

Bay Area Open Space Council (BAOSC)

Executive Director

Position Description

The Bay Area Open Space Council is seeking a dynamic, innovative and visionary Executive Director to build on the organization's success and lead the Bay Area to a sustainable future that integrates healthy ecosystems, healthy communities and a healthy economy.

The Bay Area Open Space Council (BAOSC) is a unique regional coalition of over 65 land trusts, public agencies, cities and conservation organizations working in 10 counties across the San Francisco Bay Area to permanently protect and steward open space, parks, trails and agricultural lands. Since its founding twenty-two years ago, the Council has collaborated with its member organizations to set and execute a conservation vision for the San Francisco Bay Area, leading to the protection of over one million acres of open space, wildlife habitat, parks, farmland, streams and wetlands. The current challenging economic climate has reduced public support for conservation programs, spurring the growth of innovative new conservation partnerships and models throughout the Bay Area. This is an exciting time to assume this leadership role and guide the Council as the organization evolves and grows to support large scale conservation efforts and craft and implement a vision for a sustainable Bay Area. The ideal candidate will have a record of visionary and collaborative leadership, excellent nonprofit management experience, superb fundraising and board development abilities, and a passion for conservation. Now more than ever, the Bay Area needs the leadership of the Bay Area Open Space Council and a new Executive Director to imagine, coordinate and achieve sustainable conservation efforts and secure funding to implement them.

Position Overview

The Executive Director (ED), under the guidance of the Executive Committee of its members manages and leads all aspects of BAOSC. The BAOSC is currently a fiscally sponsored project of the San Francisco Parks Alliance. The Executive Committee of BAOSC has recently decided to file for incorporation and anticipates official 501c3 status in the coming year. The reporting relationship of the ED will transfer to the Board of Directors through the President of the Board upon incorporation. This critical transition will provide the platform for increased impact for BAOSC.

The Executive Director will have overall strategic and operational responsibility for BAOSC, developing and implementing the Board's vision, fundraising, and managing all programmatic and administrative activities. The ED will have substantial responsibility for seeking out and developing opportunities for continued collaboration in pursuit of the BAOSC's mission. The ED will be a visionary leader, an accomplished fundraiser, and an experienced manager.

Upon assuming the position, the ED will:

- Immediately embark on updating the strategic direction of BAOSC and align the internal priorities to the needs of the current climate for Bay Area conservation; set the overall priorities for the organization and develop the tactics required for executing on that plan.
- Build a strong foundation for the newly incorporated entity including developing the board required to grow its influence and organizational sustainability and developing policies and infrastructure required for its role.

- Engage in the discussion regarding developing funding for Bay Area conservation and advance the next generation of regional funding models.

Background

The BAOSC operates from the David Brower Center, a LEED platinum rated green building in downtown Berkeley. Its lean operations include the Executive Director, a Director of Conservation Planning and a Director of Development and Engagement who steward an annual operating budget of over \$700,000. Additionally, two positions have recently been budgeted and approved in the areas of programs and operations. Together with consultants, the BAOSC is engaged with a broad array of programs and initiatives that benefit the region and their members.

BAOSC collaborates with a long list of critical partners throughout the Bay Area on work impacting the whole region. The network plays various roles in these collaborations and is frequently the convener around critical issues facing conservation in the region. Organized around three basic strategies, providing **vision**, exercising a unified **voice** and being a **hub** for members to make connections and share resources, BAOSC works on the following core initiatives and programs:

Vision

Conservation Lands Network, a bold plan to protect the Bay Area's last wild places and working lands, is part of a five year science-based study by over 125 organizations and individuals tasked to identify the most essential lands needed to sustain the "natural infrastructure" of our region. BAOSC is working on developing biennial reports to measure progress toward implementing the Conservation Lands Network and evaluating how well it is achieving the goal of biodiversity conservation.

Transit and Trails, a program of BAOSC, is a website (and application) that helps connect the Bay Area's parks and open spaces to those interested in accessing them. Individuals can find, plan and share outdoor adventures by easily searching the maps for trips, trailheads and campgrounds and find the transit options all in one place. As part of this effort BAOSC has organized an annual event, the Alt ride. *Alt* is more than a bike ride. This Bay Area event showcases the connectivity of Bay Area open spaces—bikers tackle Mt. Hamilton, Mt. Tamalpais and Mt. Diablo all in one day, using public transportation between the peaks.

