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Chief Executive Officer

Jefferson County Greenways Foundation seeks an entrepreneurial, strategic, and collaborative Chief Executive Officer to launch and lead the new organization as it lays the foundation for impact and success.



Organization Background

The Jefferson County Greenways Foundation is the nonprofit partner to the Jefferson County Greenways Commission. Together, they steward and support three large greenspaces in Jefferson County, Alabama: Ruffner Mountain, Red Mountain Park, and Turkey Creek Nature Preserve.

Each of the three greenspaces was established through the effort of local citizens and community leaders who saw the need for publicly accessible land. In 2023, the three Birmingham-region parks were unified by an act of the Alabama state Legislature into the Jefferson County Greenways Commission, which was made possible by the commitment of \$2M from the American Rescue Plan Act and an additional \$1.6M donated by supporters. This collaborative, cross-jurisdictional approach minimizes inefficiencies, duplication of resources, and competition for the same funding, instead creating a new, coordinated system of parks management on a regional scale.

In 2024, the nonprofits that supported each of the parks joined their boards and reorganized into Jefferson County Greenways Foundation. Today, the Foundation oversees programs, conservation, capital improvements, and fundraising across all three parks and supports the Commission, which manages the coordinated day-to-day operations of all three greenspaces. In its short time, the unified organization has made great strides to lay the cornerstones for success. This unique public/private partnership model offers an opportunity for an entrepreneurial, tenacious leader to build upon the groundwork for success and continue the pathway for partnership and impact.



About The Parks

Spanning several communities, Ruffner Mountain, Red Mountain Park, and Turkey Creek Nature Preserve encompass over 3,000 acres and attract more than 300,000 visitors annually. Each in their own unique way, the parks reflect the region's rich natural and cultural history. Many of the area's greenways originally served as sites for mining and smelting abundant deposits of iron, limestone, and coal in the 19th and 20th centuries. Today, these breathtaking landscapes are brimming with historic quarries, forests, creeks, wildlife, and more. They serve a crucial role in preserving habitat for native plants and animals, fostering connections between communities and the natural world, and preserving Greater Birmingham's industrial history.

Ruffner Mountain:

In the late 19th century Ruffner Mountain was a bustling mining site, contributing to Birmingham's industrial growth and the expansion of railroads to reach the western United States. Today, Ruffner Mountain is a thriving urban oasis and sanctuary for biodiversity, outdoor education, and community enjoyment.

- ✓ 1,038-acre preserve
- ✓ Native plants, animals, geological formations, beautiful vistas, open picnic areas, and ore-mining heritage
- ✓ Hiking trails and overlooks offer a beautiful view of the city
- ✓ Nature center, including exhibits and family programs

Red Mountain Park:

Indigenous hunters and travelers originally encountered hematite, a mineral of distinctive red color, in the area now known as Red Mountain Park. This ruddied deposit was pivotal in Birmingham's industrial ascent and converted Red Mountain Park into an extensive iron ore mining site in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The park is now a vibrant forest encompassing miles of scenic trails that serves as a hub for outdoor recreation and conservation.

- ✓ 1,500-acre park
- ✓ Walking, hiking and mountain biking trails, and beautiful destination sites
- ✓ Historic Spanish-style Hoist House at the Redding Shaft Mine
- ✓ 16 miles of trails featuring two city overlooks
- ✓ Three breathtaking treehouses
- ✓ Six-acre off-leash Remy's Dog Park
- ✓ Historic mine site

Turkey Creek Nature Preserve:

Inhabited by the Indigenous Muskogee people, these lands later served as an iron ore forge, becoming a key regional site for early industrial efforts. Today, Turkey Creek Nature Preserve is a refuge for diverse biological habitats and offers stunning landscapes, a world-class swimming hole, recreational trails, and educational opportunities.

