



## Vermont Natural Resources Council Seeks New Executive Director

The [Vermont Natural Resources Council](#) (VNRC) seeks an Executive Director (ED) to lead this well-established organization during a time of growth and expanding impact. The successful candidate will be a seasoned and collaborative nonprofit leader who is familiar with legislative processes, environmental policy issues, and environmental justice. The position requires a person with exceptional communication and relationship-building skills who leads with vision and authenticity in a fast-paced and complex environment.

### About VNRC

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For over sixty years, Vermont Natural Resources Council has been a pivotal leader in the effort to maintain the health and wellbeing of Vermont's environment, communities, and people. Based in Montpelier, VT, this 501(c)(3) nonprofit has a long history as a convener in Vermont's environmental community and has played an important role in building consensus among groups with diverse interests. The organization has a constant and highly regarded presence in the Vermont Legislature, where it provides research and factual information on legislation. Once laws are enacted, VNRC also serves as a watchdog to ensure they are implemented as intended through a variety of education, advocacy and litigation initiatives.

To carry out its mission, the organization tackles a broad range of issues via community action, coalition work, and state-level policy to address the myriad of interconnected issues that impact Vermont's resiliency and health: [clean water](#), [clean energy and climate action](#), [sustainable communities and climate resilience](#), [healthy forests, wetlands, and wildlife](#), and a [toxic-free environment](#).

Over the years, VNRC has grown stronger through [partnerships and collaboration](#). In 2011, it merged with Smart Growth Vermont to better support the development of housing for people of different incomes, make more transportation options accessible, and develop communities in ways that don't sprawl into the countryside. And in 2012, VNRC entered into a strategic partnership with Vermont Conservation Voters, a 501(c)(4) organization that works to make environmental protection a top priority for elected officials, candidates, and voters. This strategic partnership ensures that Vermont is widely regarded as a leader in voting rights and democracy protections.

VNRC strives to deepen its awareness and practices around issues of environmental justice and equity, inclusion, and diversity. This involves evaluating and addressing the influence of power and privilege within its own walls and making an effort to include diverse voices in priority setting and policy development with an emphasis on ensuring that historically marginalized and most impacted populations have opportunities to shape public policy. This work continues, and the organization is well aware that more learning and growth are needed.

VNRC's activities are carried out by a highly skilled, mission-driven staff of 15 members who are leaders and knowledge experts in their respective fields. A membership-based organization having over 5,000 members and activists, VNRC is financially sound, with a \$2.1M operating budget. It has healthy reserves and owns two office buildings in Montpelier. Revenues come from a mix of grants, donor and endowment contributions, membership dues/gifts, and earned income. VNRC is governed by a committed 13-member Board of Directors who bring skills in law, accounting, government, anti-racism work, philanthropy, natural resources management, environmental justice and education, affordable housing development, agriculture, rural development, forestry, and community planning.

### **Opportunity Going Forward**

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VNRC's new Executive Director will step in at a time of great opportunity, change, and challenge. The spiraling impacts of climate change hit Vermont hard last year when catastrophic flooding and landslides washed out roads and bridges and created significant property loss. This brought to stark light how climate and the environment are intertwined with economic, transportation, and housing issues, especially for low-income and marginalized groups who are most impacted by environmental degradation. As a majority white field, the environmental movement struggles to include and lift the voices of these groups.

VNRC is at the pinnacle of its 60-year legacy, and the new Executive Director will leverage its many strengths – a talented and highly-respected staff, a strong financial position, its powerful role in the state legislative process, its network of partnerships and coalitions, a long history and impact in VT's environmental movement, and an engaged and diverse board of directors – to strategically grow VNRC to continue protecting the state's remarkable natural resources and tackle the challenges ahead.

As the new Executive Director assumes leadership, key priorities in the first 12-18 months will be to:

- Cultivate strong relationships with staff and continue to foster a climate of trust and community.
- Build trust and relationship with the Board and support an ongoing governance development process.
- Work with staff to develop and implement strategies to engage younger segments of the population in conservation efforts.
- Establish relationships with key constituents: legislators, coalition partners, partnering state departments, and funders.
- Gain a solid understanding of VNRC's history and context and its role in Vermont's environmental context.
- Advance VNRC's work on diversity, equity, and inclusion issues and environmental justice.
- Continue to secure funding through grants and from individual donors, with a focus on strengthening current and building new donor relationships.
- Continue to advance VNRC's policy work at the state level.
- Begin the process of engaging VNRC's Board and staff to develop a strategic plan.
- Assess and improve VNRC's operations and structure: evaluate current work systems and identify and address structural issues.
- Coordinate with VCV's Executive Director to understand and strengthen the relationship between the organizations and VCV's role in the political process.

## **Position Duties and Responsibilities**

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The Executive Director Manages and coordinates all programs, generates organizational cohesion and sense of direction, keeps the Board of Directors informed and engaged, maintains and strengthens membership and development, and provides an articulate voice for VNRC on all issues. Through its strategic partnership with Vermont Conservation Voters (VCV), the Executive Director also serves as the Deputy Director of that organization and supports VCV's electoral work in accordance with a Memorandum of Agreement and Cost Sharing Agreement between the 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) organizations.

