

# KOPPLIN KUEBLER & WALLACE

THE MOST TRUSTED NAME IN EXECUTIVE SEARCH AND CONSULTING

## **GENERAL MANAGER/CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER PROFILE: ROARING GAP CLUB ROARING GAP, NC**

A special opportunity exists for an exceptional candidate with a successful track record of accomplishment, leadership, and high-quality operations management experience in private clubs, communities, or resorts. We are conducting a search for the GM/COO at one of the premier residential club communities in the Blue Ridge Mountains, one which has built a reputation amongst the finest multi-generational family clubs in the country.

The primary focus of the role is delivering an exceptional member experience, which is of utmost importance to the social fabric and culture of the Club. The ability to consistently be forward-looking in planning, innovation, organization and departmental leadership is the critical skill set required for success in this position. Also important is the ability to intuitively embrace the need to be visible and highly interactive with members and staff; leadership in this area begins and ends with approachability and accessibility. Finally, positively embracing very small town, mountain community life with highly seasonal member usage and staffing is essential. It is all about 'community' at Roaring Gap and that instinct must be a natural part of one's DNA to be successful! The Club is the primary conduit to facilitate opportunity to spend and enjoy time with one another!

[Click here to view a brief video about this opportunity.](#)

### **THE ROARING GAP CLUB AND COMMUNITY**

With a history dating back to the late 1800's, the community where the Club now sits was once home to a summer resort and hotel that initiated much of the affection generations of members have for the area. After the original Roaring Gap Hotel resort burned to the ground, the current Graystone Inn was built and opened in 1926 with several outbuildings added as well as several homes in the acreage around the Inn. In 1969, a reorganization was necessary for the resort operation and Roaring Gap Club was formed, with all cottage owners becoming initial Charter Members.

Many aspects of Roaring Gap are unique and help to make it the special community it is today. The Club's special Roaring Gap golf course was designed in the 1920's by Donald Ross and was often referred to as the "Pinehurst of the Mountains."

One of the more unique amenities at Roaring Gap is Lake Louise. A man-made dam created a 54-acre boating/fishing/swimming and beach amenity which recently saw a significant restaurant renovation and expansion and is now one of the most popular amenities in the community. The original Graystone Inn now houses several member owned condominiums above the Club and Community's administration offices, more formal dining and function operations, pool complex, Chef's Cupboard (mini-market concept), a spa and beauty shop, and meeting/gathering spaces. Most areas within the Graystone Inn are in various stages of renovation and reconstruction with the goal of making them more relevant to today's member desires and to allow staff to deliver better and more efficient services and an overall member experience.

Adjacent to the Inn is a very large multi-use field and is the site for an early summer multi-day concert that is the highlight of an event filled calendar of activities between Memorial and Labor Days. The Club has an active tennis program with seven courts located near the Graystone Inn, and recently added pickleball to great success.

Other activities include a small equestrian center, skeet range, paddle court, croquet, numerous hiking and walking trails, an active children's camp centered around its "Happy Shack," and a very active social and intellectual programming schedule.

Roaring Gap epitomizes a traditional family community and continues to evolve as its members do. While many traditions are locked in time, leadership at Roaring Gap has recognized the need to continue to maintain strong relevance to changing usage and amenity desires but has done so in a thoughtful evolution while appreciating and celebrating the history and enjoyment the community has provided so many of its members over the years.

#### **THE ROARING GAP CLUB BY THE NUMBERS:**

- The Club and Community are highly seasonal with most activity occurring between Memorial Day and Labor Day, but increasingly busier shoulder seasons with a significant number of projects typically being undertaken in the winter months.
- Gross operating revenues of the Club and Community are approximately \$6.6M
- Food and beverage revenues, mostly from the summer season, are approximately \$1.2M, and are the product of multiple dining venues and were increased nicely when the Lake Grille venue was expanded. They are expected to increase again when the Graystone Inn is renovated which includes a major kitchen upgrade.
- Initiation fee: \$67,000
- Rounds of Golf annually: Approximately 11,100
- Dues are \$13,103, with another \$3,000 R&E, and \$2,000 Debt Service pay down, and \$1,400 for the HOA.
- There are approximately 328 members in all categories
- There are approximately 92 FT, year-round employees, supplemented by 135 FT seasonal staff, many of whom are housed in Club provided accommodations
- Current committees include Executive, Finance, Audit & HR, Real Estate, Golf, Greenspace (ad hoc), Membership, Legal & Bylaw, House & Grounds, Lake & Pool, Food and Entertainment, Children Activities/Tennis/Stables, Look and Feel, and Design Review
- There are 14 Board members. They serve three-year terms and can serve two consecutive terms before stepping down for a year
- The average age of members is approximately 55 years, with a trend slightly younger
- The Club uses JONAS for POS and back house accounting
- Ultimately, Roaring Gap is in an enviable financial position compared to most other clubs around the country.

