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Mainspring Conservation Trust, Inc. seeks an Executive Director with a passion for land protection and stewardship of the southern Blue Ridge Mountains. The Executive Director (ED) will bring a vision of growth to a highly-regarded nonprofit recognized for its conservation accomplishments and strong connection to its communities. The successful candidate will be an experienced leader, capable administrator, skillful advocate, solid relationship-builder and demonstrated fundraiser, with a talent for building consensus among partners, stakeholders and communities.

### **Background of Mainspring**

In 1995, a group of visionaries began meeting informally to discuss the rapid pace of development in western North Carolina and the impact it could have on the region's important natural resources. This was the beginning of the nonprofit that is now Mainspring Conservation Trust. Mainspring's mission is to conserve the waters, forests, farms and heritage of the Little Tennessee and Hiwassee River basins. Mainspring's service area of 1.8 million acres includes the six western-most counties in North Carolina – Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Jackson, Macon and Swain – and northern Rabun County, Georgia. Mainspring employs a staff of 11 and is guided by a 15-member volunteer board of directors, with a budget exceeding \$1.5 million. The main office is in Franklin, NC, with satellite offices in Murphy and Sylva. Mainspring has been accredited since 2010 by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission through the national Land Trust Alliance

Mainspring has conserved more than 26,000 acres, including viewsheds of the Appalachian Trail and Blue Ridge Parkway. From more traditional conservation methods like conservation easements, to programs that teach youth about the importance of cool, clear water, to transforming contaminated brownfield sites into green community spaces, Mainspring is the motivating force for conservation in the Southern Blue Ridge.

### **About the Region**

Nestled in the foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains, the Southern Blue Ridge is steeped in beauty, history and extraordinarily diverse flora, fauna and aquatic life. As one of the most desirable places to live in the United States, Mainspring's region offers an ideal combination for conservation, environmental education, and connection to the mountains, waters and culture through education and outreach. The US Forest Service is a major land owner in the region. Home to the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI), Western Carolina University, the Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests, and Great Smoky Mountains National Park, this thriving region is a great location to achieve a full work-life balance. The Executive Director will reside in Mainspring's service area.

## **Position**

With the retirement of the current Executive Director, who successfully led the organization following the retirement of the founding director, the third ED will be a strategic leader who believes in the value of land conservation, restoration of waterways, preservation of cultural heritage and strong connections with the community. Working with an effective, capable, strong staff, the new leader will have the vision to move Mainspring forward in directions consistent with its mission, while valuing traditions, respecting the past, and nurturing new energies among staff, volunteers, board members and the conservation community.

The ED will bring fresh perspectives and proven experience to execute the strategic plan, work closely with the deputy director, staff and Board to accomplish the organization's direction, and continue partnerships with donors, land owners, community groups, local and regional government officials, and the EBCI.

The ED will be a skilled manager of staff, finances and operations, with a history of improving systems and processes. The successful candidate will be a talented, proven fundraiser who will evaluate and improve current fundraising activity and expand the discovery and cultivation of new donors to diversify and strengthen Mainspring's donor base, while stewarding existing donors. The new leader should have experience with, and be comfortable recruiting, cultivating, and soliciting major donors, foundations and public agencies.

## **Responsibilities**

Below is a partial list of duties the ED will be responsible for, or will oversee through staff work plans and responsibilities. The ED will work with a seasoned Deputy Director, as well as well as staff in communications, education, finance, conservation and stewardship.

### ***Leadership***

- Provides visionary and operational leadership consistent with Mainspring's mission, values and direction and ensures that best practices are followed throughout the organization.
- Works with the Board and staff to implement, measure, and regularly update the strategic plan.
- Provides leadership in developing organizational, financial and programmatic plans with the Board and staff and carries out plans and policies authorized by the Board.
- Works with the staff directors of conservation, land protection and stewardship in the acquisition and/or protection of conserved properties and assures legal requirements and stewardship goals are met.
- Establishes or expands collaborative relationships with local, tribal, state and federal governments, conservation related organizations, and donors who can have an impact on the success of the organization and who can be allies on issues of importance.
- Has responsibility for the recruitment, employment, and release of all personnel, in accordance with approved policies and legal requirements.
- Assures Mainspring maintains its accreditation through the Land Trust Alliance.

