Executive Search for the Executive Director
Conservation Trust for North Carolina
April 2017
Conservation Trust for North Carolina
Position Description: Executive Director
http://www.ctnc.org/
Applications will be accepted until May 19, 2017 or until position is filled.

The Conservation Trust for North Carolina (CTNC) seeks an Executive Director with a passion for land conservation and a deep appreciation for its benefits to the people of North Carolina today and to future generations. The Executive Director will be leading an organization with a strong reputation for its integrity and willingness to stay innovative and forward-thinking including taking a leadership role in promoting diversity and equity in conservation and access.

Background
Celebrating its 25th year of service, CTNC is unique among its national peers serving as both a leader, supporter and advocate for the North Carolina land trust community while also being itself a land trust. In 1996, the Governor’s “Year of the Mountains” Commission asked that CTNC lead and coordinate efforts to preserve the Blue Ridge Parkway, a national treasure and economic engine for western North Carolina. Its mission is to “Save the places you love – streams, forests, farms, scenic vistas, wildlife habitat, parks, and trails – by working with landowners, local land trusts, and communities so that the people of North Carolina can enjoy safe drinking water, clean air, fresh local foods, and recreational opportunities for generations to come.” CTNC fulfills its mission by protecting natural and scenic lands along the Blue Ridge Parkway, assisting local land trusts so that they can protect more land in the communities they serve, and connecting people, especially young adults and underserved populations, to the outdoors.

CTNC is one of 317 land trusts from across the country that are accredited by the national Land Trust Accreditation Commission, certifying that they meet national standards for excellence. To date, CTNC has protected 33,376 acres in 64 Parkway locations, and supports 23 independent land trusts across the state with resources that include technical assistance, loans for land and easement purchases, grant funding, advocacy with local, state and national policy makers, and building public awareness. Statewide, NC land trusts have conserved more than 428,936 acres in 2,751 places; many of these projects have been supported by $14 million in grants and $12 million in loans distributed by CTNC. CTNC is the organizer and convener for the NC Land Trust Council.

CTNC consistently positions itself to take on challenges and test new strategies that will benefit the land trusts it serves. There is no shortage of challenges including responding to climate change, the loss of land to development, and responding to the government retreat from funding and making the environment a priority. CTNC has invested heavily in innovative programs to create a conservation family that includes and values people from all racial and ethnic groups and income levels, and urban and rural parts of the state, to provide all people access to nature, and to grow the next generation of conservation leaders who represent the diversity of our state. This year, 109 young adults will be employed full time through CTNC’s three paid programs: North Carolina Youth Conservation Corps, Diversity in Conservation Internship Program, and the AmeriCorps program.

A 21-member Board governs the organization, augmented by a 36-member Honorary Board comprising former Board members, conservation-minded philanthropists, former legislators and conservation leaders. The Executive Director leads a dedicated staff of 12, several of whom have been with the organization for more than a decade. The leadership team includes the Associate Director, Senior Associate, Finance Director, Development Director, and the Communications Director. Financially, CTNC
is well positioned for future growth. Its FY16-17 budget is $1,709,000, and has $224,000 in operating reserves and $1,402,000 in long-term reserves.

CTNC’s location in Raleigh puts it near the state’s General Assembly and governing agencies as well as positioning it in a geographically central location for easy access to all regions of the state.

Position Highlights
CTNC’s next Executive Director will inherit a well-run, highly-regarded and stable organization with a Board and staff who place a high value on integrity, trust, collaboration, honest discussion, excellent planning and thoughtful action. It is a supportive, inclusive, family-friendly workplace where staff and Board members work hard and enjoy the good fortune of being part of an organization where taking hikes and being with others who love the natural world is a valued aspect of their success. The organizational culture has been important to CTNC’s success, the longevity of its staff and the strong commitment of its Board. CTNC’s Executive Director must be a good fit with this culture, and be a leader who can continue to nurture and develop it.

Building strong and effective relationships will be at the core of what the Executive Director will do to be successful internally and externally. Establishing and maintaining strong partnerships with donors, local land trusts, community groups, other nonprofits, legislators, government officials and others is key to CTNC’s success. The next leader for CTNC will be highly visible and must be a confident public speaker and face of the organization, yet also able to step back as needed to allow the professional staff to do its work and to regularly bring attention and recognition to staff accomplishments. The Executive Director must also excel at diplomacy, keeping interactions with CTNC’s partner land trusts respectful, cooperative, and always pursued with the goal of helping both CTNC and the local land trusts meet their missions. While CTNC often employs lobbyists to maintain contact with legislators and legislative staff, the Executive Director will play a key role in these interactions, promoting sound policies supporting issues critical to land trusts and the environmental communities.

