



Opportunity and Challenge Profile

Search for the Executive Director

Sierra Club

San Francisco, California

Executive Summary

Sierra Club – America’s oldest, largest, and most influential grassroots environmental organization and a leading voice worldwide in the movement to protect the planet – seeks its next Executive Director. The Sierra Club stands at a critical moment in its history. Climate change – the organization’s current highest priority focus – is now broadly recognized as an imminent threat to wild places and to humanity, and there is unprecedented interest across political, social, and economic sectors in taking action to address it. This is a unique opportunity for a passionate and savvy executive to play a pivotal role in transforming the world by leading the transition to clean, sustainable energy sources.

The Sierra Club is simultaneously undergoing its own evolution and adaptation to the dramatic changes that are impacting environmental advocacy. Digital technologies have profoundly changed how citizens take action, communicate with one another, and relate to organizations. Grassroots groups now inform and mobilize their supporters through the Internet, and younger generations are typically found to be more responsive to specific calls to action than to invitations to join organizations as dues-paying members.

In this context, the new Executive Director will be the architect who will gather the Club’s powerful grassroots resources, talented volunteer leadership, and professional staff to transform the Sierra Club as it responds to this highly dynamic landscape. S/he will build upon the Club’s greatest strengths – including its long history and brand as the national leader in preserving wild places and stopping environmental degradation, and its marriage of grassroots leadership with highly capable professional staff. The next Executive Director will guide the Sierra Club in its most important work to date.

For more than 117 years, the Sierra Club has combined grassroots organizing, lobbying, litigation, and public education to win major environmental victories. The Sierra Club was a leader in the establishment of over 250 million acres of national parks, wilderness areas and other protected areas. It was instrumental in the passage and defense of landmark environmental laws such as the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act, and National Environmental Policy Act. Most recently the Sierra Club has focused its power on addressing the global climate change with strategic interventions to transition our economy to clean energy and fuels, protect communities from the effects of climate change, and preserve natural habitats resilience in the face of these changes.

The size and clout of the Sierra Club's activist volunteer base is unparalleled in the environmental movement: an Aspen Institute survey of Congress and key federal officials named the Club the most influential environmental organization in Washington, D.C. With an operating budget of approximately \$85 million, the Sierra Club currently has approximately 1.3 million members and supporters, including more than 70,000 active volunteers in 65 chapters nationwide. Roughly 530 professional staff work in the San Francisco headquarters, a legislative office in Washington D.C., and chapter and field offices across the nation. A 501(c)4 organization, the Club receives support for its lobbying and political work from member dues and other non-exempt sources and is supported in its charitable activities by the 501(c)3 Sierra Club Foundation.

The search profile that follows (along with Appendix I with more organizational detail and Appendix II with the formal job description) was prepared by a six-member Board-appointed Transition Committee and Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm which is assisting the Sierra Club in this recruitment. All inquiries, applications, and nominations should be directed in confidence to the search firm as noted on page 5 of this document.

The Role of Executive Director

The Executive Director is the Sierra Club's highest ranking staff member, responsible for strategic and inspirational leadership as well as overall operational management of the Sierra Club, Inc. and its 530 staff, who are organized in five primary divisions and managed through a senior staff leadership team of eight. The Executive Director reports to a 15-member Board of Directors, itself elected by the Club membership. The Executive Director serves as a key external face of the Club, responsible for nurturing relationships with the non-governmental organization community, government officials, philanthropic agencies, donors, the media, and others. The Executive Director also leads the staff in its strong partnership with the Club's unique and invaluable volunteer cadre.

Key Opportunities and Challenges for the Executive Director

- **Provide Strategic and Visionary Leadership for the Sierra Club**

The new Executive Director will be expected to provide confident, thoughtful, and insightful leadership and guidance to the organization, articulating the distinctive role that the Club will play within the broader environmental movement. This vision, looking over both the short- and the long-term, should build upon the Club's existing core policy initiatives, including the Climate Recovery Partnership, and also encompass innovative new programs and approaches that will be compelling and inspiring to existing members and will engage a new generation of supporters from all backgrounds. S/he will be expected to continue the Club's efforts to build its strategic capacity and strengthen its reach and impact.

