

Position Description: Director of Education



This is a professional leadership position at Cottonwood Gulch who works with the Leadership Team to further the educational programs and the mission of Cottonwood Gulch Expeditions (CGE). Our mission is to provide outdoor learning adventures to youth of all backgrounds that foster personal growth, strengthen community, and inspire stewardship of the natural world. We have been leading outdoor expeditions since 1926, and currently work with hundreds of students (or “trekkers,” as we call them) each year. During the school year, we partner with more than 30 schools and nonprofits, primarily serving 1-12 graders in New Mexico on trips ranging from one day to two weeks. During the summer, we run multi-week expeditions for 8-18 year olds. All of this totals about 10,000 field days each year, and hundreds of lives impacted for the better. We are seeking an Education Director to work closely with our school partners and staff team to design and continually improve our programs, while supporting our field staff in delivering impactful outdoor learning experiences.

Job Objective: To oversee the outdoor and experiential education components of Cottonwood Gulch’s programs. This person will work directly with school partners and other CGE staff to design and implement outdoor programs for all CGE expeditions. The Education Director will act as the point person for our school partners, and will play a major role in training CGE staff on our programs, curriculum, and itineraries. As a member of the Leadership Team, they will help improve CGE’s systems and policies, and directly support all staff.

Responsibilities:

Outdoor Programs: Develop, Improve, and Align (30%)

- Design and improve CGE educational programs, ensuring they align with the organization’s mission, vision, and values. Working closely with CGE Leadership Team and school partners, create new programs that incorporate science, art, culture, personal growth, teamwork, and more. Our programs include day trips and multi-week expeditions.
- Outdoor and experiential education
- Create digital and physical resources for field staff.
- Communicate effectively with program staff and operations staff to ensure field programs function at a high level.
- Ensure program design incorporates best practices to manage and mitigate risk in outdoor settings; help train staff on risk management practices.

School Partnerships (30%)

- Act as the main point of contact for our school partners.

- Alongside our school partners, create programs that align with their goals and CGE's mission, vision, and values. This may include aligning CGE programs with state or national standards and/or explaining how our programs meet the required standards.
- Recruit new schools to partner with CGE.
- Write reports about the successes and challenges of our programs for school partners and funders.
- Develop and implement systems to gather feedback from school partners and CGE staff. Use that feedback to improve programs and strengthen relationships.

Staff Leadership and Training (30%)

- Supervise 1-3 permanent staff members; potentially supervise seasonal staff on a short-term basis
- Train CGE staff on how to implement our programs, and how to teach effectively in outdoor settings to different age groups. Our staff trainings occur 2-4 times per year, and include multiple nights in the field at our Basecamp or camping in New Mexico.
- As part of the Leadership Team, act as an organizational role model; provide administrative and field support to respond to unexpected and challenging situations.
- Collaborate to stay current, implement, and evaluate our risk management plan and enforce the rules and regulations that are key to the safety and well-being of the program participants, and the preservation and appreciation of the land in its natural state.
- Play an active role in understanding and implementing consistent policies, practices, and culture.
- Assist with staff recruiting and hiring.
- Work with the Leadership Team to develop and improve systems that benefit all Cottonwood Gulch programs.
- Participate in the Cottonwood Gulch On Call system.

Administrative and other duties (10%)

- Help create and manage budgets for CGE expeditions, especially our school partners.
- Collaborate with the administrative team to develop aspects of the organization's annual and seasonal financial budgets and goals.
- Assist in finding and writing grants to support CGE school partnerships.
- Work with land managing agencies and CGE operations staff to secure and administer special use permits
- Respond to the needs of the organization consistent with the philosophy of "see a job and do it".
- Contribute to the care and well-being of the organization's gear and property.

Required Qualifications:

- Applicants must be at least 21 years of age by the position start date and possess a valid driver's license. Must have a clean driving history and be able to meet the criteria for CGE vehicle insurance coverage.
- At least five years of experience in education, classroom teaching, outdoor teaching, and/or curriculum development with a diverse population of students.
- Must be able to spend multiple days at a time in the field, including overnight hours. Work hours are sometimes outside of traditional office hours during the warmer months.
- Experience as an outdoor educator or similar role, managing risk, supervising other field staff, and independently running programs.
- Strong organizational skills.
- Experience with Google Drive, Adobe products, and Microsoft Office, or ability to quickly learn to use those products, and similar ones, in a professional setting.
- Ability to prioritize and manage multiple tasks simultaneously and independently.
- Ability to communicate effectively and professionally with a wide range of audiences.
- Wilderness First Responder certification, or ability to acquire within 60 days of hire.

Preferred Qualifications:

- Eight or more years experience in education, classroom teaching, outdoor teaching, and/or curriculum development with a diverse population of students.
- Fluent or working proficiency in Spanish and/or Native Indigenous languages of New Mexico
- Wilderness EMT
- Experience with development work, including fundraising and grants.
- Experience working with federal and local land management agencies.

Reports To: Executive Director

Leadership or Supervisory Duties: This person will serve as a part of the leadership team at Cottonwood Gulch and will be responsible for overseeing 1-3 full-time staff members.

Criminal Background Check: Cottonwood Gulch Expeditions requires criminal background checks from all employees.

Work Location: Albuquerque, NM, with travel throughout the state, including periods of time camping in frontcountry and backcountry settings and at our Basecamp in Thoreau, NM (we estimate 30-40 nights total, more if desired).

Physical Requirements: Ability to hike up to 5 miles a day on uneven surfaces and carry a pack up to 30 pounds. Ability to sleep in a tent or open-air cabin accessed by stairs, work at a desk, talk on the phone, and use a computer.

Compensation: This is a year-round, full-time, exempt position, eligible for benefits. Starting salary \$46,000-\$54,000 depending on experience, plus room and board while at Cottonwood Gulch Basecamp and on field expeditions. Benefits include health care, dental care, paid time off, retirement plan salary match up to 5%, funding for professional training opportunities and pro deals.

Inclusive and Welcoming Environment

CGE is an equal opportunity employer and does not and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender identity or expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, spousal affiliation, mental or physical handicap, serious medical condition, or military status in any of its activities or operations.

Moreover, Cottonwood Gulch Expeditions believes in the learning, growth and healing that can take place in the outdoors. We also recognize that access to programs like ours—along with access to any green space, clean air and water, and healthy food—continues to be a privilege rather than a right. CGE recognizes that in outdoor spaces, the voices and work of people of color, people from working class backgrounds, Indigenous people, women, and LGBTQ+ individuals have been often overlooked and marginalized. Therefore, we encourage applications from people in these groups, and all people, regardless of background.

To Apply

Email a resume and cover letter to Jordan Stone, Executive Director: jordan@cottonwoodgulch.org

For full consideration, please apply by August 23, 2021. Position open until filled.