



The Conservation Alliance
Executive Director
Position Profile
www.conservationalliance.com

THE FOREST GROUP
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Together we helped protect 51 million acres, 3,107 river miles, removed or halted 34 dams, purchased 14 climbing areas & designated 5 marine reserves.

OUR MISSION

The Conservation Alliance's mission is to engage businesses to fund and partner with organizations to protect wild places for their habitat and recreation values.

OUR VISION

To protect and restore America's wild places.

OUR VALUES

We are catalysts.

Providing a link between the conservation community and businesses, we enable and inspire our colleagues to work together to protect the wild places vital to their business.

We represent strength in numbers.

We recognize that our greatest strength is our collective nature. Our members are competitors who come together around a common purpose.

We embody simplicity and effectiveness.

We are laser focused on providing resources to grassroots conservation projects. We strive to find the best conservation partners who will succeed given adequate support, and we measure that success in terms of measurable, on-the-ground protection for wild places.

We are responsible.

As a group of outdoor and associated businesses, we have a responsibility to invest in protecting the places that are important to our colleagues and customers.

ORIGIN STORY

The Conservation Alliance is a group of outdoor industry companies that disburses its collective annual membership dues to grassroots environmental organizations. We direct funding to community-based campaigns to protect threatened wild habitat, preferably where outdoor enthusiasts recreate. The Alliance was founded in 1989 by industry leaders REI, Patagonia, The North Face, and Kelty, who shared the goal of increasing outdoor industry support for conservation efforts. The Conservation Alliance now has more than 230 member companies, and plans to disburse \$2 million in 2019.

Since its inception in 1989, The Conservation Alliance has contributed more than \$22 million to grassroots conservation groups throughout North America. The results of the funding have been remarkable. Our funding has helped protect more than 52 million acres of wildlands and 3,481 miles of rivers; stop or remove 35 dams; designate five marine reserves; and purchase 14 climbing areas. We follow a rigorous grant proposal review process that ensures grants go to organizations that can succeed given the necessary financial resources. By supporting The Conservation Alliance, members invest in an array of the most compelling conservation projects in North America.

MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM

Membership in The Conservation Alliance is open to companies representing all aspects of industry, including manufacturers, retailers, publishers, mills and sales representatives. The result is a diverse group of businesses whose livelihood depends on protecting our natural environment. As a group of outdoor industry companies, our members recognize our responsibility to help protect the wild lands and waterways on which their employees and customers recreate and wildlife thrives. We strive to be our members' partner in conservation, and at 230 member companies strong, we are proud that The Conservation Alliance continues to grow as the outdoor industry further recognizes the importance of protecting wild places for their habitat and recreation values.

The Conservation Alliance has recently begun recruiting sister industries including craft brewing and natural food; sectors that share both our values and customers that benefit from and understand the value of our wild places. We take our position at the intersection of the business and conservation communities seriously. Now more than ever, it is important that we stand together and grow our reach to protect and defend our public lands. We look forward to working with our partners in the conservation community, the outdoor industry, and industries beyond to save our last wild places, and preserve the system that keeps them wild.

Since our inception, we have passed 100 percent of our members' dues directly to grantees. We finance our operating budget through several initiatives including our Legacy Fund endowment, highly successful member product sales at Outdoor Retailer trade shows, foundation grants, the Leading Edge major donor program, and member contributions above and beyond annual membership dues. The staff and board have always followed a "lean and mean" approach to finances managed, with a rigor one would expect from our business membership base.

Pinnacle Members:

The Conservation Alliance's **Pinnacle Membership Program** recognizes companies that contribute \$100,000 annually to the organization. CLIF Bar and Company, Columbia Sportswear, Merrell, KEEN, Inc., Patagonia, Inc., REI, and The North Face each give at our highest membership level. Our goal is to increase the amount of funding we can contribute to conservation efforts throughout North America. Our work to protect and defend North America's wild places has never been more important, and these seven members are showing the leadership we need to safeguard wild lands and rivers for the long term. The Conservation Alliance encourages other members to increase their commitment to the organization

Benefits to Member Companies:

Grant Program: We make grants twice annually. Member companies have the opportunity to nominate two organizations per funding cycle to submit funding requests, and each member may vote on which of the nominated organizations should be funded. This program gives members the opportunity to steer significant funds to organizations they think are making a difference in your community (or elsewhere).

