



## LEADERSHIP PROFILE

**Chief Financial Officer**  
**Trust for Public Land**

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*"We believe everyone should have access to the outdoors."*

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October 2025

# A Moment to Lead

For over fifty years, [Trust for Public Land](#) (TPL) has transformed a simple belief into extraordinary action: everyone needs access to the outdoors. During a time when social divisions feel more pronounced, TPL recognizes that connecting with nature can inspire hope, harmony, and unity. With more than 5,000 parks, trails, and schoolyards created and millions of acres protected, TPL has evolved beyond traditional conservation into a powerful force for social change—utilizing green spaces to foster connections and promote healthier communities.

Trust for Public Land does far more than create parks and protect land. It brings people together and strengthens community. The organization combines national expertise—in land acquisition, conservation finance, data mapping, policy, and advocacy as examples—with strong local leadership to deliver complex projects that change people's lives across the country. As a unifying force, TPL convenes community members along with public, philanthropic, and private partners to pursue bold, achievable goals. Collaboration is a core value that shapes every project, from early planning through long-term stewardship, and TPL is proud to work alongside community, state, tribal, and national leaders at every step.

TPL is at an exciting inflection point of strategic growth and deepening its impact. The organization has doubled its philanthropic support since 2020. It has ambitious plans to scale and give more people access to the benefits of the outdoors and cultural and historical connections to place. TPL seeks a strategic, visionary Chief Financial Officer to architect the financial strategies that will power the next chapter—combining rigor with innovation so TPL can act quickly when opportunity knocks.

The CFO will be a trusted partner to the CEO and a key member of a collaborative Executive Management Team.

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TPL is a national nonprofit founded in San Francisco in 1972. Since its inception, it has connected millions of people to the outdoors.

This leader will build and develop relationships which increase access to capital to support the mission, identify and manage risks to the organization, and streamline internal financial management and reporting. The CFO will be able to tell TPL's financial story in ways that inspire donors, investors, partners, and staff. With ~400 employees, a \$100M+ operating budget, and ~\$300M in annual capital transactions, TPL's scale and complexity call for a seasoned financial executive who pairs vision with execution and a bias towards action.

## Organizational Strengths

TPL is a national nonprofit founded in San Francisco in 1972. Since its inception, it has connected millions of people to the outdoors in a rare mix of urban and rural settings. The magic of TPL's work lies in its ability to bring a robust toolset to complex challenges and execute these with strong local leadership, subject matter expertise, a community-centric approach, and multifaceted partnerships to address climate, health, and access issues.

TPL centers its work and holds itself accountable to five outcomes:

- Enduring access and connection to welcoming, high-quality outdoor spaces,
- Health and wellness,
- Historical and cultural connection to place,
- Social cohesion and civic engagement,
- Climate resilience.

It is executed locally through:

- Conserving land and cultural sites,
- Creating parks, trails, and schoolyards,
- Planning and designing with communities.

TPL accomplishes this work at scale through data analysis and evaluation, knowledge sharing and dissemination, technical assistance and capacity building, policy, advocacy, and conservation finance.

TPL's work is multidimensional, ambitious, and exciting. Whether helping a neighborhood create a city park or acquiring a vast landscape for transfer to the National Park Service, TPL stays with the project from start to finish: site selection and acquisition, planning and financing, design and construction. The organization takes the long view of impact, investing time and resources and working in close partnership with others to deliver lasting change.

**Notable projects include:**

**Randall Preserve (Orange County, California)** – Once the largest stretch of private open space remaining on the Southern California coast, the more than 387-acre Randall Preserve is now permanently protected from development thanks to Trust for Public Land. Just minutes from millions of residents in Orange County, the preserve offers sweeping ocean views, vital coastal sage scrub habitat, and trails accessible to all. Archaeologists have documented cultural sites here dating back at least 3,000 years, three of which are formally recognized as sacred by the California State Native American Heritage Commission—and an irreplaceable public treasure for both people and wildlife.

