



**Kenyon College
Philander Chase Conservancy
Director
Position Description**

Painter Executive Search is supporting Kenyon College (Kenyon) in its search for a Director for the Philander Chase Conservancy. The new Director will lead the conservation efforts to protect the rural character of the region while engaging the campus community in best practices in land conservation.

Philander Chase Conservancy (Conservancy) located in Knox County, Ohio was formed in 2000 to protect the natural beauty of the farms, woodlands, waters, and open spaces surrounding Kenyon College and to preserve the rural character of the region at large. The pastoral quality of life and the stunning scenic views from campus are an important and enduring element in a student's experience at Kenyon.

Knox County, while still predominately small family farms, is under increased pressure for development due to the growth of Columbus, the nearest large city. Recently Intel Corporation announced the largest economic development project in Ohio history. The plan to build up to eight factories and invest over \$100 billion dollars in the greater Columbus area over the next decade puts the Village of Gambier and the surrounding College Township within the path of development. Knox County now has increased urgency to engage in critical planning and conservation work.

To date the Conservancy has protected over 5,800 acres within a five-mile radius of the College and will continue to selectively protect lands important to preserving the agricultural nature of the area, the viewshed of the College and properties with unique ecological, historical and community value. This leadership transition comes at a critical moment and requires a strong leader to inspire and engage the community and the College in thoughtful explorations and tangible projects that will ensure the region, its beauty and productivity, remains vibrant in perpetuity.

The path ahead for the Conservancy includes the continued use of traditional land conservation tools combined with maximizing the unique opportunities of a land trust affiliated with a liberal arts college. Kenyon is believed to be the only college or university in the country to have a dedicated land trust. College leadership is committed to environmental education and the student body is increasingly concerned with sustainability. This unique relationship between the College and the Conservancy has significant potential to activate and deepen student understanding of and engagement with land conservation work including local policy and planning, habitat restoration, research and local adaptations for carbon capture and climate resiliency. The Conservancy's intention to bring best practices to their work has been evolved through the process of accreditation with the Land Trust Accreditation Commission. Just this month it was granted this important designation.

POSITION AND ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

The Director, reporting to the President of Kenyon College and accountable to the Conservancy's Board of Directors through the Chair of the Board, will lead the execution of Conservancy's new Strategic Plan.

Building upon a reputation as a trusted and reliable partner in the local community, the Director will work with willing landowners to ensure the rural nature of the county remains in perpetuity. The Director will be a partner to farmers, able to speak the language of soil, crops and the values that flow from long-time stewardship of cultivated land. The Director will grow conservation expertise and increase the value of the organization as a partner in best practices, develop funding opportunities for both conservation and agriculture easements, and occasional fee-title transactions as well as funding for ongoing operations and programs.

The President and the Board seek a forward-thinking leader to help shape and articulate the vision for land conservation in the region and increase opportunities to directly engage students, academic partners and those affiliated with the college in land work. The Conservancy seeks to deepen its relationships to partners across the campus and collaborate in conservation efforts with academic and administrative departments, the Brown Family Environmental Center (BFEC), the Kenyon Farm, the Environmental Studies Program, the Office of Green Initiatives and with all those engaged in Kenyon's conservation and sustainability efforts. The Conservancy seeks to broaden its participation in planning and regional conservation with the village of Gambier, College Township, nearby cities such as Mt. Vernon, Knox County as well as other statewide efforts. The Director will also need to continue to evolve relationships with other conservation organizations including the local Owl Creek Conservancy, the Ohio Department of Agriculture, and the Knox County Park District among others. The Director will advance regional conservation and stewardship efforts by seeking out more opportunities for partnership and leveraging those for student learning.

The Director will work closely with a dynamic and committed Board. The Board is made up of Kenyon alumni who live around the country and other local residents who hold a strong love of place. Their professional expertise and personal networks are a powerful support to the Director in advancing the goals of the Conservancy. The Director will build and engage the Board and together they will achieve the strategic and fundraising goals of the current plan.

Working most closely with the small, talented staff of the Conservancy, the Director will maximize the impact of their work. The Director will be the land conservation expert and have responsibility for leading all Conservancy functions required for continued accreditation including relationship and transaction development, high-quality conservation easements, monitoring, land stewardship and the development of appropriate financial and conservation related records. The Director will be supported by Kenyon College staff in developing increasingly robust fundraising, budget, financial tracking, and the reporting required for good management, annual audits, grant development and funding compliance. The Director will need exceptional communication skills, a broad understanding of land use and conservation practice, as well as savvy interpersonal skills to navigate the various departments, initiatives, and resources available to support the Conservancy's efforts.

The staff of the Conservancy, including the Director, are Kenyon employees and are governed by Kenyon Human Resource policies and are granted Kenyon benefits. Use of Woollam House as office space and other general operating support is governed by a Memorandum of Understanding between the College and the Conservancy. A small annual program budget is provided by the College. The Conservancy has

designated funds set aside for general land conservation, legal defense and has other small endowments for specifically designated purposes.

