

# Center for Natural Lands Management

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## POSITION DESCRIPTION

### Preserve Manager – Central California

Reports to: Director of Conservation Science and Stewardship (with support from the Regional Preserve Manager, Central California)

Location: Somewhat flexible, preserves located in vicinity of Bakersfield, CA

Position: Permanent / Full-time (1.0 FTE); Exempt (Salaried)

Compensation: DOE; Benefits



Application deadline: Open until filled, active recruitment

### Position Summary and General Duties

The Preserve Manager – Central California (Preserve Manager or PM) will join the current team of three other preserve managers in CNLM's Central California region. The PM will be responsible for managing a portfolio of three preserves in Kern County, CA that collectively cover approximately 8,000 acres. (Some of this responsibility is shared with another Preserve Manager). Those preserves are Lokern (approximately 4,000 acres), Semitropic Ridge (approximately 3,700 acres), and Sandridge (270 acres). All of the preserves are owned by CNLM, and all are protected and managed for conservation purposes—including threatened and endangered species. Valley saltbush scrub and grasslands dominate much of the larger parcels, with diverse biotic assemblages that reflect the geography, topography, and scale of these preserves.

CNLM has considerable history with, and hence data on, these preserves—some parts of which were acquired in the early 1990s. As such, the Preserve Manager will not only continue to manage and monitor these lands and their resident populations but will manage the growing database with appropriate analyses and representations so as to track trends and derive information for adaptive management.

The scale of these conservation lands provides an opportunity to understand and effectively manage at an ecosystem level the threatened and endangered species that reside here. This responsibility requires a strong background in biological sciences and a risk-sensitive approach to monitoring and management. The taxonomic diversity requires a generalist perspective, with particular attention to vegetation requirements of animal species.

The Lokern Preserve is composed of several disjunct parcels along both sides of the California Aqueduct, approximately 30 miles west of Bakersfield, California. Much of the Preserve is comprised of annual grassland and valley saltbush scrub and provides quality habitat for several

threatened and endangered species including San Joaquin kit fox, giant kangaroo rat, Tipton kangaroo rat, San Joaquin antelope squirrel, blunt-nosed leopard lizard, and Kern mallow. The Lokern Preserve provides habitat for a variety of additional species of concern, including burrowing owl, LeConte's thrasher, tri-colored blackbird, short-nosed kangaroo rat, and Tulare grasshopper mouse.

The major vegetative associations at the Semitropic Ridge Preserve include valley saltbush scrub and valley sink scrub. The (state and/or federal) listed animal taxa that are the focus of conservation here are similar to those at Lokern. Semitropic Ridge Preserve together with adjacent natural lands forms one of the largest natural remnants of the San Joaquin Valley. The western border of the Preserve is contiguous with the Northern Semitropic Ridge Ecological Reserve, owned by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. The Kern National Wildlife Refuge is approximately five miles north of the Preserve.

The Sand Ridge Preserve encompasses a portion of a narrow sandy ridge and part of the floodplain of Caliente Creek, an intermittent stream with headwaters in the Sierra Nevada and Piute Mountains. The ridge-top sand system is highly isolated from similar habitat and hosts several rare and endangered species including Bakersfield cactus, Sand Ridge Jerusalem cricket, and the giant flower-loving fly—the latter two species currently only being found at Sand Ridge Preserve. Despite its small size relative to the other two preserves in this portfolio, Sand Ridge is not only a refugium for imperiled species, but it is currently undergoing considerable enhancement activity. A new species of legless lizard—*Anniella grinnelli*—was discovered recently on the Preserve. CNLM staff have been actively expanding the occurrence of Bakersfield cactus with planting, monitoring efficacy of weed management treatments, and acquiring adjacent property to provide a larger and more defensible preserve for the species of conservation focus. The plant communities at Sand Ridge Preserve are a unique assemblage of San Joaquin Valley and Mojave Desert plants. Although there is a trail on the Preserve, it is currently closed due to the sensitivity of resident animal and plant populations and ongoing enhancement activities.

CNLM's Central California Region is both a region in which CNLM has a long history of stewardship as well as one of recent and substantial expansion in CNLM's conservation portfolio. Currently in the Central California Region (which does not include the CNLM Santa Cruz County preserves), there are eight preserves with sizes between 40 and 25,000 acres distributed among Kern, San Benito, Fresno, Kings, Monterey, San Luis Obispo, and Tulare Counties. Almost all of these preserves are owned in fee by CNLM, with one that is protected (but not managed) by CNLM with a conservation easement that CNLM monitors, enforces, and defends.

