



Position Description

RESEARCH ASSISTANT BUZZARDS BAY COALITION

The Buzzards Bay Coalition seeks a Research Assistant for this energetic, performance-driven and rapidly growing regional organization. The full-time position reports directly to the Vice President for Bay Science, joins a talented staff and dedicated Board of Directors, and is responsible for aiding in the effective monitoring of Buzzards Bay and analyzing the impact of nitrogen pollution and climate change to Buzzards Bay.

The Research Assistant will further the Coalition's two long-term monitoring efforts, the baywide water quality monitoring program and salt marsh monitoring. The Research Assistant position is a combination of desktop research and data management/analysis, fieldwork, and equipment preparation and deployment. The Research Assistant will be experienced in environmental research and data analysis, an effective communicator who works well with others, and capable of managing small projects.

The position offers the opportunity to contribute to the success of a dynamic organization and have a direct impact on the future of our regional environment; and an outstanding quality of life on the shores of Buzzards Bay – all one hour from Boston and a half an hour from Providence and Cape Cod.

BACKGROUND

Buzzards Bay is a national treasure whose outstanding beauty and natural resources touch so many aspects of our lives here in southeastern Massachusetts. It is central to our quality of life, to our economy, and home to some of the world's leading oceanographic institutions. The Bay's waters support a thriving commercial shellfish and expanding recreational sportfishing industry, diverse and abundant wildlife populations, and some of the finest sailing on the entire globe. On its shores, the Bay's watershed lands are among the most beautiful on the eastern seaboard, with deep forests, clear rivers, and farmland as old as New England itself, all meeting the Bay's soft edge of beaches and saltmarsh through more than 30 harbors, coves and tidal estuaries.

The Buzzards Bay Coalition was incorporated as a nonprofit 501(c)(3), membership-supported organization in July 1987 with start-up funding support from the US Environmental Protection Agency. The initial Board of Directors was comprised of individuals from throughout the Bay watershed - environmental advocates, cranberry growers, fishermen, marina owners, research institutions and town government. Today, the organization continues to maintain a governing Board from Westport to Woods Hole and from a variety of backgrounds.

The initial push to reverse the decline of Bay water quality and fisheries began in earnest in 1984 when Congress recognized the unique value of Buzzards Bay by selecting the Bay as one of four estuaries in the country to be studied under the new federal National Estuary Program.

Directing the activities of the National Estuary Program during its early years was a Citizens Advisory Committee comprised of local town officials, environmental advocates, and scientists. This group was charged, among other things, with determining if Buzzards Bay would benefit from the establishment of a private advocate/watchdog to ensure that the right decisions were being made for the Bay long after the program was dissolved. They determined that even more than federal recognition, what the Bay really needed was a community-based organization to speak for everyone who lives near, works on and enjoys the natural bounty of Buzzards Bay and its watershed. They founded the Buzzards Bay Coalition to be that independent voice.

OUR MISSION & SCOPE

Today, The Buzzards Bay Coalition is a nonprofit, membership organization dedicated to the restoration, protection and sustainable use and enjoyment of our irreplaceable Bay and its watershed. The Coalition works to improve the health of the Bay ecosystem for all through education, conservation, research and advocacy.

The Coalition works throughout the entire Buzzards Bay Watershed to protect the region's coastal, river and drinking water quality and the upland forests, wetlands and streams that support a healthy watershed/bay ecosystem.

We are a \$4.8 million/year organization staffed by a team of 32 conservation professionals, aided by hundreds of volunteers, and supported by more than 10,000 members. As we have grown over the past 30 years, our effectiveness and reach have greatly expanded. What has not changed is our fundamental vision for the Bay we have committed to defend and restore.

OUR VISION

- A Buzzards Bay shoreline defined by safe swimming beaches, open shellfish beds and stretches of scenic open spaces for all to enjoy.
- Healthy waters that support abundant fish, shellfish and wildlife populations.
- A Bay safe from the threat of oil spills, industrial and sewer discharges and ocean dumping.
- A watershed where rivers, streams, forests and wetlands that buffer the Bay are protected.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In the past two decades, the Buzzards Bay Coalition has earned a reputation as entrepreneurial, professional and focused on winning results for our local environment. We have:

- Partnered with towns and state agencies to clean-up pollution. The results of this work can today be seen in cleaner waters and safer beaches in every bay community.
- Preserved more than 9,000 acres of watershed lands as permanent open space and established the support services needed to aid towns and land trusts in the protection of many thousands of additional acres. The Coalition is an accredited land trust and the 2007 recipient of the 1st National Land Trust Excellence Award from the Land Trust Alliance.
- Responded to the 2003 Bouchard Oil Spill which fouled 93 miles of our shoreline by organizing the volunteer response, and subsequently led the effort to provide appropriate training and equipment for local first-responders in the event of another catastrophe. Following the spill, we pushed lawmakers to help secure some of the nation's strongest oil spill prevention laws and regulations at both the state and federal level.
- Created the most comprehensive volunteer-based water quality monitoring program in New England to guide Bay protection and restoration efforts that just finished its 31st year.
- Altered the course of hundreds of development projects in the watershed by working with town officials and developers to reduce the negative impacts of new growth on the health of the bay, our rivers and wetlands.
- Through public programs, in-school activities and Learning Centers in New Bedford, Woods Hole and Acushnet, educated over 10,000 thousand residents of all ages and communities throughout the watershed about what they can do to protect the Bay.
- Gone to court when necessary and succeeded in halting the largest source of pollution to the Westport Rivers, securing development setbacks to all of the bay's tidal rivers, and the permanent banning of dredge spoil disposal on the Bay bottom.

