



EarthWalk Vermont
growing community rooted in nature

March 19, 2019

EarthWalk Vermont Executive Director Candidate Packet

Dear applicant,

Thank you for your interest in applying for the position of Executive Director of EarthWalk Vermont. Please read the information in this packet. We want to make sure that EarthWalk is a place where you can offer your gifts, and this position would be a good fit for you. This document includes the following:

- 1. Executive Director Job Overview**
- 2. EarthWalk Vermont Overview**
- 3. Statement of Acknowledgement and Gratitude**
- 4. Executive Director Job Description**
- 5. How to Apply**
- 6. Overview of the Interview Process**

1. Executive Director Job Overview

We seek a leader who will be dedicated to preserving and growing EarthWalk's powerful and transformative education model while skillfully guiding the organization towards a regenerative and sustainable business model. Our new Executive Director will bring a high level of fiscal development and oversight to EarthWalk while collaborating with a dynamic staff and board to create and implement a strategic plan for EarthWalk's long future. An entrepreneurial spirit with community-building skills, a big heart, collaborative instincts, strong listening skills and the ability to bring out the best in others are all qualities of this new leader.

EarthWalk Vermont actively seeks a diverse pool of candidates. EarthWalk does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, marital/civil union status, age, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, veteran/uniformed service status, disability or other legally protected classification. EarthWalk Vermont is an equal opportunity employer.

If you feel inspired to explore the possibility of serving as EarthWalk's next Executive Director, the Search Committee looks forward to discovering your gifts.

With gratitude for your interest in becoming an integral part of this exciting and pivotal time in EarthWalk's evolution,

The Board, Staff and community of EarthWalk Vermont

2. EarthWalk Vermont Overview

EarthWalk is a vibrant outdoor school guided by its vision of creating healthy, nature-connected and resilient communities in central Vermont. Founded in 2005 by seasoned nature educator Angella Gibbons, EarthWalk has a mission to inspire and empower children, families, and communities to reconnect with and care for one another and the Earth through long-term community and nature-based mentoring. EarthWalk's transformational programming annually serves more than 300 families in the forests and fields on the Goddard College Campus in Plainfield, Vermont. Our educational approach is rooted in an ancient and yet revolutionary educational model: intergenerational nature mentoring. Skillful mentors, supported by teen leaders and community elders, work with children to help them develop the skills and knowledge needed to create and maintain responsible and caring relationships within communities and between people and the land.

Education Model

EarthWalk's curriculum is founded on connecting to nature while learning outdoor skills, how to live in and be in service to community and grow into long-term stewards of the land. Our work is collaborative, with over three hundred affiliate schools and programs around the world utilizing similar mentoring principles. These practices and principles are documented in *Coyote's Guide to Connecting to Nature* by Jon Young, Ellen Haas and Evan McGowan. EarthWalk is listed as an affiliate school.

Current Programs

EarthWalk offers year-round outdoor programs for children, teens and adults. Our programs for children ages 6-12 include a weekly full-day Village School program as well as an after-school program, and 10 weeks of summer camps. We also offer Coyote Kids Forest School in partnership with Sterling College, in Craftsbury. For teens, they learn valuable leadership skills through our Mentor In Training (MIT) leadership and summer Steward programs. For adults, EarthWalk offers the Field Institute for educators, monthly EarthSkills workshops, a Mentor Apprenticeship program and a year-long accredited Nature Mentoring Certificate. Graduate and undergraduate credits can be obtained through EarthWalk's partnership with Castleton University. EarthWalk also hosts seasonal community festivals and events for all ages. For detailed descriptions of all of EarthWalk's programs, please see our website at www.earthwalkvermont.org

There are several programs under development and/or planned expansion, including:

- **EarthWalk for Teens:** We received grant funding to expand our teen programs to include more hands-on skills, permaculture and activism.
- **EarthWalk Village School** and public school partnerships
- **Adult Field Institute**

EarthWalk's Shared Values

EarthWalk is a welcoming and inclusive community with a centering priority and ethos of caring for one another and the natural world. We deepen our relationships with the values of gratitude, justice, kindness, honesty, service, and stewardship.

We do our best to recognize and intentionally address deeper issues within our organization, including cultural appropriation; undoing racism and white supremacy; acknowledging Abenaki peoples and their land; seeking to create alliances with local Abenaki peoples; making policies and guidelines around healing and reparations to address harm done by inflicted trauma, colonialism and other acts of oppression. While there is much work to be done, we believe our work of compassionate community building and nature-based mentoring can help dismantle these systems of domination and oppression.

