



PRESERVES MANAGER

The mission of Driftless Area Land Conservancy (DALC) is to maintain and enhance the health, diversity and beauty of Southwest Wisconsin's natural and agricultural landscape through permanent land protection and restoration, and to improve people's lives by connecting them to the land and to each other.

HELP US GROW! DALC is a nationally-accredited land trust operating across seven counties in Southwest Wisconsin. As we celebrate our 25th anniversary, we are strategically growing our staff, preserves and community conservation work. We've protected over 10,000 acres with a combination of land protection tools including nearly 60 conservation easements. We host a network of public nature preserves on 9 sites covering nearly 1000 acres where we work to demonstrate best practices in ecological restoration, regenerative agriculture, and trail management. We strive to engage volunteers and our communities in these endeavors.

DALC prides itself on nurturing a supportive, collaborative, and flexible work environment and is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Learn more about us at: www.driftlessconservancy.org.

Position Summary

The Preserves Manager (PM) reports to and works closely with the Conservation Director to oversee all aspects of management and monitoring across our expanding network of nature preserves and Driftless Trail segments. As a leader on DALC's Land Team, the PM will strategically grow DALC's internal land management capabilities, while prioritizing and setting the pace of projects based on site needs as well as staff, contractor and funding availability. By incrementally and strategically moving specific management units and even whole preserves through intensive ecological restoration phases, the PM will push sites toward equilibriums of sound management maintained with regular prescribed fire, grazing, spot mowing/spraying and other tools.

The PM has strong project management and land stewardship skills and can efficiently consider priorities across sites, maintaining an awareness of ongoing and new issues, and pivoting to meet challenges. The PM works closely with external partners such as the Natural Resources Conservation Service and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to collaboratively manage certain sites. The PM supervises DALC's Land Management Specialist and future hires as we grow our land stewardship program staff and equipment resources.

Job Duties:

Strategic Leadership

- Assess each DALC preserve and determine restoration and seasonal management priorities in the context of DALC's strategic plan, specific site objectives and resource (staff/equipment/funding) availability.
- Consider existing preserve management plans and adapt as needed based on organizational priorities and site responses to work previously completed.
- Develop high-level work plans for each site that other staff and volunteers can follow.
- Develop budgets and work within them to complete projects.
- Supervise all DALC land management staff (currently 1 FTE) and consider how best to grow DALC's internal land management capabilities.
- Identify, apply for, and manage grants and government program enrollments (e.g. CRP) to improve habitat quality and public nature-based recreation experiences while assuring appropriate tracking, and timely reimbursement and reporting.
- Manage contracts, agricultural leases, timber sales and similar agreements to assure DALC objectives are met.
- Work with DALC's staff Leadership Team and the Board of Directors to make decisions about high priority land restoration and protection projects including acquisition of preserves and new trail segments, as well as disposition of preserves to partners.
- Grow and maintain knowledge of best practices in ecological and agricultural land management to implement and demonstrate best practices in the field for other DALC staff and the broader community.

Stewardship & Organizational Implementation

- Oversee and directly engage in habitat restoration and trail projects including application of prescribed fire, tree and brush clearing, herbaceous invasive species management and general maintenance including regular mowing during the heart of the growing season.
 - Work with Land Management Specialist (LMS) and volunteers to implement work plans including restoration projects and regular maintenance at each preserve and trail corridor segment.
 - Work with LMS and volunteers to regularly monitor preserves and trails for safe and enjoyable visitor experiences.
 - Work with LMS and volunteers to document and assess progress on the ground via maintaining photo points, plant and animal inventories, etc., and welcoming research, surveys and other means of analysis to judge efficacy of actions.
- Participate in public speaking events, workshops and volunteer days.
- Create GIS maps for a broad array of uses including management planning, grant applications and work tracking.
- Use Landscape land conservation software platform to track and report on restoration units and phases, legal agreements, grant deliverables and other work items across sites.
- Ensure land management program compliance with internal policies and external requirements, including the Land Trust Alliance's Standards and Practices.

Minimum Qualifications:

- Knowledge of current trends and practices in land management (e.g. prescribed fire, invasive species control, recreation management, water quality protection, agricultural systems and forest management for biodiversity and carbon storage)
- BA/BS degree and 5 years of experience in conservation practice **or equivalent combination of education and experience**
- Experience managing complex or multiple projects, including staffing, workloads and finances under deadlines
- Supervisory experience, including motivating, leading, setting objectives and managing performance
- Communicating clearly via written, spoken, and graphical means
- Strong time-management skills
- Collaborative leadership style
- Willingness to work flexible hours including occasional evenings and weekends

Desired Qualifications:

- Knowledge of Driftless Area ecology, land management, farming and hunting traditions
- Knowledge of agronomy and regenerative/sustainable agricultural practices including best practices to protect water and soil
- Knowledge of rotational grazing systems and potential ecological applications
- Experience implementing prescribed fire
- Experience operating equipment including tractors, UTVs, mowers, skidsteers, chainsaws, brush saws, water pumps and similar
- Experience building and maintaining equipment
- Experience managing building facilities
- Experience in partnership development with non-profit partners, community groups, academic institutions and/or government agencies, including municipalities
- Experience negotiating

Salary and Benefits

This is a full time (40 hours/week), salaried position located at our office at 206 S. Iowa Street in Dodgeville, Wisconsin or hybrid/remote from another location in DALC's service area of Iowa, Lafayette, Richland, Sauk, southwestern Dane, and northwestern Green Counties. Note that while DALC has not made a final decision, we may be moving our offices to Spring Green in 2026.

The salary range is \$62,000 - 72,000 annually depending on qualifications and experience. Benefits include a generous leave policy, including up to 3 weeks paid vacation in the first year; medical benefits and retirement. This position will require travel throughout Southwest Wisconsin with mileage reimbursed.

DALC believes that continual growth through experiential learning, peer-peer networks and relevant training makes for a happier and more effective team. Professional development opportunities include attendance at conferences, participation in region-wide peer networks

organized by Gathering Waters, membership in professional societies, and myriad online trainings and seminars offered by the Land Trust Alliance. DALC staff also have access to local skills workshops such as chainsaw training, prescribed fire management, and trail building.

To Apply

To apply please email a cover letter and resume to Natasha Rank, Operations Manager at info@driftlessconservancy.org . **NOTE: Please put the words “Preserves Manager” in the subject line of your email.**

Please direct questions about the position to: Stephanie Judge, Conservation Director at stephanie@driftlessconservancy.org.

The hiring team will begin reviewing and interviewing candidates on a rolling basis as soon as October 6, 2025.