



## **Director of Education, Squam Lakes Association**

Holderness, New Hampshire

*The Squam Lakes Association is dedicated to conserving for public benefit the natural beauty, peaceful character and unique resource values of the lakes and surrounding area. In cooperation with local and state authorities and other conservation organizations, the Association promotes the protection, careful use and shared enjoyment of the lakes, mountains, forests, open spaces and wildlife of the Squam Lakes region.*

## **The Squam Lakes Association**

The Squam Lakes Association (SLA) seeks a creative, resourceful Director of Education to expand the SLA's successful youth and seasonal education programming to build year-round opportunities reaching a broad constituency. The new director will join the SLA's hands-on core staff in implementing a new and ambitious strategic plan for 2017-2021 which includes a new AmeriCorps program, launched in 2017.

Founded in 1904, the SLA acts as a resource to the lakes community and strives to offer a model for watershed conservation. The SLA monitors water quality, combats invasive species, and educates the public on these and other important ecological issues. Fifty miles of trails and over 600 acres of property, a small boat landing, boat rentals and numerous campsites maintained by SLA allow the public opportunities to enjoy this pristine and beautiful environment in low-impact ways. SLA's youth programs, including the Junior Squam Lakes Association (JSLA), in its 61<sup>st</sup> year, and Community Youth Sailing Program (CYSP), educate the future stewards of the watershed in responsible enjoyment of its resources, engaging over 200 youth each summer. The SLA works in close collaboration with local conservation, education, advocacy, and recreation groups in its conservation, ecological, and educational programs, and has an enthusiastic population of volunteers ready to help make the organization's efforts successful.

## **The Director of Education**

The Director of Education for the Squam Lakes Association is responsible for the overall administration and implementation of SLA education programs. While much of the SLA's educational programming to date has focused on summer youth programs, this full time position is intended to expand the programming scope to include environmental education opportunities for all ages, year-round. The Director of Education works in close collaboration with the full SLA team, coordinates with the Director of Conservation, and ultimately reports to the Executive Director. The position has supervisory duties over seasonal education staff and education volunteers and is part of the management team for the Lakes Region Conservation Corps AmeriCorps program. The Director of Education is also the staff liaison to the Board's Outreach and Education Committee, which acts as a guide and ensures that SLA's programs adhere to the mission and strategic objectives of the organization.

## **The 2017-2021 Strategic Plan**

The Squam Lakes Association's five-year goal is to become the most effective watershed organization in New England and to gain a regional and national reputation for our work. We will engage our members and all who use the watershed in the management, protection, and appreciation of our lakes, watershed, and heritage – grounding our work in science and fortifying our position as a resource and educator for stewards of this special place.

To achieve this goal, we are undertaking four main initiatives. These initiatives interconnect and support one another in many ways. They include year-round monitoring and maintaining water quality, revitalizing the SLA's trails system, improving the SLA campus as a watershed hub, and expanding education and communication to ensure a sustainable community of watershed stewards.

Specific education initiatives within this context, beyond maintaining our current programs for youth, are to explore expanded programs for teens and to ensure our programs are available for all ages and abilities. The SLA is also committed to building partnerships for both content and reach with other conservation groups as well as local and area camps and education programs including but not limited to Camp Hale in Sandwich, and recreation departments and school programs in all watershed towns.

### **Programs and Initiatives**

The SLA's staff increases exponentially over the summer months, when activity is at its peak. The local population rises considerably with the arrival of summer vacationers, and the region comes alive with boating, hiking, and other outdoor activities. The SLA is a full participant in this surge of energy, running several summer programs for youth and a set of volunteer opportunities, offering canoes and kayaks for rental, maintaining campsites and trails, running low-impact fishing derbies, and acting as an information hub for the area. The SLA has been expanding its year-round programming as well, offering educational evenings on a variety of topics with local experts, and leading outdoor programs. In the fall, the Squam Ridge Race is the SLA's main event, now in its fifth year, bringing runners, hikers, and families together in an event that raises critical money to help maintain the trails. Winterfest, the main wintertime event, is a largely outdoor showcase of recreational opportunities on the lake, including cross-country skiing, skating, and ice-fishing. As set out in the strategic plan, the SLA will continue to expand its year-round activities to embrace and share the full measure of the watershed's offerings.