- **Leverage, Engage, and Grow the Volunteer Base**

The Sierra Club's volunteer base consists of thousands of passionate activists who dedicate their time and resources to the organization with no expectation of reward or compensation. These individuals represent the heart and soul of the Sierra Club and distinguish it among its peer organizations. It is essential the Executive Director and volunteer leadership of the Club work collaboratively to ensure that this grassroots "army" is nurtured, empowered, well leveraged, and appropriately marshaled. It is a complex challenge, made all the more so by the fact that the profile of the average Sierra Club member is changing and the ways in which a number of members or volunteers choose to participate is also in flux.

Attracting a new generation of members and supporters will be vital for the organization's future. The Sierra Club must creatively and effectively engage its next wave of constituents by developing new, innovative ways to nurture younger activists. It is also essential that the Club increase the diversity of its leaders, members, and supporters, reaching out to a much broader range of socioeconomic, geographic, and ethnic demographics than in the past.

The new Executive Director will be expected to provide a strategic framework for experimenting with and evaluating new avenues for creative communications with and among its current and potential members, activists, and supporters. Leveraging such tools as social networks, e-mail, message boards, on-line communities, and other technologies will be increasingly important in helping to keep volunteers connected, mobilized, and accountable. Strengthening the link between online and on-the-ground activism will be key to achieving the broad activist engagement necessary for successful campaigns.

- **Serve as a Unifying and Decisive Staff Leader**

The Sierra Club relies enormously on its highly dedicated and skilled staff. Roughly one-third of these 530 professionals work from San Francisco, 14% from Washington DC, and the others work from 80 field and chapter offices across the country. In such a dispersed organization, especially one with active volunteers at all levels, it is critical that staff members are well directed and share a common sense of purpose and strategy.

A priority for the Executive Director will be to ensure that the senior staff leadership group (known as the Cabinet) works as a highly effective team in managing the organization as a whole. This requires skillful delegation; consistent internal communication; decisive, transparent decision-making; and setting clear and consistent goals and standards organization-wide. Continuing to attract, retain, and develop the strongest possible staff will be essential.

The Club has begun to implement a model of "outcome-based management," which seeks to empower staff members, as well as volunteers, to track their progress toward clearly defined goals at the individual, team, and organizational levels. The new Executive Director will be expected to continue and extend this effort, helping to break through ingrained and entrenched patterns, supportively pushing people out of their comfort zones, and encouraging greater accountability at all levels.

- **Generate Diversified Funding**

Over the next seven years, the Sierra Club and the Sierra Club Foundation will focus nearly all fundraising on the \$400-500 million Climate Recovery Partnership, a set of six integrated campaigns described in Appendix I. The Partnership launched is quiet leadership phase in January, 2009, and is off to a very strong start. It benefits from the active involvement of Dr. Donald Kennedy, President Emeritus of Stanford University, as Campaign Chair, and it will be the primary focus of Carl Pope's work when he steps down as Executive Director of the Sierra Club. The new Executive Director will also be highly involved with this Campaign through his or her personal efforts and as Chief Executive Officer.

On the 501(c)4 side, funds to support the Sierra Club's lobbying and political activities and the supporting administrative functions are increasingly difficult to raise. This is due to a confluence of factors including but not limited to the economic recession, public perception that environmental activism is less pressing under a "friendly" Federal administration, and the trends related to membership and fundraising mentioned above.