### ***Land Conservation, Stewardship, and Program Management***

- Works closely with the Land Conservation Director and Lands Committee to set priorities for staff time and financial input for potential land conservation projects.
- Works closely with the Stewardship Coordinator and Stewardship Committee to monitor all easements and work with landowners to resolve major conservation easement violations in a timely manner.
- Articulates a strategic vision for land conservation sensitive to emerging environmental threats and opportunities.
- Assures all properties acquired by the organization are cared for according to conservation best practices and legal requirements.
- Works with the Aquatics Program Manager to ensure programs function effectively and helps achieve organizational goals and objectives.

### ***Finance and Operations***

- Oversees the preparation of the annual budget and recommends approval to the Finance Committee and Board.
- Possesses a thorough knowledge of Mainspring's financial details and status.
- Works with the Board and staff to assure Mainspring has the resources required to be financially healthy and to maintain adequate reserves.
- Assures Mainspring uses sound financial management practices, including effective internal controls for the protection of organizational assets.
- Assures state, federal and Accreditation requirements are met.

### ***Fundraising/Communications/Marketing***

- Develops a diversified fundraising strategy including annual, major, planned, estate and land gifts from individuals in addition to support from foundations, corporations, civic organizations and government agencies.
- Manages a personal portfolio of top donors and prospects, including cultivation and solicitation, and encourages and supports fundraising activities by the Board.
- Prepares an annual fundraising plan to meet budgetary needs along with growing conservation reserve funds and endowment.
- Serves as Mainspring's lead spokesperson and advocate in promoting the organization's protection of the region's natural resources.
- Develops a thorough knowledge of Mainspring's history, major accomplishments and challenges, key leaders and funders, and role within the conservation community.
- Encourages collaboration among staff to ensure the work of the organization routinely and creatively supports fundraising and communication goals.

### **Board of Directors**

- Keeps the Board fully informed on the condition of the organization and factors influencing it.
- Provides accurate and timely reports and information necessary for the Board to make informed decisions.
- Plays an active role in recruitment and development of new Board members.
- Assists the Board in creating a culture of philanthropy through individual giving and participation in fundraising.
- Works with the Board to plan, develop, and implement projects that advance the organization's strategic plan.

### **Education and Qualifications**

- A Bachelor's Degree is required; advanced degree receives additional consideration.
- A minimum of five years of progressively responsible nonprofit leadership with proven experience in moving an organization forward is required.
- Knowledge of natural resource conservation is required. Knowledge related to the Southern Appalachian Mountains bioregion is desired.
- Experience working effectively with a nonprofit Board of Directors is required.
- Experience and proficiency as a politically savvy advocate; working effectively with diverse local, regional and state agencies and organizations; evidence of building long term relationships with key stakeholders are required.
- A seasoned leader and manager with integrity and reputation of creating and nurturing effective, collaborative working environments built on trust, clear expectations and accountability is required.
- A person who leads by example, is an excellent listener and facilitator with a record of making difficult decisions is desired.
- An exceptional writer and communicator, who listens, engages, inspires, educates and moves people to action is required.
- Planning and management skills; results orientation; setting and exceeding ambitious goals, meeting deadlines and measuring performance are requirements.
- Fundraising knowledge and experience raising significant gifts from individuals, businesses and foundations are required.
- Emotional maturity, energy, creativity, confidence in abilities and a sense of humor are desired.
- Willingness to work evening hours and weekends as necessary is required.

### **Process**

Send your resume, cover letter and three work-related references in email attachments to [jobs@mainspringconserves.org](mailto:jobs@mainspringconserves.org) by October 31, 2019. Excellent benefits. Salary is competitive and commensurate with experience.