#### *Education Programs*

The Junior Squam Lakes Association (JSLA), launched in 1955, aims to educate area youth in good stewardship and responsible enjoyment of the watershed through summer recreational programs on the lake and in the mountains offered on a weekly basis. Over the years, as the program has become more consistent and established, the JSLA has worked to shed a history of participation dominated by summer residents and to reach out to local schools and communities to ensure that year-round residents were aware of the program and had the opportunity to take part, balancing participation among constituencies. A scholarship program for area youth, awarded to two students in each school of the lake's five towns, has also helped boost local participation.

While JSLA is the oldest and largest of the SLA's youth programs, hosting roughly 200 children each summer, the SLA's other programs are adding still more variety to SLA's offerings. The Community Youth Sailing Program (CYSP), active since 1998, offers sailing instruction for approximately 70 youth ages 8-16

each summer in SLA's fleet of Optimist, Club Junior and Lightning class boats. And a growing sailing program for all ages—from children to adults—offers opportunities for new experiences.

Other programming, such as hikes and paddles and special sessions with the Lakes Region Conservation Corps AmeriCorps members, further extend the SLA's reach. The SLA has also worked on providing programming in water quality and water conservation, managed recreational activities including canoeing and hiking outings, and hosted family overnights in collaboration with area schools and recreational departments.

### **Opportunities and Challenges**

The SLA seeks a Director of Education with a passion for conservation and the outdoors, and the drive to share that passion by building up SLA's education programs and initiatives. They must be a creative thinker willing to listen to new ideas and to find effective ways to engage staff, volunteers, and the community in reaching our goals. Excellent communication skills are essential. A personal connection to and love of lakes and the natural world would be helpful.

Specific objectives for the Director of Education are as follows:

#### *Environmental Education:*

- Embrace environmental education with a hands-on approach to conservation, an emphasis on collaborative skill-building, and the space for children to explore and enjoy the outdoors in a spectacular lake and mountain setting.
- Maintain the rotating curriculum for the JSLA program, ensuring that campers get a different experience when returning for successive weeks or from one summer to the next.
- Build opportunities for children local to the watershed and those who visit every summer, as well as visiting friends and family.
- Monitor and attend to changing demographics that affect participation and enrollment over the years.
- Design and implement after-school, school vacation, and community service programs.
- Update and manage interpretive education exhibits for the SLA's main building.
- Create and maintain collaborative relationships with local schools, universities, recreation departments, and after school programs, and build partnerships with area conservation groups and camps with complementary and similar missions.
- Maintain, coordinate, and strengthen further existing systems for registration.
- Keep social media and webpage updated with education oriented posts, news items, and page updates.
- Help maintain the network of SLA education former staff and alumni campers for supporting programs, events, and hiring.

#### *Administration of Junior Squam Lakes Association and Community Youth Sailing Program:*

- Recruit, hire, train, and supervise seasonal education staff.
- Update and maintain online program registration. Oversee processing of seasonal and weekly camp registrations and general program registrations and ensure all necessary documentation is

complete and on file. Ensure that office staff has current registrations for fiscal administration and for constituent tracking.

- Implement a summer youth program staff training and orientation program including necessary health and safety certification.
- Implement the scholarship program including school visits and award ceremony attendance.
- Guide, mentor, and support seasonal education staff, many of whom will be new to working intensively with children for the first time.

#### *Other Responsibilities and Qualities*

- Prepare and submit grant funding applications in support of education programs and activities.
- Keep file updated with respect to important education dates, deadlines and events and duties.
- Maintain all required permits for SLA education and outreach activities.
- Oversight of management and maintenance of equipment and supplies for education.
- Work with volunteer coordinator to recruit, train, and track education related activity.
- Participate with all SLA employees in preparing and assisting with bulk mailings, events, the store, and other general SLA responsibilities.
- Demonstrate a familiarity with the sport of sailing.
- Bring an engaging personality, comfortable with people of all ages and backgrounds, good humor, and resilience.

#### **To Apply:**

Please direct nominations, inquiries, and application materials in confidence to SLA Director of Conservation Rebecca Hanson, [rebeccahanson@squam lakes.org](mailto:rebeccahanson@squam lakes.org), or PO Box 204, Holderness, NH 03245. Electronic submission of materials is preferred.