
March 16, 2016

Confidential Application Process
Email (Word or PDF document) cover letter summarizing interest and qualifications along with a current resume to the attention of Jennifer Boyle Warner, IASWCD at Jennifer-boyle@iaswcd.org.

Resumes must be accompanied by a cover letter. Inquiries may be sent to the same e-mail address. Applications received by the deadline will be acknowledged with an email reply.