



We protect special places forever.

Position Announcement

Title: Executive Director
Reports To: Chair, Groundswell Conservancy Board of Directors

About Groundswell

Groundswell Conservancy envisions a world filled with green places where communities thrive. Established in 1983, Groundswell is a non-profit community-based organization that permanently protects special places in Dane County and southern Wisconsin, including Cherokee Marsh north of Madison, the beautiful Black Earth Creek valley, natural areas along the Wisconsin River, and rich farmland all around Madison. At our Westport and Pasley farms, we overcome barriers faced by black, indigenous, people of color, and New American farmers in obtaining access and tenure on farmland. At Lake View Elementary School and Mendota Elementary School on Madison's north side, we reconnect children with nature, through outdoor learning and recreation.

Groundswell is based in Madison, Wisconsin around four lakes and the ancestral home of the Ho Chunk Nation. The Fox (Meskwaki) and Sauk tribes also lived in the area. We strive to be an anti-racist land conservation organization that shares power and decision-making with diverse communities that reflect our broader community.

Groundswell has six highly experienced and dedicated staff members. Our financial position and reserves are excellent and supported by a large and loyal base of financial supporters. The position is open due to retirement of the current Executive Director after an outstanding eighteen-year career at the organization. The current fifteen-member Board of Directors, with staggered terms and diverse, relevant community and technical backgrounds and non-profit leadership experience, provide strategic guidance and oversight based on a consensus approach and a 2020-2024 strategic plan.

Job Overview

The Executive Director will lead the team and engage with our Board to inspire and build partnerships to expand Groundswell Conservancy's land conservation programs and make our work useful and relevant to diverse communities. The Executive Director will be a steward of the mission and build on 38 years of success protecting great places. The Executive Director will continue and expand our core mission to permanently protect cherished lands and lead Groundswell to meet emerging challenges in our rapidly growing community. Current challenges are:

- overcoming barriers faced by black, indigenous, people of color, and New American farmers to land access and tenure
- responding to people's changing needs and desires about how to enjoy and use conservation lands, such as through the creation of "all access" trails at our preserves
- helping communities respond to the climate crisis, for example, by protecting and managing wetlands in their watersheds
- protecting more recreational land to meet the demands of our growing population

This position is based in Madison, Wisconsin and responsible for fostering an organization focused on creating lasting benefits for how people and land come together. The Executive Director is a dynamic, thoughtful, and strategic leader. In addition to driving execution of the mission and the strategic plan, the Executive Director represents the organization in the greater Madison community and the larger conservation community. The Executive Director ensures the continued evolution of the organization, its partnerships, and understands what it means, and what it takes to create permanent benefits to the community.



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The Executive Director duties include:

Strategic Responsibilities:

- Maintain Groundswell’s core land and easement acquisitions, land conservation management, and land easement monitoring responsibilities.
- Strengthen and expand Groundswell’s land conservation opportunities that support diverse communities access to green places.
- Maintain, build, and expand partnerships and relationships; inspire, motivate, communicate, and raise funds for a shared land conservation & equitable land access vision.
- Proactively seek to partner with traditional and nontraditional stakeholders to ensure that Groundswell Conservancy remains relevant and a leader – identifying and initiating new opportunities that leverage Groundswell strengths.
- Integrate with and leverage funding from foundations, individual donors, local, state, and federal programs to advance the Groundswell Conservancy mission.
- Lead, inspire and develop Groundswell personnel.

Operational Responsibilities:

- Manage board, donor and partner relationships; staff board meetings and assure accurate reporting of Groundswell Conservancy’s work.
- Manage Conservancy finances; build a yearly budget and execute the financial plan for the organization.
- Supervise staff; maintain personnel development plans for the organization, and cultivate talent for future hire, volunteering, and mentoring opportunities.
- Develop and maintain strategic and annual operating plans for the organization.
- Oversee strategic and operational plans, including communication, marketing, and fundraising plans.

Professional Skills and Qualifications:

While it’s rare for a single individual to possess all the desired experiences and qualifications, the successful candidate should bring many of the following qualifications, skills, experience, and qualities to the role:

- Non-profit, public sector, or private entrepreneurial experience.
- Supervisory, project management, financial management, fund-raising experience.
- Experience working with a diverse range of communities. Awareness of social inequalities and the competencies required to foster an anti-racist organization.
- Experience initiating, leading, team building and problem-solving with strong interpersonal and emotional intelligence skills.
- Experience or training or undergraduate degree in land protection, conservation management, natural resources, or community conservation.
- Demonstrated ability to work with diverse communities of donors, board leaders, community leaders, managers, and employees.
Proven ability to integrate with and leverage local, state, and federal programs.

This Job Is Ideal for Someone Who Is:

- Passionate about nature – values the critical roles of the environment in our lives
- Historically Aware – knows history & role of conservation organizations & issues of racism in conservation
- Inspiring – can motivate the team and the community
- Humble – understands that there is a lot we don’t know



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Groundswell Describes Its Culture as:

- Dependable – reliable, consistent
- Outcome-oriented -- results-focused with an eye towards permanence
- People-oriented -- supportive and fairness-focused
- Team-oriented -- cooperative and collaborative

How to Apply:

If you are interested in being considered for this exciting opportunity, and can demonstrate the required abilities and knowledge, please submit your resume and cover letter to grhyer@wisc.edu and/or call 608.320.3243 for information.

Applications will be reviewed as received with the goal of identifying an outstanding candidate before the end of 2021.

The position will remain open until we have an accepted offer.

The expected start date for the position is March 1, 2022.

Salary Range & Benefits:

- \$80,000 - \$95,000 per year based on experience and qualifications
- Health insurance through Quartz (Groundswell covers 70% of the monthly premium for the individual plan; coverage is available for the employee's family and the employee pays 100% of those monthly premiums.)
- Dental insurance through Anthem (Groundswell covers 90% of the monthly premium for the individual employee; coverage is available for the employee's family and the employee pays 100% of those monthly premiums.)
- 11 paid holidays per year
- 3 days paid personal time per year
- Annual leave between 15 and 20 days per year
- Paid sick leave accrued at the rate of 8 hours per month
- Additional paid and unpaid family, parental, and other forms of leave.
- Simple IRA retirement (Groundswell matches up to 3% of the employee's salary based on their voluntary contribution.)

Work Conditions:

Monday to Friday (and occasional evening and weekend work); ability to provide one's own transportation for work at near east side Madison office and for field and community work.