



LEADERSHIP PROFILE



Executive Director Freshwater Land Trust Birmingham, AL

“The Freshwater Land Trust conserves, connects, and cares for land and water in Central Alabama, creating dynamic green spaces for future generations”.

– Freshwater Land Trust mission statement

THE OPPORTUNITY



In the simplest terms, the Freshwater Land Trust conserves land and build trails so that communities in an eight-county region in Birmingham and Central Alabama are healthier and happier. As Birmingham’s profile grows and its renaissance as a city continues to evolve, FLT is playing a material role in helping to build a multi-faceted city,

serving as a leader in conservation and a developer of venues in nature for community gathering and enjoyment. Both the organization and the city are at exciting inflection points, and FLT is positioned to be an increasingly important part of Birmingham’s efforts to create a uniquely livable community that achieves the right balance of conservation and commerce.

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Finding leaders that matter for missions that matter. ®

Working in tandem with a committed board, a generous community and progressive civic leadership, this role will build on the successful work of two previous executive directors and lead the organization to even greater visibility, impact and sustainability.



To reach its aspirations, FLT seeks a leader who is authentically excited about conservation and who can recognize and fully realize the spectrum of immediate and long-term opportunities for the eight-county region served by the Land Trust. The Executive Director will bring the presence, gravitas and charisma required to represent the organization in a manner that compels financial and philanthropic support, a desire to explore and forge new partnerships and established credibility as a leader (ideally within the conservation sector).

[The Kiwanis Vulcan Trail: \(Click to visit see a video about the project\)](#)

Fundamentally, this individual will bring a passion for conservation and related or tangential professional experience in managing an initiative of similar complexity and scope; key mandates for the Executive Director include:

1. Expanding the physical footprint and reach of the organization
2. Helping find the appropriate balance of economic and mission-related priorities for the land trust
3. Growing the profile and awareness of the organization locally, regionally and nationally
4. Building strong partnerships between FLT and the community

THE ORGANIZATION

Founded in 1996, The Freshwater Land Trust conserves and cares for land in an eight-county region in Central Alabama with a focus on conservation projects that enhance water quality in our rivers and streams. With a budget of ~ 700k and land assets under its control of more than 36M,





the FLT works in tandem with landowners with an openness to conservation as well as businesses and civic and community groups to make sure that land is permanently protected and will benefit the community and the environment for future generations.

Several species of animals are the beneficiaries of FLT's targeted approach to land preservation and conservation, and with Alabama holding the distinction as the fifth most biologically diverse state in the United States, attention to protecting a broad and diverse spectrum of wildlife is a key priority for the Land Trust. Several watersheds protected by FLT have served as habitats for unique animal species; representative examples ([found here](#)) include:

The Locust Fork River Watershed: Home to the largest undammed river in Alabama, this watershed serves as home to 74 known species of fish (12 of which are endangered) and six species of mussels.

The Turkey Creek Watershed: This habitat serves as a haven for three critically endangered and endemic fish species (the vermilion, watercress and rush darters) and also harbors the endangered flattened musk turtle. Of note, this watershed is the only location in the world where the Vermillion and Rush Darters can be found.

The Cahaba Watershed: This river and region is unique among North American waterways - serving as home to the greatest number of fish species of any waterway on the continent. It is also the habitat for eight endangered species of mussels and the largest remaining population of the shoals spider lily.

In addition to the significant role FLT plays in preserving rare fauna and flora, it has also shepherded the development of the [Red Rock Trail System](#) – a network of more than 100 miles of trails in Jefferson County that follow waterways in Birmingham. These trails are the beginning of a bold and innovative plan to connect the region through a network of 750 miles of pathways; the Red Rock System will serve as both a window into the county's unique ecology and a foot and bike trail that will provide alternative transportation pathways and promote active and healthy lifestyles.



