

**Executive Director, Sequoia Riverlands Trust**

Location: Visalia, CA

*Position Profile*

**About the Organization**

Sequoia Riverlands Trust (SRT) is a regional non-profit land trust dedicated to strengthening the natural and agricultural legacy of California’s Central Valley. With a vision for lasting protection for important lands across the southern Sierra Nevada and San Joaquin Valley for the prosperity and enjoyment of future generations, SRT seeks a future where productive agricultural land and important natural systems are protected to generate regional vitality and economic prosperity, the mission of SRT is to inspire love and lasting protection for these important lands.

SRT engages landowners, farmers, conservationists, business partners, and governmental agencies across eight counties to collaborate on land conservation. To date, SRT has protected more than 40,000 acres, owns and manages seven nature preserves, and holds 66 conservation easements on more than nearly 23,000 acres of protected land, most of them on working farms and ranches. In addition, SRT has collaborated on environmental mitigation projects incorporating over 25,000 acres, in alignment with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and state and federal Endangered Species Acts (ESAs) compliance, working with agencies, other non-profit conservation organizations, and landowners to protect nearly 4,700 additional acres, including 2,386.6 acres with 46 deed restrictions on Bureau of Land Management land within Carrizo Plain National Monument.

SRT is an innovative land trust that combines conservation, education, and policy work to fulfill its mission. Educational and volunteer programs engage and inspire youth and adults alike to take part in a meaningful, informed, and curious relationship with our environment and natural resources. Mitigation services have expanded in recognition that our land and its farmers are of irreplaceable value both economically within the region and to the future food security of our country. Finally, SRT engages deeply with government agencies and non-profit partners to ensure that when key policy decisions are made, there’s a sensible voice for conservation at the table.

We are pleased to highlight a 30-minute special about SRT recently produced by PBS: <https://video.valleypbs.org/video/natures-keepers-pvdwxy/> To learn more about Sequoia Riverlands Trust, its programs, and its mission, visit: <https://sequoiariverlands.org/>

**About the Community**

Situated in California’s San Joaquin Valley, Visalia and its surroundings are known for being one of the most productive agricultural counties in the United States. Newcomers and long-time residents alike boast about Visalia’s central location and close proximity to the Sierra Nevada Mountains, home to some of California’s most beautiful National Parks including Sequoia and Kings Canyon (less than 60 miles east) and Yosemite (100 miles north). Meanwhile, the Central Coast, Los Angeles, and San Francisco are just a few hours’ drive away, making Visalia a wonderful place for outdoor enthusiasts and those who enjoy having access to California’s most iconic cities and attractions.

This welcoming, close-knit community of 136,000 residents is drawing more and more families and young adults due to its affordability and easy commutes, combined with an urban lifestyle that features a charming downtown that supports the arts, music, theatre, and a vibrant nightlife. There are plenty of beautiful parks and natural areas to stroll through and recreational activities to enjoy, notably [Kaweah Oaks Preserve](http://www.tularecountytreasures.org/kaweah-oaks-preserve-v.html) located just east of Visalia. Members of the community take pride in this incredibly beautiful natural oasis, owned and managed by Sequoia Riverlands Trust.

To learn more about Visalia, Gateway to the Sequoias, visit <https://www.visitvisalia.com/> and <https://www.visalia.city/>

**The Opportunity**

The new Executive Director of Sequoia Riverlands Trust will take the reins upon the retirement of an entrepreneurial long-time leader. The organization has grown steadily and strategically over many years. The incoming ED will be called upon to assess the organization’s current position and structure,and recommend a course of action to position SRT to fulfill its mission effectively in its next stage of development, with an eye toward ensuring the conservation of its protected lands “in perpetuity”.

Working with and through a committed and knowledgeable team, and in partnership with a well-connected Board of Directors, the Executive Director will need to understand how the interconnected nature of SRT’s programs fit within the social, economic, political, and policy landscape within the counties it serves. This includes a complex interplay of the needs of current landowners, particularly ranch and farm families in the southern part of California’s Central Valley and Sierra Nevada foothills and woodlands; the regulatory environment related to habitat and species conservation, agricultural easements, environmental mitigation, and groundwater management. Also important is an understading of the economic drivers and natural resource constraints that influence decisions regarding land use and resource protection in the Valley.

The Executive Director reports to the Sequoia Riverlands Trust Board of Directors, with direct oversight from the Executive Committee.

**Key Priorities**

***Strategy & business model***

Working closely with the Board and with input from staff, external stakeholders, and funders, the Executive Director will clarify current and future direction, setting priorities for programs and budgets in alignment with that strategy. This includes an evaluation of the organization’s business model and revenue streams for conservation, mitigation, education and community engagement, and policy work.

