

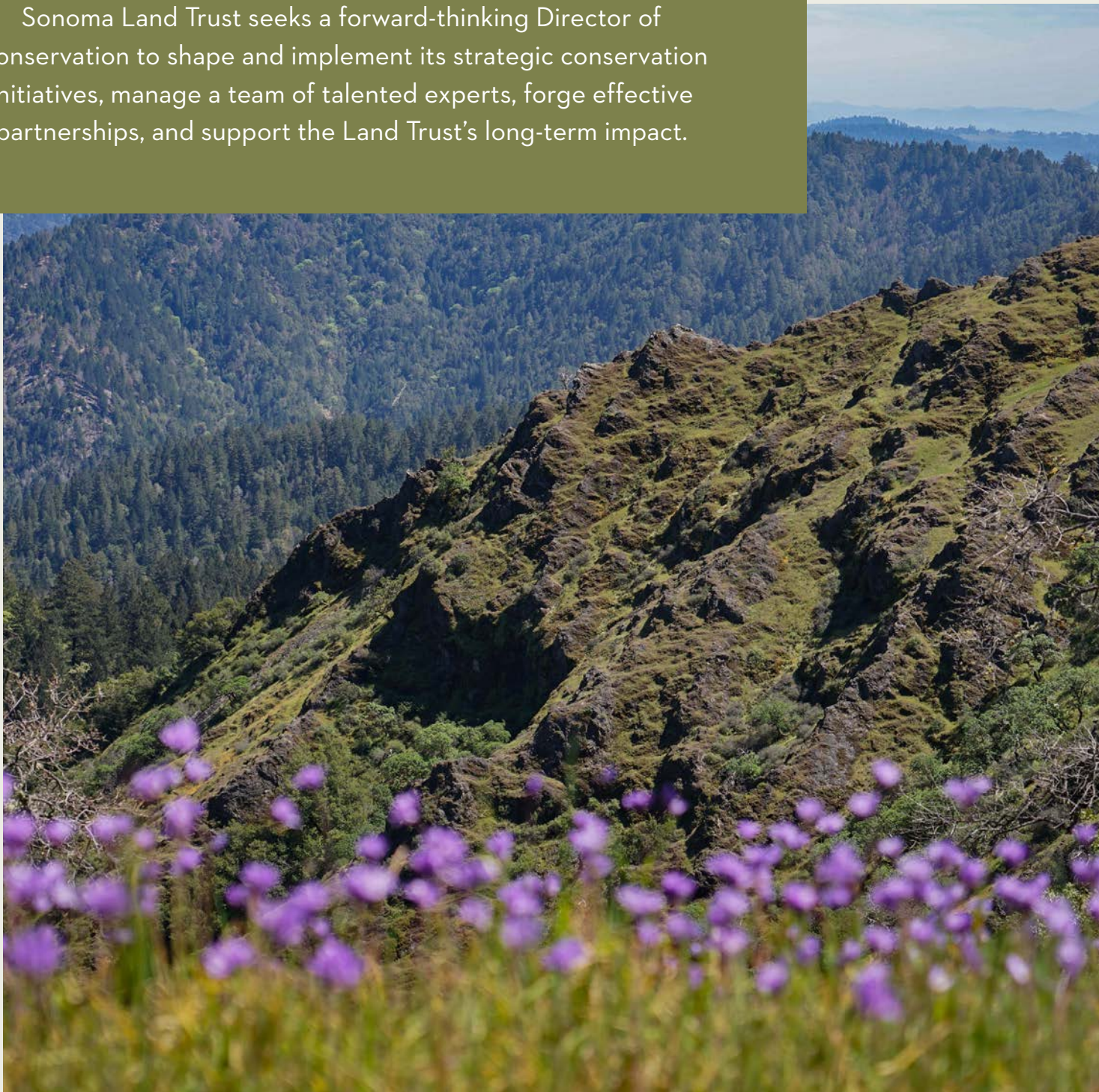


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DIRECTOR OF CONSERVATION

Sonoma Land Trust seeks a forward-thinking Director of Conservation to shape and implement its strategic conservation initiatives, manage a team of talented experts, forge effective partnerships, and support the Land Trust's long-term impact.



ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

For more than fifty years, Sonoma Land Trust has partnered with local communities to protect the open, natural, and working lands and waters of Sonoma County to secure healthy and thriving futures for all. We are also committed to ensuring more equitable access to the outdoors. Sonoma Land Trust has preserved more than 60,000 acres of the most ecologically and culturally important landscapes of Sonoma County.

We are a national award-winning nonprofit with a diverse, expansive, and growing network of partnerships to accomplish a wide range of conservation goals that serve both people and nature. We work closely with private landowners, community partners, and foundations, as well as county, tribal, state, and federal partners and agencies. Our most important partnership—between board and staff—is strong, and our organization is becoming more representative of the communities we serve. Funded largely by donor contributions, Sonoma Land Trust is a member of the California Council of Land Trusts and

is accredited by the national Land Trust Accreditation Commission.

Sonoma County is at the heart of one of the most geographically and biologically diverse regions in the world, and like much of the northern Bay Area, it is both rural and highly urbanized. It is also at the front line of the climate and biodiversity crises, with a recent history of catastrophic wildfires. The severity of these crises is reflected in the ambitious scale and scope of our work. From acquiring land and conservation easements, to large-scale and innovative restoration projects, and programs connecting people to nature, we work tirelessly to find ways to protect the unique ecosystems and natural communities of Sonoma County and to share the benefits of its land and waters with all communities.

We seek a dynamic conservation leader and practitioner to help shape our vision for the next fifty years.



MISSION

Sonoma Land Trust partners with local communities to protect the open, natural, and working lands and waters of Sonoma County to secure healthy and thriving futures for all.

VISION

By 2030, Sonoma Land Trust will have protected and restored tens of thousands of acres of land to nurture resilient, adaptable habitats and open space for everyone.

VALUES

Conservation

We hold a profound respect for the Earth and the interconnectedness of all living things. We strive for balance, sustainability, and wise stewardship in conserving the natural systems that give us life.

Courage

We are unwavering in our determination to fulfill our mission and overcome challenges through creativity, risk-taking, and innovation, all with a deep sense of responsibility for the future.

Collaboration

We actively listen to, learn from, and incorporate unique needs and perspectives to build a community of collective care and shared responsibility for nature.

Belonging

We strive to build authentic relationships, together and with our community, with mutual respect and a culture of trust, to foster a sense of belonging where people feel empowered, valued, and connected.

Integrity

We act with integrity, honesty, and openness to build a resilient, natural world for generations to come.

OUR CONSERVATION STRATEGY AND GOALS

For nearly 50 years, Sonoma Land Trust has successfully protected, restored, and centered conservation as a shared value in our community. Our 2028 [strategic plan](#) is our roadmap toward our 30x30 conservation goals and includes six core strategies that focus on land, water, and people. Each is mutually dependent on the other and is essential to creating a flourishing, productive, and resilient environment.

PROTECTING BIODIVERSITY

Goal: In alignment with California's 30x30 conservation goals (30% of all land and water protected by 2030) we will acquire, conserve, and restore lands with the highest capacity to support connected and healthy habitats and ecosystems that provide plants and animals the space for movement, proliferation, and adaptation to a changing climate.

LIVING WITH WILDFIRE

Goal: Positioning fire-adapted land management practices as a top priority, through our investments, expertise, and nature preserves we will continue to participate in projects across Sonoma County that use good fire to create resiliency to climate change and restore the health of our forests.

PRESERVING NATURE NEARBY

Goal: Ensure equitable access to nature through parks and open space for all people in Sonoma County. Increase the number, variety, and proximity

of natural places so that all members of our diverse community can benefit from the social, public health, and climate benefits parks and open spaces provide.

EMPOWERING OUR COMMUNITIES

Goal: Build an inclusive community that encompasses all of Sonoma County's diverse populations and is conservation-minded, allied with nature, and has opportunities to act for climate resilience.

ADAPTING TO RISING WATERS

Goal: We will continue to transform the San Pablo Baylands by protecting and restoring up to 10,000 acres that improve and enhance key coastal habitat for biodiversity including endangered species while buffering local communities and critical infrastructure from sea level rise and flooding.

