Water Resource Program Specialist, Stormwater Management

Job Description

Water Resource program specialists ensure that **all water protection protocols and standards** are followed in the work area. Involves **ensuring regulatory compliance** designed to **protect and preserve** the environment primarily in regards to stormwater management and surface water quality.

Salary

Entry — $46,000
Middle — $76,500
Top — $130,000

Core Tasks

- Ensures compliance with state stormwater permit and helps coordinate and manage surface water programs.
- Works across departments and with the public to ensure regulatory requirements are met and streams, creeks, and rivers are protected.
- Develops, and applies appropriate mathematical and statistical models as necessary to identify and evaluate environmental problems including site specific surface water computer simulation modeling.

Workplace / Environment

- Work hours
  Approx. 40 hours/week
  (At key milestones overtime work may be required in event of major contamination)
- Environment
  Typical **office setting** with visits to sites to **evaluate environmental health**
- Travel
  Typically **within a permittee's jurisdiction**.

Education / Prerequisites

Education Level

Bachelor's in environmental sciences, or similarly related discipline.

Licensing

N/A

Pre-Job Preparation

2-4 years experience in environmental compliance and/or programming

Experience

Soft Skills

- Communication
- Problem-Solving
- Collaboration

Technical Skills

- Mathematics & Statistics
- Technical Writing
- Environmental Regulation & Legal Knowledge

Career Path: Mike Vermeulen

About Me

Water Resource Program Specialist at the City of Issaquah

Bachelor's of Science in Geological Studies

Changing Interests

"I didn't know what I wanted to do in high school. The first time I took an **environmental science class** where we learned about all sorts, from nuclear power meltdowns to ecology, and **I was fascinated by it.** I didn't think I was going to do anything with it. I thought I was gonna go into nursing, until I realized that I hate needles. One of my friends suggested I take a geoscience class to see if I liked it. **I fell in love with it.** A big part of geoscience is field work, doing research, and I loved it."

A Winding Path

"I had the opportunity to go to **Antarctica to study glaciers and climate change**, which was a **totally life changing** moment. I thought I really wanted to be a research scientist, I really liked the research, but I realized I didn't want to be in research I **want to see results** come from the work that I do, and there's **no guarantee** when you're doing research that will happen. I shifted to find a career where I'd be **creating more immediate change**. When I graduated, I went into environmental education for a little bit at Cuyahoga Valley National Park, working with students and schools. I got to work with people one on one, but it wasn't a forever thing for me. It did reaffirm that I like to **work with people face-to-face**. So I went to graduate school for environmental education, and wound up studying birds. It was a good avenue to learn more about how you can take research and apply it to the communities around you. After that, I started working for the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality on their data team looking **at stormwater permits**. I transitioned out of that into **more permit compliance and environmental program work**, which is what I'm doing now with the City of Issaquah."

A Lifelong Thread

"I have always been **interested in education**.My mom ran a daycare out of our house, my first job was doing after school programming, I was a TA in grad school, I worked at the Environmental Education Center. Now, I do a lot of work around **outreach and education**. A good program I'd like to highlight is the **Adopt-a-Drain program,** citizens can adopt a drain, and take care of it, that helps us like improve our water quality and our streams and lake, it reduces the amount of pollution going out into the environment."

About My Job

"Water is a fundamental right, not just to humans, but all the living creatures."

Pros

- "Something I **love** about my job is just really getting to **understand the natural environment** of the City of Issaquah. I've always really enjoyed environmental work and **getting to take a deep dive** almost every day is really the type of job that I've wanted since I was an undergrad student."
- "Having a **wide variety** of different types of projects that I get to work on. **Everyday looks different** to all my other days."
- "I like getting to work with the **environment and other people**."

Cons

- "I've liked to be **outside a lot** in my research. It was all this like really fun outdoor stuff a lot of the time. And I **don't get as much** of that anymore. I get some, a con is that that's not my main focus."

Fieldwork

- "I have some days in the field. Let's say there's a car accident and oil spills all over the road, or it gets out **into the environment**. We go out, we inspect the scene, see what happened and make sure that **we're cleaning up so the environment** is not being harmed or impacted."
- "Some days might have **unexpected trips** out to the field or helping out with inspections."

Office Work

- "A typical workday, for me, **varies a lot.** I have some days where I'm sending emails the entire day, a lot of my job is **coordinating with folks** in the city and also outside of the city. On a day like that, I get to work, **flexible-hybrid** either out of my home office or in the workplace."

Skills

- "I'd say, I think the most important thing to do in a career is to **be open to trying new projects**. Focus on **personal skills**, building relationships, being a good co-worker, helping your team out. I think that's probably the **most important thing.**"
- "I think it's really important to **understand research**, even if you're not running a research project. A lot of our programs are implemented based on best available research, being able to **have basic background understanding** of what's going into that, what's playing into the suggestions that you're giving other folks. I think that's a really good way to ground what you're doing. "

Education/Experience

- "Learn how your **local laws apply**. What are businesses allowed to do, what are we technically allowed to put in our water, or back out into the environment. **Get an understanding of that**, because there's a rule for everything."
- "I had a lot of jobs that weren't in the environmental field, all those **different experiences can help you get to your end goal**, if it's working in the environment or something else."
- "It's helpful to **have an undergrad degree.** A lot of the skills, specific to my job, or the environmental field I've developed as I've gone along. For instance, Antarctic research isn't really applicable to much in the day-to-day, but it is transferable to other fields."

The Future of **Stormwater Regulations**

"I see Water Rights being a place where there is an avenue to make change.""

"I think the environmental field, in the regulatory sense, is **ever growing**. We keep finding out more and more, what we've done **affects the environment around us**, and we're trying to play **catch up with our understanding**. Regulations keep expanding, so I think that it's always going to be a growing field. I think that's really **going to influence my job**, my specific permit comes out on a five year basis. So every time a new permit is issued, **jobs change to fit new needs.**"

About Sustainability Ambassadors

We are here to ***RAPIDLY ADVANCE A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE.*** Empowering ***YOUTH*** to catalyze community sustainability, ***TEACHERS*** to integrate rigor with relevance for real-world impact, ***COMMUNITY*** to drive collective impact.

We support a year-round training program for over 60 highly motivated middle and high school youth, a Teacher Fellows Program, City-County CAP internships, and college-level interns, and work with hundreds of educators to design new models of problem-based, place-based learning around ***a shared vision of educating for sustainability.***

Your Green Jobs Future

Ready to explore your future in green jobs? Use ***Map your Career*** to map your trajectory!

Find career opportunities near you now! Use ***Career Connect - Washington's*** tool to find programs to build your career skills.

Interested in a future in solar? Take a look at the ***Solar Jobs Census*** to track solar job growth nationwide.

Explore ***RVC's opportunities*** to work with organizations led by communities of color.

Dive into the ***Center of Excellence for Clean Energy's*** robust career tools in the sustainable energy sector.

Grow your professional sustainability skillset with the ***Seattle Youth Good Program.***

See Seattle's ***Clean Energy Resources Map*** to examine what the city is planning for a greener energy future.

Check out the ***U.S. Green Building Council*** to explore the sector's current opportunities. :

Funder Acknowledgement

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CASCADE WATER ALLIANCE

King County
Department of Natural Resources and Parks
Wastewater Treatment Division