

**DEFENDERS OF WILDLIFE  
POSITION DESCRIPTION**

JOB TITLE: Senior Vice President, Conservation Programs	CLASSIFICATION: Executive 2 SALARY: \$228,000 - \$252,000 FLSA: Exempt
DEPARTMENT: Conservation Programs LOCATION: Headquarters, Washington, DC REPORTS TO: President & CEO NUMBER OF DIRECT AND INDIRECT REPORT(S): 7 direct; 80+ indirect	
LAST REVISED: January 2023	

**POSITION SUMMARY**

The Senior Vice President (SVP) is responsible for supervising and directing the operation and implementation of Defenders of Wildlife’s conservation programs. Program responsibilities focus on developing innovative management, science, legal and policy strategies to accomplish Defenders’ mission priorities. The SVP provides overall direction, supervision and coordination of program design, materials preparation, publications, policy analysis, public representation, grant writing, personnel management, and program budget management. The SVP works closely with the President & CEO, Chief of Staff, Senior Vice President for External Affairs, Senior Vice President for Operations, other senior managers in developing and coordinating strategies, national campaigns, organizational growth opportunities and budgets, as well as ensuring the operational needs of conservation programs are met. The SVP directly supervises the vice presidents who lead Defenders’ conservation departments, a senior international counsel who leads Defenders’ international conservation program and a program director.

**ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Develop effective program strategies and oversee the formulation of program strategic plans, budgets, timelines, and activities designed to maximize the impact of Defenders’ program work and to achieve Defenders’ conservation program goals as set forth in Defenders’ strategic plan. Help provide visible, dynamic leadership of Defenders' conservation program, allocating staff and other resources to campaigns to accomplish the organization's program goals.
- Supervise the conservation leadership and oversee the conservation program work of those departments. Ensure appropriate collaboration and coordination among Defenders’ conservation departments and with other relevant departments supporting mission priorities.
- Supervise the Senior International Counsel and oversee Defenders’ international program, including the work performed by Defenders’ contractor in Mexico.
- As a member of Defenders’ Business Council, work with other senior leaders of the organization to develop organizational policies and processes as requested by the president & CEO, including helping to shape the mission priorities, strategy, tactics, and culture of Defenders and coordinating work plans across conservation departments.
- Maintain effective working relationships with key government agency officials,

- members of Congress, and congressional staffs.
- Testify at legislative and administrative hearings, cultivate relationships, and represent Defenders' policy and program positions with reporters and other members of the media, and address professional and lay audiences, as well as Defenders' members and supporters as appropriate, to explain, advocate and publicize Defenders' priority goals and programs.
  - Assist with the preparation of foundation grant and major donor proposals; initiate ideas for proposals; maintain relationships with key funders as appropriate; keep the President & CEO, Senior Vice President for External Affairs, and development, marketing and communications program staff aware and current on significant emerging conservation issues of importance to Defenders; and provide feedback to the Senior Vice President for External Affairs, VP for Development, and VP for Marketing on draft marketing and/or fundraising materials as requested.
  - Ensure proper management of conservation program staff, including ensuring the conduct of annual performance reviews and the provision of appropriate training opportunities. Recommend, review, and approve employment actions, including interviewing, hiring, promotions and raises, in conjunction with Human Resources. Partner with Human Resources in the handling of disciplinary issues.
  - With input from senior program staff, prepare periodic activity reports for the President & CEO and brief the board of directors on conservation program issues and activities at the request of the President & CEO.
  - Ensure development of appropriate proposed budgets for conservation program departments and make recommendations to the President & CEO regarding conservation program department budgets and allocation of resources to best meet Defenders' conservation mission.
  - Ensure communication of duties and responsibilities to direct reports and monitor performance. Provide regular coaching, mentoring, and counseling. Identify training needs. Prepare and deliver salary and performance reviews; review and approve performance and salary appraisals as necessary.
  - Perform all other related duties as assigned.

## QUALIFICATIONS

**Education:** Advanced degree in relevant discipline (conservation policy, science, or law)

**Experience:** 20 years of relevant experience; 15 years supervisory, 7 years managing 2+ layers

An equivalent combination of education and experience may be accepted as a satisfactory substitute for the specific education and experience listed above.

### **Knowledge, Skills, Abilities for All Defenders**

<https://defenders.org/knowledge-skills-and-abilities>

### **Knowledge, Skills, Abilities for Executive 2**

#### Administrative

1. Ability to accurately maintain electronic and physical records

2. Anticipate and meet the needs of internal and/or external stakeholders delivering excellent service

#### Communication

1. Ability to clearly and accurately communicate with internal and external stakeholders
2. Ability to articulate complex ideas clearly, accurately and concisely
3. Ability to convey effective messages to broad and diverse constituencies
4. Ability and willingness to effectively represent Defenders' interests in external environments
5. Ability to exert influence and build consensus with internal and external stakeholders

#### Critical Thinking

1. Ability to handle sensitive and confidential matters with discretion
2. Strong research and data analysis skills, including ability to gather and synthesize information from multiple sources to produce high quality work products in a consistent, efficient, accurate, and timely manner
3. Creative problem-solving and troubleshooting skills with willingness to experiment and innovate new methods.
4. Facilitate and promote the integration of diversity, equity and inclusion strategies into Defenders' work
5. Ability to independently exercise appropriate judgment in response to complex and/or fluid environments
6. Strategic thinker with the ability to create high-level strategy, identify organizational-level impact, and translate strategy into relatable points and action steps.

