
Application Deadline: Open until filled

Job Title: Senior Program Manager

Location: Sacramento, CA (hybrid)

Position Type: Full-time

Expected Start Date: Summer 2026

The Freshwater Trust (TFT) is a non-profit leader in data-driven watershed restoration and freshwater resource management. Our team members are building tools and creating and testing new, scalable solutions that will help deliver measurable environmental and economic benefits. With a mission of preserving and restoring freshwater ecosystems, our approach is driven by science, data and results (see our [Core Values](#)).

TFT employs ~50 team members with programs across California, Oregon, Idaho, Colorado, Washington, and Texas. We currently have three physical offices in Portland, OR, Ashland, OR and Sacramento, CA. Our team members range in background and skillset. Teams include program implementation, science and analytics, habitat restoration, legal, philanthropy and fundraising, communications, finance, and administrative and systems support.

Position Description:

The Senior Program Manager is an experienced project manager who is comfortable managing multi-year, multi-million dollar programs in California. The ideal candidate comes from a consulting background and has managed projects from proposal to delivery for a variety of clients and agencies. Main duties will include budget oversight, technical document preparation and review, program development and management, and client communications. There will also be an opportunity to manage direct reports as the project progresses. The California team includes field staff, researchers, and scientists who work closely with TFT's Science and Analytics team. The Senior Program Manager reports to the Regional Vice President, California.

This role is focused on leading TFT's work on a large-scale ecosystem enhancement program in agricultural, riparian, and wetland environments. This exciting effort is associated with in-lieu groundwater aquifer recharge that will benefit both the agricultural community, and riparian and wetland ecosystems. The ideal candidate has the ability to effectively collaborate with and extract strategic direction from a variety of technical teams, as well as the ability to absorb complex technical issues from multiple disciplines and extract critical path issues so they can advise the California Regional VP on potential risk factors.

The position is actively engaged in cost projections and reviews of complex programmatic budgets, organizational budget projections/tracking/reporting, and responsibility for client facing documentation. A scientific background would be helpful in particular, riparian and wetland science. You must be local to Sacramento area as this role will work from our office with the whole California team once a week, have local project meetings, as well as travel to project sites as needed.

Position Responsibilities:

- Develop an acute understanding of California programs and how they are connected through the watershed.
- Program oversight including frequent deliverables, progress/tracking, procurement compliance, quality control, budgets, and client and internal communications.
- Preparation of technical documents; review of technical documents and other documents prepared by the team.
- Being responsive to client needs and adapting deliverables as needed.
- Lead cost projections and reviews of complex programmatic budgets, working with the Program Administration Manager and the Finance and Administration team.
- Manage and mentor staff; the position will not include staff management from day one, but will be expected to manage four staff within the first quarter. Management will include supporting task prioritization, handling personnel issues, and conducting year-end performance reviews.
- Attend public meetings and represent the organization and/or the client.
- Prioritize safety for staff and contractors in all aspects of delivery.
- Work closely with the Regional Vice President, California to support the primary activities, as well as proposal preparation for projects that build or enhance the benefits of existing programs.

Desired Skills and Qualifications:*Qualities:*

- Highly organized and able to learn, use and improve internal tracking and coordination tools and processes.
- Commitment to effective contractual project management and tracking scopes, schedules, and budget.
- Ability to work safely as part of a team in rural and remote areas.
- Quick learner and problem solver with the ability to adapt to new processes and contexts.
- Relational & collaborative:
 - Excels in building trust and working with others to achieve multiple benefits.
 - Ability to form and maintain strong cross-departmental and cross-disciplinary relationships.

Skills:

- Excellent communicator (written/verbal), facilitator and manager.
- Able to proofread and provide QC on technical documents and provide feedback to clarify and enhance reports and other documents.
- Able to summarize and synthesize project, program and personnel needs and priorities while also building understanding, buy-in and alignment of team members.
- Strong people- and time-management skills with ability to be flexible and responsive to changing priorities.
- Thrives proactively juggling multiple tasks and competing priorities within a high-energy, fast-paced environment.
- Ability to evaluate details in bigger-picture context of organization priorities.

Qualifications:

- 15+ years of professional experience and 10+ years managing large programs.
- Advanced degree in natural resource management, water resources, or biological sciences.
- Experience working with engineers and biologists.
- Consulting and/or scientific backgrounds preferred.

- Working knowledge of freshwater ecosystems, including water quantity and quality, agricultural irrigation practices, and construction BMPs.
- Strong understanding of water management challenges, policies and politics in California.

Seeking Perseverant, Creative and Energetic Candidates Who:

- Have a passion for the mission and values of The Freshwater Trust.
- Exhibit professionalism, confidence, intellectual curiosity, and resilience.
- Possess a valid and clean driver's license.
- Hold legal authority to work permanently in the US.

Compensation Structure:

- Competitive salary based on experience.
- The Freshwater Trust believes in investing in our employees, their health, and future through our benefits offerings. Our total rewards package includes full health and dental coverage, automatic retirement employer contributions, commuter benefits, and cell phone reimbursement. Because we are all in, we value getting out and support our staff with 5 weeks of paid time off plus over 10 paid holidays per year. We also offer perks such as staff retreats, sabbatical for full-time staff after seven years, and professional development opportunities.

Application Instructions:

- Supply a Cover Letter, Resume, and a list of 3 references into a single PDF not exceeding 5MB.
- Submit required information and documentation [here](#).

Interested candidates from historically underrepresented communities are strongly encouraged to apply. The Freshwater Trust is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate in its selection of candidates for employment on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex or sexual orientation, marital status, disability, age, military service, family medical history, legal source of income, gender identity, political affiliation, or family leave obligations. ADA accommodations will be provided upon request.