Under its program umbrella, The Conservancy established the Kokosing Nature Preserve (KNP), a dedicated green burial ground. The KNP is a stand-alone 501(c)13 (cemetery corporation) governed by its own small Board of Directors which includes the Director of the Conservancy. Currently one Conservancy staff member dedicates time to directly support this program, but the nature of this work requires additional staff support at times. The preserve offers a natural burial option on twenty-three acres of native prairie and woodland. KNP was envisioned as an opportunity to create a dedicated income stream for conservation and has a permanent endowment fund for future care and maintenance of the property. KNP is still evolving its potential conservation and financial contributions.

Philander Chase Conservancy has helped to protect nearly 6,000 acres within a five-mile radius of the Kenyon campus. Twenty-seven properties totaling nearly 2700 acres are in permanent conservation easements. Nineteen properties (over 2400 acres) are held in agricultural easements in partnership with the Ohio Department of Agriculture with the Conservancy holding the easement monitoring responsibilities. Nine properties are held in fee title by the Conservancy and another 8 properties are held in fee title by Kenyon College through the Conservancy's efforts. Three of Kenyon's properties have conservation easements held by the Conservancy. The Conservancy also holds a number of rights and options for various parcels. Currently land held in fee-title by the Conservancy is typically leased to local farmers. Some properties held in fee title are intended for longer term purposes, others are expected to be sold with easements at a later time.

Relationship to Kenyon College and Kenyon MOU

Philander Chase Conservancy is a 501(c)3 membership organization with one member; the sole member is Kenyon College, represented by the President of the College. The relationship between the Conservancy and the College is managed under a signed Memorandum of Understanding. Kenyon College provides substantial operating support to the Conservancy including facilities on campus, staff salaries and benefits, financial operating support, communications and fundraising support. The President of Kenyon College is responsible for reviewing the Director under Kenyon's performance review policies. The Kenyon College Board of Trustees appoints the Conservancy's Board of Directors at the Conservancy's request. There is a designated point person in the Kenyon Advancement office to support the Conservancy's fundraising efforts including prospect review, development of solicitations and general portfolio development and tracking. Finance, communications (both technology such as phones and wireless, as well as marketing and communication services), building operations, Campus Security and Human Resource services are all provided to the Conservancy under this agreement.

Strategic Plan

The Conservancy Board of Directors working with the Director and staff adopted a new five-year Strategic Plan in October of 2021. Beginning in 2019, as the Conservancy approached its 20th anniversary, the Conservancy Board of Directors undertook a planning process with outside consultants that included research, stakeholder interviews and surveys from which the current plan was formed. The plan sets forth the following broad priorities and includes more detailed initiatives and goals for each priority:

- Strategic Land Conservation. In keeping with the mission, continue to selectively conserve strategic properties within a five-mile radius of Gambier and the College.
- Optimal Land Use and Management. Realize the highest potential and best use for Conservancy fee and easement properties within the context of broad landscape, regional, and local land use patterns, and goals. Employ sustainable, state-of-the-art stewardship practices for Conservancy properties.
- Promote Kenyon's environmental literacy goal, as defined in Kenyon College's Strategic Plan "Foundations For Kenyon's Third Century."
- Network of Partners. Strengthen and diversify the network of Conservancy partners in order to more broadly engage with the College and community to accomplish shared conservation goals.
- Organizational Capacity. Recruit strong leadership, ensure adequate staffing, build a robust, sustainable financial foundation, communicate the Conservancy's vision and progress to all constituencies, and ensure Conservancy's Board and staff conduct business at the highest standards of professional conduct.

DIRECTOR: ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Leadership and Strategy

- Be a visible leader; represent the Conservancy broadly and with integrity, extending its reputation as a trusted partner both on campus and in the community;
- Develop a deep understanding of local land use issues and agricultural practices and build warm, strong relationships with local landowners;
- Be an effective advocate for land conservation and smart growth, work pragmatically to ensure growing enthusiasm for conservation, particularly of agricultural lands;
- Work in close collaboration with partners across the campus to position the Conservancy and the Kokosing Nature Preserve as resources, laboratories, and classrooms to advance the educational mission of Kenyon;
- Collaboratively develop opportunities for more students to directly experience land conservation and stewardship practices in action, engage the academic community in fully utilizing the Conservancy for educational purposes and inspire new possibilities for enriched learning;
- Work together with local, regional, state, and federal partners to pursue collaborations and resources to advance local and regional conservation goals;
- Work closely with the Board to ensure strong Board governance and capacity, build opportunities for strong committee work and staff engagement; assist the Board in the recruitment and evaluation of board members and in succession planning and engage the Board to address issues of importance to the operations and strategy of the organization;
- Facilitate and participate in meetings of the Board of Directors and standing committees, assist the Board and committees by preparing reports and with other support when requested;
- Review and execute the roadmap to achieve financial neutrality allowing the Conservancy to contribute to the greater educational and environmental priorities of the College and have more agency in their work.

