



**LAND CONSERVATION PROGRAM DIRECTOR  
JOB DESCRIPTION  
MARCH 2022**

Eastern Sierra Land Trust (ESLT) is seeking a Land Conservation Program Director to join our nationally accredited land trust. This is a full-time position based out of Bishop, California with hybrid (in-office and remote) work options, and fieldwork throughout the Eastern Sierra region of Inyo, Mono, and Alpine Counties in California, and western Nevada.

**POSITION SUMMARY:** ESLT's Land Conservation Program Director is responsible for the land protection program of ESLT. The position coordinates and implements a comprehensive program to protect natural areas and wildlife habitat, agricultural properties, and other priority lands using the full range of protection tools, including gift, conservation easement, purchase, bargain sale, collaborations, and cooperative projects with federal, state, and local government, conservation organizations and other partners. The position is responsible for implementing and achieving ESLT's strategic priorities through representing ESLT in relationships and negotiations with private landowners, community leaders, funders, and cooperating agencies/organizations to implement and finance protection of priority conservation areas. The position provides supervision of the Stewardship program and is responsible for maintaining ESLT's accredited status as it relates to land protection and stewardship. The position will be expected to attend Lands Committee meetings, some Board meetings, some regional meetings, and various trainings. The position ensures that all land transaction, stewardship, grant reporting, and recordkeeping tasks are fulfilled according to ESLT's policies and procedures and Land Trust Alliance Standards and Practices.

Reporting to the Executive Director/CEO, the position supervises the Land Stewardship Manager and may supervise seasonal staff, volunteers, and contractors. Working in a collaborative team environment, the position will be expected to perform other duties as requested.

The position requires a mix of office and administrative work, as well as occasional fieldwork. Flexible schedule required, as weekend and evening events are occasionally necessary. ESLT offers a hybrid workplace and dog-friendly office to those who are interested and eligible. The position requires time in the field and at the office and is somewhat seasonal as it relates to field versus office duties. In the past five years, ESLT has completed six land protection projects totaling over 9,000 acres.

**KEY RESPONSIBILITIES:**

**Conservation Planning and Land/Conservation Easement Transactions**

- Identify, plan, negotiate, and secure protection of lands and waters using a complete range of protection tools, including conservation easements, fee simple acquisitions, cooperative ventures, management agreements, land exchanges, land transfers, and gifts of land.
- Write, edit, update, negotiate, and review transaction documents, in collaboration with ESLT's contract attorney. These include conservation easement deeds, donation agreements, letters

of intent, purchase and sale agreements, leases, escrow instructions, and governmental agreements that comply with ESLT and Land Trust Alliance standards.

- Facilitate the review of legal and real estate documents (e.g. title, escrow, due diligence, surveys, mineral rights, and water rights) to determine liabilities associated with potential acquisitions and oversee resolution of any issues prior to closing.
- Research and identify specific opportunities to maintain a pipeline of potential acquisitions that meet ESLT's strategic goals.
- Develop funding strategies for acquisitions and, where possible, project costs, including identifying, seeking, and reporting on public and private grants.
- Select appraisers and review appraisal reports.
- Draft (or supervise drafting of) baseline documentation reports, grassland management plans, grazing plans, and agricultural plans.
- Manage governmental funder relationships and act as the primary ESLT contact for grants that support acquisition projects.
- Field questions and interest from landowners and other community members regarding potential conservation easement or fee land acquisitions.
- Build and maintain positive working relationships with landowners, lessees, communities, federal and state agencies, local governments, Native nations, and other conservation organizations to expand conservation efforts and develop support for ESLT's activities.
- Provide leadership and guidance in implementing long-term conservation planning and strategic planning for land protection and stewardship goals and objectives.
- Manage the legal, contractual, and other processes of carrying projects to completion from initial contact to negotiations to closing. This includes oversight of ESLT's project approval process through the Lands Committee and Board of Directors.
- Conduct fieldwork. Collect (or oversee the collection of) photographs, notes, and data that inform conservation easement baseline reports, agricultural plans, and map exhibits.
- Prepare GIS maps and use GIS to analyze data.
- Stay up-to-date on local, state, and federal statutory or regulatory changes, grant sources, and case law that could affect conservation easement or fee land acquisition.

### **Supervision of Land Stewardship Manager**

- Create and maintain a positive working environment, strong staff morale, and a culture of teamwork and mutual support.
- Provide advice and support for Land Stewardship Manager's efforts to manage easement notices, requests for approval, amendments, potential violations, and legal and public relations issues for ESLT's existing protected properties.
- Advise Land Stewardship Manager regarding conservation easement interpretation questions.
- Assist the Land Stewardship Manager with performance management, training, and career development. Establish clear directions and help set objectives.

