Job Announcement: Assistant Director of Regional Engagement

COMPASS seeks motivated candidates for the position of Assistant Director of Regional Engagement. COMPASS empowers scientists to engage in the public discourse about the environment. We are looking to grow our capacity to support scientists to engage in the West, on topics spanning oceans, land, and water.

You can learn more about our mission and the change we seek in the world by visiting our website, our blog, and checking out our theory of change (pdf).

Position description
The Assistant Director of Regional Engagement (hereafter, just ‘Assistant Director’) will support and grow COMPASS’ work to empower scientists to engage in the public discourse about the environment, particularly in the western U.S. This individual will lead and contribute to our work to connect scientists to decision makers to transform, frame, and catalyze the policy dialogue around natural resources throughout the West (across local, state, and regional levels), and make connections between this work and the federal discourse. This individual will also lead and contribute to communication trainings, especially highly customized workshops focused on helping scientists to share their collective insights with society around salient environmental topics. The Assistant Director will ensure that COMPASS is well connected to relevant science and networks of scientists across a diversity of fields (spanning oceans, land, and freshwater) to inform COMPASS’ current and future directions. This position will be an integral member of the COMPASS team, with the opportunity to contribute to a diversity of other activities.

Essential duties
- Lead and contribute to designing opportunities to connect scientists to decision makers to transform, frame, and catalyze the policy discourse around the environment, particularly in the U.S. West
  - Lead, design, and implement a diverse spectrum of activities (briefings, meetings, panels, workshops) to connect scientists and key decision makers
  - Geographic scope for this work will be primarily along the West Coast (oceans) and across western lands (land and water), and may also include western Canada and U.S. federal policy audiences
  - Build and maintain a trusted network of connections, especially at state and regional levels, drawing on your policy networks and experience, as well as COMPASS’, in natural resources, conservation, climate change, and other relevant areas
  - Support activities led by other staff by researching relevant scientific and policy landscapes, potential scientific speakers, and contributing to background materials and leave-behinds
Design and lead communication trainings for scientists
- Includes in-depth, highly customized workshops intended to empower scientists, both as individuals and as a community, to more effectively communicate their collective insights with decision makers, journalists, and others to ultimately transform the public discourse around salient topics
- Also includes delivering a range of other workshops, from basic Message Boxes to multi-day communication and leadership trainings

Sleuth the state of the science about key environmental topics to inform COMPASS’ current and future directions
- Includes understanding the state of knowledge, emerging themes, connections among different ideas and insights, and where there may be unnecessary silos
- Includes interviewing scientific leaders across a diversity of fields, attending relevant conferences, and reviewing relevant the scientific literature
- Spans topics from climate adaptation, to biodiversity conservation, to ecosystem services, to restoration, across ocean, terrestrial, and freshwater ecosystems

Coach scientists as they prepare to connect with journalists, policymakers, or other influencers of the discourse
- Requires understanding the fundamental resources and tools that COMPASS teaches scientists (from the Message Box to the fundamentals of the science of science communication), an understanding of the culture and world of the audience with whom the scientist is preparing to connect, an understanding of the relevant socio-political contexts, and an understanding of the science and its significance

Serve as an integral member of the COMPASS team, including:
- Practicing a culture of consultation which includes a commitment to proactively sharing ideas, leads and connections resulting from their work, and listening to others on the team as they share
- Liaising with other COMPASS staff to ensure our strategies are well-integrated across programs and staff
- Contributing to efforts to capture the information and impact flowing from our events, activities, and networking
- Contributing to program management, including annual planning and strategy development, budget creation and management, grant reporting, and other fundraising or administrative tasks as needed

Other duties and responsibilities

Scout for connections
- Keep an eye on the science, media, and/or policy worlds, flag where people may benefit from meeting others, and identify gaps or mismatches between the science and the state of the public discourse on that topic

Share your experiences and insights with scientists and others in COMPASS’ network
- Write for the COMPASS blog and other publications, speak on panels, give talks, and contribute to COMPASS’ overall social media presence
Contribute new directions and new innovations to COMPASS’ work
Over time, we anticipate that this person will supervise one or more staff

Qualifications
The candidate must have:

- An advanced degree in fields relevant to our work (e.g., ecology, economics, environmental science, social sciences, natural resource management or policy) and 3-5 years of relevant experience
- Ability to understand science, the culture of science, the culture of policymaking, and have a working understanding of the world of the media
- Ability to communicate science, and its implications for policy, to non-scientific audiences
- Ability to support, champion, and share COMPASS’ mission
- Excellent written and verbal skills
- Ability to professionally network and effectively maintain working relationships
- Attention to detail and ability to track multiple efforts simultaneously
- Willingness and ability to accommodate rapidly changing deadlines and unplanned periods of high-intensity work
- Ability to work collaboratively (most frequently) as well as independently

In addition, the candidate will preferably have:

- Knowledge of current scientific content and a sound foundation in environmental sciences, leading players, and institutions, including ability to learn and evaluate emerging science
- A work style that combines tenacity, creativity, and troubleshooting
- Ability to manage a project from creation to completion and stay within determined budgets
- A positive, upbeat personality with patience, enthusiasm, an ability to be direct, receive constructive feedback, and an ability to proactively communicate expectations to other teammates
- Group facilitation skills
- Fundraising experience

Principles that guide COMPASS’ work

- We focus on people. We support scientists to share and discuss their knowledge, and we forge relationships between scientists and other audiences (especially journalists and policymakers) to help scientists connect with the most relevant audiences at relevant times.
- What kind of communicator a scientist chooses to be—whether it’s simply sharing data or passionately advocating for change—is a deeply personal decision. We help scientists evaluate their options and equip them with the tools they need to engage in the manner that works for them and that embraces the dynamic and fast-paced world beyond the scientific enterprise.
- COMPASS does not advocate for policy solutions related to the environment or natural resources. However, we do advocate for the use of science in decision-making and for scientists to have a seat at the table where those policies are formulated. We create
opportunities for scientists to engage in a way that is relevant to the policy discourse, without advocating for a particular agenda. We believe this is a critical niche, one of the trickiest to navigate, and one that tends to be under-occupied by scientists.

The science of science communication provides powerful insights for effective engagement. We strive to bring this academic knowledge to our work as science communication practitioners.

Compensation and location
COMPASS offers a competitive benefits package and salary commensurate with position and experience. COMPASS staff are distributed across the country, with main offices in Portland, OR and Washington, D.C. Ideally, this position will be based in either Oregon (Portland) or California (Sacramento or the San Francisco Bay Area). Specific details on location will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Equal Opportunity Employer
COMPASS is an equal opportunity employer. We strongly encourage and seek applications from women, people of color, including bilingual and bicultural individuals, as well as members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender communities. Applicants shall not be discriminated against because of race, religion, sex, national origin, ethnicity, age, disability, political affiliation, sexual orientation, gender identity, color, marital status, or medical condition. Reasonable accommodation will be made so that qualified disabled applicants may participate in the application process. Please advise in writing of special needs at the time of application.

How to Apply
Interested candidates should submit a single pdf (titled LastName_FirstName) to jobs@COMPASSscicomm.org that includes:

- A cover letter describing why you want to work for COMPASS, how your skills and experiences will help advance COMPASS’ mission, and why you are well-suited to this position in particular
- A resume or CV
- Contact information for three professional references. COMPASS will not contact your references without your permission

The deadline for receipt of application materials is March 24, 2017.

Although we would like someone to start as soon as possible, the start date for this position is flexible based on candidate availability. No phone calls, please.

We look forward to hearing from you!