



NEW ENGLAND **FORESTRY** FOUNDATION

Search for the Executive Director

New England Forestry Foundation

Headquartered in Littleton, Massachusetts

THE SEARCH

New England is one of the most forested regions in the country and a key part of one of the most intact temperate forests on earth. New England forests are mostly privately owned and form a backdrop to the region's identity and way of life. What many do not recognize is the huge potential for these forests to help us avoid the worst of climate change and support rich biodiversity. At this critical moment, [New England Forestry Foundation](#) (NEFF) is advancing bold forest-climate solutions and seeks a strategic and entrepreneurial leader to serve as its next Executive Director (ED), building on the organization's strong trajectory of innovation and collaborative leadership throughout the region, and working toward real-world solutions for these complex challenges.

Founded in Massachusetts in 1944, New England Forestry Foundation is dedicated to the conservation and ecologically sound management of privately owned forestlands in New England through land protection, resource management, and one-on-one engagement with landowners. The nation's sixth-largest land trust by acreage, NEFF strives to ensure that future generations can enjoy a beautiful and thriving New England through land conservation, Exemplary Forestry practices, and innovative natural climate solutions.

The incoming ED will join NEFF at a pivotal moment as the organization was recently awarded a \$30 million, five-year award from the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) [Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities Program](#), a ground-breaking initiative to incentivize climate-smart forestry at scale and build markets for low-carbon climate-smart forest products. This landmark program has enabled NEFF to take its emerging forest-climate solutions work to scale, and work directly with small private, large commercial, and Tribal landowners to implement forest management practices that significantly increase carbon sequestration, quantify the resulting carbon gains, and build markets for climate-smart forest products to pivot to a bioeconomy. The ED will build upon the momentum of this program and will actively participate in new, ever evolving fundraising efforts, further solidifying the organization's position as an innovative leader in advancing nationally significant nature-based climate solutions.

Reporting to the Board of Directors, the ED will be responsible for creating a strategic roadmap to advance NEFF's critical leadership on [Exemplary Forestry](#) management, [land conservation](#), and [climate change solutions](#) initiatives. Serving as the public face of the organization, the ED will advance NEFF's advocacy efforts, sharing the organization's successes and outcomes, and captivating a broad network of local and national stakeholders. NEFF has recruited exceptional staff, and the ED will be responsible for scaffolding efforts to develop and nurture employees while building an increasingly inclusive culture.

To better support the full scope of its work across New England, NEFF has recently restructured as a geographically distributed, predominantly remote team. The Executive Director must live in NEFF's New England service area, with regular travel to NEFF's Prouty Woods headquarters in Littleton, Massachusetts, and Greater Boston, with additional site visits throughout New England.

The New England Forestry Foundation has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in the recruitment of this important position. All inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed in confidence as noted at the end of this document.

ABOUT NEW ENGLAND FORESTRY FOUNDATION

The New England Forestry Foundation is dedicated to the conservation and ecologically sound management of privately owned forestlands in New England through land protection, resource management, and educational programming. In the past decade, NEFF has taken a leading role on the cutting edge of the intersection of forestry, conservation, and natural climate solutions. Its innovative, nimble approach has positioned NEFF as a leader in defining, implementing, and modeling creative and entrepreneurial solutions to climate change.

For 80 years, NEFF has led conservation and sustainable management of the region's forests; the organization has conserved more land than any other nonprofit organization in New England and is the sixth largest land trust in the nation. NEFF holds conservation easements on more than 1.2 million acres in Maine, including the Pingree Forest easement (762,000 acres)—the largest forestland easement in the U.S.—and the Sunrise and Farm Cove conservation easements (339,000 acres). The success of these projects helped inspire the present era of large easement conservation and improvements in monitoring techniques. In early 2024, NEFF was awarded Land Trust Alliance accreditation, a process affirming that NEFF upholds the highest standards in sound finances, ethical conduct, responsible governance, and an unwavering commitment to its mission.