A key challenge for the Executive Director will be to develop and implement a new business model for the Sierra Club that will allow it to sustain and even strengthen its lobbying and political work. This is likely to require streamlined operations, combining the best of online and on-the-ground action, as well as tremendous creativity and resourcefulness in developing new approaches to fundraising and earned revenues. The organization will have to continue to move beyond its traditional dependence on classic annual dues-paying membership funding and expand current efforts and develop new methods to attract large volume donations, possibly drawing on techniques that have proved effective in recent political and other fundraising campaigns, including Web-based efforts. In addition, it will have to focus more deliberately and systematically on defining specific outcomes and concrete investment returns for donors. The Executive Director may also seek new ways to generate 501(c)4 funds through appropriate partnerships with other organizations or corporations, taking great care to safeguard the Club's independence and integrity.

- **Continue to Raise the Profile and Build the Positive Reputation of the Sierra Club**

The Sierra Club has long been at the forefront of the environmental movement, usually ahead of the curve in raising and addressing issues of deep social concern and influencing politics at local, state, and national levels. As a key public spokesperson for the Club, the Executive Director must set a standard by intellectually and emotionally engaging people at all levels – from top policy makers to local constituents – and doing so in a wide range of settings and through various media.

The new Executive Director will lead the Sierra Club in keeping its profile fresh, powerful, effective, dynamic, and nimble. She/he will need to develop or oversee the development of innovative marketing and communications campaigns and themes that will lead more Americans to regard the Club both as a force for stopping activities that might harm the environment and as a source of positive, practical solutions that will have long-term environmental, social, and economic benefits.

Qualifications and Experience

For this unique and important role, the Sierra Club seeks a dynamic, highly credible, unifying leader who is deeply committed to the Club's mission and legacy. The greater and broader a candidate's knowledge of environmental issues, the better. Political savvy and proven advocacy experience are essential. Candidates should bring strengths in both external relations and high level internal management, with an acute ability to balance the two. The Executive Director must be energized and motivated by the prospect of working within the Sierra Club's highly democratic governance structure, and have the flexibility, diplomacy, stamina, and resilience to excel in an environment where diverse interests and opinions are forcefully expressed.

The specific qualifications and experience of an ideal candidate are described in the job description in Appendix II on page 10.

Compensation and Location

Compensation will be competitive and commensurate with the successful candidate's experience. The ED will be based in the Sierra Club headquarters in downtown San Francisco and should expect to travel at least one third of the time.

Inquiries, Nominations, and Applications

Inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed in confidence to:

Sierra Club Search
Isaacson, Miller
649 Mission Street, Suite 500
San Francisco, CA 94105-4128
Phone: 415.655.4900
Fax: 415.655.4905
Sierra@imsearch.com

Applications should include a resume and 1-3 page cover letter. Electronic submissions are strongly preferred.

*The Sierra Club values diversity in race, class, culture, and religion,
and we welcome a diverse pool of candidates in this search.*

More information may be found at: <http://www.sierraclub.org/>

July 10, 2009

Appendix I: About the Sierra Club

In 1892, a group of professors from the University of California at Berkeley and Stanford University helped John Muir and attorney Warren Olney launch an organization modeled after the eastern Appalachian Mountain Club, with a goal “to make the mountains glad.” The Club’s initial goals included establishing Glacier and Mount Rainier national parks and saving California’s coastal redwoods. The legendary John Muir, who served as the organization’s president until his death in 1914, led President Theodore Roosevelt through Yosemite in 1903, and two years later the California legislature ceded Yosemite Valley and Mariposa Grove to the Federal government, upon which it became America’s second national park. In the decades since, the Sierra Club has been at the forefront of every major environmental issue in America.

Since 1992, the Sierra Club has been led by Carl Pope, who has been with the organization for nearly thirty years. During Pope’s tenure as Executive Director, the Club has helped protect over 10 million acres of additional wilderness and national monuments. It has won litigation in the Supreme Court to require the federal government to treat carbon dioxide as a regulated air pollutant, blocked logging in Giant Sequoia National Monument, demanded full protection for wolves and grizzly bears in Yellowstone, and required the elimination of toxic lead in children’s toys. Club volunteers helped collect more than a million comments – the most public comments in history on a single regulatory issue – to protect the remaining roadless areas in America’s National Forests, and led the charge in pressuring the Bush Administration to reverse its position against new rules that would lower the amount of arsenic in America’s drinking water and mercury in our fisheries.