SECURING FRESHWATER FLOWS

Goal: By rehabilitating and reconnecting freshwater systems to restore natural watershed processes and increase water levels in rivers, streams, creeks, and aquifers, we can build water security for our region. Returning freshwater levels that provide pathways and habitat for fish, including species of salmon threatened with extinction, improves the ecosystems that depend on them.

POSITION OVERVIEW

The Director of Conservation is a forward-thinking, pragmatic, and experienced leader responsible for implementing the Land Trust's conservation strategies. They will oversee the Conservation Programs Team, which comprises the Acquisitions, Stewardship, Policy, and Science Departments. The Director of Conservation serves as an advisor and thought partner to the Executive Director and contributes to organization-wide strategy. The Director will build on the cross-team culture to accelerate and scale up our work and turn strategic aspirations into reality. They will strengthen alignment between the Conservation Programs Team and the fundraising, marketing and communications, and community engagement departments.

The Conservation Director manages a talented team of department directors, streamlines decision making, and facilitates program integration and resource management to enable the effective execution of conservation priorities. Externally, they will cultivate and strengthen relationships with partners and funders across the region, influence conservation policy outcomes, and pursue innovative sources of grants and financing.



RESPONSIBILITIES



STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

- Lead the development, planning and implementation of the organization's acquisitions, stewardship, science, and policy programs to ensure effective teamwork and strategic wins for the Land Trust's core strategies.
- Stay current with developments in conservation and best practice leadership to provide expert guidance and thought partnership to the Executive Director and contribute to the Land Trust's leadership and strategy.
- Partner with the Community Engagement Team to align the organization's work on community-centered conservation.
- Partner with philanthropy and marketing and communications teams to support Sonoma Land Trust's fundraising and messaging.



PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

- Guide transparent and effective planning and decision making for the Conservation Programs Team, developing shared programmatic priorities that align with the Land Trust's strategic goals.
- Oversee actionable work plans with achievable timelines and allocate staff and financial resources to ensure the effective implementation of programs to advance core strategies.
- Direct the annual planning and budgeting process and oversee budgeting and reporting for the team in collaboration with department directors.
- Manage large-scale projects with complex financial requirements, timelines, and partnerships.
- Support government grant management, including identifying untapped or innovative opportunities and supervising proposal writing, fund administration, and reporting.
- Ensure that the necessary systems, processes, and tools are in place for the Conservation Programs Team to function well and succeed.



TEAM MANAGEMENT

- On a daily basis, lead, supervise, inspire, and support a team of four direct reports including the Land Acquisition Director, Stewardship Director, Policy Director, and Senior Scientist.
- Conduct regular check-ins with direct reports and lead the annual performance management processes for the team.
- Chair the biweekly Conservation Programs Team meeting.
- Recruit, retain and cultivate high performing, dedicated professional staff, and provide timely, ongoing, and effective performance feedback to direct reports, including recruiting, onboarding, and developing the initial goal plan for the new Senior Scientist role.
- Build on and enhance a workplace culture of collaboration, transparency, and accountability.



EXTERNAL PARTNERSHIPS

- Develop and strengthen key partnerships to advance Sonoma Land Trust's strategies with mission-aligned partners, including nonprofits, local tribal nations and their representatives, government agencies, and research institutions.
- Represent Sonoma Land Trust as an ambassador and advocate in public forums, including meetings with partners, policymakers, funders, the science community, media, and the public.
- Work closely with the philanthropy team and the Policy Director to identify and secure new sources of philanthropic or public grant funding or innovative funding mechanisms at the federal, state, and local levels.
- Support donor visits and lead funder tours when appropriate.
- Participate in advocacy opportunities to advance conservation outcomes through state and local policy or public funding allocations.
- Partner with the acquisitions, stewardship, and philanthropy teams to manage relationships with landowners and current or potential easement holders.



