



THE
CONSERVATION
FUND

LAND SUSTAINS US

California State Director

The Conservation Fund seeks an experienced, strategic California State Director to lead vital conservation initiatives throughout the state and ensure operational excellence, effective partnerships, and sustainable funding.

Search Conducted By

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A photograph of three hikers standing on a rocky mountain ridge, looking out over a vast, rugged landscape with distant mountain peaks under a blue sky with light clouds. The hikers are wearing backpacks and outdoor gear.

Organization Background

The Conservation Fund is in the business of conservation, creating innovative solutions that drive nature-based action for climate protection, sustainable economies, and vibrant communities.

Land conservation is vital to climate, biodiversity, economic vitality, and community wellness. However, public agencies struggle to buy the most at-risk properties in a timely and efficient manner, often losing high conservation value lands forever, which has irreversible effects on local communities.

The Conservation Fund (TCF) was founded to address this challenge and is a leading “bridge owner” of land for public agencies and conservation partners, bringing capital and expertise to transact nationwide. TCF uses a “buy-protect-sell” approach to secure high-value conservation properties, sustainably manage them, and then transfer them to public agencies and other long-term stewards for permanent conservation outcomes.

TCF has pioneered a financially sustainable business model that delivers value to landowners, conservation partners, and the communities they serve. By generating a modest, consistent margin on its real estate activities, TCF has proven its ability to deliver impact and build a strong capital position with a culture that values partnership, innovation, and thoughtful risk-taking.

A focused, business-minded approach combined with exceptional staff and durable, trusted relationships with stakeholders have positioned TCF as the leading provider of conservation solutions in the United States, uniquely positioned to continue to grow and realize its vision for a society that can successfully protect its most vital natural resources.

Land sustains us.

The TCF Difference

The Conservation Fund is a 501(c)(3) **charitable organization** with a unique dual charter for conservation and economic development in the United States.

TCF represents **40 years of conservation** innovation. Since 1985, TCF has been working to ensure that the highest priority wildlife habitats, forests, rangelands, farms, and open spaces nationwide are conserved for local communities, our partners, and society.

TCF brings all the **financial tools of the market** to complete the most complicated conservation real estate transactions in the country, from critical open lands to essential cultural and historical sites to vast working forests.

TCF averages over **230 real estate transactions** per year using innovative business structures and financing strategies, and the organization has completed over **4,000 projects across all 50 states**, protecting critical lands valued at more than \$8 billion.

TCF currently holds over **\$750 million** in conservation properties with total assets at **\$980 million**, and generated a total revenue of **\$373 million** in 2024.

TCF issued **\$150 million** in taxable green bonds for conservation in a first-of-its-kind offering and maintains a Moody's Investor Services long-term credit rating of A3.



Land Conservation

TCF acquires and protects at-risk lands with high conservation and community value—before they are lost forever. TCF shapes permanent conservation solutions that work for nature and people, uniting economic and environmental priorities.



Conservation Solutions for Business

The scale of infrastructure needed to provide sufficient power in the United States is enormous and the need for community support is squarely in the middle of it. TCF is dedicated to helping address key bottlenecks in expanding the nation's energy system by providing conservation and community solutions, so that critical infrastructure can be built on a sustainable basis.



Working Lands

TCF works to purchase at-risk forests and farmlands and to put permanent protections in place to sustainably manage and preserve the natural environment while helping local communities. Over the last 10 years, it has protected more than one million acres of threatened forests. TCF is in the pilot phase of extending this approach to working farmland and has saved a number of critical farms thus far, helping to protect at-risk agricultural lands, shore up local food systems and provide economic opportunities for communities.

Resilient Communities

At TCF, we believe that effective conservation must not only protect the land but ensure that the communities that depend on it are vibrant, resilient, and healthy. TCF partners with local governments, community organizations, and businesses to improve access to jobs and healthy food, as well as to ensure equitable access to greenspace.





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Position Overview

The California State Director provides visionary leadership for TCF's conservation programs in the state, predominantly conservation real estate acquisitions, dispositions, and fundraising for project completion and operations. These responsibilities require the individual to develop and manage partner relationships with state, local, and federal conservation agencies and with public and private funders to support this work.

