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SENIOR SCIENTIST

Sonoma Land Trust seeks a rigorous conservation scientist with strong communication skills to oversee applied research projects, furthering the organization's commitment to scientifically informed conservation.

ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

Sonoma Land Trust works in alliance with nature to conserve and restore the integrity of the land, with a focus on climate resiliency. The organization is also committed to ensuring more equitable access to the outdoors. Since 1976, Sonoma Land Trust has protected nearly 63,000 acres of ecologically productive and environmentally significant land in and around Sonoma County.

The Land Trust works closely with private landowners, nonprofit partners, foundations, Sonoma County Ag + Open Space, and other public agencies at all levels of government. It is a local, nongovernmental, nonprofit organization funded largely by membership 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 one of the most beautiful and biologically diverse counties in the United States. We believe that its landscapes and habitats are the source of our physical and economic health, and a treasure that should be enjoyed by all of our communities. From acquiring land and conservation easements, to restoring land and the natural properties on which we

depend, to protecting land for wildlife and recreation, we work tirelessly to find ways to preserve the unique ecosystems and natural communities of Sonoma County. In addition to clean air and water, healthier forests, and the many other benefits that nature provides, we offer programs to engage directly with the land through outdoor activities and outreach.

We maintain a diverse and expansive network of partnerships to accomplish a wide range of projects. Thanks to the generosity of those who trust in our work, we have been carrying out this mission for nearly 50 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.





OUR COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

We are passionate about building and sustaining an inclusive and equitable working environment that is representative of the communities we serve. Our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion is integral, not auxiliary, to our mission as we work in partnership with local communities to secure healthy and thriving futures for all. We know that having varied perspectives leads to better outcomes to solve the complex problems of conservation, climate change, and environmental justice in Sonoma County.

To realize this vision, Sonoma Land Trust has undertaken a collaborative effort uniting the voices and contributions of both our dedicated staff and respected board members. Through an inclusive process that embraces diverse perspectives and experiences, we strive to embody our values and translate them into tangible action.

To achieve our mission of protecting the land of Sonoma County forever, we need an array of voices reflecting our community—a rich diversity of talent, backgrounds, and beliefs—embodied in our board, staff, interns, volunteers, landowners, donors, partners, and program participants.

We acknowledge that there is much work to do to ensure that our programs, land preserves, and resources are shared equitably with the community. Further, we know there are many people we have yet to engage in our work, and we must overcome the cultural, geographic, and economic barriers and historical traumas that hinder our progress in doing so.

To best serve the people of our community, we are taking the actions outlined in the midpoint update of our 10-year [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion \(DEI\) Plan](#).

POSITION OVERVIEW AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The newly established Senior Scientist position builds on Sonoma Land Trust's five-decade record of conservation innovation and excellence by leveraging the latest science to inform its conservation strategy development, planning, preserve management, educational programs, decision making, and advocacy. This position will oversee the Land Trust's applied field research and scientific data collections, and will work collaboratively across the organization to identify opportunities to implement landscape scale conservation. In addition to technical expertise and an expansive understanding of the role of conservation in tackling climate, biodiversity, and environmental justice challenges, the Senior Scientist must demonstrate a strong commitment to partnership and forging effective collaborations with peers in the conservation and academic communities. The Senior Scientist is an integral member of the Conservation Program's team and supports the leadership team in advising conservation research strategy. They will report to the Director of Conservation and will be responsible for supervising the Land Trust's GIS Manager.



RESPONSIBILITIES



RESEARCH AND DATA MANAGEMENT

- ✔ Analyze and interpret data to identify key conservation challenges in Sonoma County's ecosystems and landscapes and inform Sonoma Land Trust's land management decisions, conservation priorities, and programmatic activities.
- ✔ Act as an advisor to the staff and board, aligning strategy with science initiatives.
- ✔ Collaborate with program teams to develop, refine and conduct applied research on the Land Trust's preserves to gather data on ecological conditions and biodiversity, in order to design key conservation strategies.
- ✔ Guide the strategic development of data, methods, tools, and integrated information products that result in enduring benefits in the conservation of biological and ecological diversity.



