



Montana Natural History Center

Connecting People with Nature

120 Hickory Street

Missoula, MT 59801

406.327.0405

www.MontanaNaturalist.org



Position Title:	<u>VNS Field Trip Instructor</u>
Position Category:	<u>Part-Time, Seasonal (25-30 hours/week)</u>
Salary:	<u>\$16.75/hour</u>
Duration:	<u>September 29th- November 6th, 2026</u>

JOB DESCRIPTION

Make a difference, work outdoors, and gain skills in place-based environmental education as a Field Instructor with the Montana Natural History Center (MNHC)! Instructors will support the MNHC mission of connecting people with nature during our Visiting Naturalist in the Schools (VNS) field trips located at natural areas throughout the Missoula area.

ABOUT VNS

The VNS program brings professional teaching naturalists into 4th- and 5th-grade classrooms to engage student curiosity in the natural world through scientific inquiry, exploration, and multiple ways of knowing. Our Teaching Naturalists visit the classroom once per month beginning in September and ending in June, with student field trips in the fall and spring at local sites. The VNS Field Instructor will lead lessons at three field trip stations to promote scientific observations, skills, and communication about the natural world. Activities include nature hikes, the use of naturalist tools such as binoculars, and nature journaling.

COMMITMENT

This is a part-time, seasonal position. The work week will average 25-30 hours a week, Monday-Friday, depending on our field trip schedule. Days typically run from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm, although this may vary by field trip location. Days off will be assigned as the schedule allows.

AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

I. Specific Responsibilities:

- Support MNHC's expectations of providing high-quality environmental education and fostering positive group dynamics.
- Work alongside volunteers, co-instructors, and MNHC staff to lead activities.
- Facilitate VNS lesson plans and schedule as assigned.
- Supervise and actively engage with students during lessons and at transition times in order to provide a safe, positive, and fun learning environment for all students.
- Communicate effectively, professionally, and positively with students, teachers, chaperones, volunteers, and MNHC staff throughout the day.
- Engage in reflective teaching practices to support the professional growth of all staff.
- Maintain program supplies and participate in keeping storage bins and areas well-organized.
- Drive MNHC's short bus from the Center to field trip locations (note: not all instructors will be required to drive a bus).



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II. Required Qualifications

- a) Experience with or passionate commitment to teaching/working with elementary students.
- b) Work effectively as an individual and as a member of a team.
- c) Flexible, positive, and solutions-oriented attitude and mindset.
- d) Ability to thrive in an environment that is fast-paced, creative, and dynamic.
- e) Current CPR/First Aid certification, or willingness to obtain prior to start date.
- f) Having a clean driving record to be verified by a driving record check (for bus drivers only).

III. Preferred Qualifications

- a) Experience participating in or teaching various outdoor and naturalist skills such as hiking, nature journaling, orienteering, citizen science projects, camping, place-based knowledge of Montana, etc.
- b) Experience with best teaching practices, classroom, and group management in an academic school setting.
- c) Practical knowledge of methodologies in science and natural history education.
- d) Knowledge of local Montana flora and fauna.
- e) WFR, Lifeguard, and/or additional safety certifications.

IV. Reporting Relationships

VNS Field Trip Instructors report to the School Programs Coordinator.

V. DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

The Montana Natural History Center is committed to building a diverse community which is inclusive of people from all backgrounds. The Montana Natural History Center does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, disability, age, citizenship status, genetic information, marital status, sexual orientation, mental illness, or physical illness. This nondiscrimination policy applies to employees, volunteers, participants, and all aspects of our operations.

To Apply:

Please send **a resume, cover letter, and a list of three professional references** to evielbig@montananaturalist.org or:

Erin Vielbig
Montana Natural History Center
120 Hickory St Suite A
Missoula MT 59801

This position is open until filled. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis as they are received.



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WHO ARE WE?

At the Montana Natural History Center (MNHC), we believe that nature-based education inspires connection to the outdoors, a love for the natural world, and in turn, stewardship. Put another way, our mission is to *promote and cultivate the appreciation, understanding, and stewardship of nature through education*. To achieve this mission, MNHC offers a wide range of programming to children and adults in Missoula and throughout Montana:

- Our Visiting Naturalists in the Schools program delivers an innovative, engaging curriculum for 4th-5th graders throughout the school year.
- We run and oversee the Montana Master Naturalist program in partnership with other organizations.
- Our museum features interpretive exhibits and gardens highlighting the natural history of Montana.
- We host distance learning programs for both youth and adults.
- Our staff lead adult classes on nature writing and natural history topics and lead guided outdoor programs.
- We run exciting homeschool and summer camp programs for youth in grades K - 8
- We publish the *Montana Naturalist* magazine and partner with Montana Public Radio to produce the *Field Notes* radio program.

Here at MNHC, connecting to nature is not a luxury, but a necessity. We strive to build capacity and fundraise. Doing so enables us to help serve all Montanans in our region and to engage our large community in MNHC programs.

ABOUT MISSOULA

Missoula is a serene mountain town tucked away in the Northern Rockies of Montana, an outdoor enthusiast's dream! There are over 60,000 acres of wilderness to explore just minutes from downtown. Missoula's outdoor recreation opportunities make it an excellent location for getting outside. Enjoy hiking, kayaking, cycling, floating, backpacking, skiing, climbing and more! Missoula has incredible local restaurants, shops, live music, and arts and culture events. It is full of families, students, and people who appreciate and care for the outdoors!



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