**THE ROARING GAP CLUB WEB SITE:** [www.roaringgapclub.com](http://www.roaringgapclub.com)

#### **GENERAL MANAGER/COO (GM/COO) POSITION OVERVIEW**

The GM/COO at Roaring Gap Club has full responsibility for all aspects of operations of the Club and Community, effectively managing all resources and reporting to the President and is expected to be the embodiment of an “exceptional member-centric experience.” The GM/COO will lead the management team, be representative of modern management “best service and member experience” practices, while promoting a positive, engaging, responsive and highly competent service culture in all operations of the Club and Community.

Unlike many mountain club communities, Roaring Gap has a history of being a family-focused culture with many second, third and fourth generation family traditions balanced with relevance to today’s member needs and expectations. Honoring tradition and balancing innovations and modern techniques is a critical success factor. Members have historically been actively involved in committees, with a focus on balancing the positive perpetuation of the unique and critically important culture of Roaring Gap with thoughtful and appropriate modern enhancements. All this needs to be done with a sincere, integrity-filled, hands-on style, recognizing the need to be the “face” of Roaring Gap both internally and in the greater Sparta and Alleghany County community.

The successful new GM/COO at Roaring Gap must possess especially strong skills in “mentoring” and “holding accountable” senior staff and a group of meaningfully engaged and well-regarded employees who are looking for that type of leadership as well. Direct Reports to the GM/COO include Controller, Director of Golf, Golf Course Superintendent, Assistant General Manager, Tennis Professional, Facilities Maintenance Manager, Aquatics Director, Camp Director, Stables Manager, Director of Security, Administrative Office Manager, Communications & IT, Director of Public Works, Administrative Assistant/Real Estate/Rentals, Front Desk Manager.

Many of the senior staff are long tenured and very capable leaders, and a review and potential reorganization of the Org Chart is likely a key initial priority.

Members recognize that a continuous focus on enhancement of an energized, well-trained, committed team is critical for continued success and a great membership experience. A sincerely engaged, personally invested, and instinctually 'front facing' style is particularly important for one's success in this role. Of additional critical importance is the sincere embracing of remote community life where members, staff, and external community involvement intertwine regularly.

Also important is either the experience or a short runway to learn the community aspects of the operation which includes over 40 buildings, a dam, water treatment plant, hiking trails and other key utilities and resources within the purview of the General Manager.

Key attributes, characteristics and style of the successful new leader include:

- Being a "hands on" interactive leader who directly monitors the operation and mentors the staff throughout each day; someone who recognizes and embodies the details necessary for consistency and high levels of satisfaction in all operations and amenities. Additionally, someone who recognizes that that he/she will be 'out of balance' workwise in the summer months of the season when most members are in residence and all amenities are fully open.
- Possessive of a natural demeanor that is genuine, likable, positive, and upbeat and one that projects attractive qualities that puts people at ease. Honesty, straightforwardness, integrity, accountability, leadership, and dedication are all part of the "gravitas" desired in this key leader. The GM/COO should be able to inspire and motivate others, earn the respect of the members and employees as well as the community (both internal and external) at large.
- Being a true leader who can work closely with other leaders in a team concept, supporting and learning from each other, and ensuring a culture of collaboration and "team."
- Being confident yet humble and an astute listener with a bias for action.
- Possessive of the natural "art of seeing something..." and then either executing a plan to improve, add, eliminate, or rally for whatever it is; essentially being naturally aware and proactive in seeing and managing the details of success.
- Having an active 'network' in the industry to the point of being on the forefront of trends in clubs, communities, and economic cycles.
- Having a naturally outgoing, conversant, respectful, and diplomatic style, but able to say "no" when appropriate without alienating members or staff while doing so.
- Understanding that this truly is a unique and diverse operation that combines traditional elements of club management with coordination and understanding of a homeowner's association that requires an even higher level of empathy, authenticity, and responsiveness.
- Serving as the "Behavior Model" for direct reports and all levels of employees; actively aware of his/her influence on the team with his/her 'tone at the top' modeling.