Advocacy: The voice of Conservation Alliance member companies has a strong impact on our elected officials. By leveraging this collective voice, we are able to send a message to decision makers in Washington, DC and on the local level about the economic benefit of protected lands and waters. Through trips to Washington, sign-on letters, and our conservation policy trainings, member companies can become more active in shaping conservation policy.

The Backyard Collective: Backyard Collectives bring together member company employees and local grantees for a day of environmental stewardship. These events get member employees out of the office to do good work to preserve and protect the open spaces in their own backyards.

Ambassador Program

Encourage the next generation of key influencers and leaders in the outdoor industry by identifying an individual from our member companies to serve as an in-house representative to The Conservation Alliance. Ambassadors are motivated, environmentally-conscious employees who serve as a conduit for spreading the word about Conservation Alliance programs and grantee activities within member organization and to member customers.

Relevant Staff:

Membership and Development Manager:

The Membership and Development Program Manager oversees a comprehensive program to grow The Conservation Alliance membership in the outdoor and sister industries. This is currently an open position that is in the process of being filled.

Outreach Associate:

Reporting into the Membership and Development Program Manager, **Abby June Becker**, coordinates and leads the majority of our outreach events from Backyard Collectives to Outdoor Retailer event efforts.

Abby is a natural connector, influencer and producer first became familiar with The Conservation Alliance when she worked with the apparel design team at Merrell in Portland, Oregon. She has been involved with the Backyard Collective event series since 2011

GRANT PROGRAM

What We Do:

We make grants to the most effective conservation organizations in North America; groups working to protect the places outdoor companies and their customers love to play. We track and report on the progress of funded projects while providing opportunities for member companies to take action in support of our grant recipients.

How We Do This:

We collect annual membership dues from like-minded companies and then we give 100 percent of those dues to conservation organizations. Our members play a significant role in determining where to invest our funds by nominating organizations for funding, and voting to determine which groups receive funding.

The Specifics:

We make grants to registered 501(c)(3) organizations whose work meets each of the following criteria:

- 1) The project should seek to secure lasting and quantifiable protection of a specific wild land or waterway. We prioritize landscape-scale projects that have a clear benefit for habitat.
- 2) The campaign should engage grassroots citizen action in support of the conservation effort. We do not fund general education, restoration, stewardship, or scientific research projects.
- 3) All projects must have a clear recreational benefit.
- 4) The project should have a good chance of final success within four years.

Public Lands Defense Fund:

In addition to our regular grant program, the Public Lands Defense Fund (PLDF) supports organizations working to preserve the integrity of the US public lands system. The Conservation Alliance's goal is to support organizations that are strategically confronting efforts that would diminish our public lands system.

PLDF grants fund efforts to:

1. Defend existing protections for landscapes and waterways on public lands (e.g. National Monuments; Roadless Areas; Wilderness Study Areas; Mineral Withdrawal Areas)
2. Defend our bedrock conservation laws (E.g., Wilderness Act, Antiquities Act, National Environmental Policy Act); and
3. Oppose the proposed transfer of federal lands to the states or to private hands.

We launched the Public Lands Defense Fund in January 2017 with initial commitments from founding member companies Patagonia and The North Face. Together, these two companies pledged \$100,000 annually for four years. Arc'teryx added a three-year, \$50,000 annual commitment. Though The Conservation Alliance accepts contributions to the fund from any company or individual interested in preserving our public lands, all contributions are incremental to a company's annual membership dues. As with Conservation Alliance membership dues, 100 percent of contributions to the Public Lands Defense Fund go directly to conservation organizations. Public Lands Defense Fund grants are administered solely by The Conservation Alliance Board of Directors. We expect to contribute \$200,000 in PLDF grants in 2019.

Relevant Staff:

Grant Program and Communications Manager:

As the Grant Program and Communications Manager, **Josie Norris** manages all aspects of The Conservation Alliance's grant programs, including grantee relationships, the grant review process, grant recommendations and administration. She is also responsible for managing communications for The Conservation Alliance, excluding advocacy content. This includes email campaigns, social media, the website, member content sharing, etc.

