



POSITION DESCRIPTION
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

OPPORTUNITY

The Darien Nature Center is seeking a dynamic leader to manage this successful community nonprofit organization focused on nature education and environmental protection. The Executive Director will work in partnership with the Board of Directors to provide leadership, strategic vision, and direction. The Darien Nature Center, established over 40 years ago, is a vibrant education center with a live animal collection and professional staff that fosters an interest in and respect for the natural world.

VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

The Darien Nature Center envisions a community that is deeply connected to nature and inspired to take action to preserve and protect it.

We inspire passion and respect for the natural world through nature education, hands-on experiences with nature, and environmental action and stewardship.

We value:

- Nature. We appreciate nature’s beauty and complexity, and we foster strong and lasting connections to nature.
- Nature Education. We are committed to experiential nature education that is accurate, empowering, and confidence-building.
- Integrity and Authenticity. We are a trusted source of information for our community. We treat all living things with respect.
- Excellence and Quality in all that we do.
- Collaboration. Working with other public and private organizations expands our reach into the community and provides us with valuable perspectives.
- Our Leadership as stewards of the environment and sustainable practices.

BUDGET

Annual operating budget of approximately \$900,000.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Leadership and Management

- Assure that the vision, mission, and values of the Darien Nature Center are consistently carried out with excellence throughout all programs.
- Provide strategic leadership to the Board to maximize their impact on fundraising, financial oversight, and overall relevance of the organization.
- Oversee the implementation of a 3-year strategic plan. Refresh and revise to respond to the changing landscape.
- Partner with the Program Director to develop, implement and assess programs to further the mission.
- Lead staff successfully through mentorship, constructive feedback, team-building, and accountability.
- Be a visible leader in the community and nurture and expand community partnerships.
- Serve as the representative of the Darien Nature Center to the media and community
- Foster a culture of trust, excellence, and cooperation among all staff.
- Direct management of four senior-level staff and indirect management of approximately 20 program staff.
- Oversee a culture of professional development and growth to maintain the exceptional quality of staff at all levels.
- Lead all staffing decisions through consistent and vetted protocols.
- Prepare written annual reviews for all senior-level staff.
- Provide guidance and support to the Board nominating process.

Development and Fundraising

- Manage a vibrant annual appeal and event schedule to achieve budgeted fundraising targets.
- Identify new fundraising opportunities and outreach strategies to enhance the Nature Center impact in the community.
- Identify and nurture donor relationships from existing and new constituents to develop a major gift culture in the organization.
- Collaborate and lead Board volunteers in two primary events each year. Assure the event architecture is in place to hit goals and provide the professional support needed from staff.
- Implement a capital improvement campaign to renovate the existing animal exhibit renovation per the strategic plan.
- Research, write and manage grants, mostly to private foundations.

Operations and Oversight

- Assure the financial health of the organization and provide strict oversight of the budget.
- Develop an annual budget with the Finance Director and Finance Committee of the Board for discussion and approval by the Board.
- Report monthly on financial results.
- Monitor all expenditures, approve all bills, and sign all checks.
- Attend and present updates at all Board meetings.
- Attend Board Committee meetings as needed.
- Support the Board nominating process.
- Identify and recommend capital improvement projects to the Board.

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE WILL

- Have significant work experience in the not for profit and fundraising realm.
- Have significant experience leading and developing a team of individuals.
- Have a proven track record in fundraising, development, and cultivation of donors.
- Possess excellent time-management and interpersonal skills, including the ability to juggle multiple timelines and priorities.
- Demonstrate a deep commitment to Darien Nature Center's mission and a passion for nature and the environment.
- Operate with purpose, prioritize effectively, and successfully balance long- and short-term priorities.
- Possess outstanding oral and written communications skills.
- Love animals and be willing to engage with our live collection of 30+ creatures.
- Meet education standard: Bachelor's degree required; Master's degree preferred.

COMPENSATION

The position is a full-time salaried position. Salary range is \$75,000-\$85,000, depending on relevant qualifications.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

The Darien Nature Center is an equal opportunity employer. All applicants will be considered for employment without attention to race, color, religion, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, veteran or disability status.

Please submit cover letter and resume to: NatureCenterEDSearch@gmail.com