



**SIERRA  
CLUB**

## LEADERSHIP PROFILE

**Executive Director  
Sierra Club**

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"Climate change is urgent. It intersects with other crises.  
We must work together, centering justice and equity.  
**Sierra Club exists for this challenge."**

—Ramón Cruz, President, Sierra Club

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# The Compelling Opportunity

**Sierra Club has played a critical leadership role in virtually every major environmental victory over the past 130 years.** America's most influential and enduring grassroots environmental organization empowers over three million members and supporters, 7,000 volunteer leaders, over 800 staff, and many partners to take action, and to win against powerful adversaries, on behalf of humanity and the planet.

**Together with partners and allies, Sierra Club has fostered the largest, most effective environmental movement the world has ever seen.** Recent [accomplishments](#) include forcing the closure of 356 coal-fired plants, cancellation of the Keystone XL pipeline, defeat of the Millennium Coal Terminal, establishing and protecting national monuments including Bear Ears, electing climate champions up and down the ballot, aiding confirmation of the first Native American cabinet secretary and first female African-American Supreme Court Justice, and achieving suspension of new oil and gas leases in the Arctic Region. Each year, Sierra Club outings get 200,000 people out in nature.

**Sierra Club brings unparalleled capabilities to the fight against climate change,** to advance federal, state and local lobbying, advocacy and legal action, grassroots organizing, national campaigns, public education, outings and partnerships. With annual revenues of \$160 million, Sierra Club has 64 Chapters spanning all 50 states, Washington, DC and Puerto Rico. No other environmental organization has the breadth, depth and expertise of Sierra Club.

**The new Executive Director (ED) will engage Sierra Club's full talent, capacities and heart at a time of profound transformation and promise.**



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The ED will lead Sierra Club to accomplish bold, necessary changes that center justice, equity and inclusion, and to fully engage its unique capacities, in order to reverse the climate and biodiversity crises.

**Significant transformation is underway at Sierra Club.** As can be expected with major change processes involving an organization with more than a century of history and thousands of leaders, some reforms are controversial. There are differing perspectives about Sierra Club’s founder and legacy, actions to address harms to volunteers and staff, and structural reforms connecting Chapters and National and modernizing the organization.

**This is also a time of immense progress and promise.** The Board of Directors adopted [Core Values](#) and a new 2030 strategic framework, [Powerful Together](#), in December 2021. These have earned wide acceptance and provided a roadmap to a promising future. An 18-month Structural Assessment is providing guidance for evolving and unifying Chapter/National structures. All are at initial stages of implementation.

**The strategic framework sets out broad plans** to achieve transformative protection of land and water, broaden equitable access to nature, replace fossil fuels with clean energy, expand and diversify the movement, and advance the Sierra Club mission. The framework recognizes the intersectionality of the climate and biodiversity crises with democracy, systemic racism and economic oppression.

**The majority of Board members, staff and volunteers believe this direction is right,** and the organization has a bright, impactful future. Volunteers and staff alike believe in the power and necessity of transforming and uniting as “one Sierra Club,” collaborating and living into its full capacities, potential and mission.

# Mandate for the Executive Director

**The new Executive Director (ED) will be a strategic, confident and humble leader of Sierra Club at this time of transformation and promise.**

The ED will bring leadership and management experience in complex, transformative contexts, including experience with dispersed organizations and engaged volunteers. The ED will have a dedication to justice combined with expertise and passion for environmental issues, gained through movement building and proven leadership, ideally in the climate and/or environmental justice movements.

The ED will embody and be a spokesperson for the Sierra Club core values and 2030 strategic framework. The ED will be a builder of trust, shared purpose and unity, collaborative teams, passion for mission, and a strong, sustainable future. Sierra Club values diversity in race, class, culture and religion, and welcomes a diverse pool of candidates.