Prior to joining The Conservation Alliance in 2014, Josie spent ten years working for environmentally responsible brands in the Outdoor Industry. She left Patagonia in 2006 and moved to Portland to help launch Nau, a sustainable outdoor apparel company. While at Nau, she led e-commerce and the corporate giving program. Josie currently serves on the board for the Adventure Travel Conservation Fund, a new NGO that directly funds projects around the world engaged in the conservation of unique natural and cultural resources of adventure travel destinations. People often call her a "connector" because she is passionate about creating meaningful connections within a community.

ADVOCACY PROGRAM

Holding the line and preparing for the future, The Conservation Alliance supplements its grantmaking with strategic advocacy, bringing our member's voices to bear on conservation. Currently our advocacy work settles into two themes: opportunity and education. We take proactive measures to add protections to our shared wild places through membership organizing and education, action alerts, sign-on letters, and trips to Washington DC, and respond to administrative and Congressional attacks to our public lands system through similar tactics.

Additionally, realizing the potential to elevate the collective voice of our membership, we focus energy on providing our members with opportunities to learn more about the public land system through in-person and digital trainings. We believe a deeper understanding of our public lands will result in increased advocacy efforts to protect and defend them. Our advocacy efforts help to both defend conservation victories as well as create foundations for future conservation successes.

Relevant Staff:

Advocacy Program Manager

As the Advocacy Program Manager, **Kirsten Blackburn** engages state and national decision makers on behalf of our member companies. Kirsten develops and implements plans to engage Conservation Alliance member companies and their employees in advocacy efforts in support of the projects we fund, and in defense of our public land system. Additionally, the Advocacy Manager manages all advocacy-related communications.

Prior to joining The Conservation Alliance, Kirsten managed corporate philanthropy and activism for KEEN, Inc., where she worked to create a movement of people dedicated to preserving our country's incredible outdoor landscapes. She managed strategic non-profit partnerships and a grant program called the KEEN Effect, and worked to establish fan-based activism campaigns. She grew up in Whitefish, Montana with Glacier National Park as a backyard. Growing up amongst the beauty of Western Montana fostered a love for the outdoors and a burning desire to preserve them. She spends her time climbing, trail running, and getting lost in Oregon's high desert where she serves as a board member for Oregon Natural Desert Association.

LEGACY FUND

The Conservation Alliance directs 100 percent of each member's annual dues into their fund to support conservation projects. This 100 percent pass-through is great for their members and grantees, but it leaves little to sustain the operational needs of the organization. The Conservation Alliance Legacy Fund is a \$4.3-million endowment, annual earnings from which provide a permanent source of operational funding for the organization. This endowment funds roughly 25 percent of the annual operating expenses, which allows staff to focus on refining and improving core functions, and ensures that conservation is a permanent commitment of the outdoor industry. The Conservation Alliance withdraws earnings from the Legacy Fund annually, directing these monies into their operating fund.

LEADING EDGE PROGRAM

The *Leading Edge* is a community of long-time industry leaders who have shown a lifetime of active commitment to conservation and want to ensure that conservation remains a priority for our community of businesses that depend on protected wild places. The Leading Edge program was launched in 2016 and provides the opportunity for a select group of leaders in the outdoor industry to participate directly in The Conservation Alliance's efficient and effective conservation efforts. Members of The Leading Edge commit to contributing a minimum of \$5,000 annually to The Conservation Alliance for at least three years. We currently have 20 contributing individuals and families.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Executive Director is currently supported by (and in turn supports) 14 Board Members, each of whom represents a member company. Each of the founding members – Patagonia, REI, The North Face, and Kelty – holds a permanent seat on the board. The remaining directors are elected to serve up to two three-year terms. This is a working Board with Committees including Governance, Finance, Advocacy,

Communications and Recruitment. The Board has the ability to create ad-hoc Committees such as the current Selection Committee.

Conservation Alliance Board members/directors are charged with overall management of the affairs of the Conservation Alliance. In discharging their duties, including their duties with respect to committees of the organization, Directors must act (a) in good faith, (b) with the care and ordinarily prudent person in a like position would exercise under similar circumstances, and (c) in a manner the Director reasonably believes to be in the best interests of the organization. Directors represent The Conservation Alliance within the outdoor industry, and leverage support for the organization. Through their service to The Conservation Alliance, all Directors seek to increase the outdoor industry's commitment to conservation.

