



POSITION SPECIFICATION

Executive Director

North Cascades Institute seeks our next Executive Director to lead the organization in inspiring environmental stewardship and a community of belonging through transformative learning experiences in nature.



SEARCH CONDUCTED BY





ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

North Cascades Institute is a regional conservation organization with a national reputation focused on “transformative learning experiences in nature,” including place-based environmental education, outdoor recreation, health and wellness, conservation, environmental justice, and community engagement.

The Institute was established in 1986 to connect people, nature, and community in the Pacific Northwest. We do this through science, art, literature, storytelling, and direct engagement with the natural and cultural history of the region. Many of our programs are conducted at the world class North Cascades Environmental Learning Center, a green-built residential facility that opened in 2005, which we operate in partnership with the National Park Service and Seattle City Light.

We share a deep love of nature, especially for the North Cascades ecosystem of the Pacific Northwest. We approach our work with an entrepreneurial spirit and an enduring belief that all people have a fundamental right to learn, recreate, explore, connect, celebrate, and heal through direct relationships with natural places. As a learning institute, we are committed to cultivating a community of belonging that is welcoming and accessible to everyone so that people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities can experience and enjoy the mountains, rivers, forests, people, and wildlife of the Pacific Northwest. We are looking for a leader who brings a whole-hearted approach to work and strives to create a sense of kinship, inclusion, and stewardship that encourages all to care for and protect this special place.

North Cascades Institute utilizes a strong endowment, a committed group of donors and customers, and a high-quality group of dedicated staff and educational, agency and school partners to deepen its ties to its region and grow the breadth of its impact. The Executive Director oversees the organization’s annual operating budget of approximately \$4 million, oversees 60 staff, and reports to a 16-member board of directors. The Executive Director is also responsible for advancing North Cascades Institute’s vision, mission, and goals and for upholding the beliefs and values that form our organizational culture.

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Strategic Goals

- **Lifelong Learning.** Facilitate ongoing environmental stewardship through effective, high quality, place-based programs and digital outreach.
- **Kinship.** Cultivate an Institute community of belonging that is welcoming and accessible to ensure the Institute is relevant in a changing world.
- **Conservation in Practice.** Achieve Institute climate neutrality by 2030 and use the journey as an opportunity to inspire action in ourselves and others.
- **Exemplary Workforce.** Establish best practices for sustainability of Institute staffing and operations to ensure our ability to respond to opportunities and challenges.
- **Fiscal Sustainability.** Maintain long-term financial sustainability to support the Institute's mission and strategic goals.

Mission

To inspire environmental stewardship through transformative learning experiences in nature

Vision

Healthy Northwest ecosystems where all communities and species thrive

Values

Stewardship of nature and communities

Sustainability of our programs, staff, organization, and impact

Inclusion through building a welcoming, accessible, and safe environment for all

Strategic Focus that is innovative and mission driven

Reflection through mindfulness, gratitude, and authenticity

Learning sparked by a sense of wonder, curiosity, and creativity

Community engagement through experiences and partnerships

Accountability based on integrity, effectiveness, and dedication

Customer Service committed to offering high quality, relevant experiences



RESPONSIBILITIES

The Executive Director must be equally an educational visionary, entrepreneurial fundraiser, and an organizational leader. Areas of focus include:

Organizational leadership, strategy, and management

- Build on North Cascade Institute's established strengths to prioritize and drive forward its strategic goals and oversee an annual planning, budgeting, and review process that engages new ideas and an entrepreneurial mindset.
- Report to and work with the board of directors to ensure organizational well-being and growth.
- Lead, coach, hire, develop, and retain a diverse and talented staff with a focus on building the organization's capacity for skilled leadership, a welcome and accessible community, complex project and program implementation, partnership cultivation, and fundraising.
- Grow and build a team mentality and reinforce a positive and equitable workplace culture that flourishes with a diversity of voices and experiences.
- Support the development and delivery of projects and initiatives that enable transformative learning experiences in nature and a kinship across peoples and the non-human world.

