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Where:

[Advanced Search >](#)[< Back to Results](#)[Dock](#)[Overview](#)[Duties](#)[Qualifications & Evaluations](#)[Benefits & Other Info](#)[How to Apply](#)

Go to section of this Job:

**Job Title:** SOIL CONSERVATIONIST (DEU)**Department:** Department Of Agriculture**Agency:** Natural Resources Conservation Service**Job Announcement Number:** SD-617732-SK

**SALARY RANGE:** \$38,790.00 to \$61,678.00 / Per Year

**OPEN PERIOD:** Wednesday, February 29, 2012 to Wednesday, March 28, 2012

**SERIES & GRADE:** GS-0457-07/09

**POSITION INFORMATION:** Full Time - Permanent

**PROMOTION POTENTIAL:** 09

**DUTY LOCATIONS:** 1 vacancy(s) - Armour, SD [View Map](#)

**WHO MAY BE CONSIDERED:** US Citizens and Status Candidates

**JOB SUMMARY:**

The Natural Resources Conservation Service provides leadership in a partnership effort to help conserve, maintain, and improve our natural resources and environment. [South Dakota NRCS](#)

South Dakota is an excellent place to live, hunt, fish and work. For more information [www.sdreadytowork.com](http://www.sdreadytowork.com)

**Agency Information:**

USDA NRCS CENTRAL  
Federal Building - Room 203  
200 fourth Street SW  
Huron, SD  
57350  
USA  
Fax: (605)352-1270

**Questions about this job:**

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**Job Announcement Number:**

SD-617732-SK

**Control Number:** 310653300

Those interested in applying under Merit Promotion should apply via the MP announcement that runs concurrent with this announcement - only one position will be hired.

Applicants must submit the following documents in order to be considered for this position.

\_\_\_Résumé

\_\_\_Transcripts (official or unofficial)

\_\_\_Complete the on-line questionnaire

\_\_\_DD-214 or SF-15 if you are a disabled Veteran or claiming entitlement under VEOA or VRA hiring authorities.

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Those interested in applying under Merit Promotion should apply via the MP announcement that runs concurrent with this announcement - only one position will be hired.

This position serves as a soil conservationist on one of the South Dakota field office staff assisting the district conservationist in carrying out a complete natural resource conservation program. The incumbent is under the supervision of the district conservationist.

**Relocation entitlement not authorized.**

## Status Candidates include:

- All Federal employees serving on a career or career-conditional appointment.
- All former Federal employees with Reinstatement eligibility.
- Career Transition Assistance Program (CTAP) and Interagency Career Transition Assistance Program (ICTAP) eligibles (See information under other benefits section).
- Veterans eligible under Veterans Employment Opportunities Act of 1998 (VEOA).

**KEY REQUIREMENTS**

- You must be a United States Citizen.
- Males born after 12/31/1959 must be registered with the Selective Service.
- You must complete a FBI Fingerprint, Background and Security Investigation.
- You must have a valid state driver's license.
- Incomplete applications may not be considered.
- Must meet the positive education requirements for qualification.

**DUTIES:**[Back to top](#)

## DUTIES:

- Provides technical assistance and guidance to individuals, small groups, and units of government in the development and implementation of conservation and natural resources plans. Assistance will be consistent with technical references and furnished to customers to aid in decisions on how to conserve, improve, and maintain their soil, water, air, plant, animal, and human resources.
- Applies a follow-up and maintenance program on lands of conservation district cooperators so that conservation and natural resources plans reflect current needs and objectives, determines progress, and provides assistance in implementing the plans. Makes new material available and keeps cooperators informed of new opportunities for improved land use and treatment.
- Applies or supervises the application of conservation practices on farms. As required, determines need and feasibility, supervises and checks construction, and certifies completion of practices to supervisor.
- Provides information and assistance to the district conservationist in analyzing workloads; developing plans of operation (business plans), as needed; and establishing goals in line with needs, available manpower, and other resources.
- Works with the district conservationist in providing guidance to the conservation district board in developing and carrying out the conservation district's program and coordinating the conservation district's program and work plan with the field office program.
- Completes routine progress and timekeeping reports.
- Utilizes available computer software programs, as needed. Enters conservation planning data and applied practices into the computer using current software programs.
- Provides information to the district conservationist on the nature and extent of resources conservation work needed on all the lands in the county for use in working with the National Resources Inventory (NRI).
- Participates in the information program designed to keep the community informed of the need for and progress in resources conservation by writing news stories and articles, giving presentations at meetings, and conducting field tours and demonstrations.
- Assists the district conservationist on the county resources conservation group in developing average cost data, coordinating activities, and developing recommendations that help operate all applicable programs, including but not limited to, the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP); the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP); the Continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CCRP); the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP); the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP); the Resource Conservation and Development Program (RC&D); the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP); the

conservation provisions of the Food Security Act (FSA), and all other current farm bill programs and policies. Keeps the district conservationist informed of all activities and situations requiring the district conservationist's approval or certification.

