



FORESTER POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT

About the Center for Heirs' Property Preservation

The Center for Heirs' Property Preservation (the Center), a nonprofit organization established in February 2005, has a mission of protecting heirs' property (HP) and promoting the sustainable use of land to provide increased economic benefit to low-wealth families through education, advocacy, legal services and forestry technical assistance in the counties of Allendale, Bamberg, Beaufort, Berkeley, Calhoun, Charleston, Clarendon, Colleton, Dillon, Dorchester, Georgetown, Hampton, Horry, Jasper, Lee, Marlboro, Orangeburg, Sumter, Williamsburg, Darlington, Marion and Florence.

The Center is moving into Aiken, Barnwell, Chesterfield, Edgefield, Fairfield, Greenwood, Kershaw, Lancaster, Lexington, McCormick, Newberry, Richland and Saluda counties for the purpose of providing forestry technical assistance.

Forester Position Description

Under the direction of the Director of Forestry, this position performs such professional forest management duties as providing forest management services to private non-industrial under-served landowners in such ways as: educating landowners about sound forestry management practices; preparing complete forest management and conservation plans for landowners, and assisting landowners in securing help for all work recommended. This position is a full time equivalent, exempt position.

The initial home office for this position will be at the Center's Orangeburg, SC Office located at 396 St. Paul Street, Unit 105 Orangeburg, SC 29115. The initial primary service area for this position will be in Aiken, Barnwell, Edgefield, Greenwood, Lexington, McCormick, and Saluda counties.

Extensive travel is a part of the position and employee will be required, at times, to utilize their personal vehicle over rural terrain and will be reimbursed for mileage at a rate which is currently 56 cents per mile.

Desired Experience, Education, Skills, and Knowledge

- Graduate of a 2-year college with an Associate in Applied Science in Forestry Management Technology or an accredited 4-year B.S. (minimum or graduating with a BS) degree in forestry, natural resources management, or a related field
- Capability of working in remote outdoor locations in various weather and forest conditions
- A minimum of one (1) years' experience related to forestry field work
- Knowledge of forest management techniques and practices. Experience in wildlife management is desirable
- Must be a Registered Forester in South Carolina or obtain this designation within one year from date of hire
- Must be proficient with various forest inventory/mensuration techniques and methodologies
- Must have working knowledge of landowner assistance programs, such as those contained in the U.S. Farm Bill.
- Must have the ability to become a certified prescribe fire burn boss and a USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Technical Service Provider within one year from date of hire
- Must be proficient with both Microsoft Office suite and GIS software
- Capability to maintain project records and reports using technology and experience in using this information to prepare project-related reports for management, partners and funders
- Excellent interpersonal skills and strong oral and written communications skills, as well as time management skills
- Capability to deal with individuals from various backgrounds, including clients, personnel from partner agencies, and forest consultants/contractors.
- Experience either in working or volunteering for a nonprofit social service organization
- Empathetic to the special values and challenges of HP owners and other historically underserved landowners
- Willingness to work occasional nights and weekends for educational activities and special events.

Compensation

Compensation consists of (1) a base salary that is dependent upon level of experience and falls within Center Pay Grade 9 (\$42,900 - \$50,000) and (2) benefits (i.e., paid leave, health, dental, and vision insurance and retirement plan).

Application Process

Applications will be received until 5 pm on **April 8, 2022**. It is anticipated that the position will be filled by the end of April, 2022. Applicants should send via either email or mail (1) a cover letter, which includes why the applicant wishes to apply for the position, along with salary requirements and (2) a resume. This information should be sent to the attention of:

J.F. Walden, COO, (jwalden@heirsproperty.org), Center for Heirs' Property Preservation, 1535 Sam Rittenberg Blvd., Suite D., Charleston, South Carolina 29407

No calls, please, regarding this opportunity; however, feel free to view the Center's website at www.heirsproperty.org for additional information.



What is Heirs' Property?

In the Lowcountry, most heirs' property is rural land owned by African Americans who either purchased or were deeded land after emancipation, but who were routinely denied access to the legal system. Much of this land has been passed down through the generations without the benefit of a will so that the land is owned in common by all of the heirs, regardless of whether they live on the land; pay the taxes or have never set foot on the land.

This form of property succession is called *intestate succession* which is an unstable form of ownership that puts heirs' property at high risk for loss because any heir can sell his/her percentage of ownership (no matter how small) to another who can then force a sale of the entire property in the courts. This legal vulnerability has resulted in the loss of many family estates, and in particular, has disrupted the continuity of culture and heritage among African-American communities living in coastal South Carolina.

Ironically, a great deal of heirs' property is land that was originally considered mosquito-ridden and unlivable because it was located near water. Today, it is some of the most desirable land in the Lowcountry. With increasing pressure from development along the coast, conserving this important rural land is also essential to the preservation of our coastal landscape and everyone's quality of life. Therefore, the Center promotes and facilitates the engagement and involvement of heirs' property owners with community leaders in their local planning processes.

Often, heirs' property mistakenly believe that they own their property (have clear title) because: 1) they have paid taxes on the land; 2) they have received a verbal expression of inheritance, and 3) they have been living on the land. This is not the case.

Consequently, community education is the main thrust of the Center followed by full representation to provide the necessary legal services to help heirs' property owners resolve their HP issues. At any given time, the Center's attorneys are handling 60 or more family cases. Once title is cleared, the landowners may take advantage of the Center's educational workshops with a range of expert partners to determine the best option(s) for making use of their land to maximize income and value. Those with forested acreage may qualify for the Center's Sustainable Forestry Program. The Center's specific services include:

- Conducting HP 101 (heirs' property) legal seminars to educate heirs on their rights and strategies to ensure they do not lose their land;
- Providing extensive legal assistance and representation to heirs who either want to "clear" title, or are in the process of losing their land;
- Providing "Family Presentations" to promote essential, family agreement
- Conducting Wills Clinics to prevent the growth of heirs' property ownership, and
- Conducting the Sustainable Forestry Program for African American landowners with a minimum of 10 forested acres to maximize their income and land value, and
- Conducting "Informational Outreach" presentations to the community-at-large.