

Nova Scotia Nature Trust--Director of Conservation

Job Description

The Nova Scotia Nature Trust, one of Canada's leading provincial conservation charities (land trusts), is making exciting strides forward in our mission to protect Nova Scotia's unique natural legacy, through private land conservation. We have pioneered many conservation firsts and have a strong track record in effective land conservation and stewardship. Our conservation network already encompasses over 75 properties protecting 10,000 acres of outstanding ecological areas across the Province, including the landmark 100 Wild Islands.

To guide and manage our increasingly complex and extensive conservation programs, we have created an exciting new leadership position for the organization. The Director of Conservation provides direction, leadership and expert guidance for the organization. The Director is a key member of the leadership team, with significant programmatic, policy, external relations, supervisory and budgetary management responsibilities.

The Director sets strategic conservation priorities for the organization, and develops and oversees all aspects of the conservation science, conservation planning, land securement, stewardship, education and field volunteer programs to best advance the Nature Trust's conservation mission and to maximize conservation impact. The Director leads the permanent, legal protection of new conservation lands, and guides the ongoing stewardship and management of the Nature Trust's conservation lands network. The Director manages the Nature Trust's conservation team including staff, contractors, science advisors and volunteers, and reports to the Executive Director.

The Director ensures the Nature Trust remains a leader in conservation and protected areas in Nova Scotia, and an integral part of the broader conservation network. The Director is also an effective communicator and educator who helps to inform, inspire and engage community members, landowners, partners, supporters and funders in the Nature Trust's work.

The Director is a highly organized, strategic, results-driven individual who is outgoing, bright and an inspiring leader for the organization, as well as a well-respected and trusted partner for our landowners, volunteers, community and government partners. The Director is very personable with exceptional relationship-building and communications skills, and is deeply passionate about the cause and the charitable sector.

Note: The ideal candidate has an exceptionally strong conservation, science, protected areas and land trust background. However, the most important thing for us is finding the right person--an individual with the passion, ambition, personality and multiple talents needed to lead the Nature Trust through the next 20 years of inspiring conservation success and achievement.

Key Roles and Responsibilities

Leadership, Management and Human Resources

- Works with the Senior Leadership Team to help establish the strategic direction of the organization in terms of conservation priorities, programs and initiatives.
- Accountable for leading and managing all conservation, science, stewardship, field volunteer and education programs (including strategic and operational planning, implementation and evaluation, operational and capital budgets and all aspects of human resource management, and creation and implementation of relevant policies and procedures)
- Ensures appropriate human resources are in place for delivering high impact, professional and highly effective programs

- Provides inspiring leadership, management and mentorship for the conservation team (staff, experts, scientific advisors, volunteers, contractors, committees) in the achievement of conservation goals and priorities
- Ensures all conservation operations and programs are optimally efficient, organized and effective

Land Securement

- Provides leadership, oversight and direction for all aspects of the land securement program
- In cooperation with the Executive Director provides expert guidance to the Board and Properties Committee in decision-making around land securement
- Directly implements (or oversees if a Conservation Manager or Land Securement Coordinator in place) all aspects of the land securement program including”
 - Site prioritization, assessment
 - Landowner outreach, relationships, educations and support
 - Land transaction negotiations and land securement through purchase, donation, split receipt sale, conservation easement, bequest or other conservation tools
- Ensures appropriate scientific guidance for all property securement decisions and transactions
- Creates and implements innovative ventures with government agencies, private organizations, landowners, and other partners to conserve natural communities

Stewardship

- Provides leadership and oversight for all aspects of the land stewardship program
- Identifies critical threats, stewardship priorities and appropriate action plans, in cooperation with the Stewardship Coordinator, to ensure a high standard of conservation of natural values across Nature Trust properties and easements
- Provides leadership in major community engagement and educational initiatives related to stewardship and long-term care of Nature Trust conservation lands
- Liaises with government and leads joint stewardship planning for provincial lands under Conservation Easement with the Nature Trust
- Ensures ecological and scientific expertise, guides all property assessments, baseline studies, property stewardship and management
- Supports the Conservation Manager in overseeing all other stewardship activities undertaken by the Stewardship Coordinator

Outreach and partnerships

- Identifies, develops and maintains positive and productive external relationships, networks and formal partnerships with diverse interests including public agencies, conservation organizations, the academic community, scientists, land trusts, landowners and other stakeholders and supporters to achieve the following:
 - to achieve large scale conservation outcomes and to address key conservation challenges through collaborative conservation planning and partnership
 - to ensure effective information exchange to maximize the effectiveness of the overall conservation community in Nova Scotia
 - to advance research focused on solving real conservation challenges and innovative approaches to dealing with emerging conservation issues
- Represents the Nature Trust on all relevant conservation committees, teams and working groups

Conservation/Scientific Oversight, Guidance and Support

- Provides leadership, guidance and support in developing the conservation vision for the Nature Trust, and sound, science-based goals, priorities, strategies, plans, programs and policies that most effectively advance conservation in Nova Scotia