You will be rated based on the following factors:

*Knowledge* of fundamental soil, water, and resource conservation theories, concepts and principles.

*Ability* to collect, analyze and interpret natural resources data in order to perform as a Soil Conservation.

*Ability* to develop and implement conservation plans for various program objectives and initiatives.

*Ability* to plan, survey, design, and supervise the application of the following conservation measures.

*Skill* in communication in order to relay information to internal and external customers.

Miscellaneous public relations and team building skills

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#### QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED:

[Back to top](#)

**You must meet A or B, and ALSO qualifying specialized experience.**

A. Candidates must have a bachelor's degree (including 300 or 400 level courses) in soil conservation or a related agricultural or natural resources discipline such as agronomy, soil science, forestry, agricultural education or agricultural engineering. Course work must have included 30 semester hours in the natural resources or agricultural field, including at least 12 semester hours in a combination of soils and crops or plant science of which a minimum of 3 semester hours must be in soils and 3 semester hours in crops or plant science.

**OR**

B. Combination of education and experience--with at least 30 semester hours in one or more of the disciplines as shown in A above at the 300 and 400 level, including at least 12 semester hours in a combination of soils and crops or plant science, plus appropriate experience or additional education. Of the 12 semester hours, a minimum of 3 semester hours must have been in soils and 3 semester hours in crops or plant science.

**COLLEGE TRANSCRIPT(S) MUST BE SUBMITTED TO VERIFY EDUCATION. IF YOU DO NOT PROVIDE THE TRANSCRIPT(S) YOU WILL BE RATED NOT QUALIFIED.**

To see if you qualify, refer to the Qualification Standards on the internet at:

<http://www.opm.gov/qualifications/SEC-IV/A/GS-PROF.HTM> and

<http://www.opm.gov/qualifications/SEC-IV/B/GS0400/0457.HTM>

**Qualifying Specialized Experience for GS-7:** You have been in a soil conservationist position at the GS-05 level for at least one year OR you have one year of professional work

experience equivalent to the grade 5 providing technical guidance and on-site assistance to field office personnel in carrying out agency policies and procedures in natural resource conservation planning, performing administrative activities of an office, and developing and maintaining an informational program.

Credit will be given for appropriate qualifying unpaid experience or volunteer work such as community, cultural, social service, and professional association activities on the same basis as for paid experience. To receive proper credit for unpaid experience or volunteer work, fully describe your responsibilities and show the actual time (years, months, and hours per week) spent in such.

**Qualifying Specialized Experience for GS-9:** You have been in a soil conservationist position at the GS-07 level for at least one year OR you have one year of professional work experience equivalent to the grade GS-07 of the federal service working as a team to develop and install more complex conservation practices. Such practices have been using a variety of techniques; developing, applying and maintaining conservation plans for land users and landowners. This involves a variety of soil patterns and conservation practices such as nutrient management, water management facility, cover crop and irrigation water management. You have participated in information and education programs to identify opportunities to keep the public informed of and to create local interest and understanding of NRCS and partnership programs.

Credit will be given for appropriate qualifying unpaid experience or volunteer work such as community, cultural, social service, and professional association activities on the same basis as for paid experience. To receive proper credit for unpaid experience or volunteer work, fully describe your responsibilities and show the actual time (years, months, and hours per week) spent in such.

APPLICATION MATERIALS MUST BE RECEIVED BY 11:59 pm EST Wednesday, March 28, 2012.  
FAILURE TO PROVIDE COMPLETE INFORMATION MAY RESULT IN YOU NOT RECEIVING CONSIDERATION FOR THIS POSITION.

- Applicants must have completed at least 52 weeks at the next lower grade-interval than the grade applying for in order to meet the time-in-grade requirement for this position. Creditable service includes competitive and excepted service in General Schedule and other pay systems.
- If you are not in the series for which applying, your application package must show evidence of meeting the GS-457 Qualification Standards; i.e., required course work (transcript/listing of courses); specialized experience; etc.

#### HOW YOU WILL BE EVALUATED:

Your application will be evaluated and rated under the Category Rating and Selection Procedures. Your resume must support your responses to the occupational questionnaire. We will review your resume and supporting documentation and compare this information to your responses on the occupational questionnaire to determine if you meet the minimum qualifications for this position. If you are qualified for this position, we will evaluate your application package. A panel of subject-matter experts or HR Specialist will assess the quality, depth, and complexity of your accomplishments, experience, and education as they relate to the critical knowledge, skills, and abilities for the position. We will then place you in one of the following categories and only those in the Best Qualified category will be referred to the hiring manager for further consideration.