**Cook Park (Atlanta, Georgia)** – Located in the Vine City neighborhood—an area historically devastated by flooding—TPL and the City of Atlanta transformed a 16-acre floodplain into Cook Park, a new community space that also serves as state-of-the-art green infrastructure. Cook Park now includes an advanced stormwater catchment and filtration system designed to reduce flooding across 160 surrounding acres while protecting Atlanta's downstream drinking water. Shaded play areas, walking trails, and community spaces now welcome residents where floodwater once collected. The project has been praised as a national model and featured in [The New York Times](#) for its innovative combination of resilience, equity, and design.

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### **Camino Nuevo Charter Academy – Jose A. Castellanos Elementary (Los Angeles, CA)**

In the Pico-Union neighborhood, students, families, and TPL redesigned an asphalt lot into a living schoolyard. Today, the campus is shaded by trees, cooled by permeable play areas, and enriched with gardens and outdoor classrooms. After school hours, gates swing open to welcome the community, creating one of the only green spaces in the area. Early data show surface temperature drops of as much as 36 degrees—proving that green schoolyards can combat extreme urban heat while giving kids safe places to learn, play, and dream. [CBS News](#) recently spotlighted the project as a powerful example of climate solutions that start with our children.

### **Saguaro National Park (Pima County, Arizona)**

For over 30 years, TPL has worked with the National Park Service and local partners to [expand and protect Saguaro National Park](#). Together, we have conserved more than 2,300 acres—preserving iconic Sonoran Desert views, strengthening wildlife corridors, and extending nearly 200 miles of trails that serve over 1 million visitors annually. Recent acquisitions, like 47 acres along the Tucson Mountains, continue this legacy by linking beloved community spaces like Sweetwater Preserve with the national park, ensuring that Tucson's “big backyard” remains open, wild, and accessible.

TPL's portfolio also creates green spaces across America's most sprawling cities, including the [Dallas Greening Initiative](#), reimagining New York's abandoned railways into family-friendly trails like the [Long Island Greenway](#), and leading a national movement to transform asphalt [school playgrounds](#) into vibrant green spaces that improve education outcomes, community health, and climate resilience.

Over the past 26 years, the Trust for Public Land has generated [over \\$111 billion in voter-approved public funding](#) for parks, trails, climate resilience projects, and open space, demonstrating unprecedented bipartisan



support for conservation across urban, rural, suburban, and Tribal communities nationwide. This remarkable track record reflects TPL's unique ability to unite diverse stakeholders around a shared vision of connecting everyone to the benefits of nature. In 2024 alone, the organization protected over 67,000 acres, continuing its legacy of creating accessible green spaces. It has established a park within a 10-minute walk of nearly 10 million people over the past five decades.

TPL has 28 offices across the country, operating with a distributed structure. It leverages and coordinates its considerable subject matter expertise, spanning social cohesion and health to data mapping and climate resilience, with local, on-the-ground knowledge and leadership to drive large-scale change. TPL's funding is a mix of philanthropy, federal and state grants, and land acquisition fees.

TPL projects and programs often rely on assembling funds from various sources. Programs and projects range from one million to hundreds of millions of dollars. TPL utilizes a combination of federal, state, and local grants, loans, Program-Related Investments (PRIs), corporate and foundation funding, and individual investments to fund its work. Funding is tailored to meet the specific needs of each project. Providing increased financial flexibility will enable TPL to move quickly and capitalize on emerging opportunities.

## The Mandate

TPL is a strong, ambitious organization poised to expand its influence and impact. The CFO will be a skilled financial leader who understands how to raise capital, manage risk, deploy resources strategically, optimize the organization's balance sheet, partner with the philanthropy team, simplify budget presentations, and position TPL for its next chapter of growth and impact. The leader will also possess strong organizational and financial management skills, leading an accomplished financial team.

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The CFO will transform and simplify financial data into actionable information for better decision-making and storytelling across all organizational levels.

## Key Responsibilities:

### 1. Provide Strategic Vision and Growth

- Serve as a strategic thought partner to the CEO and the executive management team on organizational growth and capital deployment.
- Lead the design and implementation of financial growth strategies, including potential impact investment models and private sector strategies that apply to a nonprofit organization that engages in complex transactions, often including land and real estate.
- Partner in campaign planning and execution, understanding how to leverage philanthropy with other funding sources.
- Drive innovation in financial models that other organizations will seek to emulate.

