



Position Profile  
**Director, Chewonki Camp for Girls**  
Chewonki Foundation  
Wiscasset, Maine

**Mission Statement:**

*The Chewonki Foundation is dedicated to helping people grow individually and in community with others by providing educational experiences that foster an understanding, appreciation, and stewardship of the natural world and that emphasize the power of focused, collective effort.*

*Chewonki Camp for Girls offers a variety of unique opportunities for girls and young women to explore the natural world in a challenging, fun, and nurturing environment. By camping and traveling in small groups, girls and young women experience many rich dimensions of wilderness living while gaining self-confidence, cultivating relationships with their peers and leaders, learning a wide variety of skills, and deepening their knowledge of wild places. The length of journey increases as participants become more competent, deepening their discovery of the joys, challenges, and opportunities for reflection that lie within the woods and waters of Maine and beyond.*

*Chewonki's leaders support each participant in realizing her inborn capacity for courage, compassion, insight, and perseverance, allowing each girl to return home with heightened self-awareness, expanded horizons, and a renewed sense of wonder.*

**The Search:**

The Chewonki Foundation, a dynamic, multi-faceted educational and environmental community, seeks a new Girls Camp Director, the second in its history.

Chewonki Camp for Girls officially opened at Fourth Debsconeag Lake on June 23, 2008. Since the opening of this remote trip-based camp, the number of girls served each summer has tripled, the camp has earned American Camping Association Accreditation (2010), and staff and campers have returned at a rate of over 50%. The new director will begin work continuing this influential new program starting in January of 2011.

Chewonki is a year round institution that, in addition to the Girls Camp, includes overnight camps for boys and families; wilderness trips for teens and adults; a semester school for high school juniors; an environmental education center offering residential outdoor classroom

programs for school groups, traveling natural history programs; and a nationally recognized sustainability office that is known for its innovative energy projects. All programs share land, facilities, and staff in a collaborative and efficient use of resources that ideally leads to a synergy of effort in line with the mission.

For this position, Chewonki seeks a director who recognizes the inherent value in girls' and women's leadership development. This person must see the value in living in small community and in wild places. The new Camp Director should enjoy the full-time demands of small camp community and be comfortable with wilderness living. The director should be equally at home in a boat, facilitating staff meetings, setting tables, mopping the floor, managing a budget, and consoling a camper. The new director must have a passion for the natural world and for educating young people in a setting that emphasizes experience and responsibility while fostering individual growth and development.

The new director will inherit a young, but vibrant accredited camp that draws both returning campers and staff members back each year. Although the camp is in its infancy, meaningful traditions and systems have already formed. There is still, however, room for creativity, innovation, and further growth.

A search committee of Chewonki faculty and staff, under the direction of the Chewonki president, will recruit and select the new director. A committee of staff and advisors will support the transition, which will include time in collaboration with the founding director. Persons wishing to apply for, nominate, or inquire about this position should contact Nancy Percy as directed at the end of this statement.

### **Background:**

Clarence Allen, an energetic schoolmaster, launched Split Rock Camp on the shores of Lake Champlain in upstate New York in 1915, and in 1918, moved it to Chewonki Neck, a spectacular 400-acre peninsula in midcoast Maine. Chewonki remained a summer camp for boys until Allen retired in 1965. In 1962, a group of former campers and staff members purchased the camp and incorporated it as a non-profit educational organization.

It was at this time that Chewonki began offering wilderness experiences in the summer for girls through coed expeditions. In 1996, Chewonki introduced the first all-girls programs, designed to teach leadership and wilderness camping skills to girls in a challenging, fun, and supportive environment. From 2002 to 2007, Chewonki offered a unique program called the Canoe Expedition for Maine Girls. This program design was the master's thesis of a former Chewonki Semester School student who saw the value in girls' development, wilderness journey, and providing enriching experiences for girls in Maine. The curriculum that supported this program

became the backbone for the vision of the development of a girls' camp. In 2007, after nearly a decade-long search for a permanent site for our girls programs, Chewonki found a simply stunning location on the edge of a vast protected wilderness in northern Maine. Pleasant Lake Wilderness Camps situated on Fourth Debsconeag Lake on the edge of the Nahmakanta Public Reserve Land became the new home for Chewonki Girls. The rustic and beautiful camp opened in the summer of 2008.

