

GIS Technician

To Complete: Fairfield County Open Space Inventory & Flood Resilience Analysis

Position Description

The Western Connecticut Council of Governments (WestCOG) is a regional planning agency serving 18 municipalities in Connecticut. We provide services in professional practice areas such as land use planning, transportation planning, data analysis, and regional services. In a partnership with The Nature Conservancy, WestCOG is seeking a qualified person to serve as a temporary GIS Technician (roughly 3-month period @ 35 hours/ week @ \$22-\$26 per hour) to perform the following planning and analysis activities:

- Task 1. Kick Off Meeting.** An initial Flood Resilience & Open Space CRS Kick Off Meeting will be conducted with planners and stakeholders in the region to outline the targets and schedule of this initiative. Kick Off Meeting will be hosted virtually and recorded.
- Task 2. Open Space Schema.** A schema will be developed for the open space dataset such that it meets local, regional, and CRS program needs.
- Task 3. Open Space Inventory.** The collection and categorization of all existing open space properties within Fairfield County will be entered and stored within the developed Open Space Schema (Task 2).
- Task 4. CRS Verification.** An additional data collection effort will be conducted where the open space properties will be verified according to CRS standards that the properties are indeed open space under the definitions set by the CRS program. Typically, this comes in the form of land deeds or easements (scanned copies).
- Task 5. Process & Automation.** A replicable process will be developed that allows for the training of other COGs and staff to develop the same program and to continue moving forward after the project completion. This process will allow the Contractor to maintain an authoritative open space layer. Opportunities for automation will then be determined and advanced.
- Task 6. Outreach.** Emails, Websites, and newsletters will go out to inform communities regarding this project, and the potential benefits and their current standings within the CRS program.
- Task 7. Web Application.** A web application will be developed to showcase where these properties are throughout Fairfield County and the extent of potential CRS credits and savings a municipality could achieve if they were active in the CRS program.
- Task 8. State Standard.** The Open Space Schema will be posted through the CT GIS Network and through the Office of Policy and Management as a state standard for open space inventories.

Project Background

The objective of this project is to develop a repeatable and partially automated process to update and collect open space data within Fairfield County alongside an outreach campaign to encourage communities to take advantage of flood resilience programs that leverage protected open space as a buffer for flood protection.

Protected open space is an important factor for flood resilience and is a foundational component to the flood mitigation strategies developed through FEMA's Community Rating System (CRS). Protected open spaces not only provide a buffer between developed properties but also absorbs impacts from destructive high-water flow during a flood event as well as sea level rise. FEMA's CRS program incentivizes communities to protect open space in flood zones and, once the community is within the program, further incentivizes communities to expand their flood mitigation activities.

Current inventories of open space are severely outdated (not updated since 2008) and updates currently require substantial effort to update. Additionally, many open space inventories do not collect open space information within the quality of criteria necessary to document and verify properties within the CRS program. No readily available and easily calculated estimate of CRS creditable open space exists within Fairfield County except for those few communities who are currently active in the program.

An updated and regularly maintained inventory for Fairfield County would allow communities to see where they stand, incentivize communities to join the CRS program, reduce municipal labor for communities currently active in the program, and help improve the overall resilience of communities across this critical portion of the state of Connecticut.

This project and job opportunity was made possible by The Nature Conservancy.

Desired Skill Set

The ideal candidate would have a combination of skills and experience in GIS, flood resilience, data collection, automation, web applications, and public outreach as necessary to complete the above listed tasks.

Workplace

The position will be located at WestCOG's office, 1 Riverside Rd, Sandy Hook, Connecticut with flexible options for teleworking.

The applicant should have a valid driver's license and access to a vehicle.

Application Process

Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until the position is filled. Interested applicants can send resume, cover letter, and sample work (maps, studies, reports) to: westcog@outlook.com. Applications sent by any other means (via facebook, indeed, etc.) will **not** be considered.

WestCOG is an Equal Opportunity Employer