

Walloon Lake Association and Conservancy
Director of Conservation Programs (Full-Time)

Job Description Updated 3.2.2020

On July 1, 2019 the historical Walloon Lake Association (WLA), founded in 1910, merged into the Walloon Lake Association and Conservancy (WLAC), one of the oldest land trusts in the State of Michigan, founded in 1978. These sister organizations worked in tandem for nearly 40 years to protect and conserve the natural beauty of Walloon Lake and its surrounding lands for future generations. New leadership in the spring of 2017 and because of an increased focus on organizational capacity building, the course was set in 2018 to bring the resources of the WLA and WLAC together. The merger of the WLA and WLAC would streamline office functions, develop more impactful and unified messaging to increase stakeholder engagement and to better deliver on the mission to protect the most beautiful lake on the planet.

The newly formed Walloon Lake Association and Conservancy's (WLAC) mission is to conserve, care for and enhance the connection of people to Walloon Lake and its watershed, now and forever. The WLAC is an oddity in the conservation community in that it is a hybrid of a lake association and land trust. We view our uniqueness as a strength. We are a non-profit (501C3), membership-based organization. We have 17 Trustees and 5 full-time staff members with an additional 1-2 interns every summer. Through 12 Committees we are able to tackle lake and land issues; from boater safety, government relations, aquatic invasive species control to land conservation, preserve stewardship and public education. Additionally, the WLAC is pursuing Land Trust Alliance Accreditation in 2021. The right person will see this extra-ordinary combination as a unique opportunity to protect lake and land in one of the most beloved scenic areas in the country.

We: conserve and protect the "Gem of the North," aka Walloon Lake and its watershed following best practices and standards. We are a small but mighty team that helps form lifelong connections between this amazing little piece of the world and the people who live, work and play in Walloon. Our board members and volunteers are the best humans on the planet. And our stakeholders like to bake us cookies.

You: love all things land and water. Your everyday vocabulary consists of terms like "undivided partial interests," "environmental report: phase I," "biotechnical erosion control" and "Phragmites." You have the uncanny ability to make nature and science relevant and fun for anyone, of any age. You hold a lot of iron in your nose when you're running solo out in the field but you are also an accomplished people person.

Position Summary: The Director of Conservation Programs in cooperation with the Executive Director provides vision and leadership in land and water conservation programs to the organization and implements plans that support the Walloon Lake Association and Conservancy's (WLAC) strategic objectives. The Director promotes the mission and the interests of the WLAC to the internal membership community (Walloon Lake Association) as well as in the greater regional community. The Director of Conservation Programs directly influences the Conservancy's activities to acquire land or interests in land, oversees management of fee properties (Preserves), leads water protection initiatives, administers the conservation easement stewardship program, and assists with communications, fundraising, regional

planning as well as staff and volunteer management in coordination with the Executive Director. This position has one direct report, the Watershed Stewardship Coordinator.

Along with the ability to offer a competitive salary based on level of expertise and experience we provide benefits including but not limited to:

The usual...

- Simplified Employee Pension (SEP)
- Healthcare Reimbursement Arrangement (HRA)
- Short-term disability insurance
- Paid parental leave
- Annual bonus program

But to sweeten the deal...

- Modern and dog-friendly office space (Pygmy goats also welcome)
- Brand spankin' new Mac computers (We just had a complete tech upgrade in Feb 2020)
- Awesome teammates

DUTIES

Land Protection Program

- Leads, creates and implements the plan for strategic conservation, identifying priority areas for the land conservation program that align with the vision of the WLAC
- Familiarity with Land Trust Alliance Standards and Practices as well as the Accreditation process
- Develops land protection projects in focus areas for presentation to Land Protection Committee
- Identifies, cultivates and stewards relationships with interested landowners
- Proactively engages with interested landowners to design the appropriate protection strategy for properties; ensures due diligence regarding organizational priorities, and community needs; and manages the acquisition process of any new land protection project
- Coordinates the final approvals and closing of land acquisitions projects with Land Protection Committee and Board, executing all negotiation of easements, gifts and purchases with the oversight of the Executive Director
- Keeps and maintains accurate files and records for all WLAC projects
- Proactively identifies grant opportunities and plays an active role in fundraising for land acquisition projects
- Ensures the complete professionalism of WLAC's land conservation operations through full implementation of Land Trust Alliance *Standards & Practices*, including the development of appropriate policies and procedures