**Best Qualified:** Applicants possess all of the job related competencies identified as important for successful job performance.

**Well -Qualified:** Applicants possesses a majority (i.e., more than half) of the job related competencies needed for successful job performance.

**Qualified:** Applicants meet the basic eligibility and minimum qualification requirements, but does not meet the definition of Well-Qualified or Best Qualified described above.

Veterans' preference is applied after applicants are assessed. Veterans' preference eligibles who meet the qualification requirements are placed in the appropriate category and are listed ahead of non-preference eligibles. Veteran preference eligibles that have a compensable service-connected disability of at least 10 percent are listed in the highest quality category, except in the case of scientific or professional positions at the GS-9 level or higher.

YOUR RESUME SHOULD DOCUMENT THE WORK EXPERIENCE YOU REFLECT UPON IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE. If, after reviewing your resume and or supporting documentation, a determination is made that you have inflated your qualifications and or experience, OR that your resume does not support the score on your questionnaire, your score can and will be adjusted to more accurately reflect your abilities. Please follow all instructions carefully. Errors or omissions may affect your rating.

[Online Questionnaire](#)**BENEFITS:**[Back to top](#)

The Federal government offers a comprehensive benefits package. Explore the major benefits offered to most Federal Employees at <http://www.usa.gov/Federal-Employees/Benefits.shtml>.

**OTHER INFORMATION:**

- 1. If you are an eligible Interagency Career Transition Assistance Program (ICTAP) or Career Transition Assistance Program (CTAP) applicant** you may apply for special selection over other candidates for this position. To be well-qualified and exercise selection priority for this vacancy, displaced Federal employees must be rated at 85 or above on the rating criteria for this position. ICTAP and CTAP eligibles must submit one of the following as proof of eligibility for the special selection priority: a separation notice, a "Notice of Personnel Action" (SF-50) documenting separation, an agency certification that you cannot be placed after injury compensation has been terminated, an OPM notification that your disability annuity has been terminated, OR a Military Department or National Guard Bureau notification that you are retired under 5 U.S.C. 8337(h) or 8456.
- 2. If you are a current career or career-conditional Federal employee or former Federal employee** who has reinstatement eligibility, you must submit a copy of your latest SF-50 "Notification of Personnel Action" and/or a copy of the SF-50 that reflects career or career-conditional tenure. If these forms are not submitted you will not be considered under the merit promotion process and your most recent performance appraisal.
- 3. If you are a veteran with preference/special hiring eligibility** you must attach a copy of your DD-214 or other proof of eligibility. Applicants eligible as 30% or more disabled veterans must submit an SF-15 and Letter from the VA establishing disability rating to receive special hiring consideration.
- 4. If you are a male applicant who was born after 12/31/59** and are required to register under the Military Selective Service Act, the Defense Authorization Act of 1986 requires that you be registered or you are not eligible for appointment in this agency.
- 5. You can apply for a non-competitive appointment** if you meet the basic eligibility requirements and you are eligible for special appointment such as those authorized for the severely disabled, certain Vietnam era and disabled veterans, returned volunteers from the Peace Corps or Vista, etc. Please indicate the type of special appointment you are seeking, if any, on your application and follow all other instructions for applying shown in this announcement.
- 6. All qualification requirements must be met by the closing date** of this announcement. Additional information on the qualification requirements is outlined in the OPM Qualifications Standards Handbook of General Schedule Positions. It is available for your review in our office, in other Federal agency personnel offices, and on OPM's web site at <http://www.opm.gov/qualifications>.
- 7. A background investigation will be required** for all new appointments. Your continued employment will be subject to your successful completion of a background security investigation and favorable adjudication. Failure to successfully meet these requirements will be grounds for termination.
- 8. False Statements:** If you make a false statement in any part of your application, you may not be hired. You may be fired after you begin work; or you may be fined or jailed.
- 9. Relocation entitlements are not authorized.**
- 10. Applicants eligible to apply for this announcement** should also consider applying through the concurrent "Open to All Sources" announcement that is posted on USA Jobs.
- 11. E-Verify:** This employer will provide the Social Security Administration and, if necessary, the Department of Homeland Security with information of each new employee's Form I-9 to confirm work authorization.
- 12. Reference Checks:** Reference Checks are likely to occur, often in advance of an interview. Applying for this announcement gives consent to these reference checks.
- 13. Vehicle Operation:** Employee serves as an incidental motor vehicle operator on public and private roads during daylight and after dark, as needed, to perform the duties of the position. A valid state driver's license is required.

**HOW TO APPLY:**[Back to top](#)

ONLY DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED AS OUTLINED IN THIS VACANCY WILL BE ACCEPTED. EMAILED/MAILED DOCUMENTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

FAILURE TO PROVIDE COMPLETE INFORMATION WILL RESULT IN YOU NOT RECEIVING CONSIDERATION FOR THIS POSITION.

