



## Chief Operating Officer & Vice President of Conservation Policy

Posted: March 11, 2021

This position is part of Harpeth Conservancy's strategic growth plan to expand the number of vibrant, talented, and experienced leaders with expertise in conservation and environmental public policy on behalf of ensuring clean water and healthy rivers for every Tennessean.

**Position Description:** The position of Chief Operating Officer and Vice President of Conservation Policy will be responsible for leading and managing the public policy work of the organization and for the internal management of several core operations of the organization. This position will be one of the chief strategists in the conservation and environmental policy arena for Tennessee. This position requires someone who likes to solve problems, implement solutions, work with decision-makers, build coalitions, build and work with a network, is familiar with lobbying, and creates and manages issue campaigns effectively. This position also requires someone with a proven record of raising funds, internal program management, and strategic planning and leadership with staff, a board of directors and organizational advisors.

The successful candidate will have proven experience in conservation/environmental public policy leadership, advocacy, working with community leaders, issue campaign work, and coalition building as well as executive management in non-profit organizations. Also the position requires strong interpersonal skills, positive attitude, flexibility, ability to manage multiple priorities simultaneously, and appreciation for how to bring various perspectives together to solve complex problems that affect communities from agricultural to urban with respect to the environment and public health. The position requires a commitment to understanding and addressing systemic problems that cause environmental inequity and to working with a broad network that incorporates other effective efforts to affect social change to ensure environmental justice for all Tennesseans.

This intent is for the candidate to work in this role and then transition to the CEO within two years. The current and founding CEO will transition out of organization and program management into a role that provides leadership in statewide conservation and environmental policy and leadership fundraising for the strategic goals of the organization. The current COO & VP is retiring in this position but will continue with the organization as the Senior Policy Advisor as a vital part of the organization's conservation and environmental policy program and rural land and land use planning program efforts. This position is a core component of the organization forming a leadership staffing structure to support a statewide conservation policy organization and network.

This position is a corporate officer and will report to the board of directors. The decision to transition to the CEO role will be made by the board of directors.

### **Responsibilities of the position will include, but not be limited to:**

1. As Chief Operation Officer the position will handle:

- Annual planning process and oversee all program management, including the management systems for program tracking and accountability
  - Human resources, benefits, and annual staff plans and review
  - Annual budgeting, and oversee monthly financial reports, annual audit, tax return and other corporate filings
  - Responsible for corporate governance and oversee secretarial needs for the board of directors
2. As the Vice President of Conservation Policy the position will:
- Work with staff, board, and network of experts to direct, shape and lead the organization's policy work for the Clean Water Protection Program and Protection Rural Land and Land Use Program
  - Conduct and oversee analysis relevant to all conservation policy
  - Manage issue campaigns and advocacy efforts with staff team
  - Be an influential spokesperson and build relationships with decision makers in local government, state legislature, state agencies and other partners and entities
  - Work with the press including being the face of the organization
  - Provide leadership in shaping conservation policy in Tennessee
  - Lead in building an effective state-wide coalition for conservation and environmental public policy.
  - Inspire funders and build financial support for the core policy program work of the organization, including proposal writing
  - Be committed to the values of diversity, equity, inclusion and justice and be dedicated to creating environmental equity and ensuring environmental justice.

**Ideal Qualifications:**

- Master's degree, law degree and 5 or more years of senior nonprofit management experience. Prefer 10 years of senior nonprofit management experience
- Executive level experience with natural resource protection, conservation, or environmental action group or organization
- Demonstrated success in working with multiple partners, government agencies, local governments, community organizations and with diverse groups
- A history of successfully generating new revenue streams and improving fiscal results
- Demonstrated fundraising experience. Must have excellent donor relations skills.
- Demonstrated success in establishing relationships with individuals and organizations of influence including funders, partner agencies and localities, and volunteers
- Demonstrated information technology skills including overseeing social media and related advocacy and network building tools
- While not required, having networks and/or expertise in Tennessee preferred
- Expertise and familiarity with lobbying, campaign management, and advocacy
- As one of the key external voices for the organization, the candidate needs to possess excellent oral and written communication skills in various formats and be a confident public speaker
- Must have genuine love for the outdoors and commitment to protecting our streams, river and wetland resources.
- Comfortable interacting professionally with all levels of donors, supporters, and volunteers
- Ability to multi-task and stay calm under pressure
- Team player and strong time management skills and ability to meet deadlines