#### **KEY PRIORITIES FOR SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONING**

The following priorities have been identified as recommended primary focus:

- Working to ensure a smooth and successful transition. Roaring Gap functions at a high level at present; a successful outcome will include understanding and embracing the Club's "culture," and quickly developing relationships with members and staff.
- Be "present" and positively approachable where needed to develop strong member and staff trust and confidence; approachability, follow up, and candid, respectful interactions are key. Being engaged and part of every operating department is critical, as is becoming the "face of Roaring Gap!"
- Develop Board and Committee relationships, working to create a strong bond and communication exchange of diplomatic openness. Ensure that historical well-intended member volunteer involvement is appropriate

and in support of the Club's goals but recognize the fact that Board and Committee Members are volunteers and want to enjoy the Club and Community as well.

- Immerse into the Club's financial and business plans to fully understand the Club's history and model for success, making thoughtful recommendations for organizational chart and funding strategies.
- Work closely with the F & B team to ensure that an appropriate foundation of success is in place in this department, both in the culinary and service execution sides of the operation. F & B operations are of great importance to the membership, and meeting members' expectations in this area is a critical success factor.
- Creating and/or expanding on a necessary pipeline of seasonal staff (H2B, J1, winter clubs, universities, etc.) recruitment for key summer positions.

#### **CANDIDATE QUALIFICATIONS**

- Ideally, a minimum of 7 - 10 years of progressive leadership/general management experience in (preferably) a private member-owned country club, ideally within a residential community with significant, multi-dimensional operations, or leading resort/hospitality operations outside of the club industry in a similar relationship-based environment operation. Leading in a true "COO-like" model and taking "ownership," accountability and responsibility while doing so are verifiably necessary traits and experiences.
- A history of treating members, staff and business associates with great respect and consideration always taking the high road in times of conflict.
- A history of professional development as well as for furthering the professional education of the staff.
- Knowledge and ability to utilize appropriate and relevant technology tools for modeling and monitoring business activities and outcomes. Technologically proficient and recognizing of best practices use of technology to improve 'high touch' service delivery to members, as well as to more effectively manage and lead operations.
- Naturally outgoing, energized, motivated with an "authentic" style and a true "servant's heart."
- Prior experience in coordinating and overseeing complex capital improvement projects.
- Strong history of success and keen understanding of quality food and beverage operations, including revenue growth, training, innovation and creativity, and strong service culture development.
- A motivator and leader who can bring out the best in others by setting clear goals and expectations, holding them accountable for outcomes, by providing consistent feedback, support and through respectful interaction and professionalism. A "great listener."
- A true, confident, diplomatic, and competent club industry professional who recognizes the importance of accountability, and who has a strong history of success in working with member boards and committees, especially important in this instance as many new operating practices are being established.

#### **EDUCATIONAL AND CERTIFICATION QUALIFICATIONS**

- A Bachelor's Degree from a four-year university or college is desired, preferably in Hospitality Management or Business Management.
- From the club industry, Certified Club Manager (CCM) designation is desirable but not necessary.

#### **SALARY AND BENEFITS**

Salary is open and commensurate with qualifications and experience. The Club, along with the typical CMAA benefits, offers an excellent bonus and benefit package.

#### **INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO APPLY**

Please upload your resume and cover letter, in that order, using the link below. You should have your documents fully prepared to be attached when prompted for them during the online application process. Please be sure your image is not present on your resume or cover letter; that should be used on your LinkedIn Profile.

**Prepare a thoughtful cover letter addressed to Mr. Burney Jennings, Search Chairman** and clearly articulate your alignment with this role and why you want to be considered for this position at this stage of your career and why RG and the Roaring Gap area will be beneficial to you, your family, your career, and the Club if selected.

***You must apply for this role as soon as possible but no later than October 15, 2021. Candidate selections will occur early November with first Interviews expected before Thanksgiving. The new candidate should assume his/her role in first quarter of 2022.***

**IMPORTANT:** Save your resume and letter in the following manner:

**“Last Name, First Name - Resume” &**

**“Last Name, First Name - Cover Letter - Roaring Gap**

(These documents should be in Word or PDF format)

Note: Once you complete the application process for this search, you are not able to go back in and add additional documents.

[Click here](#) to upload your resume and cover letter.

If you have any questions, please email Patty Sprankle: [patty@kkandw.com](mailto:patty@kkandw.com)

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