



**Sonoma Land Trust
Director of Philanthropy
Position Description**

Painter Executive Search is supporting Sonoma Land Trust in its search for an experienced Director of Philanthropy to increase funding and build a sustainable base of annual contributions to support their mission of conservation, stewardship and access to the beautiful places that define Sonoma County.

Since its inception in 1976, Sonoma Land Trust has protected nearly 50,000 acres of scenic, natural, agricultural and open landscapes throughout Sonoma County. Located north of San Francisco, Sonoma County is 1 million+ acres of the most beautiful landscapes in California. From the San Pablo Baylands and the Mayacamas Mountains to the stunning coastal forests and the meandering Russian River, the natural and working lands of Sonoma County form awe-inspiring beauty. 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 believes the well-being of local communities is intrinsically linked to the health of the land. Their vision for Sonoma County focuses on the land, waterways and viewsheds, but also extends to the larger community. They are committed to ensuring their projects utilize the best available science to promote ecosystem functioning and resilience to climate change, and they offer a comprehensive range of science-based natural resource planning, land protection, stewardship and outdoor recreation services.

POSITION SUMMARY

Reporting to the Executive Director (ED), the Director of Philanthropy (Director) will be responsible for the leadership, strategic direction and management of all fundraising for Sonoma Land Trust (SLT). 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 philanthropy and grow a sustainable base of support for the organization. As an important external face of the organization, the Director is expected to make a significant contribution to growing the visibility of the organization and to work closely with the Executive Director to embed fundraising strategy into daily decision-making and operations.

The Director will manage a full range of fundraising programs, including annual giving, legacy, planned and major gifts, and special project campaigns. Paramount to the Director's success will be to forge close working relationships with staff and Board colleagues, and to work collaboratively and transparently in support of shared goals. Becoming knowledgeable in all aspects of Sonoma Land Trust's mission, and programmatic, and strategic initiatives is required to fully utilize the depth of SLT's work in building long-term relationships with donors and growing support in the community.

The Director, working collaboratively, will establish a multi-year Fundraising Strategy and Operational Plan that will expand and develop the current funding base. SLT is undertaking a Brand review and will be updating the website and core messaging to align with its new Strategic Plan. As a critical part of that

process, the Director will actively voice the needs of the Development Department as the team works to fully engage current donors and broaden support from new audiences.

Recent investments in fundraising efforts have grown the Development Department to a team of six, including staff members dedicated to Planned Giving, Major Gifts and Membership, as well as increased focus on research, database development, stewardship and events. With the growth of the organization and the department, developing a cohesive team and establishing clear lines of responsibility will be important. Creating fluid communication within and between departments, and establishing fundraising strategies and clear program goals will be critical.

SLT is in a sound financial position with a strong balance sheet and an operating reserve. The organization benefits from strong support from long-term donors and legacy giving is an important source of funding. The organization is well-positioned to build the support required for the future. As part of the Fundraising Plan, significant efforts to build annual support and deepen major gift portfolios will be required to establish a sustainable base of funding for current and future programs.

Sonoma Land Trust is in the process of changing its fiscal year from calendar year to April 1–March 31 to assist in forecasting revenue for the following year's operation. SLT's 2016 operating expenses of approximately \$4 million will remain steady in 2017 while fundraising strategy is shifted from opportunistic to systematic and comprehensive. Contributed annual income is expected to grow from a projected \$2 million in 2016 to meet future operating needs over the next few years. While trends in membership, annual gifts, major gifts and planned giving are positive, significant progress in these areas will need to be achieved to meet the goal of sustainability.

Background

Although many people visit Sonoma County to enjoy the more than 400 wineries, most of them return for the beauty of the landscape. Visitors and residents alike cherish the numerous parks and trail systems throughout the county. 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. While the county continues to absorb second homeowners and new residents, land conservation continues to be widely supported and is the beneficiary of a voter-approved ¼ cent sales tax that funds the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District.

Given the shifting demographic within the county, along with changing funding models and increased requirements to fulfill its mission, SLT has adopted a new comprehensive Strategic Plan. In addition to focusing on land with high conservation values and collaboratively working with a wide range of partners to ensure land protection and stewardship, SLT is also exploring how to invite more people to appreciate and support the diverse landscapes of the county.

Current Focus and Program Highlights

Sonoma Land Trust is completing its 40th year and recently adopted a new five-year Strategic Plan. The Plan outlines a vision for Sonoma County that focuses on the land, waterways and viewsheds, but also extends to the larger community. In addition to deepening their commitment to protecting and stewarding the landscapes of the county, SLT has pledged to preserve and enhance the resilience of local ecosystems in the face of a changing climate and to safeguard the local land and water systems. The Plan also calls for an economically sustainable, financially secure organization with an endowment

and a land protection fund that enables the organization to be nimble and act swiftly when land protection opportunities arise.

Outlined in the Plan is a renewed emphasis on the land and stewardship programs; it also includes a range of strategies to increase public engagement. The continuing core programs include:

SONOMA COAST PROGRAM Protect and restore the natural and working landscapes of the Sonoma Coast to ensure the region's ecological and economic health.

