



Executive Director
Lakes Region Conservation Trust
Center Harbor, New Hampshire

THE SEARCH

[The Lakes Region Conservation Trust](#) ("LRCT" or "the Trust") seeks a demonstrated, dynamic, and experienced leader to serve as its next Executive Director. The Trust's mission is dedicated to the permanent conservation, stewardship, and respectful use of lands that define the character of the Lakes Region of central New Hampshire and its quality of life. LRCT is a nonprofit organization conducting conservation and stewardship work that preserves community character, critical wildlife habitats, and diverse ecosystems, protecting natural landmarks and scenic landscapes in one of the most beautiful parts of the country, and providing outdoor recreation opportunities for people of all ages. Reporting to the organization's Board of Trustees, the Executive Director will have the opportunity to usher the organization into its next era of impact, influence, and organizational maturity, with substantial potential for expansion and development.

LRCT is the leading land trust in the region, with remarkable support and credibility amongst its members and community. Founded in 1979, the organization has grown from a devoted cadre of volunteers into a professionally staffed organization that partners closely with conservation-minded landowners, community residents, and other conservation organizations to protect and enhance the natural beauty of the Lakes Region. The next Executive Director will lead a dedicated team of six and manage an annual operating budget of approximately \$1 million and \$9 million in endowment, restricted, and reserved funds. The Trust celebrates the upcoming retirement of its outgoing leader after nearly two decades of dedicated and meaningful work. Providing inspirational and visionary leadership will be paramount as an energized team and the upcoming milestones of LRCT's 50th anniversary and 30,000 acres conserved call for a galvanizing Executive Director to lead with fervor.

The Executive Director will bring a passion for protecting and conserving natural spaces. A compelling storyteller and relationship builder, the next leader will cultivate and maintain strong working relationships with key partners locally, regionally, and statewide, including other conservation groups and land trusts in the region. Additionally, they will bring a strong leadership skill set, including operational sophistication,

empowering team management, a successful fundraising track record, a nuanced understanding of Board governance, and a natural inclination toward collaboration and community engagement.

The Lakes Region Conservation Trust has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in this recruitment effort. All applications, inquiries, and nominations, which will remain confidential, should be directed to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

ABOUT THE LAKES REGION CONSERVATION TRUST

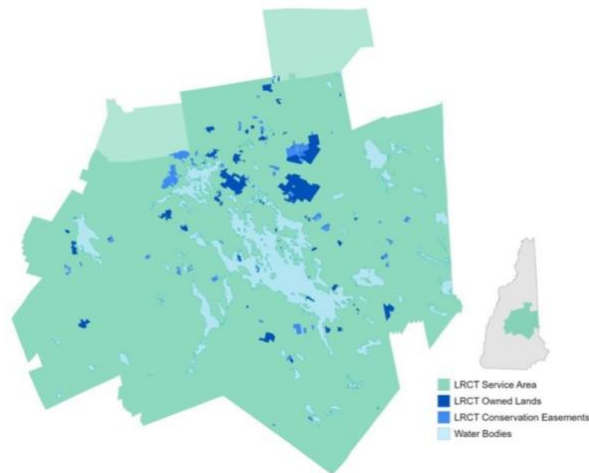


The Lakes Region of New Hampshire is a land of extraordinary natural beauty. With the advent of good roads in the mid-20th century, the development pressure on the area increased to such an extent that the area's natural beauty was in jeopardy, so LRCT set out to protect the best of what remained undeveloped. Starting with two small parcels on Lake Winnepesaukee, the Trust has conserved [178 properties, totaling 29,348 acres](#), including 36 miles of shoreline, 29 summits, and over 130 miles of trails over the last 46 years. These protected lands encompass many special places that define this unique and

spectacular part of New England, affording abundant opportunities to explore and connect with the natural world and establishing a legacy of conservation for future generations. LRCT works in 34 communities of the Lakes Region. With numerous lakes and ponds, mountains, farms, streams, and islands in the largest water body in the region, Lake Winnepesaukee, the Trust protects land that has significant value for habitat, education and scientific study, low-impact recreation, agriculture, and scenic value, for the enjoyment and benefit of present and future generations of human and non-human inhabitants, and for the benefit of the environment itself.

