

Job Description – Friends of Big Marsh Executive Director

Date: June 1, 2018, open until filled

Status: Part-time position

Location: Chicago, IL

Summary: Friends of Big Marsh is seeking an Executive Director who can help the organization achieve efficient operations, sustainable fundraising, clear communications, and meaningful community engagement. The ideal person is an effective manager, a strategic organizer, a clear communicator, a thoughtful collaborator, a proven fundraiser, and a creative problem solver with a passion for parks, the outdoors, cycling, and the partnership of recreation and ecology.

Big Marsh is a 278-acre public park on the southside of Chicago just east of Lake Calumet that opened in November 2016 with restored marshland habitat, hiking, bird-watching, the first phase of a world-class bike park, and venues for mountain biking and cyclocross racing. The Ford Calumet Environmental Center is under construction on the site and will open in 2019, bringing education, visitor and cycling services. Big Marsh is a public Chicago Park District park and open free-of-charge to everyone from dawn to dusk.

Friends of Big Marsh (FBM) is a 501(c)3 non-profit founded in 2014 to support the transformation of the former industrial site into an eco-recreation park. FBM:

- raised over \$2 million in private funding to open the Park in 2016.
- leads on the bike park, cycling programs, races, bike events and development.
- supports the Park District on the education and ecology programs, events, community engagement and development.
- maintains the bike park features and works on mountain bike trail expansion under contract and supervision of the Chicago Park District.
- fundraises for park improvements, new trails, and future bike park phases

The organization is currently managed by a three- person volunteer executive committee. There is an active board of directors and a volunteer development advisor. Staff include a full time Project Coordinator (who handles communications, programming, and community outreach), a bike park maintenance manager, and seasonal maintenance assistants. FBM has an annual operating budget of nearly \$200K.

FBM needs a leader with good management skills to take our scrappy startup non-profit to sustainability. We've accomplished amazing things but we are struggling to put all the pieces in place that can help Big Marsh achieve its full potential. We are not looking for someone to do all the work but to assemble and inspire the mix of board, staff, volunteer, partner orgs, Park District, community groups, public officials, allied businesses, and park visitors to get the important work done.

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Know and track progress on mission and goals

- Develop annual workplan and budget
- Board and executive committee management and development
- Manage program and maintenance staff
- Coordinate with Ford Calumet Environmental Center director and Chicago Park District Staff
- Oversight of payroll, insurance, and bookkeeping
- Ensure that tax and government reporting is completed on time.
- Ensure timely reports to foundations and that donors are thanked and recognized
- Manage Chicago Park District maintenance contract
- Corporate and business relationship management
- Major sponsorship recruitment
- Facilitate planning for future bike park phases, trails, and park amenities and concessions
- Outreach to leaders of cycling, business, environmental, community groups

Lead board involvement, staff involvement, skilled volunteer recruitment, and organizing for organizational competence in the following areas:

- Major donor fundraising
- Grassroots fundraising
- Web presence and Newsletters
- Member and contact management
- Media response and publicity
- Future capital campaigns
- Events and Races
- Government relations
- Sustainable employee benefits package
- Cycling programs and services

We realize this list is daunting. Therefore strategy and prioritization skills will be key.

Other Considerations:

Expect to be at Big Marsh and have meetings at other south side locations on a frequent basis.

Office location to be determined. Some work from home possible.

A flexible work schedule including evenings, weekends, and holidays is required.

Qualifications:

- Outstanding written and verbal communication skills
- Proficiency with business-related software, technology and applications for writing, presentations, communications, social networking, databases and spreadsheets

- Demonstrated leadership and consensus building in a volunteer-focused, non-profit environment
- Demonstrated public speaking, presentation and group facilitation and negotiation skills
- Keen organizational strategist.
- Extensive experience with development and fundraising in a non-profit setting
- Experience with volunteer recruitment, management and retention for grassroots initiatives
- Experience working with government agencies, environmental groups, community groups and elected officials
- Demonstrated ability to problem solve in a collaborative team environment
- Data-driven approach to decision making.
- Attention to detail and strong time-management and organizational skills
- Knowledge and understanding of the bicycle, outdoor recreation industries, and conservation organizations
- The successful candidate will be passionate about parks, the outdoors, cycling, and the partnership of recreation and ecology.
- Energetic, “can-do” personality, who is comfortable working both independently and as part of a team.

The position will report to FBM’s Board of Directors.

Immediate Supervisor: FBM Board President

Full-time potential: FBM can not afford a full-time Executive Director at the present time. Candidates that would prefer full-time employment should indicate this in their cover letter. There may be some creative solutions that FBM can put together for the right candidate.

Benefits: None presently. This is something you will help us figure out.

Salary: \$2,500 per month. Hours negotiable.

Applying: Interested applicants should send a PDF cover letter and resume together in the same file to: ExecDir@bigmarsh.org

Friends of Big Marsh is an Equal Opportunity Employer and values diversity.