

TITLE: Information Officer (Thriving Communities Specialist)

EMPLOYER: This is a full-time position working for NEIWPCC on issues related to the Lake Champlain Basin Program and the Champlain Valley National Heritage Partnership. NEIWPCC Headquarters is in Wannalancit Mills, 650 Suffolk Street, Suite 410, Lowell, MA, 01854.

LOCATION: The position itself will be based out of 54 West Shore Rd, Grand Isle, VT, 05458.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: NEIWPCC is a regional commission that helps the states of the Northeast preserve and advance water quality. We engage and convene water quality professionals and other interested parties from New England and New York to collaborate on water, wastewater, and environmental science challenges across the regions, ecosystems, and areas of expertise.

NEIWPCC serves as financial administrator and program advisor to the Patrick Leahy Lake Champlain Basin Program (LCBP) and the Champlain Valley National Heritage Partnership (CVNHP). In this role, NEIWPCC employs the program staff, including the Program Director, and maintains the program office in Grand Isle, Vermont.

The LCBP work is directed by the Lake Champlain Steering Committee whose members lead resource and planning agencies in Vermont, New York, and Quebec, and additional representatives from local government, federal agencies, chairs of the jurisdictional citizen advisory and programmatic advisory committees. The Lake Champlain Steering Committee makes overall policy and budget decisions regarding basin management, with input and recommendations from an Executive Committee and several advisory committees.

LCBP coordinates and funds activities that protect and improve the natural and human resources of the Lake Champlain Basin. Partners in the program include the States of Vermont and New York, the Province of Quebec, NEIWPCC, the U.S. EPA, the U.S. National Park Service, and the International Great Lakes Fishery Commission. LCBP and CVNHP also collaborate with several other agencies and organizations at the federal, state, and local levels, including private firms, academic institutions, and non-government organizations.

The CVNHP was established by the U.S. Congress in 2006 to recognize the importance of the historical, cultural, and recreational resources of the region and to assist efforts to preserve, protect, and interpret those resources. The National Heritage Area also works to enhance the quality of the tourism economy and to encourage working partnerships among state, provincial, and local governments and non-profit organizations in New York, Québec, and Vermont. The 2011 CVNHP Management Plan is a stand-alone plan that informs and is integrated into the LCBP's management plan Opportunities for Action (OFA), which was updated in June 2022. The CVNHP *Conservation & Community* interpretive theme maintains a strong association to the Thriving Communities and the Informed and Involved Public chapters of OFA. The Champlain-Adirondack Biosphere Network (CABN) is an internationally recognized network that connects people and organizations working to build harmonious relationships between people and the environment. CABN includes the Lake Champlain watershed and the adjoining Green Mountain National Forest and Adirondack Park—an extensive area of wild forests, mountains, lakes, rivers, wetlands, and farmlands.

JOB SUMMARY: The Information Officer I (Thriving Communities Specialist) supports both the LCBP and CVNHP through public outreach, education, and community engagement

(approximately 40% of time), and coordination of stakeholder and citizen advisory groups (approximately 60% of time). The incumbent will lead and assist in developing and implementing outreach programs, events, and communications that advance public awareness and stewardship of the Lake Champlain Basin's water quality, natural resources, and cultural heritage. The position also coordinates the New York and Vermont Citizen Advisory Committees (CACs) and the CABN, ensuring strong communication and collaboration among partners and stakeholders throughout the basin. The position also will support management of education and outreach and CVNHP grants.