A member-supported land trust, LRCT is the leading protector of the Lakes Region's natural heritage and guarantor of open space in the region. Its regional focus connects the work of towns, local groups, statewide organizations, and volunteers to accomplish conservation projects that reflect community priorities and have region-wide importance. LRCT is accredited by the national Land Trust Accreditation Commission and has a contract for carbon sequestration through the California Air Resources Board.

In conjunction with the impressive support of its volunteers, LRCT maintains close relationships with other land trusts in the region, town conservation commissions, and various local, lake, and community organizations to conserve new lands and steward existing conserved lands. Most of the LRCT's owned properties are open to the public for low-impact, nonintrusive, and non-mechanized recreational uses: walking, hiking, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, and nature observation. These lighter, gentler uses and activities recognize and respect the importance of protecting wildlife habitat and other resource values intrinsic to the natural world – e.g., the sights, sounds, smells, and peaceful settings that nature affords.



This map shows a large portion of NH served by LRCT, including LRCT-owned lands and easements (dark/bright blue).

Programming

Land Conservation, Management, Stewardship, and Recreation

The Trust works to permanently conserve significant lands for natural habitat, agricultural, recreational, and cultural resources. LRCT works with landowners, other conservation organizations, and local conservation commissions on dozens of land conservation projects and opportunities throughout the Lakes Region. LRCT's land conservation work is guided by the Lakes Region Strategic Conservation Plan, which incorporates climate change resilience data and provides a valuable tool for LRCT and other land conservation organizations working in the region.

In addition to its land conservation efforts, LRCT's responsibilities include managing more than 100 owned properties, totaling over 18,500 acres, and stewards more than 60 conservation easements, totaling over 9,225 acres, to ensure that the conservation values of these lands are being protected and that easement restrictions and requirements are being satisfied. A particular focus of LRCT's land management work is the provision of opportunities for the public to enjoy, appreciate, and learn from the conserved lands. With the help of over 200 volunteers, LRCT manages to remove invasive species and maintain trails for hiking, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, as well as mountain biking and snowmobiling on certain trails.

The Trust offers various programs to individuals visiting the natural treasures of the Lakes Region, such as guided excursions on or accessed from its properties, including hikes and birding tours, informational

kiosks, activity guides, trail maps, presentations to local organizations, participation in local events, a monthly email newsletter, and a traditional newsletter called “[The Legacy](#).” The Castle in the Clouds Conservation Area Hiker Achievement Patch Program is an LRCT project designed to recognize hikers who have ascended the five major summits and hiked the 19 designated trails, totaling 30 miles. The 5,381-acre Castle in the Clouds Conservation Area is the largest property owned and stewarded by LRCT. The Lakes Region Conservation Trust Explorer Patch Program is a project designed to encourage people to visit various LRCT conservation areas throughout the Lakes Region.

Finances + Philanthropy

A history of individual philanthropic giving, conservative endowment draws, and astute fiscal oversight has kept the Trust on durable financial footing. LRCT is supported by \$9 million in endowed, restricted, and reserved funds, while the organization runs an annual operating budget of around \$1 million. In the most recent fiscal year, the Trust raised about \$875,000 for operations primarily through the support of [members](#) and other donors, and also received grant funding for land conservation and stewardship activities. Currently, fundraising is primarily conducted through annual giving; given the capacity and dedication to LRCT of many in the Lakes Region, there is a substantial opportunity to build out a major giving program. As it stands, LRCT’s donor base consistently meets or exceeds current fundraising goals set for its annual operating requirements and funds needed for its land and easement acquisitions.

ROLE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Reporting to the Board of Trustees and serving as an ex-officio member of the Board and its committees, the Executive Director sets the strategic and day-to-day direction of the organization by managing the staff, working closely with volunteer leadership, and developing and maintaining strong relationships with the organization’s numerous stakeholders, both public and private. In partnership with a contract CFO, the Executive Director is responsible for the astute fiscal management of the organization’s annual operating budget and endowment and updates yearly financial plans in collaboration with the Board, its committees, and the staff.