Exemplary Forestry

NEFF's core activities include practicing [Exemplary Forestry](#) on its network of over 150 Community Forests comprising over 40,000 acres across New England, as well as outreach and communications to convey the importance of Exemplary Forest management, land protection, and stewardship of conservation easements. As a complement to NEFF's long-standing forest stewardship and conservation work, NEFF

launched the Exemplary Forestry Center (EFC). The EFC brings NEFF's programs and partnerships together to tackle ambitious new goals and projects, all with the aim of solving the climate crisis. The EFC builds on NEFF's activities and expertise in the five themes of the Center: forest science, outreach and coalition building, policy, communications, and innovative conservation finance programs. These themes work in concert to achieve four outcomes:

- no net loss of forests and connectivity across the landscape;
- spread Exemplary Forest management;
- store carbon in long-lived wood products, especially tall wood buildings; and
- reduce the use of energy-intensive materials, particularly concrete, steel, and plastic—shifting to a bioeconomy.

Thirty Percent Solution

Advancing potent forest-based climate solutions is also a top priority for NEFF. Through NEFF's innovative [30 Percent Solution](#), the organization is committed to helping New England meet its net-zero carbon emissions goals. Forests can play a critical role in both lowering carbon emissions and reducing carbon in the atmosphere. By spreading Exemplary Forestry and other climate-smart forestry approaches, decreasing the net loss of forests, using renewable building materials, and permanently sequestering carbon in strong wood buildings, NEFF's holistic approach could pull more than 646 million metric tons of carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere over the next 30 years. NEFF's research, confirmed by several scientific studies, indicates that 30 percent of New England's necessary carbon emissions reductions can be offset by carbon drawdown in better managed forests. This 30 Percent Solution represents nearly one-third of the total energy-related CO₂ emissions reductions needed in New England by 2050. The climate-aligned Exemplary Forest management needed to achieve this goal would simultaneously improve wildlife habitats, help protect air and water quality, allow continued forest recreation, and improve the quality and affordability of urban housing.

Land Conservation

NEFF has permanently conserved more than 1.2 million total acres of forestland, including 164 conservation easements and over 150 community forests. Just a couple examples of this work include:

- In Maine, NEFF made history by conserving 762,000 forestland acres in 2001 through the [Pingree Forest Partnership](#), the largest forestland conservation easement in U.S. history, pioneering a new scale of land conservation. This success made NEFF one of the six largest land trusts in the nation by acres conserved. Three and a half times the size of Baxter State Park and the same size as the state of Rhode Island, the Pingree easement conserves some of the most spectacular natural resources in Maine, including the Allagash Lakes, 2,000 miles of river frontage, and Maine's most productive Peregrine Falcon nesting area.
- The [Downeast Lakes Forestry Partnership](#) was a joint effort of NEFF and the Downeast Lakes Land Trust with numerous partners to protect 339,000 acres in Maine's easternmost county; NEFF

protects 335,000 of these acres under easement. The project was designed to address the social and economic needs of the region, as well as to achieve far-reaching conservation goals, standing apart from similar landscape-scale conservation efforts. Strategically situated between 600,000 acres of conservation land in New Brunswick and 200,000 acres of state, federal, and Native American lands in Maine, the project contributes to the protection of more than one million acres across an international boundary. Public access is granted throughout the 339,000 acres, which include more than 1,500 miles of river and stream shoreline, 445 miles of shoreline on all or portions of 60 lakes, and 54,000 acres of productive wetlands.

