



**Vice President of Operations  
Buzzards Bay Coalition  
New Bedford, MA**

## **THE SEARCH**

The Buzzards Bay Coalition (The Coalition), a nonprofit organization headquartered in New Bedford, MA, dedicated to protecting and preserving Buzzards Bay, the Vineyard sound, and their watershed lands, seeks an experienced, accomplished, and mission-driven professional as their first Vice President of Operations (VPO). The VPO reports to the President, works closely with the Board and senior leadership team, and has five direct reports. They will be responsible for leading all operations functions for the Coalition: financial and investment management; human resources; government contract management; the maintenance and care of facilities across the region; marine operations; and overall office management.

The new VPO will join the Coalition at a moment of great possibility as the organization emerges from years of rapid growth and impressive success. In the last five years, the Coalition raised over \$53M in a capital campaign, enabling the organization to expand programmatic offerings and facilities. The VPO will be responsible for bringing the financial, operational, human resources, and management capacities of the Coalition into alignment with the organization's increased scale and complexity, representing an incredible opportunity to make a deep and lasting impact on the organization.

The successful candidate will possess a deep appreciation for the Coalition's mission. They will be a strategic and operational leader with proven experience related to financial management, operations, human resources, facilities, and compliance. They will work closely with the President, the Board, and senior management team to develop and implement processes that increase efficiency and effectiveness, support programmatic endeavors, and align infrastructure and operational capacities with the Coalition's strategic goals and ambitions. A familiarity with nonprofit management and finance, in addition to experience working with an engaged Board and volunteer base will be valuable. As the leader of all operations functions for the Coalition, the VPO will be an accessible and supportive manager, modeling a culture of creativity, flexibility, and shared accountability, motivating staff to provide a high level of service for departments across the organization.

The Buzzards Bay Coalition has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in conducting this important search and to help identify outstanding candidates. All inquiries, applications, and nominations for this opportunity should be directed to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

## **BUZZARDS BAY COALITION**

The Buzzards Bay Coalition (The Coalition) is a nonprofit, membership organization dedicated to the restoration, protection, and sustainable use and enjoyment of Buzzards Bay, Vineyard Sound, and their watershed lands. The Coalition works to improve the health of the coastal ecosystem for all through education, conservation, research, and advocacy. With operations throughout the entire Buzzards Bay and Vineyard Sound watersheds, the Coalition protects the region's coastal, river, and drinking water quality and the upland forests, wetlands, and streams that support a healthy watershed/bay ecosystem.

The Coalition has an annual operating budget of \$4.8 million and is currently staffed by a team of 23 conservation professionals, aided by hundreds of volunteers, and supported by more than 10,000 members. The dedicated staff is broken into six teams: Bay Science, Clean Water Advocacy, Watershed Protection, Outdoor Exploration, Advancement, and Operations (Administration & Finance). In addition to President and Buzzards Baykeeper Mark Rasmussen's leadership, the Coalition is further guided by a volunteer Board of Directors, as well as a Leadership Council of community members who provide expertise, contacts, and resources to advance the mission.

### **Recent Growth and Accomplishments**

In recent years, the Coalition has dramatically expanded its impact. Following strategies outlined in the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan, the Coalition has focused on expanding land conservation efforts, increasing the resilience of the Buzzards Bay ecosystem, better engaging and educating the public, advocating for aggressive pollution clean-up efforts, and ensuring the Coalition has the financial stability and facilities needed to support continued growth. Just over five years after articulating these goals in their strategic plan, the Coalition has made incredible progress with highlights including:

- Executing a Capital Campaign that exceeded the original goal of \$40M to raise \$53M.
- Growing the endowment to almost \$12M, including \$6M towards vital Bay Science activities.
- Saving 2,700 acres, including iconic Bay landscapes like Cuttyhunk Island, Allens Pond in Dartmouth, and large swaths of forest and cranberry bog restoration sites.
- Raising \$7M to create the Onset Bay Center, offering high-quality on-the-water programs such as sailing, paddling, rowing, shell fishing, and shoreline ecology for primarily underserved youth.
- Building modern facilities including the Marion Science & Field Operations Center and the new Wheeler Forest Reserve, as well as making improvements to the New Bedford Headquarters.