Our Move Beyond Coal Campaign has successfully blocked 100 new pollution-emitting coal plants from being constructed, thereby preventing 400 million tons of carbon dioxide from entering the atmosphere, and is working to stop Mountain Top Removal coal mining in Appalachia. The Sierra Club has also helped hundreds of cities create plans to increase their use of renewable energy and reduce their carbon footprint.

When Congress refused to act on cleaning up cars and promoting renewable energy, we turned to our state lobby network and convinced dozens of states to adopt clean car standards and renewable energy requirements. This tactic was designed to build momentum and force Washington to follow suit and act. We have already seen the adoption of tough new national fuel economy standards for cars and Congress is in the process of debating and adopting a national renewable energy and energy efficiency requirement. Sierra Club Water Sentinels and Hunter and Angler organizers operate in dozens of states.

Our International Program works on such varied issues as climate change in India, global population stabilization and promoting environmentally responsible trade.

The political program established in the 1980s is now a highly effective instrument for promoting pro-environmental candidates at all levels of government and holding them accountable. And Sierra Club has been at the forefront in demanding recognition and redress of environmental injustice with local organizing operations in nine locations.

The Sierra Student Coalition is among the largest and most active environmental youth movements in the country. Our Building Bridges to the Outdoors and Military Families in the Outdoors programs help thousands of children experience the wonders of Nature.

The Sierra Club Today

The Sierra Club mission is to “explore, enjoy, and protect the wild places of the earth; to practice and promote the responsible use of the earth’s ecosystems and resources; to educate and enlist humanity to protect and restore the quality of the natural and human environment; and to use all lawful means to carry out these objectives.”

Currently the Sierra Club’s conservation work is oriented around three major initiatives, each of which is supported by focused campaigns and programs:

- **Smart Energy Solutions:** This initiative calls for a bold shift from reliance on fossil fuels and nuclear power to a safe, clean energy future built on efficiency, renewable fuels, and innovative technologies.
- **America’s Wild Legacy:** This effort focuses on protecting our wildlife and their habitat and preserving our wild and special places.
- **Safe and Healthy Communities:** Through this initiative, the Sierra Club fights pollution of our water and air and toxic threats to communities across America.

Currently, the Sierra Club has approximately 1.3 million members and supporters, a budget of \$85 million, and 530 staff. Members are organized into chapters and local groups defined by geographic location, with dozens of special interest sections, committees, and task forces working to address particular issues. Volunteer leadership teams at the national level provide expertise and strategic guidance to chapter activists. The 15-member Board of Directors is elected by the membership: each year, five directors are elected to three-year terms, and all Club members are eligible to vote. A President (currently Allison Chin) is elected annually by the Board from among its members.

Members of the Sierra Club stay involved with the organization through a variety of methods. All members receive *Sierra* magazine, a bimonthly glossy magazine describing the Club’s activities and spotlighting various environmental issues. Each chapter also publishes a newsletter and/or schedule of activities, as do many local groups. The Club also has a weekly radio show called Sierra Club Radio, and Sierra Club Productions is the organization’s own video production arm. The Sierra Club has a strong online presence, with a web site, multiple blogs and online communities, and an online newsletter. Sierra Club Books publishes books on environmental issues, wilderness photographic essays, nature guides, and other related subjects, as well as Sierra Club Calendars, which feature photographs by well-known nature photographers.

