



Montana Natural History Center

Connecting People with Nature

120 Hickory Street

Missoula, MT 59801

406.327.0405

www.MontanaNaturalist.org



Position Title: Teaching Naturalist

Category: Full-Time, Permanent (40 hours/week) Monday-Friday

Salary: \$16.55/hour

Start Date: Week of August 5th, 2024

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 and 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 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.

WHO ARE YOU?

We value the benefits a diverse staff can bring to our organization. Whether you're an urbanite or mountain connoisseur from the east coast, west coast, North Pole or Mars, you'll fit right in. Though we come from different places, the MNHC family is bonded by a deep commitment to our mission.

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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JOB DESCRIPTION

Make a difference, work outdoors, and gain skills in place-based environmental education as a Teaching Naturalist with the Montana Natural History Center! Teaching Naturalists will provide leadership and instruction for school day classroom visits and field trips located at natural areas throughout the Missoula area. The Teaching Naturalist will be a key part of the Montana Natural History Center’s teaching team, providing instruction and program support across all MNHHC programs and departments. Duties will primarily include teaching, working with volunteers and interns, material preparation, summer camp instruction, and curriculum development.

ABOUT THE VISITING NATURALIST IN THE SCHOOLS PROGRAM

The Visiting Naturalist in the Schools Program connects professional naturalists with 4th and 5th-grade classrooms in western Montana. The program includes:

- Monthly class visits in September, November, December, January, February, March, and April.
- Field trips at a local natural site in October and May.
- Journals for each student in the program to record observations, practice science journaling, and develop reading and writing skills.
- Ongoing science inquiry and encouragement of the students’ natural curiosity about the natural world.
- 19 hours of direct instruction by a professional MNHC staff Teaching Naturalist.
- Curriculum aligned to the Next Generation Science Standards that also contributes to academic goals in literacy, critical thinking, and communication.

AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

I. Specific Responsibilities:

- a) Provide lead instruction for Visiting Naturalist in the Schools classrooms (4th and 5th-grade students) from September-May, including outdoor field trips in October and May.
- b) Provide instruction and Museum Youth Programs Coordinator support for any full-day Summer Outdoor Discovery Day Camp programs in June-August.
- c) Take on lead duties for the VNS program to include but are not limited to: Volunteer Coordination, Scheduling and Calendar Assistance, Inventory Management, Field Trip Lead, and Center Visit Liasson.
- d) Provide instruction for other school-aged youth activities, including developing and leading programming for camps when school is not in session (e.g. spring break camp).
- e) Lead additional educational activities when available for other programming, including Center Visits, Traveling Naturalist, and other community outreach activities.
- f) Actively participate in professional development opportunities and reflective teaching practices to continuously develop skills and experience in best teaching practices.
- g) Coordinate and collaborate on the preparation and maintenance of materials for lessons, as well as other educational resources and collections.
- h) Assist Education Director and School Programs Manager in the coordination and successful facilitation of the VNS Program.
- i) Assist with training, supervision and recognition of interns, volunteers, and summer camp staff.
- j) Participate in evaluation of programs and curricula.
- k) Maintain clear and consistent communication with appropriate staff, supervisors, VNS teachers,



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and others.

- l) Assist with other programs and other duties as assigned across MNHC departments. Some weekend and evening work required for tabling and special events such as the MNHC Fall Auction and Banquet.
- m) Maintain MNHC's expectations for safety, education, and positive group dynamics.
- n) Drive MNHC's short bus from the Center to field trip locations.

II. Required Qualifications:

- a) Minimum 1 year (combined) naturalist experience in the role of a teacher/educator, ideally in the field and in the classroom.
- b) Experience and willingness to work with all audiences.
- c) Ability/comfort learning how to use basic naturalist tools and the ability to teach others how to do so (for example, ability to teach 4th graders how to use microscopes, field guides, binoculars, aquatic and terrestrial insect nets, etc.).
- d) Interest and engagement with the study of natural history. Desire and willingness to learn more about the natural history of the local area.
- e) Ability to work effectively as an individual and as a member of a team.
- f) Flexible, positive, and solutions-oriented attitude and mindset.
- g) Proven ability to plan and implement educational activities using a variety of curriculum sources.
- h) Proven oral & written communication skills with supervisors, co-workers, and others.
- i) Strong organizational skills, including the ability to manage multiple teaching dates and other calendar events, maintain communications with many people at once, and keep equipment organized and well-maintained.
- j) Willingness to work and teach both outdoors (for up to a full day, in all conditions) and indoors.
- k) Ability to lift and transport up to 40 lbs. of equipment for up to ½ mile over potentially uneven terrain.
- l) Willingness to work weekends and evenings as necessary.
- m) Ability to use basic computer programs including Google suite (email, Drive, Sheets, etc.), Microsoft Word and Excel, and others.
- n) Willingness to work to meet goals of organization above and beyond assigned duties.
- o) Ability to multi-task and take on a variety of programs and projects with enthusiasm.
- p) Current CPR/First Aid certification, or willingness to obtain prior to start date.
- q) Having a clean driving record to be verified by a driving record check.

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 curriculum development, best teaching practices, classroom teaching, 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.
- f) Experience and passion for working with adults.



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g) Proficiency in Microsoft Office Suite, Google Suite, and basic computer skills.

IV. Reporting Relationships:

Teaching Naturalists report directly to the School Programs Manager and/or Education Director.

BENEFITS

- Paid vacation, holiday, and sick leave.
- Eligibility for 403(b) retirement plan, including a 1% match.
- Discounts for all MNHC programs.
- Full medical and vision coverage.
- Participation in professional development opportunities and a reflective teaching community that values ongoing innovation and skill development to meet our educational goals. This includes training in environmental education best practices, ability to participate in professional organizations like the Montana Environmental Education Association, learning opportunities around natural history topics, and fundraising practices.

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 jrobinson@montananaturalist.org or:

Jennifer Robinson
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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