Muddy Sneakers seeks an experienced full-time Executive Director (ED) with a passion for youth environmental education and a demonstrated commitment to organizational excellence to guide the organization. More detailed information on Muddy Sneakers can be found at www.muddysneakers.org

The Organization
Muddy Sneakers is an outdoor science education program that serves fifth-grade students attending public schools across the state of North Carolina. Through Muddy Sneakers’ innovative programs, fifth-grade students explore the essential science standards set by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction using hands-on, experiential outdoor learning. Muddy Sneakers currently operates out of two regional field offices: our Western (WNC) regional field office located in Brevard, and our Piedmont (PNC) regional field office located in Salisbury. With a vision for continued regional growth as well as additional field offices, Muddy Sneakers is primed to serve more students in the years ahead across North Carolina while continuing to prioritize organizational sustainability as it enters its 15th year.

Muddy Sneakers has 9 full-time staff and 23 seasonal instructors, with a $1.35M annual budget. Revenue sources include program fees from annual school contracts and community programming with key partners outside the school year, individual donations and foundation grants, as well as nonrecurring appropriations from the NC State Legislature.

Our mission:
To awaken in children a deeply felt connection with the natural world — one that inspires curiosity, stimulates learning, and brings new life to classroom performance.

Our vision:
Muddy Sneakers envisions a world where every child has the opportunity to form a connection to nature and benefit from the wellness it provides. We are committed to becoming a national model for closing the science literacy gap, inviting diversity into the outdoors, and instilling an understanding of one’s role in the greater ecosystem. In doing so, we cultivate healthier generations committed to the stewardship of our natural resources.

Our values:
- **Access**: We believe children of all backgrounds, cultures, and abilities benefit from and have a right to meaningful experiences in the outdoors that foster a connection to nature.
- **Belonging**: We have a responsibility as outdoor educators to introduce nature as an equitable, inclusive, and empowering space for all people.
- **Experiential Learning**: Hands-on instruction, via the outdoor classroom, can deeply impact a child’s formal education. We are committed to small group, place-based learning that reimagines the traditional classroom. We cultivate curiosity, observation, inquiry, and relationships that foster scientifically literate future generations.
- **Conservation**: We know that healthy human and natural communities are interconnected. To create a more sustainable world, youth must have opportunities, at a formative age, to connect with nature and come to understand how we each play a role in preserving the natural world.
Well-being: We promote an inclusive culture of integrity, passion, collaboration, accountability, and individuality that inspires enjoyment and fulfillment for the individuals who serve our mission.

Current Programs and Services
- **School Expedition Programming** - Muddy Sneakers partners with public schools to supplement fifth-grade science instruction through hands-on outdoor learning expeditions, with topics like Aquatic Ecosystems, Forces and Motion, and Weather. The 5th grade NC Essential Standards for Science set by the Department of Public Instruction are deeply integrated into Muddy Sneakers Curriculum. Schools pay 25% of the cost of the partnership, while Muddy Sneakers raises the remaining 75%.
- **Classroom Curriculum and Virtual Expeditions** - In addition to our traditional expedition model, Muddy Sneakers developed the Classroom Curriculum in response to the needs of students learning from home through COVID-19. Our comprehensive Muddy Sneakers Classroom Curriculum can now be used by all partner teachers and students to bring science to life through experiential lessons that are accessible both in the classroom and through remote learning. Teachers also bring Muddy Sneakers into the classroom through dynamic, instructor-led virtual lessons.
- **Community Programming** - To broaden the reach and impact of the work, Muddy Sneakers offers special programming opportunities beyond the 5th grade setting through partnership with mission-aligned community groups, other non-profit organizations, the environmental and science education communities, and additional school partners within the service regions.

The Position
Muddy Sneakers seeks an individual who is well-prepared to provide the inspired external and internal planning-focused leadership required of this role. The ideal new Executive Director will have demonstrated knowledge of and passion for environmental education and youth programs. The position requires proven, significant, and successful organizational leadership experience and the ability to guide finance, fundraising, programs, and overall operations while engaging effectively with staff, Board, and key constituents to guide the organization. The Executive Director must also possess the talent to listen, lead, communicate effectively with, and build strong relationships with multiple constituencies, including the Board, staff, donors, partners, public school systems and government officials, public land partners, and other community leaders.

The new Executive Director will start as early as November 2022. The new ED will succeed the outgoing director, Ryan Olson, who has led Muddy Sneakers over the past ten years through its growth from a small regional organization to one that is state-wide with significant programmatic impact, financial stability, and brand recognition.

**Reporting Relationships**
The Executive Director reports to the Board of Directors. The ED directly works with an administrative team including Regional Directors, Development Director, and Administrative Assistant.
**Location**
The Executive Director ideally will be based in western or central North Carolina. The position requires significant in-person presence in all service regions, blended with options for remote work. Regular travel to and within service regions is expected (average 2-4 times per month), including presence in the field with students.

