JOB DESCRIPTION
DIRECTOR OF LAND PROTECTION

Job Classification: Department Director; Regular; Exempt

Time: Full-time – 100%

Responsibilities:
The Director of Land Protection is a senior level manager responsible for providing the vision and leadership to the Preserve’s ownership of land and all land rights held in trust, assuring our boundaries are legally understood and protected, and maintaining amicable relations with our neighbors. The Director is responsible for strategic planning, managing, budgeting, and implementing the overall Land Protection program, including applying the Preserve’s Land Protection Policy as a guide for the acquisition of land and interests in land. The Director oversees many land trust duties including easement and boundary monitoring, and maintains the Preserve’s Land Trust Alliance Accreditation. The Director works to promote land conservation awareness in the community, build support for projects, identify and pursue project funding opportunities, assist in land protection grant proposals, and participate in other inter-departmental Preserve initiatives. The Director reports to the Vice President and CFO.

The Director also works in close cooperation with the Director of Stewardship, the Director of Conservation Science, and the Director of Education.

Job Duties:
Fee-Owned Land and Conservation Easement Management

- Coordinate mechanics of real estate transactions resulting in protection of critical segments of the northern Shawangunk Mountain Region surrounding the Mohonk Preserve, and work as part of a team to devise management and use plans for such lands;
- Collaborate with General Counsel in meeting the legal needs of land protection projects;
- Arrange for contractual services for surveys, mapping, appraisals, legal and title searches for acquisition and boundary line projects and monitor progress and quality of such services;
- Oversee annual monitoring inspections and inventories of fee-owned properties and conservation easements held by the Preserve, communicate results and issues with affected landowners;
- Maintain record of annual easement monitoring and landowner contacts;
- Ensure timely development and delivery of baseline documentation reports;
- Provide interpretation, approvals of permitted uses, and guidance to landowners of easement-protected properties on terms of restrictions and resource values protected within agreements;
- Coordinate research into deed, property, assessment, and other data in various County and Town offices of record;
- Oversee the regular planning, operations and maintenance of Preserve property boundaries and conservation easements in accordance with Land Trust Alliance Standards and Practices.

Administrative

- Review and manage the Preserve’s compliance with best standards and practices required for LTA re-accreditation; maintain historic land protection files, surveys, maps and GIS database;
- Oversee and coordinate all easements, leases, licenses and rights of way on or over Preserve property;
Coordinate, attend and participate in Land Protection Committee meetings including compiling agenda, preparing presentations, and recording, transcribing and distribution of meeting minutes;
Coordinate with outside Grantees and regulatory agencies including NYSDOT, NYSDEC, NYS OPRHP, Ulster County and the Preserve’s five surrounding municipalities, as it relates to Land Protection, acquisition, and the maintenance of such agreements as restrictive covenants, trail easements, licenses, and rights of way;
Oversee the Preserve’s GIS team with the Conservation Science department;
Work with Business Manager to prepare and file annual property tax-exemptions (by February 28 each year);
File annual conservation defense insurance application (TerraFirma);
Prepare and submit an annual budget, performance evaluation reports, and other information as required or requested by the Vice President & CFO;
Participate on the management team supporting organizational planning and integrated initiatives;
Attend Board and Committee meetings prepared to make presentations on land protection projects as needed.
Other duties and projects as assigned by the Vice President & CFO.

**Supervisory**
- Supervises Land Projects Manager, Interns and Volunteers (is staff liaison for Land Protection-relevant volunteers)
- Supervises and supports Land Projects Manager to develop and manage conservation transactions, monitor easements and boundaries, lead the organization’s GIS and mapping initiatives.
- Recruits, manages, trains, motivates, supports and empowers a strategic high-performing land transaction team, providing direction and input for the team and for each team member.
- Coordinates effective communication among all team members and between the team and staff in other departments.

**Fundraising**
- Work with the Development department as a partner in the cultivation of donor prospects, and create solicitation strategies for potential donors of land and easements;
- Assists in land protection grant preparation and review;
- Collaborates with the Grants Manager and Development staff to identify and develop funding strategies to secure funds for land acquisition projects and conservation defense initiatives.

**Outreach and Collaboration with Partners, Alliances and Neighbors**
- Respond to inquiries from landowners and discuss conservation options, costs and basic financial implications and benefits of conservation projects;
- Promote land conservation and stewardship techniques through participation in partnerships and forums as appropriate and communicate the economic benefits of land conservation to local communities;
- Maintain active and ongoing neighbor rapport and communication including identifying landowners who might consider protecting their land;
- Manage neighbor encroachments, unauthorized trespass, occupancy and other issues arising on the Preserve boundaries;
- Represent the Preserve with the Land Trust Alliance and other regional land protection organizations and partners.
Qualifications:

- Bachelor’s Degree in conservation, natural resources management, law, planning, or a related field required; Master’s Degree desirable/preferred;
- Minimum of five (5) years’ experience in conservation real estate acquisition and project management, and/or 10 years of experience in complex real property transactions, multi-party land acquisitions, conservation easements, and conservation planning.
- Demonstrated ability to independently initiate, structure, negotiate and manage, and close complex, high profile and sensitive transactions.
- Knowledge of leading trends and national Standards and Practices in land trust management;
- Knowledge of conservation tax law and benefits of land & easement donations;
- Exemplary communication abilities including written, oral, and presentation skills; experience communicating with partner organizations.
- Organizational skills with attention to detail and record-keeping.
- Experience working with landowners; civic groups; town, county, state agencies & their processes
- Strong supervisory and team management skills, including demonstrated ability to motivate, lead, set objectives, implement priorities and manage performance; ability to foster an environment of creativity and professional growth.
- Ability to inspire and work with staff, Board of Directors, community partners, members, and volunteers.
- Proven project and program management skills, including budgeting;
- Ability to set and implement priorities, manage multiple projects, and evaluate project success;
- Ability to lead as well as function as a team member;
- Willingness to work occasional irregular hours, including some weekends, evenings, and/or holidays.
- Ability to navigate and traverse at times in deep back country, in off-trail land conditions, sometimes in extremely rugged mountain terrain while carrying equipment for up to eight hours at a time in all weather conditions.

Advanced computer & technical skills:

- Experience with cartography software/hardware (e.g. GPS units & GIS software, ArcGIS), field mapping, aerial photo interpretation, land survey techniques.
- Ability to read and evaluate the landscape; i.e. tree blazes, stone rows, rail fences, hedgerows, corner monumentation, etc.
- Proficiency in all standard office productivity software (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook or similar email application) and internet research
- Strong relational database experience