The Santa Lucia Conservancy is a non-profit organization dedicated to the protection, study, and stewardship of the unique natural resources of the Santa Lucia Preserve. The Santa Lucia Preserve is an ecological preserve of 20,000 acres, 18,000 acres of which are permanently protected and cared for by the Conservancy. The Preserve is forging a new relationship between people and nature, advancing the field of careful living at the wildland interface.

The Conservancy, as a science-based land trust, conducts novel and essential land management, landscape level habitat restoration, and conservation research to support an ecosystem with extraordinary biodiversity. And it does so in partnership with the Preserve community of nearly 300 families and various Preserve operating entities to create a truly unique and sustainable system of conservation and enhancement.

Established in 1995, the Conservancy is dedicated to expanding the art and science of conservation-compatible development through adaptive land management, conservation easement stewardship, ecological research, and environmental education programs. The Conservancy is funded primarily through a permanent endowment that allows it to leverage its staff expertise to promote and advise conservation both on the Preserve and across California’s Central Coast. Through these partnerships the Conservancy is testing and implementing cutting edge conservation management, research and environmental education on the Preserve, which serves as a model and living laboratory. The Preserve’s globally significant biodiversity, and its non-traditional conservation model, positions it to advance and inform conservation and sustainable development well beyond its boundaries.

To learn more about the Santa Lucia Conservancy, visit: [https://slconservancy.org/](https://slconservancy.org/) or view SLC’s recent brochure here.

To learn more about the Santa Lucia Preserve, visit: [https://www.santaluciapreserve.com/](https://www.santaluciapreserve.com/).
ABOUT THE LAND

The Santa Lucia Preserve is located in the Carmel Valley on California’s Central Coast, within one of the world’s greatest biodiversity hotspots. Hidden among mountains, forests, and oak woodlands, the 20,000-acre Preserve sits a few miles from the historic Pacific Coast Highway and a two-hour drive from the San Francisco Bay Area. As you drive into its vast landscape, you are immediately taken by the outstanding biodiversity and history of the landscape, with impressive flora and fauna, and a topography rising from 90 to 3,000 feet above sea level through valleys, flats, ridges and creek beds. The Preserve landscape includes coastal chaparral, grasslands, rolling oak savannas, woodlands, redwood forests, and creeks. The landscape runs east from Monterey Bay through the foothills of the Santa Lucia Range to the rich alluvial soils and warmth of the Salinas Valley.
THE OPPORTUNITY

Position Summary

**Title:** Executive Director (ED)  
**Location:** Carmel Valley, California  
**Reports to:** Board of Governors

The **Santa Lucia Conservancy** seeks an Executive Director (ED) to act as a leader in conservation and community engagement for the vast, ecologically diverse landscape of the Santa Lucia Preserve. This is an opportunity to join a talented and accomplished group of staff and work in partnership with both community members and national conservation leaders to advance a unique, first-of-its-kind model of community-based conservation.

The ED and the Board of Governors – including both Preserve residents and outside experts – work in concert to set the strategic direction of the organization through the periodic development of a strategic framework and annual work plans. The ED is tasked with the overall leadership of the organization in pursuit of the goals and priorities set forth through this process and is accountable to the Board of Governors, primarily through the Board Chair.

The ED serves as the public face of the Conservancy and represents the conservation mission and values of the organization in all endeavors, including individual engagements with Preserve landowners, Preserve-wide initiatives and activities, community collaborations, and external partnerships.

The ED ensures a positive and productive working relationship with the County of Monterey, other regulatory agencies, and regional partners. The ED also works in close partnership with the CEO of the Santa Lucia Preserve and general managers of various Preserve entities. Together, they ensure the coordinated management of the Preserve lands consistent with the successful and sustained implementation of the Preserve’s Comprehensive Development Plan and the health and vitality of the Preserve community.
Key Areas of Responsibility

Specific responsibilities will include, but are not limited to:

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Key Responsibilities

Community Relationships and Engagement

• Communicate and reflect the Conservancy's mission, vision and core values.
• Provide leadership in messaging of Conservancy's work with stewardship, easement protection and research priorities and communicating the importance of ecological and conservation values and the unique Preserve model for conservation.
• Position the Conservancy as a fundamental partner for Preserve landowners, and Preserve entities including supporting fuel management, wildlife management, habitat restoration, and conservation-related activities on private lands within the Preserve.
• Lead the staff in building and sustaining relationships with landowners as partners in the Preserve model of land conservation.
• Represent the Conservancy to a variety of audiences, including Preserve landowners and staff, government agencies and officials, community leaders, and other partners.
• Ensure landowners, prospective buyers, real estate professionals, architects, contractors and other key stakeholders have access to information and understanding relating to the Conservancy’s role and values, obligations related to Conservation Easements and other key resources.
• Engage and inspire Preserve landowners and other stakeholders in the development of conservation plans that guide infrastructure development, improvements, and management to minimize adverse impacts on the Preserve’s Protected Values.
• Oversee and contribute to outreach plans, strategies, and materials. Manage professional communication consultants and coordinate with Preserve marketing and communications teams.
Key Responsibilities

**Staff Leadership**

- Lead a team of accomplished conservation professionals, administrative staff, and volunteers in achieving short and long-term objectives.
- Recruit, train, motivate, and evaluate direct report staff and supervise hiring of all Conservancy staff.
- Ensure professional development opportunities for staff to increase their effectiveness and currency in their respective fields.
- Foster commitment to the Conservancy’s mission and vision.
- Lead, guide, and direct the organization through positive engagement and leading by example to support a productive working environment. Support and demonstrate an understanding of ecological, scientific, and conservation policy to the staff and Board.
- Oversee staff in the development of multi-year and annual work plans including benchmarks and measures of success; assess and report on progress.
- Assist staff in effectively building and nurturing relationships with Board members, landowners, Preserve staff, agency partners, and other key stakeholders.
- Ensure that the organization advances its mission consistent with its values, fiduciary obligations and the strategic direction set by the Board.
- Maintain currency in conservation, non-profit management, and leadership expertise.
Key Responsibilities