**Key Responsibilities**
- **Vision, Mission, and Strategy Development** - Working with the Board, staff, clients, and key stakeholders, the ED will shape the implementation of strategic long-term and annual planning to guide Muddy Sneakers towards success in its vision and mission.
- **External Liaison and Public Image** - As primary spokesperson for Muddy Sneakers, the ED will inspire external partners to collaborate towards achieving its mission. The ED oversees marketing, public relations, and advocacy efforts, acts as liaison with partner organizations, and nurtures and expands the organization’s key external relationships. The ED must cultivate healthy working relationships with multiple diverse constituencies.
- **Programs and Services** - The ED is responsible for the successful operations of all programs, services, and functions of the organization, as well as evaluating their impact.
- **Fundraising and Resource Development** - The ED, in partnership with the Board and Development staff, will drive fundraising initiatives for developing and implementing appropriate and diversified fundraising strategies.
- **Fiscal Management** – The ED will oversee planning and budgeting systems to ensure that income is managed wisely to serve the organization’s goals, and that systems and staff are in place to accurately monitor, assess, and manage the financial health of the organization.
- **Human Resources Management** - The ED maintains strong internal leadership built on teamwork and collaborative decision-making. The ED will emphasize staff leadership development activities that upgrade employee skills, motivate performance, and promote staff retention and morale. The ED will also ensure adherence to the personnel policies in all hiring and employment practices. They will apply best practices in equitable leadership and management: translating equity and inclusion into plans for staff recruitment, development, retention, strategy, and improving culture.

**Key Organizational Priorities for the New Executive Director’s First 12-18 Months**
- **Infrastructure Investment**; Lead a strategic planning process, engaging all key community stakeholders to co-create a collective vision resulting in a 3-5 year strategic plan, including issues of needed infrastructure as well as statewide growth and sustainability. The new ED will ensure the success of Muddy Sneakers, with a focus on solidifying and supporting the current partnerships, and an eye toward future further expansion statewide.
- **Financial Sustainability**; The new Executive Director will continue Muddy Sneakers’ ongoing work to evaluate the financial sustainability of the programming model, taking into consideration funding (individual donations, grants, business sponsorships, program fees, and state funding), programmatic, and growth objectives. The ED will build relationships with elected officials and advocate at the state legislative level and the Department of Public Instruction for funding. The ED will also enhance individual, foundation, and corporate fundraising efforts, as an integral part of the development team.
● **Staff Culture:** Practice an inclusive leadership style to empower, develop, recruit, and retain an expanding staff and instructors, and systematize effective internal communications and workflows.

● **Board Engagement:** In addition to continuing Muddy Sneakers’ efforts to enhance Board effectiveness and governance, the ED will cultivate a healthy Board-staff connection and support the recruitment and diversification of the Board, including racial background, geographic location, and professional experience.

● **Equity and Values Alignment:** The new ED will continue leading Muddy Sneakers’ efforts to operationalize its values and be able to successfully navigate those complexities in today’s environment.

The ideal candidate’s strengths will include many of the following:

- A history of visionary, mission-focused leadership based on strong strategic and collaborative thinking
- Ability to grow mutually beneficial relationships with multiple diverse constituencies: rural communities, key donors, legislators, school boards, public school administration, and education leaders
- A successful record of senior leadership and management experience in the nonprofit and/or public sector, with strong organizational and decision-making processes
- Personal commitment to and/or lived experience in advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion, and the ability to successfully navigate the complexities of centering equity and belonging
- Ability to nurture and navigate relationships in the public sector and with elected officials to engender awareness and support for Muddy Sneakers’ growth, funding, and mission.
- Demonstrated understanding of the systems and issues related to public education in North Carolina
- Demonstrated experience with organizational change, change management, and growing/expanding organizations
- Demonstrated experience with fundraising practices and relationship cultivation within the areas of foundations, corporate, and individual giving
- A high degree of financial literacy and financial management experience
- Ability to work with and develop strong Board leadership
- Exceptional written and verbal communication skills, including interpersonal communication, public speaking skills, and media relations
- Experience managing distributed teams and/or regional offices
- A commitment to fostering a culture of staff trust, empowerment, and individualized staff development through an inclusive and accessible leadership style, characterized by candor, transparency, feedback, and empathy
- Ability to foster a growth-oriented workplace that encourages innovation, reflection, and lifelong learning

*The requirements listed in our job descriptions are guidelines, not hard and fast rules, and if you have 75% of the qualifications listed we encourage you to apply. Your experience refers to paid and unpaid experience, including volunteer work, which helps build the competencies, knowledge, and skills that translate directly to our openings. Applying gives you the opportunity to be considered.*
Compensation
The salary range is $80,000 - 85,000 annually, commensurate with experience. Muddy Sneakers offers a comprehensive benefits package, including health insurance stipend, a 3% match to a 401K plan, and competitive paid time off.

Application Process
To apply, please send your résumé and a letter of interest explaining why you would be a great fit for the role in a single PDF file using the following naming convention: “FirstName LastName APPLICATION.pdf” via email only to the Muddy Sneakers Transition Committee to: search@muddysneakers.org

APPLICATION DEADLINE: Monday, August 1, 2022 at 11:00AM EST

At Muddy Sneakers, we know that a rich diversity of perspectives and wisdom is imperative to our mission and can only come from a wide variety of life experiences. MS is committed to attracting, developing, and retaining exceptional people and to creating a work environment that is dynamic, rewarding, and responsive, enabling each of us to realize our potential. Our team is committed to a growth mindset and recognizes that healthy change requires intention, humility, and lifelong learning. MS’ work environment is safe and open to all employees and partners, respecting and valuing the full spectrum of race, color, religious creed, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, political affiliation, ancestry, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, and all other classifications protected by law in the locality and/or state in which you are working. This job description is not intended to be an exhaustive list of all duties, responsibilities, or qualifications associated with the job.