- Provides visible conservation leadership presence for the Nature Trust within the province, and within the land trust community nationally
- Communicates scientific/technical conservation concepts clearly to scientists and non-scientists alike, including NT staff, Board, decision-makers, funders/donors, partners and media
- Maintains a strong and engaged scientific/conservation expert network for the Nature Trust, including overseeing and supporting the Nature Trust's scientific advisory council

Conservation Planning and Prioritization

- Leads/oversees conservation planning, Geographic Information Systems-based (GIS) and other landscape modelling and prioritization initiatives:
 - Multi-party provincial/landscape level conservation planning and partnership initiatives to advance land and wildlife conservation in Nova Scotia and maximizing joint conservation impact
 - Initiatives to determine overall strategic conservation vision, priorities and direction of the Nature Trust (i.e. identifying key biodiversity targets, focus areas, ecological themes).
 - Assessment, selection and prioritizing of specific potential conservation properties to be secured through purchase, donation, bequest or conservation easement agreement with private landowners, and/or to be secured through other means in partnership with other organizations

Policy and Planning

- Leads efforts to partner in ensuring government policy and programs are in place to provide incentives and opportunities for supporting and advancing conservation in Nova Scotia

Development and Public Relations/Communications

- Collaborates with and supports fundraising and government relations staff on fundraising efforts to raise public and private funds for conservation objectives
- Manages major conservation funding relationships/partnerships, in cooperation with the Executive Director
- Undertakes solicitation of stewardship endowment funding with landowners
- Supports outreach, communications and public relations efforts of the Public Relations teams through event participation, public speaking, communications strategy, major donor meetings and asks, social media, and supporting media relations, press releases, articles and publications
- Represents the Nature Trust in all appropriate external relations and communications functions

Public Education, Engagement and Volunteer Programs

- Oversees the conservation education and landowner outreach programs and activities carried out by conservation coordinator(s) and manager, including a regular program of extension/outreach/education events and activities and regular communications with conservation partners, stakeholders, volunteers and priority landowners.
- Oversees conservation staff in the planning and implementation of the field volunteer/citizen science program and specific field volunteer initiatives.

Position Requirements

Leadership and Management Experience

Required

- Minimum of 10-15 years of professional experience in organizational/department/program management in a relevant field, with increasing levels of leadership, programmatic, policy and human resources responsibility and authority
- Demonstrated success as a highly effective leader and manager who motivates teams to achieve and sustain excellence
 - Recognition as an outstanding team leader/manager/supervisor
 - Experience building and overseeing multi-disciplinary teams of staff, experts and volunteers
 - Experience leading volunteer teams/committees
 - Experience managing community engagement/stakeholder relations
- Proven track record in successfully developing, leading, and managing effective and impactful programs and projects
 - Demonstrated excellent in strategic and operational planning; program and project development, management and evaluation; budgeting and financial management
- Ability to provide expert guidance for the Nature Trust's strategic planning, policy and program development, operations and risk management in the areas of science, stewardship and conservation planning, land securement and conservation
- Proven ability manage multiple programs/departments/systems in a highly organized and efficient manner, with maximum impact and achievement

Desirable

- Minimum of 10 years professional experience in land/habitat conservation
- Proven track record in successfully developing, leading, and managing *land conservation* programs and projects
- Experience developing and implementing organizational/program policies and procedures related to conservation and science
- Experience influencing, developing and implementing conservation policy, plans, programs at the provincial or national level
- Demonstrated skill in applying scientific concepts to addressing real-world, tangible conservation challenges, issues and opportunities

Education/Knowledge

Required

- University degree in an appropriate conservation/science *or other relevant field*

Desirable

- Masters Degree in Science, Ecology or other relevant field
- Exceptional knowledge of conservation biology, ecology, biodiversity and land/habitat/species conservation priorities
- In-depth, practical knowledge of Nova Scotia's natural history, ecosystems, landscapes (freshwater, forest, coastal, barrens etc.), natural communities and species
- Knowledge of protected areas and biodiversity conservation programs and initiatives generally, and specifically within Nova Scotia, as well as legislation, policies, programs, issues, trends and opportunities relevant to the Nature Trust's conservation planning, science and stewardship

- Knowledge of best practices in landscape scale conservation, biodiversity conservation, protected areas planning, management and stewardship
- Knowledge of threats, liabilities and risks to conservation lands and appropriate prevention, management and mitigation options
- Knowledge of the private land conservation field, including land trusts, land trust standards and practices
- Knowledge of Nova Scotia's conservation priorities at a landscape, habitat and species level

External Relations/Stakeholder Engagement

Required

- A proven ability to network and to interact comfortably with diverse individuals and groups: landowners, local communities, government agencies, the not-for-profit and corporate sectors

