POSITION PROFILE

Executive Director
Alaska Wilderness League | Alaska Wilderness League Action
Flexible; Washington, DC preferred
ABOUT THE ALASKA WILDERNESS LEAGUE

Alaska is a national and international treasure, with towering mountain peaks and glaciers, old-growth forests, pristine tundra, rivers, wetlands and barrier islands. It is home to distinct and abundant fish and wildlife, including vast herds of free-roaming caribou, unparalleled wild salmon runs, and millions of birds that nest in the state before migrating to continents throughout the world. Currently, there are more than 225 million acres of federal lands in Alaska — including 17 national park units, 16 national wildlife refuges and 48 designated Wilderness areas.

It’s here that you can find the two largest national forests in the entire country – the Tongass National Forest in southeast Alaska, and the Chugach National Forest in south-central Alaska. America’s Arctic, located in northern Alaska entirely above the Arctic Circle, is home to three of the nation’s greatest wild treasures: the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska, and America’s Arctic Ocean – the Beaufort and Chukchi Seas.

Its people further enhance Alaska’s richness in wildlife and landscapes: Eighteen percent of Alaska’s population is American Indian or Alaska Native, representing 11 distinct cultures and 22 different language dialects. Combined, they make up the highest proportion of this community of any state in the union.

Regrettably, Alaska and its people face the greatest threats in centuries. Over the past 60 years, Alaska has warmed more than twice as fast as the rest of the United States. Average annual temperatures have increased by three degrees Fahrenheit and average winter temperatures by six degrees Fahrenheit. Alaskans are already seeing earlier spring snowmelt, widespread glacier retreat, drier landscapes, and more insect outbreaks and wildfires because of climate change. Arctic summer sea ice is receding faster than previously projected and is expected to virtually disappear before mid-century. There is now only about half as much sea ice in the month of September as at the beginning of the satellite records in 1979 for that month.

The Alaska Wilderness League (AWL) is the only national conservation group devoted full-time to protecting Alaska’s public lands and waters. For nearly three decades AWL has worked to protect millions of acres of some of the wildest and most iconic landscapes left on the planet. Throughout that time, AWL has been committed to standing in solidarity with Alaska Native communities while fighting to prevent exploitation of these precious lands and safeguarding the wildlife that live on them.
With 15 talented staff, a committed Board of Directors and Leadership Council, and $5.5 million in revenue for FY ‘20, AWL and affiliate AWLA are leaders in protecting the future of Alaska’s climate and environment. AWL is a national organization with more than 100,000 members and supporters across the country, and the world, with offices in Washington, DC and Anchorage. The organization’s mission is to advocate for the protection of Alaska’s national treasures among federal decision-makers. AWL works closely with key partners on a shared vision to protect Alaska’s wildest places for generations to come.

AWL stands with, serves and supports the many people and organizations who believe in a future for Alaska that is free from unsustainable extractive industries and the harm they cause to communities, wildlife and landscapes. The organization honors and respects the cultures of Alaska Natives whose way of life is deeply connected to the land. AWL’s vision is that Alaska’s long-term economic future and subsistence traditions are inexorably tied to the health and sound stewardship of its natural resources. These resources support hunting, fishing, tourism and unrivaled outdoor experiences that are central to Alaskans’ quality of life.

LEARN MORE: alaskawild.org
ABOUT THE ALASKA WILDERNESS LEAGUE

AWL is especially committed to:

Environmental Justice

Alaska Wilderness League’s commitment to confronting activities that cause environmental harm is rooted in justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion. A foundation of AWL’s work is standing with and supporting Alaska Native and Indigenous peoples who, for generations, have lived on and protected the lands that AWL works to conserve. AWL is committed to amplifying their voices and uplifting their history, values and experiences while bringing attention to the disproportionate impact they face at the hands of extractive industries.

