



Interpretive Naturalist

Forest Preserve District of Will County

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Closing Date: 2026-09-18
Salary: \$54,473 - \$75,207

Description:

POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT

INTERPRETIVE NATURALIST

The Forest Preserve District of Will County is accepting resumes for an Interpretive Naturalist at Plum Creek Nature Center located in Beecher, Illinois.

See the attached Position Opening outlining the position duties, education, training, experience, physical/mental requirements, and necessary special requirements. Resumes will be accepted until September 18, 2026.

Application Procedure: Send a cover letter and resume to:

Human Resources Department
Forest Preserve District of Will County
17540 W. Laraway Road
Joliet, Illinois 60433
815.722.5669 (desk)
815.722.3608 (fax)
humanresources@fpdwc.org

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FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT OF WILL COUNTY

JOB DESCRIPTION

TITLE: | INTERPRETIVE NATURALIST – FULL TIME

DEPARTMENT: | VISITOR SERVICES

FLSA STATUS: | EXEMPT

DATE: | 2024

LOCATION: | VISITOR FACILITIES - VARIOUS

BASIC FUNCTION

Under the direction of the Facility Supervisor, perform programming and visitor services via interpretation of both natural and cultural history of the area at Forest Preserve visitor facilities. Develop, organize, and implement interpretive and recreational programs, activities, exhibits, and events at their respective facility.

ORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Reports to:

- Facility Supervisor

Works closely with:

- Interpretive Naturalists, Program Coordinators, Permitting Manager, PT/Seasonal Staff as determined applicable per site

Supervises:

- None

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Develop and present education programming for schools and youth groups, K-12.
2. Develop and present public recreational, historical, and natural history programs.
3. Develop first-person historical characters appropriate for natural and cultural history-based programs, especially character portrayal for the Great Lakes Fur Trade era – at Isle a la Cache Museum only.
4. Under the direction of Facility Supervisor, plan, budget, and develop Facility-Based Events or other District-wide events.
5. Create, plan, and develop facility exhibits including concept, basic design, text writing, images, and fabrication, and ability to work with professional designers/fabricators.
6. Participate in community outreach events.

7. Staff visitor facility on weekends, weekdays, and evenings as required and provide on-the-floor interpretation and programming.
8. Responsible for facilities, equipment, inventory, cash operations, and visitor safety.
9. Perform basic informational services for visitors.
10. Issue permits and other transaction services provided at the facilities for visitors/customers.
11. Provide exceptional service to all visitors and participants regardless of age, culture, or ability level.
12. Serve on work groups to develop departmental or District-wide projects.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES

- Ability to work independently with minimal direction
- Excellent organizational skills and communication skills both oral and written
- Excellent initiative and ability to strategically plan and create proposals
- Excellent understanding of educational philosophies, the EE community, and the field of interpretation
- Experience creating budgets and managing project contracts
- Ability to work days, evenings, and weekends as required to perform job duties
- Proficient with computers for generating documents and emails, operating reservation system (ActiveNet)
- Ability to operate office equipment: Point of Sale, printer, phone
- Excellent customer service skills
- Effective communication skills, both orally and in written form
- Ability to maintain sensitive personal information in a professional secure manner
- Ability to maintain accurate records and data reports
- Proficient in math
- Desire to provide high-quality service to visitors and participants of all ages, cultures, and abilities.

TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE

Minimum requirements include:

- Bachelor's Degree or higher in outdoor education, education, interpretation, biological sciences, or related field.
- Two years of programming experience at an interpretive visitor facility, living history museum, or historic site.
- Two years of experience developing first-person historical programs (Isle a la Cache Museum only).
- Working knowledge of education and interpretive teaching methods.
- Highly motivated, positive, and energetic.
- Ability to work well in a team setting, and demonstrate follow-through, good judgment, and decision-making, especially while serving the public.
- Ability to communicate in a friendly, respectful, and professional manner with the public both orally and written.
- Experience with operating and maintaining a POS system/cash register.
- Comfortable handling live animals on occasion such as turtles or snakes.
- Must possess and maintain a current and valid Motor Vehicle Operator's license.

WORKING ENVIRONMENT AND CONDITIONS

The work environment characteristics described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions. Requires work out-of-doors in the preserves on and off trail. Weekend, weekday, and weeknight hours. Must be able to hike, bike, and canoe/kayak for extended periods of time.

Manual Dexterity: Work requires the ability to lift on occasion up to 50 pounds

Physical Effort: Work requires the ability to move between sitting, standing, and walking for 6-8 hours

Working Conditions: Occasional exposure to moderately disagreeable weather in the preserves on and off trail

Hazards: Negligible

PAY RANGE, ANNUAL SALARY, AND BENEFITS

Pay Range: Grade 10

Salary:

Minimum: \$54,473

Midpoint: \$64,006

Maximum: \$75,207

Benefits: Medical HMO/PPO HDHP, dental, vision, basic life/AD&D, and voluntary life/AD&D, IMRF pension, paid sick time, vacation, and holidays following the current handbook, employee assistance program, options to purchase voluntary insurance, and deferred compensation.