



Director of Trail Protection

Reports to: Executive Director

Location: This position is remote, but the staff member must be based in one of the eight states of the North Country National Scenic Trail (ND, MN, WI, MI, OH, PA, NY, or VT).

Summary: The **North Country Trail Association** (NCTA) seeks a Director of Trail Protection to lead the efforts to securing a permanent corridor for America's longest National Scenic Trail. This position works with NCTA staff, volunteers, and federal and state agency partners in setting standards, selecting priorities, and pursuing projects that secure permanent protection for the corridor of the North Country National Scenic Trail (NCNST) and the surrounding landscapes. This is an emerging area of work for NCTA, requiring this position to lead in developing a shared vision among partners and building a program from the ground up. At present, NCTA holds easements but is not an accredited land trust – although we are exploring options for the future. This position will play a critical role in setting policy, managing complex projects with partners and guiding our volunteer leadership in this work. As a member of NCTA's management team the Director of Trail Protection will have additional responsibilities that include advocacy, grants management, and partnership development. This position requires extensive travel and may include travel in remote locations on the NCNST.

Key Responsibilities:

Conservation Planning, Easement and Land Acquisition

- Provides leadership and guidance in implementing long-term planning for the legal protection and subsequent stewardship needs of the Trail route.
- Works with staff, volunteers, and partners to set acquisition priorities for the Trail and determine roles of each partner in the acquisition process. This is including but not limited to federal, state, and local agencies, land conservancies, and NCTA Chapters and Affiliate organizations.
- Coordinates with Director of Trail Operations on program priorities and with Regional Trail Coordinators on projects within their regions.
- Develops funding strategies for acquisitions and, where possible, project costs, including identifying, seeking, and reporting on public and private grants.
- Leads selected priority projects; manages the legal, contractual, and other processes of carrying projects to completion.
- Coordinates advocacy efforts for projects that include the Land and Water Conservation Fund, or other federal or state acquisition requests.
- Organizes and oversees contractors who provide various data, reports, and information required for easement and land acquisition.

- Keeps abreast of news, issues, and trends related to land conservation and National Scenic Trails.

Stewardship

- Leads NCTA's efforts in enabling volunteers to build and maintain effective relationships with landowners and partners, leading to greater trail protection.
- Undertakes priority landowner outreach and cultivation.
- Defines best practices for landowner communication and develops subsequent materials.
- Helps establish guidelines for baseline documentation and boundary monitoring programs.

Program Administration

- Maintains proper tracking of easements and agreements in collaboration with the GIS Program Manager and Director of Trail Operations.
- Works with National Park Service and NCTA leadership to develop trail protection and stewardship policies and procedures.
- Serves as staff liaison on NCTA's Trail Protection Committee.
- Administers the use of NCTA's Trail Protection Fund and grant program.
- Assists Director of Development and Communications to identify and respond to funding opportunities.
- Reports regularly on the progress of trail protection.

Additional Duties

- Adheres to and emulates the NCTA's [Core Values](#), and serves as an ambassador of the NCTA.
- Attends staff, board, and other organizational meetings as needed.

Qualifications and Experience

- Minimum of five years of experience in easement and land acquisition, and land conservation programs implemented through public/private partnerships.
- Bachelor's degree in natural resources, land planning, or related field.
- Ability to inspire and empower volunteers.
- Experience with public lands and preferably long-distance, multi-jurisdictional trails.
- Experience with partnership and coalition building between agency and nonprofits.
- Understanding of federal and state land acquisition programs.
- Understanding of Land Trust Alliance Standards and Practices, experience with dealing with landowners and performing real estate transactions.
- Hands-on experience with GIS databases.
- Self-starter with good judgment; initiative to work without close supervision, and to create and promote new program ideas.
- Ability to work independently, travel, and work on weekends as needed.

Hours: This is a full-time, salaried, exempt position. Some weekends and evenings may be required.

Benefits and Compensation: This position is eligible for NCTA employee benefits including paid time off, observation of all federal holidays, health insurance, 403(b) participation, and employer match and flexible work environment. Salary range \$55,000 to \$65,000 based on experience, proven performance, and geographic location.

About NCTA: The mission of North Country Trail Association is to develop, maintain, protect, and promote the North Country National Scenic Trail as the premier hiking path across the northern tier of the United States through a trail-wide coalition of volunteers and partners.

Apply: Submit electronic resume and cover letter to hr@northcountrytrail.org.

Position Post Date: April 20, 2022