This position requires close collaboration with the Program Manager for the CVNHP, other LCBP and CVNHP staff, and NEIWPCC colleagues in Lowell, Massachusetts.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Informed and Involved Public: Education and Outreach (40%)

- Provide information and outreach materials about LCBP and CVNHP programs and initiatives to children and adults at schools, camps, fairs, workshops, and other community events. This work includes occasional evenings and weekends.
- Identify and pursue new CVNHP and LCBP community outreach opportunities, partnerships, and venues.
- Support CVNHP and LCBP grants: assist with proposal review, grant management, and review of deliverables, budgets, and workplans.
- Assist with development of new outreach and interpretive materials and update existing exhibits and interpretive displays.
- Provide coverage and training for seasonal outreach staff and interns.
- Represent the LCBP and CVNHP at partner meetings and serve as liaison to organizations in Vermont, New York, and Quebec.
- Contribute to the preparation and review of outreach-related grant reports, budgets, and metrics.
- Maintain accurate notes and records of outreach events, committee meetings, and project activities.
- Assist with publications, and communications that enhance collaboration across LCBP and CVNHP programs as needed.
- Provide occasional coverage in the LCBP Resource Room within ECHO, Leahy Center for Lake Champlain as needed.

Thriving Communities: Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) and Biosphere Network Coordination (60%)

- Coordinate meetings of the New York and Vermont CACs, including developing agendas, recruiting speakers, arranging venues, and producing documentation.
- Support annual deliverables such as CAC priority fliers or action plans.
- Build membership across committees to ensure broad and diverse representation.
- Facilitate communication among CACs, state agencies, and LCBP staff to align outreach and policy messages.
- Organize legislative days for CAC members to engage with state legislators and agency staff (without advocacy or lobbying).
- Attend Quebec CAC (OBVBM) meetings and coordinate one annual joint meeting among all three CACs to promote collaboration across jurisdictions.
- Support the CVNHP and LCBP grants program for organizational support, professional development, technical assistance and training to municipalities and other community-based entities around water quality best practices and community

connections to the resource (e.g. road salts, public recreation access, etc.), community capacity building.

- Develop and implement methods of tracking success metrics around knowledge, attitudes, and practices around Thriving Communities topics, programs, and activities.
- Develop and deliver outreach materials with municipalities and other community groups as the primary audience. Potential focus areas may include economics of clean water, water consideration in local planning, benefits of aquatic organism passage projects, flood resilience, “climate change” adaptation. Communicate success stories of community actions.
- Enhance communications of CVNHP programs and initiatives, including the connection between cultural heritage and natural heritage, with communities as the nexus of this connection. Develop/enhance the Conservation and Community theme.
- Coordinate the CABN Steering Committee, meetings, and communications.
- Represent CABN in national and international Biosphere Network activities under UNESCO’s Man and the Biosphere Programme.
- Assist with development of outreach and educational materials highlighting shared work between CABN, LCBP, and CVNHP.
- Attend and support meetings of watershed organizations and stakeholder groups, sharing relevant messaging and updates.

Quality Management

- Review and edit Quality Assurance Project Plans submitted by LCBP partners in collaboration with NEIWPCC Lowell office staff and in accordance with NEIWPCC’s Quality Management Plan.

Other Duties: As assigned.

SUPERVISORY CONTROLS: The incumbent operates with some independence of action within assigned areas of responsibility. The Program Manager for the CVNHP provides direct supervision, instruction, and performance evaluation, in consultation with the LCBP Education and Outreach Lead, and NEIWPCC Lowell staff.

The satisfactory performance of these duties requires the incumbent to develop a thorough understanding of NEIWPCC’s, LCBP’s, and CVNHP’s programs, organization, and policies; to exercise initiative and resourcefulness; and to work effectively with federal, state, provincial, and community partners.

The incumbent will rely on their ability, expertise, and commitment to excellence and will embody NEIWPCC’s culture of honesty, ethical behavior, personal integrity, respect for others, transparency, hard work, and collaborative teamwork.

Incumbents of positions at this level may exercise direct supervision (i.e., not through an intermediate level supervisor) over, assign work to, and review the performance of 1-5 technical or professional personnel; may exercise indirect supervision (i.e., through an intermediate level supervisor) over 6-15 technical or other personnel.

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS: A bachelor’s degree in the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, or related fields. Experience working with the public. Coursework or

passionate interest in Lake Champlain or watershed issues relevant to the LCBP, CVNHP, or NEIWPCC missions.

