

# JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT



## Habitat Specialist Montana (1 position)



**Application Deadline: January 19, 2015**

**Location: Moiese (area), Montana**

**Anticipated Start Date: March 9, 2015.** This is a part time temporary position. The contract ends December 31, 2019. The contract can be extended.

**Duties and Responsibilities:** This position will foster the mutual conservation objectives of Pheasants Forever (PF) and The US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) by developing bird habitat on lands owned by USFWS throughout the Mission Valley, Montana. The Habitat Specialist will physically enhance habitat on USFWS owned lands by planting and cultivating small grain crops and native grass/forb mixes, and other duties associated with habitat enhancement projects. These cooperatively funded positions will receive weekly work direction from USFWS employees at the National Bison Range. Onsite work will include, but will not be limited to: small and large equipment operation, equipment transport, site preparation, seed mixing & planting, mechanical & chemical weed control, tillage and mowing practices, water manipulation, fencing, posting and signing, livestock management practices, controlled burning and other agricultural practices. The ability and willingness to work long hours during crucial periods of the growing season, and coordinating work activities with the USFWS is required. Administrative duties will include, but not be limited to; detailed record keeping, accomplishment reporting, time and budget management, procurement of materials, and coordination with and assisting USFWS staff with area management plans. Pheasants Forever organizational training will be provided by PF Regional Representative and PF National Office. USFWS equipment training and certifications will be provided by the National Bison Range certified instructor. Applicant must be able to obtain USFWS equipment operation certificate through successful completion of DOI courses provided by NBR certified instructor.

**Minimum Qualifications:** Graduation from an accredited college or university with a Bachelors Degree in Wildlife Management, Biological Sciences or Agriculture is a benefit but is not required for these positions. PF and the USFWS are looking for motivated individuals with the ability to work long hours in the field during peak seasons of the year. Practical experience in the operation and repair of equipment including: tractors, tillage equipment, grass drills, mowers, ATV's, trucks, bumper and gooseneck trailers is very important. Candidates must show experience that includes practical knowledge of establishment, maintenance, and the long-term management of grasslands, shrubs and small grain crops. Knowledge, experience, and training in prescribed burning are helpful. Applicants must be an innovative and resourceful self-starter with excellent communication skills and be able to work with minimal supervision. Successful applicants must also possess or be able to acquire a Montana CDL Operators License and an Herbicide Applicators License. *This is a demanding but rewarding job. The right individual will gain incredible experience working with landowners, resource agency personnel and volunteers while building, enhancing and maintaining conservation projects and wildlife habitat.*

**Core Competencies and Special Ability Requirements:** We expect the persons in these positions to accept varied and changing responsibilities in the job, develop and sustain cooperative working relationships with partner agencies and the public, effectively communicate both orally and in writing, develop solutions to solve problems, employ computer technology to enhance work quality, understand needs of customers, and to work evenings, Saturdays and Sundays on occasion.

**Salary:** \$18/hr + Health and Retirement Benefits (Potential for full time employment possible dependent on future funding)

**To Apply:** Please visit our recruitment website at [www.pheasantsforever.org/jobs](http://www.pheasantsforever.org/jobs)

**ONLY ONLINE APPLICATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED.** Please include cover letter, resume and 3 references in one Word document or PDF file.

**Contact:** Matt O'Connor, Habitat Forever Coordinator 563-926-2357, [moconnor@pheasantsforever.org](mailto:moconnor@pheasantsforever.org)

**Local Contact:** Amy Lisk, Biologist National Bison Range 406-644-2211 ext. 217  
Dan Bailey, Pheasants Forever Montana Regional Representative 406-586-8137

**Description of Area:**

All of the work will take place in the Mission Valley of NW Montana. The Lake County Wetland Management District, administered by the National Bison Range Complex (NBRC), includes nine WPAs: the 80 acre Montgomery piece in 1974; the 80 acre Herak and 400 acre Sandmark tracts in 1975; the 719 acre Duck Haven in 1988; the 80 acre Johnson 80 and the 1,549 acre Crow tracts in 1989; 163 acre Anderson and 169 acre Kicking Horse in 1991; and the 28 acre Ereaux in 1998. Former land use on most of these acres was primarily agriculture grain and forage production. Most WPAs were intensively managed through farming activities by FWS and partners until the late 1990s, with the objectives of reducing invasive forb populations and establishing dense nesting cover (DNC) for breeding waterfowl. Species commonly used in DNC vegetation mixtures were smooth brome, tall and intermediate wheatgrasses, basin wildrye, orchard grass, alfalfa, and yellow sweet clover. From the late 1990s to the present, the FWS has employed a variety of methods to minimize establishment and spread of the invasive species in the area. These efforts have met with mixed success. While purple loosestrife and leafy spurge infestations were kept at bay, whitetop, Canada thistle, teasel and spotted knapweed have become established to varying degrees. Concurrently, several of the seeded DNC species smooth brome and both wheatgrasses have not only persisted, but have become near monocultures with correspondingly low structural diversity and forb production.

Now, over 20 to nearly 40 years after initial acquisition, we propose a multi-year, multi-phase project to begin to renovate habitats at these WPAs. We use "renovate" to indicate that our objective is not to attain some selected historic benchmark or reference condition, but rather to aggressively combat invasive species, increase structural diversity for breeding birds, increase forb production to support high invertebrate abundance, and establish a resilient plant assemblage of native and desired non-native species.