

Redwood Forest Foundation (RFFI)

President

Position Description

The Redwood Forest Foundation (RFFI) is seeking a President to develop the operational, programmatic and financial support required to fulfill its mission to actively, effectively and sustainably manage its working forests in ways that enhance the long-term health of the forest and return value to the local community.

The Redwood Forest Foundation, Inc. (RFFI) was conceived out of the “timber wars” of the 1990s. Brought together by a common goal, a diverse group of activists, timber interests and community leaders set about creating a new model – a community working forest for the benefit of the redwood region. Working together in deep appreciation of the intrinsic and economic value of redwood forests, they developed a vision and a new nonprofit framework that would own and manage forests for timber production while returning them to a healthier state and retaining high quality jobs in the process. Honoring the diverse voices of the community, they committed to sustainable principles that carefully balance social and ecological considerations with the long-term economic health of the region. Utilizing commercial sector funding, RFFI was able to acquire a 50,000 acre forest and retain local management committed to stewarding the land sustainably. RFFI’s mission is recognized as a unique and powerful idea for community-based resource management. Now RFFI is actively working to ensure the success of this idea.

Position Overview

The President, reporting to the Board of Directors through the Chair of the Board, is responsible for managing and leading RFFI. Additionally, RFFI is looking for an experienced leader who can synthesize the long-term mission and vision of RFFI into an operating strategy and execute a plan that will build financial support and strengthen the organization on all levels. In partnership with a committed and active working board, the President will lead the development and execution of a five-year strategic plan. Acting upon the policies and goals set forth by the board, the President will be the primary agent for building the organization including growing strategic relationships, developing and directing resources and managing operations.

Key to the success of the role is the ability to operate as a trusted partner to a diverse set of stakeholders and partners. In particular, the President will need to understand and honor the unique configuration of conservation, timber and community interests that brought about the formation of RFFI in order to successfully negotiate the deeply felt commitment to the values of each voice.

RFFI currently operates with a lean staffing model and primarily contracted operations, and will need a well-rounded leader equally capable of managing complex finances and operations, building financial support, and connecting community strategy to daily work. The successful candidate will have exceptional communications skills, strong operational skills and a deep respect and passion for developing RFFI’s vision.

Background

It took ten years of perseverance, but in 2007, RFFI entered a bid to purchase the 50,000 acre Usal Redwood Forest (Usal), which was on the market and was threatened by forest fragmentation. Seizing this opportunity to create a community forest, the Foundation purchased the property through an innovative financing structure. RFFI controls the property and directs its management through a contract with Campbell Timber Management. The original \$65 million dollar financing was structured with the expectation that the sale of a conservation easement would both ensure its future as a working forest and pay down a portion of the debt. After some delay, in 2011, RFFI was able to conclude a conservation sale that sold 957 acres to the Save the Redwoods League and sold a conservation easement on an additional 50,000 acres to The Conservation Fund. This last year, as local markets began recovering from the recent recession, Usal once again returned to a working forest as Shuster’s Logging, of Willits CA, hauled the first load of logs from the property. Since taking control of the property in 2007, RFFI has



invested over \$2 million in restoration projects. While many long-term benefits of RFFI's management of Usal are decades away, the successful placement of the conservation easement, the impact of restoration projects and the continuation of timber harvests have tangible benefits today.

The Usal Redwood Forest has tremendous potential as a community asset. The property is rich in fishbearing streams, diverse wildlife and plant species, and archeological sites. There are many economic opportunities for local jobs. The property is typical of coastal forests that have suffered the impact of intensive industrial logging for over 100 years. The historical removal of overstory trees has left hardwoods dominant on much of the land. The long-term vision for the property is a redwood-dominated forest, however converting from the current hardwood-dominated structure will require decades of careful management. Since 2007, RFFI has been actively restoring the property. In partnership with many other organizations, nearly nine miles of roads have been decommissioned while others have been upgraded to reduce erosion; streams have been restored and surveys to assess fish populations are being conducted. Shaded fuel breaks have been established along ridgelines to reduce the risk of wildfire and RFFI and local tribal representatives have worked together to form the Chinquapin Springs Acorn Grove which will be used for acorn gathering by local Native Americans.