- ✓ 655-acre preserve
- ✓ Stunning beauty and unique habitats
- ✓ Five-mile national recreational trail system
- ✓ One of the state's top swimming spots
- ✓ Home to three federally endangered fish species
- ✓ One of Jefferson County's first settlements
- ✓ Hands-on educational opportunities and annual events for the community



Position Overview

The Chief Executive Officer will oversee the staff of the Jefferson County Greenways Foundation and the Jefferson County Greenways Commission. The CEO will guide the work of the Foundation, completing the integration of the three founding entities and continuing to build the framework for a cohesive, effective organization. The Foundation and its CEO are responsible for programs, conservation, capital improvements, and fundraising on behalf of the parks, and oversee and support the Commission's on-the-ground operations and maintenance in the parks. This position will lead the implementation of the Foundation's strategic plan, manage and expand a talented team of staff, and report to the Foundation Board of Directors. They will foster open lines of communication with the Commissioners and cultivate and maintain strong, supportive relationships with funders, government, and community partners, clarifying and strengthening the brand, reputation, and public awareness of the Foundation, Commission, and the parks.

Focus Areas



Strategic Leadership

- Advance the organization's strategic plan in partnership with the Foundation Board of Directors, staff, and Commission.
- Unify the Commission, Parks, partners, community, and funders around a shared vision for the greenways through active listening and communication that builds trust, collegiality, and strong working relationships.
- Foster trust and open communication with board members and commissioners, ensuring alignment and partnership to leverage their expertise, networks, and resources for the Foundation's benefit.
- Keep the board fully informed on the condition of the organization and all pertinent issues, and help them fulfill their governance responsibilities, including legal and fiduciary duties in compliance with all legal and ethical standards.
- Work with the board to identify, recruit, and orient new members who align with the organization's mission and needs.



Government Relations and Public Partnerships

- Build relationships and foster collaborative partnerships with key contacts at all levels of government, with various community organizations, and in the private sector.
- Advocate for public policies and funding priorities that support the maintenance and enhancement of the Jefferson County Greenways.
- Engage with local, state, and federal officials to promote the organization's mission and ensure compliance with regulatory requirements.
- Work closely with local groups, volunteers, and other community organizations to ensure their voices are included in Foundation initiatives and to advance shared goals.
- Foster relationships with historically underrepresented communities to promote equitable access and involvement by engaging respectfully and understanding their diverse cultural and historical ties to the parks.

Organizational Oversight

- Continue the process of consolidating and integrating the three nonprofits into the unified Foundation, and ensure the successful merging and implementation of systems, policies, and procedures.
- Work in seamless partnership with the Jefferson County Greenway Commission to align goals, priorities, and resources.
- Provide leadership in developing organizational, financial, programmatic, and human resource plans and policies with the Foundation Board of Directors, commissioners, and staff.
- Oversee the fiscal management of the organization and ensure sustainable and fiscally responsible practices for long-term financial stability.
- Prepare an annual budget with input from the staff and board and ensure the organization operates within budget guidelines and goals.
- Manage the identification, prioritization, and delivery of high-impact programs and park projects that align with the Foundation's mission and values.
- Partner with the organization's leadership team to ensure excellence across all aspects of the Foundation and Commission's mission delivery.
- Manage staff to ensure strategic goals are met through mentorship, staff development, metric development and tracking, and accountability for results.
- Attract, hire, and retain new staff where needed to effectively execute the Foundation's strategic plan and to meet the needs of the Commission.
- Build an inclusive, collaborative, and mission-driven organizational culture that reflects the values of the Foundation and the Commission.

Public Communication

- Serve as the spokesperson and champion for the Foundation, Commission, and Parks.
- Oversee the continued cohesion of the parks' brands and reputation, and the public's understanding of the value of the greenways and the role of the Foundation.
- Effectively communicate with diverse constituents, including policymakers, funders, and community leaders and adapt messaging to resonate with the audience.
- Prepare and deliver professional and informative presentations and engage audiences at public events, community gatherings, and fundraising opportunities with clarity and enthusiasm.
- Celebrate the natural, cultural, and historical significance of the greenways and their enduring value to communities and the environment.

Fundraising

- Serve as the face of Jefferson County Greenways Foundation's fundraising efforts and inspire support for its mission, including at fundraising events, conferences, and donor meetings.
- Work with the development staff and board to create and implement a comprehensive fundraising plan to secure diverse, sustained funding streams to support the needs of the Parks, Foundation, and Commission.
- Build and maintain relationships with high-net-worth individuals, foundations, and corporations.
- Support board members to leverage their networks and secure significant philanthropic gifts.