### **Core duties include:**

- Assuring success of VNRC goals and strategies identified in the Ends Policies.
- Managing all aspects of the organization through strict compliance with the Executive Directives set forth in [VNRC's Governing Means Policies](#).
- Maintaining an effective and engaged relationship with the VNRC Board through strict compliance with the Board-CEO Relationship guidelines set forth in [VNRC's Governing Means Policies](#).
- Developing and overseeing long range fundraising, membership development, and financial management and marketing plans, including the design and implementation of direct mail, phone, and digital outreach efforts.
- Preparing Annual Budgets and Work Plans and overseeing the judicious financial management of the organization.
- Developing and maintaining strong relationships with existing and prospective VNRC members, major donors, and foundations. Establishing and overseeing the implementation of attainable membership and development goals annually.
- Providing support and constructive guidance for all staff in accordance with Personnel Policies, annual evaluations and ongoing supervision; hiring new staff as needed.
- Developing and articulating VNRC positions on a wide range of topics and policies to multiple audiences.
- Overseeing the strategic use of litigation to achieve VNRC's goals and priorities.
- Overseeing the careful stewardship and maintenance of VNRC's properties.
- Being in regular and constant contact with political, community, and organizational leaders in Vermont and the region.
- Helping VNRC take the leadership role in environmental issues in Vermont.
- Ensuring that environmental justice and equity is a central consideration when establishing priorities and crafting public policy.
- Coordinating with the Vermont Conservation Voters on annual budgeting, shared resource deployment, and providing support to VCV's work in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding and Resource Sharing Agreement between the two organizations.

## **Profile of the Ideal Candidate**

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The ideal candidate will demonstrate the following capacities:

### **Passion For and Understanding of Environmental Advocacy**

- Passion for VNRC's work to protect and strengthen Vermont's environment and communities, preserve connected forests and wildlife habitat, advocate for clean toxic-free land and waters, safeguard productive working lands, and advance renewable energy and long-term climate resilience.
- Understanding of the multiple components and complex dimensions of natural resource conservation.
- Commitment to equity, inclusion, and diversity principles.
- Experience in environmental justice work.

### **A Seasoned and Collaborative Organizational Leader**

- Background in nonprofit organizational management and in strategically managing an organization through growth.
- Solid understanding of nonprofit finances with complex budgets and multiple funding streams and ability to strategically align and maximize resources.
- A bridge-builder who fosters collaborative relationships with and among community and policy partners.
- Ability to foster an organizational and staff culture that is equitable, diverse, and inclusive.
- A collaborative approach to managing staff, along with the ability to be decisive when needed; a track record in fostering a trusting and independent work environment.
- A strategic and visionary thinker with experience leading strategic planning processes.

### **A Skilled Fundraiser**

- A solid understanding of fundraising strategies and a track record of successful fundraising across all areas of development – including planned giving and soliciting and securing major gifts.

### **A Relationship Builder, Networker, and Collaborator**

- A people person with strong emotional intelligence.
- Skills in mediating conflict among groups and individuals with diverse perspectives to achieve shared goals.
- A track record of building strategic and lasting relationships, networks, and partnerships with diverse groups of people.

### **Exceptional Communication Skills**

- A strong public speaker with the ability to convey technical information in a clear, concise, and compelling manner to diverse audiences, including legislators, students, and the press.
- An exceptional and authentic communicator who can pivot quickly between different groups and styles of communication – legislators, community leaders, local citizens, media.
- Excellent writing skills.

### **Strong Advocacy Skills, Policy Knowledge and Political Acumen**

- Familiarity with key policy issues surrounding environmental conservation and understanding of how policy impacts equity.
- Knowledge of and experience advocating for legislative policy in the environmental or related field.
- Politically savvy, able to navigate and strategically pivot in challenging political environments.

## **Compensation and Benefits**

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This is a full-time, salaried, exempt position with a salary range of \$110,000-\$125,000, determined by relevant experience and qualifications and by internal equity. In addition to the base salary, VNRC provides a benefits package that includes a \$20,000 annual stipend for all permanent full-time employees that may be used for pre-tax benefits (e.g., health care) or taken as salary, life, and disability insurance, a Simple IRA that includes an employer match of up to 3% of salary, generous paid time off (18 days of vacation with less than three years of service/24 days after three years, two personal days, 12 paid holidays, and sick time). The Executive Director will be required to maintain office hours on a regular basis, although VNRC does allow for a hybrid of remote and in-person work schedules.

## **Application Process and Additional Information**

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VNRC is an Equal Opportunity Employer and strongly encourages applications from candidates whose identities have been historically underrepresented in the environmental movement, including people who identify as Black, Indigenous, Hispanic or Latino, Asian or Pacific Islander, or people of color; people from marginalized economic backgrounds; and people living with disabilities.

A candidate must include a resume and a cover letter that describes how their qualifications and experience match the needs and mission of VNRC. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. Upload required documents to: <https://eostransitions.applicantpool.com/jobs/>.

This executive search is being conducted by Eos Transition Partners consultant Catherine Bradshaw. All submissions will be acknowledged and are confidential, and any questions can be submitted to Catherine at: [cbradshaw@eostransitions.com](mailto:cbradshaw@eostransitions.com).

