

Marion Soil and Water Conservation District Communications and Outreach Specialist



Job Description

Our mission is to partner with people in support of thriving lands, clean water, and healthy habitats. We do this through planning, technical assistance, funding, and education.

Introduction

The Marion Soil and Water Conservation District (District) is a special district organized under Oregon Revised Statutes Chapter 568 and authorized to implement a broad range of conservation services and programs.

Position Overview

This is a full-time position which serves as the Communications and Outreach Specialist of the Marion Soil and Water Conservation District (District). The position acts on behalf of the District Manager and the Board of Directors (Board), within the authority delegated by the Board and this description.

A Communications and Outreach Specialist is essential to strengthening an organization's visibility, reputation, and public engagement. This role focuses on crafting compelling messages and promoting the District's conservation driven mission, goals, and services to diverse audiences through channels such as social media, press releases, newsletters, and public events. Responsibilities include developing and implementing outreach strategies, collaborating with team members, and cultivating strong connections with community members, media, and the public on environmental and conservation initiatives. The Communications and Outreach Specialist also monitors public perception, responds to inquiries, and ensures consistent, brand-aligned communication that effectively demonstrates the District's achievements, programs, and impact. By enhancing awareness and fostering positive relationships, the Communications and Outreach Specialist plays a key role in driving community engagement and support for the District's conservation strategies.

The ideal candidate is highly creative, brings enthusiasm, a positive outlook, a collaborative spirit, and a strong commitment to conservation and the environment. At the District we believe that our greatest successes come from a combination of strong teamwork and individual initiative. Employees are expected to collaborate effectively with colleagues while also taking ownership of their specific roles. We value open communication, mutual respect, and a shared commitment to achieving our goals.

Core Job Duties with Percent of Annual Work Hours Dedicated to Job Duties

An estimated 85% of annual work hours (2080 hrs.) are dedicated to job duties, with up to approximately 15% allocated to support the balance of work and life through company-paid leave.

Digital and Print Communications (25%)

- Create engaging and impactful content across digital platforms, including social media posts, videos, podcasts, e-news, and blogs, to effectively reach target audiences. Collaborate with staff to ensure cohesive messaging.
- Manage social media livestreams and posts, actively monitoring and engaging with comments.
- Serve as the website administrator, overseeing content to ensure accuracy, timeliness, and

alignment with the District's mission. Provide guidance on tone, appearance, and user experience while collaborating with team members on content development.

- Develop and edit print and multimedia content, including videos, photographs, and digital graphics, using desktop publishing software.
- Supervise the graphic design and production of brochures, publications, and promotional materials, ensuring adherence to brand standards and maintaining high-quality, error-free results.
- Use photography and videography to document District events for use in various media, including the website, social media, printed materials, and special projects.
- Manage digital content and publications in compliance with Oregon's Public Records Retention guidelines and maintain the District's photo, audio, and video collection.
- Spearhead translation and transcription initiatives to ensure District events and materials are accessible to a diverse audience, fostering inclusivity and broad community engagement.
- Utilize analytic tools to track audience reach and engagement across communication channels.

Community Outreach (25%)

- Develop and implement outreach activities, awareness campaigns, and informational materials to promote conservation topics, increase public awareness, and support District initiatives.
- Inspire youth and adults to appreciate nature and its benefits by leading guided tours, designing outdoor activities, and developing engaging programs that promote both new and lasting interest in conservation.
- Represent the District at community events, assisting in the design, promotion, and coordination of festivals and outreach events.
- Collaborate with the team to plan specialized outreach events and create materials focused on project-based conservation topics.
- Oversee the development of the annual "Communication Calendar," which outlines the District's planned events for the year.
- Enhance outreach efforts by conducting strategic research, tailoring events to public needs, expanding the mission to underserved communities, improving accessibility, and pursuing professional development to adopt innovative outreach techniques.
- Establish and maintain relationships with community organizations and other partners to foster collaboration and support for conservation efforts.
- Plan, coordinate, and execute the District's annual meeting and outreach event to ensure broad community engagement and participation.
- Join forces with the team to establish the District as a central resource for conservation information by collecting, creating, and storing up-to-date and meaningful digital and hardcopy resources for the District's informational library.
- Collaborate and co-lead volunteer coordination by recruiting, training, and scheduling individuals for events and initiatives. Oversee volunteer engagement, manage required background checks, and ensure an organized sign-in process.
- Maintain an organized inventory of materials and resources for outreach activities, including efficient sourcing and purchasing.

