



Royal River Conservation Trust

Executive Director Royal River Conservation Trust

The board of Royal River Conservation Trust (RRCT) seeks a deeply knowledgeable, inspiring leader to assume the role of executive director. The Royal River Conservation Trust protects the natural, recreational, scenic, agricultural and historic resources of the Royal River region for current and future generations. RRCT works primarily in seven Maine towns and cities in Androscoggin and Cumberland Counties forming the Royal River watershed: Yarmouth, North Yarmouth, Pownal, New Gloucester, Gray, Durham, and Auburn.

Organization Overview

The Royal River Conservation Trust grew out of the Friends of the Royal River and four local land trusts, following decades of advocacy and the scientific work of watershed organizations focused on the river. Since its founding in 1988, RRCT has conserved 6,025 acres of land including RRCT-owned preserves; town-owned preserves supported by RRCT; expansions to state-owned state park and wildlife areas; and dozens of conservation easements including those of working farms.

RRCT's land conservation successes are made possible by the strong working relationships with neighboring and regional land trusts; local municipalities; mission-aligned organizations; and the hundreds of families, businesses, and individuals who share the trust's passion.

In 2022, RRCT released an updated Conservation Plan to guide long-term watershed dialogue while increasing the pace of land conservation. The plan outlines five conservation imperatives:

- **Accelerate expansion & connection of resilient lands.** We target lands that protect, expand, or connect conserved land, large blocks of habitat, or high-quality habitat. Our aim is to keep common species common; give our rare, threatened, and endangered species viable future habitat; and allow new species to successfully migrate to their new climate homes.
- **Elevate & conserve RRCT's four-town hot-spot.** The area where Pownal, Durham, Auburn, and New Gloucester meet has some of the largest remaining habitat in Greater Portland and Southern Maine. It is our best opportunity for leaving future generations open space in the most populated area of Maine.
- **Protect ecological integrity & immersive, natural spaces for respite.** As an organization rooted in "conservation in perpetuity," we must carefully pace the usage of our lands and protect immersive experiences for people and intact areas for plants and animals, managing properties based on the location, best available science, and community needs.
- **Secure welcoming access for all.** Focusing on distributing land conservation more equitably in our watershed and recognizing that Gray, Durham, and Auburn have significantly less conserved land than other towns in our watershed, we seek to bring conservation closer to all people in and around our watershed and to ensure that everyone's experience is welcoming and inclusive.
- **Restore & protect our waters.** We advocate for the reestablishment of a sea-run Royal River. We support our partners in leading the effort and are focused on how we can protect headwaters and stream-side habitat upriver from Yarmouth's two dams.

These high-level strategies guide where RRCT focuses its attention and resources for the benefit of the watershed's plant, animal, and human communities. The next executive director will partner with the board in developing a new strategic plan, a more detailed blueprint for the years ahead that addresses with urgency the challenges of housing development; changing demographics; invasive plants, pests, and pathogens; and climate change.

Apart from the executive director, RRCT's staff includes specialists in stewardship, land acquisition, community planning, and development; and the organization relies on a robust corps of volunteers who serve on Trail Crew and several active committees. Over the past six years, RRCT's contributed income has tripled, nearing \$1 million in 2023. With a skilled and dedicated team and growing community support and awareness, RRCT is well positioned to continue its growth trajectory and deepen its impact.

More information about Royal River Conservation Trust, including links to the 2022 Conservation Plan, the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan, and various maps, reports, and program descriptions, can be found at <https://rrct.org/>.