Business Model

The annual budget of EarthWalk is just over \$375,000. Approximately sixty percent of EarthWalk's annual budget is income based and generated by fee-for-service tuition, while forty percent is raised from grants, gifts, partnerships and philanthropic outreach. The Executive Director leads the fundraising efforts. Current funding streams include gifts from major donors, seasonal appeals, a circle of monthly sustaining donors, larger grants from foundations and smaller grants from local businesses, as well as events and merchandise sales.

In effort to ensure accessibility to EarthWalk's opportunities, one in four EarthWalk students receives some level of scholarship support. Our current annual scholarship budget is over \$25,000. Since EarthWalk's founding almost \$400,000 has been distributed to families in need.

Governance

EarthWalk's governance model centers on collaboration and community building, dynamic governance principles, collaborative decision-making, and employee engagement and accountability. EarthWalk was founded with the understanding that all employees must have a voice in decisions that affect their work. EarthWalk's bylaws reflect this consent-decision making process, and staff and board members are receiving ongoing training in Sociocracy.

“Sociocracy is a system of governance which seeks to achieve solutions that create harmonious social environments as well as productive organizations and businesses. It is distinguished by the use of consent decision-making through dialogue-based member-facilitated meetings and operates using a set of interlocking “circles” made up of board and staff who are empowered to lead and are accountable to one another. Each circle indicates a distinct function or area of operation within the organization. Circles do the work of the organization and work together to create proposals for other circles to consider.” Learn more at: www.sociocracyforall.org

Land

EarthWalk is located on the Goddard College Campus in Plainfield, Vermont. We lease a two-story office building which is adjacent to approximately 175 acres of land. Our education programs run entirely outdoors; in meadows, forests, and along the Winooski River. We have three camp shelters and a large community space (Spruce Lodge), two outhouses, a wood shed, and an outdoor kitchen, complete with a cob oven.

Our working model of education and community are place-based in nature and are deeply connected to an intimate, respectful and regenerative relationship with land stewardship. One of the creative challenges for EarthWalk's new Executive Director will be to build on the deep values of stewardship as well as strategize a long future through conversations with Goddard and/or other community partners about land access, tenure and security.

Community Partners

EarthWalk is a powerful and resilient learning community which includes a family of amazing partners. Past and current partnerships include: Goddard College, Castleton University Center for Schools, Twinfield Union School, Vermont Youth Conservation Corps (VYCC), the University of Vermont's Rubenstein School, Friends of the Winooski, 350.org Vermont, the Vermont Community Foundation, 1% for the Planet, and the Montpelier Kiwanis Club. EarthWalk's largest funding partners include the Bay and Paul Foundations and the Canaday Family Charitable Trust.

Nature Connection Leadership

In 2016, with partners from other nature mentoring schools, EarthWalk helped to found the annual Nature Connection Leadership Conference. Over forty leaders from the northeast gather each January to share best business practices, development strategies and collaborative training in leadership and social justice issues. The new Executive Director will attend this annual conference, along with the Founder and Youth Programs Director. In 2018, a Nature Connection Network was established to facilitate more collaboration throughout the year, offering webinars, a website (<https://natureconnection.network/>) and resources.

The Nature Connection Leadership Network (The Network) was founded to support and strengthen its member organizations and amplify this work through sharing resources, knowledge and best practices. The Network's mission is to encourage and support the healthy growth of nature connection organizations and their leaders in building resilient, regenerative and just communities.

3. Statement of Acknowledgement and Gratitude

(A full version is on EarthWalk's website [here.](#))

We would like to acknowledge and thank the various people, inspirations and teachings that influence EarthWalk. In this effort, we are working to clarify our most deeply held values and why we do this work.

We acknowledge that, at this time, EarthWalk is staffed predominantly by people of European descent coming from a place of privilege and opportunity. We acknowledge the long history of hardship faced by First Nations Peoples in the ongoing struggles of colonization and resistance. We also acknowledge that inequities and injustices must be reconciled and healed, and that there is much work to be done.

As a community, EarthWalk Vermont acknowledges that many of our crafts, skills, songs and stories originate from cultures that have lived in close connection to the land for thousands of years. We do our best to acknowledge origins and share what we have learned in skillful and respectful ways.

We send our deepest thanks to the Land as our greatest teacher and source of inspiration. We give thanks to the First Nations People in particular to the Abenaki whose land we live and work on. We give thanks for the collective knowledge, skills and wisdom passed on to us through teachers of all kinds. We would like to thank the Traditional and local Elders, who have supported and guided EarthWalk.

We give a special thanks to Jon Young, founder of the Wilderness Awareness School and the Regenerative Design Institute, both on the West Coast. Thanks to Jon's vision and many elders and teachers, there are now over three hundred affiliate schools and programs around the world connecting people of all ages to nature, utilizing common mentoring principles, including EarthWalk Vermont.

