



# LAND TRUST of SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

## JOB OPENING

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DATE:	June 13, 2022
JOB TITLE	Director of Land Protection
REPORTS TO:	Executive Director
STATUS:	Full-time, Overtime exempt

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### **Summary:**

The Land Trust of Santa Cruz County (Land Trust) is a vibrant and well-respected conservation organization serving Santa Cruz County and beyond. Since its inception in 1978, the Land Trust has protected more than 14,000 acres across 50 properties. The Land Trust stewards fee properties totaling 2,300 acres, 42 conservation easements totaling 3,200 acres, and manages nearly 9,000 acres of lands owned by partners.

The Land Trust has strong momentum and, in 2022, will complete several miles of public trails, see the completion of the wildlife tunnel under Highway 17, and protect an additional 2,500+ acres of habitat, ag lands, and open spaces. This is all possible because of our innovative staff, collaborative work environment, and successful private and public fundraising.

The Land Trust seeks an experienced land protection and acquisition professional to ensure the completion of numerous transactions currently underway; to develop landscape-level land protection strategies; to cultivate partnerships and policies in support of the organization's objectives; to identify and complete new land protection transactions; and to position the Land Trust as highly effective, innovative, and reliable within the greater conservation community including with landowners, funders, donors, and complementary organizations.

The ideal candidate brings significant conservation experience, approaches work with an innovative and entrepreneurial mindset, sets and attains far-reaching goals, and develops excellent rapport with a variety of people. This position may have the opportunity to grow into a broader leadership role as the organization evolves.

The Director is a member of the Leadership Team and works closely with the Executive Director, Board of Trustees, and coworkers to advance the Land Trust's mission and vision. The Director supervises a Land Protection Manager and collaborates with a team of conservation professionals to achieve the organization's goals.

This job is a full-time position with excellent benefits, generous paid time off, flexible working conditions, and a positive work culture. The Land Trust pays competitive wages, using comparative data and cost of living factors to develop its pay rates. Pay will be based on experience and qualifications, ranging from \$100,000 to \$150,000.

### **Job Responsibilities:**

#### Land Protection Strategy & Policy

- Define and refine the Land Trust's long-range science-based, climate-resilient land protection goals and short-term strategies; ensure internal buy-in and understanding
- Work with the Board of Trustees Lands Committee for approval of upcoming land protection projects and provide updates on ongoing activities
- Stay abreast of local, state, and federal policies relevant to land protection and seek opportunities to lay the foundation for new projects or approaches. In collaboration with the Leadership Team, develop and implement the Land Trust's political and legislative outreach strategy.
- Liaise with the Board of Trustees Policy Committee on public conservation-impacted policies to be endorsed or opposed by the Land Trust
- Develop and maintain positive relationships with local landowners
- Serve as a staff advisor on real estate related legal issues. Assist with lease negotiations, easement violations, title investigations, and other real estate matters.

#### Conservation Finance

- Develop and manage the annual land protection budget, and identify additional revenues to support operations and projects
- Assist the Executive Director and consultants with maintaining and growing governmental relationships
- Collaborate with the Grants Manager to identify and secure state and foundation funding for land protection projects
- Stay abreast of conservation finance innovation approaches as they develop

### Partnerships

- Build and maintain strategic partnerships to collaboratively maximize conservation outcomes for our region
- Strengthen existing partnerships and serve as a knowledgeable and passionate representative of the Land Trust
- Position the Land Trust as an innovative leader within regional planning and broad-scale conservation coalitions. Assist in the overall public relations effort by advancing and promoting the Land Trust's excellent reputation with public agencies, conservation organizations, elected officials, and the general public.
- Provide outreach, cultivation, and relationship maintenance of landowners of properties identified as Land Trust conservation priorities
- Make presentations and lead property tours for donors, funders, landowners, and elected officials as needed

### Land Acquisition

- Proactively pursue key conservation acquisitions in alignment with Land Trust strategic objectives; position the Land Trust favorably with nearby landowners, acquisition partners, funders, and takeout partners
- Define purpose and vision for each easement or acquisition project; ensure buy-in from staff and board
- Direct and supervise land acquisition staff and consultants
- Provide leadership for innovative approaches to bring deal opportunities to completion, including negotiations, financing, and partnering
- Manage all aspects of the acquisition and conveyance of property and property rights, including negotiating purchase agreements and other contracts; undertakes the Land Trust's transaction due diligence process; manages the development of easements and other legal documents; and manages and coordinates the closing process through close of escrow. Secures appropriate delegation of authority to negotiate and transact real estate on behalf of the Land Trust.
- Ensure acquisition practices conform to Land Trust Alliance's Standards and Practices. Makes certain that Land Trust land protection projects are structured to meet high standards of integrity and minimize the Land Trust's exposure to legal or reputational risk.

### Staff Management

- Supervise Land Protection Manager, provide timely feedback and ongoing support, and provide training and professional development opportunities.
- Secure necessary and supervise contractual or volunteer support to fill capacity

gaps for land protection activities.

- Other duties as assigned

**Job Knowledge, Skills, Ability & Experience:**

- Bachelor's degree
- 10 years of professional experience, including demonstrated success in a land protection, conservation, or related role
- Demonstrated experience with real estate transactions, landowner negotiation, and conservation finance mechanisms
- Experience with obtaining public funding through grant writing and relationship-building
- Excellent written and oral communication skills with diverse groups of stakeholders, landowners, a Board of Trustees, donors, partners, and staff
- Strong organizational and staff management skills
- Ability to work independently while also collaborating with others
- Proficient with basic computer programs including Microsoft Office (Outlook, Word, Teams, and Excel), smartphones, and other digital technology
- Understanding of and enthusiasm for conservation of natural, agricultural, cultural, and open space resources and the role of land trusts in that effort

**Application Instructions:**

- The position is anticipated to start as soon as possible and will be kept open until filled.
- Applications received by June 30, 2022 will receive priority review.
- Submit the following three things to [teresa.malone@landtrustsantacruz.org](mailto:teresa.malone@landtrustsantacruz.org):
  - Cover letter
  - Resume
  - List of land transactions completed: include year, property size, cost, and your role