### **Location:**

Chewonki owns or manages over a dozen properties in Maine, totaling close to 1,200 acres. Four are deep in the Maine woods, strategically located near prime wilderness hiking and canoe trails. The campus of the girl's camp is one of these. The rest, which are used by several programs as camping locations, are scattered strategically along the rugged Maine coast and include eight islands. Central to all programs is the 400-acre campus in Wiscasset located on the Chewonki peninsula, bordered by a protected tidal inlet several miles upriver from the mouths of the Kennebec and Sheepscot rivers. The campus is used year-round and houses the administrative offices for all programs, including Camp for Girls. The name Chewonki likely derives from the Wabanaki name for goose "je-wonk" combined with "ki" for "shore," which was applied to the Chewonki peninsula long ago as thousands of migrating Canada geese rested in nearby salt marshes on their long journeys up and down the East Coast. Today the name symbolizes Chewonki's commitment to nature and the long history of its beautiful location. As stewards of the lands owned and protected, Chewonki has committed to becoming as self-sustaining as possible and to reaching an eighty percent reduction in carbon emissions by 2050. Photovoltaic panels, biodiesel, renewable hydrogen, biomass, passive solar, hydro, geothermal, wind, and solar heat technologies are all part of the sustainability initiative as is the low-impact lifestyle of the Chewonki community.

**Chewonki Camp for Girls on Fourth Debsconeag Lake** - The girls camp is located on Fourth Debsconeag Lake, T1R11 between Greenville and Millinocket. The lake is nestled in a wilderness area of vast proportions, surrounded by 90,000 acres of conservation lands owned by the State of Maine and The Nature Conservancy, just 2 miles east of the Appalachian Trail, 12 miles south of the West Branch of the Penobscot River and Chewonki Big Eddy Campground. The site is stunning, and a perfect location to begin wilderness journeys for girls and young women. Chewonki leases the 7 acres that define girls camp from the Department of Conservation. In the off season, (fall, winter, and spring) the site functions as a wilderness camp that is open to the public, known as Debsconeag Lake Wilderness Camps. Vehicle access is possible up to one-half mile from the camp. Participants and staff alike must hike in the remaining half-mile or boat in to the camp. Fourth Debsconeag is on a chain of 8 lakes and connected by the Debsconeag Lake Wilderness Trails. The closest towns to the camp, Greenville and Millinocket, are

each about a 2 hour drive (1.5 hours on dirt road). The towns have full medical facilities as well as amenities such as food, postal services, restaurants, hotels, etc. The girls camp has based most of their services in Greenville, including food pick-ups from both food service and a local organic farmer.

### **The Program:**

Chewonki Camp for Girls is a wilderness camp for girls ages 8-18. Through small community and wilderness experiences, participants, as well as staff, learn new skills, explore the wonders of the natural world, and discover their inborn capacities for courage, leadership, and perseverance. The summer is broken into two 3-week sessions, and the number of girls in camp never exceeds 50 at one time. Because of this small community, campers and staff alike know each other's names, interests, passions, and challenges.

Chewonki Camp for Girls offers both in-camp activities and wilderness travel for girls ages 8-16. In-camp activities include formalized instruction in several activities - wood working, canoeing, art, crafts, nature, local history, camp craft, map & compass, renewable energy projects, and communal meal preparation. Special emphasis is given to natural history, ecology, and wilderness canoeing and hiking trips. There is plenty of time and space for laughing, swimming, games, skits, singing, group discussions, stargazing, campfires, and many other informal activities that make the small community unique and special.

The location on Fourth Debsconeag Lake supports the vision to provide a journey based wilderness program for girls. Each group of girls will go on at least one wilderness adventure during her time at camp. The program supports a progression model - as the girls get older and gain new skills, the length of journey increases.

There is intention not only in the site of the program but also in the curriculum and in the structures that support the program. The housing for campers are circular canvas yurts and the tables in the dining hall are round, both supporting the value of process, engagement, and reflection. The food served in the main lodge aligns with our mission of living sustainably. The produce, grains, meat, and dairy are all purchased locally from relationships forged with local organic farmers. The camp session schedule creates a flow that moves from gaining a sense of place, connection, and skill development, then moving on to adventure, challenge, journey, and a closing of collective celebration and acknowledgement of success.

In addition to the extended camp sessions, Girls Camp, in collaboration with Chewonki Outdoor Classroom for Schools program, offers a 5-day residential camp for girls ages 8-11 called Saltwater Session. This program takes place in late August and is offered at the Wiscasset campus. The

traditions and philosophy of Girls Camp are incorporated into the program, which is intended to be a feeder for extended camp programs and trips.

### **Position Objectives:**

The Girls Camp Director is responsible for the oversight and development of running a wilderness camp for girls. This person must feel full responsibility for the campers and staff, before, during and after each session; although, there is ample support from the president, especially in operations, advancement, and governance.