The next Executive Director will also oversee a strong existing [team of six](#), with the opportunity to make three additional hires. LRCT also receives support from two seasonal staff serving as Seasonal Conservation Land Stewards, a significant number of volunteer property adopters, and approximately 250 volunteers. The Executive Director carries forward the vision, initiative, and expertise that have characterized LRCT and made it the leader in conservation in the Lakes Region and a respected organization in its various communities.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Develop and articulate a compelling vision for the Lakes Region Conservation Trust as it enters its next phase of organizational maturity and impact.

The next Executive Director will join LRCT at an auspicious time as the staff and Board begin preliminary conversations for the organization's next strategic plan. In partnership with these key stakeholders, the Executive Director will help to determine the organization's next strategic goals and priorities, including celebrations of the Trust's upcoming 50th anniversary. The growth of land conserved and LRCT's impact on the region over the years is remarkable, and now, its organizational maturity and structure are at a critical inflection point. Under the skillful leadership of the next Executive Director, efforts to strengthen internal processes and operational management will be critical in successfully focusing the staff, Board, and all other stakeholders in advancing a new strategic vision.

Opportunities for the next chapter in the organization's story are even more important and promising in the context of land conservation as LRCT approaches a milestone of 30,000 acres conserved. Rapid property valuation growth in the Lakes Region, coupled with the constant spread of development, challenges LRCT to proactively expand relationships with organizations and individuals committed to preserving land and funding transactions through which the land is preserved. Similarly, LRCT's extensive portfolio of conserved properties, including preserved islands, intensively used recreational lands, and underused lands and buildings, requires considerable use-planning and maintenance to ensure the public's access, enjoyment, and safety, and funding the necessary staffing and work involved. If well-crafted and executed successfully, the Executive Director's vision will amplify the organization's reputation and profile as an integral part of the stewardship and region-wide impact of this beautiful and important land.

Lead, recruit, develop, and retain a high-performing team and ensure ongoing operational excellence.

The Trust's small yet mighty staff is driven by its passion for the organization's mission. It is an intergenerational staff with a mix of tenures who are based locally and remotely; fostering their development, fulfillment, and retention will be crucial to the ongoing success of the organization. The Executive Director will demonstrate a complete understanding of their work, ensure organizational cohesion, and communicate effectively. Deft and attentive internal leadership is a priority for the new Executive Director, who will identify opportunities for team-building and professional development. With four direct reports, the Executive Director will be an accessible, engaged, and empowering leader, delegating ably and leveraging teamwide subject matter expertise.

Although LRCT was founded almost 50 years ago, its maturation as a professionally staffed organization is more recent, and much of the organization's institutional knowledge and expertise lies with its more tenured staff and longtime Board members. The next Executive Director must assess the current organizational structure to leverage and best support the team of experts while also optimizing staffing for the goals ahead. With stronger internal functionality and role clarity, the Executive Director will cultivate an environment where staff can thrive in their individual roles and work towards larger organizational strategic goals. To that end, the Executive Director will make three critical hires for the organization: an Advancement Director, a Stewardship Director, and a third opening, which is flexible, based on organizational needs determined once the Executive Director is identified. As the staff of LRCT grows, so will the physical space it operates out of. The Executive Director will be responsible for crucial decisions around expanding the headquarters and the headcount of the Trust and ensuring its staff and volunteers are provided with the necessary resources to carry out the mission.

Grow and diversify LRCT's philanthropic donor base.

Looking to the future, maintaining the organization's ambitious mission, supporting the spaces conserved, and promoting future land conservation projects will require expanded engagement with LRCT's donor base. The Executive Director, in partnership with a new Advancement Director and the Board of Trustees, will build and retain LRCT membership to provide growth in financial and community support for LRCT's work commensurate with its growth in landholdings, perpetual care of the land, and aspirations for future initiatives. The Executive Director will also support the Advancement Director and other staff in marketing and branding efforts for the organization. This leader will bring an appetite and aptitude for donor cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship, with a track record of success securing major gifts and a keen understanding of individual and institutional donor interest.

