 PAINTER EXECUTIVE SEARCH

**Sonoma Land Trust**

**Director of Philanthropy**

**Position Description**

***Painter Executive Search is supporting Sonoma Land Trust in its search for an experienced chief fundraiser with the strategic and operational expertise to increase support for conservation, stewardship and access to the beautiful places that define Sonoma County.***

Since its inception in 1976, Sonoma Land Trust has protected over 47,000 acres of scenic, natural, agricultural and open landscapes throughout Sonoma County. Located north of San Francisco, Sonoma County is a million acres of diverse natural resources, fertile agricultural land, acclaimed wineries and small cities. Sonoma is one of the most bio-diverse counties in California with more than 55 miles of Pacific coastline, significant tidal wetlands, redwood forests and oak woodlands, unique geological regions, and productive valleys and waterways. An accredited land trust, Sonoma Land Trust is dedicated to being a premier civic institution in Sonoma County and among the leading land trusts in the Bay Area and nationally. The organization’s deep expertise in land transactions and stewardship and its history as a trusted and willing partner make Sonoma Land Trust a potent catalyst in protecting Sonoma County’s outstanding landscapes and ecosystems.

**POSITION SUMMARY**

Reporting to the Executive Director, the Director of Philanthropy (Director) will be responsible for the leadership, strategic direction and management of all fundraising and communications for Sonoma Land Trust. As a member of the Executive Team, the Director will work closely with the ED, Board of Directors and key management across the organization to facilitate a culture of fundraising and brand building. The Director will be responsible for increasing recognition of Sonoma Land Trust’s conservation contributions, crafting effective messages regarding organizational priorities and needs, strengthening research and developing strategies for cultivating new prospects, facilitating the preparation and solicitation of gifts, major gift fundraising including establishing a planned giving program, and effective cultivation and stewardship of supporters, members and donors. Building upon their history of successful fundraising, the Director will increase the rigor and measurements around fundraising activities and effectively engage leadership at all levels of the organization in fundraising with the goal of creating sustainable annual fundraising levels of $3-4 million.

In addition to the vacant Director position, the department is staffed with 2.8 FTE including an 80% time Donor Relations Director, a Development Manager and a Communications Director. The plan to build the department includes adding at least two additional staff, including a Major Gifts Officer and another role as defined by the new Director. Additionally, the *On the Land* Program and its two staff (1.25 FTE) will shift their reporting relationship to the Director to facilitate the outreach and membership growth.

The 2014 operating budget for Sonoma Land Trust requires approximately $3 million in individual giving from annual and major gifts. Current fundraising programs include a spring membership appeal and a year-end drive which bring in approximately $750,000. Historically fundraising efforts have been structured as part of an overarching major gift campaign. Major Gift pledges from previous years available for unrestricted use in 2014 are $1.5 million. Evaluation of the structure and range of fundraising programs and the use of campaign methods is under review and will be a key focus in the first year of this role. The 2014 operating budget (excluding salaries) for development and communications and the *On the Land* program is approximately $475k and supports a range of small events for donor appreciation and outreach as well as print and electronic communications.

**Background**

Although many people visit Sonoma to enjoy the more than 400 wineries, they often stay for the beauty of the landscape. Growing cultural amenities and interest in local products, sustainable agriculture, and viticulture have brought a new sophistication to a community with deep roots and a strong sense of place. Conservation is supported in the county by a voter-approved ¼ cent sales tax which funds the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District. First approved in 1990, this tax was reauthorized for 20 years in 2006 with a stunning 75% yes vote.

Conservation efforts in the county are highly collaborative; joint and overlapping missions are regularly tapped to find the right resources and skills to steward the shared vision of the county as preserved in perpetuity with rich and healthy ecosystems and easily accessible parks and wildlands. Conservation efforts of many partners have preserved nearly 15% of rural landscapes in the county. Regional efforts to safeguard wildlife corridors, prepare for climate change impacts and tackle complex, whole system restoration are possible given this level of partnership and broad support for conservation.

Historically, the primary responsibility for securing funding for land acquisitions is with the Executive Director and the experienced acquisitions team. At times, the Director will be called upon to develop capital support for an acquisition project but the primary department focus is growing individual support. This support is critical for long-term land stewardship, restoration, programing, and the retention of the expertise and operations that Sonoma Land Trust has developed which enables it to identify and shepherd a wide range of fee title, conservation easement and other complex conservation transactions and to effectively manage the land in the portfolio. Acquisition dollars, important and critical to the mission, often come from a variety of government and philanthropic relationships which will need to continue to be cultivated at a high level in the organization and will require the attention, but not the focus of the Director. This role focuses on building a stronger and deeper base of support through the engagement of individual donors and other non-public sources including building support from private foundations and corporations.

The organization is in regular communication with over 10,000 people of which 2,700 are members. Growing and strengthening ties to the community and strategically inviting people to engage more deeply in support of Sonoma Land Trust will be critical for the success of the role.