Bringing People Together to Tell the Story of Alaska Protection

The League has a foundational belief that Alaska protection campaigns are most effective through community-wide, national, and local collaboration. The League has the strategic expertise and experience to bring together organizations, people, and resources to support of broader coalition efforts for protection, emphasizing partnership with frontline advocates and communities, national field organizing, earned & paid media, and direct advocacy. AWL aims to provide backbone support for campaigns, and works collaboratively to elevate Alaska’s lands and waters with political leaders and key decision-makers.
ABOUT THE ALASKA WILDERNESS LEAGUE

Key to the work is connecting to and supporting local, state, regional, and national groups that care about Alaska conservation, as well as AWL’s more than 100,000 activists, using on-line tools, technology, trainings, and other resources. Further, given the organization’s role in the broader conservation community based in Washington, DC, as well as its presence in Anchorage, AWL is uniquely positioned to serve as a vital bridge between state-based conservation, tribal interests, decision-makers, and nationally based partners. This includes elevating key Alaskan voices in the federal advocacy arena and national coalitions and serving as the eyes and ears in Washington, DC for Alaska-based partners.

Making All of Alaska’s Public Lands and Waters Part of the Climate Solution

Alaska Wilderness League believes Alaska’s public lands and waters are an indispensable part of a broader set of conservation solutions. AWL acknowledges that the severity of the climate crisis will require rapid and far-reaching transitions of current policies that go beyond AWL’s scope of influence. AWL works collaboratively with stakeholders, political leaders, and others to elevate the importance of protecting lands and waters and to pursue measurable and transformational policies toward addressing the climate crisis.

Overwhelmingly, the experience of Alaskans and the vast collection of scientific evidence confirm that Alaska is on the front lines of climate change. AWL fights for policies that help identify and mitigate climate-caused damage in the Alaskan Arctic through direct advocacy and by bringing national attention to the harms this damage does to communities, wildlife, and landscapes.

Securing a Just Economic Transition for Alaskans

Alaska Wilderness League recognizes Alaska’s unique economic reliance on oil and gas revenues, and is committed to a just economic transition for Alaska Natives and all other Alaskan communities. However, acknowledging that we do not have all the answers, AWL believes that early and inclusive dialogue, planning and action will be far better for the state than ignoring difficult issues. Therefore, as the transition to new energy sources accelerates, AWL will advocate for ensuring that economic and environmental solutions that address climate change also support Alaska’s hardest-hit workers and overall economy.

Respecting Science and Incorporating Traditional Knowledge of Alaskans

Alaska Wilderness League is committed to problem-solving guided by both science and the knowledge of Native and local people through experience, observation, and cultural traditions. AWL aims to help bridge the gap between the two as policies are considered or implemented in Washington, DC.
AWL launched the Alaska Wilderness League Action (AWLA) in 2004. AWLA is an affiliate 501(c)(4) organization that engages in legislative and political advocacy to protect Alaska’s wild places. It aims to create opportunities to ensure the long-term protections for Alaska’s lands and waters by raising the profile of Alaska conservation across the country and developing tools to hold decision-makers accountable.

LEARN MORE:
alaskawildaction.org
THE OPPORTUNITY

Alaska Wilderness League is seeking a visionary, action-oriented and collaborative leader to serve as the organization’s next Executive Director. They will also act as the Executive Director for the Alaska Wilderness League Action, the 501(c)(4).

This is an opportunity to elevate issues of national importance regarding the preservation and conservation of Alaska’s public lands. AWL’s next Executive Director will represent the organization’s position on emerging policy conversations while advocating for key protection efforts that safeguard Alaska’s most treasured places. This leader will partner with other environmental organizations and work with Alaska Native communities to champion Alaska’s public lands and waters on a national stage. Specifically, they will be a central figure in refining and advancing the goals and mission of the organization in its next chapter. Further, they will prioritize diversifying and expanding the League’s donor base, to ensure the resources needed for a strong fiscal future.

Now is a key moment to cement AWL’s efforts on conservation and leverage proactive opportunities with a new Presidential Administration. Additionally, AWL is looking to chart new priorities that center environmental justice alongside the need to protect America’s public lands from the harms of climate change.

AWL seeks a fresh, innovative, and adaptable leader who can build authentic and deeply rooted relationships with communities in Alaska; and who can develop strong partnerships with groups everywhere whose values align with environmental justice and the conservation of Alaska’s public lands. Ultimately, this leader will inspire a national movement and be a tireless advocate for the conservation of Alaska’s wilderness before decision-makers locally, nationally and within the halls of Congress.