The ideal candidate is a strategic leader with a deep understanding of conservation at the state level, experience overseeing complex real estate transactions to protect key conservation priorities, and proven fundraising, relationship building, and communication skills.

The California State Director works remotely from within California and travels throughout the state. This position reports to the Western Region Senior Vice President and currently supervises a remote team of three experienced conservation practitioners.

“ California is a vital and growing contributor to TCF's overall conservation impact. The California State Director is a peer of other state directors nationwide and plays a central role in connecting statewide work with TCF's national approach and ensuring we have broad reach at scale.

Mark Elsbree, SVP, Western Region



©Olivia Jackson

Responsibilities



Strategic Leadership and Oversight

- Lead and grow TCF's land conservation efforts in the State of California, ensuring alignment with the organization's mission and strategic goals
- Provide leadership, coordination, and assistance with all aspects of land conservation programs in California, and develop and implement a 3-year strategic direction as well as annual goals and budgets
- Lead and manage TCF's California team in developing and implementing a vision to enhance existing land conservation programs while seeking out and growing new conservation opportunities
- Work with TCF's Development, Marketing and Communications, Government Relations, Legal, Finance, and North Coast Forest teams to coordinate and advance all program-related efforts in California



Acquisitions, Partnerships, and Policy

- Generate funding for land conservation projects and operations through private and public fundraising, including the Wildlife Conservation Board and the State Coastal Conservancy; this may include state and federal lobbying efforts and private fundraising initiatives
- Deliver conservation real estate projects
- Ensure the timely acquisition and disposition of conservation properties in partnership with public agencies and nonprofit organizations
- Develop and maintain strong partnerships with nonprofit organizations, state, local, and federal agency representatives, key members of the California Congressional delegation, and the state legislature
- Coordinate TCF's participation with lobbyists and coalitions on issues central to its mission



Staff Management and Development

- Oversee the workflow and results of the California Conservation Acquisitions staff
- Foster a culture of operational excellence, entrepreneurship, collaboration, and accountability across all conservation programs
- Recruit, hire, train, and supervise new staff, as appropriate
- Manage contractors
- Support the organization's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion initiatives
- Provide constructive and timely performance evaluations for staff, as applicable



Experience and Attributes

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The California State Director will have outstanding interpersonal and relational skills and excel at developing, leveraging, and sustaining philanthropic and partner relationships. They must possess significant leadership skill, emotional intelligence, and an entrepreneurial approach to help TCF advance its national mission and grow its profile and impact in California.

The California State Director will have significant experience managing teams and working collaboratively on complex land conservation real estate transactions. These activities require vision, a strategic approach, and the ability to align a team toward common goals.

This position requires a combination of education and experience equivalent to an advanced degree, with at least 10 years of senior-level experience.



Frequently cited statistics show that women and people from underrepresented groups apply to jobs only if they think they meet 100% of the criteria. If you meet many but not all the criteria and feel you may be a good fit for the role, The Conservation Fund encourages you to apply.

Desired Competencies

Demonstrated experience in land conservation real estate with a proficiency in all aspects of conservation real estate transactions

Experienced and proven background in project and operations fundraising, preferably in the conservation field, including a demonstrated ability to lead and successfully complete major project fundraising efforts

Strong negotiating and emotional intelligence skills

Demonstrated ability and/or capability to develop and excel at the leadership competencies required for building partner relationships, scaling conservation programs, and supervising key staff

Demonstrated ability to work independently

Demonstrated operational flexibility and teamwork within an entrepreneurial environment

Excellent oral and written communication skills, including public presentations and fundraising meetings

Willingness and ability to work cooperatively with a wide range of individuals and organizations with diverse backgrounds