### **Outreach**

- Educate landowners and stakeholders about conservation benefits and practices.
- Provide landowners with guidance and information about conservation techniques, including conservation easements, bargain sales, and charitable donations.

- Represent the organization, as needed, as a presenter/educator in various situations designed to increase public awareness of the mission and goals of ESLT.
- Assist with post-closing tasks, including promotion (website, newsletter articles, press releases), and dedication event planning.
- Lead outreach projects and public education events including interpretive outings, farm and ranch tours, and assist with fundraising events and other special events as needed.

#### **REQUIREMENTS:**

- Bachelor's degree and a minimum of five years related experience in natural resources management, conservation, business, law, real estate, fundraising, or other related experience or equivalent combination of graduate degree and three years' experience.
- Expertise in the mechanics of voluntary land protection techniques, including conservation easements, fee-simple acquisitions, related tax issues, stewardship issues, funding sources, and other financial considerations. Previous real estate, negotiating, and land trust experience strongly preferred.
- Considerable knowledge of agricultural and land conservation techniques and practices; appraisal standards and practices; escrow processes; tax implications of land conservation strategies; and economic trends of land value.
- Strong project management skills with ability to complete projects within deadlines and established budget.
- Knowledge of and ability to answer questions regarding current trends and practices in conservation, land management, ranching, and natural resource preservation. Understanding of emerging public policy issues affecting land use and land conservation, including habitat protection, water quality/quantity, and climate change.
- Ability to work in a team environment as well as independently with minimal supervision.
- Ability to manage time and diverse activities under deadlines while delivering quality results.
- Experience with securing and managing public and private grant funding.
- Experience with contract drafting, review, and management.
- Experience supervising staff, volunteers, and/or interns.
- Knowledge of conservation planning, monitoring, stewardship, GIS, and map-making.
- Excellent writing and communications skills, as well as attention to detail. Strong aptitude for communicating oral and written ideas in English.
- Superb interpersonal skills demonstrating diplomacy, professionalism, authenticity, and tact.
- Creative problem-solver and comfortable navigating conflict.
- Persistence, sense of humor, and a high tolerance for meeting competing demands efficiently.
- Experience hiking in remote and rugged terrain.
- When traveling to and working on remote properties, may require camping or staying at a hotel in shared accommodation for up to a week at a time.
- Must have (or be willing to get) a valid driver's license with insurance.

#### **DESIRED KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS:**

- Knowledge of terrestrial and aquatic ecological principles with an emphasis on sagebrush steppe, wetlands, and Sierra Nevada ecosystems preferred.
- Knowledge of federal, state, and local laws and ordinances related to land use.

- Experience using all-terrain vehicles, manual vehicles, and driving on narrow and steep dirt roads with trucks and trailers.
- Familiarity with Land Trust Alliance Standards and Practices.
- Experience interpreting aerial and satellite imagery.

ESLT is open to the possibility that a great candidate for this job may not precisely meet all of the above criteria; if you believe you're the right person for this job and can persuasively make that case, we encourage you to apply.

### **WORKING CONDITIONS:**

This position requires approximately 75% office work and 25% field work (season dependent). When working in the field, this position requires working outside in variable weather conditions, including hot and dry conditions at high elevation, at remote locations, on difficult and hazardous terrain, and under physically demanding circumstances. Field visits may involve hiking several miles through mud, creeks, desert, and mountain terrain. This position requires work in an environment with the possibility to encounter ticks, mosquitoes, venomous snakes, and bears.

### **COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS:**

This position is full time and exempt, with paid leave (accrued vacation paid leave at 0.83 days per month for a total of 10 days annually (first 2 years); accrued sick leave at 0.83 days per month; 12 paid holidays annually; 100% ESLT Health Savings Account-eligible health plan; 100% ESLT dental plan; and Simple IRA retirement plan upon eligibility. Opportunities for training and career advancement available as annual budgets permit. Salary based on experience ranging from \$80,000 - \$100,000 with benefits.

All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, protected veteran or disabled status, or genetic information.

### **COVID-19:**

ESLT is committed to protecting and enhancing the welfare of its employees during the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent variants. As a condition of employment, all newly hired employees must abide by ESLT's COVID-19 policies and procedures. ESLT requires that employees be vaccinated for COVID-19 prior to visiting or working in ESLT's office or conducting any travel or in-person meetings on behalf of our organization. If you are hired for this position, ESLT will require proof that you have received the COVID-19 vaccine.

**TO APPLY:** Send cover letter, résumé, and three references to [info@eslt.org](mailto:info@eslt.org) with the subject line: Land Conservation Program Director Position. No phone calls or drop-ins, please. Application review will begin April 28, 2022, with an anticipated start date of June/July. Applications submitted after April 28, 2022 will continue to be reviewed on a rolling basis until the position is filled.