



Discovery Southeast

Hands-on Nature Education for Southeast Alaskans

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Mendenhall Glacier Bookstore Manager

Discovery Southeast is hiring a manager to oversee and run the retail bookstore and gift shop at the Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center. This is a broad position with significant responsibility which encompasses all aspects of retail operation, from inventory management and merchandising to hiring and scheduling staff. Secondly, the manager will be involved in community outreach—organizing public events at the visitor center, as well as assisting with Discovery Southeast membership, marketing, and events during the non-tourist season.

Discovery Southeast: Discovery Southeast is a non-profit organization with a mission to deepen our connection with nature through education and exploration. We have provided hands-on nature education in Juneau since 1989. Our outdoor science lessons reach virtually every local 3rd – 5th grade classroom, and our summer and enrichment programs have introduced hundreds of children, families, and teachers to the outdoors.

Position overview: With the bookstore at the Mendenhall Glacier our goal is to raise revenue for our programs, offer educational materials, and build community engagement in the Tongass National Forest. We want the bookstore to be a public face for Discovery Southeast and the Forest Service, both for locals and visitors. The position affords an opportunity to work with local families, artists, and authors and to be engaged in the community. Accordingly, we seek someone who believes in Discovery Southeast's work and has a commitment to community, nature, and education.

With approximately 600,000 visitors a year (primarily May-September), the Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center and surrounding area is the most visited site in Alaska, attracting a broad diversity of U.S and world visitors. The bookstore is in the Visitor Center, adjacent to an observatory, exhibits, and theater. Just outside are viewing areas for the nearby Mendenhall Glacier and wildlife, as well as many trails. There is also a small kiosk bookstore adjacent to the parking lot.

We expect to run a profitable store in a demanding environment. Despite the high number of visitors, the retail space is only several hundred square feet—it is extremely challenging to provide engaging display, handle a tremendous volume and diversity of customers, and maintain inventory in such an environment. Keeping inventory on the shelf is one of the biggest challenges of this space and cannot be underestimated. We seek an applicant who is strong in customer service, management, and inventory logistics.

The position is year-round, however there are seasonal variations. Summer tourist season will be extremely busy, while fall and winter allow a more relaxed schedule. During the non-tourist season, the manager will keep the store open limited hours; handle office tasks such as reporting, inventory, and ordering; promote community programs and artist exhibits; and provide some marketing, outreach, and event support to Discovery Southeast. We hope this balance will attract a strong candidate seeking long-term, stable employment.

The first year will be challenging—and rewarding—as we expect to start operations within 5 months. There is a tremendous amount to do, such as select and start-up a POS system, develop inventory supply and relationships with local authors and artists, and choose and layout floor and wall displays. We anticipate the manager may hire support this spring to help with start-up, including potentially an assistant manager. We are fortunate to have strong community backing, and the manager will have access to professionals throughout the community who can lend expertise and a guiding hand.

Specific responsibilities/experience sought:

- 1) Product procurement.
 - a) Develop relationships with artists, authors, and vendors.
 - b) Oversee product selection with input of Discovery Southeast and Forest Service staff.
 - c) Order inventory in sufficient supply and in advance.
 - d) Negotiate pricing to achieve best possible profit margins.
- 2) Merchandising and Display.
 - a) The manager will be responsible for general merchandising and organization of in-store displays.
 - b) Regularly rotate effective, eye-catching displays in appropriate locations.
 - c) Displays will need to provide clear information about the merchandise and artists/authors.
- 3) Stocking, maintenance, and upkeep.
 - a) Due to a high volume of sales in a small space, the manager needs to be proactive and attentive to make sure inventory available and stocked.
 - b) Ensure retail and staff areas are clean and kept professionally.
 - c) Maintain and restock inventory by regularly transporting items from nearby warehousing space.
- 4) Overseeing staff.
 - a) Hiring and training seasonal summer retail staff. Due to our educational mission, and because visitor center staff are often viewed as a face of the Forest Service, we are committed to knowledgeable customer service.
 - b) Scheduling employees, accounting for various skill sets to achieve the right balance.
 - c) Supervising and evaluating staff.
 - d) Integrating community volunteers into staffing.
- 5) Community outreach and partner cooperation.
 - a) Primarily during the off-season, coordinate and market community events that engage locals—fireside talks, holiday promotions, exhibits of local artists, or author readings.
 - b) Build and maintain a positive working relationship with Forest Service staff at the visitor center. Foster a close relationship with the Visitor Center Assistant Director, and work closely with the entire team of Forest Service staff to ensure that the bookstore is in tune with the goals and operations of the Visitor Center.
 - c) Fall and winter marketing support for Discovery Southeast’s membership renewal campaigns and member outreach.
 - d) Winter administrative support for Discovery Southeast’s annual auction.
- 6) Bookkeeping and accounting.

- a) Although a bookkeeper will oversee the accounting, the manager will be responsible for some bookkeeping and accounting tasks.
 - b) Accurate cash handling, maintaining an adequate supply of change.
 - c) Daily sales reconciliation including: credit card receipts, cash, and checks.
 - d) Creating and making daily bank deposits.
 - e) Running sales reports and making commensurate adjustments to staffing or inventory in order to maintain profitability.
- 7) Physical labor and driving.
- a) This position requires standing for several hours as well as the ability to lift and transport boxes of product such as books, including in difficult-to-maneuver storage spaces.
 - b) The ability to drive a vehicle to transport inventory, and potentially the willingness to use a personal vehicle (with reimbursement).
- 8) Genuine interest and motivation.
- a) Interest in developing sales creatively, such as working with local artists and Forest Service officials to expand offerings, developing online sales, developing mail order sales.
 - b) Desire to engage people in Juneau nature and outdoor education.

Salary & Benefits:

The position is year-round full time, with a starting annual salary in the 40s, depending on experience. Benefits, including paid time off and healthcare, are negotiable, and we may be open to the potential of profit sharing. We anticipate a January start date.

How to Apply

Applications are sought by Dec. 14. Interested candidates should send a resume and cover letter to Shawn Eisele, executivedirector@discoverysoutheast.org. Because this position is quite diverse and involved, please feel welcome to discuss your interests and strengths in the cover letter. You may also email with any questions.