**History and Successes**

The Sonoma Land Trust has evolved from a dedicated grassroots organization to a leader which strategically selects land with high conservation values and collaboratively works with a wide range of partners to ensure protection and stewardship. Over the years, the trust has been gifted with a number of historic ranches including Glen Oaks Ranch in Glen Ellen and Laufenburg Ranch and Live Oaks Ranch in Knights Valley. In the 1990’s with the beginning of the sales tax support, conservation efforts increased. With that source of revenue and the passage of several state bond measures, came the opportunity to think in terms of whole landscape conservation and long term sustainability.

Sonoma Land Trust currently holds title to about 7,000 acres of land and conservation easements on another 7,000 acres. Some of the land will transition to other partners to hold and manage, but key properties will be held by Sonoma Land Trust for long term stewardship. These “Anchor Preserves” provide a visible presence in the region in which the land is located and have become foundations for ongoing land protection efforts. The Anchor Preserves are: Sears Point Ranch off Highway 37, Glen Oaks Ranch and surrounding properties in the Stuarts Creek Watershed in Glen Ellen, and Pole Mountain and Little Black Mountain in Cazadero. The Land Trust has other properties including White Rock, west of the Alexander Valley; Laufenburg Ranch and Live Oaks Ranch in Knights Valley; the Estero Americano Preserve south of Bodega Bay; and Tolay Creek Ranch off Highway 121. From this platform Sonoma Land Trust continues to build key linkages utilizing all methods of land conservation.

***Key Program Highlights***

*Sears Point*—Sonoma Land Trust is in the process of acquiring and restoring land along San Pablo Bay that was historically marsh, but has been farmed for the past 100+ years. The objective is to restore San Francisco Bay’s wetlands to reestablish the health of the bay as an estuary and to act as a hedge against sea level rise. Part of the Pacific Flyway, this land is key to bird migration and to mitigating the impact of climate change. Working with partners including Ducks Unlimited, Sonoma Land Trust is currently restoring 1000 acres of tidal wetlands—the $18 million dollar Sears Point Restoration Project. In that same area, another significant acquisition was recently completed. Haire Ranch on Skaggs Island was the lynchpin that will allow 4,400 acres of diked baylands to convert to wetlands.

*Jenner Headlands*--In December of 2009, Sonoma Land Trust acquired the stunning 5,630-acre Jenner Headlands — a nationally significant project and the single largest conservation land acquisition in Sonoma County at that time. This $36 million purchase was completed with the collaboration of 10 public and private funding partners. In September 2013, Sonoma Land Trust transferred the fee title of the property to The Wildlands Conservancy to manage as a preserve governed by consensus management decisions between The Wildlands Conservancy and Sonoma Land Trust based on a restoration blueprint.

*Pole Mountain--*In June 2014 Sonoma Land Trust will close on the purchase of Pole Mountain, the highest point along the Sonoma Coast, with 360-degree unobstructed views of Sonoma County and beyond, including Sonoma Mountain and the Santa Rosa Plain, the Cedars and the Mayacamas. This 238-acre property connects Jenner Headlands with Little Black Mountain Preserve ensuring wildlife access to over 6000 acres of protected land.

*Glen Oaks Ranch and the Sonoma Valley Wildlife Corridor--*The 234-acre Glen Oaks Ranch, located in the Valley of the Moon near Glen Ellen, was bequeathed to the Land Trust in 2001. In addition to exceptional wildlife habitat, the Ranch's Civil War-era stone house, stone barn, stone walls and oak woodlands offer incredible scenic and historic value. This property is a part of an overarching strategy to protect the Sonoma Valley Wildlife Corridor which stretches from Sonoma Mountain, across Sonoma Creek and the valley floor, and east to the top of the Mayacamas range and defines a critical linkage between Marin and Lake Counties. The goal of this collaborative large scale project is to ensure that wildlife can move safely through the landscape so their populations can persist in the face of development and climate change. In addition to acquiring the three to four at-risk properties, the Sonoma Land Trust is drafting model conservation easement language focused on “wildlife freedom of movement” to be used in this corridor and shared with other conservation groups also working to secure wildlife corridors. With this initiative, Sonoma Land Trust is working across property boundaries with private and public landowners to offer guidance on maintaining and improving wildlife habitat and passage. The Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation provided a $1.8 million grant for the purchase properties and easements that are critical to keeping the corridor open. The funding also supports camera monitoring and integration of these parcels into a broader implementation strategy. At the heart of the corridor lies the Sonoma Developmental Center which represents the largest and most significant unprotected land in the Sonoma Valley. Sonoma Land Trust is leading a collaborative effort to envision and bring about a future for the Sonoma Developmental Center that will permanently protect the Center’s natural areas. Successful protection of the undeveloped portions of this area would directly link more than 9,000 acres of protected land.

**Current Focus and Program Highlights**

In its 2011-2015 Strategic Plan, Sonoma Land Trust set forth a number of goals including being well-run and respected as a community leader. Two primary goals define the thrust of their programmatic work; one is to permanently protect the rural landscapes of Sonoma County and the other is to connect people with the land.