Current Board Members: Hans Cole, Patagonia (Chair); Tracy Brunz, REI (Vice Chair); Amy Beck, Oboz Footwear (Vice Chair); Deven Clemens, Clif Bar & Company (Treasurer); Arne Arens, The North Face; Linda Balfour, Superfeet; Joe Craig, Columbia Sportswear; Chris Enlow, KEEN Footwear; Michael LaLonde, Deschutes Brewery; Kate Larramendy, Toad & Co.; Peter Metcalf, Wildlands Policy Institute; Mary Robbs, The Forest Group; Russell Rowell, Kelty; Strick Walker, Merrell.

For complete bios on the current Board of Directors please visit:

<http://www.conservationalliance.com/board-and-staff/>

BOARD COMMITTEES:

Governance Committee: The Governance Committee oversees all policies relevant to the functioning of the organization, including: bylaws; personnel policy; conflict of interest policy; whistleblower policy; and anti-discrimination policy. The Governance Committee implements strategic planning, manages and reviews the performance of the Executive Director, and assesses Board composition with an eye toward recruiting candidates to serve on the Board.

Finance Committee: The Finance Committee oversees all financial aspects of the organization. The Finance Committee works with staff to advise on annual budget development and quarterly reporting. The Finance Committee reviews the annual audit, and oversees regular auditor rotation. In conjunction with strategic planning, the Finance Committee develops three-year financial models for the organization. The Finance Committee oversees the Legacy Fund and its investment policy.

Communication Committee: The Communications Committee works closely with staff to build and direct strategic communications plans that support our mission. The Communications Committee's objective is to raise the profile of The Conservation Alliance among member companies, outdoor customers, and the conservation community.

Advocacy Committee: The Advocacy Committee directs The Conservation Alliance's efforts to engage in advocacy efforts in support of the projects the organization funds. The Advocacy Committee sets annual goals for advocacy efforts based on where The Conservation Alliance engagement stands to have the greatest impact on conservation campaigns. The Advocacy Committee works with staff to organize the annual board education session in Washington, DC.

THE OPPORTUNITY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Alliance-*a relationship based on an affinity in interests, nature, or qualities. An association to further the common interests of the membership.*

Thirty years ago, The Conservation Alliance founders recognized their responsibility to invest in the protection of our public lands, waters, and wild places. As brands that benefit from our national inheritance of public lands, they believed deeply in the power of collective giving, and created a model to provide funding to grassroots organizations working to protect and restore extraordinary places for their habitat and recreation value. The Conservation Alliance's advocacy and communications work complements our core grantmaking function, and directs our unique business voice to support issues and campaigns that we've funded. We are looking for our next organizational leader who can continue to advance our mission and programs, increase our impact, grow our membership, and support our dedicated board and staff.

We cannot imagine a more critical role in a more critical time. In the past two years, we've seen both direct assaults on our protected public lands, such as the Trump Administration's attack on National Monuments – and some striking victories in protecting wild places, notably the recent public lands package that passed Congress with bipartisan support. In complicated times like these, we need an Executive Director whose vision, presence, courage, commitment, integrity and accountability will build trust amongst all stakeholders, and inspire a sense of hope and possibility in the outdoor industry, today and into the future.

As a member-driven organization, building relationships amongst all stakeholders will be critical for the incoming Executive Director. We seek a proven leader with the ability to effectively communicate at every level from Pinnacle Members to foundations, while engaging and influencing key decision makers throughout our government, and on both sides of the political aisle.

In many ways, the table has been set. John Sterling, the outgoing executive director, did a fantastic job building the membership and fostering trust in the organization through strategic grantmaking and effective advocacy. As a result, the Alliance has become a relational vs. transactional organization. The next Executive Director will inherit a passionate membership, strong staff, and a committed Board of Directors who will all support the mission going forward. We have grown incrementally and wisely rather than attempting to scale aggressively without a solid foundation. Our next leader will benefit from our highly competent staff, which is wholeheartedly committed to supporting and partnering with the Executive Director in the key areas of grantmaking and advocacy.

We seek a strong and strategic visionary who can nurture and expand the hard won public and brand trust The Conservation Alliance created. Opportunities remain in realizing the full power and potential of corporate philanthropy and advocacy in the outdoor industry. And there is much room to grow and deepen key membership benefits like direct advocacy, communications, and deep brand connection to like-minded consumers. The Conservation Alliance helps members create a strong cultural commitment to conservation values within their companies, and member employees share a sense of pride and commitment related to their Conservation Alliance membership. We expect our next Executive Director to have a deep respect and understanding of the history of the conservation movement and the outdoor industry.

