ELDON FARMS
CONSERVATION ECOLOGIST

Eldon Farms is a privately held working landscape of over 7,000 acres in Rappahannock County, Virginia. Historically a well-run cattle farm, new ownership is committed to stewarding the farm such that biological diversity and ecological health go hand in hand with grazing livestock. This commitment is captured in our working mission statement:

“Eldon Farm will demonstrate a highly successful “working landscape” for the Piedmont ecosystem that:

• bridges the traditional dichotomy of ecology versus economy,
• focuses on building the balance sheet (economic, ecological and community) versus cash flow,
• welcomes the local & regional community,
• provides an accessible innovative learning laboratory.”

To build on the existing highly effective management and operations team, ownership is creating a new position for a “Conservation Ecologist”. This is a special opportunity to work in a creative, applied environment with a team that’s excited about pushing the edges of existing paradigms.

Responsibilities:

1) Co-develop, implement and adapt a strategic plan for landscape conservation at Eldon Farms that prioritizes biodiversity and ecosystem values in a multicomponent working landscape.

2) Identify priorities and initiate applied field research relevant to the development of a resilient healthy working landscape.

3) Collaborate with land use and grazing teams to implement an effective, cost-efficient riparian restoration program. This may build on the existence of a small number of beavers, and the extension of an existing program building beaver dam analogues (BDAs).

4) Develop & manage research partnerships with outside organizations (i.e., Smithsonian & Virginia Working Landscapes, VA Tech, Clifton Institute, University of Virginia, George Mason University, Blandy Farm, American Farmland Trust)

5) Collaborate with land use and grazing teams to develop and integrate best ecological management practices into cost effective grazing management systems.
6) Work with the land use team to develop and implement invasive species management plans. This includes the mitigation of non-native plants, pest insects and deer.

7) Review existing ecological data sets for Eldon Farms. Explore potential for ecosystem function markets (i.e., nutrient credits, water quality credits, wetland mitigation credits, carbon credits, biodiversity credits, etc)

8) Work with Eldon Farm’s staff naturalist to build outreach programing, including guided nature walks that would be attractive to a broader community.

Desired attributes:
1. Scientific and quantitative aptitude, well developed conservation ethic, people and community-orientation,
2. Equally comfortable in a swamp, community meeting, among cattle, in the driver’s seat of a large pick up or at a GIS workstation,
3. Desire to work in field application settings,
4. Ability to understand and advance a wide range of ecological issues. “Jack of all trades, master of none, but better than a master of one”,
5. Entrepreneurial,
6. Collaborator,
7. Capacity to work with non-scientists that share similar working landscape goals,
8. Innovative,
9. Systems thinker; cross and/or transdisciplinary vision of conservation and agriculture.

Minimum Qualifications: 
Master’s Degree in Ecology, Conservation, Environmental Science, or closely related discipline from a nationally recognized graduate program, and two or more years of experience with conservation science and practice.

Salary commensurate with experience. Health and retirement benefits included.

Eldon Farms supports a more equitable and just food system for all and works towards creating a more inclusive farm learning and working environment for those who are historically and currently under-supported in agriculture. This includes but is not limited to women, people of color, LGBTQIA+ individuals, veterans, low-income individuals, people of diverse religious and non-religious affiliations, immigrants, and asylum seekers.

To apply, please send cover letter and resume to John Genho at John@EldonFarms.com

Applications will be accepted until suitable candidate is identified.