The ED will:

- 1. Be a trusted, strategic leader of the whole organization.** With an open, transparent approach, the ED will embrace all facets of Sierra Club's dispersed constituency—including staff and volunteers at the National, Chapter and Group levels, as well as members and partners. The ED will be an inclusive, motivating leader, able to crystallize and clarify vision, values and purpose, make strategic decisions, establish priorities, and communicate in ways that resonate and engage people across the organization. The ED will be a trusted advisor to the Board, improving cohesion among Board leaders and fostering clear decision-making.
- 2. Embrace and unlock the full potential of Sierra Club.** The ED will inspire and unite



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volunteers and staff around the 2030 Strategic Framework, core values and ongoing change processes. The ED will help Sierra Club define its role and its voice in the greater movement for progress. They will embrace Sierra Club's broad, tremendous range of talent and capacities, across the Chapters, National offices and grassroots entities. The ED will lead and empower the organization to leverage its full potential, power and impact.

**3. Be a great leader of leaders.** The ED will be skillful at empowering and developing trusted, capable leaders and teams. With current and new leaders, the ED will build an effective organizational structure and a cohesive team. The ED will be comfortable with distributed and matrixed leadership, and with delegating and sharing power across and beyond senior staff. The ED will champion bottoms-up ideas and innovation, personal growth and organizational transformation. The ED will strongly support, and delegate, much of the work of internal transformation. The ED will foster collaborative, transparent processes and decision making, ensuring all needed voices are included and instilling trust around strategic choices.

**4. Be a compelling fundraiser and external representative.** The ED will be a dynamic, credible and visible Sierra Club leader and fundraiser. The ED will connect with donors of all kinds, partnering with National and Chapter team members and volunteers on strong, diverse, and values-driven fundraising in order to deliver resources across all parts of the organization. Sierra Club is a member-based organization, and building and developing a strong base calls for work to develop leaders and effective strategies. With movement colleagues, legislative leaders, donors and partners, the ED will be an inspiring communicator, storyteller and ambassador. They will model equitable partnering and



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The ED will select, empower and develop trusted, capable leaders, create an effective organizational structure and build a cohesive team.

collaboration, and will help ensure Sierra Club remains a core partner of choice for climate and environmental justice allies, governmental agencies, national advocacy organizations and community leaders.

- 5. Position Sierra Club for a high-impact, sustainable future.** The ED will embrace and support Sierra Club's transformation. The ED will help Sierra Club move forward in strong and sustainable ways, through strategy, organizing, financial and nonprofit savvy, effective risk management, and advancing commitment to the core values and equity transformation. The ED will have knowledge of marketing, brand building, technology and digital strategies, and will seek to raise Sierra Club profile and awareness. The ED will relish working across the whole organization, strengthening culture and capacity at Chapter and National levels, expanding grassroots power and influence, and building operational strength and resources for the long haul.

## Personal Characteristics and Assets

The ideal candidate aligns with Sierra Club core values, is inspired by the 2030 strategic framework and goals, and can articulate a vision for transformation that unites all of the constituencies to be powerful together. The ED will engage effectively with the Board, staff and stakeholders, and be someone with whom others enjoy partnering. Passion for the mission, and extensive relevant experience, are essential. Personal characteristics will include:

- Integrity, self-awareness, self-confidence *and* humility
- Authentic lived values that center justice, equity and inclusion
- Conflict mediation and resolution skills
- An energetic and energizing persona



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The organization is working for a world where every person can exercise the right to clean air, fresh water, public access to nature and a stable climate.

- Relationship building, listening skills and emotional intelligence
- Proven ability to collaborate, build cohesive teams and positive culture
- People management: hiring, developing, delegating and empowering
- Change management expertise
- Organizational development
- Communication, advocacy and persuasion skills
- Record of valuing others' ideas and contributions
- Resilience and adaptability
- Able to stay calm, centered and thoughtful under pressure
- Enthusiasm for working with leaders and donors at all levels

## The Organization

**Founded in 1892, Sierra Club is now an organization with over \$160 million in annual resources.** There are over 800 employees with three Unions, 64 Chapters spanning all 50 states, Puerto Rico and Washington, DC, and over three million members and supporters. The organization is working for a world where every person can exercise the right to clean air, fresh water, public access to nature and a stable climate.

