



Bay Area Open Space Council Executive Director Position Description

Painter Executive Search is supporting the Bay Area Open Space Council in a search for an experienced Executive Director to lead a broad regional coalition of Bay Area land conservation agencies and organizations in shaping the next generation of land conservation policy, planning and funding.

The Bay Area Open Space Council is a unique regional coalition of over 60 land trusts, public agencies, cities, conservation groups and other allied organizations working in 10 counties across the San Francisco Bay Area to permanently set and execute a conservation vision for the San Francisco Bay Area.

Founded under fiscal sponsorship in 1990, the Bay Area Open Space Council obtained 501c3 status in 2014. This transformation creates the opportunity inherent in a start-up (fully building out the vision, leadership and funding for the new organizational structure) while benefiting from a deep history as a regional funding advocate, convener and as a resource for Bay Area conservation efforts.

This is a critical time for conservation in the Bay Area. In the next year or two, it is anticipated that key decisions around funding will be made that impact the region's ability to execute its overarching conservation goals. Additionally, the Bay Area Open Space Council is still young in its organizational development and needs to build the relationships, focus and programs that will both sustain its efforts, and grow its impact. These two overarching priorities will need to be balanced in order to successfully fulfill the potential of the organization to fully execute a regional conservation vision.

Working closely with the staff, board and the advisory council, the executive director will be both a capable manager and a consummate communicator who can create the resources, data, and the collective will required to align regional priorities and build the support for those goals with the Bay Area's conservation leaders and partners so that collectively, the region can speak with one voice and create a compelling case to various funders and ultimately to voters.

POSITION SUMMARY

The executive director, reporting to the president of the board and responsible to the board of directors, will have overall strategic and operational responsibility for the organization. The primary responsibility of the executive director is to harness the relationships, organizational assets and innovations of the Bay Area Open Space Council to yield political support for regional funding and policies, and to manage all programmatic and administrative activities of the organization. The ED will have substantial responsibility for deepening the vision and expanding the reach of the organization in order to fully animate the potential of this unique organization to achieve regional conservation goals.

Given the current pressures on the conservation community, the priorities for the organization in the next twelve months are:

- Establish a formal effort to support the development of regional funding for the Bay Area which includes strong and visible advocacy with legislators, the Governor, and in coordinating its member agencies to speak with a strong, common and effective voice in Sacramento;

- Continue development of Your Bay Area, a regional marketing campaign, that instills in local residents/voters the value of open space about why these areas require support;
- Create and execute a plan that provides sustainable funding for the organization, including supporting the growth of the board of directors and developing a strategic plan which reviews the long-term mission and vision of the organization and sets a clear framework for decision-making.

The dynamics around land conservation is changing. The Bay Area Open Space Council plays an important role in educating, convening and coordinating the conservation community in the Bay Area so that they are effectively and efficiently moving toward critical, shared conservation goals. What is needed in the next 12 months, may not be what will be needed in the next 48 months. Acting upon the potential for collective action, building a “bigger tent” and continuing to develop innovative tools to support shared conservation efforts is critical to the long term success of the ED and the organization. Ultimately, the ED needs to lead the broad coalition of conservation-minded organizations to align their collective resources to build the next generation of conservation support and supporters in order to retain the gains achieved so far, and to ensure the long-term protection of land for healthy, sustainable communities in the Bay Region.

The executive director leads a staff of four employees including a deputy director, whose primary role is fundraising and outreach; an operations coordinator; a development coordinator; and an additional budgeted role, which has traditionally focused on program development and execution. Directing the work of the staff will require both a clear view of the current priorities of the organization and a keen understanding of the political environment in order to respond opportunistically and strategically to advance the mission. Maximizing staff impact will require very open and clear communications and comfort making executive decisions in a complex environment.

There are currently six members on the board of directors who are responsible for adopting the strategic plan, overseeing the execution of that plan, the legal and financial management of the organization, as well as for developing financial support through their contributions and the engagement of others. The board is supported in their efforts by a 14-member advisory council, which represents the 60+ member organizations. The advisory council provides key input to the ED and the board on the organization’s strategy and program efforts. Currently the board includes members of the advisory council and communication between the two groups is fluid. As the organization develops the board of directors to the 13 members allowable in their by-laws, the organization will need to ensure the effective engagement of the advisory council in order to sustain its connection to grassroots conservation efforts across the region.