Usal faces a number of challenges, particularly economic ones. As a working forest, it is expected to eventually pay its own way, serving its debt and covering its operating costs. Low timber market prices and the debt burden reduce the options RFFI has to manage the property and honor its commitments. RFFI has been working diligently to assess and determine ways to manage the forest in a manner consistent with their principles and retain the positive working relationships they have with the community and their financial partners. Balancing the needs of the financial model while honoring the various community voices, will require a careful listener, an expert communicator and an entrepreneurial spirit undaunted by complex issues.

RFFI is a young organization and is still building its programmatic work, community outreach and the financial support required to implement its vision. To date, the programs and infrastructure of the organization have been subordinate to the needs of the Usal property. Creating a strategy to fulfill the promise of a working community forest while developing and executing a funding plan to build the organization's capacity will be critical for the organization's success.

The current operations for RFFI are funded through a combination of a line of credit and philanthropic support and will remain so until timber operations generate adequate operational revenue. Programmatic development has been hindered by the need to develop additional philanthropic investment and, if practical, market-based funding streams. The current budget is approximately \$300,000 and staff includes part time contractors in administration and development. The location for the position is flexible as key relationships are dispersed throughout the Redwood Region. A regular and routine presence is likely needed in Fort Bragg, California, where the office of Campbell Timber Management is located and which is centrally located for convening members of the board.

Key Responsibilities

ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP:

- Establish and maintain a positive working relationship with the Board of Directors;
- Assist Nominations Committee in identifying potential future Board members who deepen the capacity of the board to represent various stakeholders and increase its ability to fundraise and fulfill RFFI's mission;
- Work with the Board of Directors to develop and execute a five-year strategic plan for the development of RFFI including annual work plans to build the capacity of the organization;
- Work with the Board to advance the Stewardship Plan for Usal Redwood Forest;



- Provide the Board with information and resources needed to carry out their work, promptly inform them of all business and policy issues and opportunities that may affect RFFI and recommend appropriate courses of action;
- Present accurate, effective and timely management reports to the Board and sustain the open communications required for healthy partnership with a working Board;
- Lead the development of strong and effective governance at all levels of the organization;
- Facilitate communication and cooperation between the forest managers, community members and conservation voices so that ideas, and perspectives can be shared and relationships strengthened;
- Build and manage staff as required; and
- Recommend new policies for Board approval as needed.

FINANCE AND OPERATIONS:

- Manage and establish a clear delineation of authority and responsibilities for all contractors; oversee the Usal forest manager, Campbell Timber Management, on all forest management activities with a focus on planning and executing Timber Harvest Plans for Usal Redwood Forest as approved by the Board;
- Maintain an open and direct working relationship with financial partners in order to actively and advantageously manage fiduciary responsibilities;
- Develop and manage RFFI's annual budget; implement the annual budget including both the expenditures and the realization of revenues through successful fundraising and earned-income development;
- Oversee development of Usal Redwood Forest annual budget that is prepared by the forest manager;
- Develop the capacity and effectiveness of internal systems, operations, procedures, policies, and communication processes; and
- Monitor and ensure organizational transparency and compliance with California statutes, the conservation easement, Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification, IRS regulations governing nonprofit corporations and other agreements, certifications and regulations.

