

Environmental Planner Tompkins County

Department: County Planning and Sustainability; Towns of Ithaca, Dryden, Lansing and Ulysses

Classification: Competitive

Labor Grade: County White Collar Grade of 14. Other entities have their own pay grading systems.

Approved: Bd. Res. #489, 12/18/1990

Revised: 6/91; 8/93; 6/95; 8/97; 2/05; 5/05; 6/06; 4/11; 3/18

By: HH, Commissioner of Personnel

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

(a) Graduation from a regionally accredited or New York State registered college or university with a with a Masters of Science in natural resources, planning, or related field with concentration in environmental planning policy or land use policy planning, **AND** one year full-time paid (or the equivalent part-time and/or volunteer) experience in areas of federal, state or local governmental environmental planning, or nonprofit or private sector environmental impact analysis; **OR**

(b) Graduation from a regionally accredited or New York State registered four year college with a Bachelor of Science in natural resources, environmental planning or related field **AND** three years full-time paid (or the equivalent part-time and/or volunteer) experience in areas of federal, state or local governmental environmental planning, nonprofit or private sector environmental impact analysis; **OR**

(c) Any equivalent combination of training and experience as described in (a) and (b) above.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENT: Possession of valid New York State driver's license within 30 days of appointment.

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE CLASS:

This is a mid-level professional planning position with the primary responsibility of carrying out the municipal charge of protecting and planning for the wise use of land and local natural resources. The Environmental Planner is responsible for coordinating interdepartmental implementation of New York State's State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), as defined in local policy on SEQRA. The position initiates the design, development and implementation of various environmental projects, studies, reports, and plans for the municipality, and actively advises all Departments that may have projects with an environmental design component. The position provides direct assistance to individuals and private, nonprofit, and public organizations and municipalities in answering requests for environmental information. The Environmental Planner is also responsible for all environmental project reviews affecting municipal facilities and interests.

The Environmental Planner working for Tompkins County is the primary staff person to coordinate and advise the Environmental Management Council (EMC) (a County-wide environmental advisory board with responsibility for advising the County Board of Representatives on environmental issues). In the County Planning Department, the work will be performed under the general supervision of the Commissioner of Planning.

In the Town of Ithaca, the work will be performed under the general supervision of the Director of Planning. A high degree of autonomy and independent judgment in performing work and developing internal and external programs will be allowed. The incumbent will perform all related duties as required.

In the Town of Dryden, work will be performed under the general guidance of, and in collaboration with, the Supervisor of the Building and Zoning Department. The Environmental Planner is the primary staff person to coordinate and advise the Dryden Conservation Board.

In the Town of Lansing, work will be performed under the general guidance of, and in collaboration with, the Town Supervisor. A high degree of autonomy and independent judgment in performing work and developing internal and external programs will be allowed.

In the Town of Ulysses, work will be performed under the general guidance of, and in collaboration with, the Town Supervisor. A high degree of autonomy and independent judgment in performing work will be allowed. The Environmental Planner will also act as the Zoning Officer for the Town and assist the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) in its functions.

A high level of interpersonal skill and diplomacy is required of an Environmental Planner since the position must advise and facilitate the work of a wide range of public interest groups who often have conflicting opinions. The Environmental Planner may be responsible for supervising the work of the various clerical staff and hired interns, as well as, supervising the contractual work of consultants hired to perform work under various environmental programs.

TYPICAL WORK ACTIVITIES:

- Provides professional technical support to all departments in implementing New York State's State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA);
- Reviews site plans and environmental impact statements, and provides professional advice on environmental impacts (in conformance with State, especially SEQRA and General Municipal Law Section 239-1&m, federal, and local laws) to municipalities (for the county position), Planning Department staff, and other departments; Provides technical support for municipal planning efforts;
- Analyzes natural resources, land use, and demographic information, in support of various environmental programs of boards, departments and municipalities (for the County position), by using the County or local Geographical Information System, and prepares map products as required;
- Encourages inter-agency cooperation with other departments, municipalities, and public/private/nonprofit officials by working to develop and implement plans related to environmental and comprehensive land use planning;
- Makes both formal and informal presentations to advise, recommend and inform citizen advisory boards, legislative bodies, and public officials on environmental and land use programs and issues;
- Serves as the environmental resources contact person for the Planning Department by responding to requests for environmental and land use information/complaints about environmental problems from the public, community organizations, and County/Town government;
- Produces written communication, such as reports, program summaries, news releases, and technical memorandums for the public and various groups and individuals as appropriate;
- Prepares grant applications to private/public/nonprofit funding agencies for environmental programs, and administers the implementation of these various grant programs;