The Sierra Club also operates formal activity-based programs designed to promote awareness and appreciation for the outdoors. The National Outings Program, which dates back to 1901, organizes hundreds of outings every year, mostly between four to ten days in length. Every year, the Sierra Club introduces approximately 12,000 young people to the wonders of nature through outings and service projects, including the Inner City Outings (ICO), which operates in 50 urban areas across the nation. The Sierra Club’s local chapters, groups, and sections also lead thousands of hiking, biking, kayaking, and other trips for members every year, and many of the organization’s activists and leaders first became involved with the Club through these outing activities.

The Climate Recovery Partnership

In February, 2009, the Sierra Club and the Sierra Club Foundation formally launched the Climate Recovery Partnership, a set of campaigns designed to help cut carbon emissions at least 80% by 2050; reduce the nation's dependence on foreign oil; create a clean energy economy; and protect our natural heritage, communities, and country from the consequences of global warming. These conservation campaigns are central to a fundraising campaign that is estimated to require between \$400 and \$500 million over the next seven years; a Campaign Cabinet, led by Donald Kennedy, has been designated to provide intellectual and philanthropic leadership to support these efforts.

The Climate Recovery Partnership consists of six integrated campaigns:

- **The Move Beyond Coal Campaign** aims to stop the construction of new coal plants by educating investors and decision makers about the economic and environmental risks of investing in new coal. Through this initiative, the Sierra Club is working to retire old plants that are the worst contributors to soot and smog pollution and replace them with clean energy solutions, while also working with communities to move away from coal as a primary energy source and to ban mountain top removal coal mining.
- **The Clean Energy Solutions Campaign** focuses on growing a clean energy economy in the U.S. by promoting the adoption of wind, solar, and other safe, clean sources of power. This program aims to promote the development of greener buildings that eliminate global warming emissions, reduce utility bills, and generate renewable energy, and to tie them together through an “energy internet” that links homes to a smart grid powered by clean energy.
- **The Federal and International Climate Campaign** is focused on achieving two primary outcomes: Working to pass federal legislation that curbs U.S. greenhouse gas emissions at least 80% by 2050, puts a price on carbon in order to internalize the cost of climate change into markets and policies, and enhances our use of clean energy sources and creating the domestic conditions needed for the U.S. to lead in negotiating and implementing an international climate treaty sufficient to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to levels called for by climate scientists.
- **The Green Transportation Campaign** has three desired outcomes: 1. Clean and efficient vehicles, i.e. a fleet-wide new vehicle fuel economy average of at least 42 miles per gallon by 2020 and at least 50 mpg by 2025, through a combination of state and federal standards and a shift to vehicle electrification; 2. Lower-carbon fuels, i.e. reducing the carbon content of the fuels used for transportation by 15% below the 2005 level by 2030; 3. Expanded transportation choices and increased reliance on transportation alternatives, i.e. reducing vehicle miles traveled per person by increasing public transit use, fostering compact communities, etc.
- **The Resilient Habitats Campaign** is designed to protect the natural world from the impacts of climate change. Scientists project that up to 40% of species on earth are facing extinction unless steps are taken to cut greenhouse gas emissions and simultaneously build resilience and resistance in native ecosystems. Following the recommendations of leading scientists, this campaign will establish large core protected areas and connecting corridors so that wildlife and native plants can survive and adapt to a changing climate; reduce non-climate stresses such as pesticides and water pollution; and develop and implement land, water and wildlife management plans that will build resilient habitats. This campaign will also promote new climate-smart ecological management of forests, agricultural soils, and wetlands so that

they can absorb huge amounts of long-lived carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and thereby restore and stabilize the climate.

- **The Safeguarding Communities Campaign** seeks to help communities reduce, prepare for and withstand the unavoidable effects of climate change. This campaign is focused on achieving four primary outcomes: 1. Protect coastal communities by restoring and protecting coastal wetlands, dunes, and natural vegetation and mitigating the hazards associated with storm surges and sea level rise; 2. Protect and restore water sources for human communities and natural systems; 3. Convert natural hazard zones (floodplains, coastal marshes) into natural buffer areas; 4. Reduce wildfire hazard to rural communities.