### 2. Increase Capital

- Develop and manage relationships with banks, investment managers, charitable investors, and other financial institutions.
- Break into new sources of capital and structure new financial instruments and strategies to fund TPL's work and enable it to compete at the speed of the private sector.
- Create and oversee internal funding streams to expand TPL's capacity for prompt capital deployment to support land transactions and compete with private sector speculators.
- Navigate complex financing options for multi-million-dollar projects, including grants, PRIs, and forgivable loans.

### 3. Drive Operational Excellence

- Transform and simplify financial data into actionable information for better decision-making and storytelling across all organizational levels.
- Oversee budget management for \$100M operating budget and \$300M in capital transactions.

- Ensure robust and secure financial systems that support TPL's distributed, multi-region structure.
- Lead risk management strategy, including insurance coverage and deal structuring.

#### **4. Enhance Organizational Communication**

- Translate complex financial concepts into simple, understandable, consistent, and predictable terms for the board, staff, and stakeholders.
- Increase financial literacy across the organization.
- Maintain transparency in financial decision-making processes and rationale.

#### **5. Pursue Diverse Funding Opportunities**

- Provide financial analysis and structure solutions for land conservation projects and transactions, as well as large park, schoolyard, and trail development projects.
- Partner with the Advancement team to navigate complicated estates and donor intentions.
- Support state directors and conservation teams nationwide in assembling capital for time-sensitive opportunities.
- Balance mission-critical needs with financial sustainability across TPL's national geographic footprint.

#### **6. Manage the Finance Team & Work Closely with the National Board**

- Nurture, champion, and develop the finance team through collaboration and mentorship.
- Create and model continuous learning and improvement, and foster a culture of excellence, innovation, and responsiveness.
- Bring clarity and decisive leadership focused on priorities, process, and results.
- Partner and consult with the Board's Finance, Audit, and Transaction Committees.

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The ideal candidate will bring a mix of for-profit and nonprofit expertise to the role.

## The Candidate

The CFO will be a compelling senior executive with a depth of financial leadership experience in a similarly complex and/or larger distributed organization. The ideal candidate will bring a mix of for-profit and nonprofit expertise to the role. Nonprofit experience may include serving on the board of a national NGO.

### Professional Assets:

- Experience as a CFO or deputy CFO in a complex, distributed organization (preferably \$100M+ operating budgets)
- Experience working with board audit and finance committees
- Evidence of raising capital with an understanding of philanthropic leverage and non-traditional funding sources
- Ability to cultivate and manage complex lending relationships
- Knowledge of nonprofit financial management practices, including GAAP accounting and 501(c)(3) compliance requirements
- Sophisticated risk management experience and ability to manage risk in support of TPL's mission
- Knowledge of real estate transactions, mergers and acquisitions, and understanding of conservation finance tools preferred
- Evidence of innovative, forward-thinking, team-oriented financial management

### Personal Assets:

- Strategic growth mindset
- High emotional intelligence
- Sensitivity to regional/state leader needs in a distributed organization
- Collaborative leadership style
- Strong communication skills
- Ability to translate complex finances to a variety of stakeholders
- Passion for the mission of TPL and land conservation
- Sense of humor

# The Relationships

<b>CFO reports to:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Chief Executive Officer, Trust for Public Land</li></ul>
<b>CFO manages:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A team of 17</li></ul>
<b>CFO interfaces with:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Executive Management Team</li><li>• The National Board of Directors</li><li>• Board Finance, Audit, and Transaction Committees</li></ul>

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# The Location

The CFO can be based in any city with a major TPL office. Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Denver, New York, San Francisco, Seattle, or Washington, D.C. preferred.

# Compensation

Base salary range is \$375,000 - \$400,000, depending on location and candidate experience. A competitive benefits package will accompany the salary.

**For potential consideration** or to suggest a prospect, please email [TPLCFO@BoardWalkConsulting.com](mailto:TPLCFO@BoardWalkConsulting.com)

or call Crystal Stephens or Terri Kohan at 404-BoardWalk (404-262-7392)

