



# Executive Director Durham, NC

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## The Opportunity | *Executive Director*

The Eno River Association (ERA), based in northern Durham, NC, seeks an inspiring and experienced leader to serve as its next Executive Director. The next Executive Director will be a visionary and collaborative leader with a deep belief in the value of land conservation, community-building, and advocacy. This individual will bring fresh perspectives and proven experience to guide ERA's strategic objectives in alignment with its 2023-2027 strategic plan. The ideal candidate will possess a commitment to viewing all work through an anti-racist and equity lens. The Executive Director will excel at building strong partnerships with donors, landowners, local land trusts, community groups, legislators, and local government officials to help achieve the organization's mission.

The ERA is supported by a 16-member volunteer Board of Directors, and the Executive Director will lead a dedicated team of 11 staff members. Directly under the Executive Director are three full-time program directors: Director of Conservation and Stewardship, Director of Philanthropy, and Director of External Engagement as well as the Finance and Operations Manager. A key priority will be working collaboratively with the executive team to fill the vacant Director of Philanthropy position and to expand the organization's donor base to secure a sustainable future for its conservation work. ERA staff are supported by a talented corps of more than 1,000 volunteers, many of whom have been with the organization for a decade or more.

The new Executive Director will oversee the three program areas and operations of the Association. Program areas include land conservation efforts and the long-term stewardship of protected lands and easements; environmental educational programs; and community engagement including the Festival for the Eno. Additionally, the leader will continue ERA's advocacy at the local and state levels for the protection of the Eno River basin and support of Eno River State Park. They will work closely with the Board of Directors to recruit new members and align their efforts with ERA's strategic goals. The ideal candidate will have proven leadership experience, particularly in land conservation, non-profit management, or a related field, and possess strong fundraising skills with a history of cultivating and soliciting major donors, foundations, and public funding agencies. The role also requires exceptional management and organizational skills, with experience improving systems and processes, and the ability to build effective partnerships with a wide range of stakeholders. A creative advocate with excellent public speaking and diplomacy skills is essential.



## The Organization | *Eno River Association*

The ERA is an accredited nonprofit land trust dedicated to protecting and conserving the natural, cultural, and historic resources of the Eno River basin. Since its founding in 1966 by local citizens, the ERA has played a pivotal role in the creation of Eno River State Park and has protected nearly 8,000 acres within the river basin, much of which is now part of seven public parks (Eno River State Park, Occoneechee Mountain State Natural Area, West Point on the Eno Durham City Park, Confluence Natural Area, Panther Branch Natural Area, Little River Regional Park, and Penny's Bend Nature Preserve). The ERA is accredited by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, underscoring its commitment to excellence in land conservation, and is a member of Land for Tomorrow, a statewide coalition dedicated to increasing land and water conservation in North Carolina. The organization conducts a wide variety of popular STEM-based environmental education programs, engaging more than

6,000 participants each year. In addition, the ERA organizes the annual Festival for the Eno, which attracts more than 10,000 participants and raises awareness for river protection during this two-day music, craft, food, and educational event over July 4th weekend.



For nearly 60 years, the ERA has focused on river protection and building the Eno River State Park, one of the natural treasures of North Carolina. Today, the organization is working to deepen its commitment to prioritizing environmental justice, climate resilience, and community-driven conservation while continuing its mission to protect and steward the lands within the Eno River watershed, expanding public awareness of the importance of land conservation, and providing environmental education. This is an exceptional opportunity for a dedicated, collegial, and innovative leader to help shape the future of land conservation in North Carolina's vibrant and diverse Piedmont Triangle region.

## Responsibilities & Qualifications | *Executive Director*

### **Leadership**

- Provides visionary and strategic operational leadership while upholding the Association's mission, values, and direction; ensures adherence to best practices organization-wide.
- Collaborates with the Board and staff to update and implement the Association's long-range strategic plan.
- Works with the Board and staff to secure resources for financial stability and adequate reserves.
- Provides leadership in developing organizational, financial, and program plans in coordination with the Board of Directors and staff; implements Board-authorized policies.
- Partners with the Director of Conservation and Stewardship and the Board to acquire and protect new conservation properties, ensuring they fulfill the organization's conservation goals and legal requirements, with effective funding strategies and partnerships.

- Strengthens and expands strong collaborative working relationships with governments, land trusts, conservation-related organizations, or other entities to support the Association’s success and advocacy efforts.
- Keeps the organization informed of national, state, and local trends and policies.
- Cultivates a safe, productive, and healthy work environment for staff and volunteers.
- Promotes diversity and equity internally and externally with membership, program participants, supporters, and volunteers.
- Manages recruitment, employment, and release of all personnel in line with approved policies; maintains a motivating environment to attract and retain a diverse, high-quality staff.
- Ensures staff and volunteers receive the best possible training and support within the budget constraints to excel in their positions.

