

CENTER FOR NATURAL LANDS MANAGEMENT



POSITION DESCRIPTION

Preserve Manager Santa Barbara County

Reports to: Regional Preserve Manager – South Coast Region
Location: Santa Barbara County (preserves are in southwest Santa Barbara County, CA)
Position: Permanent / Full-time (1.0 FTE); Exempt (Salaried)
Compensation: **\$68,640 – \$78,640** (\$74,541.88 - \$84,541.88 including home office and phone stipends) with benefits, including but not limited to 11 paid holidays annually; three weeks of vacation annually (progressive); sick leave; substantial employer contribution to health insurance plan; dental and vision plans; employer contribution to retirement plan

Application deadline: The position is open until filled but for fullest consideration, please apply by November 14, 2025.

POSITION SUMMARY AND GENERAL DUTIES

The Preserve Manager – Santa Barbara County (Preserve Manager) will be responsible for co-managing two preserves in Santa Barbara County that have been permanently protected for conservation purposes. The larger of those preserves – Gaviota Tarplant Ranch Preserve – is a 2,731-acre preserve located south of Lompoc, CA that includes annual and perennial grassland, coastal oak woodland, coastal scrub, riparian, and wetlands. The second preserve – Harris Farm Preserve – is a 34-acre property that lies within a larger privately-owned farm along the Gaviota coast. The species that command the stewardship focus on both of these preserves is the State and Federally Endangered Gaviota tarplant. Other significant species that reside within the larger preserve include Mesa horkelia, Kellogg's horkelia, and California red-legged frog. CNLM is gradually assuming full perpetual management and monitoring responsibilities for both preserves. Both preserves require conservation grazing to be used as a management tool for the benefit of Gaviota tarplant.

The Preserve Manager will work closely with other CNLM staff (including a second Santa Barbara County Preserve Manager), grazing operators, landowners, botanists, contractors and other partners, in conducting all the management and monitoring activities needed to protect and conserve the Gaviota tarplant. This solicitation is for the preserve management position focused on grazing and rangeland management.

The Preserve Manager will focus on the stewardship of Gaviota tarplant populations and habitat conditions and contribute to applied research and adaptive management in support of this species. The Preserve Manager will be involved in overall management of the Preserve, and preparing budgets, plans, and reports; however, the areas of emphasis for the rangeland management focus specifically includes:

- Implement a grazing management plan to support Gaviota tarplant habitat.
- Manage grazing as a vegetation management tool to implement the goals of the management plan.

- Conduct effective communications and relationships with grazing operators and monitor grazing effects (e.g., RDM surveys).
- Determine and implement, as appropriate, other vegetation management tools such as pesticide application, mowing, mechanical removal or prescribed burns.
- Collaborate with partners to promote the protection, conservation, and expansion of Gaviota tarplant on the preserves.

The Preserve Manager will be involved with technical advisory committees composed of researchers, regulatory personnel, and other collaborators, which will provide input towards management. The Preserve Manager will provide resource management in accordance with the conservation values and regulatory requirements of the Preserve, CNLM's stewardship standards and practices (which also reflect and exceed Land Trust Alliance standards), and the preserve-specific management plan. Other activities will include revising management plans; preparing annual budgets, work plans, and reports; analyzing data as needed; and active engagement of contractors needed for specialized services. The position of Preserve Manager 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 the 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 the Preserve, the Preserve Manager will contribute to CNLM's expertise and documentation of 'best management practices' for managing rare and protected plant and animal species particularly with respect to 'conservation-directed grazing'. Grazing is a stewardship approach practiced on several other CNLM preserves, and the Preserve Manager will join the team of other staff towards acquiring and sharing experience in this discipline. They 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.

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.

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 and investing in excellent staff.

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

GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The Preserve Manager will focus on rangeland management for the stewardship of Gaviota tarplant populations and habitat conditions. The responsibilities described below are expected.

