

Director- M.S. Swaminathan Biodiversity Park, Wayanad

The MSSRF bio-diversity park is situated within the heart of the Wayanad biodiversity hot spot and covers 42 acres. The Park boasts a unique location that sets it apart from other conservation areas. The Biodiversity Park is currently operated as a dedicated conservation and research center, devoted to the preservation and exploration of the region's extraordinary biodiversity. It currently conserves over 2000 endemic species and attracts 5000 visitors every year who primarily visit the garden and the nurseries. It also attracts several students and researchers for academic and research studies.

Named after the founder and renowned agricultural scientist, Dr. M.S. Swaminathan, the Foundation aims to honor his vision of sustainable development and biodiversity conservation by showcasing this as world-class Bio-diversity Park.

Objectives of the Bio Park:

- Conservation:** The primary objective of the Bio Park is to conserve and propagate endangered plant species found in the Wayanad region using scientifically proven multiplication and propagation techniques and action research via partnerships
- Restoration:** The secondary objective of the Bio Park is to restore RET and Wild crop relatives into communities and via greening projects in the region in partnership with State Biodiversity Boards, Forest Dept. and Panchayats
- Ethno-botanical Showcase:** The park will be a living museum, spotlighting the traditional knowledge of Wayanad's tribal communities regarding the medicinal and economic uses of various plant species.
- Education and Awareness:** Through interactive exhibits and educational programs, the Bio Park will raise awareness among visitors about the significance of preserving ethno-biodiversity and the Nilgiris Biosphere.
- Community Empowerment:** The establishment of the Bio Park will involve active participation from local tribal communities, empowering them economically through eco-tourism and other sustainable practices.
- Global Significance:** By showcasing Wayanad's unique ethno-biodiversity on an international platform, the park will garner global attention and support for conservation efforts in the Nilgiris Biosphere.

Job Purpose

The Director of the M.S. Swaminathan Biodiversity Park will oversee the overall management of the park which includes conservation, research, education and park operations in the 42-acre M.S. Swaminathan Biodiversity Park.

He/she will spearhead business development initiatives and resource mobilization efforts to ensure the sustainable operations of the biodiversity park.

The Director supervises full-time staff- research staff, gardeners, botanical garden aides and naturalists who, with the support of park staff will implement a full suite of biodiversity park conservation and maintenance practices

The Director will coordinate the research of internal and external collaborators and with Science, Education, and Volunteer Services staff to oversee science programs in the Garden's natural areas.

The Director serves as the primary contact for others who wish to use the Park as an educational and recreational resource.

The Director represents the Garden in local, regional, and national collaborations and partnerships related to ecological conservation, restoration, invasive species management, and other topics in the field of applied conservation science.

Additionally, this position supports local community Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility initiatives and helps to build and maintain an inclusive organization culture throughout the institution and promote livelihoods for local communities, especially tribal women and youth

Specific Duties & Responsibilities

Stewardship and Research Duties and Responsibilities:

- Develops and implements a program of education, research, conservation and restoration in the 42-acre M.S. Swaminathan Biodiversity Park
- Develops and implements programs to promote the growth and regeneration of native species and control the spread of invasive species within natural areas of the Biodiversity Park
- Collaborates with scientists and external researchers to understand and document the biodiversity and ecology of the M.S. Swaminathan Biodiversity Park and other natural areas, both within and in this region of the South Western Ghats, and to measure and manage the impacts of invasive species and other anthropogenic disturbances on biodiversity processes

Education and Outreach Duties and Responsibilities:

- Collaborates with Education, Science, and Volunteer Services staff to develop and implement Science and educational programs in the park
- Partners with State, National and Global Botanical Gardens and Parks and other organizations to advance the practice of ecological conservation, restoration and the management of invasive species locally and regionally
- Supports internal and external research projects that use the M.S. Swaminathan Biodiversity Park
- Collaborates with creative agencies and marketing staff to develop and continually improve interpretive signage and other public education materials for the park including social media, website development etc to sustain visitors' traffic to the park
- Designs and has oversight over Children and Adult Education programs, coordinates regular tours of the park, and makes presentations about the Park's conservation initiatives to various audiences
- Represents the M.S. Swaminathan Biodiversity Park in various media.

Administrative and Supervisory Responsibilities:

- Directly supervises naturalists, garden staff and oversees students, interns, and volunteers who work in the M.S. Swaminathan Biodiversity park to ensure the highest standards and protocols of park maintenance
- Manages costs to budgets

- Creates and executes comprehensive fundraising strategies to generate financial support for the biodiversity park. This includes organizing fundraising events, writing grant proposals, and leveraging digital platforms for crowdfunding campaigns. Additionally, the manager should explore innovative funding sources such as corporate sponsorships, philanthropic donations, and eco-tourism initiatives to diversify revenue streams and ensure the long-term financial viability of the park
- Manages contracts including developing scopes of work, executing contracts, and supervising contractors in the field.

Institutional Responsibilities:

- Participates in strategic planning, trustee meetings, fundraising events, and other institutional events and activities
- Weekend and evening work required at times

Qualifications, Skills and experience

- The ideal candidate will have a PhD or a MSc in ecology or related areas with minimum of 5 years of leadership and supervisory experience in natural conservation and /or eco restoration projects
- MSSRF will encourage the individual selected for this position to develop his/her research interests in conservation science and ecological restoration.
- Knowledge of Malayalam and field natural history experience in Kerala / Western Ghats is mandatory
- Demonstrated knowledge of the spontaneous flora of Southern Western Ghats and surrounding area and proficiency in forest mensuration, surveying, ecological sampling, and analysis is a plus
- Excellent communication abilities, including speaking, writing, and presentation skills
- Must be able to work outdoors in all weather conditions
- Proficiency in Word, Excel, PowerPoint and other software used in ecological research and professional communication