Land Protection

- Oversee land transactions, monitoring and enforcement, and ensure compliance with the highest standards of land trust practice;
- Establish and maintain positive and productive relationships with landowners; work directly with landowners to discuss conservation and agricultural programs and negotiate mutually agreeable conservation projects and foster those relationships over time;
- Establish and maintain effective working relationships with organizations and campus programs and initiatives involved in land stewardship, preservation, and land use planning;

- Work collaboratively and with humility in engaging the leadership of villages, townships, counties, and municipalities in advancing conservation efforts;
- In collaboration with the land committee of the Board, present and prioritize land protection and agricultural conservation projects;
- Facilitate and/or prepare, review, and finalize all documents necessary to consummate land conservation projects with advice from outside counsel as needed; ensure their accuracy and completeness and adherence to best practices.

Fundraising, Communications and Partnership Development

- Be the external face of the Conservancy; effectively represent the organization in order to increase its impact, visibility, and support for its operations and ongoing conservation efforts;
- Work in collaboration with the Kenyon Development office to identify and steward relationships to raise the funds for the current land conservation and stewardship goals, maintain sound operations, reduce reliance on Kenyon's financial support and build sustainability for the long-term stewardship of easements and properties held;
- Coordinate and engage the Board and staff in raising the profile of the Conservancy with prospective donors, alumni, and community members;
- Coordinate with the Board, staff, and others in the planning and organizing of annual fundraising and partner recognition activities, alumni events, and other opportunities for campus visibility;
- Oversee the review, editing and submission of grant applications for public or private funds coordinating with the College as appropriate;
- Utilize the resources of the Kenyon Advancement and Communications departments and support from the Board, to facilitate the development of compelling messaging, stories, and a strong case for support to be incorporated in all Green Initiative and Alumni newsletters and magazines; build social media content as well as print and press opportunities;
- Work to develop open communication and enthusiastically engage the academic community in the varied work of land conservation; support mutual curriculum development, research proposals, student internships and broadly increase learning opportunities for students.

Internal Leadership and Operational Management

- Oversee Conservancy's operations and programs ensuring progress toward overarching goals;
- Recruit, nurture and cultivate a motivated professional staff; delegate specific responsibilities with appropriate authority; foster open, positive communications;
- Collaborate on the development of KNP to maximize its value as a model of conservation and increase its positive financial impact on the Conservancy;
- Work with the Board and the Accounting Office to develop the budget, financial, risk and reporting required to meet accreditation standards as well as legal, regulatory and grant compliance;
- Work with the Kenyon Accounting Office to develop an annual operating budget for presentation to the Board and ensure that the finances are managed appropriately to the approved budget.

POSITION REQUIREMENTS

A successful Director candidate will likely have:

Experience

- Passion for a rural lifestyle; ideally, experience with agriculture or working lands;

- Experience in land conservation particularly with land and easement purchases, stewardship, funding sources and monitoring requirements;
- Experience as the face of an organization; well-developed interpersonal skills; superb oral and written communication skills, able to present ideas clearly and persuasively; capable of developing credibility with both the academic community and local farmers;
- A history of strong collaboration; someone who is trustworthy with strong follow-up; capable of balancing individual, campus and regional priorities with grace and clarity;
- Experience leading an organization of similar size; ideally with experience reporting to a nonprofit Board or with an academic program;
- Experience engaging with academics and others with educational expertise to collaboratively shape learning opportunities for students;
- Evidence of developing and implementing an effective strategy; able to create a compelling vision and the relationship and capacity building required for successful execution;
- Demonstrated leadership; able to foster teamwork within the organization, across the campus, and among the local community to develop local solutions and achieve mutual goals.
- BS/BA degree required; advanced degree preferred.

Attributes

- Someone who is humble in their work and derives strength from their commitment to preserve rural and agricultural land and create sustainability for the communities dependent upon them;
- Culturally astute and able to respectfully communicate and work with diverse groups of stakeholders including farmers, professors and college administrators, regional planners and local officials, students, and others critical to land and education work;
- A team builder with both vision and strong tactical skills; one who can motivate and engage a wide range of partners to accomplish important work and to share collective successes;
- Emotionally mature with a good sense of humor, someone who is at ease, confident and competent and truly enjoys working with people;
- Someone excited by student engagement and bringing real-world opportunities to the campus;
- Solutions-oriented with attention to detail; pragmatic with an eye to the future;
- A good listener; understands learning comes in many shapes;
- Resourceful—able to set priorities and act opportunistically;
- Exercises high ethical standards with honesty, directness, and a good-natured approachability.

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

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Kenyon College is an equal opportunity employer and applications from members of all underrepresented groups are encouraged. It is the College's policy to evaluate qualified applicants without regard to race, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, physical and/or mental disability, age, religion, medical condition, veteran status, marital status, or any other characteristic protected by institutional policy or state, local, or federal law. Kenyon College has a strong commitment to supporting diversity, equity and inclusion.