

Coastal Carolina Riverwatch

White Oak Waterkeeper

Full-Time | Exempt | Based in Carteret County, North Carolina

Reports To

Executive Director

Compensation

Salary is \$35,000-\$50,000 based on experience and qualifications. The position includes flexible scheduling, paid leave, and other benefits.

Position Summary

Coastal Carolina Riverwatch seeks a mission-driven, strategic, and community-centered White Oak Waterkeeper to protect the quality of water and quality of life in coastal North Carolina. This role serves as a lead research position focused on identifying, documenting, communicating, and helping address threats to waterways, fisheries, public health, and coastal communities across the White Oak River Basin and nearby coastal waters.

The White Oak Waterkeeper combines field investigations, water quality monitoring, scientific coordination, public engagement, and policy advocacy with practical program development and grant support. The position requires someone who can move comfortably between fieldwork, community meetings, data review, partner coordination, public communication, and strategic issue response.

About Coastal Carolina Riverwatch

Coastal Carolina Riverwatch is a nonprofit organization working to protect the quality of water and quality of life in coastal North Carolina. The organization advances clean water through science-informed action, water quality monitoring, public education, community engagement, advocacy, partnerships, and practical solutions that support healthy fisheries, resilient communities, and strong coastal ecosystems.

Essential Responsibilities

- Lead routine and targeted fieldwork related to water quality conditions, pollution concerns, harmful algal blooms, fish kills, stormwater impacts, wastewater concerns, and other watershed issues.
- Collect water samples, field measurements, and environmental observations using established protocols; maintain clear chain-of-custody, quality control, and documentation practices as needed.
- Coordinate and support scientific monitoring efforts, including data management, trend tracking, basic analysis, mapping support, and communication of findings for public education, partner coordination, grant reporting, and strategic response.
- Work effectively with laboratories, researchers, and technical partners to support sample processing, research coordination, interpretation of findings, and project implementation.

- Identify, document, and escalate pollution incidents and recurring environmental problems by gathering field notes, photographs, maps, community reports, and other supporting materials needed for agency referrals, partner action, or enforcement support.
- Participate in occasional boat-based fieldwork and patrols; boating is helpful but not a primary function of the position.
- Build and maintain trusted relationships with fishermen, residents, researchers, local governments, utilities, regulatory staff, and partner organizations.
- Represent Coastal Carolina Riverwatch in public meetings, coalitions, working groups, advisory settings, and issue-based advocacy efforts related to water quality, fisheries, stormwater, wastewater, habitat protection, and coastal resilience.
- Help develop, refine, and advance public comments, testimony, briefings, outreach materials, and issue-based communications that support stronger protections for coastal waters and communities.
- Translate technical findings into plain, accessible language for the public through presentations, trainings, tours, tabling, community meetings, newsletters, reports, and digital communications.
- Supervise and support interns, volunteers, and temporary program support personnel as assigned, including task coordination, training, mentorship, and quality control for field and outreach work.
- Contribute to program development, work planning, grant proposal support, grant-funded project implementation, activity tracking, and reporting.
- Support fundraising and donor-facing activities by providing field stories, photos, impact examples, project updates, and selected participation in donor cultivation or community fundraising events.
- Maintain organized records of field activities, contacts, incidents, follow-up actions, equipment, and program deliverables, and represent the organization professionally in all settings.

Required Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree in environmental science, biology, marine science, natural resources, geography, public policy, environmental studies, or a related field, or equivalent relevant professional experience.
- At least three years of relevant professional experience in water quality work, watershed protection, environmental investigations, fisheries, community-based environmental work, research coordination, or a related field.
- Demonstrated experience with water quality issues and monitoring, including field sampling, documentation, and handling technical information accurately.
- Strong written and verbal communication skills, including the ability to communicate complex issues clearly to community members, decision-makers, and partner organizations.
- Experience supervising, coordinating, or mentoring interns, volunteers, staff assistants, or project teams.
- Ability to work independently, manage multiple priorities, exercise sound judgment, and follow through on assignments in a small-team environment.
- Ability to build trust and work diplomatically with people from varied backgrounds and sectors, including community members, fishermen, researchers, government staff, and industry stakeholders.
- Valid driver's license and reliable transportation.

- Ability to work outdoors in variable weather and environmental conditions and occasionally during evenings or weekends.

Preferred Qualifications

- Master's degree in environmental science, biology, marine science, natural resources, geography, public policy, public administration, environmental studies, or a related field, or equivalent relevant professional experience.
- Knowledge of coastal North Carolina waterways, fisheries, shellfish waters, stormwater issues, wastewater issues, and watershed conditions.
- Experience working with laboratories, environmental data, research teams, or applied field-based science projects.
- Experience with GIS, mapping, GPS-based documentation, or spatial analysis related to water quality or watershed work.
- Experience using drones or supporting drone-based documentation, environmental observation, or visual communications; FAA Part 107 certification is helpful but not required.
- Experience preparing or supporting grant proposals, grant deliverables, and funder reports.
- Experience with public speaking, community organizing, coalition work, volunteer coordination, or environmental justice-centered engagement.
- Boating experience or willingness to complete boating safety training if needed.

Work Environment and Physical Requirements

- This position includes a mix of fieldwork, office work, remote coordination, and community-based meetings.
- Regular fieldwork may involve heat, humidity, mud, insects, uneven terrain, and work near or on the water.
- The role requires lifting and carrying sampling supplies, outreach materials, and basic field equipment.
- The schedule may shift based on field conditions, emerging environmental issues, public meetings, events, and organizational priorities.

To Apply

Please submit a resume, cover letter, and examples of previous work to waterkeeper@coastalcarolinariverwatch.org.

Equal Opportunity Statement

Coastal Carolina Riverwatch is committed to building a strong, effective, and inclusive workplace. We encourage candidates from varied backgrounds and experiences to apply.