



San Juan Mountains Association

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Job Announcement Summer Educator

BACKGROUND

Founded in 1988, San Juan Mountains Association (SJMA) is a public lands conservation non-profit working in partnership with the San Juan National Forest, Rio Grande National Forest, Grand Mesa Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forest, and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) providing outreach, education, and stewardship throughout southwest Colorado.

JOB SUMMARY

The San Juan Mountains Association (SJMA) is hiring five (5) summer educators for its popular environmental education day camp. This is a unique opportunity for the right individual to participate in a top-notch conservation education program that engages youth and the community to learn about public lands and our local environment while having fun at camp.

The summer educator will teach the curriculum already developed by SJMA's staff. The successful candidate will be one of seven (7) instructors responsible for a group of (up to) 35 kids, ages 6-17. The summer educator will work with the SJMA education team to deliver outdoor education programming at SJMA's Durango Nature Center and on public lands throughout Southwest Colorado. There is a specific theme for each camp and different campers each week. SJMA's instructors have a passion for getting youth outdoors, cultivating a deep understanding of natural processes, and encouraging public lands stewardship. For more information on the camps, visit: <https://sjma.org/summercamps/>

LOCATION

The position is based out of SJMA's office within the San Juan National Forest Headquarters in Durango, Colorado. This position will also require regular daytime travel in SJMA-provided vehicles throughout La Plata and Montezuma Counties, the San Juan National Forest, and occasionally overnight travel to farther areas such as Montrose.

SCHEDULE

- This is a temporary, seasonal position that ends no later than August 7th, 2026.
- Of the nine (9) weeks of programming, educators will be expected to work at minimum six (6) of them in addition to a mandatory training from May 26th-May 29th. Schedules for the entire summer will be determined during the training week. Applicants must at least be able to staff the six (6) weeks of the Durango Junior Naturalist Field Camp.
- Expected schedule is approximately 40 hours per week, with occasional longer days depending on program needs.
- Camp dates can be found at: <https://sjma.org/summercamps/>

KEY RESPONSABILITIES

This individual will work under the direct supervision of SJMA's Camp Director, Education Director, and in coordination with other SJMA staff to achieve the following objectives:

- Maintain safety at all times for campers and staff, including active supervision, headcounts, appropriate boundaries, and proactive risk management;
- Lead and facilitate outdoor environmental education activities using SJMA-provided curriculum, adapting instruction to camper ages, abilities, and learning styles;

- Create a positive camp culture by modeling respectful behavior, inclusion, curiosity, and stewardship;
- Manage group dynamics and behavior using SEL strategies;
- Prepare for each day/week by reviewing lesson plans, managing materials, setting up/cleaning activity spaces, and ensuring equipment is ready and accounted for;
- Support smooth operations by assisting with check-in/check-out procedures, verifying authorized pick-ups, and maintaining confidentiality when appropriate;
- Communicate clearly and professionally with families as directed;
- Practice and promote Leave No Trace and public lands ethics; ensure campers follow site-specific rules and respect cultural/natural resources;
- Collaborate as part of the instructor team by participating in daily briefings/debriefs, communicate needs early, and support other groups/staff as needed;
- Represent SJMA professionally in the community and on public lands, maintaining punctuality, preparedness, and a positive, solutions-oriented attitude;
- Comply with SJMA's child protection policies, including mandatory reporting requirements for suspected abuse or neglect;
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries with youth in accordance with SJMA policies;
- Must be legally eligible to work with minors and comply with all SJMA youth protection policies;
- Other duties as assigned to support safe, high-quality camp programming.

SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS

The successful candidate will possess the following skills/qualifications:

Required:

- Enjoy working outdoors with children and teens (ages 6–17);
- Prior experience working with children in a supervision role (camp, school, afterschool, coaching, childcare, etc.);
- Strong ability to lead groups with clear expectations, positive behavior management, and consistent boundaries;
- Demonstrated reliability, punctuality, and professionalism;
- Excellent communication and teamwork skills; ability to work effectively with diverse campers, families, and coworkers;
- Strong organizational skills and ability to manage multiple tasks and transitions calmly;
- Ability to work safely in an outdoor setting (variable weather, uneven terrain, high activity days), including hiking and carrying program gear;
- Valid Colorado Driver's License and good driving record;
- Willingness and ability to travel to public lands sites in the region, including occasional overnight travel as needed;
- Employment is contingent upon successful completion of a criminal background check and reference checks, in accordance with applicable law;
- Must be able to drive personal or SJMA vehicles in compliance with organizational vehicle use policies;
- This position regularly requires standing, walking, hiking on uneven terrain, bending, lifting up to 50 lbs, and working outdoors in variable weather conditions. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions of the position.

Preferred:

- Camp counselor / outdoor educator experience;
- Environmental education, teaching, science, natural resources, outdoor recreation, or related background;
- Familiarity with Colorado ecology, Leave No Trace, and public lands stewardship/conservation issues;
- Spanish language skills;
- First Aid/CPR or Wilderness First Aid certification (or ability to obtain before camp begins);
- Experience supporting a wide range of learning styles/needs and building an inclusive, welcoming group culture.

COMPENSATION

- **Hourly rate:** \$15-18 an hour, DOE. End-of-season bonus contingent upon successful completion of the full season and satisfactory performance.
- **Simple IRA:** SJMA offers a Simple IRA plan with a 3% match after earning \$2,500, and
- **Sick Leave:** 1 hour of sick time per 30 hours worked, per Colorado law.
- **Non-Exempt:** This position is non-exempt and eligible for overtime in accordance with Colorado and federal wage and hour laws.
- Benefits are subject to eligibility requirements and may change in accordance with SJMA policies.

TO APPLY

Those interested in the position are asked to submit a resume and letter of interest in one PDF demonstrating their qualifications for the position to jobs@sjma.org. The cover letter should succinctly describe the applicant's interest and suitability for the position, and other pertinent facts that may not appear in the resume.

SJMA is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, national origin, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other protected status under applicable law.

Employment with SJMA is at-will and may be terminated by either party at any time, with or without cause or notice, in accordance with applicable law.

No phone calls please.