

Teacher-Naturalist Job Description

About Us

North Branch Nature Center's mission is Connecting People with the Natural World. We envision a world where people of all ages learn, teach, and play together in nature, supporting healthy, resilient communities and ecosystems. More than 17,000 people visit North Branch Nature Center (NBNC) annually to be immersed in the natural world through environmental education, natural history, and community science programs. Our 28-acre preserve of forest and fields is nestled in a gentle bend of the North Branch of the Winooski River, just two miles from downtown Montpelier, Vermont, and is also popular as a year-round place to walk, ski, swim, or simply to do nothing beside the river. We are committed to making our natural areas, our organization, and our entire community an inclusive and equitable place.

The Position

The Teacher-Naturalist works with the Director of Education and the NBNC education staff to provide informative and experiential programs for schools participating in Educating Children Outdoors (ECO) throughout Central Vermont; collaboratively leads nature immersive afterschool, homeschool, and summer camp programming for ages 4-14; and develops and implements natural history, community science, evening, weekend and family programs, and other nature-based educational programming throughout the year as needed.

Responsibilities include:

Programmatic Responsibilities

- NBNC Teacher-Naturalists' programmatic responsibilities vary significantly with the seasons. During the school year, the focus is on the ECO program, ECO Homeschool, Afterschool, and other programming. During the summer, Teacher-Naturalists teach NBNC's popular summer camps. Mixed in with these programmatic responsibilities is a considerable amount of planning and debriefing time, administrative tasks related to the programs, team meetings, and other desk duties. Across the year, Teacher-Naturalists spend roughly 80% of their time in the field teaching and about 20% of their time on planning or other administrative tasks,

though that breakdown varies significantly based on the time of year.

Teacher-Naturalist responsibilities in each of these program areas include:

- **Educating Children Outdoors.** ECO, our flagship school-based program, takes public elementary school students into the forests on or near school grounds for weekly lessons. A Teacher-Naturalist develops and delivers standards-based lessons in collaboration with the classroom teacher, maintaining a regular ECO teaching or consultation schedule at 1-3 area public schools. ECO programming typically runs September - December and March - June, though some schools do have ECO in January and February.
- **ECO Homeschool.** Develop and deliver student-led lessons and activities that take advantage of local phenology during ECO Homeschool sessions, write weekly summaries and extensions for parents, and coordinate and co-teach with other NBNC Teacher-Naturalists. Once a week, September - June.
- **Afterschool.** Work with other NBNC Teacher-Naturalists to plan and lead nature-based Afterschool sessions. Once a week, September - June.
- **Summer Camp.** Develop and implement experiential Summer Camp activities based on weekly themes throughout the summer season. Help train, mentor, and co-teach with seasonal Summer Staff and high school Leaders-In-Training. June - August.
- **Other Programming.** In consultation with NBNC's Director of Education and Program Director, and based on the strengths and interests of the Teacher-Naturalist, develop, deliver, and take a lead in other nature-based programming and nature connection opportunities for the NBNC community, including but not limited to family outings, evening and weekend programs, natural history programs, community science opportunities, community events, and other activities. Year round.
- **Additional Roles/Responsibilities.** In addition to the above responsibilities, and based on the interest, skill set, and community need, the Teacher-Naturalist position holds the opportunity to take on additional roles and responsibilities at NBNC as the individual grows within the organization and their career.

General Responsibilities

- Throughout all areas of programming, support whole-child development and promote a nature- and place-based approach to learning. Provide a supportive,

inclusive and accessible outdoor learning environment for all participants. Observe and document student learning.

- Develop, write, and implement lesson plans that align with the Next Generation Science Standards, Common Core, and additional objectives as determined collaboratively with classroom teachers and the NBNC Education Team. Appropriately file lesson plans within NBNC's organizational system; help maintain and improve that system over time.
- Actively manage risk in an outdoor setting, adhere to all NBNC and host schools' safety protocols, and perform periodic safety assessments at all outdoor teaching sites.
- Uphold NBNC's commitment to justice, equity, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of programming, partnership, and other work.
- Attend NBNC Education Team meetings and NBNC staff meetings.
- May sit on staff/Board committees.

Qualifications

- At least two years experience in environmental education, place-based education, or similar nature-based, outdoor, community science, or other educational programming.
- Bachelor's Degree in education, environmental education, environmental science, natural science, or related field, or commensurate life experience.
- Experience with and interest in working with children in an outdoor environment.
- Willingness to teach outside in all Vermont weather conditions.
- Knowledge of local natural history, including flora, fauna, geology, and Vermont's historical land use preferred. Knowledge of local Indigenous cultures and history preferred.
- Professional training in anti-bias education.
- Experience with storytelling, singing, and nature-inspired art in daily teaching routine.
- Proficiency in outdoor skills such as fire tending, tool use, and knot tying.
- Experience managing risk in an outdoor setting.
- Wilderness First Aid or First Aid certification, Adult/Child CPR, and AED certification, or the willingness to obtain those certifications before employment begins.
- Clear background check; valid driver's license; reliable transportation to teaching sites.

Position Details

Compensation and Benefits: Annual salary of \$42,640, plus a benefits package that includes: health insurance, paid holidays, paid sick time, paid leave, a Flexible Spending Account, Dependent Care Account, SIMPLE IRA retirement plan, NBNC program fee waivers, and pro deals.

Job status: Full-time, exempt, year-round position.

Start Date: June 16th, 2025

Reports to: NBNC Director of Education.

Supervises: No supervisory duties.

To Apply: Send a cover letter, resume, and 3 references to Ken Benton (ken@northbranchnaturecenter.org), Director of Education. Position will remain open until filled.