



Wild Whatcom

EXPLORING / SERVING / CONNECTING

Position Opening: Executive Director

[Wild Whatcom](#) is a flourishing non-profit organization dedicated to fostering lifelong connections to nature. We provide experiential learning opportunities that inspire participants of all ages to build healthy relationships with nature, community, and self. We serve more than 2,000 individuals each year through our school programs, weekend outings, nature preschool, summer camps, community programs, and projects with many community nonprofits. With a [talented staff of 25](#), we provide more than 50,000 nature hours to individuals in Whatcom County each year.

Wild Whatcom board, staff, and volunteers are united in a vision of organizational development that continues to increase opportunities for diverse populations to (re)connect with nature; allows us to attract, retain, and nurture talented staff from all parts of our community; and deepen our programs and partnerships. We seek an Executive Director with excellent fundraising, financial management and organizational skills, and a focus on collaboration, equity, and distributed leadership.

Equity and access are at the center of our organizational goals. We're regularly working to reduce barriers in the outdoor education field in all of our decision making. For example, we have robust school-based programs to connect students to the outdoors for free during the school day; we are continuing to develop a staffing model that provides consistent pay and hours for field instructors; we are practicing a new model for our Board and Committees to offer several avenues for participation and a diverse body of advisors. We are committed to advancing social and economic equity and are looking for a capable Executive Director to help continue this important journey. To learn more, visit our [Commitment to Equity](#) page.

Leadership Opportunity

The Board of Directors is looking for a dynamic leader to further the mission of Wild Whatcom. We are a strong organization with a healthy internal culture and solid financial footing. Seventy-five percent of our annual income is generated through fee-based revenue, our reserve fund holds several months of operating expenses, and we have a track record of strong financial management and performance. The high quality of our programming and staff draw participants, partners, and donors to our organization. We have deep roots in distributed leadership, prioritizing shared decision-making, and stakeholder engagement. We seek someone to cultivate these strengths and bring new capacities, vision, and perspectives to the work.

The Executive Director reports to a dedicated Board of Directors and working Committees and holds responsibility for the daily operations of the organization as well as the strategic implementation of its vision and mission. The Director has a network of internal and external support including, but not limited to: several working Committees (Finance, Governance, Outreach, Grant Review), a strong staff leadership team with long histories with the organization, long standing community and funder partnerships, and involvement in an Executive Director Roundtable.

The priorities for the first 12-36 months will be to lead Wild Whatcom to make significant progress on the following goals:

- **Support our wide array of programming** to offer outdoor enrichment and education with reduced barriers to access, including assessing current pilot programs and balancing increased demand for programs with strategic and sustainable growth.
- **Increase our fundraising and administrative capacity** so that we are able to meet goals of increasing transportation options in our programs and providing traditional benefits to our outstanding staff.
- **Continue to develop a diverse Board of Directors and group of working Committees** (Governance, Outreach, Finance, and Grant Review) to hear from a wide range of stakeholders in decision making, strategic direction, and public engagement.
- **Nurture our positive reputation and our history of community leadership and advocacy**, including continuing representation in several local and regional coalitions, on an OSPI advisory committee, and with local elected officials and district leaders invested in outdoor education.
- **Continue and augment our strong financial footing** through exemplary fiscal management, including implementing an internal financial review and business plan with the support of the Finance Committee.

Qualifications

The ideal candidate will have excellent people and communication skills to develop, build, and maintain strong relationships with internal and external stakeholders. Proven non-profit management, budgeting, and fundraising skills are essential, as is the ability to build teamwork in a collaborative manner so that board members, volunteers, and staff are supported and empowered to use their collective skills and experiences to advance the mission. Wild Whatcom is also seeking a leader with a background and commitment to equity and brings energy and a sense of humor.

