



Director of Land Acquisition (Full-time)
Indian River Land Trust
Vero Beach, FL
FLSA Exempt: Yes

Organizational Overview: The mission of the Indian River Land Trust (IRLT) is to protect, improve, provide access to, and promote the preservation of waterways, open spaces, and green places in Indian River County for the benefit of all today and tomorrow.

First established in 1990 to save McKee Botanical Garden, in 2009 the Indian River Land Trust began working to Protect the Land that Protects the Lagoon. The Land Trust continues to promote the conservation of the Indian River Lagoon and areas throughout Indian River County by preserving habitat, protecting the scenic waterfront and providing access for public recreation and education. Protected land provides important public benefits including the opportunity for residents to learn about and enjoy the natural environment and take advantage of our protected lands and waterways to enjoy hiking, boating, fishing, and observing an abundance of fish and wildlife.

Job Description: The Director of Land Acquisition is a new, full-time position created to increase the rate of conservation within Indian River County with a focus on strategic conservation of priority lands to be identified in IRLT's Strategic Conservation Plan (2023). Under the guidance of the Executive Director, the Director of Land Acquisition supports the permanent protection of the County's high-value natural resources, including important waterways, wildlife habitat, lands critical for ecological services, public drinking water resources and lands important for public access.

The Director of Land Acquisition will work collaboratively with other non-profits and county, state and federal agencies to develop effective working relationships and conservation projects with private landowners, partner organizations, and government agencies/towns. The Director of Land Acquisition proactively contacts landowners within priority areas of the IRLT Strategic Conservation Plan, builds and maintains relationships with community partners, responds to land acquisition inquiries, and prepares local, state and federal grants and foundation proposals. The Director of Land Acquisition negotiates land acquisition and conservation easement projects using a full range of conservation tools and coordinates the land acquisition process, grant administration, conservation easement drafting (as applicable), due diligence and closing of these projects.

Responsibilities

Land Acquisition

- Manages existing and new conservation transactions from start to finish, including coordination with partner agencies, field evaluations, project assessments, legal counsel, coordination with partners to hold the legal interest, and landowner negotiations.

- Develops effective working relationships with private landowners and negotiates gifts or purchases of land and conservation easements.
- Responds to and conducts preliminary evaluations of potential conservation projects.
- Contacts and cultivates targeted landowners within priority focus areas through mailings, phone calls, programs, and other means.
- Establishes and manages project budgets.
- Drafts conservation easements to meet requirements of landowner, funding partner, and easement holder.
- Manages work and contracts for outside services with surveyors, appraisers, lawyers, and governmental officials.
- Writes, manages, and administers grants for selected conservation projects from a variety of local, state, and federal funding programs, and private foundations.

Community Relations

- Attends meetings of the County's Environmental Land Program Panel and related County Commission meetings.
- As may be needed, represents IRLT at public meetings.
- Works cooperatively with communities, government agencies, and other stakeholders to achieve shared goals.
- Participates in or leads outreach events and field trips related to land acquisition projects.

General and Administrative

- Maintains records consistent with IRLT's internal policies, practices, and activities.
- Participates in the review/updating of policies and procedures to ensure consistency with applicable Land Trust Alliance Standards and Practices.
- Participates in organization-wide events (such as Annual Benefit, Annual Membership event, & Conservator's Reception) and IRLT committees as assigned.
- Completes other tasks as may be assigned to support the organization's mission.

Qualifications

IRLT seeks the best candidate for the job. We encourage you to apply, even if you don't believe you meet every one of our described qualifications. We are looking for applicants with the following:

- Bachelor's degree and two years of experience, or Master's degree in natural resources (wildlife, ecology, forestry, conservation biology, environmental/land use planning, land use law or related fields).
- Minimum of five years of experience negotiating and managing conservation easements, fee simple land acquisitions, other land conservation techniques, or similar real estate transactions.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills and careful attention to detail.
- Flexibility in approach to problems and/or changing expectations
- Ability to manage multiple projects that require varying processes and requirements of collaborating partners and governmental agencies.
- Good judgment, awareness, independent initiative, sensitivity to situations, and a mature and friendly manner are critical.
- Empathetic and observant listener able to work with a wide range of personalities and opinions to reach a common goal.

- Ability to remain calm during difficult negotiations and to be patient yet persistent.
- Demonstrated initiative; committed to making things happen.
- Ability to interpret and understand legal documents, maps, survey plans, natural resource inventories, and other related materials.
- Proficient with Microsoft Office suite.
- Familiarity using ArcGIS and related mapping tools.

Physical and Other Requirements:

This position requires an ability to sit, stand, walk, bend, lift, reach up, stoop, and carry items occasionally. It also requires manual dexterity to operate standard office machines, such as copier, scanner, calculator, telephone, and other equipment as necessary. IRLT expects its employees to follow proper safety standards. Candidates must possess a Florida driver's license and have access to personal vehicle for regular travel to and from IRLT events and meetings. This position will require occasional work on evenings and weekends.

Compensation and Application Deadline:

Base salary up to \$85,000 based upon experience and achievements.

IRLT offers a comprehensive benefits package including:

- Competitive Health and Disability Insurance Package
- Paid time off, including vacation and paid holidays
- Matching 401(K) Plan with up to a 6% organization contribution

The Indian River Land Trust is an equal opportunity employer and will not allow discrimination based upon age, ethnicity, gender, national origin, disability, race, size, religion, or any other status prohibited by law.

Interested applicants should submit cover letter and resume to Ken Grudens, Executive Director, at kgrudens@irlt.org. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until filled. All applications will be received confidentially.