Liaise with the Board of Trustees.

LRCT is fortunate to be supported by a dedicated Board of Trustees comprised of 16 active and engaged individuals committed to the organization's mission. Serving as a critical bridge connecting the Trust's staff and the Board of Trustees, the Executive Director must engage actively with the Board and successfully communicate its vision to the staff responsible for implementation and ensure that the Board receives timely and accurate information about the organization's work, including obstacles encountered by staff. To that end, the next Executive Director will support a strong governance structure and help the Board effectively partner with staff as the organization matures.

In partnership with the Board Chair, the Executive Director will assess the Board's role in operations, committee structures, and how they might better align with a more mature and professional organization. Presently, LRCT's Board has seven standing committees: Executive, Audit, Development, Finance,

Governance, Lands, and Stewardship, and one ad hoc committee, Strategic Planning. As board members approach the end of their term limits, a crucial aspect of the Executive Director's role will be cultivating relationships and stewarding new Board members to serve the Trust, leveraging their experience and passion to complement continuing Board members' skill sets.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The Trust seeks a proven, passionate, and collegial leader to serve as its Executive Director. While no single candidate will possess all ideal attributes, the successful candidate will bring many of the following experiences and qualities:

- *Leadership experience:* Demonstrated success in conceiving and implementing innovative approaches that increase organizational effectiveness. A record of a dynamic partnership with a committed Board of Trustees. Accomplished executive management, including formulating and implementing organizational strategies, processes, and procedures.
- *Commitment to mission:* Comfortable leading an organization with a mission that has local, state, and regional impact. While a record of land conservation leadership or adjacent leadership in environmental work is a plus, it is not a requirement for consideration. Familiarity with place-based leadership is strongly preferred, and a passion for land conservation, natural spaces, and the people who visit and care for them is paramount.
- *Administrative management experience:* Demonstrated success in attracting, retaining, mentoring, and motivating a staff of similar size. Collegiality and an orientation toward teamwork and partnership. Humility to leverage and learn from experts on staff. A genuine commitment to and track record of fostering an environment that is welcoming, inclusive, and accessible for all.
- *Financial and business acumen:* A keen understanding of finances, including balancing organizational priorities and resources and managing restricted and unrestricted endowment funds, is required. Ability to communicate financial decisions to the Board, staff, and broader community. A track record of using data to guide decision-making.
- *Substantial fundraising experience:* A record of effective fundraising for organizations of comparable size and ambition. Experience developing and maintaining robust networks, engaging members and new prospects for individual giving, and inspiring support through relationship development and connection with the organization's mission.

- *Outstanding communication skills:* Strong written and oral communication skills. Political savvy, diplomacy, and a compelling public presence. An ability to engage individuals and groups internally and externally and establish key partnerships and collaborations in the pursuit of land preservation and the support of stewardship through volunteer activity.
- *Personal qualities:* Integrity, dependability, and steadiness. The ability to lead all members of an organization with fairness, humility, compassion, and trust. Personal and professional drive, persistence, resilience, and optimism.

COMPENSATION AND LOCATION

The Lakes Region Conservation Trust's office is located in Center Harbor, New Hampshire. This position offers the opportunity to live and work in an exceptionally beautiful, pristine, and ecologically functional setting. The Lakes Region is spacious and inspiring—a great place to live and visit. It is also uniquely accessible to metro areas within a few hours' drive (e.g., two to three hours to Portland, Maine, or Boston, Massachusetts).

LRCT offers a competitive compensation package consistent with the Executive Director's qualifications. Base salary and incentive potential on an annual basis are central to compensation. A broad benefits package is also available. Relocation consideration and the availability of a residence for temporary use, depending on the circumstances encountered, are also envisioned.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Confidential inquiries, nominations, referrals, and applications (including resumes and two- to three-page letters of interest responding to the opportunities and challenges outlined above) should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller search website: [Lakes Region Conservation Trust, Executive Director](#).

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LRCT is an equal-opportunity employer.