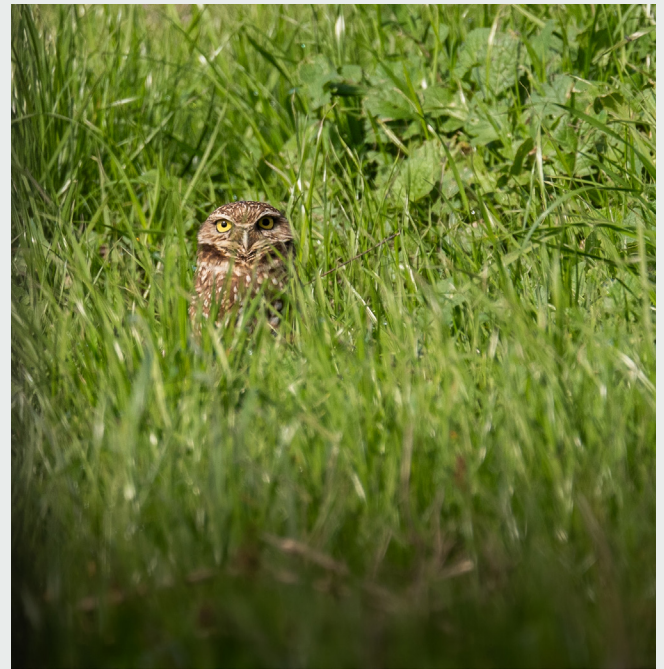
PROJECT MANAGEMENT

- ✔ Plan, manage, and implement research projects in partnership with program teams to meet timelines within budget targets.
- ✔ Lead and/or collaborate on funding proposals and grant applications to secure financial resources for scientific research and conservation projects.
- ✔ Collaborate with program teams to design and implement durable conservation strategies and land management practices.



COMMUNICATION AND PARTNERSHIP

- ✔ Communicate the scientific findings of field research to diverse internal and external audiences through reports, articles, and presentations.
- ✔ Represent the organization in external forums such as meetings with the conservation science community, partners, policymakers, elected officials, donors, and institutional funders.
- ✔ Collaborate with the Public Policy and Funding Manager to ensure the integration of science into policy development and advocacy campaigns, providing evidence-based rationales for the Land Trust's policy positions.
- ✔ Build and maintain relationships with regional and national academic institutions, natural resource management agencies, and peer conservation NGOs to foster research, collaboration, and knowledge exchange.
- ✔ Engage with local communities, landowners, and tribal government representatives to ensure that conservation research projects recognize the rights and perspectives of community members, provide a benefit to community partners, and make ethical use of data that may be shared with Sonoma Land Trust.
- ✔ Serve as a consultant to the Community Engagement and Marketing and Communications Teams in their work to develop scientifically robust educational programming and messaging.



SCIENTIFIC LEADERSHIP

- ✔ Identify, evaluate, and prioritize research initiatives and key scientific conservation issues to align with the organization's mission and drive impactful conservation outcomes within Sonoma Land Trust preserves and throughout the region.
- ✔ Ensure the senior leadership team and staff stay informed about and understand current scientific research, consensus, developments, and their implications for and application to the organization's mission and strategy.
- ✔ Collaborate with senior leadership to organize the scientific foundation and direction for Sonoma Land Trust's conservation priorities and organizational strategy and ensure that evidence-based science informs all aspects of the organization's work.



DESIRED EXPERIENCE AND COMPETENCIES

Sonoma Land Trust seeks an experienced scientist who can balance scientific rigor with strategic decision making. Experience designing, executing, and managing field research projects is required, as are strong analytical and data-interpretation skills. The ability to translate scientific findings into conservation actions, clearly communicate complex subjects to a variety of audiences, and collaborate effectively are essential. Above all, the successful candidate must be passionate about conservation, nature-based solutions, and the value of evidence-based applied science.

We are open to candidates with diverse backgrounds, experience, and transferable skills. We are looking for candidates with the following experience or the ability to develop skills in each of these categories:

SCIENTIFIC EXPERTISE AND LEADERSHIP

- ✔ Passion for conservation, a commitment to biodiversity protection and nature-based climate solutions, and a deep understanding of conservation science, ecological principles, and land management practices
- ✔ Ability to analyze and interpret complex scientific data to inform actionable, practical conservation strategies and decision making that balance scientific rigor with real-world application
- ✔ Strong analytical and problem-solving skills in dynamic collaborative environments
- ✔ Advanced degree in biology, ecology, environmental science, conservation planning, or a related field
- ✔ At least three to five years of professional experience in applied conservation science, with a strong record of field-based work in natural resource management and restoration

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

- ✔ Strong leadership, organizational, project management, budgeting, and grant management skills
- ✔ Proven experience managing field research projects, including budgeting, timelines, staff and contractor coordination
- ✔ Strong organizational and time management skills to oversee and prioritize multiple initiatives simultaneously
- ✔ Experience contributing to successful funding proposals and managing grants
- ✔ Experience working with federal and state agencies and departments to obtain permits and grants is highly desirable.

RESEARCH AND DATA MANAGEMENT

- ✔ Proficiency in designing and managing multi-disciplinary conservation research projects at multiple scales to answer applied ecological research questions or to evaluate the efficacy of conservation and restoration efforts
- ✔ Demonstrated understanding of and experience with integrating cultural and archaeological consultation with conservation planning and research
- ✔ Understanding of and ability to provide guidance to staff on ecological data analysis, statistical software, and GIS tools

COMMUNICATION AND PARTNERSHIP

- ✔ Excellent written and verbal communication skills, especially the ability to clearly present complex scientific concepts to diverse audiences including community members and peer experts
- ✔ Track record of publishing research in peer-reviewed journals and familiarity with the publication process are preferred
- ✔ Strong interpersonal and collaboration skills
- ✔ Ability to support interdisciplinary internal teams including Communications and Philanthropy to develop clear, compelling, science-focused outreach materials for nonscientific audiences
- ✔ Demonstrated experience in successfully leading partnership research consortiums to integrate scientific findings into practical actions and achieve conservation outcomes
- ✔ Experience engaging cooperatively and respectfully with communities that have been systemically marginalized
- ✔ Familiarity with collaborative approaches to land stewardship and research and enthusiasm to engage with local communities, landowners, and underrepresented groups to ensure inclusive and ethical conservation practices



COMPENSATION

This is a full-time, exempt, benefit-eligible position. The anticipated annual salary range for the Senior Scientist position is \$143,000-\$159,000, commensurate with knowledge, abilities, and experience. Relocation support is available.