- Located on the shores of Squam Lake in Center Harbor, New Hampshire, [Chamberlain Reynolds Memorial Forest](#) is one of NEFF's most ecologically important forestlands—whose nearly mile-long shoreline is a critical nesting area for loons—and the crown jewel among 10 remarkable Community Forests in the area. Chamberlain Reynolds has well-maintained trails as well as five waterfront tent sites, the only place across NEFF's more than 150 properties where camping is allowed. Harris Reynolds founded NEFF in 1944; Chamberlain was a founder of the Massachusetts Forest and Parks Association, and preceded Harris Reynolds as the organization's Executive Secretary.
- Tucked within a bend of New Hampshire's Pemigewasset River, [Hersey Mountain's](#) primarily northern-hardwoods forestland provides prime wildlife habitat. NEFF worked with Northeast Wilderness Trust and Sweetwater Trust to designate 2,100 acres of the property as the Hersey Mountain Wilderness, and roughly 1,100 acres of Hersey Mountain as a working forest. This diverse conservation approach is crucial to successfully address the climate and biodiversity crises, creating an interconnected system of unmanaged wild forestlands and well-managed working forestlands, both of which are essential. Hersey Mountain demonstrates in miniature that this balance is possible.
- The dramatic [Braintree Mountain Forest](#) sits in Vermont's Braintree Range and includes four peaks. This unique Community Forest represents the largest donation of land to NEFF in the organization's history. Paul Kendall and Sharon Rives of the Todhah Hill Foundation gifted the forest to NEFF after spending decades assembling it from smaller parcels of adjacent lands to protect the headwaters of the Riford Brook watershed from development and to ensure opportunities for outdoor recreation and sustainable forestry. Visitors can enjoy 360-degree mountain views and an excellent trail system for hiking, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, and backcountry downhill skiing.
- Located a few miles from Tolland and Granville State Forests in southwest Massachusetts, NEFF's [Phelon Memorial Forest](#) is a beautiful property with deep woodlands that open up to astonishing views, all interwoven with a trail system. The 1,487-foot summit allows visitors to see into five different states on clear days, and it becomes even more awe-inspiring during seasonal raptor migrations. Hawks like the Broad-winged Hawk, Sharp-shinned Hawk, and Red-tailed Hawk make up the bulk of the hill's sightings, and birders on the hill once counted 2,406 migratory Broad-winged Hawks on a single day. Phelon Memorial Forest is mostly made up of hardwoods like oaks,

maples, and birches, which also means the forestland is a great place to witness another set of seasonal changes: spring leaves unfurling and autumn leaves taking on flame-like hues.

ROLE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Reporting to the Board of Directors, the next Executive Director will manage a budget of \$6.6 million, a total staff of 30, and a talented and experienced senior leadership team of four, including a Deputy Director, Chief Development Officer, Chief Conservation Officer, and Director of Finance & Administration. The ED will be responsible for the strategic alignment between NEFF's conservation, forestry, and climate strategies while expanding NEFF's fundraising efforts and strengthening current and building new partnerships that advance NEFF's mission.

As the public face of NEFF, the ED will be an active participant and thought leader in the national discourse related to forestry, land conservation, climate strategies, and advocacy. This leader will also be responsible for stewarding existing supporters while also branching out to cultivate new partnerships across New England and nationally, and facilitating programmatic collaboration with strategically aligned organizations. A skilled fundraiser, the ED will lead the charge in sustaining existing and identifying novel avenues of philanthropic support. The incoming ED must recognize and celebrate the importance of amplifying Indigenous forest management and climate-related knowledge, and will proactively seek out practices and partnerships that sustain and expand on these efforts.

In recent years, NEFF has grown and evolved as an organization and is centered on a collaborative approach where talented staff are empowered to lead in their areas of work. The incoming ED will work closely with the high-capacity leadership team and be an effective manager of people and process, ensuring that NEFF's geographically distributed staff and board members are fully aligned with NEFF's strategic trajectory, knowledgeable about work happening across the organization and about programmatic outcomes, and remain in open dialogue about NEFF's future.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Further distinguish NEFF's profile and amplify the organization's local, regional, and national influence.

NEFF is strategically positioned as a regional thought leader in the forest management and natural climate solutions sector and has ambitions to further distinguish the organization in the national landscape. Working with the Deputy Director, who leads NEFF's programmatic work, the incoming ED will craft an agenda that expands NEFF's ability to implement forest-climate solutions at scale, advise policymakers, influence industry leaders and small forestland owners, and build overall momentum towards Exemplary Forestry in New England and beyond. This leader must be a skillful storyteller and comfortable with public speaking, engaging the press and elected officials, and seeking local, regional, and national platforms to raise awareness about NEFF's distinctive approach, programmatic initiatives, and outcomes.

Retain, develop, and recruit a diverse and talented staff and board.

By strategic design and necessity, NEFF has a geographically dispersed workforce. In recent years, as NEFF's work has evolved, the organization experienced significant growth in staff. The incoming ED must bring exceptional management experience and be comfortable working with staff in distance structures. Furthermore, this leader should have the organizational development experience to maintain the organization's expanded mission. Ever committed to sustaining an inclusive workplace culture, the ED will support developmental opportunities for staff and board members and partner with senior leadership to scaffold onboarding and performance review processes while increasing training, mentoring, and career development opportunities. This leader will be a transparent and clear communicator, ensuring that all staff members understand and are committed to NEFF's mission and have opportunities to collaborate and share learnings across the organization.

