

YOUTH EDUCATION COORDINATOR/TEACHER NATURALIST

Position Description: December 2023



Organization Overview:

Ruffner Mountain, Red Mountain Park, and Turkey Creek Nature Preserve are the three largest green spaces in Jefferson County. Together, they encompass over 3,000 acres of protected forests and waterways and receive more than 300,000 visitors annually. These natural areas serve a crucial role in preserving habitat for native plants and animals, fostering connections between communities and the natural world, and preserving Greater Birmingham's industrial history.

Over the past three years, leaders from each organization collaborated to establish the Jefferson County Greenways Commission (JCGC), a state agency aimed at providing permanent public financial support for the operations and maintenance of the three parks. While the day-to-day operations will be consolidated under the JCGC, the nonprofit will continue offering community support services, including conservation efforts, education programs, capital improvements, and master planning for the parks.

Position Summary:

An integral part of the nonprofit's mission is to educate our youth on how to deepen their connection to the natural world and be better stewards of our environment. The Youth Education Coordinator/Teacher Naturalist is pivotal in helping develop, coordinate, implement, and evaluate K-12 education programs at Ruffner Mountain, Turkey Creek, and Red Mountain Park. Reporting to the Director of Programs and Community Partnerships, this position will work collaboratively with other teaching naturalists, program staff, and volunteers to lead field trips, partner programs, and summer programming.

The standard working hours for this position are Monday through Friday, from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. However, the applicant should be flexible and available to work on some weekends and evenings if programs are scheduled on those days. This role involves travel to three different locations and requires the ability to navigate large acreage sites. Spending time outdoors is an integral aspect of this position.

S/he/they will demonstrate a background of working directly with people from diverse racial, ethnic, geographic, and socioeconomic backgrounds, using a welcoming, inclusive, and accessible approach. If you are enthusiastic about connecting youth with nature and promoting DEI initiatives, we encourage you to apply for the Youth Education Coordinator/Teacher Naturalist position.

Responsibilities:

K-12 Field Trips and Curriculum Development

- Work closely with the Director of Programs and Community Partnerships and other program staff to help develop and evaluate all K-12 field trip programs for Ruffner Mountain, Turkey Creek, and Red Mountain Park.
- Help lead the curriculum development for field trips at all three sites, focusing on BEETLES (Better Environmental Education, Teaching, Learning & Expertise) pedagogy as well as alignment with Alabama state standards.
- Strengthen the relationship with city and county school systems, with a **primary** focus on Birmingham City Schools, Jefferson County Schools, and school systems close to each park/preserve. The secondary focus will be working with home school groups, private schools, and charter schools.
- Work with the Director of Programs and Community Partnerships as well as the Development Director to seek out funding opportunities for field trips and transportation costs for Birmingham City Schools.
- Coordinate all logistics efforts related to field trip programming:
 - Attend teacher service days, distribute flyers, and communicate with school teachers to promote field trip programming.
 - Schedule in advance field trip programs at each site for the months of September-November and March-May and be the lead teacher-naturalist for field trips.
 - Train and schedule teaching naturalists, interns, and volunteers to assist with field trip programs.

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Partner Programming, Community Engagement, Internships

- Collaborate with community partners such as Elevate Birmingham, Breakthrough Birmingham, Girls Inc., Big City Mountaineers, the Housing Authority of Birmingham District, the Jefferson County Health Department, Workshops Empowerment, DISCO, and others to provide tailored environmental programming to youth during the school year but more primarily during the summer.
- Represent the organization at outreach or boothing events and partner festivals, such as Cahaba Fry Down, Salamander Festival, East Lake Fishing Rodeo, EEAA conference, etc.
- Collaborate with other program staff to properly train and utilize high school and college interns throughout the school year and summer months.

Tracking, Reporting, and Evaluation:

- Work with the Director of Programs and Community Partnerships to track program requests, programs offered, number of students served, DEI goals, and other metrics tied to strategic goals.
- Work with the Director of Programs and Community Partnerships to evaluate all K-12 programs offered through teacher surveys, focus groups, and other evaluation tools.
- Work with the Communications Coordinator to capture stories from youth programming to be represented in digital newsletters, end-of-the-year appeals, and other promotional materials.

Desired Skills and Qualifications

Environmental Education Expertise:

- Demonstrated experience/passion for environmental education and connecting youth with nature.
- Experience in curriculum writing, state standards, classroom management, and best environmental education practices.
- Familiarity with Alabama's native biodiversity and ecology.

Community Engagement and Communication Skills:

- Strong interpersonal skills to work effectively with people from diverse racial, ethnic, geographic, and socioeconomic backgrounds.
- Team-focused with a collaborative mindset.
- Ability to professionally represent the organization at community events and local organizations.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills for designing and publishing curriculum, digital newsletters, and other promotional materials.

Flexibility and Outdoor Engagement:

- Flexibility to work on some weekends, evenings, and holidays to align with program schedules and events.
- Comfort and ability to navigate large acreage sites and spend time outdoors.

Data Management:

- Proficiency in maintaining educational program records, tracking attendance, and utilizing evaluation tools to measure program impact.

Salary Full-time position: 40 hours per week

- Range: \$50,000-\$60,000
- Paid Holidays, Paid Time Off - starting at 18 days a year
- Applicants subject to a Background Check, Driving Record Check, and Drug Screening
- Health//Dental Coverage (100% of individual premiums paid by Ruffner Mountain)
- Life Insurance/AD&D (100% of premiums paid by Ruffner Mountain).
- IRA with employer matching 3% after one year of employment

Ruffner Mountain provides equal employment opportunities to all employees and applicants for employment and prohibits discrimination and harassment of any type without regard to race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin, disability status, genetics, protected veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state or local laws. This policy applies to all terms and conditions of employment, including recruiting, hiring, placement, promotion, termination, layoff, recall, transfer, leaves of absence, compensation, and training. Visit <https://ruffnermountain.org/about> to read our full Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Accessibility (IDEA) Statement.