Sonoma Land Trust's benefits include:

- 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 field work is required.

START DATE

Fall 2026

TO APPLY

Visit potrerogroup.com/sonomascientist 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.

Interested candidates should apply by **July 10** for priority consideration.



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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

For additional information regarding this opportunity, please contact

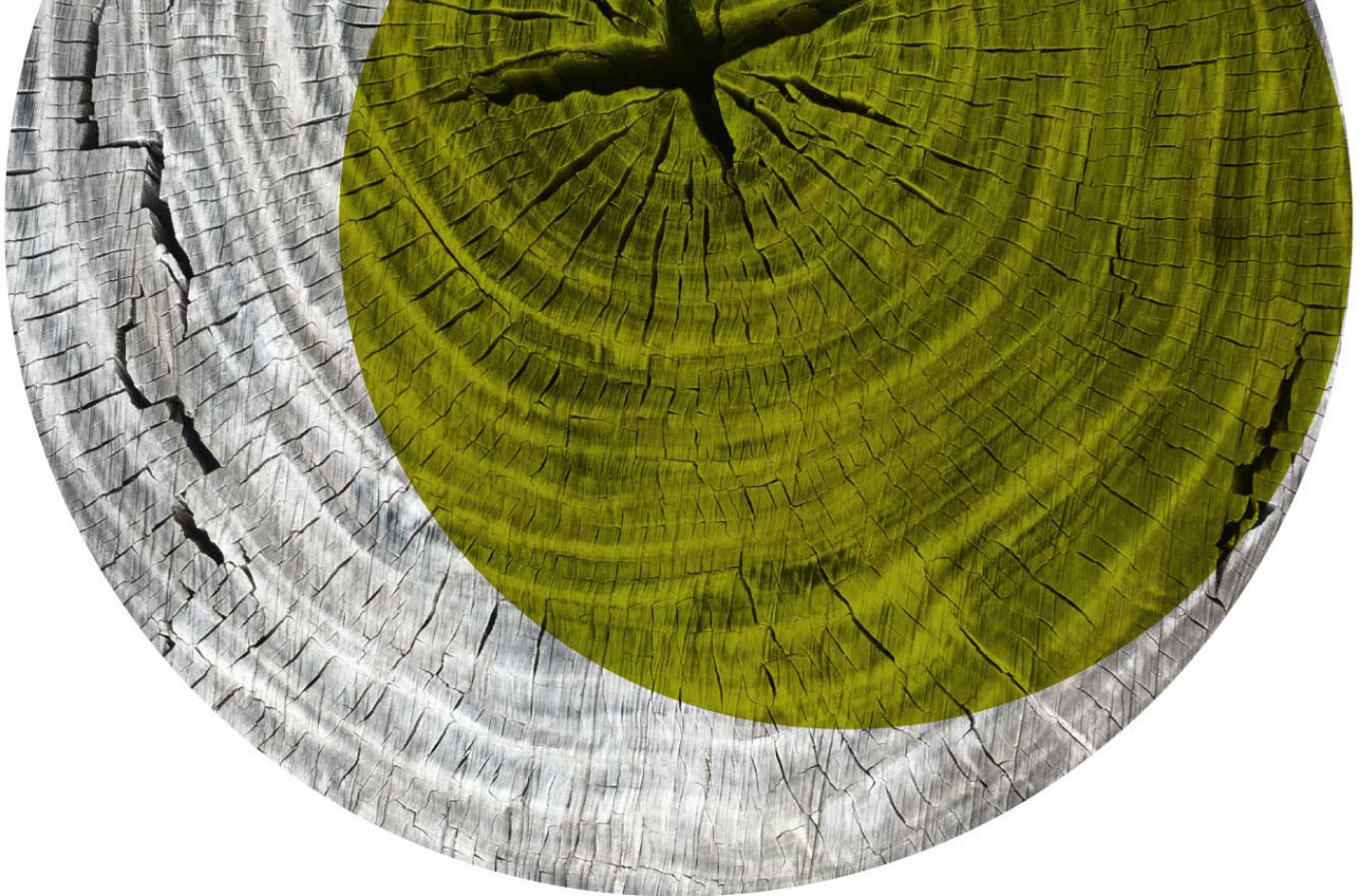
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Sonoma Land Trust is an Equal Opportunity Employer

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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.

To join our mailing list and be notified of future opportunities, please visit

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