The Coalition's growth, ambitions, and successful initiatives have led to national recognition, most recently the 2021 National Coastal Stewardship Award from the Coastal Estuarine Research Federation.

### **Issue Areas**

The Coalition is actively engaged in restoring, protecting, and conserving the environment on the Bay and on the land. Current issues are described below.

### *On the Bay*

- **Nitrogen Pollution:** Nitrogen pollution is the greatest long-term threat to the health of Buzzards Bay. The Coalition leads aggressive efforts to fight for clean water by reducing nitrogen sources and preventing the creation of new sources by working with state and federal government to enforce pollution laws and deliver funding to local communities to clean up nitrogen.
- **Oil Spills:** After a major oil spill in 2003, the Coalition developed new laws that make the Bay safer from oil today than it was 10 years ago. However, the Coalition continues to advocate for the strongest possible protections as oil spills remain a constant threat
- **Toxic Pollution:** Although toxic contamination has seen a significant reduction in the past several decades, it remains a problem in parts of the Bay, specifically around the urban center of New Bedford. Through strong and dedicated advocacy, the Coalition works to make toxic pollution a relic of the past.
- **Bacterial Contamination:** Bacterial contamination was once Buzzard Bay's biggest pollution problem, leading to shellfish bed and beach closures. To address this issue, the Coalition has worked for decades to improve wastewater treatment, correct storm discharges, identify illegal septic system hook-ups, and tie more homes to municipal wastewater treatment plants. As a result, beaches are safer, and more shellfish beds are open.

### *On the Land*

The Buzzards Bay watershed is a 432-square-mile area that drains to the Bay. The coalition works across the watershed to conserve important natural areas and restore damaged streams and wetlands.

- **Land Conservation:** To protect clean water in Buzzards Bay, the Coalition has, in perpetuity, protected more than 9,000 acres of land, representing the largest land conservation program in southeastern Massachusetts. To do so, the Coalition purchases land outright, acquires development rights on private lands, and works with towns and local land trusts to protect forests, farms, and wetlands.
- **Restoring Streams & Wetlands:** The Coalition is restoring damaged streams and wetlands in places like the Acushnet River, the Weweantic River, and the Mattapoisett River to protect clean water and improve the health of the Bay ecosystem.

### **Leadership**

*Mark Rasmussen, President and Buzzards Baykeeper*

Mark grew up on Buzzards Bay and has dedicated his career to making the greatest possible impact on its restoration and protection. President since 1998, Mark's path with the Coalition flows through an oyster farm, Woods Hole science missions, and positions as a staffer at the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management and associate at the Stockholm International Water Institute. He is a graduate of Boston College and Harvard University.

## **New Bedford**

Located approximately 60 miles south of Boston and with a population just over 95,000, New Bedford boasts 18 miles of shoreline and a rich maritime and abolitionist history. In the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, New Bedford was one of the world's most important whaling ports. The whaling industry, along with textile manufacturing, made New Bedford one of world's wealthiest cities per capita in the mid 1800s; however, the waning of these activities led to economic decline in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Today, New Bedford is seeing a renaissance and resurgence as the city leans into its maritime past and history of promoting equality. Sites that explore and celebrate the city's deep connections to the sea abound, in addition to artist studios, performance spaces, and restaurants, not to mention incredible parks and recreational areas, all making New Bedford an exciting place to visit, work, and live.

## **THE ROLE: VICE PRESIDENT OF OPERATION**

Reporting directly to the President, the Vice President of Operations (VPO) will be responsible for leading all operations functions for the Coalition: financial and investment management; human resources; government contract management and compliance; the maintenance, and care of facilities across the region, marine operations; and overall office management. The VPO will manage a strong team of five direct reports including the Finance Director, Bookkeeper, Office Manager for New Bedford Headquarters, Office Manager for Woods Hole, and the Boat Captain and Facilities Tech.

