

New Canaan Nature Center

Part-time Visitor Center Naturalist

Status: Hourly/Non-Exempt

Hours: Part-time, 2 days/week, Monday & Saturday

Position summary

The New Canaan Nature Center, a community-based environmental center and 40-acre sanctuary with forests, fields, ponds and streams, seeks a year-round Visitor Center Naturalist. The Visitor Center Naturalist is often the first point of contact with our community and creates a welcoming, educational and dynamic hub for the public by exhibiting a cheerful attitude and maintaining a clean, friendly, educational, and informative physical space.

Major duties include: connect with and engage the public with nature, animals and environment; effectively maintain the public space (appearance, information dissemination and interpretive displays/activities) of the Visitor Center and surrounding grounds; distribute information regarding the Center's programs, events, volunteer opportunities, etc.; work with Front Desk volunteers; and perform other miscellaneous duties as required by the New Canaan Nature Center.

Working hours

The Nature Center's regular operating hours are 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Saturday. The schedule for this position is variable and dependent upon the season and needs. A flexible work schedule is key, as there may be an occasional need for work extending beyond regular open hours.

Duties

The Visitor Center Naturalist will report to the Director of Environmental Education. Job responsibilities include:

Visitor Center Education and Interpretation

- Welcome, greet and assist all visitors, young & old alike, as a friendly public interface in the Visitor Center.
- Create a positive learning environment for public entering and utilizing the Visitor Center. Promote the exploration of the great outdoors & nature (both inside & outside the Visitor Center).
- Enhance every person's visit to the Visitor Center by providing detailed and accurate information, directions, and/or history about Nature Center activities, offerings, opportunities, and programming.
- Engage visitors in conversation about organization's mission and our role in being a resource for the community. Promote ways people can support our mission & organization.
- Maintain and provide daily upkeep of self-guided activities, trail maps, exhibits, and equipment including pond nets, discovery packs, etc.

- Collaborate with the Director of Environmental Education and Education Department to develop new and innovative self-guided activities and interactive displays for the Visitor Center.
- Design & create pertinent, engaging and educational bulletin boards in the Visitor Center.
- Assist with the care of the nature center's live animal ambassadors and the cleaning and maintenance of public animal displays.

Front Desk Reception

- Open & close the Visitor Center on a daily basis.
- Respond to visitor inquiries/questions via the phone, in person and, as needed, e-mail. Connect visitors with appropriate staff members/organizations that can best provide assistance and answers to questions.
- Perform general administration duties in an efficient & timely manner: answering phones, passing along messages, basic data entry, filing program registrations, & statistics tracking.
- Regarding the NCNC Gift Shop: manage sales & money exchange, while helping to track, label & ensure the safety of inventory; restock supplies when necessary.
- Ensure that the Visitor Center is properly used and alert the appropriate person(s) when personal safety or the facility is compromised.
- Maintain a general awareness of the all staff calendar to know who is on-site versus off-site, who may be teaching, what rooms are being used/rented, etc.
- Help to maintain a safe, clean and welcoming Visitor Center (this includes the Front Desk, Community Room, main Visitor Center area, kitchen, bathrooms, and surrounding grounds).
- Work with Director of Environmental Education to ensure that volunteers (Front Desk, Animal Care, Trail & Grounds Maintenance) have supplies, tools & support needed to complete their tasks.
- Sort mail to proper inboxes and sign for special deliveries.
- Assist with the set up and break down of daily events and meetings.
- Provide support at annual community/special events.
- Participate and contribute in All Staff meetings.

Minimum Skill and Ability Requirements:

- Experience and/or interest in customer service/retail, parks, tourism, and/or environmental education.
- Knowledge and good common sense of working with public of all ages – very young to seniors.
- Strong verbal and written communication skills; personable and energetic; ability to work productively as part of a team of staff, volunteers & interns.
- Enthusiasm for working on multiple aspects of Nature Center role at one time.
- Ability to effectively manage self in fulfilling and completing required tasks in timely fashion, with minimal direction and/or supervision.
- Ability to take charge of Visitor Center space & ensure effective use and maintenance of said space.

- Computer proficiency (Microsoft Office, e-mail systems, CRM database, etc.).
- Prior knowledge of the natural environment & desire to continue to learn about nature.
- Willingness and demonstrated ability to handle live animals (including small mammals, reptiles, invertebrates, and possibly birds of prey) for program use and care; or the willingness to learn.
- Responsible and reliable; ability to be at work regularly and on-time.
- Must be at least 21 years old; candidate should have a minimum of a high school diploma.
- Valid driver's license is a plus.

Pay/Compensation

Hourly pay is \$15/hour and is commensurate based on experience and qualifications of the candidate. Payroll is paid according to normal payroll practices with employees paid twice a month.

Start date

August 30, 2021

To Apply:

Email cover letter, resume, and the names & contact information of 2 references to Michelle Hips, Director of Environmental Education, at mhips@newcanaannature.org.