



Position Announcement

Mississippi River Policy Manager

Position Description

The Biodiversity Project and the 30+ member Mississippi River Network: Headwaters to Gulf (MRN), is looking to hire someone for a 2-year contract to work on the coalition's policy agenda. The MRN is a collaborative effort of 35 organizations who have joined together to protect and restore the Mississippi River. The MRN has several initiatives, 1. a public communications campaign, 2. improved and amended policies that restore and protect the river and 3. promoting communication and collaboration among the MRN partner organizations.

The MRN is managed by the Biodiversity Project, an environmental, non-profit communications organization located in Chicago. Funded by a new, two-year grant, the Biodiversity Project would enter into a contract with the successful candidate to focus on advancement of the MRN policy agenda. Specifically, the Policy Manager will provide key analysis and proactive policy development in issues relating to the restoration and conservation of the Mississippi River, analyze proposed legislative or administrative changes to Federal policy and law related to the River, educate policymakers, the public, and the media on such policies and proposals, and cultivate support for those policies and proposals among policymakers and other stakeholder organizations. The Policy Manager will accomplish this by, among other means, creating and implementing short and long-term strategies, coordinating policy work among the MRN partners, educating decision makers, planning and attending briefings and meetings in Washington DC, and locally along the Mississippi River, working with the 1 Mississippi campaign manager on engaging interested members of the public (River Citizens) and assisting the Biodiversity Project Executive Director with managing MRN.

The successful candidate will be a self-starter with a solid background in environmental policy, preferably including at least two years professional experience in the environmental policy arena, and demonstrated organizational, communications, research, and writing skills. The ability to work well with diverse interest groups and within a team is a must. An understanding of and experience with Capitol Hill and the federal policy process is highly desirable. She or he will be supervised by Biodiversity Project's Executive Director Jennifer Browning on a day-to-day basis.



Roles and Responsibilities:

- Create a detailed two-year strategy and workplan to meet the MRN’s policy goals. The goals are as follows:
 - Improve FEMA’s National Flood Insurance Program so that it discourages building in floodplains
 - Improve the Farm Bill in order to reduce run-off from agricultural lands in the Upper Mississippi River basin
 - Create a mandate for all federal agencies associated with the River and the 10 main-stem state agencies to work collaboratively on creating a restoration plan for the whole river
 - Restoration of the Clean Water Act
 - Insure that the new Principles and Guidelines are in the best interest of the River
- Work in an inclusive manner with MRN members to meet policy goals
- Stay up-to-date on federal and state rules, regulations and legislation that impacts the Mississippi River
- Organize and attend meetings with MRN members and decision makers
- Prepare briefs, press packets and information sheets on policy issues
- Distribute via e-mail, a weekly or bi-monthly update on Mississippi River related issues, including any legislative updates and other pertinent activities or media coverage.
- Travel throughout the ten-state MR region and Washington, D.C., to meet with partners and other stakeholders
- Represent the MRN in relevant policy meetings and workgroups such as the Mississippi River Collaborative and the Great Waters Initiative
- Support MRN members in meeting their own policy-related wetland and floodplain restoration and protection goals
- Identify potential and recruit new MRN members and partners
- Work with the communications campaign manger to support the integration of the policy work with the on-going public campaign

Qualifications

- Experience with and understating of how policy is made and changed at a federal level
- Familiarity with issues related to the Mississippi River, specifically the current status of Federal legislation and appropriations, such as the Water Resources Development Act, the Farm Bill, FEMA’s Flood Insurance Program and the Clean Water Act.
- Familiarity with Federal programs, policy and regulations related to the above legislation, including proposed revisions to the Principles and Standards, EPA’s NPDES program, targeted USDA River Basin initiatives and Army Corps of Engineers programs, such as NESP and EMP.



Qualifications Continued

- Demonstrated ability to successfully work with coalitions and build consensus
- Experience with managing several projects at the same time
- Excellent written and oral communication skills
- Creativity and the ability to quickly adapt to new situations
- Passion for and a belief in the legislative process
- Bachelor's degree is a must, preferably a Graduate degree, but appropriate experience is equally important

Location

The location of MRN Policy Manager is flexible and may be in Chicago, Washington DC or near the Mississippi River. Ideally the person is situated near a large airport as travel to and from DC, Chicago and the ten main-stem Mississippi River states is expected.

Compensation

The selected candidate and the Biodiversity Project will enter into a two year agreement. The annual amount of the contract will be based upon candidate's experience, but will range from \$45,000 - \$48,000 per year. The candidate is responsible for all income taxes, related taxes and health care. The contract is for salary only. Biodiversity Project will cover all travel and materials associated with the project. Workspace and a computer are not provided.

To Apply:

Please send cover letter and resume to Biodiversity Project Executive Director, Jennifer Browning at jbrowning@biodiverse.org. Position open until filled.

To Learn More:

The Mississippi River Network's public campaign is titled 1 Mississippi. The 1 Mississippi website (www.1mississippi.net) has a great deal of information about the campaign and some information about the Mississippi River Network and its members.

Biodiversity Project is a non-profit environmental communications organization located in Chicago, Illinois. We create and implement communication strategies and help guide coalitions, as we are doing now with the Mississippi River Network. Visit our website to learn more about us and our other projects. www.biodiverse.org