

7 Lakes Alliance - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

7 Lakes Alliance Chief Executive Officer Belgrade Lakes, ME

7 Lakes Alliance is seeking nominations and applications for the position of Chief Executive Officer to lead a mature and vibrant conservation organization. [7 Lakes Alliance](https://www.7lakesalliance.org/) supports land and water conservation in the Belgrade Lakes Region by engaging with the whole community to achieve clean water, well stewarded lands, and a vibrant economy. This work combines contemporary scientific knowledge, respect for the area's natural heritage and local traditions, inclusive priority setting and collaborative problem solving, with ongoing dialogue and widespread resource sharing to create a culture of conservation for the benefit of all. (<https://www.7lakesalliance.org/>)

7 Lakes Alliance seeks a seasoned leader who is passionate about environmental stewardship and committed to advancing the mission of conserving the land and waters of the Belgrade Lakes region for all. Water quality has been deteriorating as a result of watershed development and aquatic invaders. The new CEO will be charged with leading conservation efforts to address these and other critical threats.

Reporting to a Board of Directors, the CEO will lead a team of conservation professionals with expertise in environmental law, land conservation and stewardship, erosion control, invasive species identification and eradication, and lake biogeochemistry. The CEO will oversee internal operations including budget, finance and information management, lead fundraising and development efforts, and oversee key program initiatives. S/he will lead the strategic planning processes and have excellent relationship-building skills to further key partnerships with Colby College, local watershed municipalities and businesses, and Maine public and private conservation organizations to cultivate support internally and externally for the work of 7 Lakes Alliance.

The CEO will have executive leadership experience, excel in relationship building across sectors – and with diverse stakeholders – and represent the organization in a credible and influential way. They will be responsible for staff management and development. S/he will be a dynamic and engaging communicator, both verbally and in writing. The CEO will have experience and an unwavering commitment to land and water conservation, along with a deep understanding of the challenges and opportunities related to community engagement in watershed management. The CEO will operate from the 7 Lakes Alliance building in Belgrade Lakes, Maine.

HISTORY AND MISSION

Founded in 2018 through the merger of the Belgrade Regional Conservation Alliance and the Maine Lakes Resource Center, 7 Lakes Alliance supports land and water conservation in the Belgrade Lakes Region by engaging and partnering with local communities to achieve the shared goal of clean water, well stewarded land, and a vibrant economy for the benefit of all.

Now a mature and vibrant conservation organization with a \$3M annual operating budget, 7 Lakes Alliance combines use of scientific knowledge, respect for natural heritage and local traditions, inclusive priority setting and a collaborative approach to create a culture of conservation that transcends the region's geographically and economically diverse community.

Key outcomes in the last five years include National Land Trust accreditation, conservation of 2,400 new acres of land including the 813 acre [Vienna Mountain Kennebec Highlands](#) project, management of the East Pond alum addition to sequester sediment-based phosphorus, restoring lake water quality,

establishment of a state-of-the-art water quality monitoring and analysis program in partnership with Colby College, expansion of proactive courtesy boat inspections and successful management of milfoil infestation on Great Pond, and expansion of erosion control projects supported by \$1.1M in Federal grants, resulting in over \$2M in total work to reduce erosion in the Belgrade Lakes watershed.

This work is based in a modern 3,500 sq. ft. conservation center with labs, office space, water access, infrastructure to support extensive field work, demonstrations of best management conservation tactics, and a 90 person community meeting space. The grounds of the building are a showcase for conservation best management practices including porous paving options, rain gardens, and buffer strips.

Committed to raising the necessary funds to grow programs, the organization is now well along in the private phase of a major comprehensive campaign geared at raising \$11M.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FACING THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

7 Lakes Alliance requires a leader who inspires collaboration and community engagement. Reporting to the Board of Directors, the new CEO will lead a dynamic, entrepreneurial team. Specifically, the CEO will:

- Bring a demonstrated passion and infectious commitment to land conservation and water protection that promotes healthy, vibrant, verdant, and resilient communities
- Be an excellent coalition builder and proven people connector, with a talent for transcending disparate interests through the articulation of a compelling vision that unites and inspires others
- Develop and lead donor engagement and fundraising strategies to increase financial support for 7 Lakes Alliance programs
- Oversee all organizational, administrative, and operational functions including accounting, budgets, finance, talent management, land stewardship, scientific study, and information management
- Design, coordinate, manage, and enhance existing programs including the Lake Trust, Land Trust, education and outreach initiatives, and water quality initiatives
- Regularly review and update the organization's strategic plan to reflect the mission and vision of 7 Lakes Alliance
- Deepen the existing relationship with Colby College, maximizing the terms outlined in the M.O.U. which include the provision of six research positions to advance scientific understanding of threats to water quality
- Steward and enhance collaboration with key partners and stakeholder groups to deepen community support for the work of 7 Lakes Alliance
- Serve as a champion, and charismatic community ambassador, for 7 Lakes Alliance

QUALIFICATIONS OF THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

While no one person will embody all of the qualities enumerated below, the ideal candidate will possess many of the following professional and personal abilities, attributes, and experiences:

- Demonstrated leadership skills and a minimum 7-10 years of professional experience working in a field related to land use and water conservation;
- Background leading non-profit organizations;
- Experience in fundraising with documented success, especially with respect to engaging foundation, government, and major donor sources;

- Executive leadership experience, including strategic planning, administration, program development, and board governance;
- Experienced and charismatic public speaker;
- Proven management skills, including the ability to build, supervise, mentor, and develop a highly skilled, productive and professional team;
- A humble servant leader with a strong ability to build and foster deep relationships with local government leaders, community partners, donors, volunteers, and diverse audiences;
- A demonstrated passion and interest in land conservation and watershed management and a strong drive to make a difference in the Belgrade Lakes ecosystem;
- An inspirational advocate for sustainable stewardship with a record of motivating others to join the cause, and a proclivity for persuading the toughest critics to reconsider and engage;
- The willingness, wisdom, and initiative necessary to learn, invent, innovate and otherwise further grow and enhance existing programs to improve the quality of life for everyone in the watershed;
- A sense of humor and an irrepressible passion for saving great places; and
- Bachelor's Degree required, Master's Degree or terminal degree is preferred.

APPLICATIONS AND NOMINATIONS

The search committee will begin reviewing applications on 10/30/23 and will continue until the position is filled. Applications including a cover letter describing your interest and qualifications, your resumé, and where you learned of the position should be sent to: CEO-Search@7LakesAlliance.org. 7 Lakes Alliance is an equal opportunity employer and proudly values diversity. Candidates of all backgrounds are encouraged to apply.