DESIRED EXPERIENCE AND COMPETENCIES

Sonoma Land Trust seeks a seasoned, dynamic conservation leader to guide and implement the organization's ambitious strategy across its Conservation Programs Team. The ideal candidate is a strategic thinker with a deep understanding of conservation restoration, ecosystem dynamics, biodiversity protection and reinstatement, and climate resilience. They must have a proven ability to deliver key conservation outcomes by organizing complex goals into actionable plans. They will have extensive experience managing and resourcing large-scale, multifaceted, multistakeholder projects. As a critical partner to the Executive Director and the leader of a talented team of professionals, this individual must also possess outstanding interpersonal and leadership skills. They must have the ability to inspire and motivate internal teams as well as external partners and major donors.

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

- Proven track record of providing forward-thinking leadership and establishing strategic direction in the areas of land acquisitions, land protection, research, and policy advocacy at a similarly sized organization or entity
- Experience effectively partnering with Executive Director to implement mission and vision
- Expertise in coordinating diverse teams to ensure a unified, organization-wide approach to strategy
- Demonstrated skill in presenting complex information and strategic recommendations to internal and external audiences
- Expertise in conservation science, ecological principles, land management practices, and/or land transactions

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

- Extensive experience translating strategic goals into actionable, measurable work plans with realistic timelines
- Expertise in project management, overseeing large-scale, multifaceted projects with complicated budgets, timelines, and partnerships
- Demonstrated ability to forecast and manage program budgets and allocate financial resources effectively
- Proven success in the full lifecycle of grant management
- Experience creating and refining processes and systems that improve operational efficiency and team coordination
- Able to lead through uncertainty and adapt to change

TEAM MANAGEMENT

- Possesses strong leadership skills with a successful track record of leading, managing, and mentoring a team of senior-level professionals
- Demonstrated ability to hire, retain, support, and develop high-performing staff
- A decisive leader with experience leading transparent, consultative decision-making processes
- A collaborative and programmatically ambitious team leader who prioritizes the shared success of the team and enhances team culture

EXTERNAL PARTNERSHIP

- Excellent emotional intelligence and a positive attitude
- A compelling public speaker who is comfortable communicating with a broad range of audiences, including donors
- Demonstrated ability to forge and maintain strong relationships with peer organizations, policymakers, government agencies, philanthropic funders, community groups, tribal governments, conservation scientists, or other strategic partners
- Experience with or training in partnering effectively with Indigenous groups
- Experience collaborating with philanthropy teams to identify and create compelling cases for support and secure new sources of funding
- Proven experience in prioritizing grant opportunities, managing submission timelines, and securing funding
- Policy expertise, especially at the local and state level, is an asset



COMPENSATION

This is a full-time, exempt, benefit-eligible position. The anticipated annual salary range for the Director of Conservation position is \$190,000–\$205,000, commensurate with knowledge, abilities, and experience. Relocation support is available.

BENEFITS

- Paid time off including paid vacation based on tenure, 15 paid holidays, and paid sick and family leave
- 100% of employee premiums for medical, dental, and vision, and 75% of dependent premiums
- 5% employer contribution to retirement plan after one year of employment
- Employee life and disability insurance
- Pre-tax dependent care coverage plans for dependent or elder care
- An employee assistance program for mental health, coaching, and financial or legal consultation services
- A lifestyle account annual stipend for wellness or gear purchases

