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Position: Conservation Dogs Program Associate  
Reports to: Conservation Dogs Program Coordinator

Date: March 2024  
FLSA: Exempt

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Application deadline: 03/29/2024

Start date: 04/29/2024 - 05/13/2024

Salary: \$42,000 - \$48,000 per year

Experience: 1 - 3 years

### **Organization and Program Overview:**

The [New York-New Jersey Trail Conference](http://www.nynjtc.org) is a volunteer-powered non-profit organization caring for public lands and trails. Our passion is helping people responsibly enjoy the benefits of the outdoors. The Trail Conference is also the host organization for the [Lower Hudson Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management \(LH PRISM\)](#), a coalition of more than 50 organizations, agencies and other stakeholders invested in invasive species management throughout the region. The Trail Conference's [Conservation Dogs Program](#) (CDP) was developed to leverage the unique detection capabilities of dogs to improve the quality of invasive species early detection and rapid response management actions. Since 2019, our dogs have learned to detect 8 invasive species, including 6 plants, the insect spotted lanternfly, and the fungus that causes oak wilt, to support our mission of protecting our region's native habitats and biodiversity. We have also recently expanded our work into surveying and monitoring protected and sensitive native species threatened by the impacts of invasive species including New England cottontail, wood turtles and eastern box turtles.

### **Conservation Dogs Program Associate Job Description:**

We are looking for a highly motivated, thoughtful, and creative person to join our team as the Conservation Dogs Program (CDP) Associate. The CDP Associate will train, deploy and care for the Trail Conference's newest conservation dog with the goal of searching for priority invasive species and/or native species threatened by invasive species. By working with the Trail Conference's Volunteer Engagement team and Communications staff, the CDP Associate will also engage the public in helping with invasive species removals and habitat restoration initiatives and share the conservation detection dog method and program successes via multiple avenues of communication. Our ideal candidate has a diverse skillset that allows them to joyfully and responsibly interact with humans, dogs, and our natural world.

This is primarily a field-based position, with one day per week generally reserved for an administrative day in the Mahwah office regardless of the season. Field work includes detection dog training and surveys, invasive species removal, and helping to organize and lead education and outreach events. Office work includes data entry, data management, report writing, communications via web and social media, and grant writing.

**Duties and Responsibilities:**

- Perform scheduled fieldwork on projects that utilize the program dogs with direction and coordination with the Conservation Dogs Program (CDP) Coordinator
- Work closely with the CDP Coordinator to train new skills and maintain dogs' detection performance and handler techniques
- Comply with welfare and performance protocols. Periodically test dogs' performance via field preparedness test to ensure skills are being maintained.
- Care for conservation detection dog: includes maintenance of nutrition, exercise, off duty enrichment, husbandry, etc.
- Collect and enter training, performance, and ecological data according to Conservation Dogs Program policy
- Assist CDP Coordinator in collating data and creating reports for appropriate funding/granting agencies and partners
- Help nurture collaborative partnerships with non-profit organizations and municipal, state, and federal agencies on research, survey, and management projects that could involve the use of the conservation dogs
- Organize and attend outreach events. Offer educational programs and demonstrations involving the conservation dogs for various stakeholders and members of the public including school-aged children, volunteers, professionals in the field, and donors
- Schedule and lead volunteer workdays that support Conservation Dogs Program projects
- Aid in fundraising efforts with the Trail Conference Development team to support the program
- Assist in researching and applying for grants that align with CDP and Trail Conference missions
- Work with Stewardship Communications Coordinator to help develop and implement a communications plan that engages the public via print, digital and social media as it pertains to the CDP
- Help to revitalize and maintain Conservation Dogs Program webpage and social media
- Assist with writing and reporting for Stewardship Program and LH PRISM initiatives, including the LH PRISM Annual Report, quarterly progress reports and newsletters

**Minimum Requirements and Qualifications**

- Bachelor's degree in biology, wildlife science, forestry, natural resources, or a related field
- At least one year experience training dogs for high level sport competition or working with dogs in a professional capacity
- Ownership of one or multiple working dogs AND/OR be open to guardianship of a Trail Conference owned dog suitable for detection
- Understanding of dog behavior, scent theory, and animal husbandry/welfare
- Ability to walk 3-8 miles per day in various weather conditions and terrain
- Fluency with social media applications
- Comfort with public speaking and engaging with public stakeholders and concerned community members
- Patient, organized, and excellent creative problem solver
- Must hold and maintain a valid driver's license and have reliable access to a personal vehicle for work-related travel (on the job travel expenses reimbursed)

## **Preferred Qualifications**

- 1-3 years of experience working with detection dogs
- Experience with ArcPro and ESRI suite
- Experience leading volunteer groups, creating educational content, or presenting skills to groups of people
- Familiarity with northeastern flora, fauna, and invasive species relevant to this region
- Experience applying for and adhering to private, municipal, state and/or federal permits for environmental fieldwork
- Experience with contributing to grant and funding applications

## **Supervision and Work Environment**

Based in Mahwah, New Jersey, this is a full-time position beginning immediately. It offers a full-time, competitive salary with health and retirement benefits and opportunities for learning. The CDP Associate reports directly to the CDP Coordinator but will frequently coordinate directly with the Ecological Stewardship Program Manager, the Stewardship Communications Coordinator, and the Volunteer Engagement Manager.

While work performed at the Trail Conference's headquarters is preferred, hybrid work arrangements may be used to allow staff members to fulfill some or all their duties from an off-site location. Enabling remote and hybrid work is a strategic business decision, in addition to being a benefit for staff members, and is consistent with the Trail Conference's culture, including:

- Creating a highly engaged, equitable, diverse, and inclusive workforce.
- Attracting and retaining staff members by providing a work environment that is supportive, productive, and flexible.
- Sustaining a highly collaborative culture.
- Fostering an environment for continued productivity, improvement, and excellence.
- Empowering decisions that prioritize both business needs and staff member preferences.
- Reducing our environmental impact and aligning with the organization's sustainability goals.

For these reasons, we encourage the use of remote and hybrid work arrangements and flexible scheduling when appropriate and when in alignment with the needs of the teams. Approval for such arrangements is granted at the discretion of the Trail Conference management and is subject to ongoing and periodic review. The determination of staff member eligibility for remote and hybrid work will be made in accordance with the organization's Hybrid Work Policy and the needs of the organization.

## **Compensation**

The salary range is between \$42,000 and \$48,000 commensurate with experience. In addition, the position includes a monthly stipend for the care of any active working dog in the program. The Trail Conference proudly provides a full range of benefits including employer subsidized health care, matching 403(b), complimentary membership, eighteen+ paid vacation days, nine paid sick days, and twelve paid holidays.

### Application:

To apply, please submit the following items via email attachments (start all file names with your last name) to [jobs@nynjtc.org](mailto:jobs@nynjtc.org), subject line: Conservation Dogs Program Associate: *"Your Last Name"*. All application materials will be kept confidential.

1. A professional resume.
2. A cover letter addressing your interest and qualifications.
3. Contact information for three references.

This position is available until filled. Candidate interviews will begin immediately, followed by a second round of applications for finalists until an offer is made. No calls, please.

### Employment Opportunities

The New York-New Jersey Trail Conference provides equal opportunities to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, religion, color, age, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic disposition, neurodiversity, disability, veteran status, or any other protected category under federal, state, and local law. We pledge to uphold equality in our hiring and employment practices and to create an environment where everyone, from any background, can do their best work.

### About Us

For more information about the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference, please visit <https://www.nynjtc.org/about-us>