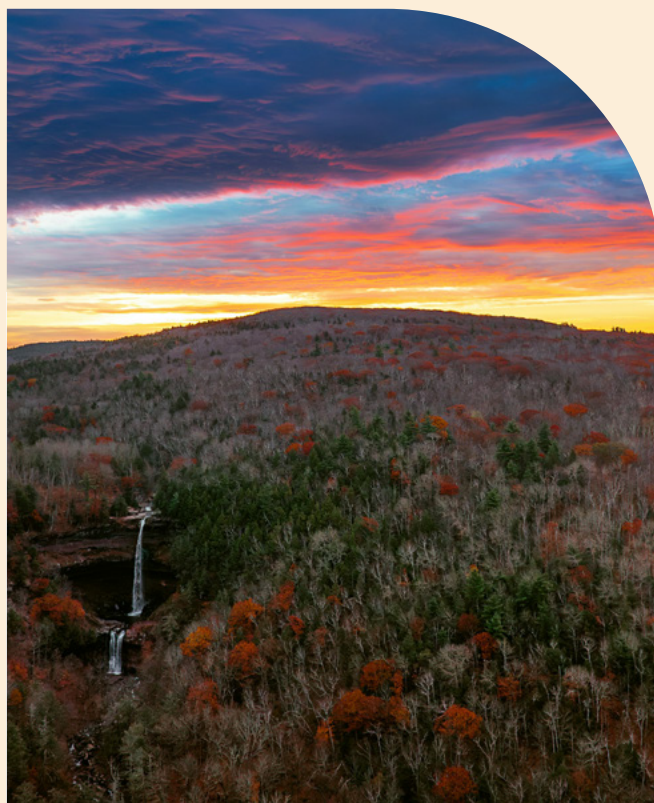
Computer skills, including word processing, email, PowerPoint, and spreadsheets

Attention to detail and the ability to meet deadlines under pressure

Ability to travel in order to reach various field locations

Experience working with local, state, and federal governments

Experience working with or in partnership with private philanthropy is preferred



Attributes

A genuine commitment to TCF's purpose, vision, mission, and goals

Enthusiasm for thinking about conservation with a visionary spirit and a creative, entrepreneurial approach

Strong systems thinking and problem-solving skills and approach

Proactive decision-making and courage in the face of difficult decisions and complexity

Adaptability and flexibility in the face of changing conditions and information; tolerance for adversity and uncertainty

Strong interpersonal skills, emotional intelligence, self-awareness, and the ability to resolve conflicts, find common ground, and maintain and develop strong relationships among diverse perspectives and backgrounds

Integrity and a commitment to high ethics and standards

Strong self-directed work ethic and the energy to sustain long days managing a workload that involves balancing multiple competing priorities



Compensation

This is a full-time, exempt, benefit-eligible position. The California State Director's anticipated annual salary range is \$170,000–\$190,000 with opportunities to earn additional performance-based bonus compensation. The range provided is an estimate and will be evaluated on an individual basis, taking into consideration the candidate's knowledge, skills, abilities, experience, and education.

TCF offers a competitive benefits package including:

- Employer contributions for medical, vision, and dental insurance plans
- Retirement plan discretionary company contribution
- Company contributions to HSA account
- Company-paid life insurance, AD&D, short-term and long-term disability insurance
- Voluntary life insurance, spouse and child plans at group rates
- Employee assistance program
- Continuing education benefit for approved programs
- Generous paid vacation, sick time, and floating holidays
- Six weeks paid parental leave
- Fourteen paid holidays

Location and Work Environment

While the position is fully remote, the State Director must be located within California.

Travel across the state and region is estimated at 4–5 overnights/month, plus additional day travel, and is likely to require significant driving hours.

Work is performed in an office and outdoors in all weather conditions. Some lifting and carrying (up to 20 pounds) will be necessary. When visiting conservation sites, the ability to traverse all terrain in outdoor and all-weather conditions will be necessary.

Start Date

Late 2025

To Apply

Visit potrerogroup.com/tcf and select “Apply Here.” Please include a resume and a cover letter describing your qualifications that align with the position criteria.

Interested candidates should apply by **September 2, 2025**, for priority consideration.



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Additional Information

More information about The Conservation Fund can be found at [conservationfund.org](https://www.conservationfund.org).