- 1. Develop, implement and evaluate quality camp and wilderness programs for girls.** The director provides a practical and inspiring vision along with the strategic thinking needed to lead evolutionary change. The director continuously recognizes, relishes, and articulates the value of our work and helps to inspire the best in staff and campers. We are interested in a director who can help articulate what Chewonki Camp for Girls will look like in the year 2020 and what our campers will need to be successful in that world.
- 2. Fully participate in and oversee camp life.** As a residential staff member in the summer months, the director shares chores, meals, work, and activities with campers. The director is “on” and available throughout the time that campers and staff are on campus each session. The director is ultimately responsible for the quality, safety, and success of the camper experience. This oversight includes mentoring and disciplinary systems.
- 3. Provide professional support and mentorship to a small, dedicated staff.** The summer staff consists of just over 20 leaders, support staff, maintenance personnel, and cooks. The director should be accessible and also proactive about observing activities, sharing ideas, and conducting regular check-ins with staff members. When positions are available, the director is responsible for hiring the staff that supports and implements the work of girls camp, including dynamic educators, wilderness leaders, counselors, cooks, maintenance staff, nurses, and support staff.
- 4. Connect with parents, alumni, and like organizations.** The extended camp community must be knit together by the director. The director communicates regularly with parents and other organizations. This work happens year-round, including fall, winter, and spring months, and it includes alumni relations and fundraising. The director should also envision new ways for Chewonki to provide ongoing education to alumni, families, and educators beyond our program and campus.
- 5. Travel to enroll camp on an annual basis.** Concurrent with stewardship of camp connections near and far, the director must make new contacts with prospective families throughout the northeast and mid-Atlantic states. This travel to homes and schools happens both independently and in partnership with Chewonki Camp for Boys and Chewonki Wilderness Trip directors.

- 6. Oversee daily operations and long-term planning for program support.** The director must coordinate sharing of resources with other Chewonki programs throughout the year and manage a budget. Furthermore, the director must work closely with the health care team to ensure appropriate care and support of campers.
- 7. Collaborate with other Chewonki senior staff and the Girls Camp Advisory Committee.** The director reports to the Chewonki president along with other program and resource area leaders who together constitute Chewonki's leadership team. In addition, the director has the opportunity to work with an energetic and supportive advisory committee composed of educators, facilitators, parents, alumni, Chewonki advisers, and Chewonki trustees.

### Opportunities & Challenges:

**Facilities** - The setting of Chewonki Camp for Girls at Debsconeag Lake Wilderness Camps is magical and provides incredible opportunities. The site, however, comes with limitations that the director must understand and be willing to work with. The facility is located on land that Chewonki leases from the State of Maine Department of Conservation.

Over the past 3 years Chewonki has renovated and constructed many of the buildings and yurts that are allowed under our current permit with the Land Use Regulation Committee. Officially we have permission to erect 10 yurts - 6 are currently in place; however, it is clear that we will not be able to find adequate sites for all the remaining 4 yurts. This is in part due to wetlands that were identified after our permit was approved. There is still the need to erect several more Trailhead model composting privies. The main lodge was expanded in the fall of 2009 to meet the needs of enjoying meals with the entire camp community under one roof. The capacity of the dining hall was reached this summer, seating 100 campers, staff, and visitors. If the camp were to grow and increase enrollment in the coming years, the director would have to think creatively about how to balance space issues with programmatic values. Additionally, the programmatic use of the facility at Fourth Debsconeag changes with the season. With these factors in mind the Girls Camp Director will need to be flexible and work closely with the Wilderness Programs Director to manage the needs of multiple programs that use the site during the Girls Camp off-season.

**Program Development** - The program has taken shape over the last three summers to offer a dynamic wilderness base camp feel for the campers and staff alike. Combining wilderness travel and in-camp life has proven to be a very rich and centering experience for the campers, but has also shown the challenges of transitions and progression. As the program continues to grow and develop, the director will need to consider ways in which to create a program that supports individual progression and growth but does not create a graded or merited system. The challenge:

How can campers continue to challenge themselves in this extraordinary place where everyone has the opportunity to succeed?

This multifaceted program requires that leaders hold many skills, including comfort and experience leading and guiding in the wilderness as well as the knowledge and abilities required of a summer camp counselor. These two roles complement each other but have proven at times to be challenging for leaders to transition from one role into the next. As the program continues to grow, the director will need to continue to evaluate the staffing structure to determine a flow that best supports the camper experience, the well being of the staff, and the bottom line of the budget.

**Enrollment** - Enrollment has been strong from the start of the program, and the sites and facilities have grown with the growth of enrollments. The camp has grown from 75 in its first year, to 87 in its second year, to 102 campers in its third year. As enrollments continue to climb, the director will have to work with the limitations of space on the site, being creative with scheduling and programming.

