



Organization

The Wildlands Conservancy (TWC) is a private nonprofit public benefit organization dedicated to preserve the beauty and biodiversity of the earth and to provide programs so that children may know the wonder and joy of nature.

Position Summary

The **Conservation Projects Director** is a senior-level team member responsible for leading and managing The Wildlands Conservancy's conservation land acquisition program throughout California and the Western United States. Working under the direction of the Executive Director and in collaboration with the executive team, this position manages complex acquisition projects from initial evaluation through closing, coordinating due diligence, negotiations, funding, legal review, and cross-functional project execution to advance the organization's strategic conservation priorities. This position also collaborates with executive leadership and regional staff to support habitat restoration, species rewilding, land stewardship planning, and long-term land management across the preserve system.

The ideal candidate possesses extensive experience managing complex transactions, strong project management and negotiation skills, strong grant-writing capabilities, and a working knowledge of the natural history and conservation landscapes of the western United States.

Work Structure & Location

This is a hybrid/remote position that may be based anywhere within California or other key western states, provided the candidate has convenient access to a major airport or transportation hub. The position requires a highly autonomous, self-directed professional who is comfortable managing remote workflows and traveling regularly to prospective properties, existing preserves, partner meetings, agency meetings, and TWC headquarters.

This position is supervised by the Executive Director and is supported and collaborates with the executive headquarters team. The successful candidate is expected to independently manage the administrative, organizational, and project management responsibilities for multiple complex projects with minimal supervision.

Key Responsibilities

1. Large-Scale Land Acquisitions Program Management

- **Deal Sourcing & Negotiation:** Initiate contact, build rapport, and manage sensitive, high-stakes negotiations with private landowners, including multi-generational ranching families and corporate entities, to acquire large fee-title private landholdings.
- **Transaction Management & Due Diligence:** Independently oversee and administer all phases of complex real estate transactions across multiple state jurisdictions. Coordinate and manage due diligence activities, including appraisals, Phase I and II environmental site assessments, water and mineral rights evaluations, surveys, title review, and other technical investigations while maintaining project schedules and resolving issues that could affect successful closing.

- **Legal Collaboration:** Serve as the organization's primary internal project manager for outside legal counsel, title companies, escrow officers, consultants, and technical specialists regarding land acquisition. Coordinate the preparation, review, negotiation, and execution of purchase and sale agreements, deeds, title curative documents, escrow instructions, and other transaction documents necessary to complete acquisitions.
- **Internal Collaboration:** Collaborate closely with executive leadership, regional directors, preserve managers, and rewilding staff to evaluate prospective acquisitions, prioritize projects, assess operational and ecological considerations, and support executive and Board decision-making.
- **Strategic Partnership:** Identify, cultivate, and maintain relationships with governmental agencies, nonprofit organizations, tribal partners and sovereign nations, local communities, and other stakeholders to advance acquisition opportunities, strengthen regional partnerships, and position newly acquired properties for long-term conservation success.
- **Donor Relationships:** In collaboration with the Philanthropy and Marketing team, work to develop support for land acquisition and rewilding projects with donors, partners, volunteers, and other supporters.

2. Grant Writing & Capital Coordination

- **Proposal & Grant Writing:** Collaborate with the Philanthropy team in writing compelling, highly technical, and persuasive grant proposals to secure multi-million dollar funding awards from state, federal, and local public agencies and private philanthropic foundations for land acquisition, land management planning, and initial stewardship activities.
- **Transaction Project Management:** Manage all due diligence items to support state funding processes.
- **Marketing and Communications:** Collaborate with TWC Marketing and Communications Team to develop materials and narratives to promote land protection projects to engage public and donor interest.
- **Capital Stack Alignment:** Develop and coordinate acquisition and other funding strategies, ensuring alignment of the project's capital stack, including public grants, private philanthropy, organizational contributions, financing mechanisms, and long-term stewardship funding. Turn complex funding streams into cohesive closing timelines. Ensure meticulous compliance and reporting for all secured capital.

3. Rewilding & Ecological Stewardship

- **Cross-Functional Coordination:** Collaborate with the Rewilding team, Philanthropy and Development, Marketing and Communications, and regional staff to support grant applications, project narratives, agency coordination, and public communications that advance rewilding and large-scale habitat restoration initiatives on newly acquired and existing Preserves.
- **Future Planning and Visioning:** Partner with the Rewilding team and regional staff to establish early land-management goals and long-term stewardship objectives for newly acquired properties, with an emphasis on species rewilding, ecological restoration, and landscape resilience.

4. Cross-Organizational Permitting Support

- **Regulatory Guidance:** Provide occasional technical assistance, advisory reviews, and problem-solving support to regional staff navigating environmental permitting and compliance frameworks (such as CEQA/NEPA, Clean Water Act 404/401, or state-specific fish and wildlife codes) across the organization.

Qualifications & Experience

Required:

- **Professional Background:** A strong background in **project management, real estate, and/or law** (e.g., real estate broker, transactions specialist, or non-practicing attorney) with a documented history of closing complex, multi-party land transactions.
- **Experience:** 5+ years of experience working directly in real estate acquisitions, land banking, a conservation land trust, or related transactional fields.
- **Grant Writing Excellence:** Proven track record of drafting successful, high-value grant proposals or complex public and private funding applications.
- **Natural History Knowledge:** A foundational baseline of natural history, regional ecology, or environmental science. The Director must be able to "speak the language" of the land, understanding landscape connectivity, wildlife corridors, and watershed health when evaluating parcels.
- **Remote Competency:** Proven ability to work productively from a home office, utilizing digital mapping (GIS), transaction tracking software, and remote collaborative tools effectively.

Preferred:

- Advanced degree in applicable subject fields.
- Familiarity with public lands policies, conservation funding mechanisms, and/or real estate laws across California and the broader Western U.S.
- Prior experience blending real estate mechanics with active habitat restoration or forestry management.

Key Competencies & Working Conditions

- **Individual Contribution & Influence:** Highly collaborative style; thrives in a matrix style organizational structure supporting distributed organizational leadership, working collaboratively across regions without utilizing direct authority over regional staff.
- **Mission Alignment:** A passion for open space and wilderness preservation, ecological restoration, and the core belief that access to nature is a fundamental human birthright.
- **Travel:** Regular travel across the West to conduct physical site assessments of remote, rugged landscapes, inspect boundaries, and meet landowners in person.
- Ability to operate a motor vehicle, a valid Driver's License, and the ability to be insured under Wildlands' auto insurance policy per the Driver Acceptability Standards. Pass a Live Scan criminal history background check and drug screen.

Classification | Compensation | Benefit Package

- **Classification:** Full-time, Exempt (Administrative).
- **Location:** Remote with required travel to other locations nationwide.
- **Compensation:** Starting pay of \$85,000 to \$95,000 commensurate with experience. Salary range for the position is \$85,000 to \$110,000.
- **Travel Expenses:** A company credit card is provided for business travel, with per diem when applicable. Personal vehicle use is reimbursed at the IRS mileage rate.
- **Benefits:** Full-time benefits include medical, dental, vision, 401(k), Flexible Spending Account (FSA), voluntary life & AD&D insurance, Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and paid time off (vacation, sick leave, bereavement, jury duty, and holidays).

The Wildlands Conservancy is an Equal Opportunity Employer; all positions are at-will.

HOW TO APPLY

To be considered for this position, email your cover letter expressing why you make the ideal candidate, along with your resume, to jobs@wildlandsconservancy.org.