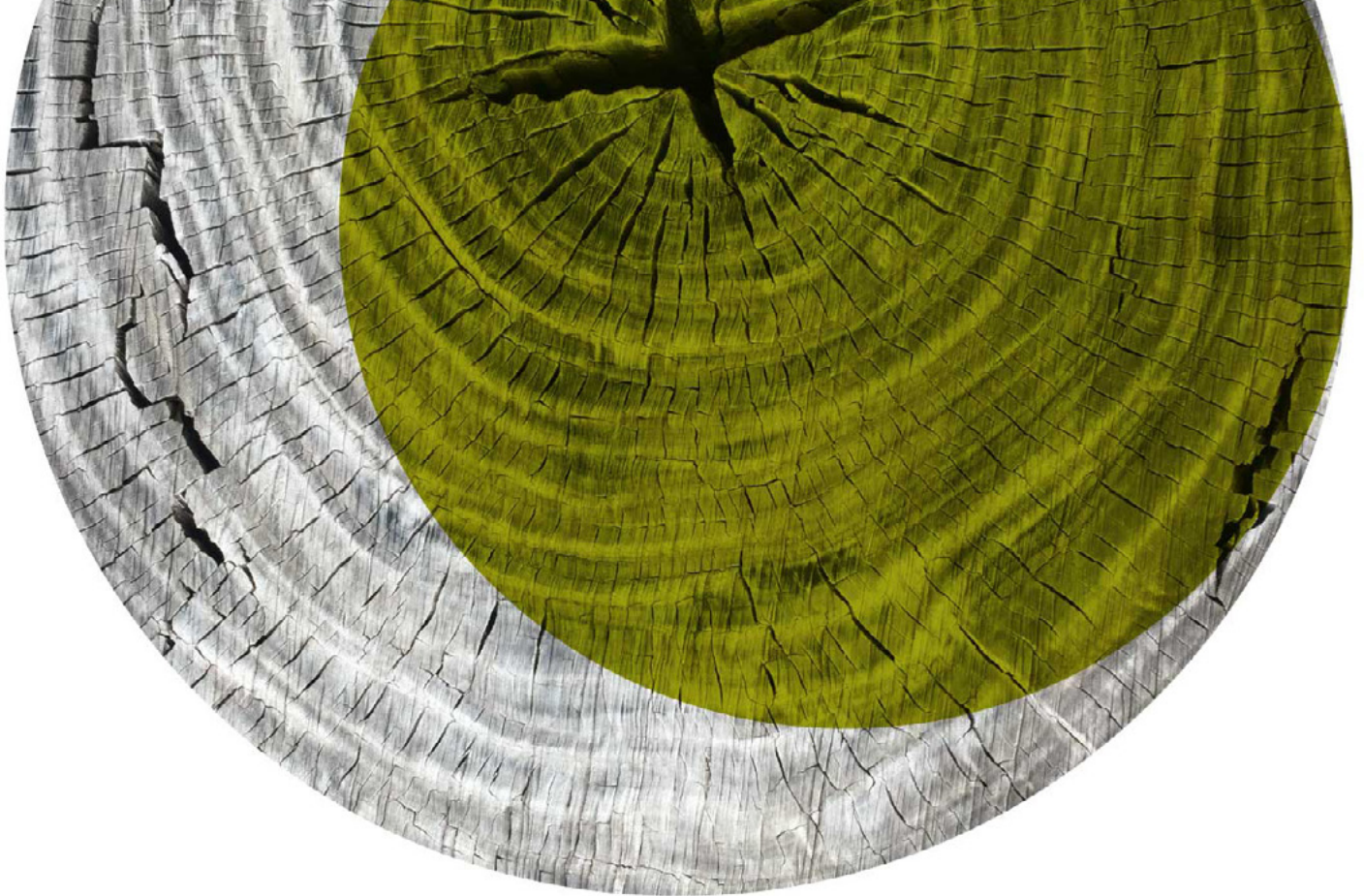
For additional information regarding this opportunity, please contact:

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Equal Opportunity Employer

The Conservation Fund is an Equal Opportunity Employer that fully and actively supports equal access for all people regardless of race, color, religion, gender, age, national origin, veteran status, disability, genetic information or testing, family and medical leave status, sexual orientation and gender identity or expression. TCF prohibits retaliation against individuals who bring forth any complaint, orally or in writing, to the employer or the government, or against any individuals who assist or participate in the investigation of any complaint or otherwise oppose discrimination.



Potrero Group is honored to coordinate this search on behalf of The Conservation Fund. 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.

To join our mailing list or for more information, please visit PotreroGroup.com.