

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Title: Executive Director

Reports to: Board of Trustees

Direct reports: Associate Director, Director of Development

Terms: Full-time / Exempt / Eligible for benefits

Location: VCE office at 20 Palmer Court in White River Junction, Vermont

Salary: \$150,000–\$225,000, commensurate with experience, with eligibility to receive a discretionary annual performance bonus

Benefits: Health insurance, retirement plan, employee assistance program, generous paid time off

Organizational Profile

The [Vermont Center for Ecostudies](http://www.vtecostudies.org) (VCE) advances biodiversity conservation across the Americas through research, monitoring, and community engagement. Biodiversity loss is one of the most pressing challenges of our time, and VCE is confronting the issue by assessing the status of wildlife and plant populations and generating the science needed to reverse declines. Together with volunteer naturalists and partner organizations, we study birds, amphibians, insects, and other taxa in a variety of ecosystems, sharing results widely to help inform environmental decisions. Our scientists are nationally and internationally recognized for their expertise in participatory, applied, and quantitative ecology. And while our programs and influence reach far beyond Vermont, collaboration with community members remains a hallmark of our work.

We believe that kindness and curiosity are integral to effective conservation science. Our staff is committed to creating a cooperative work culture that celebrates diversity, values wellbeing, and inspires learning.

Position Summary

The executive director is responsible for the strategic leadership and compassionate management of VCE's staff while reporting to and working closely with the Board of Trustees. They provide leadership for all aspects of VCE, including direction-setting, fundraising, relations with volunteers and donors, program development, financial management, and relations with other institutions and the broader community. The executive director also works to increase VCE's national and international visibility and impact, and to ensure that the organization's structure and systems keep pace as programs evolve.

VCE approaches major donor engagement as a partnership among the executive director, director of development, and Board of Trustees, working in concert with senior staff. Following the recent completion of a \$5M campaign and an increase in organizational capacity, VCE is poised to welcome a new leader to help grow unrestricted revenue over the next five years at an average rate of 10%–15%. These ambitious targets are attainable, given VCE's strong reputation, deep community goodwill, and significant untapped donor capacity.

Responsibilities

Strategic Leadership

- Work with the board and staff to execute VCE's mission.
- Communicate goals and strategies internally and externally so that all stakeholders understand their role in realizing the mission.
- Be a positive and accessible leader to the VCE staff, so they are inspired to do exceptional work.
- Listen to diverse perspectives, weigh trade-offs, and make timely, well-reasoned decisions that align with the organization's mission and culture.

- Set and model high standards for professionalism, collegiality, and accountability.
- Support staff in their careers, ensuring opportunities for professional development and advancement.
- Develop the organizational structure as needed to ensure efficiency, communication, and program integration.
- Periodically lead strategic planning with the board and staff as programs and opportunities grow.
- Foster a culture of diversity and inclusivity that includes open dialogue and constructive dissent.

Operational and Financial Oversight

- Recruit, hire, supervise, and evaluate a senior management team, delegating authority appropriately while retaining accountability for organizational performance.
- Oversee annual budgeting and financial reporting with support from the associate director and business manager.
- Provide direction on matters of risk management and compliance.

Fundraising and External Relations

- Partner with the director of development, board, and staff, to raise annual restricted and unrestricted support from individuals and foundations.
- Solicit and close on leadership gifts, including those that have been cultivated by others.
- Lead the effort to grow unrestricted revenue at a pace that matches growth in organizational capacity.
- Build on VCE's strong community participation to convert interest and engagement into personal connections, major gifts, and sustained giving at all levels.
- Develop external collaborations with agencies, academic institutions, and other organizations into formal relationships and funding opportunities.
- Work with the board and director of development to expand long-term funding streams, including endowment funds and planned giving programs.
- Be the face and voice of VCE, working actively to elevate its profile, promote its programming, and celebrate the achievements of its science team and project participants.
- Translate VCE's scientific research into clear, compelling messaging for policymakers, media, funders, and the public, extending the relevance of VCE's science beyond the scientific community.
- Work closely with the chair and full board to recruit, retain, and engage board members.

Desired Qualifications

- At least five years of experience leading a medium to large nonprofit organization, academic enterprise, or public entity focused on science and/or conservation
- Experience leading an organization through a period of growth and increasing complexity
- Ability to carry out external responsibilities while motivating results-oriented teams
- Extensive fundraising experience with a knack for building authentic relationships with supporters
- An advanced degree in natural science or related field with a corresponding record of professional achievement (e.g., publications, certifications, participation in professional organizations)
- Ability to communicate complex scientific concepts clearly to broad, non-scientific audiences

- Experience engaging volunteers, supporters, and collaborators in discussions of biodiversity research, monitoring, and conservation
- Strong written and verbal communication skills, including an engaging and persuasive style
- Experience working with board members and managing board development
- Demonstrated financial management skills, including budgeting, analysis, and reporting
- Experience recruiting, developing, and supervising a senior management team
- A strong commitment to furthering diversity, equity, access, and inclusion
- Excellent management skills, including the ability to foster collaboration among staff members and facilitate advances in efficiency and effectiveness
- Capacity for innovative thinking
- A record of thoughtful, respectful leadership and a willingness to lead by example
- The ability to develop and communicate a clear, shared, and positive vision for VCE's future

To apply, please submit a cover letter and resume as one PDF to edjob@vtecostudies.org with the title format: Last Name ED Application.

vtecostudies.org/jobs