



## JOB DESCRIPTION

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

HYBRID, BUT MUST RESIDE IN SACRAMENTO OR THE BAY AREA  
OFFICES IN SACRAMENTO, CA

### COOK SILVERMAN SEARCH

336 Bon Air Center, Suite 300  
Greenbrae, CA 94904

[www.cooksilverman.com](http://www.cooksilverman.com)



## ABOUT CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY (CNPS)

The California Native Plant Society (CNPS, [www.cnps.org](http://www.cnps.org)) is the state's leading voice in conservation, plant science, and native plant appreciation. Founded in 1965, with more than 11,000 members in 35 chapters across California and Baja California Mexico, CNPS's mission is to conserve California native plants and their natural habitats, and increase understanding, appreciation, and horticultural use of native plants. CNPS achieves this mission through nine programs: Conservation, Biodiversity, Rare Plant, Vegetation, Development, Education and Engagement, Horticulture, Operations, and Public Affairs.

The CNPS organizational structure consists of local chapters and their members, a Chapter Council, a Board of Directors, Executive Director, staff, and Program Committees. The Chapter Council is composed of a delegate representing each chapter. The Chapter Council elects the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors and Chapter Council collaborate on important projects with joint committees composed of representatives from both bodies.

For more information, please visit [www.cnps.org/](http://www.cnps.org/)

## POSITION OVERVIEW

CNPS is seeking an innovative and strategic thinker, who is passionate about conservation, to serve as the organization's Executive Director (ED) and as a leader in California's conservation community.

Reporting to the Board of Directors, the Executive Director (ED) serves as the lead executive of the organization, responsible for operating CNPS in alignment with the organization's strategic goals, vision, and values. The ED will directly manage seven Program Directors (Senior Operations Director, Senior Director of Public Affairs, Development Director, Conservation Director, Director of Biodiversity Initiatives, Rare Plant Director, and Vegetation Director), and lead a growing staff of more than fifty (50) full-time employees and 1,500 volunteers in 35 chapters statewide. In collaboration with staff, the ED will:

- Plan, budget, and fundraise for CNPS projects, programs, and operations
- Lead, support, and manage staff
- Cultivate partnerships and build coalitions
- Promote CNPS projects and programs broadly

The ED will establish and maintain a highly collaborative approach to management and program development that emphasizes cooperation, communication, delegation, transparency, and mutual trust.

## ARE YOU:

- a strong leader who is scientifically knowledgeable and comfortably articulate?
- someone who has a passion for managing large, multi-faceted, complex, and growing organizations with a diverse staff and a very strong volunteer base?
- someone who has proven experience with government and conservation advocacy work?
- a diplomatic leader who supports senior staff, but does not micromanage?
- an outstanding spokesperson/figure head for an organization?
- a thoughtful, inclusive leader that embodies diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) values and practices in everything you do?
- a collaborative decision maker who can help set strategy for the future?

## REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS

The Executive Director reports to the Board of Directors and oversees a staff of more than fifty and a statewide volunteer corps with more than 1,500 volunteers in 35 chapters.

## PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Leads, collaborates with, and supports Program Directors in advancing the CNPS mission by implementing programs, developing new projects and programs, and operating the organization.
- Works effectively with the Board of Directors and Chapter Council, serving as a professional advisor to the Board and assisting the Board and Chapter Council and their committees.
- Maintains effective relationships between staff, chapters, and members, ensuring chapter concerns are reflected in organizational planning and implementation.

- Advances diversity throughout CNPS's culture, structures, policies, and operations and serves as a leader in advancing equity, access, and inclusion in the California conservation space.
- Works closely with the Senior Director of Public Affairs to promote CNPS in the conservation community through direct involvement and public relations, including personal contact, descriptive program literature, and work with the media.
- Establishes and maintains positive working relationships and collaborative arrangements with donors, grantors, funders, government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and other partners.
- In partnership with the Development Director, expands CNPS's base of supporters through membership development, grant and contract solicitation, and donor cultivation.
- Works closely with the Senior Director of Operations to ensure the fiscal stability and long-term viability of CNPS, and the effective and efficient management of the organization's financial resources.