Desired Experience and Competencies

Jefferson County Greenways Foundation seeks an entrepreneurial, visionary, relationship-driven CEO who is able to bring structure, stability, and support to the nascent organization. The ideal candidate will be an adaptive, tenacious critical thinker and practical problem solver who is skilled at designing and implementing systems, policies, and practices that will foster organizational stability and excellence. They will be a strategic, partnership-focused, diplomatic leader who can move diverse parties toward decisions, clarity, and action on mutual goals. They will be an inspirational spokesperson and passionate, positive advocate for public open space who can easily establish trust and motivate others. Experience in nonprofit leadership, public park operations, conservation, environmental education, and community engagement are all beneficial.



Strategic Leadership

- Able to work in close partnership with the board, public officials, and parks leadership to articulate and execute a compelling and inclusive long-term vision for the organization and Parks
- Skilled in strategic planning with the ability to identify opportunities and challenges, and drive innovation while maintaining a commitment to core values
- Demonstrates an understanding of the needs, concerns, and priorities of diverse community members who use and value the greenways
- Able to tactfully mediate competing interests with empathy, fostering a shared sense of ownership and stewardship while addressing disputes by focusing on mutually acceptable solutions
- Positive, optimistic, and personable
- Loves public parks and is passionate about conservation, environmental education, and community engagement
- Consistently displays good judgment and unimpeachable credibility, honesty, and integrity



Organizational Oversight

- Experience managing organizational operations, overseeing budgets, staff, and programs to ensure alignment with strategic goals
- Energetic, tenacious, agile, and comfortable working through complexity and ambiguity to create structure, clarity, and consensus
- An entrepreneurial approach to organizational development and familiarity with the systems, processes, and clear communication needed to effectively consolidate the three original entities
- Strong financial acumen with the ability to oversee budgeting, forecasting, and financial planning to ensure fiscal responsibility, sustainability, and effectiveness
- Strong leadership skills to inspire, motivate, and mentor a diverse team, fostering a culture of collaboration, accountability, inclusion, camaraderie, and mutual respect
- Able to manage competing priorities while maintaining attention to detail and accurately tracking and reporting on metrics and activities
- Experience in environmental education, conservation, or facility management are all a plus

Government Relations and Public Partnerships

- Strong ability to build trusting relationships, actively listen, share information transparently, and work effectively with partners to achieve shared goals, including government officials, community members, and donors
- Skilled at advocating for parks and natural spaces as vital community assets, with experience influencing policy at local, state, or national levels
- Experience in handling sensitive topics with tact, transparency, and composure, ensuring relationships remain positive and productive

Public Communication

- Exceptional interpersonal and communication skills
- Inspirational and motivating. Able to articulate the organization's vision, goals, and strategies in a way that resonates with diverse audiences and ignites passion and commitment in others
- A skillful marketer who can elevate the profile, reputation, and public awareness of the greenways, Foundation, and Commission



Fundraising

- Successful track record of designing and implementing a fundraising strategy that supports the organization's mission and long-term goals
- Experience in identifying, cultivating and maintaining productive relationships with diverse funding streams, including foundations, government grants, individual donations, corporate sponsorships, and earned income
- Demonstrated success in building and sustaining relationships with high-net-worth individuals to secure transformational gifts



Compensation

This is a full-time, exempt, benefit-eligible position. The anticipated annual salary range for this position is \$110,000–\$130,000, commensurate with experience.

Jefferson County Greenways Foundation provides a comprehensive benefits package including paid holidays and paid time off, health and dental coverage including 100% of individual premiums paid by the Foundation, and life insurance and AD&D with 100% of premiums paid by the Foundation.

Of note, living expenses and home prices in Birmingham, AL are below the national average, while its school systems are ranked among the best in Alabama and are competitive across the country.

Final candidates will be subject to a background check, driving record check, and drug screening.

Location

This position will work from Jefferson County Greenways Foundation's office at Ruffner Mountain in Birmingham, AL.

Start Date

May 2025

To Apply

Visit potrerogroup.com/jcgf to apply. Applications should include a resume and a cover letter describing your qualifications that match the position criteria and what you will bring to the role.

Interested candidates should apply by **February 28, 2025**, for priority consideration.



