

Chief Veterinary Officer

Executive Leadership Team

Leadership Team/Flexible Work Week

Shape a new veterinary hospital. Lead Accreditation. Maintain your outside practice.

Position Summary

Wildlife Prairie Park is seeking an accomplished veterinarian to serve as Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO). As a member of the Executive Leadership Team, the CVO serves as the Park's senior authority for veterinary medicine, animal health and wellbeing, biosecurity, and clinical operations.

The CVO provides strategic and hands-on leadership for the Park's zoological medicine program and partners with executive and animal care leadership to advance animal wellbeing, conservation, regulatory compliance, and ZAA accreditation readiness.

Through a successful capital campaign, Wildlife Prairie Park has secured funding for a new veterinary facility and is preparing to begin construction. The CVO will play a foundational role in shaping the facility's design, equipment, workflows, staffing, and operational strategy. This is a rare opportunity to build a veterinary program and facility from the ground up while working with a diverse animal collection.

For the right candidate, this position offers something few veterinary leadership roles can; the opportunity to build a veterinary program and facility from inception while maintaining flexibility to pursue other professional interests.

Key Responsibilities

Responsibilities will be phased in as the clinic opens and staffing is established.

- Serve on the Executive Leadership Team and advise the CEO on animal health, wellbeing, veterinary risk, policy, budgets, and long-range planning.
- Maintain final clinical authority for diagnoses, treatment plans, surgery, anesthesia, quarantine, euthanasia, necropsy coordination, and other medical decisions.
- Provide and oversee preventive, diagnostic, therapeutic, surgical, emergency, quarantine, and end-of-life veterinary care.
- Establish veterinary standards for preventive medicine, biosecurity, zoonotic disease prevention, pharmacy and controlled substances, and medical records, including ZIMS.
- Lead development and operation of the new on-site veterinary facility, including design, equipment, supplies and inventory, staffing, workflows, budget, safety, regulatory requirements, and quality assurance.

- Recruit, supervise, mentor, and evaluate veterinary personnel and provide veterinary training and guidance to animal care staff.
- Partner with the animal care leadership team on animal wellbeing, nutrition, reproduction, acquisitions, transfers, population health, and collection planning.
- Provide independent veterinary oversight of animal wellbeing and recommend appropriate medical or husbandry interventions when concerns are identified.
- Lead veterinary components of ZAA accreditation, USDA compliance, emergency preparedness, inspections, permits, and required documentation.
- Develop relationships with veterinary specialists, diagnostic laboratories, universities, professional organizations, and conservation partners.
- Represent Wildlife Prairie Park within the veterinary, zoological, regulatory, conservation, and professional communities.

Qualifications

Required

- DVM, VMD, or equivalent veterinary degree from an accredited institution.
- Current Illinois veterinary license or the ability to obtain one within six months of hire, including required controlled-substance registrations.
- Relevant zoological, wildlife, large-animal, or mixed-species clinical experience.
- Demonstrated leadership experience in personnel supervision, program administration, and budget management.
- Knowledge of preventive medicine, surgery, diagnostics, quarantine, biosecurity, emergency response, USDA requirements, and applicable state and federal regulations.
- Strong judgment, communication, collaboration, and crisis-management skills.
- Valid driver's license.

Preferred

- Five or more years of progressively responsible zoological or comparable veterinary experience, including leadership.
- Board certification by the American College of Zoological Medicine or another relevant specialty.
- Experience developing or managing a veterinary clinic or hospital.
- Experience with ZIMS for Medical or a comparable system.
- Familiarity with ZAA and/or AZA accreditation standards.
- Experience with hoofstock, carnivores, native wildlife, or mixed-species collections.

Schedule and Coverage

- Flexible schedule, less than 40 hours and ability to maintain private practice or other contracts.

- Relief veterinary coverage for planned absences will be arranged in coordination with CEO. The Park currently utilizes three veterinary practices for assistance.
- Occasional evenings, weekends, holidays, and professional travel.
- The CVO may maintain private practice, consulting, teaching, or other professional activities, provided they are approved by the CEO, do not create a conflict of interest, and do not interfere with the CVO's responsibilities, clinic coverage, or emergency response needs.

Compensation and Benefits

Salary: \$75,000 -\$85,000 commensurate with experience. Salary is negotiable for candidates who bring the practice-management experience this role requires.

- Enhanced paid time off for this executive level position
- Paid holiday leave
- Health insurance and SIMPLE IRA with employer match up to 3% if candidate works full time (30 hours or more)
Park paid veterinary license, DEA and controlled-substance registrations and professional memberships.
- VetPark-paid continuing education, such as AAZV conferences or training in an area the veterinarian wants to strengthen that benefits the Park with approval from CEO.
- Employee perks include free park admission for your immediate household, 25% off at the Snack Shack and Gift Shop, 10% off banquet room rentals, 50% off peak season lodging. 2-Night Stay for \$50.00 on select cabins during non-peak season.

Physical and Working Requirements

- Ability to work safely indoors and outdoors around diverse animal species and throughout a large zoological property.
- Ability to perform the physical functions of veterinary practice, with or without reasonable accommodation, including lifting up to 50 pounds.

To Apply

Submit a cover letter and résumé or curriculum vitae to dprock@wildlifeprairie.org.

Wildlife Prairie Park is an equal opportunity employer and considers qualified applicants without regard to legally protected status.