LOCATION

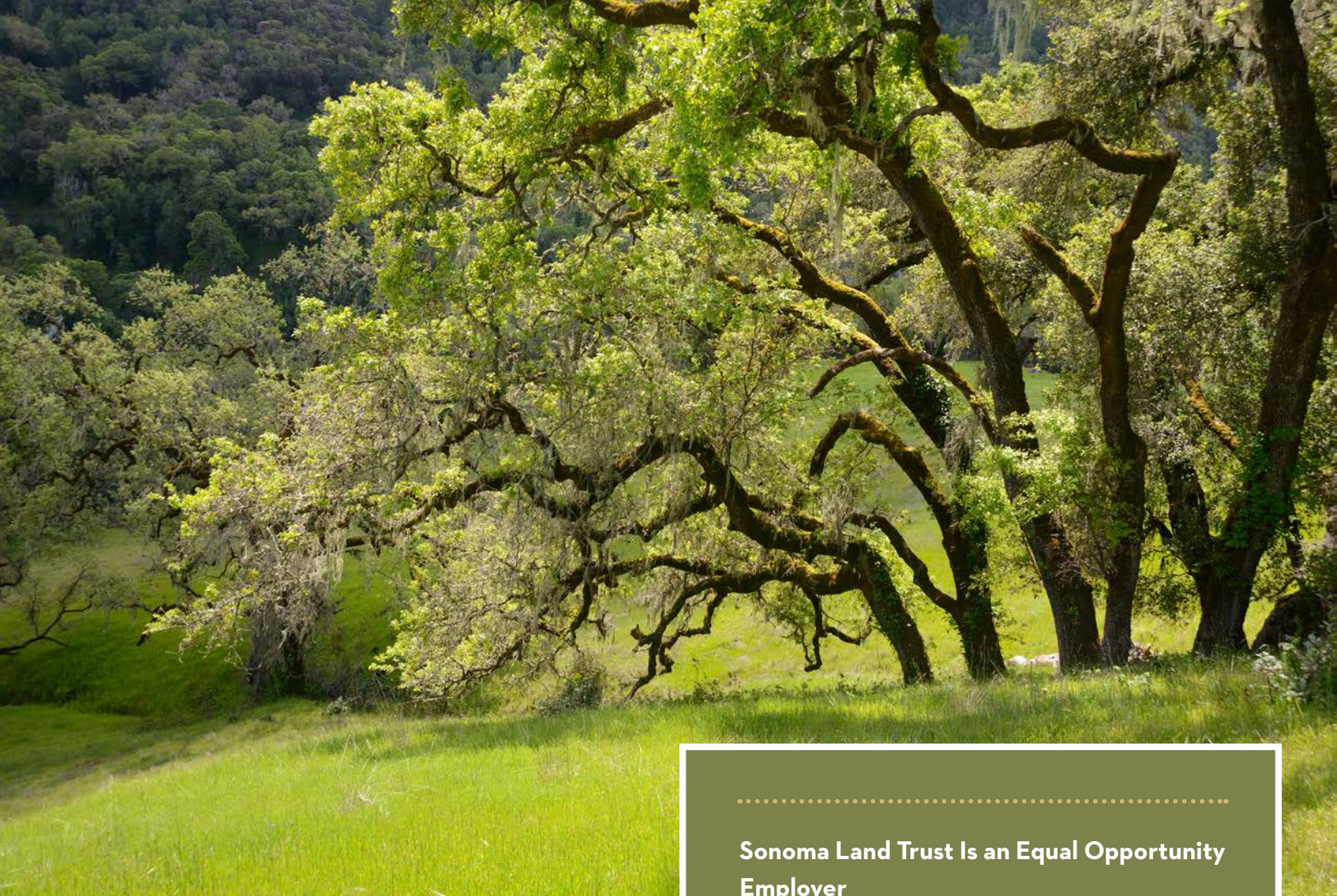
This position is located at the Sonoma Land Trust office in Santa Rosa, California. Staff are working in a hybrid model. Some travel is required.

START DATE

Winter 2025

TO APPLY

Visit potrerogroup.com/sonoma-conservation and select “Apply Here.” Please include a CV or resume and a cover letter describing your research qualifications, skills, and experiences that match the position criteria, and what you will bring to the role.



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

More information on Sonoma Land Trust can be found at sonomalandtrust.org.

For additional information regarding this opportunity, please contact:

Jena Kuznik
Senior Consultant, Potrero Group
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Sonoma Land Trust Is an Equal Opportunity Employer

We strive to create a diverse and inclusive organization and encourage applicants from all backgrounds. Sonoma Land Trust prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, religion, gender, national origin, ancestry, color, language, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, reproductive health decision making, physical or mental disability, medical condition, genetic information/ characteristics, veteran status, political affiliation, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state, or local law. This nondiscrimination policy applies to all employment practices, including recruitment, hiring, compensation, benefits, promotion, training, transfer, discipline, layoff, recall, and termination.



Potrero Group is honored to coordinate this search on behalf of Sonoma Land Trust. 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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