Role and Responsibilities

The executive director reports directly to the board and bears responsibility for the overall management and strategic direction of the organization. This individual leads RRCT's dedicated team, oversees the day-to-day operations, ensures financial stability, and represents the organization to stakeholders and the broader community. Key responsibilities include:

Leadership and Strategy

- Provide bold leadership and partner with the board in developing long-term strategic plans to advance the mission, increase membership, and fulfill stakeholders' shared vision for the watershed
- Foster a positive and inclusive organizational culture that encourages forward-thinking, collaboration, innovation, and high performance

Operational Management

- Oversee land acquisition and stewardship, program implementation, staff management, and administrative functions
- Develop and standardize operational processes and procedures to enhance efficiency, consistency, and effectiveness across all functions
- Establish and maintain a comprehensive set of policies and procedures to guide organizational activities and decision-making

Financial Management

- Develop and implement long-term financial plans and projections to support strategic initiatives and organizational growth.
- Lead the development of the organization's annual budget in collaboration with key staff and the board's finance committee, and continuously monitor budget performance throughout the fiscal year
- Establish and maintain robust internal controls to safeguard organizational assets and ensure financial integrity
- Promote financial transparency by providing clear and accessible financial information to stakeholders, including annual reports and financial statements and regular reports to the board.
- Oversee fundraising efforts, including grant writing, donor relations, and special events, to secure diverse funding sources sufficient to meet RRCT's long-term goals

Board Relations

- Work closely with the board of directors to support best governance practices, provide regular updates, and implement board policies and directives
- Facilitate board meetings and assist in the recruitment and orientation of new board members and ongoing board education

Community and Public Relations

- Represent RRCT to external stakeholders, including community and municipal leaders, government agencies, media, and the general public

- Build and maintain strong relationships with key partners, including donors, volunteers, community organizations, town government leaders, and other conservation organizations

Compliance and Risk Management

- Ensure compliance with all relevant laws, regulations, and organizational policies
- Manage risk by implementing effective policies and procedures for operational and legal matters

Qualifications

A comprehensive set of skills and abilities is required to lead Royal River Conservation Trust. The successful candidate will be a creative leader and a systems thinker, who understands the complexity of the landscape, the urgency of the work, and what is required over the long term. The board expects that the successful candidate will embrace RRCT's guiding principles and bring to the role:

- A passion for conservation, deep interest in ecology, and appreciation for the unique features of the Royal River region
- Senior-level organizational leadership experience, preferably in the nonprofit sector, and demonstrated capacity to juggle multiple responsibilities, prioritize, balance big-picture thinking and attention to detail
- Financial acumen and experience in financial planning, budgeting, and reporting
- Exceptional verbal and written communication skills, including active listening, and the ability to adapt and engage meaningfully with various constituencies
- Evident charisma and readiness to engage energetically in fundraising and relationship-building
- Experience managing diverse teams, effectively delegating, and developing talent
- A track record of forging strategic partnerships to advance shared interests, leverage collective strengths, fuel robust decision-making, and magnify impact
- Proven experience in building and managing systems of accountability, with specific experience in regulatory compliance and risk management a plus
- Technological proficiency, including ideally familiarity with mapping software
- Integrity, curiosity and humility

An authentic connection to Maine would be advantageous.

Compensation

The compensation package includes a salary of \$85,000-100,000 commensurate with experience. Benefits include a contribution to the employee's health insurance coverage, up to a 3% match on the employee's retirement savings plan, 20 days paid time off and 16 paid holidays. The successful candidate can expect a formal review after six months as well as an annual review.

Nondiscrimination

Royal River Conservation Trust does not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, national origin, ancestry, public assistance, ethnic background, religion, marital status, economic class, age, disability or handicap (mental or physical), sex, creed, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression and any other legally protected characteristics in admission or participation in its programs, services and activities, or in employment. The organization complies with all applicable national, state and local laws pertaining to nondiscrimination and equal opportunity.

To apply

Interested candidates should send a cover letter and resume to Starboard Leadership Consulting at the following address: search4@starboardleadership.com. Paper copies may be sent to Jessica Weiner, Starboard Leadership

Consulting, 84 Harlow St., Bangor, ME 04401, but electronic submissions of material are preferred. No phone inquiries, please.

The application deadline is October 21, 2024, and review of all submissions will begin immediately thereafter.