***Financial sustainability***

The Executive Director will develop and manage a multi-year financial plan and projected budgets, to include plans for new sources of revenue. SRT’s new ED will be creative and proactive in cultivating existing relationships as well as developing new relationships that would be beneficial to SRT’s mission and programs. Funding streams include (but are not limited to) private donations or memberships; corporate, private, and government grants; as well as donated and earned revenue from mitigation, easements, and other conservation projects.

***Organizational development***

Starting with an assessment of current policies, processes, and systems, the new Executive Director will work with staff to ensure effective and efficient internal communication, decision-making, recordkeeping, and compliance with internal and external requirements. The ED will do this with an eye toward team-building, staff development, and employee engagement. Meanwhile, the ED will work with the Board of Directors on Board development and education, including taking a fresh look at the committee structure.

***Brand & community visibility***

The Executive Director is the public face of Sequoia Riverlands Trust – to donors and volunteers; to ranchers, farmers, and other landowners; to local and state government officials; to partner organizations; and to the general public across Tulare, Kings, Fresno, and Kern counties. A key step in SRT’s growth is to build a more cohesively recognizable brand that increases visibility among all of these stakeholder groups, solidifying SRT’s reputation for the innovative and premier land trust organization it has become in nearly two decades. The ED will be attentive to the synergistic cycle of visibility, program growth, and increased revenue – establishing goals, objectives, and metrics in order to share results and progress with funders and the community.

**The Ideal Candidate**

The next Executive Director of Sequoia Riverlands Trust has a vision for long-term conservation of unique natural open space and productive farmland, a talent for harnessing the abilities and interests of a large variety of internal and external stakeholders to accomplish a mission, and a drive to be the public face of SRT’s mission throughout the Central Valley and beyond.

Successful candidates understand the complexities of accomplishing land conservation work in diverse environments and communities. Familiarity with California’s Central Valley is preferred but not required. The Executive Director role requires a high degree of pragmatism, diplomacy, and the ability to relate authentically to diverse stakeholders who connect with SRT’s mission for a wide variety of different reasons.

To be successful as Executive Director of Sequoia Riverlands Trust, candidates must have practical relevant knowledge related to conservation and/or agricultural land use. While specific work experience in land trusts is not required, SRT’s next Executive Director will need to be credible quickly on topics related to conservation easements, agricultural easements, and environmental mitigation, as well as the regulatory environment related to land, soil, and water resources in California (including the California Sustainable Groundwater Management Act).

The ideal candidate has a demonstrated ability to formulate and execute on a vision: to be able to envision the future as well as chart a path to get there. Complementary and equally necessary is the full set of organizational management skills, including financial management (planning and budgeting), human resources and team building, and the ability to institute processes and systems. Communication and relationship building skills will be critical to achievement of these objectives.

Demonstrated experience generating revenue in an organization of similar size and complexity is strongly preferred. Non-profit fundraising experience is strongly preferred, including direct solicitation as well as leading and “headlining” the efforts of staff performing grant-writing, event planning, membership drives, and other fundraising activities. Candidates with minimal experience related to grant and donor revenue must have experience with relevant earned revenue streams (e.g., from complex land deals) combined with the ability to effectively communicate and “sell” a mission-oriented organization, service, or product.

The ED of Sequoia Riverlands Trust embraces the opportunity to be the public face of the organization and its mission. Successful candidates will understand how to market SRT’s value proposition, programs, and accomplishments to funders, landowners, government agencies, and to the broader community, including the ability to communicate complex topics in a way that is relatable and understandable to audiences that range from government officials to farmers and ranchers to school children.

**Minimum Qualifications**

Candidates should have a minimum of 10 years progressive leadership and management experience in a non-profit, for-profit, and/or public sector organization. Outstanding verbal and written communication skills are essential to be an outgoing collaborator, spokesperson, and fundraiser. Experience reporting to a Board of Directors is preferred. Candidates should have demonstrated people, operational, and financial management skills.

The Executive Director will be located in SRT’s office in Visalia, CA.

**To Be Considered**

Sequoia Riverlands Trust is an equal opportunity employer and all qualified candidates are encouraged to apply as soon as possible. To be considered, please go to *https://careers-waldron.icims.com/jobs/1071/executive-director/login* and submit your resume and a cover letter expressing your passion for the mission and fit for the role.

*The search for an Executive Director for Sequoia Riverlands Trust is being assisted by a team from Waldron:*

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