While no one can be an expert at everything, candidates who meet most of the following qualifications will receive strong consideration:

Non-profit organizational or business management and leadership

- Experience in non-profit or business management, preferably in youth, environment, sustainable communities, educational activities, and/or public programming.
- Understanding of, experience with, and commitment to social and economic equity at an organizational level; ability to lead organization-wide efforts (staff, board, and participants) to better reflect the diversity of our community and address systemic inequity.
- Strong financial management skills, including experience developing and managing a budget, generating and interpreting financial reports, and performing business and program analysis within an organization.
- Professional work habits: punctual, responsive, organized, ability to manage multiple projects, attention to detail, and the executive function to see projects to completion.

- Experience developing and successfully implementing a strategic plan and annual operating plans.
- Experience working with and supporting a board of directors and advisory individuals.
- Knowledge of nonprofit compliance, laws, and regulations; knowledge of human resources best practices and regulations.
- Competency with Google systems, Quickbooks, Microsoft Office Suite, Dropbox, social media apps, and email marketing (e.g., Mailchimp), among others.

Fundraising and donor cultivation

- Philanthropic non-profit fundraising expertise, including demonstrated success soliciting major donors, corporate partners, and private foundations. Experience with effective annual fund (individual giving) programs.
- Successful grant writing experience as well as other income-generating strategies, and the ability to lead a team (staff, board, and volunteers) in support of fundraising goals.
- Ability to represent the organization to funders, participant families, program partners, and the broader community.

Compensation & Benefits

This is a permanent, full-time, exempt position with a salary range of \$75,000-\$85,000.

Although we don't currently offer traditional health benefits, Wild Whatcom does offer a variety of other benefits to support and appreciate our staff. This includes, but is not limited to:

- 13 days of paid federal holidays, including New Years, Martin Luther King Jr Day, President's Day, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, 4th of July, Labor Day, Indigenous People's Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving Day + the following Friday, and Christmas Day + one day. In addition, you will accrue 2 hrs of paid vacation time off (PTO) for every 40 hours worked (2.6 weeks/year), and 1 hour of paid sick time off for every 40 hours worked (1.3 weeks/year).
- Supporting staff in enrolling for health care coverage through the Washington State Health Insurance Marketplace. *Our goal is to provide employer-sponsored health insurance for year-round, salaried staff.*
- Flexible and hybrid-remote work schedule with provided desktop and laptop computers
- Personal gear stipend to be used how you'd like to support your time spent outdoors (\$150 paid in October)
- Free annual Discover Pass to access all WA state parks for free (for personal or work use)
- Use of our loaner gear as needed (for work or personal use) such as backpacking tents, backpacking stoves, and more.
- Regular paid trainings throughout the year in which all staff can participate including, but not limited to, Risk Management in the Field (including epi pen training) and wilderness skills trainings ranging from friction fire and carving to plant ID and navigation.
- Subsidized or paid training to grow your development, management and fundraising skills through external workshops and seminars.
- An organization-wide strong commitment to personal and professional goal-setting and support through an annual retreat (each Jan/Feb), annual review process, and culture of ongoing feedback and growth.

Working Environment

We expect that the Executive Director will live in or near Western Whatcom County with easy access to the Bellingham office in the Lettered Streets. The position will involve a mix of computer-based work,

staff meetings, in-person stakeholder meetings, and community outreach. We offer a flexible work environment that includes a regular presence in our open floor-plan office and several days working remotely.

How to Apply

Wild Whatcom is actively committed to social equity and justice and encourages candidates of all racial and gender identities, cultural and economic backgrounds, and of any sexual orientation to apply. Wild Whatcom is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, veteran status, or marital status in employment or the provision of services.

All qualified candidates are invited to apply by submitting a resume, cover letter, and contact information for three professional references (will not be contacted without prior notice). Please direct all questions and application materials (emailed as one .pdf file) to EDjob@wildwhatcom.org with your name in the subject line.

We will acknowledge and review all applications as they are received. The priority deadline for applying is **March 15**, and we encourage early submission. The position will remain open until filled. We will review applications received after the deadline on a case by case basis. **We expect to begin interviews mid-March with an anticipated start date of mid-May.**

Before actual hire, the prospective candidate must pass a background check. If any concerns arise, we will review them with the candidate and evaluate potential implications within a broader context and relevance to the position.