## QUALIFICATIONS

- Ten years or more of executive or senior leadership experience, including experience managing remote teams
- Experience creating a shared vision that inspires and motivates others, and implementing pathways to achieve that vision
- Experience with nonprofit fundraising, including cultivating individual and institutional donor relationships, and soliciting major gifts
- Engaging, authentic, and thoughtful leadership style that welcomes input from colleagues
- Demonstrated understanding of and training and experience within diversity, inclusion, equity, and justice
- Strong supervision and project management skills, including demonstrated ability to successfully address complicated issues with diplomacy and resilience
- Experience working in or with an organization that collaborates with public agencies
- Genuine, diplomatic, supportive, calm, humble, kind, courageous, charismatic, and inclusive leader
- Financial acumen to develop, track, and manage a \$10 million budget that includes general and restricted funds, government contracts, and long and short-term investments
- Excellent communication skills including the ability to be a compelling voice for the CNPS mission, vision, and values in ways that are both accessible and engaging to individuals and large audiences
- At least seven years' experience with California conservation challenges and opportunities and familiarity with local organizations and government agencies working on these issues
- Bachelor's degree in biology, ecology, natural resource management, environmental planning, or a related field; or equivalent experience
- Passion for the mission of the California Native Plant Society

## Preferred Qualifications

While CNPS recognizes that not every individual will exhibit all these characteristics, the successful candidate will possess at least one – and ideally more than one – of the following:

- Prior experience working with a nonprofit board and demonstrable understanding of board governance, and decision-making.
- Experience with nonprofit organization development, with a track record of establishing strong and effective teams as well as developing operational infrastructure to support a growing organization.
- Fluency in Spanish or other languages spoken in California.
- Knowledge of CNPS and familiarity with native plants and plant communities and their ecology throughout California.
- A graduate degree in biology, ecology, natural resource management, environmental planning, or a related field.

## Physical requirements

This job requires prolonged sitting, use of computer and mouse, and ability to participate in field trips including traveling off trail in sites with variable grade. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

## Additional information

- Work requires regular travel throughout California. Work travel is reimbursed.
- Work schedule is generally eight hours a day, Monday to Friday. Flexible schedules are possible.
- Evening and weekend work may be required to meet deadlines or to participate in meetings and activities.
- A valid driver's license is required.
- This is a California-based position.

## DEIJ STATEMENT

CNPS's policy is to afford equal employment opportunity to all persons, regardless of age, ancestry, color, disability, gender, gender expression, gender identity, marital status, medical condition, military or veteran status, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation. This policy demonstrates CNPS's commitment to creating a diverse and inclusive environment that values different perspectives and fosters belonging. To better understand the demographic profile of applicants, CNPS requests candidates to fill out the volunteer questionnaire that is part of the application form. Your responses will remain confidential, anonymous, and not shared with the hiring committee.

#### SALARY OR SALARY RANGE/BENEFITS

In keeping with our commitment to equity and equal pay for all, Cook Silverman Search posts salary ranges on all job descriptions.

This is a full-time exempt position with a base salary range of \$141,067-\$152,019, with additional bonuses, and possible relocation packages. CNPS provides a comprehensive benefits package:

- Annual paid leave benefits with 13 holidays, 12 sick days, and 15 paid vacation days to start
- 100% of employee premiums for health, life, dental, and vision insurance
- 401K retirement plan with up to 6% matching contributions
- Home office, internet/phone, and field gear stipends.

#### TO APPLY

To apply for this position, or for additional information on the opportunity, please send a copy of your resume with a cover letter to Victoria Silverman at [apply@cooksilverman.com](mailto:apply@cooksilverman.com).

All applications and inquiries will receive a response and be kept strictly confidential.