CTNC was founded 25 years ago and the organization is looking towards its next 25 years with a leader who can think and act strategically. The timing could not be better for a new Executive Director as the organization’s current strategic plan concludes at the end of 2017 and a new plan will need to be created. The Executive Director will bring fresh perspectives along with his/her own experience to the process, and will work closely with the Board and staff to set the organization’s strategic direction. CTNC’s next leader should be a creative collaborator who can appreciate the value of existing assets and leverage them to make CTNC a better and stronger organization. The dedicated, highly experienced and mission-oriented staff and motivated Board are ready to move forward, and they need a visionary leader who can effectively lead the charge, implement and evaluate progress and make changes where required.

CTNC is doing well with its current fundraising, yet there is significant untapped potential in its existing donor base. The Board intentionally agreed to deficit spending this year to bring on important new positions in development and communications designed to facilitate growth in funding. Of the $2,128,000 raised in FY15-16, $544,000 (25%) came from individuals, $1,449,000 (68%) from government entities and foundations and $137,000 (7%) from earned income such as land trust council fees, rental income and workshop fees. In addition, a significant portion, $480,000 (27%) came from two key major donors who have been consistent donors for many years but whose future support is not guaranteed.

The successful candidate will be a talented and proven fundraiser who is comfortable and successful making five, six and seven-figure “asks” and is driven to exceed fundraising goals. The new Executive
Director will work closely with the Development Director to expand the discovery and cultivation of new donors with a goal of further diversifying the funding base, increasing major gifts and emphasizing creative ways to attract millennials and communities of color and plan for the eventual loss of funding from its two key major donors. An assessment of the organization’s fundraising program completed in early 2017 by moss+ross and an assessment of its communications program planned for the near future, will be of great benefit to the new Executive Director. CTNC recently secured a grant to initiate a collaborative statewide communications program to raise awareness among the state’s citizens, land owners, legislators and local decision makers about the significant role of land trusts in conservation.

A strategic and dynamic leader with a collaborative temperament, who believes deeply in the importance of land conservation and its value to people from all walks of life, will find this an excellent opportunity to start high and further raise the bar on land conservation success for now and for the generations to come.

Responsibilities

Leadership

* Provides visionary, strategic and operational leadership while embracing CTNC’s mission, values and direction; ensures that best practices are followed throughout the organization.
* Makes certain that the organization’s core values are reflected in all that it does.
* Assures that the organization has a mission-driven long-range strategy and plan with clear and attainable work goals; monitors results and keeps the Board apprised of progress and challenges.
* Works with Board and staff to ensure the organization has the resources required to be financially healthy and maintain adequate reserves.
* Provides leadership in developing program, organizational and financial plans with the Board of Directors and staff, and carries out plans and policies authorized by the Board.
* Ensures that the organization meets its goals for diversity and inclusion in its Board, staff, program work, and relationships with partner organizations.
* Establishes strong collaborative working relationships with local land trusts and a diverse array of stakeholder organizations.
* Keeps the organization and NC Land Trust Council informed of national, state and local trends and policies.
* Sets the tone in creating a safe, productive, and healthy work environment for staff and volunteers.
* Responsible for the recruitment, employment, and release of all personnel, in accordance with approved personnel policies. Maintains a climate which attracts, keeps, and motivates a diverse staff of top quality people.
* Provides leadership for an effective management team and ensures that performance expectations for all positions are clear and that all employees receive regular evaluations.
* Maintains and expands relationships with state thought leaders, political leaders and other people who may influence or have an effect on CTNC and the land trust community.
* Ensures staff and volunteers have the best training the budget can afford and the support they need to excel in their positions.