Public Communications and Marketing (15%)

- Develop, edit, and distribute information on various topics to market and promote the District, its Strategic Plan, and conservation services, grants, and programs, enhancing visibility among diverse audiences.
- Conduct social indicator surveys to assess community needs, preferences, and satisfaction. Analyze data to identify trends, understand community perceptions and behaviors related to conservation, and provide actionable recommendations to inform decision-making and improve outreach strategies.
- Support communication needs for coworkers, the District Manager, and the Board of Directors, including coordinating and scripting public appearances and events as requested.
- Assist the District Manager in crafting and promoting compelling job announcements that effectively attract top talent to the District.
- Coordinate and edit the District's Annual Report in partnership with staff.
- Facilitate video conferencing through Teams and Zoom, managing the District's Zoom account, assisting with virtual meeting needs, maintaining cloud files, and ensuring proper use of conference room communication equipment. Stay informed on advancements in video conferencing technologies and best practices.
- Handle media inquiries, coordinate interviews, arrange event announcements, and direct requests to the appropriate spokesperson. Organize media coverage for special events.
- Oversee the design, selection, and procurement of promotional items and branded workwear to enhance brand recognition.
- Collaborate with advertisers to promote the District and its events.
- Coordinate the design and procurement of branded work apparel for staff, Directors, and volunteers.
- Oversee and energize the District's primary email, office@marionswcd, ensuring it serves as a public hub for communication, connection, and timely responses.
- Promote Board elections to encourage public engagement and interest in serving on the Board of Directors. Communicate election results internally.
- Design branded templates for District business, presentations, educational materials, and communications to maintain consistent branding.

Organizational Support (10%)

- Support the District's strategic planning processes, including drafting reports for the Board of Directors as needed.
- Serve as an appointee to the District's Education and Outreach Committee, conducting duties in compliance with Oregon's Public Meeting Law and facilitating video conference meetings.
- Participate in weekly and quarterly staff meetings and co-lead the Education and Outreach Team to coordinate communication and outreach efforts.
- Assist with onboarding new employees by introducing them to the District's communication channels, outreach activities, materials, and resources.
- Collaborate with the Budget Officer to develop the annual communications and outreach budget.
- Review and provide feedback on written documents, reports, and publications to ensure alignment with expertise and District goals.
- Serve on the Partner Grant review team, offering guidance to applicants and assisting with the District's Foundant Grant Lifecycle software.

- Utilize filing systems, databases, and document management tools to streamline administrative processes and manage records.
- Responsible for tracking communication and outreach outputs and outcomes to meet performance measures.
- Monitor seasonal climate and wildfire smoke conditions, issuing timely warnings to staff via email and text.
- Provide professional and courteous customer service support by responding to inquiries from the public, partners, and stakeholders via phone, email, and in person. Provide accurate information about programs and services and connect callers to the appropriate staff or resources when needed.

Other Duties (5%)

- Complete other duties as assigned for the purpose of ensuring that the mission is achieved and for the efficient and effective functioning of the District.

Professional Development (5%)

- Proactively seek opportunities for professional growth and development, including training and conferences aligned with job responsibilities and the District's mission.
- Proactively engage in cross-training with colleagues for a better understanding of their job.

Experience, Knowledge, and Skills

Experience

- Experienced in public relations principles, media relations, and how to interact with journalists, industry experts, social media advocates, and the public to manage messaging and public perception.
- Proven experience creating, scheduling, and managing content across multiple social media platforms with a track record of growing engagement and a follower base.
- Hands-on experience in writing, editing, and developing content for different communication channels, including social media, blogs, websites, newsletters, and press releases, tailored to engage diverse audiences.
- Experience planning and implementing communication or marketing campaigns, from initial concept to execution and performance evaluation.
- Demonstrated ability to work independently, managing tasks and priorities with minimal supervision, while also excelling in collaborative settings by effectively contributing to team efforts, supporting coworkers, and fostering a cooperative and productive work environment.
- Experience working with community organizations, partners, or specific demographic groups, particularly in outreach efforts aimed at building awareness and fostering participation.
- Adept at using video conferencing platforms, including Zoom and Microsoft Teams.
- Experience organizing or supporting outreach events, workshops, or public presentations, including logistics, promotional efforts, and follow-up engagement.
- Experienced with Microsoft Office 365, including Outlook, SharePoint, Word, Excel, Teams, and other online tools, with the ability to quickly learn new software as needed.
- Familiarity with video editing and design software such as Canva or InDesign is an advantage

Knowledge

- An understanding of environmental issues and conservation challenges is crucial for effectively delivering communications and outreach efforts that increase the public's awareness of the benefits of conservation and the District's mission.
- Knowledge of marketing techniques, including how to design and implement effective campaigns, advertisements, and promotions that align with the District's mission and goals.
- Familiarity with multimedia production techniques and creating visual content through tools like Adobe Creative Suite, Canva, or video editing software, to support storytelling and enhance messaging.
- Knowledge of cultural differences and inclusive practices to ensure outreach and messaging are respectful, accessible, and relevant to diverse communities.
- Understanding of ethical standards and legal regulations related to communications, including copyright, privacy, and social media policies.
- A commitment to ongoing professional development is expected to stay knowledgeable with the latest environmental issues, conservation trends, and communication and outreach practices and techniques.