Water Protection Program

- Works to protect and if necessary restore the lakes, rivers, streams and wetlands in the watershed
- Is the technical expert who help municipalities, advocates, policymakers and citizens get clean water projects off the ground in our service area
- Participates in relevant local and state-wide initiatives that further the mission of WLAC, like the Michigan Shoreland Stewards program

- Manages the dissemination of information and program implementation of emerging water quality issues like PFAS
- Leads, implements and manages programs that control and prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species
- Leads annual water quality testing efforts and turns data derived into impactful messaging to stakeholders and future program recommendations
- Leads Swimmer's Itch research and control programs
- Educates municipal governments, the development community and the general public on the impacts of nonpoint source pollution on water quality in our communities
- Has basic knowledge of water quality parameters as well as familiarity with maintenance of equipment

Stewardship Program

- Oversees and manages stewardship staff in annual monitoring of preserves and conservation easements including; completing monitoring visits, management of volunteer monitors, landowner correspondence and record keeping
- Reviews and coordinates all conservation easement administration concerns in collaboration with Executive Director and Executive Committee
- Oversees creation of property management plans and implementation of plans
- Coordinates and leads stewardship staff activities including but not limited to restoration activities, trail development and creation, field events and volunteer coordination
- Responsible for identifying, cultivating and stewarding relationships with neighboring property owners
- Keeps and maintains accurate files and records for all WLAC properties – conservation easement and preserve lands

Conservation Partnership Support

- Researches, identifies and establishes mutually beneficial partnerships as they relate to conservation work
- Leads and coordinates all cooperative land protection efforts for agricultural and farmland protection, or other opportunities as they arise
- Participates in regional Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA)
- Plays lead or support role in partnership projects with service centers (Heart of the Lakes, Land Trust Alliance, etc)
- Maintains knowledge of national conservation trends and information and shares with committees, board and staff

Administration and Staff Management

- Supervises the Watershed Stewardship Coordinator including; creating work plans, oversight of work in field and guiding position's growth in consultation with Executive Director and Membership and Financial Operations Director
- Recruits and orients new staff, interns and volunteers (as needed)
- Directs and leads the Land Protection and Stewardship Committees in tandem with the committee chairpersons
- Sets and manages Conservation Programs budget responsibly, in tandem with the Finance committee and the Executive Director
- Contributes to the development of plans and strategies and the resolution of operational issues together with other teams

- Provides timely and accurate analysis of all programs and reports to the Executive Director, the Board and the rest of the organization as required
- Leads and/or assists in the creation of promotional materials for land conservation efforts, public outreach campaigns, or events to promote private land conservation
- Ensures all departmental activities comply with legally binding agreements and regulations
- Other duties assigned from time to time by the Executive Director

Personal Competencies

- Possess a collaborative management style with strong supervisory experience; demonstrated ability to organize, support, mobilize and motivate staff and volunteers
- Able to build access and influence with key players who can help move our agenda forward
- Expertise in the conservation grants community
- Possess a working knowledge of land conservation techniques and land stewardship
- Manage time and tasks independently, meeting deadlines with accuracy and completeness
- Exercise independent judgment, discretion, and decision-making on behalf of the organization
- Computer literacy and knowledge of GIS
- Field knowledge of flora and fauna of Great Lakes Region
- Outstanding communication skills, self-starter and ability to interact with diverse stakeholders and funders
- A passion for natural resource conservation and protection
- Maintains confidentiality and professional work standards and ethics

Education + Experience

- Bachelor's degree required in one or more of the following areas: environmental science, natural resources management, conservation, parks and recreation, environmental law or related field.
- Minimum of 2 years experience in land preservation with background in an appropriate combination of land planning/zoning, tax issues, law, natural resource management or watershed management, water conservation, wetland protection or related field.