#### Project Management

1. Ability to work well under pressure and tight deadlines while balancing competing assignments
2. Ability to remain flexible and adaptable to shifting priorities while remaining responsive to urgent requests
3. Ability to take ownership of a project or process and to use problem solving skills to resolve issues
4. Ability to manage deadlines on multiple cross-functional projects in a dynamic environment
5. Demonstrated ability in managing competing interests on complex issues
6. Ability to independently initiate project and initiative ideas; managing projects and initiatives through to completion
7. Ability to create and implement programs, initiatives, and/or systems which will result in organizational-wide impact; assess specific needs; design oversee implementation; establish benchmarks and track key performance indicators; provide recommendations for improvements; advocate and champion the program internally.

#### Coalition and Community Engagement

1. Strong interpersonal skills and ability to form effective working relationships with diverse constituencies including federal/state agencies; elected officials and their staff; Defenders' members and donors; private landowners; hunters and anglers;

- community leaders; religious, scientific, and academic communities; and/or the general public.
2. Ability to lead diverse stakeholders in collaborative activities, to anticipate issues impacting Defenders' mission and make recommendations within Defenders, other organizations, and coalitions.
  3. Networking skills to engage with leaders in the conservation community, federal and state agencies, NGOs, and other organizations.

#### Conservation Knowledge

1. Familiarity with Defenders' legal, scientific, and/or political issues
2. Familiarity with national and regional social, political and ecological landscapes

#### Leadership and Management

1. Ability to foster a team and organizational culture which models the tenets of the Commitment Statement
2. Ability to connect employees and their work to Defenders' mission
3. Ability to set and maintain clear expectations, ensuring clarity of roles, accountabilities, and responsibilities
4. Ability to ensure that staff have the skills and support required to perform at the highest level
5. Expert-level knowledge of Defenders' business and people systems and processes
6. Ability to create and maintain a diverse, inclusive, and high-functioning environment
7. Ability to prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion in department and organizational-level decisions
8. Ability to manage employee conflict and resolve escalations in an inclusive and healthy manner
9. Ability to effectively lead and manage change
10. Ability to develop mid-level leaders and staff to their highest capabilities, through delegation, coaching, empowerment, and professional growth opportunities
11. Ability to provide effective feedback in real-time
12. Ability to create and implement team and organization-wide strategies in support of Defenders' Strategic Plan

#### **Knowledge, Skills, Abilities for Senior Vice President, Conservation Programs**

1. Working knowledge of conservation and administrative laws and policies dealing with use and conservation of wildlife and natural resources, particularly the Endangered Species Act, National Environmental Policy Act, National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act, Federal Lands Policy Management Act, National Forest Management Act, and other public lands laws, and of the operation and decision-making processes of federal agencies involved in the management and conservation of wildlife and natural resources.
2. Working knowledge of current principles of conservation biology, wildlife management techniques and practices and strategies for imperiled species and public land conservation.
3. Established network of scientific, fundraising, legal, policy, and political contacts.

**PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES, ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS, PHYSICAL DEMANDS**

<b>Physical Activities</b> <i>Check all that apply</i>	<b>Frequency</b> <i>(N)Never, (O)Occasionally or (C)Constantly</i>
Ascending or descending ladders, stairs, scaffolding, ramps, poles and the like.	O
Moving self in different positions to accomplish tasks in various environments including tight and confined spaces.	N
Remaining in a stationary position, often standing or sitting for prolonged periods.	C
Moving about to accomplish tasks or moving from one worksite to another.	O
Adjusting or moving objects up to 10 pounds in all directions.	N
Communicating with others to exchange information.	C
Repeating motions that may include the wrists, hands and/or fingers.	C
Operating machinery and/or power tools.	N
Operating motor vehicles or heavy equipment.	O
Assessing the accuracy, neatness and thoroughness of the work assigned.	C

<b>Environmental Conditions</b> <i>Check all that apply</i>	<b>Frequency</b> <i>(N)Never, (O)Occasionally or (C)Constantly</i>
Low temperatures.	N
High temperatures.	N
Outdoor elements such as precipitation and wind.	O
Noisy environments.	O
Hazardous conditions.	N
Poor ventilation.	N
Small and/or enclosed spaces.	O
No adverse environmental conditions expected.	C

<b>Physical Demands</b> <i>Check only one</i>	
Sedentary work that primarily involves sitting/standing.	X
Light work that includes moving objects up to 20 pounds.	
Medium work that includes moving objects up to 50 pounds.	
Heavy work that includes moving objects up to 100 pounds or more.	

Visit [www.defenders.org](http://www.defenders.org) to apply.

All employees are required to satisfactorily perform the essential duties and responsibilities of their positions. The essential duties and responsibilities listed above are not intended to be construed as an exhaustive list of all responsibilities, duties and skills required. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions of the job.

Defenders of Wildlife requires employees who engage in in-person work activities, including business travel or onsite work, to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19. An applicant (i) who is disabled or pregnant or who has a qualifying medical condition that contraindicates a COVID-19 vaccination or (ii) who objects to being vaccinated on the basis of a sincerely held religious belief, observance or practice may request an exemption from this vaccination policy. This determination will be made on a case-by-case basis and in accordance with applicable law. Any medical information concerning an applicant's disability will be treated as a confidential medical record in compliance with applicable federal, state and local laws.

Defenders of Wildlife provides equal employment opportunity to all qualified individuals without regard to their race, color, creed, religion, sex national origin, ethnicity, age, physical or mental disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, personal appearance, family/parental status, matriculation, political affiliation, genetic information, or any other legally protected characteristic in all personnel actions.

Please be advised this position is non union-eligible.