



**Western Rivers Conservancy  
Executive Vice President  
Portland, Oregon  
Position Description**

***Painter Executive Search is supporting Western Rivers Conservancy (WRC) in a search for an Executive Vice President (EVP) to deepen the capacity of WRC to develop and steward land transactions along key river systems in the West.***

Founded in 1988 in Portland, Oregon, Western Rivers Conservancy is the nation's only land acquisition program dedicated solely to the protection of riverlands. WRC seeks out riverlands with high conservation values, focusing on properties that allow for a meaningful, long-term impact through land acquisition. They negotiate with willing sellers—including corporations, families and utilities—to gain control of those lands for the sake of conservation. Using creative funding strategies, they transfer the lands to public or private stewards for long-term conservation management. When it comes to conserving rivers, land acquisition is direct, tangible and effective. Western Rivers has over 30 years of experience honing their skills at identifying and securing key riverlands. While other forms of conservation can be effective, they still firmly believe that *sometimes to save a river, you have to buy it*.

Western Rivers Conservancy acquires land along river corridors to conserve critical habitat, provide public access for compatible use and enjoyment, and cooperate with other agencies and organizations to secure the health of whole ecosystems. They have protected outstanding rivers in the eleven contiguous western states: Washington, Oregon, California, Idaho, Montana, Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, Nevada, Arizona and New Mexico. Hundreds of miles of river frontage on such rivers as the Snake, Smith, Hoh, Sandy, Madison and Chetco have been protected through WRC's efforts.

Most recently WRC, together with the Yurok Tribe, has completed a 10-year effort resulting in a 47,000 acre salmon sanctuary and sustainable community forest on the lower Klamath River in California, one of the earth's biodiversity hotspots. Blue Creek, the single most important cold-water tributary on the Klamath River, is a lifeline for returning salmon and steelhead and a river sacred to the Yurok, California's largest Native American Tribe. This unprecedented transaction returns these ancestral lands to the Yurok Tribe and has been achieved through an array of creative funding mechanisms including public and private philanthropy, California's new carbon market, as well as accessing New Markets Tax Credits with support from the Opportunity Fund and U.S. Bancorp. This conservation win represents the range of creativity and flexibility that WRC applies to transactions.

WRC has set the professional standard in dealing with issues unique to river corridors - issues of resource assessment, valuation, title, funding and management. The boutique focus and specialized nature of their niche transactions have allowed WRC to remain strong and agile through many economic cycles. The results-focused culture at WRC provides the flexibility to work both opportunistically and creatively while retaining a clear mission of protecting whole river systems. WRC has established itself as a valuable and flexible partner to a wide range of local, regional and national government agencies,

private corporations, Native American tribes, family landowners and many others. Their expertise in creatively seeking funding for land transactions is deep and includes growing expertise in private market, carbon and other new market sources.

WRC currently has an operating budget of \$6 million and conservation land holdings valued at \$35 million. This position will be based in the Portland Headquarters. Periodic travel within the Western States is required in executing the role.

## **POSITION SUMMARY**

Reporting to the President, the EVP will support the President in building the capacity and effectiveness of the organization. This new role will work alongside the President and the Director of Lands to ensure the success of the deals in progress while developing opportunities for new conservation projects in key river ecosystems. The EVP will be engaged in organizational strategy and participate in envisioning and managing project budgets.

The EVP will manage his or her own portfolio of land projects, shaping purchase agreements and aligning the resources necessary to complete these transactions. The EVP will raise major gifts from individuals and foundations, as well as bring other funding partners together to realize each unique conservation transaction. The EVP will mentor a highly-seasoned staff of land transaction professionals and function at a senior level in this flexible and creative environment. While the Director of Lands will focus on tactical execution, the EVP provide a clearly articulated vision and increased fundraising activity, strategic relationship development and organizational strategy; thus, building a deeper bench for each transaction. The Director of Lands and Conservation Director will report to the EVP.

Working closely with the President, the EVP will become critical to the continuity of work and stand ready to act on behalf of WRC in the absence of, or by delegation from, the President.

## **Executive Vice President**

### **ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **Program Management and Leadership**

- Together with the President, develop and implement long-term organizational goals;
- Provide program vision and leadership; set the agenda for priority areas of focus;
- Assist and advise Project Managers as they work to:
  - Identify and communicate with stakeholders including citizen groups, environmental organizations and public agencies to identify river corridors that should be conserved through public land acquisitions;
  - Gain commitments on purchase and sales of property from landowners and purchasers;
  - Negotiate donations and purchases of riverlands from private owners, including corporations;
  - Work with public agencies (primarily state and federal) to complete the sale of riverlands to them for long-term protection and;
  - Work with landowners, appraisers, attorneys, public officials, surveyors, consultants and title companies to complete each transaction;
- Manage a personal portfolio of land transactions;
- Develop, monitor and meet budgets for specific projects and WRC's Lands program overall.

## Relationship and Fund Development

- In conjunction with Project Managers, develop local public support for land acquisition projects;
- Support WRC's overall marketing strategy by developing and maintaining good working relationships with public agencies, conservation organizations, elected officials, representatives from the private sector and the general public;
- Work with state and federal elected officials to establish public land acquisition priorities;
- Seek funding for land acquisition projects from private and public sources;
- Collaborate with the President and Director of Major Gifts to cultivate and secure gifts from private individuals;
- Collaborate with the President and Director of Foundation & Corporate Relations to prospect, cultivate and secure grant awards from foundations and corporations;
- Participate in the creation and implementation of development strategies.

## POSITION REQUIREMENTS

### Experience

A successful Executive Vice President will likely have:

- A passion for land conservation and an ability to communicate the importance of preserving river ecosystems;
- Significant managerial experience, as well as demonstrated desire and capacity to mentor;
- Substantial experience negotiating and completing conservation real estate and/or land transactions; as well as a working knowledge of real property and tax law and land use planning;
- Proven capacity for shaping financially sound transactions; proven negotiation and deal skills;
- A history of developing conservation opportunities through research, relationship and resource development;
- Demonstrated ability to work effectively with and influence a broad range of people including community activists, landowners, policymakers, the media, politicians, business leaders, and government representatives;
- Excellent communication skill in writing, verbal presentation and negotiation;
- Clearly demonstrated success in personally cultivating, soliciting and securing major gifts;
- Proven ability to develop and implement strategies to attract major donors and partners;
- Political savvy and experience navigating the complex political landscape.

### Attributes

- Dynamic and self-directed, with the ability to think strategically and creatively;
- Emotionally mature, someone who is both confident and competent and truly enjoys working with people; down-to-earth and light-hearted;
- Strong track record of demonstrating initiative and managing results in a complex environment;
- Tenacious, able to respond creatively to challenges; a person who can see how to move things forward;
- Solutions-oriented with attention to detail; pragmatic with an eye to the future;
- A hard worker, willing to be hands-on and brings optimism and a high energy level to daily work;
- Exercises high ethical standards.

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

Nancy Painter

[Nancy@painterexecutivesearch.com](mailto:Nancy@painterexecutivesearch.com)

(415) 202- 6240