Relationship building and partnership development

- Maintain, improve, and broaden strong working relationships with park constituencies, public entities, funders, community partners, and other nonprofits.
- Be a welcoming ambassador of the mission to all stakeholders and deepen and expand ties with and programming for the diverse peoples of the North Cascades and surrounding area.
- Work alongside critical partners, especially North Cascades National Park staff, the National Park Service, the U.S. Forest Service, Seattle City Light, and area school districts to promote the operational goals of the organization and strive towards shared goals for conservation and sustainability.
- Work alongside local Tribes, Bands, and First Nations to accurately and effectively acknowledge their ancestral homelands and ongoing stewardship, and to create opportunities for further learning, action, and collaboration with these communities.

Community engagement and inclusion

- Cultivate a community of belonging that is welcoming and accessible for people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds to enable everyone to enjoy powerful and rewarding experiences in nature.
- Convene trainings and workshops to better understand and overcome cultural and physical barriers to participation.
- Actively and openly address institutionalized racism and the marginalization of peoples in communications and programming.
- Advocate for issues of concern for both the human and non-human users of the park and surrounding areas
- Implement strategies and benchmarks to increase diversity among staff and board.



Financial management and fundraising

- Coordinate, develop, and monitor the organization's budget and revenue streams, balancing the Institute's short-term program goals and long-term resources to broaden and deepen its impact.
- Work with the board to build the organization's financial reserves and secure its financial health through growth of the Institute's program, bookstore, and development revenue
- Secure, maintain, and expand funding from high net worth individuals, corporations, foundations, and public partners.



Public communications and outreach

- Raise the visibility of North Cascades Institute and promote awareness and enjoyment of the ecosystems of the Pacific Northwest.
- Oversee all public and media relations and act as the primary spokesperson for North Cascades Institute.
- Participate and present at conferences, symposia, and training and serve as a thought leader among peers in the nonprofit, conservation, and environmental education communities.

DESIRED EXPERIENCE AND COMPETENCIES

The ideal candidate may come from a variety of career pathways. Critical to success will be a passion for the mission of the organization and a capacity to lead an established, successful organization through changing times while continuing to deliver on that mission. Executive leadership skills, paired with a creative, collaborative, and often entrepreneurial approach, are essential.

The following are desired qualities:

- Passion for the organizational mission and deep experience working in nature with people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds.
- A practical idealist, curious listener, provocative question asker, and creative problem solver with a demonstrated ability to think strategically and make decisions efficiently
- Proven leadership skills with the ability to motivate others, offer a steady hand through adversity and uncertainty, and present an inspiring and imaginative vision for the future
- Humble, empathetic, and inclusive of various perspectives; able to resolve conflicts and find common ground
- Extensive management experience in positions of increasing responsibility and authority that showcase an ability to develop the strengths of staff, board, and partners as well as acknowledge one's own areas for potential growth
- Previous experience in building internal capacities and creating more access for historically marginalized peoples/groups
- Demonstrated fundraising experience and success, including private philanthropy, corporate donations, and government grants
- Experience managing a complex budget with multiple funding sources
- Able to maintain a wide network of stakeholders, including local, state, federal, and/or tribal government agencies and other organizational partners, delivering clear communication and working to build cohesion
- Skilled in organizational development, administration, and personnel management, with attention to detail, flexibility, integrity, confidence, and a sense of humor
- Excellent interpersonal, oral, and written communication skills and comfort with public speaking





LOCATION

The Executive Director position will be based out of the Institute's main office in Sedro-Woolley, Washington, with frequent travel to the Environmental Learning Center in North Cascades National Park. Remote leadership is expected until it is safe to resume working in an office setting.

COMPENSATION

This is a regular, full-time, exempt position. We offer a competitive compensation package; benefits include paid time off, medical/dental insurance, long- and short-term disability insurance, life insurance, tax-deferred annuity and contribution retirement plan, and a yearly stipend to participate in Institute programs. Relocation assistance will be offered if necessary.

START DATE

Applicant should be available to start no later than May 1, 2021 to allow overlap with current and founding executive director Saul Weisberg, who will be retiring in June.

TO APPLY

Interested candidates should apply via email by sending a cover letter describing their qualifications that match the position criteria and what they will bring to the role, along with a resume, to Cleveland Justis at NCISearch@potrerogroup.com with the subject line "North Cascades Institute, Executive Director Search."