Sierra Club is a 501-c-4 nonprofit advocacy organization with a 15-member governing Board of Directors that is elected by the general membership. Board members serve three-year terms. Five directors are elected each year in April. Sierra Club's President and other officers (Vice President for Conservation, Vice President for Chapters, Groups and Volunteers, Treasurer and Secretary) are elected by the Board each May for one-year terms. As a grassroots organization,

Sierra Club’s work is shaped by more than seven thousand volunteer leaders who participate through Chapters, groups, and national entities.

Sierra Club works closely with the Sierra Club Foundation, a separate, independent 501-c-3 with a 14-member Board of Directors. The Foundation supports the charitable and educational work of the Sierra Club and other grantees through fundraising and assets under management of \$250 million. The Sierra Club President has a seat on the Foundation Board.

Sierra Club is committed to achieving a just, equitable, and sustainable future built on a foundation of environmental, racial, economic and gender justice—where all people benefit from a healthy thriving planet and a direct connection to nature. We must create a world where humans respect their interconnectedness to the living environment and treat each other, the earth, and all species with humility, care and respect.

Organizational [Core Values](#) are anti-racism, balance, collaboration, justice, and transformation. With its large, geographically dispersed staff, volunteers and members, Sierra Club has long been [a force for environmental victories and other progress](#). Its unifying strategic framework, [Powerful Together](#), establishes 2030 goals and the premise that a healthy climate depends on a foundation of racial, economic and gender justice. Intersectionality spans across sustainability, economic, democracy and racial equity issues.

Following are the major themes and goals of Powerful Together:

- 1. Protect our ecosystem.** By 2030: Protect 30% of U.S. lands and water.
- 2. Ensure outdoors for all.** By 2030: Cut the nature equity gap by half, ensuring an additional 50 million people can exercise their human right to connect with the outdoors.
- 3. Act for Justice.** By 2030: Restore clean air and water, provide affordable clean energy, support



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To explore, enjoy and protect the planet. To practice and promote the responsible use of the earth’s ecosystems and resources; to educate and enlist humanity to protect and restore the quality of the natural and human environment; and to use all lawful means to carry out those objectives.

-Sierra Club mission





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Sierra Club advocates  
beyond the leading edge of  
what's probable to achieve  
what is possible.

*-Powerful Together*  
strategic plan

family-sustaining jobs, and address inequities in our response to climate disruptions.

