



JEFFERSON
**LAND
TRUST**

Search Conducted By



Photo: John Gussman

Executive Director

Jefferson Land Trust seeks an inspiring and empowering Executive Director to guide and lead its mission of working with the community to preserve open space, working lands, and habitat in Jefferson County forever.



Organization Overview

Jefferson Land Trust is an accredited, private, nonprofit conservation organization with an annual operating budget of approximately \$2M serving Jefferson County on the stunning Olympic Peninsula of Washington State. Founded in 1989 on the belief that conservation is fundamentally a community endeavor, Jefferson Land Trust works with willing landowners to permanently protect wetlands, floodplains, salmon streams, farmland, wildlife corridors, working forests, marine shoreline, and scenic landscapes from inappropriate development. The organization is legally committed to caring for these lands forever—and does so with a collaborative spirit and willingness to embrace complex conservation challenges.

Over the past decade and more, Jefferson Land Trust has meaningfully expanded its definition of community and conservation. The organization has deepened partnerships with small-scale farmers and Indigenous tribal nations—the original stewards of these lands—and embraced a “People + Places” philosophy that recognizes livelihoods, cultures, and ways of life as inseparable from

land and water. Current conservation priorities include protecting habitat corridors, sustaining working agricultural and community forestlands, supporting climate resilience, and implementing a [100-year vision for conservation](#) on the Olympic Peninsula—one shaped by the whole community.

Jefferson Land Trust operates with a deep sense of gratitude for place and an abiding conviction that there are abundant resources to support the good work ahead. More than 250 community members shaped a recently completed 2026–2030 strategic plan that aims to act boldly but responsibly, protecting the lands that define Jefferson County while building an organization strong enough to steward the region for generations. Through all of its work, the organization is committed to shared purpose, mutual respect, and genuine partnership at every level. Staff, board, volunteers, and community members are all part of the same team, working together toward a future in which the people and lands of Jefferson County thrive in relationship with one another.



Position Overview

The Executive Director will provide organizational leadership by guiding strategy, supporting a talented and empowered staff team, maintaining strong board relations, stewarding donor and community relationships, and serving as a face and voice of Jefferson Land Trust across the Olympic Peninsula and beyond.

The position calls for someone who leads from humility—a connector and convener who brings people together around a shared love of place. The Executive Director will understand that the organization’s culture of collaboration, kindness, and consensus is not just how Jefferson Land Trust works, but *why* it works. They will step into a high-functioning team and see their role as a partner and an empowerer.

The Executive Director will embrace the opportunity to reach people across the Olympic Peninsula and greater Seattle area who may not yet know Jefferson Land Trust, turning curious neighbors into lifelong supporters while deepening relationships with the landowners, tribal partners, farmers, funders, and organizations that already make this work possible.

Responsibilities



Photo: John Gussman



Photo: Jefferson Land Trust

Strategic Leadership and Organizational Direction

- Collaborate with staff and the Board of Directors to develop, refine, and implement long-term strategic plans and annual work plans that reflect the organization's mission and values
- Provide visionary leadership that honors the organization's culture of collaboration, consensus, and inclusive decision making
- Translate strategic goals into achievable objectives, working in genuine partnership with staff, board, and community
- Ensure that programs and activities are developed, executed, and evaluated to maximize mission impact
- Participate with the Land Trust Alliance, Washington Association of Land Trusts, and peer organizations on policy, accreditation, and issues of shared interest

Community Engagement and Relationship Building

- Lead Jefferson Land Trust's staff and board to be ambassadors and representatives across the Olympic Peninsula — connecting with landowners, community members, local and state officials, media, tribal partners, and the broader public
- Actively reach out to people across the Olympic Peninsula who may be unfamiliar with Jefferson Land Trust, building bridges and expanding the community of supporters and believers
- Sustain and deepen the organization's collaborative partnerships with local and regional organizations, including Indigenous tribal nations, small-scale farmers, government agencies, funders, and conservation allies
- Ensure that organizational culture and programming actively welcome volunteers and community participation
- Oversee outreach, communications, and events that build connection and belonging
- Serve as a board member of the Clallam County-based North Olympic Land Trust



Photo: Wendy Feltham

Board Relations and Governance

- Support board member recruitment, orientation, and ongoing education on land trust issues and organizational governance
- Keep board members informed of Jefferson Land Trust activities and provide organizational support to officers and committees
- Provide data and resources that support the board in strategic decision making and engage the board in strategic conversations that support a consensus-based culture
- Serve as liaison between board and staff, ensuring productive and trusting relationships across the organization
- Manage growing complexities of the organization including subsidiary LLCs: Chimacum Ridge Community Forest, JLT Resources, and Olympic Wildland Burial Grounds



Photo: John Gussman

Fundraising and Donor Relations

- Lead fundraising and development efforts with energy, warmth, and authenticity, sharing Jefferson Land Trust's story and building genuine relationships with donors and prospective supporters
- Work alongside the Board of Directors and Director of Philanthropy to develop and implement fundraising strategies, including major gifts, campaign giving, planned giving, and grants
- Cultivate deep, long-term relationships with donors and partners rooted in mutual interest and investment in conservation and appreciation of place



