



## Highlands Nature Center: Naturalists

The Highlands Biological Foundation is recruiting Naturalists to support our summer programming at the Highlands Nature Center. Tucked into a temperate rainforest at the southern edge of the Appalachians, the Highlands Nature Center is located on the campus of the Highlands Biological Station, a multi-campus center of Western Carolina University. It is a small facility that averages over 10,000 visitors from across the country during the summer. In addition to natural history exhibits, it offers free daily and weekly programs for the public, weeklong summer camps, and special events. Programs typically take place in the Highlands Nature Center and adjoining 11-acre Botanical Garden, but can also include sites within the surrounding Nantahala National Forest.

This position is essential to the success of the Highlands Nature Center. Naturalists are responsible for managing daily operations, creating and running public programming, and leading summer camps. They work both independently and as a team under the Nature Center Education Specialist.

**Benefits:** \$300/week (\$7.50/hr) and shared housing. Naturalists will share living quarters and rooms in our on-site dorms. Naturalists will receive First Aid, CPR, and National Association for Interpretation Certified Interpretive Guide certifications. Opportunities to develop on-site curriculum and contribute to displays are also available.

**Hours:** Naturalists work an average of 40 hours a week. Days may begin as early as 8:30 AM or end as late as 10:30 PM. No overtime is available. Saturdays and some evenings are required. Willingness to work a flexible schedule is a must. **Position dates are May 4 – Aug 8;** however, flexibility with dates is possible.

### **Duties:**

Primary responsibilities include:

- Opening, staffing, and closing the Nature Center
- Interpreting the natural history of the southern Appalachians and related Nature Center exhibits for the general public
- Developing and presenting daily environmental educational programs for diverse audiences (e.g. garden tours, “creature features”)
- Assisting with special events and evening programs for the general public
- Answering questions about local natural areas and recreational opportunities
- Preparing and leading week-long day camps for youth ages 4 to 13
- Supervising teen volunteers assisting with day camps and animal care
- Feeding and handling live animals (primarily reptiles and amphibians) and cleaning their enclosures

Other duties include:

- Handling transactions in the Gift Shop
- Driving state vehicles
- Setting up and operating A/V systems
- Cleaning and maintaining the Nature Center

### **Education and Experience:**

Preference will be given to candidates with a degree (or enrolled in a degree program) in biology, zoology, botany, environmental science, science education, outdoor recreation, or other related fields.

Ideal candidates should have experience in at least one of the following areas: supervising children; working at a museum, visitor's center, camp, or similar setting; or handling and caring for animals.

### **Knowledge and Skills:**

Proficiency in dealing with the public is a must. Knowledge of the flora and fauna of the southern Appalachians is very desirable. Familiarity with a variety of environmental education programs such as Project WILD is desirable.

### **Working Conditions and Physical Demands:**

Naturalists will spend extended periods of time outdoors in all weather and hike up to three miles on uneven terrain. They may be occasionally asked to assist Station or Foundation employees in the office, maintenance shop, or Botanical Garden. These jobs may include heavy lifting ( $\leq$  50 lbs).

### **Other Qualifications:**

Applicants must be U.S. citizens and possess a valid driver's license. Applicants must also successfully pass a background check.

**Application Instructions:** Send a cover letter, resume, and list of 3 references with phone numbers and emails to Paige Engelbrektsson at [paige@highlandsbiological.org](mailto:paige@highlandsbiological.org). **Applications must be received by March 2, 2020**. For additional information contact Paige Engelbrektsson or call 828-526-2623.