WILDLIFE CORRIDOR PROGRAM Expand protection of the Marin Coast to Blue Ridge Linkage by conserving key private lands, enhancing wildlife permeability on public and private lands, and implementing land management practices that protect wildlife habitat and provide space for species to move throughout their range, especially as the climate changes.

SONOMA BAYLANDS PROGRAM Restore marshes and create linkages to other Baylands habitats, upland habitats and protected lands, and support compatible agricultural land uses through the continued implementation of the Baylands Habitat Goals Report recommendations for Sonoma County.

SONOMA VALLEY/SONOMA MOUNTAIN PROGRAM Build a connected system of protected lands that preserve biodiversity, unique and/or rare natural resources, wildlife movement and scenic vistas.

CONSERVATION EASEMENT PROGRAM Advance our use and stewardship of conservation easements by enhancing relationships with conservation easement landowners, monitoring terms of the easements and promoting beneficial private land conservation practices.

Additionally, the Strategic Plan calls for developing a set of new land and stewardship programs, including:

RESOURCE PRESERVE SYSTEM PROGRAM Develop a comprehensive program plan for SLT properties to guide stewardship activities and act as gateways for research, learning and public service.

AGRICULTURAL LAND CONSERVATION Enhance relationships with the agricultural sector in Sonoma County and determine feasible projects to undertake.

RUSSIAN RIVER WATERSHED PROGRAM Implement a core land protection and stewardship program within the Russian River Watershed and develop the program's geographic scope, conservation priorities, implementation timeline and funding sources.

The Strategic Plan also outlines a set of strategies that deepen and broaden public engagement in conservation, stewardship and recreation, utilizing the *On the Land Program* and *Resource Preserves* (properties owned and managed by SLT) as vehicles for introducing a diverse public to educational and outdoor activities.

Additionally, the Plan outlines SLT's focus on a range of funding strategies and establishes goals to develop resources from a variety of sources and for specific purposes. Specifically, it calls for growing

Annual Giving, increasing the Conservation Easement Endowment Fund by \$5 million dollars, and raising \$10 million dollars to increase the Land Protection Fund so that SLT can act swiftly when priority land opportunities arise. Additional goals are to build the Operating Reserve Fund to ensure organizational resiliency and to further develop Legacy and Planned Giving programs, as well as grant writing, to continue growing private and public funding.

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. The Director will need to demonstrate significant leadership internally as the organization adapts to strong growth, new funding needs and a changing environment. Strong skills in adapting organizational structure and building internal communications and trust are critical. Externally, the Director will be required to be an effective advocate for the organization and its programs, adept at reaching a broad range of partners, supporters and the general public.

Specific Duties

Leadership & Strategy

- Assess the current fundraising programs, staffing and operations of the department; establish a written multi-year Fundraising Strategy and Operating Plan to increase giving to a sustainable \$3–4 million annually; create, monitor and report benchmarks to ensure progress toward achieving this goal;
- 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 help 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;
- Working closely with the Executive Director and Communications Department; help direct a brand re-refresh to maintain SLT’s strong brand identity and to develop effective messaging that resonates with a broad range of prospective donors in communication through the web, social media and print;
- Utilize curiosity and openness to forge deeper understanding and substantive conversations around engaging more people in the work of SLT; support the entire organization and empower all members of staff and board as effective spokespersons and fundraisers for the organization.

Management

- Hire, mentor, motivate, evaluate and retain a high-caliber team; ensure each team member is prepared to contribute that which is required to reach individual and collective goals; hold all members accountable for their efforts and ensure they have the resources required to succeed;
- Assess and determine the most effective use of staff time and resources to ensure that progress is made in accordance with strategic priorities;
- Direct an effective and efficient 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;
- With support from staff, grow the Legacy League, Planned Giving and Major Gifts programs;

- Consider and develop additional special giving programs to achieve long-term goals of building land acquisition and stewardship-designated funds;
- Work closely with the acquisitions and program teams to facilitate successful corporate and foundation proposals and ensure appropriate reporting;
- Ensure the confidentiality and 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 on all solicitations and steward the donation and the ongoing relationship;
- Be a visible member of the community; represent Sonoma Land Trust at events, including the organization's own fundraising and membership events, as well as events at which prospective donors are likely to congregate.

Experience

A successful candidate will likely have significant experience leading fundraising teams, including the following qualifications:

- 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 and management skills with an entrepreneurial spirit; demonstrated ability to inspire and motivate staff, volunteers, donors and potential partners;
- Success developing and executing fundraising strategies for building 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

- Curious; enjoys learning and supporting the work of others;
- Genuinely enjoys engaging donors and the fundraising process;

- Confident in his or her fundraising expertise, but willing to be flexible and engage with new ideas and approaches;
- Comfortable interacting with high-level donors and patrons;
- Able to inspire confidence and trust, and to demonstrate an affinity for the mission;
- Ambitious and focused on success;
- Has high integrity and strong commitment to goals;
- Possesses high degree of emotional intelligence, self-awareness and gravitas;
- Demonstrates strong problem-solving attributes: drive, energy and creativity;
- Enjoys and appropriately deploys a sense of humor.

For additional information or to be considered for this role, please send information to:

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