Leadership Transition

Following 17 years of leadership, Carl Pope, the current Executive Director of the Sierra Club, is stepping away from the position to assume a new role as Chairman. This is a staff rather than a governance role (the “President” of the Club, in contrast, is a member of the Board of Directors and is elected annually by that Board). Pope will formally report to the Board but will be guided in his day to day activities by the new Executive Director. The full scope of Pope’s new responsibilities will be formalized after a new Executive Director is appointed and in close consultation with the new leader. It is expected that Pope will serve as an advisor, advocate, and principal fundraiser for the Club and for the Climate Recovery Partnership.

Appendix II: Official Sierra Club Executive Director Job Description

Title: Executive Director

Reports to: Board of Directors

Direct reports: Deputy Executive Director, Conservation Director, Chief Advancement Officer, Chief Financial Executive, Chief Operating and Development Officer, Communications Director

Indirect reports: The Executive Director is indirectly responsible for all Sierra Club staff, with the exception of the Chairman, who reports to the Board of Directors.

Location: San Francisco, California

The Executive Director (ED) is the highest ranking staff member of the Sierra Club, responsible for strategic and inspirational leadership as well as operational management of the Sierra Club, Inc. The ED works in close partnership with the Board and senior volunteer leadership to establish organizational priorities and policies, and is responsible for the organization's growth and development, financial health, and effective delivery of its mission. The ED serves as the key external face of the Club, responsible for nurturing relationships with the non-governmental organization community, government officials, philanthropic agencies, donors, the media, and others. The ED also leads the staff in its strong partnership with the Club's unique and invaluable volunteer cadre.

Major Responsibilities

- *Strategy:* Provide strategic and visionary insight to the full range of the Club's campaigns, initiatives, programs, and activities. Identify key opportunities resulting from the intersection of external events (political, social, economic, demographic, environmental) to develop and strengthen the Club's reach and effectiveness.
- *Leadership:* Continuously build and defend the strength, reputation, and leadership of the Sierra Club. Engage, motivate, and inspire a broad range of internal and external stakeholders around shared vision and mission.
- *Volunteer leadership:* Nurture the volunteer culture of the Sierra Club and champion a mutually respectful and highly effective staff and volunteer partnership. Work with the Board to seek opportunities to strengthen volunteer effectiveness, support, accountability, and leadership.
- *Staff leadership:* Hire, mentor, develop, and manage staff. Continue to build and reinforce a cohesive, dedicated, highly effective senior team.
- *External relations:* Drive effective external communications. Develop and nurture mission-critical relationships with influential donors, business and civic leaders, political figures, and media.
- *Fundraising and fiscal management:* Cultivate and solicit key donors and philanthropies both personally and through effective and comprehensive fund development strategies. Ensure strategic, timely, and prudent financial management of the organization.
- *Organizational vitality:* Promote metrics-based approaches to guide strategic planning, evaluation and improvement to keep the Sierra Club on the forefront of the environmental movement.

Qualifications and Experience

- High ethical values and commitment to diversity.
- At least 10 years in a senior leadership role within a substantial and complex advocacy organization, government agency or for profit corporation/ at least 4 years of which have been in a senior management role.
- Exceptional strategic thinking ability and demonstrated success in the planning and implementation of creative programs.
- Strong knowledge of major environmental issues and related political and societal trends; a passion and commitment to preserving and protecting the environment.
- Exceptional skill and proven success in fundraising including experience with major individual and institutional gift solicitation.
- Strong presentation and communication abilities.
- Proven financial and organizational management skills; track record in the oversight of financial, legal, and business operations. Demonstrated strengths in personnel management.
- A network of strong relationships with national leaders in the environmental, government, and business communities.
- Ability to solicit and synthesize input from a broad range of constituencies. A gift for innovation, facilitation, communication, and decision-making in the context of a highly decentralized organization
- Strong understanding of the impact of evolving communications and information technology on politics, social organizing, and on the organization's strategies.