



LEADERSHIP PROFILE

**President and CEO
Trust for Public Land**

San Francisco, CA

"Connecting everyone to the outdoors."™

A Compelling Opportunity

Trust for Public Land (TPL) is a powerful, unique national nonprofit dedicated to connecting everyone to the joys and benefits of the outdoors.

For over 50 years, TPL has been a driving force to connect communities with nature and advance equity and access to public lands, parks, trails, and schoolyards. TPL's mission is to create parks and protect land for people, ensuring healthy, livable communities for generations to come. Its comprehensive approach profoundly impacts the people it serves and offers solutions to some of our biggest challenges, such as climate change, health, and equity.

TPL believes access to the outdoors is a fundamental human need and essential to health and well-being.

TPL is committed to creating more places that bring people outside, making outdoor spaces available and welcoming to everyone everywhere, from urban to rural communities. The outdoors contributes to mental and physical health, makes communities more resilient to flooding, severe heat, and the effects of the climate crisis, and contributes to social cohesion within communities.

Yet, there is a significant outdoor equity gap in America. One hundred million people, including 28 million children, do not have access to a park within a 10-minute walk from home. TPL's data shows that parks located in communities of color are half the size of parks in predominantly white neighborhoods and serve five times more people per acre. Parks serving low-income households are four times smaller and yet serve four times more people per acre than parks serving high-income household.

TPL is at the forefront of a nationwide movement to bridge the outdoor equity gap.

It is not just creating parks but transforming communities. One of its flagship programs,



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[10-minute walk](#), is empowering cities to expand access and green space for everyone. 69% of TPL’s work historically has served communities of color, and 60% serves communities in the bottom quartile of income.

The work of TPL doesn’t just change landscapes; it changes lives. TPL’s work is centered around community, with a deep commitment to equity and addressing the needs of underserved and vulnerable populations. TPL puts communities first by helping them realize their vision for equitable access to nature’s healing power.

TPL’s work is more than just creating parks and green spaces. It fosters collaboration and builds community. With an annual operating budget of \$100 million, TPL leverages its national expertise in land acquisition, conservation finance, data mapping, policy, and advocacy with impressive local leadership and partners. Annually it leads \$150M-\$200M projects that span the United States. Its work is deeply valued, from making green space accessible in urban areas to protecting land for community access in the most rural areas. TPL is often the leading or unifying party that brings community, public, philanthropic, and private sector parties together to accomplish ambitious and bold initiatives. Collaboration is central to TPL’s values and approach, and TPL is proud to partner with community leaders throughout the life cycle of projects and beyond.

TPL is poised for greater impact and influence. TPL is a committed, substantive, and humble, nonpartisan partner attentive to the needs of the community. Its efforts are rarely known by the multitudes that benefit from its work. The new leader will expand awareness of TPL and deepen support for its work. The CEO will responsibly grow and scale the organization to its next level of excellence.

After six years of impactful leadership, CEO Diane Regas has announced plans to step down this year. The next CEO will inherit a well-staffed, financially sound, strong organization with an impressive and engaged board of directors and an unwavering commitment to ensuring equity and access to the outdoors.

The Organization

TPL is a national nonprofit founded in San Francisco in 1972. Since its inception, it has connected millions of people to the outdoors. The magic of TPL's work is its ability to bring a robust toolset to complex challenges and execute these with strong local leadership, national expertise, a community-centric process, and multi-faceted partnerships to address climate, health, and equity. Through extensive partnerships, TPL has created an impact far beyond the numbers. Its breadth and depth is impressive.

TPL brings unique and broad skills to the projects it leads. TPL advocates for public policy to preserve and protect land access and has an 83% success rate on ballot initiatives. It has helped pass 614 ballot measures and helped create over \$94 billion in voter-approved state and local public funding for parks, land conservation, and protecting communities from climate change. Its best-in-class conservation finance team is on a path to help communities create billions more—expecting to reach \$100 billion.

TPL collects and analyzes data from a wide variety of sources to generate evidence to influence policy and practices. It also has established a ParkScore®, ranking the 100 most populous cities by comparing five park qualities: equity, access, investment, amenities, and acreage. The scoring system has become a source of pride for the cities that score well and an opportunity for those that do not. This work is part of its unique “think and do tank,” the Land and People Lab.