Bay Area Protected Areas Database (BPAD): The BAOSC has collaborated with GreenInfo Network over the past 13 years to develop a very detailed GIS database of protected areas in the 9 county San Francisco Bay Area (in 2010 the project included Santa Cruz County for the first time). This information provides the knowledge required to assess regional goals, assist in planning for new areas to conserve, identify where people are in relation to parks and other relationships that allow a more strategic look at conserving and accessing the land resources in the Bay Area.

Bay Area Critical Linkages: This project brings together regional scientists and incorporates the habitat and movement needs of over 60 species.

The Park Connections: In 2010 BAOSC released the Park Connections report that identified 5 barriers to connecting young people to the outdoors and has since been continuing that work by convening workshops to gather practitioners and funders to improve access to parks and open spaces for underserved youth in Marin County.

Voice

Sustainable Communities Strategy: The passage of SB 375 in 2008 created an unprecedented opportunity to fundamentally change the paradigm of growth away from sprawl and towards walkable communities. The law's centerpiece is the development of a "Sustainable Communities Strategy" (SCS), a regional blueprint for transportation, housing and land use that is focused on reducing driving and associated greenhouse gas emissions. BAOSC is an active participant in this regional effort.

Golden Lands, Golden Opportunity: A collaboration of BAOSC, Greenbelt Alliance, and the Association of Bay Area Governments, with the support of the State Coastal Conservancy and other funders, map important Bay Area lands and create a coordinated strategy to protect them. Completed in 2008, this regional picture was a crucial first step toward helping dozens of organizations work together to set priorities, decide which lands can be protected through policies and which should be purchased, and—ultimately—save the most land in the most effective way.

Hub

Annual Open Space Conference and other convenings: Each spring over 300 leaders in land conservation gather to get inspired, make connections, and create possibilities. This annual conference hosted by BAOSC presents speakers with expertise about a wide range of subjects all related to land conservation and exhibitors with innovative and useful products and services. Additionally BAOSC hosts a range of gatherings, workshops, working groups, and provides a forum for building an on-line community.

Governance

The BAOSC is currently directed by an Executive Committee made up of 19 representatives of member organizations. With the submission for incorporation, a small number of these representatives will seed the founding board of the newly incorporated entity. This new Governing Board will grow to 8-12 members who will focus on a fiduciary role including governance development, fiscal health, policy & strategy oversight and fundraising. This new structure will allow the BAOSC to introduce the organization's important role to new audiences and leverage new skills, connections, networks, and funding sources. Complementing the Governing Board will be an Advisory Council who will represent the voice of the membership and make recommendations to the Governing Board on strategic direction, and provide specific content expertise and input on annual priorities and initiatives. The filing for incorporation is expected in June of 2012 and confirmation of the 501c3 status is anticipated to be complete by year-end.

Key Responsibilities:

External Leadership:

- Grow the voice of BAOSC in order to amplify and extend the reach of the organization with particular attention to reaching diverse communities;
- Represent the organization to a wide range of constituencies throughout the Bay Area, Sacramento and across the nation including the broader public; make the case effectively for support of regional conservation efforts and collaboration; and serve as a thought leader and active participant in the national conservation dialogue through conferences and related activities;
- Lead BAOSC's legislative and policy initiatives including the development of regional funding initiatives;
- In collaboration with key partners, take a central role in identifying regional needs that are appropriate for the BAOSC to address and bring them forth for consideration and prioritization;
- Advance the public conversation regarding conservation, sustainability and all the linkages areas such as public health, climate change and environmental justice;
- Establish and maintain positive relationships with the Board of Directors and Advisory Council, Members, actual and potential donors, key stakeholders and the community-at-large, including state and regional agencies and elected officials, business, professional, conservation and education leaders; and service organizations;
- Maintain a working knowledge of significant developments and trends in the field.

