



## **Berkeley County Farmland Protection Board**

### **Executive Director**

#### **OUR MISSION:**

The Berkeley County Farmland Protection Program aims to protect the agricultural, rural, and scenic aspects of a West Virginia County undergoing significant residential and commercial growth.

#### **WHO WE ARE:**

Berkeley County is the fastest growing county in West Virginia. The county comprises over 400 square miles in the Eastern Panhandle of the state, which places us within the Washington/Baltimore metropolitan statistical area. Our program was the first to be enabled in the state, and presently we hold the largest number of both easements and conserved acreage. The area is served by Interstate 81, US Route 11, and the Amtrak and MARC rail systems.

#### **WHAT WE DO:**

Using locally generated funds (a percentage of Transfer Tax income) combined with Federal funds (NRCS and others) the Berkeley County Farmland Protection Program (BCFPP) purchases permanent easements on qualifying properties. These easements protect the agricultural, environmental and scenic attributes of the property and, most importantly, enable and support the continued agricultural use of the land. To date, the Program has purchased perpetual easements on 80 + properties that protect over 8000 acres. Several “super clusters” of easements have emerged in the process, creating and protecting large agriculturally productive areas throughout the county.

## **THE OPPORTUNITY:**

The incoming Executive Director will have the opportunity to build on the history and success of the Program and, in particular, manage the growing stewardship responsibilities that the size and scope of the program have brought to bear. In addition, the successful candidate will work with the BCFP Board to continue to solicit, vet and purchase easements on distinct and productive agricultural properties in the County.

The annual operating budget of \$200,000.00 includes management of 1 full time staff member whose focus is on stewardship of existing easements (this position is shared with the neighboring Jefferson County Farmland Protection Board). Locally collected Transfer Tax funds typically generate upwards of 2 million dollars for easement purchases as well as providing the Program's operating budget. When farmland meets certain criteria, Transfer Tax funds are combined with matching Federal funds for the purchase of such easements.

The Executive Director actively protects and advocates for the local funding stream as well as identifies and pursues other potential funding sources to maintain the viability and purchasing power of the Program.

Although primarily an office job, the Executive Director often works in the field (Berkeley County) conducting site visits for documentation and/or monitoring of properties. He/she is the public face of the program and as such interacts with individuals already in the program; those seeking to apply, and the general public in a variety of local and state forums.

We envision the successful candidate to be competent and versatile in using social media and other appropriate venues to disseminate information about the program. In addition, he/she must be comfortable dealing with individual landowners to explain the program and walk them through what can be a complicated submission process.

## **Qualifications for Candidates:**

First and foremost, the Candidate for this position should be self-directed, highly self-motivated, and possess strong personal initiative and work ethic.

*As the public face and spokesperson for the Program, the Candidate must have:*

- strong interpersonal skills and ability to work with constituents (farmers), contractors, board of directors and county council. They will benefit from a knowledge of Berkeley County.
- skills for initiating face-to-face, telephone, and written outreach as needed
- skill, comfort and confidence in public speaking.
- competence in all applicable social media platforms used for marketing and

information sharing.

- strong technical writing skills as well as the ability to write clear, concise and interesting copy for public consumption.

*As the business manager for the Program, the Candidate must have:*

- administrative and organization skills commensurate with running a complex business.
- ability to coordinate and direct contracted work for finances, legal services, etc.
- ability to manage complex, often multi-year timelines.
- ability to work independently.
- ability to manage budgets, resources and general financial business processes.
- ability to effectively manage, supervise and evaluate BCFPB employee(s).
- working knowledge of GIS and other land mapping software.
- commitment to the goals outlined in the BCFPB Strategic Plan (available on the website).

**Ideal candidates will have the following:**

- Bachelor's degree is required; graduate degree in a related field is preferred.
- Genuine interest in Berkeley County Farmland Protection Program's mission of preserving the agricultural resources and rural aspects of the county.
- Knowledge of conservation issues and the benefits of land preservation, particularly with regard to agricultural/farm use.
- Knowledge of NRCS FRPP and ACEP/ALE easements, including their application and acquisition process for ACEP/ALE.
- Minimum of five years of relevant, demonstrable management experience is required, including successful financial management, board relations and a proven capacity to motivate, mentor and lead staff.

In addition, attributes of patience, perseverance and commitment to preservation of the agricultural way of life and environment are key qualities for the future Executive Director. Easement applicants; predominately long time, family farmers/landowners, have many questions and often require shepherding through the many aspects of the application process (as brief as two years or as long as five).

**Compensation:**

BCFPB offers a competitive pay rate, commensurate with experience, and flexible work environment. As per BCFPB's personnel policy, full-time staff are eligible for State sponsored health and retirement benefits as well as paid leave. This position is expected to be compensated between \$55,000 - \$75,000.

**To Apply:**

Please email your cover letter and resume to Tom Gleason at [resume.berkeley@wvfp.org](mailto:resume.berkeley@wvfp.org). Applications will be accepted until COB, Friday 31 March 2023. Additional information about the Berkeley County Farmland Protection program as well as a complete job description can be found at [wvfp.org/berkeley](http://wvfp.org/berkeley)

**Equal Opportunity**

The Berkeley County Farmland Protection Board celebrates, supports, and thrives on our differences to benefit our staff, our mission, and our community. We are an equal opportunity workplace and do not discriminate based on race, color, religion, sex, gender identity, national origin, political affiliation, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, genetic information, age, parental status, military service, or other non-merit factors.