

Title: Executive Director

Hours: Part-time, salaried

Reports to: Board of Directors

Location: Florida (USA) remote

Application Deadline: Open until filled

Florida Defenders of the Environment is Florida's oldest environmental organization, founded in 1970 by Marjorie Harris Carr to fight the construction of the Cross Florida Barge Canal. FDE successfully fought for the deauthorization of this historic boondoggle project in 1970 and continues to this day to remove the high hazard Rodman dam, an artifact of the Canal project that disrupts the migration of depleted fish species and the critically endangered manatee. Over the past five decades, FDE worked to protect the historic Suwannee River challenging phosphate mining, septic tanks and other forms of pollution on the river. FDE has joined other environmental groups in legally challenging the St. Johns Water Management District on minimum flows and levels and egregious water withdrawal permits in the region. As part of its mission to provide high quality environmental education, FDE has produced a series of award-winning PBS films on the Suwannee River (Seven Ways to Kill the Suwannee, 1981) and most recently, the award-winning film, Ocklawaha: Tales My Father Told. FDE hosted twin panels at the 2025 University of Florida College of Law's Public Interest Law Conference. Since its inception in 1970, FDE's newsletter, The Monitor, has served as a statewide ombudsman on a range of environmental issues. This is an important and exciting time for Florida Defenders of the Environment. For over five decades, FDE has built a reputation for its dogged campaign to restore the Ocklawaha River. While entrenched local support has made a legislative win elusive, recent political change and growing public support have brought the restoration issue to a tipping point. Florida Defenders of the Environment seeks an Executive Director with a passion for conservation, education, and the organization's primary objective to restore the Ocklawaha River and the connectivity of the Great Florida Riverway, stretching from the Harris chain of lakes, Silver Springs and the Silver River to where the Ocklawaha flows into the mighty St. Johns River. The ideal candidate has experience working to address complex systemic and societal issues and understands the importance of collaboration in all facets or stages of problem solving. This person must be ready to collaborate with the Board to lead FDE in pursuing strategic goals in conservation and environmental education in Florida.

Key Objectives

- Provide leadership and support for the current primary objective of Ocklawaha River restoration
- Work with the Board of Directors to update and implement a strategic plan
- Develop an outreach plan to increase the impact of FDE's educational outreach and communication and grow membership in number and diversity

Key Responsibilities

- Provide leadership related to goal development, implementation, and assessment
- Create and revise current policies and procedures to ensure the organization runs smoothly
- Coordinate and conduct monthly meetings with the Executive Committee, including providing reports on summary of work and financial updates
- Develop and execute fundraising strategies, including grant application and management
- Promote the organization and its mission at public engagement events
- Organize FDE events and volunteers
- Coordinate FDE's 'Monitor' newsletter
- Manage membership development and communication
- Plan and implement a social media and educational outreach campaign in collaboration with the Executive Committee and social media coordinator
- Maintain and develop relationships with collaborating organizations and stakeholders
- Ensure compliance with all state and federal regulations for 501(c)(3) organizations and other regulatory requirements

The ideal candidate will bring a passion for conservation, experience with collaboration and stakeholder engagement, demonstrate success with fundraising and grant management, and educational outreach. Knowledge of conservation issues in Florida, policy, environmental law, and related fields is a plus. The role does not require living in Gainesville, FDE's traditional headquarters; however, frequent travel to North Central Florida region will be required and the candidate must be able to spend time with the board and our coalition members.

This position is a part-time position and provides a competitive base salary with a performance-based annual bonus.

To apply, send resume and cover letter to careers@fladefenders.org.