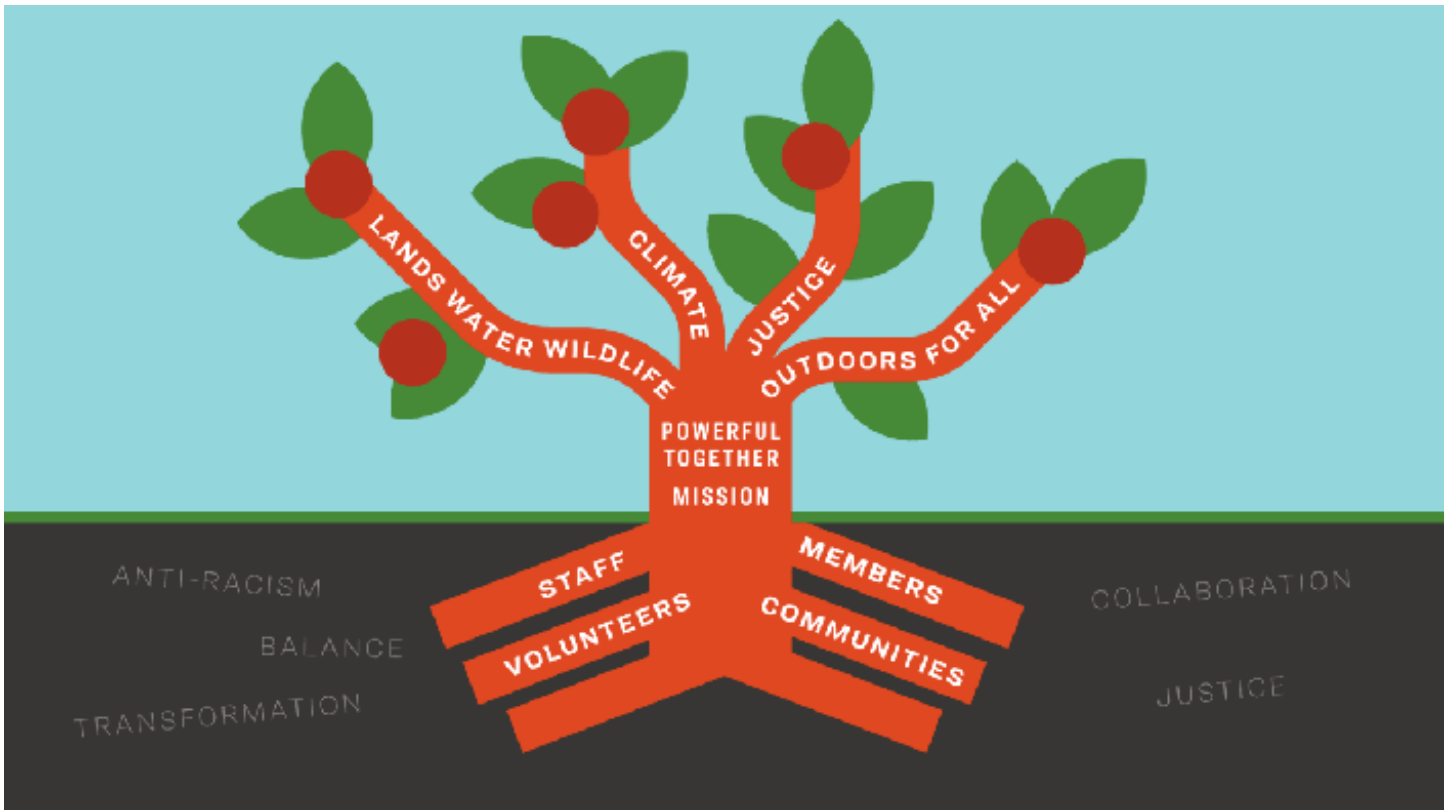
- 4. Transform our energy system.** By 2030: Stop the expansion of the oil and gas industry; achieve 80% carbon pollution-free electricity; shift trillions of public and private dollars from the fossil fuel economy to restore clean air and water, provide affordable clean energy, support good paying jobs, and increase the ability of communities to be resilient to climate disruptions.
- 5. Build a powerful base of support.** Invest in Chapters as our permanent organizing infrastructure and the anchor for a long-term vision and strategy. By 2030: Empower, diversify and expand our base of millions of members and supporters through our Chapters and Groups.

## The Relationships

The ED reports to a 15-member Board of Directors and leads the organization, comprised of over 800 staff, 7,000 volunteer leaders, and 64 Chapters in 50 states, Washington, DC and Puerto Rico. Currently, Sierra Club operates in a matrix management structure across seven national departments, an Executive office and a distributed network of Chapters. Chapters work interdependently and trans-locally. They are a hub for Sierra Club long term work. The new ED has the opportunity to implement a more streamlined executive organization.

## The Location

Sierra Club is headquartered in Oakland, CA. The organization has a significant office in Washington, DC, and additional offices at many of the Chapters. The ED can be based in the San Francisco Bay area or another location, with availability to spend substantial time at headquarters and in Washington, DC. Travel will be a meaningful part of the role.



“We can—and we must—create a world where everyone can exercise their human right to have clean air, fresh water, public access to nature and a stable climate.”

–Dan Chu, Acting Executive Director, Sierra Club

**Sierra Club values diversity in race, class, culture and religion, and we are seeking a diverse pool of candidates.**

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For potential consideration or to suggest a prospective candidate for the Executive Director position, please email

**[SierraClub@BoardWalkConsulting.com](mailto:SierraClub@BoardWalkConsulting.com)**

or call **Kathy Bremer, Diane Westmore, Lysondra Somerville**

or **Crystal Stephens** at 404-262-7392.

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For the status of this and other searches, please visit **[www.BoardWalkConsulting.com](http://www.BoardWalkConsulting.com)**.