Organizational and Board Development:

- Ensure that BAOSC has a long-range strategy that achieves its mission and vision, and toward which it makes consistent and timely progress with set goals and objectives;
- Support the Governance Committee in recruiting and orienting additional members for the inaugural board; develop individual relationships, governance and fundraising priorities for each member; partner with the board to develop strong and effective governance;
- Provide leadership in developing programmatic, organizational and financial plans with the Executive Committee and future Board of Directors; staff and carry out plans and policies authorized by the Executive Committee and future Board of Directors;
- Present accurate, effective and timely management reporting to the board; support effective board communications; and foster a high-impact culture of board engagement;
- With the Board Chair, build the cohesion and collaboration of the Board, finding ways to bind the variously located members together while leveraging the value of their respective places and perspective's; support Board committees through staff participation; encourage Board members' involvement in BAOSC's range of activities, including fundraising.

Fundraising:

- Understand the actual and prospective funding sources for BAOSC; in consultation with the Executive Committee and future Board of Directors, staff leadership and partner organizations, create strategies to engage donors in support of BAOSC's work and diversify its funding;
- Communicate fundraising goals, strategy and progress to the Board and the staff; engage the Board and staff in implementation of fundraising strategies and activities, particularly in engaging sponsors for the annual conference;

- Monitor the availability of grants from federal and state governments and private foundations, lead the team in the submission of grant proposals and presentations;
- Facilitate the preparation, content, and timing of all communications including direct mail, online marketing, and other methods to message the BAOSC's activities and encourage charitable gifts;
- Continue to develop the BAOSC's capabilities and systems to support major gift fundraising and increased individual giving.

Operations and Program Management:

- Develop and manage the BAOSC's annual budget and staffing plan; implement the annual budget including both the expenditures and the realization of revenues through successful fundraising;
- Ensure that the day-to-day operations and programs of BAOSC are smoothly and effectively administered; provide appropriate oversight of program staff activities, fundraising and finance, and overall systems and procedures;
- Mentor, empower and develop staff; ensure that performance evaluations provide clear feedback and effective review, create well-defined goals, clear responsibilities and levels of accountability for all staff; be responsible for the recruitment, employment, and release of all personnel; Maintain a climate that attracts, keeps, and motivates a diverse professional staff of top quality people;
- Plan and manage, bi-monthly gatherings and the annual conference; Continue to build support for the annual conference; ensure the conference is fiscally well managed and provides value to members and attendees;
- Be aware of any changing fiscal, physical and social environments and modify BAOSC operations in response to those changes;
- Manage and establish a clear delineation of authority and responsibilities for all contractors;
- Monitor and ensure organizational transparency and compliance with California statutes and the IRS regulations governing non-profit corporations.

Experience and Qualifications:

A successful candidate will likely have:

- A passion for the Bay Area region, its environment and communities;
- The clear ability to articulate a vision that motivates internal and external stakeholders toward common goals; speaks eloquently about the future of conservation;
- Significant leadership experience and achievement in the private, public or nonprofit sector; ideally in natural resource conservation and/or environmental education;
- An entrepreneurial spirit, able to push beyond the conventional responses to challenges;
- Demonstrated success in planning, executing and raising operating and program funds;
- The ability to forge pragmatic solutions in complex environments;
- An inclusive, transparent, consensus-building leadership style both in and out of the public spotlight that inspires Board members, donors, staff and partners in the community;
- Excellent written and oral skills as well as strong listening skills;
- Experience with nonprofit management and governance, particularly board development;
- Familiarity with Bay Area, federal, state, and local agencies and communities;

- A track record of building partnerships, coalitions, and alliances across sectors, communities and fields of practice.

Personal Attributes

- Understands and embraces the unique and critical role BAOSC can play in developing a healthy and sustainable region;
- Compelling, able to move diverse voices to unified action;
- Highly collaborative and transparent; not polarizing or partisan;
- Politically astute, able to navigate a complex social network; adaptable;
- High integrity and a commitment to personal and professional excellence;
- Inspires confidence and trust;
- “Can-do” attitude and solutions-oriented;
- Strong work ethic coupled with an optimist’s enthusiasm and a pragmatist’s desire for action;
- Emotionally mature with a sense of humor.

For additional information or to submit your qualifications for review, contact:

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