- Able and willing to work outside of the constraints of a standard work week, as required, including weekends
- Proficient financial skills (budgeting, financial analysis, etc.)
- Facile with Microsoft Office (esp. Word, PowerPoint, & Excel), donor software, social media platforms, advocacy/networking tools, and related software
- Work style characterized by self-motivation, initiative and integrity
- Commitment to the mission of Harpeth Conservancy
- Must be able to work legally in the United States
- Ability to work out in the field in rivers, farmland, be able to travel, and work at events.

**Salary, Benefits and Work Environment:**

The salary base is \$100,000 with a range above based on experience. The position is based at our office in Brentwood, TN. A flexible work schedule is expected to accommodate evenings and weekends, travel and traffic. Harpeth Conservancy benefits include generous paid-time-off, Blue Cross Blue Shield of TN cafeteria health insurance plan with a pre-tax Health Savings Account and a Simple-IRA retirement plan.

**Please submit cover letter, resume and three references to:**

EMAIL: [info@harpethriver.org](mailto:info@harpethriver.org) addressed to the Review Committee

**About the Harpeth Conservancy:**

The Harpeth Conservancy is a science-based conservation organization dedicated to clean water and healthy ecosystems for rivers across Tennessee. Founded in 1999, our mission is to restore and protect clean water and healthy ecosystems for rivers in Tennessee by employing scientific expertise and collaborative relationships to develop, promote, and support broad community stewardship and action. Harpeth Conservancy works with landowners, businesses, community, local, state, and federal decision-makers and members to foster solutions that reduce pollution and maintain healthy areas. The rivers in Tennessee, including the Harpeth, are part of the unique freshwater river systems of the Southeast which contain some of the greatest variety of aquatic life in the world.

A State Scenic River, the 125-mile long Harpeth River flows through both rural and rapidly developing urban and suburban areas of the greater Nashville region, one of the fastest growing regions in the country. The Harpeth is one of the few entirely free-flowing rivers in the state as a result of our efforts and one of the most ecologically, culturally, historically, and recreationally significant rivers in Tennessee. However, water and land use practices critically impaired the river, cited as one of America’s Most Endangered Rivers in 2015.

Over the past 20 years, the organization has broadened both the scope and geographic reach of its work as it applied lessons learned on the Harpeth to rivers and streams across the state. Supported by a broad network of volunteers, donors, and professional staff, Harpeth Conservancy has expertise in a range of disciplines including water quality science, environmental and conservation law and policy, sustainable land use planning, agricultural best management practices, volunteer and community engagement, and others.

The organization engages in land development decisions, promotes smart growth and agricultural management practices, designs stream restoration plans, assesses sewer and drinking water challenges,

conducts river studies, ensures pollution threats are removed, promotes recreation and public education, and serves as a catalyst for effective statewide conservation policies. Harpeth Conservancy uses its expertise, applied science, and relationships with landowners, businesses, residents and policy decision-makers to develop solutions inclusive of the people who live and work here.

By seeking water quality solutions developed with diverse stakeholders, Harpeth Conservancy builds broad stewardship and shared responsibility for streams and rivers that are vital for the state's economic well-being and quality of life. The Harpeth Conservancy vision is clean water and healthy ecosystems for rivers in Tennessee, championed by the people who live here. For examples of some of the major successes, see this section of our web site: [www.harpethconservancy.org/about/20-years-of-success/](http://www.harpethconservancy.org/about/20-years-of-success/)