The VPO will be a key leader, driving new processes and systems across the Coalition and further developing the infrastructure needed for a rapidly growing organization. Working closely with the President, Board, and senior management team, the VPO will play a central role in efforts to advance the Coalition as it expands its operation, impact, and influence in the years ahead.

## **Duties and Responsibilities**

### *Finance*

- Manage staff including Finance Manager and Bookkeeper
- Development, forecasting and day-to-day management of Operating Budget
- All Accounts Receivable & Payable, Payroll, and Reporting systems
- Annual Audit process management, tax filings and compliance
- Oversee Insurance Policies
- Engaged with Endowment investment, in partnership with CEO and Board
- Manage all federal, state, and municipal Government Grant processes
- Preparation and presentation of financial information to Finance & Audit Committee and Board, quarterly and as needed.

### *Human Resources*

- Continually assess and manage hiring processes and procedures, including ongoing process of recruitment of talented staff across the organization.
- Review, assess and provide maintenance of highest quality benefits structure for employees
- Supporting and further development of a culture emphasizing professional development of key staff

### *Facilities*

- Assessment and development of Maintenance Plans and budgets for all facilities and equipment and coordination of preventative, corrective, and improvement maintenance.
- Maintaining clear and comprehensive records of all facility maintenance to determine long-term trends and planning for potential capital outlays.
- Composition and upkeep of an approved list of vendors and service providers for all facility and equipment maintenance and repair needs.
- Provide overall management of facilities across the organization, including:
  - *Operations:* New Bedford Headquarters, Science & Field Operations Facility in Marion, Onset Bay Center in Wareham, and the Wheeler Forest Reserve in Woods Hole.
  - *Engagement:* “Front Door” facilities at BBC Reserves (i.e. Hawes Family Learning Center at the Acushnet Sawmill, the Horseneck Life-Saving Station in Westport, and the Wheeler Forest public access in Woods Hole.)
  - *Housing and Leases:* 55 Mill Road in New Bedford and 18 Woodrif in Falmouth (intern housing) and organizational partner leases (i.e. Sippican Lands Trust in Marion, and in New Bedford with The Nature Conservancy).

### *Marine Operations*

- Management of primary research vessel, the R/V Helen K “Baykeeper”, including staffing, maintenance, scheduling.
- Oversight of Cuttyhunk Island Boat Pumpout service including staffing, maintenance, summer operation, and branding/affiliation actions with boaters.
- Launch and maintain Water Quality Data Buoys and other on-the-water equipment in cooperation with Bay Science team.

### *Office Management*

- Office support staffing at both New Bedford Headquarters and Wheeler Forest Reserve in Woods Hole.
- Management of all office operations, IT, audio/visual communication systems, printer contracts, supplies, etc.

## **OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES**

The VPO will join the Buzzards Bay Coalition at an exciting time of growth, success, and possibility with a distinct premium placed on strategic leadership and a capacity to bring about increased operational performance across an organization.

Specifically, the challenges and opportunities for the next VPO include:

### **Advance the Coalition’s Mission and Growth Through Strategic Financial and Operational Leadership**

The VPO will be a strategic partner to the President, Board, and senior management team to advance the Coalition’s mission to preserve and protect Buzzards Bay. The past five years have been a period of enormous success for the Coalition. Due to the successful capital campaign which raised over \$53M for key priorities, the Coalition has been catapulted to new levels of performance, including significant

programmatic and facilities improvement across the organization. This expansion has, subsequently, resulted in the need for an increased level of sophistication on strategic financial, HR, and operations management to respond to increasing complexity and fulfill the Coalition's mission at a broader scale. The VPO will be responsible for bringing about this new level of performance across the organization by providing key leadership in the management and operation of strategic areas. In particular, the VPO will work closely with the President and senior management to develop and implement processes, policies, systems, and structures that standardize and streamline work across teams, increase efficiency and effectiveness throughout the organization, and align infrastructure and operational capacities with the Coalition's ambitions.