### ***Fundraising/Communications/Marketing***

- Actively supports the Director of Philanthropy and other staff to create a diversified fundraising strategy including annual, major, planned/estate, and land gifts from individuals, as well as support from foundations, corporations, civic organizations and government agencies.
- Collaborates with the Director of Philanthropy and the Board to prepare an annual fundraising plan to meet budgetary needs, grows conservation reserve funds and potentially establishes an endowment.
- Works closely with the Director of External Engagement, Events Manager and staff to ensure that the annual Festival for the Eno and other special events are run efficiently and safely, achieving their fundraising, marketing, entertainment and public awareness objectives.
- Manages a personal portfolio of top donors and prospects, including cultivation and solicitation, while encouraging and supporting fundraising activities by the Board.
- Participates in membership and major donor recruitment, retention and stewardship events.
- Serves as the organization’s lead spokesperson and advocate in promoting ERA’s protection of the region’s natural resources and its impact on community health and vitality.
- Collaborates with the Philanthropy team in the creation of annual communications and public awareness and marketing plans using traditional and social media.
- Develops a thorough knowledge of ERA’s history, major accomplishments, challenges, key leaders, important funders, and its role within the NC and national conservation communities.



### ***Finance and Operations***

- Possesses a thorough knowledge of the organization’s financial details and status.
- Ensures sound financial management practices with effective internal controls to safeguard organizational assets.
- Prepares an annual organizational budget with staff input, recommending it to the Audit and Finance Committee for Board approval, and ensures operations adhere to budget guidelines.

- Collaborates with Finance and Operations Manager to manage cash flow, authorize bill payments, and ensure timely bank deposits and annual third-party audits.

### ***Land Conservation, Stewardship and Program Management***

- Supervises the Director of Conservation and Stewardship to ensure that all properties acquired and managed by the Association are cared for according to conservation best practices including maintaining positive relationships with land and easement donors and ensuring appropriate public use (as applicable).
- Supervises the Director of External Engagement to ensure that all programs function effectively and efficiently toward achieving the organization's mission, adhere to established goals and have a positive impact on program participants.
- Encourages collaboration among the staff to ensure that the work of the Association routinely and creatively supports fundraising and communication goals.

### ***Board of Directors***

- Keeps the Board fully informed on the condition of the organization and important factors influencing it.
- Provides accurate and timely reports and information necessary for the Board to make informed decisions.
- Plays an active role in the recruitment of building and developing a diverse Board of Directors.
- Assists the Board in creating a culture of philanthropy through individual giving and participation in fundraising and awareness activities.
- Works with individual Board members to maximize each member's contribution to the success of the organization.
- Works with the Board to plan, develop and implement projects that advance the Eno River Association's strategic plan.

### ***Education and Preferred Qualifications***

- Passion for and commitment to the Eno River Association's mission and its significance to the regional community.
- Minimum of three years in a leadership role within a nonprofit with a similar or related mission, showcasing a proven track record of advancing the organization towards ambitious goals.
- Knowledge of natural resource conservation and leadership experience in a natural resource or conservation-related organization is preferred, but not required. Knowledge of the Triangle region of North Carolina is beneficial.
- Politically savvy and a tested advocate with experience working with elected officials and government staff; capacity to establish, build and manage alliances and effective partnerships; ability to influence, engage and build long-term relationships with a wide range of key stakeholders.
- Strong cultural competency with a history of working effectively with all people irrespective of their history, economic status, challenges, race, gender, educational level or sexual orientation; belief in the importance of diversity and equity.

- Seasoned organizational leader and manager with a reputation for integrity and a track record of creating and nurturing effective, collaborative work environments built on trust, clear expectations and accountability.
- Proven ability to work effectively with a nonprofit Board of Directors.
- Demonstrated success leading a staff of equal or greater size in a productive and healthy teamwork environment.
- Diplomatic and trusted; leads by example, excellent listener and facilitator.
- Proven record of making difficult decisions.
- Exceptional writer and excellent communicator with the ability to listen and engage, who can inspire, educate and move people to action as a public speaker, in personal meetings, and in written form.
- Experienced networker, enthusiastic about making connections, attending events and being visible in places that benefit the organization.
- Strategic, with exceptional planning and management skills; results- and action-oriented. Sets and exceeds ambitious goals, meets deadlines and measures performance.
- Fundraising knowledge and personal experience raising significant gifts from individuals, businesses and foundations, and a history of securing federal, state and local government grants and contracts.
- Creative thinker who can envision new approaches while honoring the Association's history and traditions. Reflective and thoughtful in taking risks; knows how to sustain new action and scale new ideas and programs.
- Working knowledge of financial and fundraising databases and social media.
- Displays emotional maturity, energy, creativity, confidence and a sense of humor.
- Willing and able to work evening hours, weekends and holidays (specifically July 4<sup>th</sup> and New Year's Day) when necessary to carry out the Association's special events.

## **APPLY HERE**

Eno River Association has engaged Capital Development Services (CapDev) to conduct a national search for this position. Candidates are required to submit a cover letter and a resume. All materials will be kept confidential. Application materials will be reviewed as received.

Additional inquiries may be directed to [search@capdev.com](mailto:search@capdev.com).

