



Position Title: Executive Director

Status: Full-time

Position Supervisor: Board of Directors

Location: Asheville, North Carolina

Compensation: Competitive compensation and benefits package for non-profits of similar size

ABOUT SOUTHERN APPALACHIAN WILDERNESS STEWARDS (SAWS)

SAWS is a conservation non-profit dedicated to providing stewardship on public lands in the Southern Appalachian region, including in more than 60 wilderness areas on 9 national forests across Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Virginia, West Virginia, and Kentucky.

Founded in 2010, SAWS serves as a resource for federal agencies, especially the U.S. Forest Service, supplementing existing stewardship efforts and providing partner capacity and support. SAWS is also a member of the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps (21CSC), providing paid work experience for youth and veterans to connect to the outdoors and become the next generation of conservation stewards and natural resource managers. In 2018, SAWS generated over 35,000 stewardship hours on public lands, employed 45 full-time and seasonal staff and crew members, and engaged hundreds of volunteers serving in the Southern Appalachians.

MISSION

Educating, cultivating, and empowering an engaged public for the stewardship of protected public lands.

POSITION SUMMARY

SAWS' Executive Director (ED) is an action-oriented and collaborative leader who serves as an ambassador for the programs and initiatives that are at core of SAWS' mission in the protected public lands of Southern Appalachia.

The ED is responsible for building on the organization's stewardship programs, implementing its strategic plan and setting the vision for its future success. To accomplish this, the ED develops and grows the organization's talented team, maintains productive relationships with its Board of Directors, and works closely with the U.S. Forest Service and other SAWS partners. Additionally, the ED strengthens and secures current and new partnerships and is the primary lead on expanding SAWS programming and funding sources.

An effective communicator and external relations expert, the ED is skilled at making connections with SAWS' stakeholders and in expanding the organization's ties with its community in Southern Appalachia, and with state and national audiences.

The ED oversees SAWS' operations and is a skillful financial manager that is driven to exceed the organization's development goals to secure the continued growth and impact of SAWS programs.

Most importantly, motivated by a passion for SAWS' mission, the ED leads with integrity, positivity and a sense of humor.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Leadership

- Articulates the vision and strategic direction to successfully fulfill SAWS' mission and leads and implements its strategic plan in collaboration with its staff and Board of Directors.
- Through a shared leadership model, engages staff and key stakeholders to develop action plans for successful program implementation and expansion. Develops metrics for monitoring, evaluating, and demonstrating the impact and success of SAWS' programming.
- Maintains and develops lasting partnerships by identifying opportunities for collaboration of mutual benefit. Works diligently to engage with diverse and underrepresented communities in SAWS' landscape to understand how SAWS can serve their needs through its programming.
- Regularly engages with SAWS' active Board of Directors and solicits their support in various aspects of non-profit governance, including strategic planning, resource development, financial health, and overall organizational sustainability.

Management

- Promotes an organizational culture that fosters passion for SAWS' mission, collaboration and teamwork, open communication, and a common organizational vision.
- Works with staff and partners to successfully deliver on SAWS' programming, including seasonal stewardship work, Wilderness Rangers, wilderness monitoring, public engagement, training and capacity building, emergency response, volunteer engagement and other stewardship responsibilities in the SAWS' footprint.
- Mentors, coaches and retains SAWS' talented team and provides opportunities for their professional development.
- Provides staff with frequent feedback and conducts regular reviews on key deliverables and job performance, highlighting successes and identifying areas for improvement.

- Develops staffing plans that serve SAWS' mission, strategic plan and operational needs to meet the commitments of current and future programs that ensure SAWS continues to thrive and grow.
- Develops and meets revenue projections on an annual basis and identifies strategies that support progress toward achievement of revenue goals.
- Serves as the organization's lead fiscal manager, closely monitoring financial activities, expenditures and liabilities. Ensures accurate financial reports are distributed to the Board on a consistent basis. Safeguards that SAWS is fiscally sound and works with staff and Board of Directors to prepare and approve budgets. Establishes rigorous accountability standards for grants and budget tracking. Assures compliance with financial management standards and reporting requirements with applicable regulatory agencies.
- Supports active Board engagement in strategic planning, outreach and fundraising. Engages the Board in financial planning, diversification, accounting, and an annual audit.

Fundraising

- Retains current key funding partners and secures new and diverse funding sources to ensure a long-term, sustainable funding base. Fundraising should remain centered on SAWS' mission and strategic plan, with a focus on deeper program capacity in the present landscape, as well as expanding SAWS' programmatic footprint in additional geographies.
- Expands revenue generation and fundraising activities to support existing program operations and future growth through an increase in donors, foundations and members.
- Collaborates with SAWS' development staff on identifying major donors and foundations that support work similar to SAWS' and develops donor cultivation strategies and action plans for implementation by both the ED and the Board of Directors. Engages with SAWS' Stewardship Council.
- Leveraging the successes of SAWS programming, as well as pertinent community events, develops creative fundraising campaigns with the support of staff and the Board of Directors.

Outreach & Communications

- Serves as the lead on telling the SAWS' story to expand public awareness of SAWS' work and value to the community.
- Spearheads external relations with key stakeholders and decision-makers. Leverages external presence to garner new opportunities for both public and private funding sources.

- Develops and implements outreach strategies that support SAWS' mission, program expansion and revenue generation. Provides oversight of all external communications, including social media, to ensure consistency in messaging and adherence to SAWS' values and brand.
- Engages frequently with partners, especially the United States Forest Service, and other protected public lands stakeholders. Additionally, establishes new partnerships and builds relationships with community leaders.
- Attends conferences, accepts speaking engagements, writes articles, contributes to regional and national journals, and engages in other public relations efforts to reach new audiences.
- Monitors developments in public lands policy that affect the mission of SAWS. Communicates and collaborates with partners and key decision-makers to affect positive policy changes.

QUALIFICATIONS

- Bachelor's degree with at least 5 years of senior management experience, or comparable experience
- Proven record of success in organizational leadership and setting and achieving strategic objectives. Experience leading a regional or national organization a plus
- Experience managing, mentoring and coaching staff to develop high-performing teams
- Proven record of developing and managing partnerships, and establishing lasting relationships with key stakeholders
- Financial acumen, with a proven ability to establish and manage budgets and provide financial oversight of organizational operations
- Fundraising experience and a desire to be the key fundraiser for the organization
- Exceptional written and verbal communication skills with an affinity for public speaking
- Proven record of engaging a diverse range of constituents and finding common ground
- Experience communicating and building an organization's story and sharing accomplishments with a wide audience
- Familiarity with public lands policy strongly preferred; willingness to learn a must
- Ability to travel 50% of time within the SAWS landscape and occasionally nationally

QUALITIES

- Creative problem-solving with an innovative approach to organizational development
- Excellent interpersonal skills and multi-cultural sensitivity
- Desire to work with a culturally and politically diverse community
- Affinity for the outdoors and public lands, and an appreciation of the unique experiences they offer the public
- Visionary, diplomatic, and entrepreneurial with a high energy level
- Passion, integrity, and a sense of humor