Sonoma Land Trust has focused its conservation efforts on three Legacy Landscapes;

1. The Redwoods and increasing public access along the Sonoma Coast;
2. Securing Wildlife Corridors and trails along the Mayacamas Mountains through Sonoma Valley and over Sonoma Mountain; and,
3. Restoring the Baylands and protecting Tolay Creek.

Sonoma Land Trust has deep strategies and substantial initiatives built around the conservation of these three areas including opportunities for acquisitions, restoration and building corridors for use by wildlife and people.

The *On the Land* Program provides public outreach and activities on Sonoma Land Trust properties including hikes, outings, and volunteer work parties for restoration and trail work. It also is the interface for volunteers of all levels to support and engage in the work of Sonoma Land Trust.

**Director of Philanthropy**

**RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Director is a strategic partner for the executive team and the board in all areas of fundraising. He/she will be an active and effective individual fundraiser personally cultivating relationships, as well as developing and managing a well-defined strategy for growing support while meeting current operating needs. As the chief evangelist of the organization, this role is expected to make a significant contribution to growing the visibility of the organization as well as be a savvy and strategic manager building a professional department prepared to secure significant, long-term support for their work.

**Specific Duties**

**Leadership & Strategy**

* Assess the current fundraising programs, staffing and operations of the department; establish a strategy for increased giving to a sustainable $3-4 million annually; create, monitor and report benchmarks to ensure progress toward that plan;
* Become knowledgeable and conversant in all aspects of Sonoma Land Trust’s mission, strategic plan, acquisitions, programs, and methods of conservation; work closely with the Executive Team to embed fundraising strategy into daily decision making and operations;
* Represent Sonoma Land Trust throughout the county and raise its profile and visibility to funders, partners , policymakers and the public;
* Partner with the Executive Director and the Board of Directors to ensure they are prepared and supported in all their fundraising efforts.

**Management**

* Hire, mentor, motivate and evaluate a high-caliber team; ensure each team member is prepared to contribute what is required to reach individual and collective goals; hold each member accountable for their efforts;
* Review membership levels and annual fund programs; propose any changes necessary to increase contributions and ensure resources are used wisely;
* Direct an effective fundraising operation; ensure eTapestry, the donor database, is accurate and appropriately managed; promote best practices including list management, prospect research standards, and timely and appropriate stewardship and reporting;
* Oversee the communications (print, web and social media) required for effective fundraising and propose any changes to the current messages and methods;
* Establish a systematic, robust planned giving program and provide benchmarks for judging its success;
* Work closely with the acquisitions and program teams to facilitate successful corporate and foundation proposals and ensure appropriate reporting;
* Ensure the integrity of donor relationships and philanthropic agreements;
* Manage the planning and development of cultivation and appreciation events; effectively manage staff time and resources to meet budgets.

**Individual Contribution**

* Develop and maintain a personal prospect portfolio; cultivate and solicit major donors and foundations;
* Craft and execute solicitation strategies for individual donors including those in your own portfolio and others – prepare briefings, set meetings, make the ask (or designate an appropriate solicitor), ensure follow up of all solicitations and steward the donation and the ongoing relationship;
* Be a visible member of the community; represent the Sonoma Land Trust at events including the organization’s own fundraising and membership events and at events where prospective donors are likely to congregate.

**Experience**

*A successful candidate will likely have:*

* A genuine passion for conserving land and enthusiasm for connecting people to land;
* Demonstrated track record of successful fundraising in an environment of similar complexity;
* Strong leadership skills, with an entrepreneurial spirit and strong management skills; demonstrated ability to inspire and motivate staff, volunteers, donors, and potential partners;
* Success developing and executing fundraising strategies for building unrestricted support;
* Experience identifying, cultivating and soliciting individual donors at the $50K+ level;
* Experience integrating marketing/communications strategies and tactics with fund development activities;
* Excellent relationship-building skills and agility in building rapport with internal and external stakeholders;
* Demonstrated experience overseeing multiple projects through to success, including meeting financial goals, project deadlines, and coordinating the work of key staff and partners;
* Exceptional communication skills; articulate, with proven ability to write effectively and speak persuasively;
* Understanding of information management systems and moves management principles;
* Knowledge of planned giving instruments;
* Superior organizational skills, with a strong sense of detail-orientation and expertise with computers, business software and other tools needed to build an effective fundraising organization;
* A Bachelor’s degree.

**Attributes**

* Genuinely enjoys engaging donors and the fundraising process;
* Comfort interacting with high-level donors and patrons;
* Inspires confidence and trust; demonstrates an affinity to the mission;
* Ambitious and focused on success;
* High integrity and commitment to goals;
* Possesses a high degree of emotional intelligence and self-awareness; gravitas;
* Demonstrates strong problem-solving attributes—drive, energy and creativity;
* Enjoys and deploys an appropriate sense of humor.

For additional information or to be considered for this role contact:

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