Reporting to the Board of Directors, the Executive Director will have overall strategic and operational responsibility for the Alaska Wilderness League staff, programs, budget, and execution of its mission.
CANDIDATE PROFILE

For this unique role, the organization is seeking a candidate who has the following professional and personal competencies, qualities, skills and attributes:

Leadership and Purpose

- A champion of land conservation who proactively advances AWL’s commitment to justice, equity, diversity and inclusion.
- An action-forward manager who can communicate skillfully and inspire a shared purpose and vision among staff, board, stakeholders, Alaska Natives and communities of color, partner organization and decision makers.
- An experienced organizer with a strong sense for conceptualizing and operationalizing strategies that are grounded and measurable, while driving operational excellence and productivity, and streamlining efficiencies.
- An authentic and self-aware individual who can build relationships and bridge partnerships while relentlessly pursuing opportunities that will strengthen the impact of the Alaska Wilderness League.
CANDIDATE PROFILE

Proven Fundraising Skills and Financial Acumen

- A financially astute director with a proven fundraising history and who can build a comprehensive development infrastructure that expands and diversifies incoming revenue sources.

- A sharp and incisive advisor who can lead staff to create, cultivate and implement fundraising plans that involve cross-functional departments like marketing, development and programs.

- A skilled communicator who can message AWL’s case statement to different audience types, including individual donors, foundations, and private interests.

- A clear thinker who can monitor controls of fiscal operations, interpret financial statements and reports, and effectively engage with board members and the finance committee on said operations.
CANDIDATE PROFILE

Passion for Alaska, Its Land, and Its People

- A politically skilled and knowledgeable professional with a working familiarity of Alaska’s complex political context and history.
- A curious person who values and respects the traditional cultures of Alaska Natives and uses a humble, listening-first approach to building relationships with local leaders.
- An ethical leader who is passionate about conserving treasured landscapes and who embodies and upholds AWL’s commitment to ensuring that the most remote and wildest places are protected for generations to come.
- A trailblazer with strong political acumen who has working knowledge and experience in the legislative process and lobbying; and has a base-level understanding of how (c)(4) political campaigns function.

Skilled at Organizational Development, Strategic Planning and Team Building

- An innovative and adaptable groundbreaker with an intuitive understanding of how the pursuit of justice, equity, diversity and inclusion can connect and propel organizational goals.
- A strategic thinker who can actualize strategic plans through the management of the organization, its people, and its programs.
- A team builder who can identify, recruit, build and manage talent who can AWL’s evolving organization culture.
- A forward-leaning mentor who effectively builds the leadership of others and prioritizes staff empowerment by building up staff learning, giving and receiving feedback as part of AWL’s DNA.

Compassionate and Trusted Institutional Leader

- An empathic listener who understands how groups work and has a sense for inspiring and motivating staff, stakeholders, partners, donors, and board members to act.
- An experienced manager in organizing geographically dispersed staff with an understanding of the systems and communication style needed to guide transparently and efficiently.
- A knowledgeable practitioner of best practices in Board governance and Board recruitment; a trusted partner to the Board of Directors, who is skilled at serving as a key conduit between Board and staff.
- An approachable individual who can serve as a trustworthy manager who can guide through change and growth.
COMPENSATION

The annual base salary for this role will start at $175,000 commensurate with experience. AWL also offers a competitive benefits package. Regardless of location, the selected candidate will be expected to travel frequently.
CONTACT

Koya Partners, the executive search firm that specializes in mission-driven search, has been exclusively retained for this engagement. Kara Teising and Libby Cornelssen are leading this search. To make recommendations or to express interest in the role please visit this link. All nominations, inquiries, and discussions will be considered strictly confidential.

Alaska Wilderness League is an equal opportunity employer and will not discriminate against any employee or applicant based on race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, age, sex, handicap, pregnancy, sexual orientation, or gender identity. Alaska Wilderness League is continually seeking to diversify its staff, particularly to broaden opportunities for individuals from demographic groups that are historically underrepresented in environmental advocacy.

About Koya Partners

Koya Partners, a part 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.

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.

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