



Director of Education

Position Description

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Riveredge is more than a nature center. Its legacy as a pioneer in the areas of land restoration, research, and inquiry-based education throughout Wisconsin serves as a strong foundation for future initiatives. Today, Riveredge is reimagining the role of the nature center by empowering and supporting communities to live in harmony with their natural environment in a way that encourages exploration, adventure, and fun.

Riveredge has a 53-year history as a leader in environmental education in the state of Wisconsin. The Center provides science-based, inquiry-oriented, outdoor experiences to over 45,000 learners of all ages each year. The mission of Riveredge Nature Center is to promote conservation through education that awakens curiosity, engages the body, and explores connections to nature for all generations. Through this, Riveredge envisions healthier human and natural communities.

Riveredge is working to become a leading destination in the Midwest for learning, discovering, and experiencing the interconnections between nature and society. This work is done through creating partnerships which transform the culture of our formal education systems, communities, and lifestyles. This is an exciting time in the history of Riveredge as we work to pioneer strategies to redefine the role of nature centers in today's society.

Position Purpose

The ultimate purpose of the Director of Education is to provide overall leadership for the robust and growing environmental education efforts at Riveredge, both at the main Riveredge Nature Center location as well as throughout southeastern Wisconsin.

Responsibilities

Key Leadership Responsibilities

- Serve as a member of Riveredge's leadership team; attend and contribute to leadership team meetings.
- Attend Board of Director meetings and prepare reports for the Board.
- Participate and provide leadership, when needed, to the Board's "Education, Science, Research, and Stewardship" committee.
- Serve as the direct supervisor for a team of 7-10 full time staff members.
- Plan and implement regular team building activities and culture-defining programs with the education team. Schedule and facilitate Education Team meetings, create agendas, assign roles, document outcomes and follow up with action items.
- In collaboration with other members of Riveredge's leadership team, provide leadership to organizational wide efforts such as Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI), Culture & Mental Health, and Visitor Experiences work teams.
- Through a collaborative process, develop and manage the Education Department operating budget. Assume responsibility for meeting fiduciary goals.
- Support education staff by assisting with oversight of [school](#), [homeschool](#), youth and community programs, [adventure programming](#), and [summer/winter camp](#), as necessary.
- Work closely with program managers to oversee Seasonal Naturalists; support continued learning by helping coordinate professional development and educator professional learning days.

- Lead annual reviews, quarterly check-in's, and conflict resolution, as needed.
- Directly supervise the [Scientist in Residence](#) partnerships with current school districts. Explore opportunities to strengthen and expand partnerships for additional years and with additional schools.
- Strategically fill any staff vacancies; onboard and train new staff in organizational policies and procedures.
- Work with staff to develop goals, work plans, track / evaluate outcomes, and make changes to the programs as needed.
- Serve as the main spokesperson for the education programs at Riveredge; communicate regularly with partners and expand partnerships and collaborations throughout the region.
- Seek additional partnerships with institutes of higher learning to build capacity and add value to the program.
- Create strong relationships and serve as a communication channel between the education team and the [Riveredge Outdoor Learning Elementary School](#) (K-5 public charter school at Riveredge); continue to grow and support work to help others replicate similar educational efforts in the state and nation
- Support the [4-year-old Kindergarten partnership](#) with the Kettle Moraine YMCA and West Bend School District
- Support [Community Rivers Program](#) partnerships with local municipalities
- Report and share results in a timely manner through evaluation summaries to the funders, donors, and partners.
- Attend professional conferences to network and share the work of Riveredge through formal presentations.

Evaluation Responsibilities

- Lead efforts to document the impacts of Riveredge programming on participants and the community.
- Collaborate with staff to create evaluation plans for programming and work to implement the evaluation.
- Create statements of impact, documents, models, and graphics to communicate Riveredge's impact to the community, organizational leaders, Board of Directors, funders, and stakeholders. Collaborate with other staff to develop methods of disseminating the collected information.
- Assist in the yearly creation of Riveredge's Annual Report in the areas of impact communication.

Other Responsibilities

- Author blog posts and newsletter articles, when needed.
- Assist in staffing the Visitor Center approximately one weekend per quarter.
- Participate in helping staff major fundraising events at Riveredge such as the Farm to Table Dinner, Frothy Forage, Sturgeon Fest, and Riveredge Ride.
- Assist in caring for any education animals.
- Other duties as assigned.