The incoming ED will also craft and lead the implementation of a long-term board development strategy that meets NEFF's evolving organizational needs. Working closely with the board chair, the ED will strengthen the board's vision, clarify strategic objectives, and standardize recruitment, onboarding, and succession processes.

Grow and steward financial and philanthropic resources to amplify NEFF's impact.

Working closely with the Chief Development Officer (CDO), the incoming ED will oversee the development and implementation of NEFF's long-term fundraising strategy to capitalize on the momentum gained from the recent USDA award and investments being made in the natural climate solutions space. The ED will support the CDO's efforts to sustain and develop relationships with local and national funders, the federal government, and private philanthropists to secure and diversify organizational resources. This leader will serve as NEFF's primary spokesperson and will represent the organization with foundations, major donors, senior government officials, board members, and prospective donors. The ED must be a compelling storyteller, communicating NEFF's singular approach to forest management, land conservation, and tackling climate change to a wide range of national stakeholders.

Develop a comprehensive strategy for the expansion of sustainable external partnerships.

NEFF inhabits a unique niche at the intersection of conservation, programming, and advocacy and is poised to amplify its work through the expansion of external partnerships. The incoming ED must appreciate and clearly communicate NEFF's exceptional positioning within and across sectors and willingness to bridge the gap between disparate forest management and conservation approaches. In collaboration with senior leadership, the ED will steward existing partnerships and expand the reach of NEFF's initiatives into new geographic areas and with novel partners that seek to continue interdisciplinary dialogue and collaboration. As a part of its work, NEFF is committed to learning from, working with, and cultivating sustainable partnerships with Indigenous leaders across New England and beyond and to identifying opportunities to amplify and sustain Indigenous forest and climate

management practices.

Provide leadership and strategic vision to maintain and grow NEFF's commitment to conservation and forest management.

Working closely with the Chief Conservation Officer and Senior Forester, the ED will maintain NEFF's commitment to conservation and forest management across New England's 32 million acres of working forests and with its wide array of industry, nonprofit, and government partners. NEFF remains committed to bringing Exemplary Forestry practices forward across New England's forested landscape and is eager to complete larger land protection projects.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The successful Executive Director candidate will have many of the following qualifications and attributes:

- Commitment to NEFF's Exemplary Forestry mission and continued forestland conservation.
- Master's degree required in natural/environmental sciences, forestry, planning, landscape ecology, non-profit administration, law, business, or other fields relevant to natural resources conservation.
- Experience leading a similarly complex organization or program with a particular focus on excellent and visionary strategic planning. Effective operational, budgetary, and personnel management is also essential.
- Success in establishing a strategic vision and providing clear decision-making processes and leadership for a sizeable team; demonstrated ability to sell ideas, negotiate, build consensus, solve problems, and produce tangible results.
- Demonstrated ability to empower and work collaboratively with staff at all levels of the organization and encourage top performance from geographically dispersed staff with specialized abilities and skills that may exceed their own in that area of work.
- A strong track record of success raising financial support for land conservation or environmental advocacy projects and for general operations.
- Ability to work and communicate effectively with a wide range of people from various backgrounds, including community members whose perspectives may vary widely; the ability to convincingly convey NEFF's mission, goals, and values to diverse audiences including landowners, donors, agency personnel, government and corporate leaders, and the public in one-on-one meetings, public meetings, and written materials.
- Flexibility in approach to problems and/or changing expectations. Good judgement and strong emotional intelligence are critical.
- Demonstrated initiative; good attention to detail while still being able to see the "bigger picture."

LOCATION AND COMPENSATION

The Executive Director must live in NEFF's New England service area. The position requires regular travel to NEFF's Prouty Woods headquarters in Littleton, Massachusetts, and Greater Boston, as well as some site visits throughout New England.

Compensation for this position will be competitive and negotiated in good faith, with the salary range estimated beginning at \$200,000, commensurate with experience. New England Forestry Foundation offers a comprehensive benefits package for full-time employees including health/dental/vision insurances, paid time off, parental leave, retirement plan with employer match and vesting, and a congenial and flexible working environment.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and applications (including resumes and one- to three-page letters of interest responding to the opportunities and challenges outlined above) should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website for the search: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/new-england-forestry-foundation/executive-director>.

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