



Program Coordinator & Lead Field Instructor / Naturalist

Location: Anacortes, WA

Reports to: Executive Director (with collaboration across program staff)

Classification: Full-time, Year-Round, Hourly, Non-Exempt

Compensation: \$53,000 to \$62,000 per year (hourly, non-exempt), depending on experience, with health insurance, PTO, holiday pay, and professional development opportunities

Schedule: 38–40 hours per week average, with seasonal variations

Start Date: March 1, 2026

Position Summary

The Program Coordinator & Lead Field Instructor / Naturalist is a hybrid leadership role responsible for both the operational coordination of Salish Sea School programs and hands-on leadership in the field and on the water. This role ensures that programs are consistently well-organized, well-staffed, safe, and beautifully delivered.

This is a core leadership position within the organization and plays a central role in the day-to-day success and long-term reliability and growth of Salish Sea School programs. It is ideal for someone who loves both logistics and leading unforgettable educational experiences outdoors with a team that feels like family.

Core Responsibility Areas

This role integrates three closely connected functions:

- Program Coordination & Operations
- Field Instruction & Team Leadership
- Natural History Interpretation & Lead Naturalist Duties on Vessels

These responsibilities are shared across the team and balanced seasonally; the emphasis of the role shifts throughout the year. This position holds significant responsibility and autonomy and is trusted to manage complex logistics, people, and programs with sound judgment and professionalism.



A. Program Coordination & Operations

Scheduling, Logistics, and Program Operations

- Manage draft and finalized program schedules across all programs (field trips, camps, ecotours, family programs, adult programs, after-school programs).
- Coordinate staff and vessel schedules and enter finalized programs into program systems and shared calendars.
- Adjust schedules as needed based on weather, vessel operations, staffing changes, or partner needs.
- Ensure programs are fully and appropriately staffed and workloads are balanced.

Partner Coordination

- Draft, track, and maintain Letters of Agreement (LOAs), Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs), invoices, and scheduling confirmations.
- Serve as the primary operational contact for schools, youth organizations, tribes, and community partners.
- Maintain clear communication regarding expectations, logistics, transportation, and waivers.

Staff Coordination, Hours Management & Risk Systems

- Assign instructors and naturalists based on availability, skill sets, and program needs.
- Monitor staff hours to prevent overbooking and ensure alignment with budget and internal guidelines.
- Communicate schedule changes promptly and support staff in managing workloads.
- Share responsibility with the Education Coordinator for implementing and maintaining The Salish Sea School (TSSS) risk management practices.
- Support incident documentation, debriefs, and follow-up as needed.

Operational Support & Administration

- Maintain accurate scheduling documentation, partner records, and staffing rosters.
- Collaborate with the Education Coordinator to align curriculum needs with operational plans.
- Participate in program debriefs and help implement improvements.
- Support Discovery Center POS operations online and in person as needed.



B. Field Instruction & Instructional Leadership

- Lead and co-lead programs for K–adult participants across field trips, camps, family programs, adult programs, and community events.
- Deliver inquiry-based, experiential, and age-appropriate instruction grounded in Salish Sea ecology, conservation, and stewardship.
- Serve as a Lead Field Instructor, modeling excellent teaching, group management, safety practices, and risk awareness.
- Coordinate and support assistant instructors, interns, and volunteers.
- Provide real-time guidance, coaching, and mentorship to support instructional quality and consistency.
- Co-lead staff trainings and onboarding with the Education Coordinator, focusing on operational readiness, safety, and consistent program delivery.
- Help identify training needs related to field operations, logistics, and risk awareness.
- Plan and prepare field lessons and activities.
- Assist with gear preparation, equipment use, and site readiness.
- Maintain situational awareness in dynamic outdoor and on-the-water environments.
- Ensure wildlife-viewing ethics and respectful distances are upheld.
- Identify and communicate hazards or incidents promptly in accordance with protocols.

C. Naturalist Responsibilities

- Teach marine ecology, seabirds, marine mammals, island ecosystems, and conservation concepts.
- Deliver curriculum with accuracy, enthusiasm, and consistency.
- Adapt teaching approaches to diverse ages, backgrounds, and learning styles.
- Model inclusive, culturally responsive education practices.
- Support other instructors and help coordinate roles, pacing, and transitions.
- Ensure naming consistency, teaching accuracy, and strong interpretive quality.
- Communicate program needs or concerns to the Education Coordinator.



General Responsibilities

- Attend staff meetings, training, and planning sessions (some may be conducted virtually).
- Support program documentation, attendance tracking, and reporting.
- Share observations, concerns, and successes with leadership.
- Occasionally represent TSSS at community outreach, service projects, or fundraising events.
- Uphold and embody the mission, values, and stewardship focus of The Salish Sea School.

Qualifications

Required

- At least two years of professional experience in environmental education, natural history interpretation, marine science, birding, or wildlife education.
- Strong teaching, facilitation, and group leadership skills.
- Strong organizational, scheduling, and communication skills.
- Strong attention to detail.
- Ability to lead in dynamic outdoor and on-the-water environments.
- Comfort balancing logistics/administration with hands-on field leadership.
- CPR/First Aid certification (or willingness to obtain upon hire).

Preferred

- Prior experience as a lead instructor, senior naturalist, or supervisory field staff.
- Experience working with K–12 students and/or mixed-age groups.
- Experience coordinating schedules, programs, or staff assignments.
- Familiarity with marine or coastal ecosystems of the Salish Sea or Pacific Northwest.
- Resides within approximately 30 miles of Anacortes, WA (or willing to relocate prior to start date).



Work Location and Schedule

This position follows a seasonal rhythm that reflects the nature of Salish Sea School's programs.

From approximately April through August (field season), the role becomes primarily field-based and in-person in Anacortes, supporting and leading field trips, summer camps, and on-the-water and island programs. During this time, the schedule is more dynamic and includes regular days in the field, on vessels, and at program sites.

From approximately September through March (off-season), much of the work focuses on planning, scheduling, coordination, and preparation. During this offseason period, many meetings and planning tasks may be completed remotely from home or at the Salish Sea School Discovery Center (at Skyline Marina), with in-person time used for training, meetings, and program preparation as needed.

While the exact balance of remote, office, and field work varies throughout the year, this role is primarily an in-person, hands-on position with seasonal flexibility built into the schedule.



Organizational Culture and Values:

The Salish Sea School is committed to fostering an inclusive, collaborative, and mission-driven work environment where team members are trusted with real responsibility and supported to do their best work. We are seeking a candidate who is passionate about marine conservation, environmental education, and meaningful community impact—and who is excited to play a central leadership role in a growing organization.

Our ideal candidate is a thoughtful, proactive leader: someone who is organized, adaptable, calm under pressure, and energized by both building systems and being in the field with students and staff. This person is motivated by purpose, takes ownership of their work, and is excited to help guide a mission-driven team that creates powerful experiences connecting people to the Salish Sea and inspiring lifelong stewardship.

We actively encourage applications from individuals with diverse backgrounds, including BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and those with lived experience in the communities we serve. The Salish Sea School is an equal opportunity employer committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

How to Apply

Please submit a resume and cover letter, to info@thesalishseaschool.org by February 1, 2026. In your cover letter, tell us why you're passionate about the Salish Sea and how your experience aligns with this leadership role.

Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis until the position is filled.

Target start date: March 1, 2026.

We look forward to hearing from you!