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Ventura Land Trust Executive Director Job Description

Date: April 2021

Reports To: Board of Trustees

Opportunity: Ventura Land Trust is seeking a strategic and visionary executive leader, skilled organizational manager and experienced community builder, fundraiser, and advocate who can successfully advance the mission of permanently protecting the land, water, wildlife and scenic beauty of the Ventura region for current and future generations.

Summary: Under the direction and oversight of the Board of Trustees (the Board), the Executive Director is responsible for the overall leadership, management, operations, planning, budgeting, development, communications, membership and outreach of Ventura Land Trust (VLT).

About us: We are a 501(c)(3) accredited land trust that has experienced recent rapid growth due to land acquisitions, community interest in local trails and conservation, and an expansion of our educational programs. Founded 18 years ago, the Trust's property started with just a few acres along the Ventura River.

In 2020, VLT swelled to nearly 4,000 acres as we were able to close escrow on two properties in the hills and canyons adjacent to the city of Ventura. This past year we opened the 2,100-acre Harmon Canyon that now has miles of multi-use trails, ocean and mountain views, and is overseen by conservation staff and docent volunteers. Another similar acreage overlooking the city awaits amenities before it too, can help serve a grateful public.

We currently have an operating budget of approximately \$1 million and a staff of 21 with 8 full time and 13 part time employees. In addition to the Board of Trustees we have a committee structure that includes Development/Communications, Education, Finance, Land, and Stewardship as well as an Advisory Council and an hoc Ventura River Task Force. A strong volunteer docent program has also been established.

What we do: In addition to acquisition of lands for public benefit we also perform habitat restoration, invasive species removal, trash clean-ups, homeless issues, trail building, and education of youth to college-aged stewards through our education programs.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities

- Executive Director leadership is subject to the direction and oversight of the Board and consistent with the Articles, Bylaws and Policies of VLT. The Executive Director is responsible for the day-to-day administration of all programs, projects and activities, as well as its financial, human, and other supporting resources.

- Assists and supports the Trustees in the performance of their duties; along with other duties as may be assigned by the Board as a whole or its Executive Committee.
- Implements policies established by the Board; assists in the formulation of these policies; fosters VLT's mission; assists in the development of long-range plans; and prepares annual budgets and work plans.
- Responsible for maintaining, organizing and preserving all records, including but not limited to, financial, project, personnel, and time records. The Executive Director prepares annual work plans consistent with the Strategic Plan.
- Provides regular progress reports of programs and projects to the Board and advises it of significant issues as they arise.

Specific Responsibilities:

- **Leadership:** Provides leadership which enables VLT to continue its mission; keeps programming on task with respect to evolving mission, goals, strategies and objectives; and develops and maintains good relationships with the Board. Assists the Board in defining and fulfilling its responsibilities to advance the mission of the organization.
- **Strategic Planning and Policy Development:** Assists the Board in the development of a vision for the future of VLT and updating of the Strategic Plan; assists Board in the development of policies and ensures implementation to ensure that all programs, projects and activities are carried out in accordance with established policies and the strategic plan.
- **Development and Fundraising:** VLT currently has 2 active capital campaigns and is working to establish an operational endowment. The new Executive Director will review and implement the ongoing development strategy with the goal of fully funding the 2 recent acquisitions and establishing stable ongoing funding which will include actively pursuing grants (including government grants), annual gifts, legacy gifts, corporate, foundation and major donor contributions; and special fundraising events.
- **Program/Project Management:** Both personally and through staff manages and oversees all programs, projects and activities, including but not limited to annual work planning, allocating financial and human resources, monitoring progress, proactively identifying and dealing with opportunities and obstacles; and measuring and reporting accomplishments.
- **Financial Management:** Oversees all financial functions including those necessary for accounting, auditing, budgeting, financial analysis, capital asset and property management and payroll in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, and all other applicable rules and guidelines; and manages the budget and endowments to maximize earnings.
- **Human Resources Management:** Is responsible either directly or through staff for the hiring, evaluation, and dismissal of all staff, mentors volunteers; builds group cohesiveness; encourages cooperation; fosters and practices good communication; recognizes and rewards individual and team accomplishments; shares success and rewards; positively manages stress and conflict; and commits to ongoing learning;
- **Government Relations:** Directs government relations and activities; keeps current on issues that affect VLT; maintains good relationships with city, county, state and federal agencies and other organizations that have an interest in land preservation.
- **Communications:** Leads and manages through staff the external communications efforts to increase the visibility of VLT with the public and increase strategic media exposure; coordinates events; recruits volunteers to help as needed for outings, events, committees and special projects; increases and strengthens partnerships within the community. Seeks opportunities to

participate in and speak at events and display VLT materials; and works with affiliated groups in support of the mission.

- **Membership:** Leads and manages through staff membership development efforts; maintains membership records; keeps members informed of issues affecting VLT; and builds and maintains good member relations.
- **Committee Involvement:** Works with and occasionally attends all committees and Advisory Council, supports committees with appropriate staff support and financial resources.

Core Competencies:

- **Job Knowledge:** Understands and keeps current on the technical aspects of managing a nonprofit Land Trust; the duties and responsibilities of the position; and the development, policy and outreach of the organization.
- **Professional Engagement:** Participates in professional associations supporting Land Trusts and Land Conservation Agencies and continues to be well informed of issues affecting land trusts.
- **Organizational Management:** Is familiar with the basic principles of managing people and organizations; able to manage a team and delegate responsibilities accordingly.
- **Financial Management:** Understands how to use effective systems of internal controls to account for and report all receipts and expenditures of funds; knows how to read standard financial reports such as profit and loss statements and balance sheets.
- **Leadership and Initiative:** Thinks strategically; able to create and communicate a vision of the future and motivate people toward its realization; provides leadership and strategic planning internally, externally and with the Board; displays initiative in developing action plans and resolving problems as they occur; has strong interpersonal skills and abilities; can organize and deploy resources to effectively achieve organizational goals and objectives.
- **Development and Fundraising:** Must have a strong background in fundraising and development for nonprofit organizations.
- **Communications:** Has strong writing and speaking skills; able to communicate effectively with multiple internal and external audiences with varying backgrounds and interests; can clearly and succinctly present and analyze issues and potential actions orally and in writing.
- **Education and/or Experience:** Must possess the knowledge, skills and qualities described above with at least five years' experience in nonprofit or related operational and financial management, business, government, or legal. A background and experience in land conservation or preservation is highly desirable but an applicant with significant experience in a related area and outstanding examples of success in the duties, responsibilities, and competencies desired is strongly encouraged to apply.

Compensation: Salary is commensurate with knowledge, abilities, and experience.

To apply: Please submit a letter of interest and resume to the Selection Committee at: executivesearch@venturlandtrust.org. Applications will be accepted until May 28, 2021.

For more information or to more fully understand the position please contact Board President Mark Watkins at: 805-402-1551