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TPL’s work is centered around four commitments: community, health, equity, and climate, which reflect the “why” of TPL’s work. It is executed through four initiatives: Land, Schoolyards, Parks, and Trails. The work is multi-dimensional, so for example, if TPL is helping a community create a park, it can engage in every step from planning and financing to design and construction. TPL takes a long view of impact, investing the time and resources to drive change in partnership with others.

WHY we do it

OUR COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITIES



TPL brings its national expertise and strong local relationships to communities across the nation and is often the driving force behind many of the public’s most valued outdoor spaces. Highlights of its work are listed below.

Parks

TPL is leading a movement to ensure that everyone in this country has access to a quality park or

greenspace close to home. TPL works directly with cities to help them identify the places where parks are needed most, and then moves forward to demonstrate that new parks can change lives. TPL's park projects have redefined neighborhoods, communities, and cities—making them more joyful and more beneficial places.

Some recent specific projects include:

Randall Preserve - TPL protected 387.6 acres of land between Newport Beach and Costa Mesa, once the largest stretch of private open space on the coast of Southern California. It is now protected from development and within an hour's drive of 8 million people. Archaeologists have documented cultural sites here dating back at least 3,000 years, including three that the California State Native American Heritage Commission has listed as sacred.

Cook Park - Working with the Atlanta Department of Watershed Management, TPL converted a 16-acre parcel of flood-prone land into a brand-new park with a state-of-the-art stormwater catchment and filtration system. The park is designed to reduce flooding for the 160 acres of surrounding neighborhoods and reduce water pollution risks to the source of Atlanta's drinking water downstream. The park's innovative green infrastructure includes plants that manage and improve the quality of stormwater collected.

Olympic Sculpture Park - TPL, working in partnership with the community and the Seattle Art Museum, transformed a fuel storage site into an award-winning waterfront park. Olympic Sculpture Park is a green and creative respite in the heart of busy downtown Seattle.

South Oak Cliff Park - This Dallas, Texas property has undergone a remarkable transformation from an illegal dumping ground to a high-quality park designed by the community to serve their needs. The 1.8-acre park will benefit the thousands of



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residents and students who live and study within a 10-minute walk of it.

Schoolyards

TPL is leading the movement to convert our nation’s asphalt schoolyards into vibrant, green spaces that improve the daily lives of students, educators and the surrounding community. Community Schoolyards™ are game-changing. The projects are a low-cost, effective solution to provide park access and promote a healthy lifestyle, reduce educational disparities, and improve educational outcomes, while making vulnerable communities more resilient to the impacts of climate change. The nation’s public schools occupy 2 million acres of land.

Opening our schoolyards to the public during non-school hours would put a park within a 10-minute walk of nearly 80 million people, including 20 million (of the 100 million) nationwide who currently lack access to public green spaces. TPL has worked with more than 300 schools across the country, from New York City to Dallas to Tacoma, Washington, turning blacktop “playgrounds” into vibrant, verdant spaces.

Land

TPL works across the country to protect the land that matters most to communities. That can mean expanding National Parks—like TPL has done in [Yosemite](#) or [Zion](#). And it can mean creating new parks or preserves to protect culturally and ecologically rich land. For example, TPL worked with the community in Trinidad Colorado—and other non-profit partners—to create the second largest state park in Colorado. And TPL worked with the community of West Windsor Vermont to protect their community’s most important public space—and create a new economic engine in the process.

TPL aims to protect the lands most important to communities throughout the country. It is proud

of its pathbreaking work with Native American Tribes—working with over 40 Tribes and Indigenous communities to protect over 250,000 acres of land. TPL has and is working to ensure that sites of critical importance to Black history and culture are seen and protected.

Trails

Trails connect people to each other and to their communities. Trails are key infrastructure for livable communities and are an investment in physical and mental health. TPL is creating hundreds of miles of trails from metro areas to mountaintops. Some key current projects include a 200-mile greenway in New York that will make it possible to cycle all the way from Manhattan to Montauk. In Atlanta, the Chattahoochee [RiverLands](#) is on track to become Georgia’s defining public space for generations to come, connecting millions of people with a vital natural resource—and creating 100 miles of trails. In Florida, TPL is creating the Florida Gulf Coast trail—aiming at 420 miles of trail that connects communities from Tampa to Fort Meyers.



TPL has a staff of over 350 people and 20 field offices across the country. The team operates in a matrix management structure. It leverages its considerable national expertise and local leadership to drive large-scale change. TPL’s understanding of equity, justice, and diversity is fundamental to its work and an area for continued investment.