Photo: Tim Lawson

Administration and Financial Stewardship

- Ensure financial compliance, strong practices, and fiscal responsibility, including budgeting, annual audit, and tax filings
- Recruit, develop, and support staff, conducting evaluations, providing coaching, and fostering high morale and a sense of shared ownership
- Maintain administrative and communication systems that support efficient, mission-aligned operations
- Oversee compliance with all applicable legal, regulatory, and Land Trust standards and practices requirements, including accreditation



Desired Experience and Competencies

Jefferson Land Trust seeks an inspiring, down-to-earth leader who approaches conservation work with deep humility, warmth, and a genuine love for engaged community life. This is an extraordinary opportunity for someone who wants to make a lasting difference on one of the most beautiful and ecologically rich landscapes in the Pacific Northwest, and who understands that lasting conservation is built on relationships, trust, and inclusion.

The ideal candidate brings experience in the land trust world or a closely related conservation or land-based field, and is comfortable with, and energized by, the rhythms of rural community life on the Olympic Peninsula. They will arrive with appreciation for the organization's culture and a commitment to nourishing it—understanding that the empowered, collaborative team Jefferson Land Trust has built is one of its greatest assets.

Community Connection and Inclusive Leadership

- Warm, personable, and genuinely curious about people, skilled at building connections with diverse constituencies from longtime supporters to people who have never heard of Jefferson Land Trust
- A natural convener who brings different groups together around shared goals, listening attentively with an open mind and creating space for every voice
- Commitment to inclusive, consensus-based leadership that values the contributions of staff, board, volunteers, tribal partners, farmers, and the broader community
- Experience working with Indigenous communities and/or a deep commitment to developing and honoring those relationships with humility and respect
- Comfortable and at home in a rural setting, and energized by the culture and community of the Olympic Peninsula

Organizational Leadership and Culture

- A leader driven by mission, not personal recognition—someone who empowers others and celebrates team success
- Strong team-builder who appreciates and nurtures a culture of collaboration, kindness, and mutual respect
- Ability to motivate and inspire staff, board, and volunteers while maintaining high organizational morale
- Experience managing budgets, staff, and nonprofit operations with care and accountability
- Approaches resources from a posture of abundance and possibility rather than scarcity

Fundraising and Donor Partnership

- Comfortable and skilled in fundraising—not as a transactional obligation, but as an invitation to make a shared investment in place
- Proven experience in development, including major gifts and campaign fundraising, ideally from an organization that has successfully completed or navigated a significant fundraising effort
- A storyteller and relationship-builder who approaches donors with gratitude and genuine partnership
- Experience with grant oversight and management, institutional funding, and diversified revenue strategies

Mission Depth and Conservation Knowledge

- Genuine, abiding commitment to land conservation and the mission of protecting working lands, open space, and habitat
- Background in the land trust field or a land trust-adjacent conservation field strongly preferred
- Familiarity with Land Trust Alliance standards and practices, accreditation, and the broader land trust community
- Understanding of the intersections of conservation, agriculture, forestry, tribal sovereignty, and community wellbeing
- Appreciation for how conservation has evolved to embrace broader definitions of community and place



Photo: Jefferson Land Trust

Compensation

This is a full-time, exempt, benefit-eligible position. The anticipated annual salary range is \$120,000–\$140,000, commensurate with experience.

A comprehensive benefits package will be provided and includes health insurance, retirement contributions, paid time off, and other benefits appropriate to the role and organization. A relocation package is negotiable for out-of-area applicants.

Location And Requirements

Stretching from the Salish Sea across the Olympic Peninsula to the Pacific Ocean, Jefferson County, Washington, is a place where extraordinary natural beauty meets deeply engaged, values-driven communities. Residents care fiercely about their land, waters, wildlife, arts, local economy, and one another—and show up through volunteerism, civic participation, and collaborative problem-solving. It's a county where visionary leadership is welcomed, partnerships thrive, and people believe that together they can shape a resilient, inclusive future.

The Executive Director will be based at Jefferson Land Trust's offices in Port Townsend, Washington, with regular travel throughout Jefferson County and the broader Olympic Peninsula and region. The position requires a regular in-person presence to build and sustain strong relationships with staff, board members, landowners, community partners, and donors.

The role requires flexibility to work occasional evenings and weekends for events, community programs, and organizational activities.

To Apply

Please visit potrerogroup.com/jlt and select "Apply Here." 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 April 13th for priority consideration.

Start Date

July 2026



Photo: John Gussman

Additional Information

More information on Jefferson Land Trust can be found at saveland.org

For additional information regarding this opportunity, please contact:

Daniel Student

Managing Director and Search Lead at Potrero Group, at dstudent@potrerogroup.com.



Jefferson Land Trust is an Equal Opportunity Employer

We are committed to providing equal employment opportunities to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression), national origin, age, disability, genetic information, protected veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state, or local law. We celebrate diversity and are dedicated to creating an inclusive environment for all employees. We also provide reasonable accommodations for applicants with disabilities during the recruitment and hiring process.



Potrero Group is honored to coordinate this search on behalf of the Jefferson Land Trust. We support innovative leaders and organizations making a difference in the world with strategic planning, facilitation, organizational development, and board and executive search services. We are committed to equitable and inclusive practices in all of our work.

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