The Preserve Manager will be responsible for management at both landscape and population levels. Stewardship activities include occasional restoration or enhancement activities; integrated pest management including chemical control of exotics if needed and/or mechanical

control; management of grazing activities; biological monitoring; revising management plans; preparing annual budgets, work plans, and reports; analyzing recent and accumulated data and presenting results appropriately; and active engagement of regulatory agency personnel and other collaborators and contractors needed for specialized services.

The Preserve Manager will provide resource management in accordance with the conservation values and regulatory requirements of the Preserves, CNLM's stewardship standards and practices (which also reflect and exceed Land Trust Accreditation Commission standards), and the preserve-specific management plans. This position requires maintenance of a home office for which CNLM provides a stipend. A company vehicle may be provided at management's discretion. There is a considerable degree of autonomy (and responsibility) associated with this position because of CNLM's organizational structure which focuses on preserve management rather than high levels of administration and supervision. In addition to the management of this portfolio of preserves, the PM will contribute to CNLM's expertise and documentation of 'best management practices' for managing rare and protected plant and animal species. The PM will participate in internal and external stewardship and conservation science events and as needed, participate in the acquisition of new preserves.

## **About CNLM**

The Center for Natural Lands Management (CNLM) is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, created in 1990, whose mission is the perpetual stewardship of natural and created conservation lands, sensitive species, and their resident ecosystems. Conservation stewardship activities are practiced on preserves in California, Oregon, and Washington. CNLM currently has a preserve portfolio of over 100 preserves that combined represent more than 75,000 acres of high conservation value.

The majority (>90) of CNLM's preserves are in California, encompassing over 70,000 acres throughout the state, with new preserves added intermittently. The preserves vary in size from three to thousands of acres and are managed under direct ownership, conservation easements, or management contracts. For purposes of organizational structure and oversight, CNLM's California preserves are organized into (currently four) regions: Northern California, Central California, Orange/Riverside County, and San Diego County.

Central to CNLM's mission and fundamental to its success are the principles of rigorous cost estimation for managing conservation areas in perpetuity and application of appropriate scientific information for conservation and restoration. CNLM staff developed the iconic "PAR" software and made it available (now through subscription to the app) to the conservation community to assist with determination of perpetual stewardship costs. Financial support for CNLM's conservation activities is primarily acquired from earnings on investments (endowments) that are professionally managed. Conservation properties are typically acquired through mitigation processes—as such the properties have been well vetted for conservation value and are accompanied by perpetual stewardship funding. In addition to its fee title properties, CNLM monitors and defends conservation easements it has been granted over many properties and works collaboratively with natural resource regulatory agencies to protect

and maintain conservation values.

CNLM is culturally significant in its focus on rare and vulnerable species, small populations, and sensitive habitats. Such responsibilities require stewardship staff with a strong background in natural sciences, the ability to apply principles from conservation biology with experienced discretion, and a passion for contributing to conservation success through long term, on-the-ground, management. To fulfill its conservation mission, CNLM has a well-established practice of selecting for and investing in excellent staff.

Given the dispersed nature of its preserves throughout California, and in Washington and Oregon, almost all CNLM staff work from home offices—accessing and posting information in a cloud-based system and maintaining core culture through virtual and in-person (when possible) meetings. CNLM currently maintains a small administrative office in Temecula, California.

CNLM offers competitive salary, paid vacation and sick time, and other financial benefits. Most importantly, we offer the opportunity to collaborate with a team of talented and committed conservation professionals and to achieve a legacy of substantial conservation impact.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Provide stewardship for a portfolio of CNLM Central Region preserves including planning, management, enhancement, monitoring, reporting, budgeting, and other activities
- Monitor occurrences and populations of native, listed, and exotic species of plants and animals
- Manage a large and growing database with biological, weather, and spatial data; analyze and represent results from analysis in a manner appropriate for reports, presentations, and the most meaningful application to adaptive management of the preserves
- Conduct specific preserve management activities such as vegetation management, maintaining and repairing fences and posting signs, patrolling and enforcement (of easement conditions), and preparing scopes of work and contracts for specific services if required for appropriate stewardship and as allowed by preserve budgets
- Manage grazing as a vegetation management tool, including the conduct of effective communications and relationships with grazing operators, monitoring grazing effects, and drafting appropriate grazing lease agreements
- Review monitoring protocols, analyze and interpret the results of monitoring activities, and incorporate this information into management activities and plans
- Develop and maintain a permanent record of preserve activities, decisions taken, and preserve conditions

- Manage and engage the public, as needed, especially with respect to use of trails on CNLM preserves
- Prepare and implement annual work plans, budgets, and reports
- Identify any additional (beyond provided budget and work plan) important activities, develop plans, and participate in efforts to acquire additional resources
- Work effectively, productively, and professionally with other CNLM staff, particularly those in the Central California Region where some activities may be shared from time-to-time
- Work professionally with natural resources agencies, consultants, and other conservation organizations
- Participate in acquiring new CNLM preserves which includes conducting PAR (Property Analysis Record) analyses on new properties and conducting associated field surveys and due diligence as needed
- Potentially supervise other CNLM staff if such positions are developed
- Fulfill other duties as assigned.

