



Executive Director

The Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation seeks an experienced, partnership-oriented Executive Director to lead one of the North Bay's most vital conservation organizations advancing environmental education, watershed restoration, ecosystem science and monitoring, and community engagement in the Laguna watershed.



Organization Overview

The Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation (Laguna Foundation) is a leading environmental nonprofit based in Santa Rosa, California, dedicated to protecting and restoring the Laguna de Santa Rosa watershed—the largest freshwater wetland complex on the California Coast.

The Laguna de Santa Rosa watershed is a remarkable ecological treasure supporting an extraordinary diversity of wildlife and providing critical flood protection. Situated in the heart of Sonoma County, the watershed lies within the ancestral territory of the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria Tribe, whose current and historical cultural legacies are inextricably tied to its native ecosystems and natural resources of the Laguna. With a clear vision of a thriving, resilient Laguna watershed accessible to all, the Laguna Foundation works collaboratively with public agencies, civic groups, Tribal nations, donors, volunteers, and partner organizations to advance science, stewardship, and education that reflects a shared commitment to nature and community.

Today, the Laguna Foundation stands at an important moment of opportunity, growth, and transition. The incoming Executive Director will partner with a dedicated staff and board to guide the organization into its next chapter. This includes expanding organizational capacity, advancing ambitious restoration, conservation, and education goals, strengthening financial sustainability, deepening commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and furthering key partnerships.



Position Overview And Responsibilities

The Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation seeks an experienced and collaborative Executive Director to provide professional leadership and management. Reporting to the Board of Directors, the Executive Director will spearhead the Laguna Foundation's role as a lead conservation organization for the Laguna watershed, moving the organization forward with strategic clarity, financial strength, and authentic community partnership and connection.

The Executive Director must be an exceptional leader who combines nonprofit management expertise with a genuine passion for people and the environment—someone who is equally comfortable cultivating major donors, guiding a team of dedicated staff, deepening partnerships with Indigenous communities, and advocating for the organization and the wider watershed among diverse constituencies.

The Executive Director will serve as the primary ambassador for the Laguna Foundation, maintaining relationships with key partners, donors, policymakers, Tribes, and other community stakeholders while overseeing the implementation of the organization's strategic plan and restoration plans.



Strategic Leadership and Planning

- Provide visionary leadership in setting organizational priorities and direction in alignment with the Laguna Foundation's mission
- Collaborate with the staff and the Board of Directors to implement and update the organization's strategic plans, restoration plans, programmatic priorities, and associated work plans
- Foster a culture of cooperation, open communication, and passion for the Foundation's vision and mission
- Continue to build a collaborative framework with agencies and other partners enabling the implementation of large-scale restoration and conservation projects

Financial Management and Operations

- Develop organizational capacity and financial sustainability as programmatic opportunities grow, with effective internal controls that are monitored and updated regularly
- Oversee an organizational structure that supports program objectives and internal capacity, including staffing, technology, finances, facilities, and communications
- Work with staff and the Board of Directors to prepare annual budgets and establish accountability standards for grant and budget tracking
- Direct financial activities, including oversight of bookkeeping, accounting, grant budgets, and expenditures
- Present annual budgets and quarterly financial reports to the Board of Directors
- Engage with the Treasurer and Board of Directors in financial planning and revenue diversification strategies to help build organizational capacity

Staff and Human Resources Management

- Collaborate with the Director of Administration to ensure the recruitment, hiring, and retention of a high-performing, mission-aligned team; provide overall leadership, support, and accountability across all departments
- Coordinate with and lead department Directors to ensure staffing, roles, and workflows effectively support program delivery and organizational goals
- Collaborate with the Directors Team to develop, implement, and continuously improve human resources policies and procedures, including onboarding, training, performance management, and professional development
- Foster a cohesive, fair, and equitable organizational culture to help ensure that staff support, communication, and team development is aligned with organizational goals and objectives
- Ensure organizational compliance with all applicable employment laws and regulations in partnership with the Director of Administration and other Department directors, consulting legal counsel as needed