Located in Berkeley, CA in a LEED platinum certified building, the ED will oversee the Bay Area Open Space Council’s \$700,000 operating budget. Revenue for the organization comes from a variety of sources including membership fees, revenue from convenings, program grants from government funders and foundations, as well as individual contributors. Currently, about half of the funding raised is restricted to program delivery. Now that the organization has attained 501c3 status, additional fundraising programs will need to be developed.

Organizational Summary and Program Highlights

History and Successes

The Bay Area Open Space Council was founded on the belief that by working together more can be achieved. In the 80’s a small group of visionary leaders created the group to collaborate on funding, create regional maps, and to share tools and innovative practices. Beginning as a casual network of

colleagues, the Bay Area Open Space Council is now an independent organization with established programs, members and supporters that range from small land trusts to large public agencies and cities and as well as national leaders in land conservation. Since 1990 the organization has employed a small staff to create a focal point for ideas and build regional efforts.

The Bay Area Open Space Council's past accomplishments include:

- Spearheaded formation of the Bay Program of the California Coastal Conservancy which has provided over \$300 million for over 425 acquisition and restoration projects. More than \$1 billion has come to the region in matching funds as a result of the Bay Program's work. Propositions 12, 40, 50 and 84 brought much of this funding and are now expiring.
- Led development of a regional conservation plan – Conservation Lands Network (CLN) – a five-year, science-based and collaborative process that identified essential lands to be protected to preserve biodiversity in the region. Funders use the CLN in proposal review and many organizations are using the CLN in their conservation planning.
- Launched Transit & Trails website and mobile applications to bring nature within reach of Bay Area residents. This web and mobile platform that provides trailhead information and encourages alternative transportation (i.e., walk, bike, transit, ride sharing) to get there.
- Laid groundwork for the formation of the California Council of Land Trusts.

Key Current Program Highlights

Convenings: Gatherings/Capacity Building and Working Groups

The Open Space Conference convenes each spring and for the last 15 years has brought together leading thinkers on conservation and its connection to policy, health, education, economics, history, transportation, and water. On a quarterly basis, other events are held around the Bay to focus on specific topics of interest. These gatherings are in high demand and provide a forum for discussion, shared learning and networking. The Bay Area Open Space Council also convenes workshops on topics like climate change, wildlife corridors; and then shares that information on their website and blog. Facilitating deeper explorations of some of these questions, the organization also creates working groups to develop and share best practices and incubate ideas around common challenges. These programs are seen as a valuable asset to the regional conservation dialog and allow other organizations to join in the work and align their goals and also provide a basis for organizing in support of regional policy and funding goals.

Research & Reporting:

The Bay Area Open Space Council takes a lead in facilitating the information required to effectively develop regional conservation efforts. Historically, these have included the Conservation Lands Network, a five year science-based study by over 125 organizations and individuals tasked to identify the most essential lands needed to sustain the "natural infrastructure" of the region. Recently, these materials were updated so that they continue to remain accurate, relevant and effective as a tool. Among other important resources fostered by the organization is the Bay Area Protected lands GIS database and *Critical Linkages Report* which help clarify the map of opportunity for conservation. Other reports and research including the *Park Connections* which details teenagers' perspectives on parks and open spaces and *Parks, People and Change* which looked at polling data for who supported parks are developed to support broader conservation work. The organization coordinates efforts to establish research and collect information that is critical in formulating and making the case for conservation initiatives.

Your Bay Area:

Currently the Bay Area Open Space Council is developing a new regional marketing campaign, an initiative to develop civic engagement and public education through leveraging an online platform. The goal of this initiative is to connect more people to nature and activate residents to use, engage, and support the region's parks, trails, and working lands with the ultimate objective of increasing volunteers, financial support and votes. This ambitious new program is a long term strategy in building support for conservation across diverse communities.

