

ILLINOIS RIVER WATERSHED PARTNERSHIP

State Program Director – Oklahoma
(full-time, leadership position)

The Illinois River Watershed Partnership (IRWP) is celebrating 20 years of work conserving, protecting, and restoring the Illinois River Watershed in Northwest Arkansas and Eastern Oklahoma. The Board of Directors is composed of six stakeholder groups that work collaboratively to fulfill the organization's mission through consensus-based solutions. IRWP implements a budget of approximately \$1 million annually and manages a 31-acre Watershed Sanctuary in Cave Springs, Arkansas, which serves as an outdoor classroom, headquarters, and event space.

Position Overview:

The State Program Director – Oklahoma will lead IRWP's programs, partnerships, and restoration efforts within the Oklahoma portion of the Illinois River Watershed. This leadership role combines project implementation related to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation America's Ecosystem Restoration Initiative (AERI) in partnership with the Cherokee Nation. The position will expand into additional strategic planning, oversight, and partnership development to strengthen the organization's impact on watershed health and water quality in Northeast Oklahoma. The Director will represent IRWP at the state and regional levels, build strong relationships with partners, agencies, local governments, and landowners, and overseeing planning and implementation of ecological restoration and water quality improvement projects.

Key Responsibilities:

- Lead the planning, coordination, and execution of the AERI planning grant and IRWP's work in Oklahoma in alignment with the Illinois River Watershed Management Plan.
- Develop partnerships, plans and strategies that support habitat and wetlands restoration, public access improvement, and community education and outreach programming.
- Develop landowner agreements in partnership with private and public landowners to protect and restore culturally significant species and habitats.
- Represent IRWP to state agencies, tribal partners, local communities, and other key stakeholders in Oklahoma.
- Manage project budgets, contracts, and reporting requirements for grants and partnerships originating in Oklahoma.
- Supervise and support contractors and consultants working on restoration, recreation, or other initiatives in Oklahoma.
- Coordinate with IRWP leadership and the Arkansas team to ensure consistency in restoration strategies, communications, and reporting across the watershed.
- Provide expert guidance on watershed management, restoration design, and green infrastructure implementation.
- Oversee outreach, education, and community engagement efforts to build public support for conservation and restoration initiatives.

- Coordinate media and press opportunities in Oklahoma in conjunction with Arkansas leadership and per IRWP policies.

Qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree or higher in Environmental Science, Natural Resources, Watershed Management, law or related field (Master's degree preferred).
- Minimum of 5–7 years of progressively responsible experience in natural resource management, watershed restoration, or environmental program leadership.
- Demonstrated success managing complex projects, budgets, and partnerships across multiple jurisdictions or stakeholder groups.
- Strong leadership, communication, and negotiation skills, with a proven ability to build consensus among diverse partners.
- Strong familiarity with Oklahoma's water quality policies, conservation programs, and ecological restoration practices.
- Proficiency with Microsoft Office Suite; GIS or data visualization experience preferred.

Compensation:

Competitive salary commensurate with experience. Comprehensive benefits package includes generous annual leave, health insurance match, retirement contributions, and flexible scheduling.

Location:

Based in Eastern Oklahoma with regular travel within the Illinois River Watershed region and to IRWP headquarters in Cave Springs, Arkansas.

Application:

Interested candidates are invited to submit a resume, brief cover letter, and three professional references to jobs@irwp.org.

Mission Statement:

The mission of IRWP is to improve the integrity of the Illinois River Watershed through public education, community outreach, and implementation of conservation and restoration practices.