Job Description
Executive Director

Posted: August 26, 2020

The Manchester Essex Conservation Trust is a charitable nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving ecologically important land and wildlife habitat in Manchester and Essex, Massachusetts, as well as adjoining communities and promoting its use for quiet recreation, education and research.

MECT enhances the quality of life on Cape Ann by ensuring that lands that are vital to public health remain in their natural condition. Since 1963, MECT has protected over 1,500 acres of conservation land, protecting critical wildlife habitat and drinking water supplies, mitigating the impacts of storms that would otherwise threaten homes and businesses, and providing opportunities for education, research and quiet recreation on miles of public walking trails. As an informed public is essential to long-term success, MECT regularly conducts public hikes and events, and provides grants for environmental education.

Job Title: Executive Director

Compensation: Commensurate with qualifications; paid vacation benefit provided.

Hours: Full time salaried position. Frequent evening meetings and occasional weekend time are required.

Location: Based in leased offices in Essex, Massachusetts. Frequent travel and fieldwork are required within Manchester and Essex. Occasional travel to nearby towns and outside the immediate region may be required for meetings, trainings or conferences. As dictated by public health orders, work from home may be required, and frequent online meetings should be anticipated.

Applications: Interested applicants should submit a resume and cover letter to:

Alida Bryant: abryant@mect.org

Position Summary:

Reporting to the President and in consultation with the members of the Board of Trustees. The Executive Director is charged with developing and implementing annual work plans to advance MECT’s strategic plan objectives in the areas of 1) Land acquisition and protection; 2) Land Stewardship; and 3) Community outreach and education. The Executive Director works closely with Standing Committees of MECT’s Board in developing work plans for each of these areas, and coordinates the efforts of Trustees and other volunteers who assist in program implementation.
Specific Duties:

Management and Organizational Leadership
• Work with the Board to periodically update MECT’s Strategic Plan and organizational policies
• Coordinate input from Board members and Standing Committees to develop and implement annual work plans
• Regularly report status of work plan progress to the Board, calling out notable risks and opportunities
• Prepare for, attend and support regular meetings of the Board and Standing Committees.
• Hire and manage other staff (currently two part-time employees, which are the Development and Finance Director and the GIS and Land Records Manager)
• Promote organizational capacity and sustainability through recruitment and training of capable staff and Board members
• Hire and manage vendors and contractors
• Recruit and manage volunteers
• Manage and coordinate legal affairs with outside counsel.
• Insure appropriate record-keeping and protection of institutional knowledge
• Prepare and submit grant proposals and support other fundraising activities
• Assist with taking and preparing meeting minutes at 5-6 Board Meetings per year

Land Protection and Stewardship
• Set land acquisition priorities, including coordination with the towns of Manchester and Essex and surrounding communities on their land protection priorities
• Undertake outreach and negotiation with owners of priority at-risk properties and initiate strategies to acquire mission-critical lands through gift, purchase, conservation restriction or other available options
• Coordinate site visits and due diligence for potential acquisitions
• Coordinate all acquisition and stewardship processes including deed research, legal work, closings, land surveys, and GIS databases, mapping and analysis. Create baseline documentation and coordinate regular monitoring of all MECT properties and conservation restrictions, including fieldwork to locate parcels, as necessary
• Coordinate MECT’s response to property encroachments, conservation restriction violations or other disputes, elevating issues to the Board of Directors as prudent to manage legal or reputational risk to the organization
• Coordinate trail and property maintenance projects to ensure MECT properties are safe and welcoming to all
• Ensure that MECT properties are maintained in accordance with best management practices for habitat, biodiversity and water resource protection
• Attend relevant committee meetings

Outreach and Community Relations
• Professionally represent MECT in the community
• Coordinate outreach to town boards and staff members to stay abreast of all matters of interest to MECT, including land use planning and preservation, wetlands and watershed protection and monitor opportunities for collaboration or assistance
• Maintain close relationships with key partner organizations (Greenbelt, Trustees, Cape Ann Trail Stewards, etc.) and cultivate mutually beneficial opportunities to collaborate
• Manage collaborations with towns and partner organizations on specific projects
• Manage relations with MECT membership, abutters to MECT lands and the public at large
- Coordinate outings and education programs for adults and youth, including local scouting organizations
- Coordinate public communications (newsletter, website, social media, press releases, etc.)

**Qualifications**

- **Required:** Significant experience and familiarity with land protection and stewardship methods, tools and practices
- **Required:** Strong leadership skills, including the ability to inspire and earn the confidence of colleagues and external stakeholders and effectively lead, motivate and manage staff and volunteers
- **Required:** Strong communication skills, including the ability to speak effectively in public, work with the media, edit the newsletter and interact well with diverse stakeholders
- **Required:** Excellent writing skills and ability to successfully apply for grants
- **Required:** The ability to represent MECT in a positive and professional manner, treating colleagues, constituents and donors of all levels and backgrounds with respect
- **Required:** Demonstrated ability to exercise sound judgment and discretion and to maintain the confidentiality of private or proprietary information
- **Required:** Proficiency with common computer applications and development of visual presentations (e.g. MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Zoom)
- **Strongly Preferred:** A degree in land conservation, natural resources, environmental science, public policy or related field
- **Preferred:** Experience in the non-profit sector, and local government.
- **Preferred:** Ability to make maps and perform basic analyses in ArcGIS
- **Preferred:** Experience managing a website, newsletter and social media accounts
- **Preferred:** Knowledge of deed research practices and ability to read and interpret historic and contemporary deeds and land surveys

Manchester Essex Conservation Trust is an equal opportunity employer.