And thank you to the children and families who bring vitality to the EarthWalk Vision. Thank you to all of you who make this vision possible: EarthWalk staff, Board of Directors, volunteers, collaborators, donors and community partners.

We acknowledge that EarthWalk is a learning and growing organization, open to feedback and evolution.

4. Executive Director Job Description

Job Summary

The Executive Director's primary responsibility is to lead and manage all EarthWalk operations, assuming overall strategic and functional responsibility for EarthWalk's staff, programs, planning, evaluation, administration, fundraising, finance, and carrying out its mission. The Executive Director works closely with the organization's board, staff, donors and partners to develop strategies and implement action plans to fulfill its mission.

Collaboration

- The Executive Director reports to the Board of Directors
- The Youth Programs Director, Development Manager and Founder & Education Leader report to the Executive Director.
- The Executive Director will collaborate and learn from/with EarthWalks' Founder & Education Leader.
- The Executive Director works closely with all staff and stakeholders to ensure organizational excellence.

Schedule

This is a full-time, year-round salaried position.

Job Responsibilities

General Responsibilities

- Maintain a clear vision to realize EarthWalk's mission to inspire and empower children, families, and communities to reconnect with and care for one another and the Earth.
- Build and maintain key relationships with donors, funders, partners, staff, program participants and families.
- Foster a collaborative work environment based on healthy communication and empowered consent decision-making.
- Monitor and implement the strategic plan; prepare and monitor annual budget.
- Oversee the development and implementation of programs and projects that fulfill the organizational mission.
- Pursue diverse funding sources to ensure a viable organization.
- Foster growth and efficacy of the board.
- Whenever possible take time to enjoy the community and its activities out on the land

Organizational Development

- Build, maintain and improve systems that streamline efforts and codify procedures and best practices.
- Develop strategic plan with board and invited contributors to guide board, staff, and partners in understanding and supporting the organization's mission and projects in the region.

- Lead short-term organizational planning processes including programmatic planning, goal-setting, individual work plans and evaluation.

Fundraising & Finance

- Guide the organization to achieve financial success and create lasting impact through ongoing financial analysis and decision-making.
- Prudently monitor fiscal planning and bookkeeping activities.
- Manage organizational cash flow and ensure prudent management of cash and organizational assets.
- Serve as the primary fundraiser for EarthWalk by developing and implementing a fundraising strategy including direct solicitations, grant writing, sponsorships, large donors, events, etc., in conjunction with board initiatives and oversight and assisted by the Development Manager.
- Write grant proposals and manage grants and reporting requirements.
- Maintain and develop relationships with the funding community and with individual donors.
- Work with the board's development committee to secure the stability and growth of the organization.
- Inform and consult the board of any potential financial risk.

Community Engagement & Networking

- Foster mission-oriented relationships and projects with local, state and regional partners and organizations.
- Remain actively informed about nature mentoring and nature-based education to inform EarthWalk's strategic direction and program offerings.
- Represent EarthWalk at public events and network gatherings, as appropriate.
- Oversee the development of EarthWalk's marketing and promotional strategy and support its evolution and implementation.
- Establish and foster strategic relationships and partnerships with aligned leaders, organizations, and initiatives at the local, statewide and regional levels.

Staff Management

- Foster a culture of shared leadership and autonomous action; consult with staff to develop creative solutions to problems and opportunities as they arise.
- Coordinate employee performance management skills and tools including updated personnel policies, job descriptions, regular performance reviews, on-boarding and orientation processes, exit interviews, and ongoing opportunities for continuous improvement.
- Maintain professional expertise of the team by encouraging professional development through trainings, workshops, and conferences when possible.
- Maintain an excellent staff by overseeing all recruiting, interviewing, selecting, orienting, and training of all administrative staff. Support Youth Programs Director to do the same for all Field staff hiring and managing.
- Encourage positive staff performance by mentoring and teaching employees; planning and reviewing job performance; assessing and providing professional development opportunities.

- Manage and oversee all personnel and payroll matters including employment contracts, compensation, requests for leave, promotions, benefits administration, timesheets and time tracking.

Board Administration

- Maintain regular communication with the board and active committees.
- Provide input regarding board meeting agendas and provide relevant materials for board meetings.
- Assist the board with coordination for board events and meeting logistics.
- Support the planning and implementation of the board's action plan.

Additional Responsibilities

- Maintain professional and technical knowledge by attending educational workshops and reviewing professional publications.
- Other duties as assigned by the Board.

