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## Job Description: Weather Observer

### *General Description*

A Mount Washington Observatory (MWO) Weather Observer's principal role is weather observation—the collecting of weather data at the summit of Mount Washington, New Hampshire, one of the planet's most extreme places. The principal work location for this position, for the entirety of the 8-day workweek, is this unique mountaintop weather station.

In addition to collecting weather data, he/she performs many other tasks while on duty at the Observatory. These tasks include educational outreach, hospitality, logistical planning, coordination, and research support, as well as the general oversight of interns and volunteers. As a group, Weather Observers are responsible for helping to maintain the summit facility and for the overall quality of our various programs.

There are two teams of Weather Observers, each comprised of three individuals with distinct sets of primary responsibilities (education, technology, meteorology). Despite the differences, there is significant overlap in the duties of all three positions due to the logistics and remoteness of the work location. The primary responsibilities for each of these positions are detailed in separate job description documents.

### *Job Tasks and Responsibilities*

Weather Observers take part in all of the following activities on the summit, including but not limited to:

- Obtaining and reporting weather observations to the National Weather Service.
- Dissemination of current weather conditions.
- Creation and dissemination of local and statewide forecasts, via the internet, radio, television, and other media.
- General oversight, upkeep, and maintenance of all research projects in process under the auspices of the summit operation.
- Interaction with the scientific, educational, and other professional communities as required.
- Interaction with the media, membership, and the general public in person, over the phone, via e-mail, through television, or the internet. This includes writing short blog updates for our very popular website on a daily basis and taking photographs on a regular basis to be used in print and online.
- Participation in live videoconference presentations from the summit.
- Regular participation in and support of ongoing fundraising efforts.
- Supervision, coordination, and providing hospitality and support for day and overnight visits to the Observatory.
- Supervision of all interns, volunteers, and observatory guests while they are on the summit or in transport to the facility.
- Assisting in the training of interns in all aspects of operations (exclusive of museum retail operations).

- General maintenance and upkeep of weather instrumentation and data systems, (including regular deicing of outside instrumentation) when required.
- Maintain weather data records using written forms, paper charts, digital files, and database methods as appropriate.
- Participation in general building maintenance and upkeep, including the yearly winterization effort, monitoring building statistics (including electricity consumption, fresh water supply, gray and black water storage, etc.) and assisting in snow removal efforts.
- Keeping Observatory facilities neat, clean, orderly, and in good repair.
- Writing articles for the Observatory's quarterly magazine, *Windswept*.
- Working with other Observatory departments as needed.

Because every department within the Observatory depends in varying degrees on the resources of the summit, it is essential that a Weather Observer supports, communicates, cooperates, and works as a team member with all departments to ensure optimization of each department's goals.

### *Additional Job Activities*

The nature of the summit experience requires the sharing of duties and responsibilities among various members of the summit staff. Although one Weather Observer typically has the principal responsibility for managing particular tasks, a Weather Observer is usually assisted by others on the summit staff, especially when the responsible individual is not physically present on the summit or is off duty.

1. Coordination of the on-site activities of the summit volunteer program:
  - Oversee the orientation of each volunteer upon his or her arrival at the summit.
  - Provide direction for the volunteer concerning daily operations (i.e., the number of meals to prepare, food quantities, menu selections and dietary restrictions of guests)
  - Provide training for new volunteers each week, especially in keeping food preparation areas clean and well organized.
  - Provide guidance for the volunteer regarding additional tasks, such as support for Mount Washington Museum attendants, computer work, or general physical plant repairs and maintenance.
2. Maintain and oversee all photographic activity:
  - Ensure that proper photographic documentation is taking place at all times on the summit, including the provision of digital photographs for display online.
  - Keep all digital and video cameras and other photographic equipment/materials in working order.
  - Sharing responsibility for the proper organization, categorization, and archiving of all images, whether 'still' or video.
  - Support other departments in their use of photographs.
3. Commissary and weekly general supply ordering for summit facility:
  - Participate in creating the weekly food order to ensure that proper food volume and required supplies are brought to the summit in a timely fashion.
  - Shopping for the weekly food order.
4. Public Safety and Emergency Response:

- Assist in disseminating relevant weather information in cooperation with New Hampshire Fish & Game Department, White Mountain National Forest, Mount Washington State Park, and the Appalachian Mountain Club, among others.
  - Maintain first aid supplies, ensuring that all necessary equipment is on hand.
  - Become trained in Wilderness First Aid within nine (9) months of becoming full time staff.
  - Provide safety tours to all guests staying overnight.
  - Be prepared to handle emergencies with observatory staff and guests.
5. Perform other related tasks as assigned.

#### *Logistical Responsibilities*

- Eight day shift at the summit facility, each day typically broken into two twelve hour shifts including a total of two hours of break time.
- On some occasions, Weather Observers may be required to complete work at other Observatory facilities, events or other locations remote from the summit.
- Living in a remote mountaintop research facility with limited access. Bunkrooms and living quarters are shared with other staff, volunteers, and guests.

#### *Knowledge, Skills, Abilities, and Personal Characteristics*

- *Weather Observers must be in excellent physical condition and able to hike up or down the mountain in adverse weather conditions, in any season, in the event of an emergency.*
- Computer literacy, including a thorough knowledge of Microsoft operating systems, Microsoft Office (Excel, Word, and PowerPoint, as a minimum). Familiarity with Adobe Photoshop, Lightroom and video editing software is preferred.
- Weather Observers serve as the Observatory's ambassadors. They must be mature, outgoing, neat and well groomed at all times, and comfortable working with the general public and Observatory guests.
- Able to lift in excess of 50lbs, strength for shoveling, the ability to climb stairs and ladders, and must be able to handle frequent exposure to a combination of high winds and low temperatures.
- METAR certification within six (6) months of acceptance of the position. Failure to achieve certification in this period may result in termination.

#### *Minimum Qualifications*

- A Bachelor's Degree is required, ideally in atmospheric, environmental, or other similar physical science.

#### *Reporting*

- Weather Observers report to the Summit Operations Manager.
- Weather Observers also take direction from their on-mountain Shift Leader and other senior personnel when appropriate.

#### *Accountability*

A Weather Observer's performance is measured by the success of the summit's role in accomplishing the goals and tasks outlined in the Observatory's mission statement and strategic

plan, and by the Weather Observer's role in attaining those goals. Specifically, some of the measures include:

- Timely and accurate weather observations and reports.
- Courteous and professional representation of the Observatory to the membership, the media, Observatory guests, and other organizations.
- Proper completion of daily and assigned tasks in a timely fashion.
- Proper oversight of weather data archives.
- Continued upkeep and care of the summit facility, including work space, instrumentation, and living space.
- Cooperation with other Observatory departments and staff.
- Willingness to act as part of a team with both other summit staff and other Observatory employees.
- Adherence to budget guidelines.

#### *About Mount Washington Observatory*

MWO is a private, non-profit scientific and educational institution organized under the laws of the state of New Hampshire. Its mission is to advance understanding of the natural systems that create the Earth's weather and climate, by maintaining its mountaintop weather station, conducting research and educational programs, and interpreting the heritage of the Mount Washington region.