Position Expectations

In addition to the Primary Duties, the Director of Education is expected to meet the following expectations set forth to all staff members of Riveredge Nature Center:

- Meaningfully contribute to the Riveredge staff team. This includes helping with projects, programs, and events that may fall outside of the primary duties or departments of this position description.
- Foster an inclusive and supportive environment through personal actions such as supporting and helping other staff members and volunteers.
- Regular and consistent growth in revenue and participation metrics on an annual basis.
- Identify opportunities and contribute to efforts to realize additional earned and contributed revenue outside the nature center program area such as, but not limited to, specialty programs, membership recruitment, in-kind donations, grants and gifts.
- Provide high quality customer service experiences to all guests and volunteers.
- Develop personal benchmarks and measures of success related to yearly Riveredge Nature Center approved goals.
- Regularly participate in staff meetings and internal professional development training.

- Seek out professional development opportunities outside of Riveredge Nature Center to further expand and improve your skills, talents, thoughts and ideas.
- Strive for excellence and innovation.
- Meaningfully contribute to applying significant examples of regional impact on the environment and education

Benefits & Working Conditions

This is a full-time, salaried position and provides the following benefits. Specific quantity of benefits will be presented in the offer letter.

- Short and long term disability paid 100% by Riveredge,
- Limited matching retirement contributions,
- Paid holidays,
- A generous Paid Time Off (PTO) allotment
- Optional participation in health insurance and dental insurance programs.

Additional working conditions include:

- Work evenings and weekends on a regular basis.
- Assume occasional travel within the state.
- Occasional hours may be spent telecommuting from home.

Physical Requirements:

- Sit and type for long periods of time indoors among an open concept office setting.
- Hike outdoors on varying terrain, in all seasons, with teaching equipment in tow.
- Ability to lift up to 20 lbs. and climb stairs.

Riveredge Nature Center is committed to fostering, cultivating, and preserving a culture of diversity and inclusion. Our human capital is the most valuable asset we have. The collective sum of the individual differences, life experiences, knowledge, inventiveness, innovation, self-expression, unique capabilities and talent that our employees invest in their work represents a significant part of not only our culture, but our reputation and achievement as well.

We embrace and encourage our employees' differences in age, color, disability, ethnicity, family or marital status, gender identity or expression, language, national origin, physical and mental ability, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, veteran status, and other characteristics that make our employees unique.

This position reports directly to the Executive Director.

Preferred Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree, or significant experience, in the education, natural sciences or related field.
- Minimum of 3 years experience in a leadership position
- Experience managing a staff team, providing inspiration leadership, and creating a positive, fun, and innovative team culture
- Self-starter, motivated, and a well-developed ability to set and meet goals and outcomes
- Flexible, collaborative spirit who brings out the best in staff members through an asset-based approach to leadership
- Excellent, transparent communicator; strong oral and written communication skills.
- Comfortable developing new sources of revenue and ability to understand revenue impacts on programming
- Loves working with learners of all ages and families
- Flexible, creative teacher with a min. of 2 years teaching experience (K-adult) in a formal/ non-formal setting
- Knowledge of inquiry process, curriculum development, teaching methods and assessment techniques
- Proficiency in using G-Suite such as Docs, Sheets, Forms, Drive, Gmail, Calendar
- Experience in a non-formal education and/or private non-profit setting

- Interest in sustainability education and its connection to environmental issues and a community's well being
- Naturalist skills and knowledge of Wisconsin natural history, or willingness to possess

Priority Deadline: Tuesday, October 26, 2021. Applications will be reviewed as they are received.
Position is available beginning December 1, 2021.

Please send resume, cover letter, and contact information for three references (as one PDF) to Executive Director, Jessica Jens, at jjens@riveredge.us. For questions, please contact Jessica at 262-375-2715. **In your cover letter, please address the following question: *How do you provide leadership to inspire a team to achieve exceptional goals?***

To Learn More

To learn more about Riveredge's mission, vision, core values, and recent mission impacts, please visit:

- <https://www.riveredgenaturecenter.org/the-mission/>
- <https://www.riveredgenaturecenter.org/history/annual-reports/>
- Growing Wild: 50 Years of Riveredge - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-9YVOGjihDY>