**REQUIRED DOCUMENTS:**

**For this job announcement you must complete the Online Questionnaire and submit the following documents:**

- Resume (online preferred)
- Final College Transcripts that state degree and year degree conferred
- If claiming Veteran's Preference - DD Form 214 (Veteran Preference), SF-15 and Veteran's Administration letter.

**SUBMITTING YOUR MATERIALS:** Complete the Questionnaire Online and Upload your Resume and Additional Material from your files. Application materials must be received by Wednesday, March 28, 2012

To start a new occupational questionnaire click this link: [Online Questionnaire](#) or enter <https://applicationmanager.gov> Scroll down the Online application screen until the "Vacancy Identification Number" box appears under the "Create a New Application for the Job" section on the left hand side. Insert SD-617732-SK; and click the submit button. When you have completed the Online Occupational Questionnaire, click the "Finish" button. At the next screen, select the "Submit" button. It must be completed and submitted by midnight on the closing date of the announcement - Wednesday, March 28, 2012. A window will appear indicating the submission of the occupational questionnaire was successful. At the bottom of this window, Click on the "To upload a resume or additional supporting documentation for this position click here" button to upload documents for this job announcement.

If you choose to fax your documents, all documents must be received not later than 11:59 PM EDT on Wednesday, March 28, 2012.

Alternate methods for submitting your materials:

To Fax your resume and/or additional materials, you must use our cover page. The cover page is used to electronically link your documents with the record you established when you submitted the occupational questionnaire. The Vacancy ID number your name and SSN should be written accurately and neatly on the cover page. If the information is inaccurate or incomplete, you may not receive consideration for this position. To print a copy of the cover page, go to <http://staffing.opm.gov/pdf/usascover.pdf>. After completing the cover page, fax your documents to **478-757-3144**.

The on-line questionnaire may be completed hard copy and then faxed as a supporting document. You must use the following form: [http://www.opm.gov/forms/pdf\\_fill/OPM1203fx.pdf](http://www.opm.gov/forms/pdf_fill/OPM1203fx.pdf).

QUESTIONNAIRE: [View Occupational Questionnaire](#)

**INFORMATION THAT IS REQUIRED IN A FEDERAL RESUME**

If you prepare a resume, be sure you provide all of the information listed below.

Tell us what job you are applying for - announcement number, title and grade.

Provide all of the following: Full name, mailing address and day/evening telephone numbers; country of citizenship; highest Federal civilian grade held, job series, and dates of employment in grade.

Education: High School name, city, state and zip code, date diploma or GED; colleges and/or universities attended, city, state, and zip code; major field(s) of study; and type and year of degree(s) received.

Work Experience: Job title; duties and accomplishments; number of hours per week; employers name and address; supervisor's name and telephone number; starting and ending dates of employment (month and year); salary; and indicate if your current supervisor may be contacted.

Other Qualifications: job-related training courses (title and year); job-related skills (e.g. other languages, computer software/hardware, tools, machinery, typing speed, etc.); job-related certificates and licenses; job-related honors, awards, and special accomplishments (e.g. publications, memberships in professional or honor societies, leadership activities, public speaking, performance awards, etc.) Do not send copies of documents unless specifically requested.

Veterans Preference: Indicate if you are claiming 5 points (attach Form DD 214) or 10 points (attach Standard Form (SF) 15, Application for 10 Point Veterans Preference, and proof required as indicated on SF

15).

Contact Information:

Shari Kieffer  
Phone: (605)352-1224

**AGENCY CONTACT INFO:**

*Shari Kieffer  
Phone: (605)352-1224  
Fax: (605)352-1270  
Email: SHARI.KIEFFER@SD.USDA.GOV*

*Agency Information:  
USDA NRCS CENTRAL  
Federal Building - Room 203  
200 fourth Street SW  
Huron, SD  
57350  
USA  
Fax: (605)352-1270*

**WHAT TO EXPECT NEXT:**

Once your Occupational Questionnaire and resume have been received, you will receive an acknowledgement e-mail that your submission was successful. All information provided may be verified by a careful review of your resume, questionnaire responses, reference check, background check, and/or verification of education. After a qualification review of your complete application package, you will be notified of the status of your application. If further evaluation or interviews are required, you will be contacted. Any exaggeration of your experience, false statements, or attempt to conceal information may disqualify you for consideration. A job offer is typically made within 45 days after the deadline for applications. You can track the progress of your application package in Application Manager at <http://ApplicationManager.gov>.

[Back to top](#)

[< Back to Results](#)

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USAJOBS is the Federal Government's official one-stop source for Federal jobs and employment information.