This year, our board and staff, with feedback from members and stakeholders, has embarked on a visioning process in which the new Executive Director will participate. This process will take a close look at our mission, while also addressing a number of core and recurring strategic questions, including: potential growth in related channels (craft brewing and natural foods for example), staff development, and our current grantmaking and membership model. At the end of this process, The Conservation Alliance may remain with its current operating model in place, but the new Executive Director will need a willingness to question, examine and challenge preconceived ideas.

Finally, the incoming Executive Director will have access to John Sterling's knowledge base and experience as part of a thorough on-boarding process. Mr. Sterling has graciously extended himself to ensure a smooth transition, and will remain available to the new Executive Director should she/he require insights or introductions.

General Summary

The Conservation Alliance's mission is to engage businesses to fund and partner with organizations to protect wild places for their habitat and recreation values. The Executive Director leads in a manner that supports and guides the organization's mission. The Executive Director, as the key strategic and operational leader, is responsible for overseeing the administration, programs, strategic plan and financial management of the organization. The position reports directly to the Board of Directors (BOD).

Key Responsibilities

The Executive Director works closely with staff and Board of Directors to implement all aspects of grantmaking, membership recruitment and retention, fundraising, advocacy, communications, and outreach. As the organization's strategic and operational leader, the Executive Director is responsible for ensuring sound strategic positioning and the execution of The Conservation Alliance's mission.

Board Management

- Communicate effectively with BOD and provide, in a timely and accurate manner, all information necessary for the BOD to function properly and to make informed decisions.
- Facilitate the work of committees.
- Manage scheduling and content of BOD meetings, in partnership with board chair.
- Manage board composition and succession efforts, in partnership with Governance Committee.
- Represent staff on the board Governance and Finance committees.

Strategic and Annual Planning

- Facilitate BOD and staff in developing three-year Strategic Plans.
- Facilitate BOD and staff in developing annual operating plans that implement the directions of the Strategic Plan.
- Anticipate and align The Conservation Alliance for strategic changes and opportunities.
- Recognize emerging issues and position The Conservation Alliance to effectively respond.

Financial Management

- Oversee all financial matters of The Conservation Alliance.
- Develop and track budgets to align with annual operating plan goals.
- Report budget variance to the Treasurer promptly and plan accordingly.
- Ensure fundraising meets operating needs.

- Manage organization's money market and investment accounts, in partnership with Finance Committee.
- Oversee annual financial audit and IRS 990 filings.

Staff Management

- Foster a culture that attracts, retains, develops and motivates a team of quality, professional staff.
- Manage program staff to ensure effective implementation of grantmaking, advocacy, membership and communications program goals.
- Develop staff performance in a manner consistent with sound human resource practices; conduct annual performance reviews of all staff: ensure regular development dialogs: address performance or team issues in a timely manner.
- Establish and maintain employment and administration policies and procedures for all functions and day to day operations of the organization.
- Review and approve contracts for services as needed.

External Relations and Representation

- Represent The Conservation Alliance at events related to appropriate business and conservation communities.
- Serve as organization's spokesperson for the media.
- Participate in regular meetings of conservation funders.
- Represent The Conservation Alliance with relevant political groups and constituents.
- Speak publicly about The Conservation Alliance and its role in the business and conservation sectors.
- Maintain strong relationships with industry organizations, member companies, grantees and the environmental community.
- Write reports to key supporters and stakeholders about The Conservation Alliance's activities.
- Write blog and eNews posts to communicate activities to members and other stakeholders.

Professional Qualifications

- Transparent and high integrity leadership.
- Personal alignment with and passion for The Conservation Alliance's mission and values.
- Dedication to and experience with principles of equity, inclusion and elevating voices from diverse races, ages, genders, abilities and economic backgrounds.
- Strong understanding of and passion for conservation policy in North America.
- Experience with conservation, and / or environmental grantmaking sectors.
- 5+ years senior management experience.

Compensation

The Executive Director will be compensated with a highly competitive base salary and participate in a strong benefits package including a 401k plan.

The Conservation Alliance welcomes diversity and is committed to creating an inclusive environment for all employees.

For additional information, please contact Mary Robbs, Adam Forest or Deb Mason at:
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