FUNDRAISING:

- Plan, direct and execute a fundraising strategy focused on raising operating capital for RFFI, supporting restoration projects and other RFFI programs, investigate alternate funding for meeting its fiduciary responsibilities and for other key initiatives;
- Develop and support fundraising programs including corporate and foundations grants, major gifts, annual support, special events, memorial gifts, campaigns, planned giving and other fundraising programs;
- Monitor the availability of grants from federal and state governments and private foundations, and work with the board and staff in the submission of grant proposals and presentations;
- Work with the board and staff to facilitate and develop a culture of fundraising within the organization;
- Facilitate the preparation, content, and timing of all direct mail, online marketing, and collateral pieces to promote RFFI's activities and encourage charitable gifts; and



- Direct the documentation and stewardship of RFFI's donors and related tree planting program; ensure that donor records and acknowledgments are maintained in accordance with appropriate standards and best practices.

EXTERNAL RELATIONS:

- Reach out and represent the organization to a wide range of community members and constituencies throughout the region and nationally to connect the broader public to RFFI's work; expand awareness of RFFI's achievements and effectively make the case for supporting the Foundation;
- Establish and maintain positive relationships with actual or potential funders, key stakeholders and the community-at-large including state and regional government, institutions and organizations, business, professional, conservation and education leaders, service organizations and others that share an interest in the work of community forestry;
- Seek the cooperation and participation of partner groups, legislators, media representatives, businesses, environmental nonprofits, civic groups and the general public to further the goals of RFFI; and
- Communicate effectively to all groups regarding the mission and programs of the Foundation; establish a trustworthy, transparent and visible presence for the Foundation in the community at large.

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT:

- Evaluate and propose new programs to further the mission of RFFI and foster the development of long term community participation and support for RFFI's work; ensure all programs bring value to the organization and are sustainably funded;
- In collaboration with key partners, identify regional needs that are appropriate for the Foundation to address and bring them forth for consideration and prioritization;
- Work with the board to continue to develop the BioChar Demonstration Project, the Chinquapin Springs Acorn Grove, as well as continue to build partnerships to address continued efforts in stream and forest restoration, fire management and access;
- In conjunction with Usal forest manager, develop and oversee forest restoration projects; and
- Develop, maintain, and present performance metrics, benchmarks and targets to measure the programmatic effectiveness and ensure the confidence of funders.

Experience and Qualifications:

A successful candidate will likely have:

- A passion for the idea of working forests and a belief in their capacity to transform communities;
- Significant leadership experience and achievement in the private, public or non-profit sector;
- A background in forestry, conservation biology, resource management or experience in roles that provide insights and knowledge of these disciplines;
- Demonstrated success planning, executing and raising significant operating and program funding;
- An energetic, entrepreneurial background that combines analytical skills with political savvy;
- Clear competency in articulating a vision that motivates internal and external stakeholders toward common goals;



- The ability to forge pragmatic solutions in environments characterized by ambiguity and complexity; patience and the ability to clearly articulate tough decisions;
- The skill to keep the end in mind while demonstrating the patience required to gain consensus;
- An inclusive, transparent, consensus-building leadership style both in and out of the public spotlight that inspires and builds trust;
- Strong listening skills combined with excellent written and oral skills;
- High integrity and a commitment to personal and professional excellence; and
- Ability to maintain confidentiality, exercising the highest level of tact and discretion in both internal and external interactions.

Additionally, the successful candidate will likely have:

- Familiarity with the Redwood Region;
- Demonstrated understanding of the legal, financial and ethical requirements of nonprofits;
- Ability to build an efficient and effective organization;
- A high degree of financial acumen; and
- A track record of building partnerships, coalitions, and alliances in the public spotlight and across sectors, communities and fields of practice.

Personal Attributes

- Understands and embraces the unique and critical role RFFI can play in developing a healthy and sustainable region;
- Highly collaborative and transparent;
- Politically astute, able to navigate a complex social network;
- Inspires confidence and trust;
- “Can-do” and solutions-oriented attitude;
- Ability to work both independently and collaboratively; and
- Strong work ethic coupled with an optimist’s enthusiasm and a pragmatist’s desire for action.

For additional information or to submit your qualifications for review, contact:

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