At least three years of full-time, or equivalent part-time, technical, or professional experience in the field above, of which at least one year must have been in a professional capacity.

Personal Characteristics

- Naturally prone to action with a focus toward continuous improvement and is committed to contributing to the overall success of NEIWPCC & LCBP.
- Ability to build collaborative relationships across NEIWPCC and our partners.
- Willingness to support colleagues in the event of workflow issues or absences.
- Approachable and diplomatic in all interactions.
- Able to manage change and articulate the “value case” for it.
- A team player who is inclusive and willing to help others.
- Dependable and capable of fostering trust.
- Accepts responsibility and is accountable for results.
- Ability to write concisely to express thoughts clearly and to develop ideas in logical sequence.
- Excellent organizational skills and the ability to prioritize key deliverables.

Special Knowledge and Skills

- Excellent verbal, written, and interpersonal communication skills.
- Strong teamwork and collaboration abilities.
- Strong organizational skills and attention to detail.
- Ability to work both independently and as part of a team in a highly collaborative environment.
- Excellent writing and editing skills; ability to express ideas clearly and concisely.
- Strong computer proficiency, including Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Publisher), with experience in or familiarity with Adobe Creative Suite and data management tools.
- Familiarity with or ability to interpret technical data and apply systematic approaches to quality assurance and quality control.
- Experience working with the public, communities, or stakeholder groups, including coordination of meetings and events.
- Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with diverse groups and partners across jurisdictions.
- Knowledge of or coursework related to Lake Champlain Basin resource and watershed issues.
- Ability to interact positively, diplomatically, and professionally with the public, partners, and colleagues.
- Strong motivation, enthusiasm, and reliability; ability to manage multiple priorities and meet deadlines.
- Experience developing outreach materials, managing grants, and supporting community or environmental education initiatives.
- Demonstrated capacity to use sound judgment, discretion, and tact in sensitive or complex situations.
- Ability to travel and represent the organization at meetings, events, and conferences across Vermont, New York, and Quebec.

The following knowledge and skills are helpful, although not a requirement to qualify

- Experience working outdoors or with environmental field programs.
- Understanding of regional environmental partnerships, including binational or cross-jurisdictional collaborations.
- Familiarity with LCBP priorities, State of the Lake report content, or related watershed management issues.
- Experience with infographic design, data visualization, or technical data communication.
- Experience with or interest in photography, exhibit development, and visual storytelling.
- Knowledge of Adobe Creative Suite, GIS software, or other digital media tools for outreach and education.
- Familiarity with natural resource policy, environmental education, or interpretation practices.
- Fluency or proficiency in French.
- Experience in quality assurance planning and reporting for grant-funded programs.
- Flexibility and adaptability to changing work assignments and collaborative projects.
- Knowledge of or experience with Lake Champlain Basin natural resource and cultural heritage topics.

Requirements

- Duties will be performed largely in an office setting, but may include outdoor field assignments, and will require travel to various meetings locations in Vermont, New York, and Quebec. A valid driver's license and private means of transportation are required. A valid passport and/or enhanced license or the ability and willingness to obtain one is required. Position will require travel both regionally and nationally. Some confrontational meetings with interest groups may occur, which will require good human relations skills and an ability to practice effective public participation techniques.
- Duties will require occasional evening and weekend work.
- Attendance is mandatory in the Lowell office for orientation and at the annual All Staff Meeting (held the last Thursday and Friday in March each year).
- This is a full-time position. This position requires incumbent to be in the office or at the assigned work location Monday – Friday for the first six months of employment. After six months of employment, this position may be eligible for a partial telework schedule, subject to approval and determined by program and office needs. Telework schedules are authorized by the NEIWPCC Executive Director.

SALARY: Salary dependent on education and experience.

BENEFITS: Generous benefits package provided, but not included in salary range: vacation, personal and sick leave; health, dental, disability and life insurance; retirement plan. This position requires the incumbent to work five days a week, 8 hours per day, except for approved compensatory time.