## **REQUIREMENTS**

- Master of Science (or Arts) degree (strongly preferred) in Natural Resource Management, Biology, Wildlife Ecology, Range Ecology, Botany, or related field; or compelling evidence of equivalent experience and self-education that would result in understanding of core principles and ability to use statistical, preserve design, ecological, and genetic principles in preserve stewardship and decision-making
- Relevant experience in land stewardship, including application of good management practices, restoration, and management of rare or fragile species; at least three years of such experience is desirable
- Experience in management of valley saltbush scrub, valley sink scrub, and annual grassland vegetative communities is desirable
- Strong background—from formal education, experience, or a combination—in ecology, with an emphasis in plant and/or wildlife biology or range management, is highly desirable
- Knowledge—identification, life history characteristics, management—of native plants in the San Joaquin Valley is highly desirable
- Excellent communication skills; ability to write professional stewardship-related plans, reports, and other documents

- Understanding of basic statistical principles for designing monitoring protocols, simple field trials, and analyzing resulting data is highly desirable
- Ability to manage large datasets effectively and efficiently
- Demonstrated effectiveness in working collaboratively and professionally at public and client meetings
- Proven initiative-taker, able to work efficiently and effectively with minimal supervision, and able to appropriately use initiative to meet habitat management goals; seeking advice and policy guidance when needed and appropriate
- Able to quickly learn and effectively use the PAR (Property Analysis Record) software, including the due diligence required for proper application of this financial tool
- Able to prepare annual budgets and manage Preserve activities within them
- Able to structure time effectively and meet deadlines
- Ability to operate from a home office, to provide a safe location for a CNLM vehicle if one is provided, and to make efficient use of the limited funds available for transportation in traveling to/from the Preserve and conducting other work-related responsibilities
- Working knowledge of GIS and GPS technologies and associated software and a working knowledge of Windows operating systems and PC applications such as Microsoft Office Suite; familiarity with statistical analyses and associated software is desirable
- Possession and maintenance of a valid driver's license and safe driving record
- Some familiarity with the California and Federal Endangered Species Acts and ability to work with appropriate discretion in a context involving listed species and regulatory requirements
- Possession of US Fish and Wildlife Service permit and CDFW permit to monitor any of the listed wildlife species found on the preserves is desirable; otherwise, the ability to quickly acquire the skills and experience that would lead to acquiring such permit is required.

## **WORKING CONDITIONS**

- Regularly required to hike through a variety of habitat types and terrain, walking over uneven ground, climbing over obstacles, and accessing remote locations
- Regularly sits or stands at a desk or computer workstation
- Regularly required to operate a CNLM vehicle to conduct stewardship responsibilities (this may include a 4x4 truck or an all-terrain vehicle (ATV))
- Frequently works in an environment with harsh weather conditions—especially hot, dry summers

- Some evening and weekend responsibilities may be required, including travel (and as can be safely conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic)
- Timing of work may be related to biological windows, fiscal deadlines, Board meetings, legal commitments, or other defining timeframes. As such, periods of heavy workload may occur.
- Coordination of work with other CNLM staff is appropriate and often necessary
- May be required to use or supervise the use of pesticides and or other chemical substances
- Occasionally required to use or supervise the use of powered equipment such as weed trimmers and chain saws
- Occasionally lifts, positions, or otherwise moves objects weighing up to 50 pounds.

The working conditions described here are representative in part of those that will be encountered by an employee in this position. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to successfully function in these working conditions.

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*The above statements are intended to describe the general nature of the work being performed by people assigned to this work. This is not an exhaustive list of all duties and responsibilities. CNLM management reserves the right to amend and change responsibilities to meet business and organizational needs, as necessary.*

*CNLM is an Equal Opportunity employer. Personnel are chosen based on ability without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, marital status, or sexual orientation, in accordance with federal and state law.*

*This position description does not constitute an employment agreement between CNLM and the employee and is subject to change by CNLM as the needs of CNLM and requirements of the job change.*

## **TO APPLY:**

Qualified applicants must provide: a **detailed letter of interest**, a **detailed resumé**, and **two examples** of written communication for which the applicant was the sole or senior author (such as a report or publication).

**Electronic submissions strongly preferred.**

Email these materials to: [careers-pm@cnlm.org](mailto:careers-pm@cnlm.org)

Or mail to: Center for Natural Lands Management  
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