TPL’s funds come primarily from philanthropy, grants, and land acquisition fees. There are some fees for service, and this is a potential opportunity for growth. As the organization scales its work, increased philanthropic support will be essential.

TPL continues to focus on its people and processes, building on its equity work internally and externally and growing its human resources



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and information technology capacity. The work is in process and will need the attention of the next leader to bring it to completion. TPL embraces its values of Belonging, Creativity, Collaboration, Impact and Hope. It creates a culture of belonging internally which extends to its work externally. Staff describe TPL as kind, inclusive, committed to the mission, and oriented to partnerships and results at the community level.

The Mandate

TPL is strong, ambitious, and poised to expand its influence and impact. The next President and CEO will be an experienced, credible, inspiring leader, knowledgeable and passionate about conservation, the environment, equity, and driving change at scale. The President and CEO will:

1. Provide inspiring strategic leadership.

The CEO will be a visionary leader who unites the organization and stakeholders around a clear vision, purpose, and priorities. The leader will embrace and communicate TPL's unique abilities and provide a shared vision that everyone can articulate. TPL is embarking upon a new strategic planning process for 2025-2029. The new CEO will have the opportunity to build on the current strategy focusing on adaptation, alignment, growth and scale.

The CEO will be an active listener, inspiring communicator, consensus-builder, and decision-maker who works effectively with a committed Board and experienced staff. The CEO will establish priorities and partner with the Board, and advance organizational collaboration, equity, inclusion, cohesion, and commitment to shared vision and values.

2. Grow TPL's visibility and brand recognition.

The CEO will be a substantive, inviting, and visible leader able to bring to life the work of TPL and

share compelling stories that renew engagement with key stakeholders and promote strong brand positioning.

3. Grow resources and partnerships.

The CEO will be an outstanding fundraiser, able to anticipate and meet donor priorities, deepen current relationships, and lead the organization to new and more expansive sources of philanthropic support and public and private partnerships. The CEO will be skilled at identifying, qualifying, and creating partnerships and alliances that enhance and magnify the work. Opportunities to collaborate exist with nonprofits, NGOs, research institutes, government, and the private sector.

4. Be a great team builder and organizational leader.

The CEO will build and empower a strong, collaborative team and seek to develop leaders across the organization aligned around a shared vision. The CEO will continue the internal transformation work and implement strong organizational operations. The leader will apply financial, operational, and change management skills to enhance an enterprise-wide approach to human resources, DEI, finance, technology, processes, and knowledge sharing that enables TPL to operate with excellence.

5. Lead TPL to a sustainable, aspirational future.

The CEO will lead TPL in its aspirations for growth in mission impact, resources, scalability, and ongoing innovation. Through the strategic planning process and work with the talented, engaged TPL team, the CEO will help create an organization that is aligned, growing, and increasing its reach and impact while building a sustainable model for the future.



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The Candidate

The ideal candidate will have substantive leadership experience, proven commitment to delivering upon diversity, equity, and inclusion, and a sophisticated understanding of conservation, the environment, and its impact on community, health, equity, and the climate.

The CEO will have skills and experience, including:

- Proven leadership ability, vision, and strategic acumen
- Demonstrated fundraising and relationship-building skills
- Existing relationships in the broader conservation and environmental community
- Multi-disciplinary leadership abilities
- Expertise leading a complex, geographically dispersed, matrixed organization
- Experience working with the diverse communities TPL serves
- Intellectually rigorous, evidenced-based approach
- Ability to build consensus and make tough decisions
- Financial, technology, organizational, and change-management skills

Personal assets will include:

- Passion for the mission of TPL
- Compelling spokesperson and relationship builder
- Credible, high energy, and an inspiring persona
- Growth mindset
- Collaborative and empowering
- Confidence, kindness, and self-awareness



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The CEO will be a compelling spokesperson and relationship builder.

The Relationships

The CEO reports to the Board of Directors and currently manages a staff of over 350 and six direct reports.

1. Chief Impact Officer
2. Chief Program Officer
3. SVP/Chief Financial and Administrative Officer
4. SVP Chief Philanthropy Officer
5. AVP of Equity
6. Senior Executive Assistant, Office of the President

The Location

TPL has offices in states across the country. The preferred location for the next CEO is in a major city where TPL has a presence. Extensive travel is required.

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

TPL@BoardWalkConsulting.com

or call **Crystal Stephens** or **Diane Westmore** at 404-BoardWalk (404-262-7392).

For the status of this and other searches, please visit www.BoardWalkConsulting.com