Fundraising/Communications/Marketing

* Supervises and actively collaborates with the Development Director and other responsible staff in the creation of a diversified fundraising strategy with an emphasis on continued growth of annual gifts and a major gift pipeline of individuals, foundations, corporations, other organizations and government agencies.
• Actively manages a personal portfolio of top donors and prospects, including cultivation and solicitation, and encourages and supports fundraising activities by the Board.
• Participates in membership and major donor recruitment, retention and stewardship events.
• Serves as the organization’s lead spokesperson, representing the programs and point of view of the organization to elected officials, government agencies, media, stakeholders, and other organizations.
• Supervises and collaborates with the Communications Director and other responsible staff to publicize the activities of the organization and its programs and goals, through traditional and social media, as part of a long-term strategic communications and public awareness campaign.
• Develops a thorough knowledge of CTNC’s history, major accomplishments and challenges, key leaders and important funders, and its role within the NC and national conservation communities.

Finance and Operations
• Possesses a thorough knowledge of the organization’s financial details and status.
• Develops and maintains sound financial practices with effective internal controls for the protection of organizational assets.
• Works with the staff, Finance Committee, and the Board in preparing an annual organizational budget and ensures that the organization operates within budget guidelines.
• Maintains official records and documents, and ensures timely compliance with federal, state and local laws and regulations as well as with funders’ reporting requirements.

Programs
• Monitors and evaluates all programs to ensure they function effectively and efficiently toward achieving the organization’s mission and adhere to established goals.
• Works with program directors to identify and respond to future needs and opportunities and set new goals.
• Maintains a working knowledge of significant developments and trends in the conservation field.

Board of Directors
• Keeps the Board fully informed on the condition of the organization and all important factors influencing it.
• Provides accurate and timely reports and information necessary for the board to make informed decisions.
• Plays an active role in the recruitment and development of new Board members.
• Assists the Board in creating an active culture of philanthropy through individual giving and participation in fundraising and awareness activities.
• Works with individual Board members to maximize each member’s contribution to the success of the organization.

Education and Preferred Qualifications
• Bachelor’s degree required; higher degree a plus.
• Five or more years in a top leadership role in a complex organization with proven experience in improving its programs and operations.
• Knowledge of natural resource conservation and leadership experience in a natural resource or conservation-related organization is preferred, but not required.
• Passion and commitment for CTNC’s mission and its importance to the people of North Carolina.
Strong cultural competency with a history of working effectively with all people irrespective of their history, economic status, challenges, race, gender, educational level or sexual orientation; belief in the importance of diversity and equity and a history of creating diverse and inclusive organizations.

Seasoned organizational leader and manager with a reputation for integrity and a track record of creating and nurturing effective, collaborative work environments built on trust, clear expectations and accountability.

Proven ability to work effectively with a nonprofit board of directors and to influence, engage and build long-term relationships with a wide range of donors and key stakeholders.

Demonstrated success leading a staff of equal or greater size in a productive and healthy team work environment.

Diplomatic and trusted; leads by example, excellent listener and facilitator.

Politically savvy; experience working with elected officials and government staff, capacity to establish, build and manage alliances and effective collaborations that make strategic, programmatic, or financial sense for the organization.

Proven record of making difficult decisions when necessary.

Exceptional writer and excellent communicator with the ability to listen and engage, who can inspire, educate and move people to action as a public speaker, in personal meetings, and in written form.

Experienced networker, enthusiastic about making connections, attending events and being visible in places that benefit the organization.

Strategic, with exceptional planning and management skills; results- and action-oriented. Sets and exceeds ambitious goals, meets deadlines and measures performance.

Fundraising excellence; personal experience raising significant gifts from individuals, businesses and foundations, and a history of securing federal, state and local government grants and contracts.

Creative thinker able to visualize new ways of doing things and to act on them, while at the same time being reflective and thoughtful when taking risks; knows how to sustain new action and scale new ideas and programs.

Emotional maturity, energetic, creative, confidence in abilities, and a sense of humor.

Willing and able to travel statewide, and nationally on occasion.

Able to work evening hours and weekends when necessary.

Compensation: Commensurate with experience and abilities and reflective of salary levels in nonprofit organizations.

To apply: Submit one document that includes your cover letter (providing your salary requirements and how you learned about the position) and your resume and send via email to:

Mr. Ray Owens  
Board President/Chair, Search Committee  
Conservation Trust for North Carolina  
CTNCSearch@mossandross.com

Applications will be accepted until May 19, 2017 or until the position is filled. Conservation Trust for North Carolina is an Equal Opportunity Employer and values diversity in its workforce.

Writing samples, a short presentation to the Search Committee and five references will be required from finalists. Academic, credit and criminal checks will be conducted before a final offer is made.

The consulting firm of moss+ross (www.mossandross.com) has been retained to assist with the search.