POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT

SENIOR RESEARCHER: FARMS AND FORESTS

Sightline INSTITUTE
About Sightline Institute

Founded in 1993, Sightline Institute is committed to making Cascadia, stretching from Alaska to northern California, a global model of sustainability—with strong communities, a green economy, and a healthy environment. We are the largest progressive think tank in our region, and we promote smart policy and monitor the region’s progress.

Sightline provides research reports and commentary; maps, graphics and tools; framing and messaging guidance; and Sightline Daily—news and views for the Northwest. We advise, inform, and advocate to public officials, change makers, and the media, and we collaborate with diverse allies in pursuit of our mission. Learn more at www.sightline.org.

The Opportunity for Impact on Farms and Forests

Climate change threatens Cascadia with droughts, fires, and pests, imperiling the region’s farms and forests. At the same time, more sustainable practices on working lands could help slow climate change. Those same practices could also help rejuvenate jobs and resources that have been worn down by decades of pesticide use, erosion, and monocropping.

The Farms and Forests program is Sightline’s newest program. It centers on improving management of the Northwest’s forests and farmlands to boost carbon storage, restore soil and ecosystem health, strengthen rural livelihoods, safeguard rural health through cleaner water, and build resilience to global climate disruption. The program centers on two connected goals:

- **Carbon sequestration** through improved forest management and reforestation. Cascadia’s forests have enormous potential to absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, storing it in their branches, trunks, roots and soil. Farming techniques such as agroforestry and cover cropping also show promise to boost carbon in agricultural soils.

- **Ecosystem health**: Cascadia’s farms can build rather than deplete the health and resilience of their soils. Proven farming practices such as cover cropping and crop rotations rebuild soils and create a more resilient food system—one that is better prepared to withstand changing weather patterns. Forestry practices such as extending rotations, utilizing selective harvesting, and protecting riparian buffers can improve the health and resilience of Cascadia’s forests and waterways. We need to get the science and incentives right to ensure adoption of these and other improved practices.
The Senior Researcher will lead our Farms and Forests program as its principal strategist, researcher, writer, communicator, and advocate. This individual will make the case for specific, targeted reforms in public policies and other institutional practices that can accelerate adoption of improved farm and forest practices. They will develop and implement strategies for using information and communications to help win passage of those reforms, often in coordination with allies, typically by identifying and delivering arguments tailored to key audiences. To that end, the Senior Researcher will likely visit and profile pioneering land managers, master relevant literature, research and write articles for Sightline.org and other publications, develop infographics, make speeches and give presentations, propose and advocate for policy reforms, and sometimes lobby public officials. They will cultivate relationships with leading land managers, relevant thought leaders and scientists, allied institutions and stakeholders, editors and reporters, and relevant policymakers in Cascadia. The Senior Researcher will report to the Director of Climate and Democracy, collaborate with Sightline fellows, and oversee contract researchers.

The Senior Researcher will benefit from being part of a high-functioning team of other researchers, communicators, and advocates, who work from the organization's Seattle office or from elsewhere in the Northwest. Sightline researchers are supported by a professional and full-service communications team and are mentored by seasoned program supervisors. Periodic visits to Seattle will be necessary, though most interaction will happen virtually, as it does for Sightline’s numerous other remote team members.

About the Senior Researcher Position
The Ideal Candidate:

The successful candidate will have a passion for the possibility of impact on Cascadia's farms and forests and professional experience that translates to the Senior Researcher role. We are specifically interested in candidates who have:

- A track record of sparking media attention and influencing policy progress through analysis, writing, public presentations, and advocacy
- At least seven years of relevant professional experience using ideas and information to advance the public good—preferably in the field of this position but at least in similar or related ones. We care more about your skills than your subject-matter expertise
- Exceptional research, analysis, and data synthesis skills
- Evidence of a pragmatic, solutions-oriented approach that incorporates equity and inclusion and input from multiple diverse allies
- The ability to question orthodoxies and bring fresh perspectives to seemingly intractable problems
- The ability to be self-directed, motivated, and to work independently
- Demonstrated experience building relationships and collaborating with diverse allies on large, catalytic efforts
- Excellent public speaking and community engagement skills
- Commitment to Sightline’s mission and core values, as articulated at www.sightline.org/about

Flexibility:

We most likely will hire a candidate who is at the “senior researcher” level of skill and experience, as just described. We are, however, flexible and will consider candidates who are more experienced and skilled, at Sightline’s “director” level, or who are less experienced and skilled, at Sightline’s “researcher” level. Duties, expectations, and compensation would ramp up or down, commensurately. We look for the overall promise of the candidate to contribute to our mission over the long term. Therefore, if you are somewhat over-qualified or underqualified for the position as described but still feel you could be a good fit for Sightline and the role, please apply.

Compensation and Benefits

The salary range for this senior researcher position is $75,000 - $90,000 (plus 10 percent retirement, as noted below). Candidates at the director level would be eligible for a salary band above this range, while candidates at the researcher level would be eligible for a lower salary band.

We offer a robust package of benefits including a 401(k) plan with employer contribution of 10 percent of salary (added to, not subtracted from, pay); full medical and dental insurance for self and partial coverage for dependents; four weeks of paid vacation, nine paid holidays, and two weeks of paid sick leave per year, and a three-month paid sabbatical leave every seven years. Sightline’s staff members work hard but enjoy balanced lives and a collegial organizational culture.
**Location**

Though Sightline Institute is headquartered at an office in Seattle (during non-pandemic times), we employ staff in five Cascadian cities in four states, and contractors in far more locations. This position can be in Seattle, but we somewhat prefer candidates who are located in the rural working lands that are the focus of the program. Because the program’s initial focus is on Oregon and Washington, residents of those two states will be the most logical candidates. Still, we are happy to consider qualified candidates across Cascadia, including Alaska, British Columbia, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington. Candidates willing to relocate from elsewhere are also welcome to apply.

**To Apply**

Please send a resume and cover letter detailing your interest in the role and how your skills translate to the position and at least one published writing sample (of which you are sole author and that is similar to Sightline’s published works in its style and form of argument) to jobs@sightline.org. (For models of comparable work, you might review articles published by current Senior Researchers on Sightline’s staff: here and here.) Other supporting materials are also welcome, such as other publications and videos of speeches or media appearances. We prefer all application materials be assembled in a single PDF and labeled with the applicant’s name. Please also tell us in your email where you found this position; this information helps us streamline our recruiting processes.

**THE APPLICATION DEADLINE IS JANUARY 15, 2021** and applications received by that date will be given priority, but we will accept applications until the position is filled. First round Zoom interviews will take place through January 21, 2021. Second round Zoom interviews will take place through late January/early February and we anticipate extending an offer before the end of February.

*Sightline Institute is an equal opportunity employer and all qualified candidates are encouraged to apply. Applicants will not be discriminated against because of race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, religion, national origin, citizenship status, disability, ancestry, marital status, veteran status, medical condition or any protected category prohibited by local, state or federal laws.*