ALBANY PINE BUSH PRESERVE COMMISSION
JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title: Visitor Services Specialist
Department: Education
Supervisor: Discovery Center Manager
Location: Albany, NY
FLSA Status: Non-Exempt
Classification of Position: Regular, Full-time
Annual Salary: $44,879

Date Prepared: November 5, 2026

Summary of Position

The Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission (APBPC) is a public-private partnership created by the NYS Legislature in 1988 to protect and manage the Albany Pine Bush Preserve (APBP) and provide the public with educational and recreational opportunities. The Management Plan for the Albany Pine Bush Preserve guides all aspects of creating and managing the preserve.

The 3,400+ - acre APBP, located in New York's Capital District, protects one of the best remaining inland pitch-pine scrub oak barrens in the world. This extraordinary fire-dependent landscape provides habitat for many plants and animals, including more than 20 percent of New York State's wildlife Species of Greatest Conservation Need, such as the endangered Karner blue butterfly. The APBP is a National Natural Landmark, Maurice D. Hinchey Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area Site, National Recreation Trail Site, a New York State Unique Area, Birding Trail Site and Bird Conservation Area, and a National Audubon Society Important Bird Area. Characterized by rolling sand dunes and over 20 miles of trails, the APBP offers visitors with a variety of interests many recreational opportunities including hiking, bird watching, cross-country skiing, horseback riding, mountain biking, hunting, fishing and canoeing.

As the gateway to the Pine Bush, the Discovery Center at 195 New Karner Road, Albany, is a "green" certified interpretive center where visitors come to understand why the Pine Bush is rare and special. This unique destination provides for exciting exploration where learning comes naturally through interactive exhibits, an outdoor Discovery Trail, and numerous programs on the ecology, natural history, cultural history and management of the Pine Bush.

The Visitor Services Specialist (VSS) plays an important role as the first point of contact for much of the public's interaction with the APBPC and for our tenants who lease the second floor of the Discovery Center. The Visitor Services Specialist is adept at communications, interpretation and customer service. A successful VSS is able to utilize their experience and knowledge of visitors and the preserve to tell the story of the Albany Pine Bush Preserve to varied audiences. Additionally, this position will focus on the gift shop and volunteers. The VSS oversees the Volunteer Docent program including supervision, training and evaluation of Volunteer Docents and the trailside interpretation program. The VSS also creates, manages and maintains inventory for sale in the gift shop.

The VSS will be required to work a total of 37.5 hours per week. Four of those days will be scheduled as frontline staff operating the Discovery Center. Currently frontline days include Sunday, Monday, Wednesday and Thursdays for a total of 28 hours per week in a frontline position. The remaining hours will be scheduled as needs and workloads dictate.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities

1. Provide interpretive services and experiences for visitors, utilizing knowledge of the APBPC and the audience to ignite interest.
2. Manage the gift shop inventory with a focus on mission-based, educational, locally-sourced and/or eco-friendly items.
3. Frontline duties include greeting visitors, answering questions, reception for tenant visitors, receiving deliveries, answering main phone line and info@ email account, operating cash register, providing visitors with information about trails, exhibit, ecology and the APBPC's work, operating exhibits and the facility. Frontline staff maintain awareness of occupants in the building and communicate their presence with the appropriate staff.
4. Train and supervise Discovery Center Volunteer Docents and Volunteer Trailside Interpreters.
5. Serve as a specialist on the Animal Care team. Handle, present to the public and provide basic care for collection of live animals (currently 3 turtles).
6. Compile weekly revenue reports for gift shop sales.
7. Other duties as assigned.

Preferred Qualifications

1. Bachelor's degree or equivalent experience. Must be 18 years of age or older.
2. One year of experience in administration, gift shops, retail, interpretation, museums or nature centers or other applicable fields appropriate to accomplish essential duties.
3. Ability to effectively convey the organizational mission and educational themes to diverse audiences. Experience with interpretive techniques is preferred.
4. Interest and/or background in natural sciences or the environment preferred.
5. Willingness and ability to work alternate schedules when needs arise.
6. Strong organizational skills with attention to detail.
7. Excellent oral and written communication, presentation and interpersonal skills.
8. Ability to complete tasks within assigned timeframes, possibly in the absence of direct supervision.
9. Some experience with live animal care preferred (current program includes 3 turtles).
10. Excellent computer skills and experience with common software applications (e.g: MS Office Programs, data management software, Internet browsers).

APBPC is an Equal Opportunity Employer

APBPC does not discriminate in its employment opportunities or practices on the basis of an individual's actual or perceived race, color, sex, national origin, ethnicity, hairstyle and hair texture, military or veteran status, mental or physical disability, marital status, sexual orientation, sexual and reproductive health decisions, gender identity, transgender status, genetic information/predisposition or carrier status, age, religion, creed, domestic violence victim status, and any other classification protected by federal, state or local law.

APBPC is an at-will employer.

Please note this job description is not designed to cover or contain a comprehensive listing of activities, duties or responsibilities that are required of APBPC for this job. Duties, responsibilities and activities may change at any time with or without notice.

How to Apply

Email the following in a single email to Blake Hastie-Etchison betchison@albanypinebush.org with "VSS Job Application" in the subject line.

1. A cover letter expressing your interest in the position and relevant experience.
2. A resume with up-to-date work history, education and volunteer experience.
3. A list of 3 references that include the following information for each:
   - Reference Name
   - Reference's Relationship to Candidate
   - Company Name
   - Dates of Employment
   - Position(s) Held
   - Phone number
   - E-mail address

Closing Date

All applications must be complete (cover letter, resume, 3 references) and received before midnight on December 9, 2026.