Fundraising and Development

- Collaborate with the Board and staff to direct and co-create fundraising strategies in support of primary objectives, including core projects, endowments, campaigns, and annual budget needs
- Cultivate and steward relationships with individual donors, institutional funders, and foundation partners
- Lead and/or collaborate on funding proposals and grant applications to secure financial resources for programs and projects
- Raise the visibility of the organization through sustainable marketing campaigns aimed at corporations and the public
- Collaborate with the Board and others to expand public awareness of the Laguna Foundation's programs and community value

Public Messaging, Partnerships, and Advocacy

- Serve as the primary ambassador and visible leader of the Laguna Foundation.
- Advance the Laguna Foundation's goals and initiatives with government agencies, partners, Tribes, funders, community organizations, and the public
- Represent the Laguna Foundation at public functions and make effective public presentations
- Build and maintain relationships with local and state lawmakers, county and state policymakers, task forces, advisory committees, and funding bodies
- Position the Laguna Foundation as a vital and effective environmental education and stewardship organization in Sonoma County and beyond



Desired Experience and Competencies

The Laguna Foundation seeks a leader who brings a combination of environmental commitment, organizational acumen, and effective relationship-building ability. This is an extraordinary opportunity for a seasoned nonprofit professional to step into a meaningful leadership role at a well-established organization that has deep community roots and a significant commitment to environmental conservation and stewardship.

The ideal candidate is an excellent communicator and creative problem-solver who leads with collaborative energy, is deeply committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and brings proven strength in personnel management, financial management, and fundraising. They will be a convener and coalition-builder who sees partnerships as essential to conservation and environmental stewardship. They must be able to balance external relationships and programmatic opportunities with strong internal organizational and fiscal oversight, supporting the organization to thrive and ensuring long-term sustainability.

Nonprofit Leadership and Mission Commitment

- Extensive organizational leadership experience managing budgets, staff, and nonprofit operations with care and accountability, ideally in an environmental or conservation context
- A strong team builder with emotional intelligence and the ability to motivate and inspire staff, board, and volunteers while maintaining high organizational morale
- Commitment to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion through continuous learning, modeling inclusive behaviors, and proactively managing bias
- Demonstrated commitment to conservation and the mission of protecting open space and habitat with a genuine appreciation for biodiversity, ecosystem services, and environmental education

Financial Management and Fundraising

- 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
- Experience developing and executing fundraising strategies to diversify revenue and grow organizational sustainability
- Ability to understand and communicate financial concepts, including cash flow, budget management, and financial reporting
- Track record of grant writing and grant management with government and private funders

Communication and Community Engagement

- Skilled at building connections and coalitions with diverse constituencies, from longtime supporters to people who are unfamiliar with the Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation
- Exceptional written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to represent the organization effectively to diverse audiences, from community members to elected officials throughout Sonoma County and beyond
- Experience working with Indigenous communities and/or a deep commitment to developing and honoring those relationships with humility and respect
- Experience working with media, executing marketing campaigns, and elevating organizational visibility

Conservation Expertise

- Knowledge of community opportunities and constraints related to community-based conservation, watershed restoration, stewardship, and environmental education
- Understanding of the intersections of conservation, watersheds and wetlands, agriculture, tribal sovereignty, and community well-being
- Familiarity with California environmental policy, regulatory frameworks, and conservation partnerships preferred



Compensation

This is a full-time, exempt, benefit-eligible position. The anticipated annual salary range for this position is \$160,000–\$180,000, commensurate with experience. A competitive benefits package is included.

Location and requirements

The Executive Director will be based at the Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation in Santa Rosa, California. Santa Rosa is located in the heart of Sonoma County, offering a vibrant community, beautiful natural surroundings, and convenient access to the broader Bay Area. The region is home to a rich network of conservation organizations, civic groups, and engaged community members deeply invested in the health of the Laguna watershed.

The position offers flexibility for periodic remote work depending on workload and daily schedule, with regular on-site presence expected. Local travel during business hours is typical, with occasional out-of-area and overnight travel. Some evening and weekend work is required. A valid Class C Driver's License and a clean driving record are required. A criminal history and DMV record check will be conducted prior to employment.

Start Date

July 2026

To Apply

Please visit potrerogroup.com/laguna 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 **May 15, 2026**, for priority consideration.