OUR WORK TODAY

The Buzzards Bay Coalition's staff, programs and initiatives are organized to achieve the following Program Objectives:

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

To create both an informed public today and future generations - tomorrow's bay stewards - who will understand the Buzzards Bay ecosystem (how it works, how it is threatened, and their place in it) and support its restoration and protection.

LAND CONSERVATION

To increase the rate of land protection and the amount of protected land in the watershed, the Coalition pursues a Bay-focused land protection strategy, empowers local land trusts and educates private landowners about conservation.

SCIENCE AND ADVOCACY

To better understand the Buzzards Bay ecosystem and its response to human-related impacts by gathering extensive, regular data on the health of the Bay in order to guide restoration and protection. To use that data to pursue the restoration and protection of the Bay ecosystem through citizen advocacy and through the regulatory and legal process at the local, state and federal levels.

Position Description

The Research Assistant supports the organization's objectives of understanding the Buzzards Bay ecosystem and its response to human-related impacts and of reducing nitrogen pollution sources to Buzzards Bay.

The Research Assistant will further the Coalition's long-term monitoring efforts through a variety of projects. The Research Assistant will support the Coalition's two long-term monitoring efforts, the baywide water quality monitoring program and salt marsh monitoring, through sample collection, equipment preparation/maintenance/deployment, and data management and analysis. This full-time position reports directly to the Buzzards Bay Coalition's Vice President for Bay Science.

The Research Assistant position is a combination of desktop research and data analysis, fieldwork, lab work, data entry, and works with full-time and seasonal staff. The Research Assistant will deploy programmable continuous water quality sensors at at least 10 locations around Buzzards Bay and on Martha's Vineyard and perform regular maintenance activities on them, including calibration and cleaning. The Research Assistant will be responsible for the management, quality control, and analysis of the continuous water quality sensor data. The Research Assistant will assist with collection of water quality data using hand-held sensors and by the collection and filtration of water samples. The Research Assistant will assist with the collection of salt marsh field measurements including marsh elevation, vegetation, and fauna. The Research Assistant will support a variety of rotating funded projects including things such as helping to update water quality signs around the watershed.

The Research Assistant will have experience performing environmental research, analyzing environmental data, and creating data visualizations. The successful candidate will be able to follow directions, pay attention to detail, and accurately record data. The Research Assistant must be able to successfully manage projects, have excellent interpersonal and communication skills, and a passion for the environment and Buzzards Bay. The position is based at the Coalition's Science and Field Operations Center in Marion, MA.

Specific Responsibilities

Tasks include, but are not limited to:

- Deploy, retrieve, and maintain continuous sensors around Buzzards Bay.

- Data management including database organization, quality assurance and processing based on calibration checks, statistical analysis, and data visualization.
- Collect water samples and field measurements of basic water quality characteristics (e.g., dissolved oxygen, temperature, salinity) and transport water samples.
- Assist with the long-term monitoring of vegetation, fauna, and elevation of salt marshes.
- Assist in the organization, maintenance, and calibration of monitoring supplies and equipment.
- Assess the locations of and support the installation of physical signs describing Bay Health at waterfront locations around the Bay.
- Assist with other watershed monitoring projects; river flow/temperature monitoring, river herring counting, etc.
- Assist with Buzzards Bay Coalition organized outreach and Bay education events.

Professional & Personal Qualifications

- College degree in environmental science or related discipline, Master's Degree a plus.
- Ability to work independently and as part of a team.
- Experience in performing environmental research, including lab and field work.
- Experience manipulating & analyzing environmental data using Microsoft Excel and R.
- High energy level, well-organized, able to take initiative, and willingness to learn.
- Ability to manage projects and work with partner organizations.
- Excellent written and oral communications skills.
- Capable of working under physical conditions in the field including heat, humidity, wet, areas of poison ivy, and tick habitat as well as carrying equipment up to 30 pounds for a mile.
- Familiarity and comfort with operating a small boat and marine gear for field deployment of instruments.
- Willing to work flexible hours – work schedules will vary from week to week, and are based around tide and weather conditions. Work outside of normal working hours, including some weekends, may be required.
- The Research Assistant must have his/her own reliable transportation to cover monitoring in the Buzzards Bay watershed (mileage will be reimbursed).
- Enthusiastic commitment to the mission of the Buzzards Bay Coalition to protect the bay.
- Familiarization with Buzzards Bay is a plus.

Salary/Benefits

This is a full-time at-will position with a salary of \$48,000 per year. Travel will be reimbursed at the prevailing IRS rate per mile.

To Apply

To apply, email a resume, a cover letter explaining your interest in the position, and contact information for three references to: Rachel Jakuba, Vice President for Bay Science, at jakuba@savebuzzardsbay.org.

Buzzards Bay Coalition is proud to be an Equal Opportunity employer. All qualified persons are encouraged to apply and will be considered without regard to race, national origin, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, disability, age, religion, or veteran status.

October 2022