Desirable

- A proven ability to lead, build and maintain effective partnerships to advance organizational goals and mission
- Experience networking and managing external relationship and partnerships specifically within the natural resources, protected areas and scientific communities and specifically within Nova Scotia

Other Required Skills and Attributes

- Passion and enthusiasm for the cause and for working in the non-profit sector
- A self-starter with energy and drive to achieve goals
- The ability to think strategically, to initiate, innovate and to problem-solve creatively and effectively
- Outgoing, confident and friendly personality with the ability to meet new people and to earn trust and confidence; a person who embodies the values of integrity, commitment to the cause and professionalism
- Exceptional interpersonal skills, including the ability to communicate clearly, to actively listen and to put others at ease
- Well-developed communications skills including:
 - Excellent one-on-one communications skills in person, by telephone and email
 - Proven negotiation and conflict resolution skills
 - Strong report and proposal writing skills
 - Ability to write clear, concise and publically-accessible articles, reports and other educational/informational documents
 - Competence in public speaking and education with diverse audiences from local community groups, conservation experts/partners to corporate partners and major donors (public presentations, workshops, conferences, educational events/guided walks, fundraising presentations)
- Excellent administrative, planning and organizational skills, with attention to detail, quality results and meeting deadlines
- A proven ability to work comfortably in different venues and environments (office environment, corporate boardrooms, rural communities, the field), and to thrive in a fast-paced, dynamic non-profit environment
- Computer proficiency with MS Office programs (word, excel, access, powerpoint), internet/email/social media programs, databases
- Willingness to travel extensively within Nova Scotia, including multiday trips, and to work evenings and weekends, particularly during the field season (spring/summer/fall)

- Valid, clean and current driver's license

Other Desirable Assets

Non-profit

- Experience working in the non-profit/non-government sector, and understanding of the unique approaches, opportunities and challenges of this sector

Conservation Science and Planning

- Recognition as a leader and expert in conservation science and planning in the Province
- Knowledge of and experience in conservation planning and prioritizing at provincial and property specific levels
- Existing networks/connections with key conservation agencies, organizations and initiatives at the provincial and national level
- Experience serving on scientific advisory, planning and strategy teams
- Working understanding of conservation science technologies including remote sensing, geographic information systems, modeling, and statistical analysis software
- Excellent skills in writing scientific/technical reports/proposals
- Map-making and analysis abilities in ArcMap

Land stewardship/management

- Experience in managing conservation lands, monitoring conservation easements, developing and implementing land management/stewardship plans
- Knowledge of active land management and stewardship activities (such as erosion control, bridge-building, trail-building, habitat restoration)

Land protection/securement

- Legal document drafting and interpretation experience, including contracts, deeds, wills
- Real estate negotiation and transaction experience including interpreting land surveys, title reports and property appraisals
- Understanding of conservation easement drafting, amendment and enforcement principals/best practices
- Knowledge of tax implications for conservation gifting (Canadian and cross-border)
- Experience serving on scientific advisory, planning and strategy teams

Private Land Conservation

- Solid understanding of land trusts, private land conservation, and land trust standards and practises related to conservation planning, land securement, stewardship and management
- Demonstrated ability to build and support effective partnerships and networks with relevant conservation organizations, government agencies and other partners, stakeholders and supporters to advance conservation goals and impacts
- Existing network/connections with key conservation contacts, organizations and initiatives in the province and within Canada/North America

Field work/Ecological Knowledge

- Experience conducting site evaluations of natural areas, and collecting, synthesizing, analyzing, interpreting and communicating ecological data
- Strong habitat, flora and fauna identification and assessment skills
- Strong field skills including backwoods navigation with map and compass, Global Positioning Systems and air photo interpretation

- Experience and comfort in working outdoors for extended periods in variable weather/all seasons, in remote locations, over difficult/hazardous terrain and under physically demanding circumstances, and working alone in the field
- Experience working on water (lakes, rivers, ocean) and undertaking wilderness travel by canoe/kayak
- Standard First Aid Training (Wilderness First Aid)

Public Relations/Fundraising

- Public relations/media experience (press releases, media events, interviews, social media)
- Demonstrated ability to assist with conceptualising, creating and implementing fund-raising strategies for conservation and stewardship programs and projects, including experience writing grants and research.
- Aptitude for interacting with and engaging major donors and corporate partners

APPLICATION PROCESS

Please send a resume, three professional references (name/contact information—please indicate if you do not wish for us to contact any references until after screening interview) and a cover letter clearly articulating your relevant knowledge and experience, why you are interested in the position and what you believe you bring to this key leadership position with our organization.

Send your completed application to:

Magali Gregoire, Office Coordinator
office@nsnt.ca

Due to the anticipated number of applicants, only successful candidates will be notified if they qualify for an interview.

Closing date: Applications will be accepted until such time as the position is filled. Interviews will be ongoing. We hope to fill the position by the end of January 2016.

Salary: Commensurate with experience and value.