Required Qualifications

- A self-starter with a demonstrated passion for making an impact in the community.
- A passion for nature-based education and nature mentoring as an educational approach.
- Curiosity and a willingness to learn and promote EarthWalk's proven and powerful education model.
- A Bachelor's degree or equivalent experience in nonprofit or business management, education, environmental studies, environmental science, or related field.
- Strong strategic planning and critical thinking skills. Ability to quickly assess a situation and make necessary decisions; skilled in creative problem-solving.
- Demonstrated success in growing and supporting the effectiveness of a non-profit organization.
- Ability to develop and manage budgets and to make sound financial decisions.
- A proven track record of success in fundraising.
- Experience with facilitation and shared leadership structures.
- Ability to cultivate collaborative and reciprocal relationships with colleagues, volunteers, donors, foundations, and community members.
- Ability to communicate effectively with diverse groups of people, including children, coworkers, parents, community members and collaborators.
- Positive attitude, creative, flexible, proactive and works independently and within a team environment.
- Ability to remain calm under pressure and in the face of changing demands.
- Strong organizational skills and natural proclivity for keeping detailed records.
- Flexibility and ability to prioritize tasks and manage workload in an ever-evolving work environment
- A commitment to improvement through professional development.
- Strong proficiency with internet use, spreadsheet development, databases, Google Drive and Microsoft Office suites. Comfort with learning new software platforms.
- Reliable private vehicle for occasional regional travel.

Preferred Qualifications

- Executive leadership in nonprofit management.
- Proven success and experience growing a business towards sustainability.
- Experience with 8-Shields nature education model through Art of Mentoring or direct experience in the nature connection field.
- Experience with, or strong interest in, collaborative or dynamic governance (Sociocracy).
- Proven leadership in social and ecological justice issues.
- Land stewardship and conservation experience.
- Master's degree or equivalent experience in nonprofit or business management, education, or related field.

Physical Requirements

- Comfortable spending time outdoors in all weather conditions, including cold, snow, rain, humidity, and heat.
- Comfortable spending time in an office setting to perform job responsibilities.
- Occasional off-site travel as needed for development, program delivery, and special events.

All employees are required to satisfactorily perform the essential duties and responsibilities of their position. The essential duties and responsibilities listed above are not intended to be construed as an exhaustive list of all responsibilities, duties, and skills required. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions of this job.

Compensation is competitive and commensurate with experience. Annual Salary range: \$56K-\$64K. This salary includes the following benefits: \$3K towards health insurance; four weeks paid vacation; eight paid holidays; 40 hours of sick time; discount meals at Goddard College (when there are residencies) and free admission to all monthly adult workshops.

5. How to Apply

- Review this complete packet.
- Send in the following by email OR Create a Google folder (EarthWalk_ED_FIRST NAME_LAST NAME_folder) with the following documents:
 - Letter of interest (EarthWalk_ED_FIRST NAME_LAST NAME_LOI)
 - Resume (EarthWalk_ED_FIRST NAME_LAST NAME_Resume)
 - List of three professional references, including supervisors, colleagues and supervisees; and two personal references (EarthWalk_ED_FIRST NAME_LAST NAME_References)
 - For the Search Committee’s initial screening, please provide the following for each reference:
 - Name
 - Context of professional (respective roles, agency, length of colleagueship) or personal (nature and length of connection)
 - relationship
 - Contact information (phone, email)

The Search Committee will not contact references without first notifying the candidate.

- Two recent documents prepared by the candidate in a recent professional role; samples should reflect two of the following four options:
 - Option 1: Letter to prospective donors at the outset of a development campaign (EarthWalk_ED_FIRST NAME_LAST NAME_Donor Letter)
 - Option 2: Letter of interest regarding a grant opportunity (EarthWalk_ED_FIRST NAME_LAST NAME_Grant Opportunity)
 - Option 3: Narrative submitted as part of a grant application (EarthWalk_ED_FIRST NAME_LAST NAME_Grant Narrative)
 - Option 4: Marketing description (EarthWalk_ED_FIRST NAME_LAST NAME_Marketing Description)

Email these documents or share this folder with EarthWalk Vermont Search Committee at search@earthwalkvermont.org

6. Overview of the Interview Process

EarthWalk has gathered a 'Search Committee' comprised of representative (and enthusiastic!) Board members, current Staff, community Elders and parents. This committee will engage with applicants and help steward an interview process to include:

- Collection and management of initial application packets
- Phone calls with selected candidates to determine initial 'fit'
- Invitation to selected candidates for in-person interviews with the Search Committee
- Top candidates will be invited in for a second interview to include:
 - Walking the land with current Executive Director, Angella Gibbons
 - A short field visit to the EarthWalk Village School
 - A meeting with Field and Admin staff
 - A round-table conversation as well as a presentation with/to the search committee and full Board of Directors