Executive Director

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Leadership and Strategy

- Lead the organization's legislative and policy initiatives including the facilitation of the development of common goals, the vision and strategies required to drive successful regional funding initiatives;
- Be an effective representative to a wide range of constituencies throughout the Bay Area and in Sacramento, making the case for support of regional conservation efforts and collaboration;
- Work closely with the board to ensure strong board governance and capacity, establish clear lines of communication and organizational transparency; provide well-defined opportunities for the advisory council, board committees and staff engagement; assist the board in the recruitment, selection and evaluation of board members and actively inform and engage the board in issues of importance to the operations and strategy of the organization;
- With the board president and advisory council chair, build the cohesion and collaboration of the board and advisory council, finding ways to bind the variously located members together while leveraging the value of their respective places and perspective;
- Together with the staff, board and advisory council create a new strategic plan with clear priorities and operating goals;
- Continue to manage and develop innovative tools and programs that advance the ability of regional partners and members to set clear goals and speak with a common voice about the value of Bay Area open spaces;
- Grow the organization's voice in order to amplify and extend the reach beyond traditional conservation partners. Connect local land conservation organizations with other advocates and efforts, including public health, urban growth, water resources, and climate change.

Fundraising and Communications

- Be the chief advocate and external face of the Bay Area Open Space Council; effectively represent the organization in order to increase its impact, visibility and support for its operations;
- Establish and maintain positive relationships with the board of directors and advisory council, current and potential members, actual and potential donors and key stakeholders, including state and regional agencies and elected officials, business, conservation leaders, and service organizations;
- Ensure the organization's fiscal sustainability by actively participating in fundraising including growing individual support through major donors, developing and maintaining key foundation relationships and critical contacts in local, regional, state and federal government and agencies.

Internal Leadership and Operational Management

- Provide leadership in developing programmatic, organizational and financial plans with the board, advisory council and staff to ensure consistent and timely progress on organizational goals and objectives;
- Recruit, nurture and challenge a highly-qualified and motivated professional staff; delegate specific responsibilities with appropriate authority and establish accountability; ensure that performance evaluations provide clear feedback and effective review ; foster open communications;
- In collaboration with the advisory council and other key partners, identify regional needs that are appropriate for the organization to address and bring them forth for consideration and prioritization by the board of directors;
- In collaboration with staff, develop and manage the organization's annual budget and staffing plan; implement the annual budget including both the expenditures and the realization of revenues through successful fundraising;
- Ensure that the organization's day-to-day operations and programs are smoothly and effectively administered;
- Be aware of any changing fiscal, physical and social environments and modify the organization's operations in response to those changes;
- Monitor and ensure organizational transparency and compliance with California statutes and IRS regulations governing non-profit corporations.

POSITION REQUIREMENTS

Experience

A successful executive director candidate will likely have:

- A passion for the Bay Area and significant demonstrated experience with land conservation;
- Experience effectively leading an organization or program of similar size and complexity;
- Leadership experience working in a nonprofit organization particularly in developing a board and in navigating a complex governance model;
- Experience in advocacy; capable of translating complex ideas for diverse audiences and developing relationships with an eye to short and long term strategies;
- Versed in change management; capable of leading in a nuanced environment;
- Evidence of developing and implementing effective strategy;
- A history of strong collaboration and coalition building; someone who actively seeks strategic partnerships and develops effective relationships;
- Experience as the face of an organization; well-developed interpersonal skills; superb oral and written communication skills;
- Ability to work well under pressure and adapt easily to changing situations and priorities; exercises good judgment; able to hear and value alternate opinions and make informed decisions;
- Strong financial and staff management skills; a track record of managing an effective team to produce results on time and on budget.

Attributes

- A team builder with both vision and strong management skills; one who can motivate and direct diverse partners while establishing accountability and shared success;
- Emotionally mature, someone who is both confident and competent and truly enjoys working with people;

- Someone who highlights and supports the successes of others, can easily share the spotlight and builds effective and lasting relationships;
- Solutions-oriented with attention to detail; pragmatic with an eye to the future;
- A good listener and strategist; comfortable receiving input from many sources while retaining the ability to act decisively when required;
- A hard worker, willing to be hands-on when necessary and brings optimism and a high energy level to daily work;
- Capable of managing diverse tasks, effectively delegating time and resources to achieve goals;
- Resourceful—able to bring the resources of others to collective work and build broad engagement;
- Exercises high ethical standards.

For additional details or to submit your experience for review, please contact;

Nancy Painter

Nancy@painterexecutivesearch.com

(415) 202- 6240