Financial assistance has decreased from 40% of all campers in the first year to 25% last year. Socio-economic diversity is important for the growing camp community; however, to meet the expenses in the budget, the goal is to get the percentage of financial assistance down to around 15-20%, which is in line with the other Chewonki Foundation programs.

Along with socio-economic diversity, cultural diversity is also a value of the Girls Camp community. Over that last few years there have been campers representing various cultures and countries. From France to Spain to Kuwait to Australia, our small camp community is drawing campers from all over the world.

### **The Candidate:**

Recognizing that candidates are unlikely to have every preferred credential, experience, and skill, we seek candidates who bring all *or most* of the following professional experiences, qualifications and personal qualities to the position.

#### **Professional Experience and Qualifications:**

- 2-3 years or more of administrative leadership in a residential camp setting, including supervision of staff, budget management, and familiarity with the ACA accreditation process
- 3-5 years or more leading or managing youth wilderness programs, including oversight of risk management and resource allocation

- 2-3 years or more experience working with adolescent girls and young women, including the utilization of research about this population's development to enrich experiences/programs
- Significant professional experience or degree in youth development or experiential/environmental education
- Significant experience listening to and being in dialogue with parents about their hopes and concerns regarding their child
- Certified Wilderness First Responder
- Lifeguard Certification *preferred*
- Experience in a non-camp educational setting such as classroom teaching is *ideal*
- Fundraising experience is a *plus*

### Personal Qualities:

1. **Vibrant and healthy role model.** Staff and campers alike look to the director for inspiration. Whether by enjoying a swim in the lake, a sunrise paddle, a stroll with a friend, a good laugh with colleagues, or by simply eating fresh organic greens at dinner, it is essential that the director model daily choices and relationships that emphasize physical health, the restorative qualities of the natural world, and the importance of fun.
2. **Recognizes the value of girls and women as leaders.** Seeks ways to better understand and provide opportunities for the varying needs of girls' development. Sharing articles, stories, and opportunities with staff that help to strengthen women's leadership in camp and beyond.
3. **Passion for wilderness travel.** The director must believe that the self-sufficiency, tolerance for adversity, flexibility, and appreciation for nature gained through backcountry travel provides a positive impact on adolescent development.
4. **Embraces remote and small community living.** The director must welcome the lifestyle of a camp administrator in a wilderness setting. The director must possess the ability to solve problems with limited resources, enjoy shared physical labor, and value the accomplishment of work through collective effort.
5. **Top-notch oral and written communicator.** The director must be open and honest in communication with campers, staff, parents, alumni, and other professional colleagues. This person should be comfortable speaking one-on-one and in front of large groups, as well as with written correspondence in all media.
6. **Commitment to relationship building.** The director must possess the ability and desire to build strong relationships with campers, staff and families.

7. **Team player.** Each Chewonki employee is part of the team, even if leaders have certain extra responsibilities as part of their roles. Candidates should enjoy the feeling of collaboration and be accessible to all constituents.
8. **Practice in or appreciation for arts, drama, and/or music.** Staff members throughout all programs integrate art, drama, and music into the Chewonki experience. At girls camp songs fill the days as do skits and silly costumes, creating a fun and spirited community. Support and participation from the director is essential.
9. **Personal commitment to the belief that diversity strengthens all systems.** Chewonki anticipates demographic and programmatic changes in the coming decades. The new director will help chart that course based upon experience and an eye to the future.
10. **Personal interests/passions outside of work that trickle into professional life.** As with arts, drama and music, we hope that each staff member shares personal interests as part of our living and learning together.
11. **Integrity and standard of excellence.** It should go without saying that the new director will be expected to perform at a high standard and with complete integrity in all areas of activity.
12. **Environmental commitment.** To live the Chewonki mission, the director must have a personal commitment to an environmental ethic with a recognition that we live in a world with limits.

### **Contact, Salary, and Search Schedule:**

The search is currently scheduled to conclude and have a starting date in January of 2011. After the application deadline there will be initial evaluations of written materials followed by interviews and extensive background checks. Salary will be competitive with a camp director position at small non-profit camps and will depend upon qualifications and experience.

**Interested candidates should submit a resume (electronic submission preferred), in confidence, with a cover letter and statement of educational philosophy (maximum 1-page) to:**

**hr@chewonki.org or Nancy Percy; Chewonki Foundation; 485 Chewonki Neck Road;**

**Wiscasset, ME; 04578. Applications are due at Chewonki before or on December 19th, 2010.**