



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>\$15.00/hour</u>
Duration:	<u>April 24th, 2023 – June 2nd, 2023</u>

Candidates applying for this role can also be considered for a summer instructor position (May 29th – August 25th) which begins immediately after the VNS field season.

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.

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 Field Instructor with the Montana Natural History Center! Instructors will provide leadership and instruction for school day Visiting Naturalist in the Schools field trips located at natural areas throughout the Missoula area.

ABOUT VNS

The Visiting Naturalist in the Schools (VNS) program brings professional naturalists into 4th- and 5th- grade classrooms to teach science and the natural history of western Montana. Seven months out of the year we work at the school itself. In the fall and spring, we also go on full school day field trips to local natural areas where students take wildlife hikes with binoculars, explore local flora and fauna, and develop naturalist skills. The VNS Field Instructor will lead stations on these field trips.

COMMITMENT

This is a part-time, seasonal position. The work week will average 25-30 hours, five days a week, approximately 5-6 hours/day, depending on our field trip schedule. Days generally range from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., though this may vary by field trip location, with some days shorter and some longer. Staff generally work M-F each week, but days off will occasionally be assigned as our teaching schedule requires and allows.

AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

I. Specific Responsibilities:

- a) Maintain MNHC’s expectations for safety, education, and positive group dynamics.
- b) Facilitate VNS lesson plans and schedule as assigned.
- c) Actively engage with students throughout the day.
- d) Communicate effectively, professionally, and positively with teachers, chaperones, MNHC staff, volunteers, and students throughout the day.
- e) Maintain program supplies and participate in keeping storage bins and areas organized.
- f) Supervise students during lessons and at transition times in order to provide a safe and positive environment.
- g) Work alongside volunteers, co-instructors, and MNHC staff to supervise and lead activities.
- h) Build positive group dynamics and ensure a safe and fun learning environment.
- i) Engage in reflective teaching practices and work towards skill building for yourself and support other staff and in their growth.
- j) Drive MNHC’s short bus from the Center to field trip locations (Note: not all instructors will be required to drive a bus).

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).



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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 Staff Instructors report to the School Programs Manager.

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 apanagakis@montananaturalist.org or:

Andrea Panagakis
Montana Natural History Center
120 Hickory St Suite A
Missoula MT 59801

Applications are due by Friday, March 3rd, 2023



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