The trail system is also having a meaningful impact on the community - already attracting new residents and businesses that will help sustain future economic growth. Further, the Red Rock Trail System has been incorporated into the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham's long-range transportation improvement plan - making the initiative eligible for federal grants to help promote healthier approaches to transportation and improve air quality.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES



The Executive Director will be a passionate advocate for conservation and an engaged and visible leader and community partner. The individual will bring both strong management acumen and a demonstrated ability to build the organization's future through engaged philanthropy. The new leader will also possess an eagerness and the requisite stamina to pursue complex, multi-dimensional real estate projects to their successful conclusion. Further, the new leader will direct and support a talented and committed staff and help the organization achieve its aspirations around both conservation and community.

More specifically, the Executive Director will:

1. Cultivate and secure the financial resources necessary to ensure the sustainability and success of the organization; the individual will lead and manage the organization with an acute sense of balancing both its conservation mission and its fiscal health.
2. Bring a passion for the mission of FLT and actively inspire others about conservation. The Executive Director will meet people where they are regarding conversation and help promote a comprehensive understanding of the benefits of the Land Trust's leadership in preserving land and habitats for generations to come.
3. Serve as a dynamic public face of the organization - overseeing and promoting relationships with a broad spectrum of stakeholders (including the business, government and conservation communities - a relatively unique set of aligned constituencies in the sector). Ideally, the Executive Director will bring an established reputation in





Birmingham and among the conservation community in the region that will help grow FLT’s organizational visibility, awareness and reputation on a local and national level.

4. Support, equip and empower a talented staff and board to maximize organizational capacity. This individual will lead the organization with maturity and grace and provide opportunities for FLT staff members to develop and grow.
5. Work closely with the board, staff and community to advance the vision for programmatic growth and organizational excellence per FLT’s 2018-2022 strategic plan.

THE RELATIONSHIPS

Reports to	FLT Board of Directors
Direct Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation Programs Director • Operations Director • Red Rock Trail System Director • Stewardship Director • Communications Director • Development Coordinator
Has other key relationships including:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local, regional and national conservation partners • Philanthropic leaders, donors and supporters • Business leaders, corporations, public officials and key community partners in Birmingham and Central Alabama • Birmingham Business Association, Alabama Chamber of Commerce • Adjacent nonprofits similarly focused on the environment, wellness and/or community development • The broad conservation stakeholder community throughout Central Alabama and the Southeast

THE CANDIDATE

Assets being sought in the Executive Director include:

- An authentic passion for conservation
- Experience in and familiarity with fundraising
- A high level of personal and professional credibility

- Courage and tenacity in approaching new projects and real estate opportunities
- Effectiveness as a charismatic and dynamic spokesperson for the organization; excellent oral and written communication skills and a high level of emotional intelligence
- Diplomacy and maturity in interfacing with stakeholders, community leaders and the FLT staff and board
- Demonstrated ability to build and cultivate relationships
- Experience in balancing a multi-dimensional agenda among a broad set of stakeholders
- Familiarity with interfacing with a nonprofit board
- A basic understanding of real estate and how easements work
- Facility and comfort with forecasting, budgeting and overseeing organizational finances
- Experience in building and leading a staff and promoting a strong organizational culture

THE LOCATION

With more than one million residents, greater Birmingham is the state's largest metro area and experiencing a renaissance of commerce and culture. Sometimes referred to as the Cradle of the American



Civil Rights Movement, the city is also home to the [Birmingham Museum of Art](#), the [Alabama Symphony](#), the [Birmingham Zoo](#), the [McWane Science Center](#) and the [Alabama Jazz Hall of Fame and Museum](#).

Widely known for leadership in medical research, banking and finance and biotechnology, the area is home to six major academic institutions, two major auto manufacturing plants, the [Southeastern Conference](#) and the [Birmingham Barons](#), the Chicago White Sox's minor league affiliate.

The city boasts more green space per capita than any other U.S. city, and its residents are proud of its local farms and gardens, which have helped Birmingham become known as a true city for food lovers and garner two recent James Beard awards. The area has received substantial publicity, including features in the [New York Times](#), [Forbes](#) and [National Geographic](#) magazine.

For more information, go to www.birminghamal.org or www.birminghamal.gov.

For potential consideration or to suggest a prospect, please email
FLT@BoardWalkConsulting.com
or call Paula Nicholas at 404-420-5851 or John Sparrow at 404-262-7392
