



Black Rock Forest Consortium

American Museum of Natural History • Barnard College • The Browning School • The Calhoun School
Central Park Conservancy • Columbia University • Cornwall Central School District • The Dalton School
Hunter College • Marine Biological Laboratory -The Ecosystems Center • Metropolitan Montessori School
New York City Department of Parks & Recreation • New York-New Jersey Trail Conference • New York City PS/IS 311
New York University • Newburgh Enlarged City School District • The School at Columbia University • The Spence School
Storm King School • Trevor Day School • Urban Assembly for Applied Math and Science

Job Description- Director of Education, Black Rock Forest Consortium

The Black Rock Forest Consortium (www.blackrockforest.org) is a unique alliance of twenty universities, schools, research organizations, and cultural institutions that jointly operate the nearly 4,000-acre Black Rock Forest in the Hudson Highlands, 50 miles north of New York City, for scientific research, education, and conservation. Since its creation in 1989, the Consortium has established effective programs in biological and environmental research and education (from primary school through doctoral studies), conservation practices, and environmental design and operations. It has constructed a Center for Science and Education with laboratories and classrooms and a Forest Lodge with 60 beds and a capacity of 140 people for lectures and other activities. These buildings are both “green” and “smart”, incorporating wood and stone from the Forest and a large solar array panel, distinguishing them among northeastern environmental organizations and field stations. The Consortium’s annual budget is \$950,000. Its members record 13,000 visitor days per year in the Forest. The Consortium continues to refine its model for how science field stations with active research programs can enhance, and provide new opportunities for, academic institutions and educational audiences.

Job Description

The Consortium is now taking the next step in its growth by preparing to hire its first full-time Director of Education. The position was envisioned in the Consortium’s 2004 Long Range Plan, and is now available due to recently secured funding.

The Director of Education will oversee education programs, policies and procedures at the Forest, in a range of science disciplines, from elementary school through graduate school level. He or she will work to ensure program quality, effective pedagogy and robust scientific basis for all education at the Forest. The director will have teaching duties and will also direct the forest education staff in meeting program needs of member institutions. He or she will act as a liaison between Forest staff and member educational institutions, establishing and maintaining collaborative relationships with teachers, administrators, and scientists. He or she will assess past and current Forest education programs with an eye to making improvements and integrating new research findings where possible. The director will develop procedures to determine the effectiveness of educational programming, and will administer the Consortium’s summer High School Research Internship Program with an eye toward further enhancement and expansion.

The Education Director will also design and implement new, rigorous science and research programs at the middle school, high school and undergraduate levels. He or she will contribute to the development of web-based activities that use new technologies to help students investigate nature. The director will be expected to develop new proposals, in concert with Forest staff and Consortium colleagues, and secure major educational grants for the organization, and also assist member institutions in securing funding for their Forest-based programs. These proposals will include, in the first year, a proposal to the National Science Foundation’s Biology Directorate to implement a new, site-based REU (Research Experiences for Undergraduates) program, and another proposal to NSF’s Informal Science Education program to extend the Virtual Forest Initiative (see below). The director will also work to effectively interface with the education programs of the newly developing National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON).

A major component of this position (approximately 50%) will be directing a \$500,000 three-year grant from the Toyota USA Foundation to design and implement new high-school science modules in Biology and Chemistry as part of the Consortium’s developing Virtual Forest Initiative. This initiative, developed in partnership with the Columbia Center for New Media Teaching and Learning (CCNMTL), is creating a digital interface with the

Black Rock Forest. CCNMTL has developed modules now used in courses at Columbia and Barnard College to explore ecology and environmental science concepts using research data from the Forest ecosystem. The high-school Virtual Forest modules will be standards-based and will support teaching and learning in a series of collaborating New York City public schools. The Director of Education will work with other core team members to write curriculum, lead field investigations and professional development efforts, and design evaluation procedures for the secondary school components of the Virtual Forest Initiative.

The Director will report to the Forest Executive Director, Dr. William Schuster, and will attend meetings of the Executive Committee of the Consortium Board.

Qualifications

Required qualifications include undergraduate and advanced degrees in education and/or science, a robust science background, and prior teaching and curriculum development experience. Applicants must be well-versed in educational pedagogy, committed to learning in nature, have prior experience using educational technology and be proficient in Web 2.0 applications.

The successful candidate will have superior verbal and written communications skills, as well as demonstrated administrative and organizational skills. He or she also must be personable and have a proven track record in establishing successful working relationships. He or she also must be enthusiastic, eager to demonstrate imagination and leadership, and must hold values and commitments consistent with the Forest enterprise.

Applicants must demonstrate an employment history of increasing responsibility. The successful candidate should have proven entrepreneurial abilities and success in securing and administering education grants and gifts from private and/or public funding sources such as the National Science Foundation.

The successful candidate must be able to galvanize the interest of a variety of potential collaborators in the educational activities of the Consortium. He or she must be comfortable working with diverse constituencies-urban (New York City) and rural (Hudson Valley) - and be prepared to travel between those locations as needed, in addition to attending education conferences and workshops. The position is primarily located at the Black Rock Forest in Cornwall, NY.

Desirable Additional Qualifications

Prior receipt of education grants from the National Science Foundation

Graduate degrees in both science and education

Professional development and teacher training experience

Experience in designing curriculum to meet New York State learning standards

Advanced web site development experience and/or web-based delivery of education

Educational use of social networking media

Experience with sensor networks

Interest in educational research

Membership in the Ecological Society of America and/or American Association for the Advancement of Science

Salary and Benefits

\$65,000 - \$80,000 per year, depending on experience. Full medical benefits, with retirement benefits after one year of service.

To Apply

Send cover letter, CV, and names of three references by **March 2, 2010** to:

Director of Education Search Committee
Black Rock Forest Consortium
129 Continental Road
Cornwall, NY 12518