



Environmental Compliance Administrator, Groundwater Protection

Job Description

Works to keep the city **in compliance** with city, state, and federal environmental regulations. Also supports city **specific environmental programs** like pollution prevention, waste reduction, health reporting, and grant writing mechanisms.

Salary

Entry — \$59,000
Middle — \$89,000
Top — \$125,000

Core Tasks

- Collect and scientifically analyze soil, air and water samples to determine the level and cause of environmental contamination, assess risk to human and environmental health.
- Advise governmental organizations, businesses, and the public on potential environmental hazards and health risks.
- Conduct environmental research projects and prepare reports and presentations on findings. Develop solutions to control, cleanup, and prevent environmental contamination.

Workplace / Environment

- Work hours**
Approx. 40 hours/week
(Overtime may be required during contamination events)
- Environment**
Typical **office** setting, field work **required** to assess contamination, like inspections, educational visits, or site examination.
- Travel**
Within City's jurisdiction, some travel outside of the city to trainings or regional meetings.

Education / Prerequisites

Education Level

Bachelor's degree in environmental science or related disciplines

Licensing

N/A

Pre-Job Preparation

Some experience in related jobs conducting environmental analysis, lab work, etc.

Experience

Soft Skills

- Critical Thinking
- Communication
- Risk Management

Technical Skills

- Data Analysis Skills
- Field Survey Skills
- Technical Writing



Career Path: Julie Wartes

About Me

Environmental and Regulatory Program
Administrator at the City of Issaquah

Bachelor's of Science in Environmental
Science with a minor in Restoration Ecology

Early Path Changes

"I've always been passionate and **involved with horses**. I wanted to be a horse trainer my whole life and was fortunate in that I worked as a horse trainer for a couple of years; around the end of high school I realized that **wasn't the career path** I wanted take. I decided to go to a local community college, but **I had no idea** what I wanted to do. I decided to go to a local community college, but I had no idea what I wanted to do. At the same time I joined King County Explorer Search and Rescue, responding to a lot of missions up in the mountains for injured hikers or lost hikers."

An Epiphany

"We had **one particular mission** that was out on the Olympic Peninsula for a missing hunter. We were flown into a remote area in a Huey helicopters, it was summer so the doors were off. We banked super hard at one point to get down to our landing spot and I just remember this amazing view of the Olympic Mountains, the glaciers, the trees, and the wilderness. **I had an epiphany**, a sort of

in the soul connection. So, I wanted to do something that **protected the environment**. I ended up gravitating into a lot of environmentally based classes at community college because there the topics piqued my interest and there was a professor that I really grew to love. I went over to the four year college to see what to do longer term and the advisors relayed that I only needed a few more chemistry and calculus classes in order to enter the Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science program – so **that was my ticket**."

Into the Real World

"I had **a few internships** in college, I did a little bit of field work for King County doing stream sampling, and some other soil sampling opportunities through various professors. I **didn't have a formal internship** to break into the industry. Before I even graduated, I had a family friend who was **in environmental consulting** and they were hiring junior level person. From there, I worked in environmental consulting for nine years. After that I worked for the Washington State Department of Ecology for a couple of years in the hazardous waste program, performing unannounced compliance visits. And then, of course, landed here at the City of Issaquah. And so I'm fortunate in that my career so far has been in my degree field, which is **really cool!**"

About My Job

"Be really passionate about whatever you're pursuing in your career."

Pros

- "I really appreciate being able to work with **people who are passionate**, like I am, about this kind of work. I think working with like-minded people validates the work that we do and makes it **feel really meaningful**."

Cons

- "I think that there are always **challenges** working in government, things don't happen the way we want them to happen in the timeline that we would like them to happen in. Especially in the environmental regulatory field, **things can just take longer**."
- "My day **changes hour by hour**, I have my day planned out, and I get pulled off on to something urgent and everything else gets put on hold. The **rapidly changing** nature of environmental work can be a pro and a con in and of itself."

Fieldwork

- "For fieldwork, we might go and **meet with a business** and talk with them about whether they are implementing **proper management practices** for their chemical storage or we might talk to them about some plastic contamination we're seeing in their compost bins that will require employee education to resolve."
- "We might be going out and taking stream samples, **tramping around through the woods** and in the rain, collecting samples. So it really just varies by season and by day."

Office Work

- "Yeah, my day to day work environment **varies quite a bit**. Post-COVID a lot of what I'm able to do is from home. There's a lot of working from my home office, a lot of answering emails, a lot of meetings to coordinate or strategize on an issue or program, **a lot of putting out fires** that you don't necessarily plan for. When I was more Jr more of my days were spent in the field but at this point in my career I do **more management and maintenance** of the steps involved to meet our City's goals."

Skills

- "I think having a lot of 'stick-to-it-iveness' is really important. Being **open minded** and **flexible is equally important**. If you stick with it long enough, it usually works out for the best and you have some really **good results**, and you've built a lot of really **neat relationships** along the way."
- "I wished that I had taken more **data analysis classes**, even just excel classes, in college. Know the basic Microsoft suite. Data is always a piece of environmental science and being able to sort of **critically think, evaluate, and understand implications** of how maybe one thing could influence another and the natural systems and environment is really important."

Education/Experience

- "Take the **science classes**, get that science degree. We see a lot of Master's degrees and that's just where the **peer-competition** seems to be but I don't know if it's necessary. Take the hard classes."
- "Government is very different from the consulting world. I would encourage anyone to get **experienced in either** sort of aspect of environmental work."
- "You can gain experience **anywhere and everywhere.**"

The Future of **Environmental Consulting**

"As we learn more about the environment, we can do better. "

"There's **a lot of improvements** in technology and our ability to test for various contaminants. I think that the field as a whole is going to need to respond to higher and **higher regulatory requirements** for various thresholds of chemicals in our environment that cause harm to human health and/or the environment. So I think that the sector is honing in on more of the things we need to focus on to really have **net positive benefit**. With that comes increasing regulations and need to interpret those regulations; regulations are a whole type of language in and of themselves."

"There's these **emerging contaminants of concern** that we're seeing, on a federal and global scale, that we're going to need to get better at resolving, addressing, and eliminating from the environment. The food chain is a huge thing that comes to mind for me, bioaccumulation of contaminants in animal tissues and how impactful that will be for **our future.**"

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



King County

Department of Natural Resources and Parks
Wastewater Treatment Division

