



## **POSITION DESCRIPTION: Director of Horticulture**

The High Line is a new public open space on a disused, elevated rail structure on the west side of Manhattan. Built between 1929 and 1934 to carry rail freight, the High Line runs from Gansevoort Street to 34th Street. The High Line has been unused for freight transportation since 1980.

Friends of the High Line (FHL) was formed in 1999 by residents in the West Village and Chelsea to preserve the historic High Line structure for reuse as an elevated public open space through the federal rail-banking program. Construction of this unique park, almost 1.5 miles long, spanning 22 blocks from Gansevoort Street to 34th Street, began in April 2006, and the first section is scheduled to open in 2008.

The High Line is owned by the City of New York, under the jurisdiction of the NYC Department of Parks & Recreation (DPR). Friends of the High Line is the City's private, non-profit partner in the design, construction, and ongoing maintenance of the park. Friends of the High Line will collaborate with the Parks Department on all aspects of future management of the park, including horticulture, maintenance, and programming.

### **Job Description**

The Director of Horticulture will be responsible for the maintenance of all plantings on the High Line. The plantings for the High Line have been designed by internationally-renowned planting designer Piet Oudolf, in collaboration with the High Line design team, led by landscape architects Field Operations and architects Diller Scofidio + Renfro. The Director of Horticulture will be expected to take a leadership role in the initial establishment of the plantings during the capital project. The Director of Horticulture will also be responsible for building a Horticulture Department for the High Line, including building the initial horticulture staff and developing protocols for ongoing maintenance and care. The plantings are to be maintained sustainably, in a first-class condition, commensurate with the world-class design of the park itself.

The Director of Horticulture will report to both Friends of the High Line and the Parks Department. The Director of Horticulture will be an employee of Friends of the High Line and will report to the High Line Project Administrator, a Parks Department employee.

### **Primary task include:**

1. **Planting Installation:** Work with planting designer Piet Oudolf to supervise the installation of the plantings during the capital construction project in spring 2008. Work with the construction team – contractor and the City's resident engineer – to ensure that the plantings and irrigation system are installed per the contract documents.
2. **Overall Planning/Management:** Establish the Horticulture Department's goals, priorities, and management strategy in preparation for opening of the park in fall 2008, including hiring of initial horticultural staff. Following opening of the park, to establish the High Line's horticultural goals for subsequent seasons and years; develop and manage an annual budget for the department based on those goals. Participate in senior staff meetings to establish goals and priorities for the organization; coordinate horticultural

operations with other staff and departments; share information with the horticulture staff gained at meetings outside and inside the organization.

3. **Manage Horticulture Operations and Staff:** Coordinate long- and short-range horticultural operations, including management of all horticultural staff and regular personal observations and analyses of the plantings themselves. Serve as a leader for the Horticulture Department, providing a good example for others to follow, and insuring good morale. Supervise, coach and appraise the skill development of staff members. Encourage staff to continue their professional education both formally and informally. Direct the hiring and orientation of new staff members. Provide clear and concise staff evaluations. Terminate staff members who are not performing up to standards.
4. **Horticulture Design:** The Director of Horticulture is responsible for managing the diverse group of plantings, including grasses, perennials, bulbs, woodies, and wetland plantings. The plantings will be a world-class design and a signature aspect of the High Line. The Director of Horticulture must be able to handle all aspects of the plantings thoroughly and manage them using sustainable methods. In collaboration with the planting designer, manage the cultivation of and changes to the planting design, as necessary, over time.
5. **Sustainable Best Practices:** Develop environmentally-friendly and sustainable management practices, consistent with the overall goals of the organization; research best practices in this area, including evaluating the work of other local and national businesses and institutions;
6. **Resource Management:** Ensure that all vehicles, tools, materials, plants, equipment and other resources are procured and available when necessary and used safely, effectively, and efficiently. Ensure that these resources are well-maintained, well-organized, and re-ordered promptly. Implement and oversee inventory control systems. Manage soil testing throughout the park.
7. **Snow/Ice:** Develop plan and processes for snow and ice removal, including the use of plows, snow shovels, "ice breakers", snow blowers, and salt spreaders on an emergency and non-emergency basis during weekdays and weekends.
8. **Contract Management:** Craft requests for proposals, write specifications for contracts and supervise all horticultural contractors working on site. Ensure that the written specifications are fulfilled and work is conducted in a safe manner. Manage outside contracts as necessary. Supervise contracts and ensure that work is completed in a timely manner.
9. **Public Education/ Outreach / Fundraising:** Lead the horticulture staff in public education. Work with the Director of Park Programming to present tours and other educational programs, coordinating local community gardeners, and developing opportunities for volunteer work. Represent Friends of the High Line to the community, private funders, and other outside organizations. Participate in professional organizations as a representative of Friends of the High Line.
10. **Safety:** The Director of Horticulture is responsible for the effective, efficient, and safe operation of the horticulture staff as they maintain the highly specialized plantings on the High Line. The Director of Horticulture is equally responsible for the public's safety as relates to plantings and horticultural maintenance.

11. **Additional Responsibilities:** Perform other duties as required in the scope of the job as designated by the Friends of the High Line's Executive Director or the High Line Project Administrator.

### **Qualifications**

This position requires a minimum of eight to ten years of horticultural experience with a minimum of five years in a hands-on supervisory capacity; must have excellent leadership, communication (both verbal and written in English), interpersonal, organizational, project management, development, technical and analytical skills; must be capable of working additional hours, under pressure and independently as necessary as well as handling a diverse range of responsibilities; must work as a team member of the horticulture department maintaining positive work relations with staff; must be able to operate all tools, vehicles, and equipment required for use by the horticulture department; must be able to interact with all levels of management and staff; must have good computer skills (Microsoft Word/Excel preferred). A valid NYS pesticide applicators license and U.S. driver's license is required. B.A. or B.S. degree in horticulture preferred.

### **To Apply**

Please submit your cover letter, resume, and salary requirements to [jobs@thehighline.org](mailto:jobs@thehighline.org). Only those whose applications are being considered will be contacted.

Friends of the High Line is an equal opportunity employer and considers applicants for all positions without regard to race, color, religion, creed, gender, national origin, age, disability, marital or veteran status, sexual orientation, or any other legally protected status.

December, 2007