



NATURAL AREAS CONSERVANCY
Associate Director of Policy and Advocacy
Job Description

ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

The Natural Areas Conservancy (NAC) was founded in 2012 to advance the restoration and conservation of natural areas for a resilient and healthy New York City. We participate in a public-private partnership with the NYC Department of Parks & Recreation (NYC Parks) to enable high-quality management of the City's 20,000 acres of forests and wetlands. The NAC works in more than 50 parks across the five boroughs and takes a science-based approach to conserving the city's nature, improving coastal resilience, and ensuring healthy forests. We believe that natural areas are vital to sustaining air quality, improving public health, providing New Yorkers with access to nature, and strengthening our communities. Since 2019, we have also worked on a national scale, leading a network of representatives from cities across the U.S. to strengthen research, information sharing, and communication efforts to enhance the field of urban forest management. More information about our work is at naturalareasnyc.org.

POSITION OVERVIEW

This two-year role will develop and advance the NAC's policy positions, advocacy goals, and associated research efforts. The primary goals of the position are: 1) increase financial and policy support for natural areas through advocacy and strategic partnership, and 2) conduct research about innovative funding sources to support natural areas management.

Advocacy and Policy (60%)

Advance the NAC's advocacy efforts, which are focused on increasing City, State, and Federal funding for the care of natural areas. Specifically, the NAC seeks support for the formalization of a citywide trails system, and care of forested natural areas and wetlands in NYC, informed by our detailed plans for each of these resource types. The Associate Director will support the creation and implementation of policies that provide protection for natural areas, including through strategic partnerships with peer organizations. The Associate Director will also provide strategic support in the NAC's efforts to increase federal funding for the care of natural areas, through our work with the Forests in Cities national network.

Work in this area will include:

- In collaboration with executive staff, develop annual and multi-year staffing and funding "asks" for NYC Parks' natural areas management (forests, wetlands, trails) including capital and expense funding, councilmember funding, and special initiative funding.

- Assist in the development and implementation of a strategy to advocate for public funding, including scheduling meetings with key elected and appointed officials.
- Identify city, state, and federal funding opportunities, and work closely with development staff to submit highly competitive proposals.
- Extend invitations to local elected officials for NAC public and private events, and regularly keep elected officials apprised of programs and projects in their districts.
- Collaborate with NGO partners to shape policies and political agendas that are related to natural areas in NYC.
- Serve as a strategic partner to NAC's national Forests in Cities Program including identifying opportunities for federal support for research and management of forested natural areas in US cities.
- Represent the NAC on committees, task forces, and coalitions that impact natural areas.
- Draft public testimony and public comments, produce briefing memos for NAC staff, and assist in the creation of presentations.
- Lead NAC's compliance with lobbying regulations at a city, state, and federal level.

Research Innovative Funding (40%)

Lead a two-year grant-funded research and convening effort to identify new sources of private funding to support the care of forested natural areas in NYC. This will include:

- Systematically gather information about current funding for forested natural areas using surveys, interviews and research.
- Research innovative funding approaches used in other cities including conservation finance projects, case studies of restoration projects, and city forest credits, among others.
- Summarize findings on the proportion of funding dedicated to natural areas management in NYC in comparison to other green spaces and city services.
- Lead engagement with local partner organizations to discuss and scenario test funding opportunities.
- Finalize communication materials including power-point slide decks, one-page reports, and memos that can be strategically communicated to those with financial investment and authority over natural areas funding sources.
- Work with partner organizations to develop a strategic communication and advocacy plan to share these materials either as a funding ask or to educate audiences on our findings related to funding models and the importance of urban natural areas.

REQUIRED SKILLS/QUALIFICATIONS

- Minimum of five to seven years of professional experience in government relations and project management, ideally related to urban issues such as park management, public health, or environmental justice.
- Bachelor's degree is required; a master's degree in public policy, environmental science or similar field is preferred.
- Excellent interpersonal and organizational skills with a demonstrated ability to distill complex messages into clear and cogent communications for multiple audiences.
- Strong public speaking and writing skills.

- Commitment to create problem solving and collaboration.
- Ability to work in a fast-paced environment and manage competing priorities.
- A deep understanding of NYC government, both executive and legislative branches. First-hand experience with the city's legislative and budget processes. Existing relationships in local government are a plus. Experience working with NYS or the federal government is a plus.
- Working proficiency of Google Suite, Microsoft Office, Adobe Creative Suite and Raiser's Edge preferred.

To apply, please submit a cover letter, resume and writing sample (policy briefing preferred) to: jobs@naturalareasnyc.org and note the job title in the subject line.

COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

The Natural Areas Conservancy offers a competitive benefits package (medical, dental, 401k, PTO) and salary commensurate with experience.