- Provide stewardship for the Gaviota Tarplant Ranch Preserve including planning, management, enhancement, monitoring, reporting, budgeting, and other activities
- Manage (adaptively) a grazing program that involves planning and implementation through monitoring and relationship maintenance with landowners, grazing operators, and others
- Monitor occurrences and populations of native, listed, and exotic species of plants and animals
- Determine ecosystem health, diversity, trend, successional stage, site potential, desired plant community grazing capacity of the vegetation and any special problems connected with the Preserve
- Conduct short- and long-term monitoring of plant community change, trends, grazing impacts; precipitation; soil erosion hazards; and correlate other rangeland resource activities and uses
- Identify any additional (beyond provided budget and work plan) important activities, develop plans, and participate in efforts to acquire additional resources
- Work collaboratively, productively, and professionally with other CNLM staff, natural resources agencies, consultants, advisory committees, and other conservation organizations
- Review monitoring protocols, analyze and interpret the results of monitoring activities, and incorporate this information into management activities and plans
- Carry out specific preserve management activities such as vegetation management, maintaining and repairing fences and posting signs, patrolling, and preparing scopes of work and contracts for specific services if required for appropriate stewardship and as allowed by preserve budgets
- Conduct stewardship activities that could include occasional restoration or enhancement activities and integrated pest management including chemical control of exotics if needed and/or mechanical control
- Develop and maintain a permanent record of preserve activities, decisions taken, and preserve conditions
- Participate in planning and community meetings as a representative of CNLM
- Prepare and implement annual work plans, budgets, and reports
- 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
- Fulfill other duties as assigned.

REQUIREMENTS

- Master of Science (or Arts) degree (strongly preferred) in Range Ecology or Management, Natural Resource Management, Biology, Wildlife Ecology, Soil Science, 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

rangeland science, statistical, preserve design, ecological, and genetic principles in preserve stewardship and decision-making

- Some experience in rangeland management and use of grazing to achieve conservation objectives is required
- Relevant experience in land stewardship, including application of various management tools, biological monitoring, restoration, and property protection
- Knowledge—identification, life history characteristics, management—of southern California native plants and experience in management of annual grassland, coastal scrub, and oak woodland habitats is desirable
- Excellent communication skills; ability to write professional stewardship-related plans, reports, and other documents (without dependence on AI)
- Demonstrated effectiveness in working collaboratively and professionally with colleagues, committees, grazing operators, landowners, and the public
- Proven self-starter, able to work efficiently and effectively with minimal supervision, and able to appropriately use initiative to meet habitat management goals
- Able to structure time effectively and meet deadlines
- Able to prepare and manage annual Preserve budgets and implement scheduled work plans
- Working knowledge of GIS and GPS technologies and associated software and of Windows operating systems and PC applications such as Microsoft Office Suite; familiarity with statistical analyses software
- Understanding of basic statistical principles for designing monitoring protocols, simple field trials, and analyzing resulting data is highly desirable
- Some familiarity with federal, state, and local environmental legislation and codes such as the California and Federal Endangered Species Acts and ability to work with appropriate discretion in a context involving listed species and regulatory requirements
- Possession and maintenance of a valid driver's license and safe driving record
- 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 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)).
- Works in an environment that involves overseeing contractors, working closely with other CNLM staff, managing public involvement, negotiating projects with regulatory agencies, and working with landowners, grazing operators, and advisory committees.
- Some evening and weekend responsibilities may be required, including travel

- 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.
- May involve supervision of other staff and coordination of work with other CNLM staff.
- Occasionally we 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 chainsaws.
- Occasionally lifts, positions, or otherwise move 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 accommodation may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to successfully function in these working conditions.

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 the CNLM and the employee and is subject to change by CNLM as the needs of the 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 are strongly preferred.

Email these materials to: **careers-spm@cnlm.org**

Or mail to: Center for Natural Lands Management
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