Skills

- This position requires proficiency in using a computer for email, video conferencing (using platforms such as Zoom or Teams), and document collaboration (via Google Docs or Microsoft Office). Additionally, it involves using a cell phone for personnel and public contact, quick messaging through text or Teams, or making calls when immediate responses are necessary. District laptop and cell phone provided.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills are essential.
- Possess exceptional skills in organization, mindfulness, time management, multitasking, and setting clear priorities.
- Proficiency in languages other than English, such as Spanish and Russian, which are commonly spoken in the Willamette Valley is a plus.
- Strong ability to think ahead, take personal initiative, and effectively collaborate and coordinate with others.
- Flexible and responsive to new challenges and shifting environments, embracing innovative communication and outreach strategies to engage people and inspire a passion for conservation.
- Skilled in analyzing situations to make informed decisions, identifying issues, and creating effective solutions.
- Ability to work effectively with individuals from diverse racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds, tailoring communication styles and creating purposeful outreach that fosters inclusivity by acknowledging and valuing diverse backgrounds.
- Skilled in capturing high-quality photographs and videos that effectively communicate messages, highlight key moments, and enhance visual storytelling is desirable.

Responsibilities and Effort

This specialized technical role offers a high level of autonomy and responsibility, focusing on providing expert insights and managing complex projects to advance the District's goals. Key responsibilities include coordinating tasks, conducting research, resolving challenges, and delivering impactful solutions while meeting deadlines, maintaining compliance with laws, policies, and standards, and

fostering team skill development.

The position combines office and fieldwork, requiring adaptability and hands-on involvement. Field duties include equipment handling, moderate lifting, site visits on varied terrain, and community engagement. Periods of moderate to high pressure and occasional urgency are expected, demanding analytical skills, problem-solving, and resilience to balance ecological, community, and organizational needs.

Effective public interaction is central to this role, requiring all communication to be professional, respectful, and accessible. The position ensures compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act for outreach events and materials and adherence to District policies, state and federal laws, and Oregon Government Ethics Law.

Qualifications

A minimum of eight years of education and/or relevant work experience directly related to the core responsibilities of the position is required, including:

1. At a minimum, a bachelor's degree is required.
 - a. With at least four years of directly related work experience tied to the core responsibilities of the position or
 - b. An equivalent combination of education, training, and experience sufficient to successfully perform the essential duties of the position, and
 - c. Of the eight years, at least two years must demonstrate progressively responsible experience in a field pertinent to the role.
2. The successful applicant will be required to operate a vehicle for District business and must hold and maintain a valid, acceptable Oregon driver's license.
3. To be considered for employment, all applicants must successfully complete a pre-employment background check.

Working Conditions

Mixed Office & Routine Outdoor Work. A balanced combination of office-based tasks and regular outdoor work.

- This role involves driving and travelling throughout Marion County and other parts of Oregon for training and conferences. District vehicles provided.
- Employees work to foster and promote a workplace culture that emphasizes collaboration, innovation, accountability, compassion, respect, and commitment to an inclusive environment.
- This position works from a shared office space at 408 N 3rd Ave, Stayton, OR.
- Outdoor work or off-site locations vary widely requiring the individual to be highly adaptable and comfortable working across a diverse range of locations.
- Outreach events require off-site setup and you must be able to lift at least 35 pounds and for extended periods of time may be required to stand and walk, as well as stooping, squatting, bending, and kneeling.
- This position involves outdoor work, which may include environments such as dairies and farms; rivers, streams, and ponds; areas with dense vegetation or woodlands; and terrains that are steep, slippery, muddy, rocky, or otherwise hazardous.

- Work is performed both in the office and in the field, with potential exposure to pesticides, chemicals, dust, fumes, dirt, noise, heat, vibration, cold, and water. Personal protective equipment is provided as needed or upon request.

Position Details

- Full-Time, at will. Introductory Period is six months.
- Non-Exempt (Fair Labor Standards Act Status)
- Flexible schedule of 40 hrs. a work week (arranged with District Manager) between 7:30 AM and 5:30 PM, Monday to Friday, including occasional weekends and evenings.
- This position reports to and is supervised by the District Manager. This position does not include any supervisory responsibilities.

Compensation and Benefits

- Starting Hourly Wage: \$30.94 (Annual \$64,358)
- The District supports a hybrid workplace model, offering flexible teleworking opportunities for most positions. Employees can establish their telework schedules by entering into an annual Telework Agreement with the District Manager.
- Comprehensive dental and health insurance, which includes medical, vision, and prescription coverage. Additionally, we provide a 125 Flexible Spending Account Plan for health and dependent care.
- The District provides sick leave, vacation leave, and ten paid holidays annually, along with two additional personal days (8hrs each day) per year, and a bonus eight hours of vacation leave on your annual hire date anniversary.
- A \$20,000 life insurance policy.
- The District's retirement program includes a 457 Deferred Compensation Plan, Roth IRA, and 401(a) Employer Deferred Compensation Matching Program.
- Paid training and professional growth opportunities are available, subject to District Manager approval and when funds are available in the District's annual budget.

Equal Opportunity Employer and Provider

Marion Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) prohibits discrimination against its employees, applicants for employment, Directors, partners, customers, clients, contractors, and visitors on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, expunged juvenile record, performance of duty in a uniformed service, physical or mental, disability, citizenship, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state, or local law, regulation, or ordinance. Marion SWCD is prepared to make appropriate arrangements and/or accommodation for people with disabilities. If special physical, language, or other accommodation is needed, please contact the District Manager at 503-391-9927 as soon as possible, and at least 48 hours in advance of any needed accommodation.