

## Vermont Center for Ecostudies Development Director

### Overview

The Vermont Center for Ecostudies advances wildlife conservation in New England and across the Americas through a combination of scientific research and community engagement. Our work includes conducting research and long-term monitoring on a variety of wildlife, from birds to salamanders, butterflies to bees, and delivering our results to inform management decisions and policies that affect these animals. We work with many partners, from New England and Canada to the tropical locations where New England's migratory species overwinter, and engage thousands of volunteers ("community scientists") who participate in our work through data collection and monitoring. Our work is funded by a combination of grants, contracts, and philanthropic donations. Our office is located just across the river from Dartmouth College in the vibrant community of White River Junction, Vermont.

### Position Description

This position presents an exciting opportunity for a motivated fundraising professional to lead and grow a thriving development program at a trusted and respected organization with a passionate staff and committed donor base. The Development Director will manage a strategic, relationship-based fundraising program with a focus on expanding major gifts, growing the annual fund, and increasing planned giving. VCE is also in the final stage of a \$6.5 million campaign, with about 70% of that goal committed. The Development Director will work closely with the Associate and Executive Director to coordinate and complete this campaign during its mid-level and community (public) phases.

The Development Director reports to the Associate Director and works in close collaboration with the Annual Fund Manager, Development Coordinator, Communications Director, Executive Director, and other VCE staff. This position is full-time and based at VCE's headquarters in White River Junction.

### Primary Responsibilities

#### *Major and Individual Gifts*

- Refresh and implement an annual development plan that incorporates short- and long-range goals, with an emphasis on expanding VCE's major gifts portfolio and increasing giving levels by engaging new and existing donors.
- Oversee relationships and stewardship with individual donors assigned to the Executive and Associate Director; coordinate Directors' engagement with major donors and prospects, including face-to-face and virtual solicitations, and other direct communication.
- Manage a personal portfolio of major donors and prospects.
- Develop goals, strategies, and plans for cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship of each major and mid-level donor and prospect, ensuring that each receives regular personalized contact.
- Identify new prospects for the major gifts portfolio and opportunities for increased giving by current donors. Oversee prospect research and actively lead identification of major gift prospects to bring new supporters into the organization.

- Oversee the annual fund and other special and on-line appeals led by the Annual Fund Manager.
- Draft donor correspondence and maintain primary responsibility for developing messages, strategy memos, talking points, and donor materials.
- Work with the Annual Fund Manager and Development Coordinator to generate and analyze data to regularly track, evaluate, and report on performance.
- Work with the Communications Director to implement a donor-focused communications plan, including development of messages, materials, and explanations of VCE's work for use in strategic donor communications, annual reports, newsletters, and other communications that advance VCE's mission and visibility.

#### *Planned Giving*

- Assess and identify opportunities to formalize and grow VCE's planned giving program.

#### *Foundations/ Grants*

- Maintain and expand a portfolio of foundation and other grant prospects; collaborate with the Director of Conservation Science and Associate Director on the submission of grants.
- Maintain a foundation grants calendar of submissions and reporting cycles.
- Identify and cultivate strategic partnerships with businesses in coordination with the Associate Director and Executive Director.

#### *Management*

- Supervise the Annual Fund Manager and Development Coordinator and track their progress towards departmental goals; oversee gift processing and acknowledgement distribution.
- Serve as a contributing member of the senior leadership team to collaboratively set overall direction and strategy for the organization.
- Maintain accurate records using the Little Green Light donor database. Ensure development activities conform to organizational policies and financial accounting practices.
- Prepare progress and activity reports for the Executive Director and the Board of Directors. Oversee and staff the Board's Development Committee, attend Board meetings and work with Board members to identify and connect with new and existing donors.
- Oversee the planning and management of strategic cultivation and stewardship events.
- Participate in the budgeting process, monitor development expenditures, and oversee monthly and annual reconciliation.
- Maintain working knowledge of VCE's programmatic priorities and needs.
- Perform other related duties as assigned by the Associate Director.

## **Qualifications**

Qualified candidates will have:

- At least **5 years** leadership experience in fundraising, including significant experience in major donor fundraising or equivalent development experience. Knowledge of the Vermont and New England philanthropic community is a plus.
- A passion for and curiosity about the natural world
- A commitment to and passion for VCE's mission of advancing wildlife conservation through a combination of scientific research and community engagement. Experience as an amateur naturalist and/or birder is a definite plus.

- Demonstrated success in personal face-to-face gift solicitation. The ideal candidate is highly motivated and eager to connect with new and existing donors on a personal level and solicit gifts.
- Demonstrated ability to work effectively with and quickly gain the respect and support of diverse constituencies, including board members, VCE colleagues, donors, and prospects.
- Strong interpersonal skills and ease working with donors, volunteers, and fellow staff.
- Demonstrated ability to motivate, lead, and collaborate with colleagues in a positive, team-oriented approach. Experience successfully overseeing and supervising colleagues is strongly preferred.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills.
- Superb organizational and time management skills, detail-oriented with strong follow-through and the ability to meet tight deadlines. The ability to set and adhere to priorities is essential.
- Sound judgment in maintaining confidentiality of donor information.
- Database and record-keeping proficiency, including donor database/CRM experience.
- Experience working on multi-year capital campaigns or other major gift initiatives is a plus.
- A firm commitment to the mission and principles of the VCE, including a personal approach that values the individual and respects differences of race, ethnicity, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, religion, ability, involvement with the criminal justice system, and socioeconomic circumstance.
- The ability to work some evenings, weekends, and irregular hours. Ability and willingness to travel regularly in-state and occasionally out-of-state, when necessary; must possess a valid driver's license and a reliable vehicle.

Term: This is a full-time, exempt, benefits-eligible position that begins ASAP. Benefits include paid time off, health and dental insurance, and a 403(b) retirement plan. The position will report to the Associate Director. Work for this position will be primarily in-person. We offer flexible work arrangement options such as telecommuting and alternative work schedules that help foster a healthy work-life balance.

VCE and our staff are committed to creating a workplace culture that respects and celebrates diversity and values the wellbeing of all employees.

### **Application Procedure**

VCE is collaborating with Gade-McArdle Philanthropy Advisors to conduct this search. Confidential inquiries from qualified candidates may be directed to Scott McArdle via email to [scott@gademcardle.com](mailto:scott@gademcardle.com).

To apply please send a cover letter and resume via email to VCE Annual Fund Manager Laura Prothero ([lprothero@vtecostudies.org](mailto:lprothero@vtecostudies.org)).