ADDITIONAL TYPICAL WORK ACTIVITIES BY LOCATION:

In the County Planning Department:

- Supervises the contractual work performed by consultants and contractors under the County forestry program and advises the County on forest management policy;
- Administers the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's reimbursement program for the EMC, which requires the preparation of quarterly reports, annual work plans, and annual reports;
- Coordinates and facilitates the work of the environmental management council (EMC) by providing professional environmental planning and administrative advice and support;
- Prepares and administers the EMC'S annual budget;
- Acts as spokesperson for the EMC and, as required for the Planning Department, to radio, television and print media;
- Supervises the work of, and develops the annual work plan for EMC clerical staff; and
- Supervises EMC and Planning Department hired interns to work on environmentally related projects.

In the Town of Ithaca:

- Coordinates the Towns Geographic Information System (GIS);
- Coordinates and facilitates the work of the Conservation Board and its Environmental Review Committee; Participates in the development review and plan review process; and
- Supervises interns to work on environmentally related projects.

In the Town of Dryden:

- Works with Town staff to develop and maintain the Town's Geographic Information System (GIS); Coordinates and facilitates the work of the Conservation Board;
- Assists with Comprehensive Plan implementation and development of ordinances related to environmental planning; Manages the Town's Stormwater Management Program; and
- Participates in the development review and plan review process.

In the Town of Lansing:

- Manages the Town's Stormwater Management Program; Participates in the development and plan review process; Develops and maintains Geographic Information System (GIS); Pursues grant and funding opportunities;
- Develop energy saving measures for municipal buildings;
- Develop stream/gully buffer protection ordinance/recommendations; Evaluate septic systems, focusing on lakeshore properties;

In the Town of Ulysses:

- Assists with Comprehensive Plan implementation and development and/or amendment of laws and ordinances related to planning, zoning and the environment;
- Manages the Town's Stormwater Management Program; Participates in the development review and plan review process; Pursues grant and funding opportunities;
- Administers and enforces the Town's zoning and land development regulations, and interprets provisions of those regulations. Processes violations of the Town's zoning and land development regulations on a timely basis; Assists the public with applications and other matters concerning the Town's zoning and land development regulations;
- Attends Planning Board, ZBA, and Town Board meetings to provide assistance and advice to those boards; Provides staff support to the Planning Board and ZBA and coordinates administrative procedures for those boards,
- including, but not necessarily limited to, mailings, agendas, and legal notices, and processing of zoning violation and appearance tickets;
- Inspects properties for compliance with the Town's zoning and land development regulations and approved site and development plans.
- Acts as the Stormwater Management Officer coordinating all required work to be in compliance with NYS regulations on stormwater.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, ABILITIES AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS:

- Excellent and extensive knowledge of natural resource policy and environmental planning principles and practices, including techniques associated with substantive analyses of environmental issues;
- Ability to interpret a wide range of maps and aerial photography, as well as some knowledge of Geographical Information Systems to analyze data;
- Excellent interpersonal and communications skills to work effectively with the general public, advisory boards, department heads, legislators, and local officials on issues that are frequently highly contentious;
- Ability to develop and maintain good public and professional relations, work under tight deadlines, and display good professional and rational judgment in dealing with controversy;
- Understanding of design, research and implementation factors in environmental and land use issues facing communities;
- Ability to prepare and supervise contracts between the municipality and contractors implementing natural resource programs on behalf of the municipality;
- Ability to apply statistical techniques to analyze environmental and land use data;
- Skillful ability to use word processing, spreadsheet, database, and GIS or high precision mapping computer software;
- Ability to interpret and evaluate scientific and policy related reports, federal, state, and local environmental regulations and statutes;
- Ability to prepare concise, well constructed oral and written communications; and Physical condition commensurate with the demands of the job;
- In the Town of Ulysses, thorough knowledge of municipal zoning and land development regulations.

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