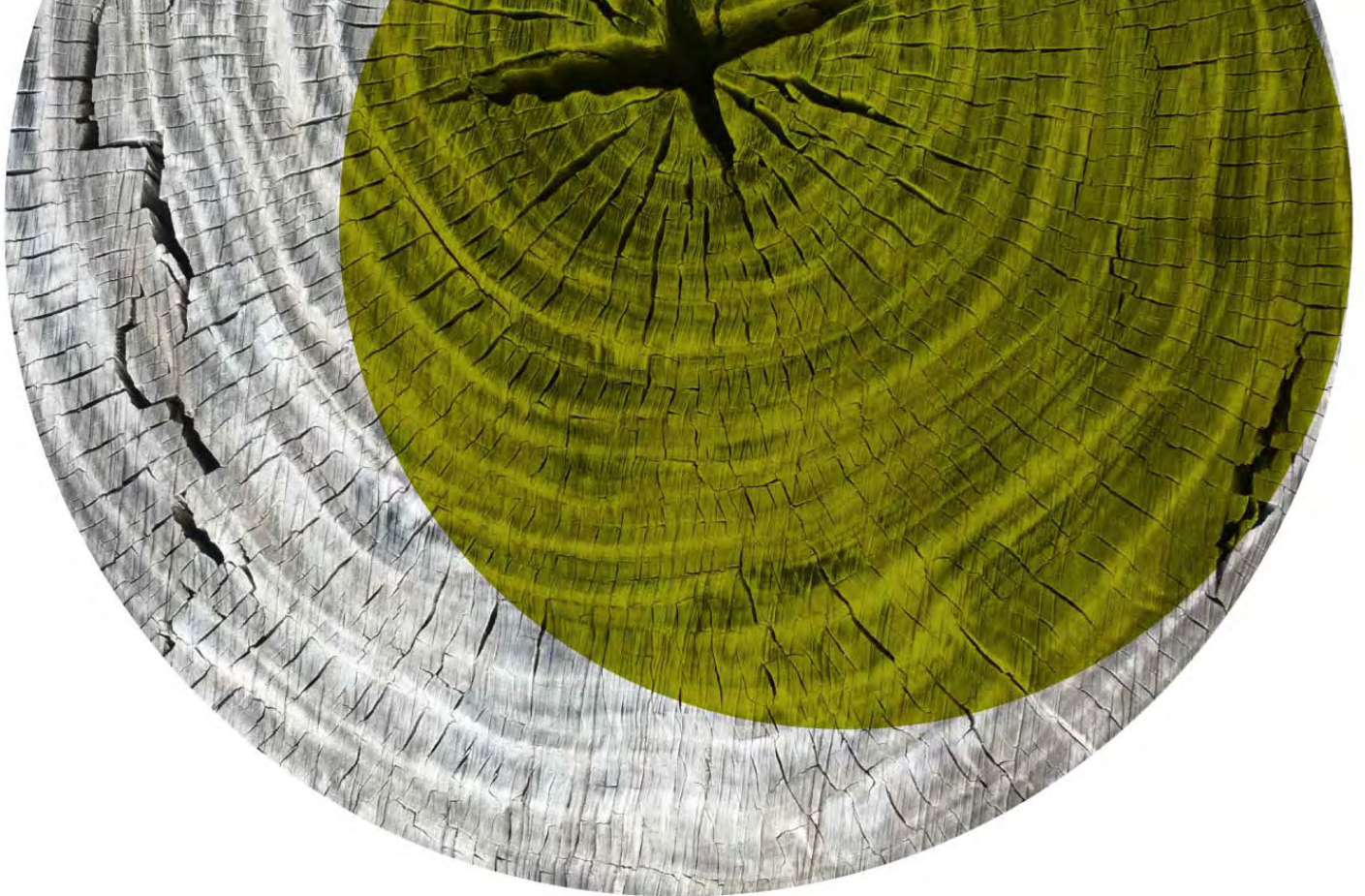
Additional Information

More information about Jefferson County Greenways Foundation can be found at united.jeffcogreenways.org

For additional information regarding this opportunity, please contact:

Jena Kuznik
Senior Consultant, Potrero Group
jkuznik@potrerogroup.com





Potrero Group is honored to coordinate this search on behalf of Jefferson County Greenways Foundation. We support innovative leaders and organizations making a difference in the world by providing rigorous strategy and business planning, organizational effectiveness, and nuanced search services to mission-driven organizations. We are committed to equitable and inclusive practices in all of our work.

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