### **Support Programs with Financial and Grants Administration**

The Coalition encompasses several programs that carry out the organization's mission to protect and preserve Buzzards Bay including Watershed Protection, Bay Science, Outdoor Exploration, and Clean Water Advocacy. Each year, these programs bring in hundreds of thousands of dollars in grant funding to support their efforts. Currently, each program is responsible for their own grant administration including tracking funds, managing budgets, generating invoices, and reporting. The VPO will formalize and provide management and oversight of these processes, creating more efficient and effective financial systems for grant reporting across the organization, and lessening the administrative burden on program staff so that they can more easily focus on their initiatives. To support this work, it will be important that the VPO have a familiarity with nonprofit finance, particularly grant management and government contracting.

### **Lead, Manage, and Grow a Strong Team**

The VPO will inherit a talented, dedicated staff who possess deep institutional knowledge. They will be expected to mentor and support this team, utilizing the expertise of seasoned members while also helping them grow through professional development opportunities. It will be especially important that the VPO support and build upon the Coalition's strong organizational culture rooted in genuine commitment to the Coalition's mission. They will foster and model an ethos of creativity, flexibility, mutual respect, integrity, and shared accountability to motivate their teams to provide a high level of service to departments across the organization.

The VPFO will have the opportunity to evaluate the team structure and hire additional staff to fill new, needed roles within the department to enhance its capacities and level of service. As the team currently stands, the VPO has five direct reports: the Finance Director, Bookkeeper, Office Manager for New Bedford Headquarters, Office Manager for Woods Hole, and the Boat Captain and Facilities Tech.

### **Work with the Board and Volunteer Base**

The VPO will be responsible for preparing and presenting financial information to the Coalition's Board and sub-committee on Finance & Audit. The VPO will need to foster generative working relationships with board members and possess clear communication and active listen skills, taking the time to present complex financial information to a diverse audience.

The Coalition is also supported by a Leadership Council, hundreds of volunteers, and more than 10,000 members, creating an engaged and dynamic community who are passionate about preserving, protecting,

and enjoying Buzzards Bay. The VPO will be expected to interact with this community, attending events and participating in activities that celebrate and amplify the Coalition's mission and work.

### **Facilities and Operational Management**

The Coalition owns and manages diverse properties, facilities, and marine operations across the Buzzards Bay region and the Vineyard Sound, including the New Bedford Headquarters, environmental science centers, publicly-accessible nature reserves, a research vessel, and water quality testing equipment, among others. The VPO will be responsible for overseeing all of these operations with an emphasis on developing systems, procedures, and plans that ensure facilities and equipment are regularly maintained and properly managed. The VPO will also maintain clear records and think strategically to assess long-term maintenance trends and plan for potential capital outlays.

### **QUALIFICATIONS**

Candidates should possess many if not all of the following qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university is required. Masters degree preferred.
- Management experience of 5-7 years in the fields of finance, administration, and/or human resources is required.
- Background of high-level strategic management combined with a sophisticated leadership approach.
- Strong understanding of strategies and a track record of measurable success in the pursuit of financial management, operations, human resources, facilities, and compliance is important. Demonstrated progressive, successful experience with human resources, accounting, budget planning, contract management, and administration is required.
- Commitment to enhancing a culture focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Experience successfully leading and building a diverse team is desired. Strong candidates will exhibit a highly collaborative and compassionate management style.
- Keen ability to establish and maintain a productive and positive organizational culture with diverse stakeholders including staff, partners, members, boards and commissions, government officials, and others.
- Experience establishing and implementing new processes and systems within an organization and measuring the success of efficiencies in a quantifiable manner.
- Experience working with a highly engaged Board and significant volunteer base is beneficial.

### **APPLICATIONS, NOMINATIONS, AND INQUIRIES**

Confidential inquiries, nominations/referrals, and applications (including resumes and letters of interest responding to the opportunities and challenges outlined above) should be sent electronically to the Isaacson, Miller executive search team via the link below.

Dan Rodas, Partner  
Katy Ryan, Senior Associate  
Isaacson, Miller

<http://www.imsearch.com/8640>

*The Buzzards Bay Coalition is proud to be an Equal Opportunity employer. All qualified persons are encouraged to apply and will be considered without regard to race, national origin, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, disability, age, religion, or veteran status.*