Conservation Leadership

• Develop sound resource management policies for approval by the Board.
• Supervise the development and implementation of resource conservation plans and priorities that sustain biodiversity and abate threats to the Preserve’s Protected Values.
• Ensure protection of the Conservancy’s conservation easements (“Openlands”) and fee lands (“Wildlands”), address issues collaboratively in coordination with landowners and Preserve senior managers as a preferred approach, pursue compliance actions when needed, in coordination with the Board.
• Ensure Conservancy compliance with the Preserve’s Conditions of Approval and the Resources Management Plan as required in the Combined Development Permit issued by Monterey County.
• Ensure Conservancy compliance with the Board-adopted Land Trust Alliance “Standards and Practices.” Work towards full accreditation by the Land Trust Alliance.
• Ensure strategies and protocols are in place to abate known threats to the Preserve’s Protected Values and people, including wildfire, trespass, emerging pathogens and invasive species.
• Build, support and oversee productive working relationships between Conservancy staff and the County of Monterey, state and federal resource agencies, and other regional, national, and international conservation partners essential to the success of the Santa Lucia Preserve.
• Help identify resources including grants, research agreements, and regional partnerships to sustain and improve the ecological health of the Preserve’s Protected Values.
Key Responsibilities

Organizational Management and Financial Responsibility

- Develop annual budgets with the support of the Director of Business Operations and other senior staff. Provide oversight of the fiscal operations of the Conservancy with the Treasurer and Finance Committee of the Board.
- Support responsible oversight of budget tracking, grant management, non-profit reporting and cost controls.
- Oversee cash flow and coordinate endowment distributions.
- With the Finance Committee, monitor endowment performance and coordinate as needed the contracted fund manager to ensure compliance with the endowment policy and to provide Board reports.
- Support organizational compliance with internal policies and procedures, as well as applicable legal requirements and financial standards, including the requirements of non-profit tax status, Supporting Organization status and Land Trust Alliance membership.
- Oversee outside contractors as appropriate and monitor their performance.
Key Responsibilities

Partnership with Board of Governors

• Assist the Board in setting the organization’s strategic direction through the development, implementation, and periodic review of a strategic framework and conservation plan.
• Serve as primary staff liaison to the Board of Governors, including assisting the preparation of materials for meetings, supporting committees, and assisting with special projects.
• Support the Board in the identification and cultivation of future Board members.
• Support the Board in its ongoing efforts to assess, sustain and, when needed, improve governance and organizational effectiveness.
CANDIDATE PROFILE

The ideal candidate will have the following qualities, skills, and characteristics:

**Relationship Builder and Collaborator**

Critical to success in this role is that the Executive Director will be skilled at building and sustaining excellent relationships across the Santa Lucia Conservancy and Preserve. The ED will be a natural diplomat with a demonstrated ability to connect, find shared value and build bridges with a diversity of stakeholders. The ED will be open-minded, allowing for the building of consensus and shared approaches to conservation across the Conservancy landscape. A tactful and approachable leader, the ED will enhance the Santa Lucia Conservancy and Preserve’s culture of stewardship and community and will be a proactive communicator with the ability to lead through influence.

**An Expert in Conservation**

The Executive Director will have a love of the outdoors and demonstrated experience leading conservation organizations, with a specific focus on active land management. The Conservancy’s next leader will have an understanding of natural history, land stewardship, and management of conservation easements. This position requires an open-minded attitude and creative thinking that supports the innovative conservation approaches of the Conservancy’s staff and Board members. The ED will bring a strong commitment to and passion for the Conservancy’s model of a conservation community woven into a managed natural landscape and will be eager to contribute their knowledge in order to refine and advance this model.
CANDIDATE PROFILE

Supportive and Trusted Leader

The ED will bring strong leadership attributes and a collaborative approach to team management. Candidates should have experience in developing strong teams and a thoughtful approach to managing employee morale. The ideal candidate will have experience working in a dynamic environment and will bring flexibility, resilience, and the ability to adapt to change and lead by example. At the same time, they should bring a level of professionalism and leadership to the staff, providing clear, consistent and achievable goals and support. The ED will bring a positive energy and good humor that engenders enthusiasm and collaboration. They will bring experience as a senior leader where they have managed goals, reviewed staff performance, and overseen budgets to ensure smooth operations and sustainable growth.
CONTACT

Kara Teising and Libby Cornelssen of Koya Leadership Partners have been exclusively retained to lead this search. To express your interest in this role please submit your materials here. All inquiries and discussions will be considered strictly confidential.

At Koya, we don’t just accept difference – we celebrate it, support it, and thrive on it for the benefit of our team, our clients, and the communities we serve. Koya is an equal opportunity employer fully committed to creating an environment and team that represents a variety of backgrounds, perspectives, styles, and experiences.

We encourage all to apply because we believe a diversity of voices leads to better discussions, decisions, and outcomes for everyone.

The Santa Lucia Conservancy is an equal opportunity employer.

About Koya Leadership Partners

Koya Leadership Partners, a member of the Diversified Search Group, is a leading executive search and strategic advising firm dedicated to connecting exceptionally talented people with mission-driven clients. Our founding philosophy—The Right Person in the Right Place Can Change the World—guides our work as we partner with nonprofits & NGOs, institutions of higher education, responsible businesses, and social enterprises in local communities and around the world.

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For more information about Koya Leadership Partners, visit www.koyapartners.com.