Additional Information

More information on the Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation can be found at lagunafoundation.org

For additional information regarding this opportunity, please contact:

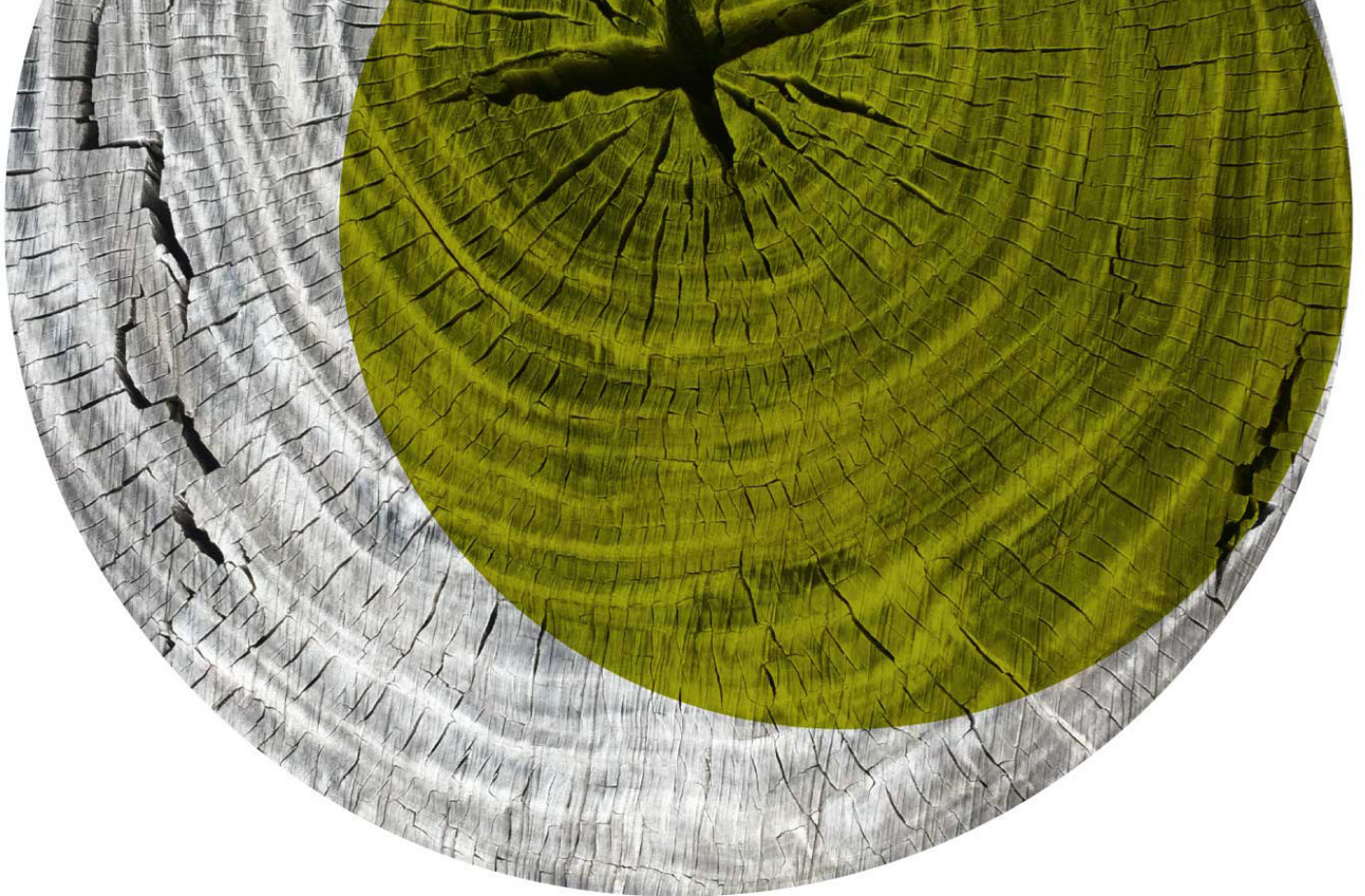
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The Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation is an Equal Opportunity Employer

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The Laguna Foundation is committed to creating a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace and encourages applications from all qualified individuals.



Potrero Group is honored to coordinate this search on behalf of the Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation. 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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