



**Friends of Southwest Virginia &
Southwest Virginia Cultural Heritage Foundation**
One Heartwood Circle | Abingdon, VA 24210
(276) 492-2420 | info@myswva.org

POSTED: 12/6/2017

Career Opportunity:

Tourism & Recreation Development Specialist

OPPORTUNITY:

Job Title: Tourism & Outdoor Recreation Coordinator
Organization: Friends of Southwest Virginia
Reports To: Executive Director
Location: Heartwood – One Heartwood Circle, Abingdon VA 24210

ABOUT FRIENDS OF SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA:

Southwest Virginia includes 19 counties and four independent cities located near the southern and western border of Virginia. The Southwest Virginia Cultural Heritage Commission, established in 2008 by the Virginia General Assembly, takes the lead in developing a creative economy in Southwest Virginia. In 2011, the Commission became the Southwest Virginia Cultural Heritage Foundation, a self-sustaining community development organization with support from the Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development. Through a supporting non-profit, the Friends of Southwest Virginia, businesses and individuals help artists, crafts people, localities, nonprofits and entrepreneurs mobilize and succeed.

A multifaceted plan identifies the cultural and natural assets of the region; coordinates initiatives, organizations and venues engaged in cultural and natural heritage toward more efficient operations for all partner organizations; and develops a comprehensive strategy and capital improvements plan to maximize the impact of state investments in this significant restructuring effort.

Key initiatives include:

- Branding and marketing Southwest Virginia to the world as a distinct culture and destination
- Developing and sustaining Heartwood: Southwest Virginia's Artisan Gateway
- Expanding outdoor recreation development initiatives and marketing throughout the region
- Planning and implementation of downtown revitalization throughout the region to instill a high quality of life within our communities and promote them to the world for a broad spectrum of economic development opportunities

Efforts to build Southwest Virginia's creative economy are the work of the Southwest Virginia Cultural Heritage Commission. Partners include the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, Virginia Tourism Corporation and the Virginia Department of Conservation and Resources. Funding partners include the Tobacco Indemnification and Community Revitalization Commission and Appalachian Regional Commission.

POSITION OVERVIEW:

Friends of Southwest Virginia is seeking an energetic and unique individual to assist with the economic redevelopment of Southwest Virginia. Friends is looking for someone willing build bridges throughout the region and think outside the box to overcome challenges facing the community, economic and tourism efforts throughout SWVA.

This position is responsible for the identification of assets, facilitating the creation of a network of stakeholders and the formulation of a development strategy of anchor recreation areas of Southwest Virginia. These areas include the Blue Ridge Parkway, the New River corridor, the Appalachian Trail, Mount Rogers Recreation Area, the Clinch River Valley, Breaks Interstate Park and surrounding area, High Knob Recreation Area and the Daniel Boone Wilderness Trail. Responsibilities include cross promotion of these areas, connecting them to communities and incorporating their brand



and assets to the Southwest Virginia regional brand, and supporting their contribution to the establishment of Southwest Virginia as a national outdoor recreation destination.

JOB DUTIES:

1. IDENTIFICATION OF EXISTING AND POTENTIAL ASSETS

- Work with stakeholders, organizations and individuals throughout the region to identify existing and proposed tourism oriented natural and hospitality assets (e.g. trailheads, water access points, campgrounds, hotels, restaurants, etc.) within or near the major anchor areas.
- Catalog sites by location to analyze for business gaps within the overall economy.
- Identify and engage significant individual and organizational stakeholders related to natural resources, recreational, cultural and hospitality assets in regional efforts for creating an outdoor recreation industry.

2. FACILITATION OF ANCHOR AREA NETWORKS AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

- Facilitate the creation or become involved with stakeholder groups to identify potential needs for existing natural assets as they relate to outdoor recreation (trails, natural areas, outfitters, clubs, organizations, signage, facilities, parking, strategic/capital improvement planning) to increase overall visitor experience.
- Assist in the formulation of development strategies to enhance visitor use of natural and hospitality assets.
- Participate in coordination and implementation of projects related to enhancements for natural asset areas including:
 - Facilitation of stakeholders
 - Coordination of regional programs or projects
 - Participation in stakeholder meetings
- Continue to work with anchor areas to prepare them for future projects, regional efforts and overall support for creating an outdoor recreation destination.

3. ASSIST WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF REGIONAL BRANDING EFFORTS

- Participate on Southwest Virginia marketing committee to identify opportunities for Friends of SWVA to assist communities in creating a regional industry for outdoor recreation.
- Coordinate and participate in meetings with localities, local governments, businesses, tourism officials, stakeholders, organization and clubs to implement the use of the Southwest Virginia brand.
- Support the Southwest Virginia Director of Marketing in areas related to outdoor recreation.

4. BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

- Conduct ground level research and evaluations on the current outdoor recreation business climate and business inventory for assigned communities. These evaluations will consider: Primary Outdoor Recreation Assets, Primary Outdoor Recreation Destination Businesses, Secondary Non-Destination Tourism / Hospitality Support Businesses, and Tertiary Non-Tourism / Hospitality Support Businesses.
- Develop Business Needs Assessment / Gap Reports for assigned communities considering: Identification of underutilized assets; Prioritization of business needs (based on gaps in businesses serving assets); Potential Existing Business Expansions; Creative Economy Opportunities; Community / Regional Partnerships.
- Participate in regional events and network potential businesses to resources available in the region.



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Minimum Qualifications:

- Education: Bachelor's degree
- Ability to adapt and work in a fast paced environment.
- Strong verbal and written communication skills.
- Positive attitude and strong interpersonal skills
- Proficient computer skills (Word, Publisher, Excel, PowerPoint and Internet)
- Presentation and public event hosting skills
- Small and large group facilitation skills
- Strong organizational skills
- Strong desire for continued growth and learning
- Able to work independently and collaboratively
- General knowledge of event coordination and execution
- Able to work weekday evenings or weekend days as needed (1-5 times per month)
- Ability to stand for up to two hours
- Ability to sit for up to two hours

Preferred Qualifications:

- Education: Bachelor's degree in tourism, outdoor recreation management, business or communications. Masters preferred.
- At least three years in the tourism, economic development or community development industries.
- Advanced group facilitation and collaboration skills
- Experience coordinating multiple projects simultaneously

Travel / Irregular Hour Requirements:

Travel: Required. Travel within the region up to 4 days per week. Overnight travel several required times per year.
Weeknight / Weekend Hours: As needed for meetings and special events. Comp time during the standard work week will be provided when working weekend events or meetings.

COMPENSATION:

Salaried. Hiring range: Mid to High \$30s with limited benefits. Travel reimbursements provided at federal rate.

HOW TO APPLY:

Send resume and cover letter to Chris Cannon at ccannon@myswva.org.

Open Until Filled; resumes will be reviewed immediately. Earlier applicants have a better chance of being interviewed, so apply ASAP. No phone calls.