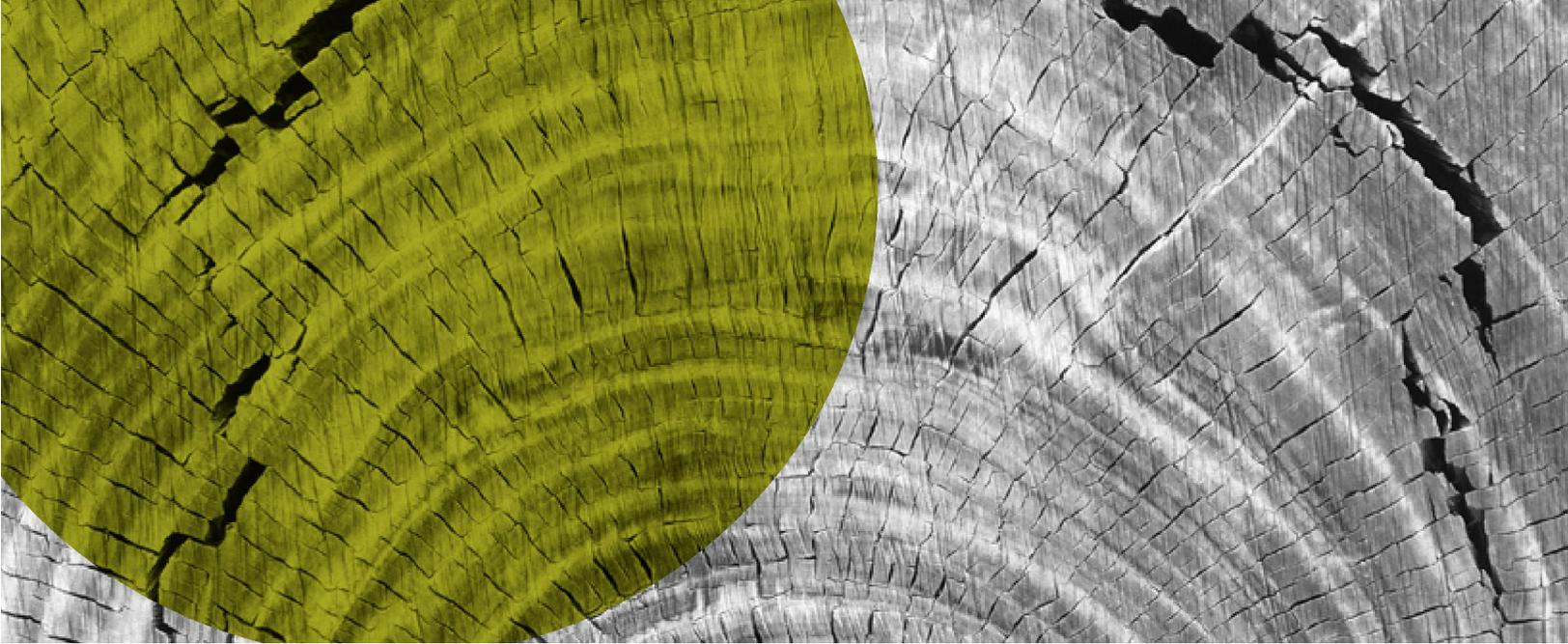
Final offers of employment are contingent upon the successful completion of a background check that may include employment history, national criminal background check, national sex offender registry search, and a driving history check. A valid driver's license and driving record check must have no more than one moving violation in the past three years, no DUI, reckless driving, or serious moving violations, etc.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

More information on North Cascades Institute can be found at ncascades.org. For additional information regarding this opportunity, please contact

Cleveland Justis
Potrero Group, LLC
cjustis@potrerogroup.com

[North Cascades Institute is an Equal Opportunity Employer.](#) Our effectiveness is enhanced when equity and inclusiveness are practiced and protected throughout our organizational governance, culture, and staffing. Recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce is a high priority at North Cascades Institute. The Institute does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender, gender expression, gender identity, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, military, genetic information, ancestry, marital status, age, citizenship, or any other basis prohibited by law in any of its policies, programs or operations.



Potrero Group is honored to coordinate the Executive Director hiring search on behalf of North Cascades Institute. Supporting a world-class conservation organization is in perfect alignment with Potrero Group's commitment to providing rigorous strategy and business planning, organizational effectiveness, and nuanced search services to mission-driven organizations. Potrero Group supports innovative leaders and organizations making a difference in the world.

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