



Position Specification

Yosemite Conservancy
Chief Executive Officer

Our Client

Yosemite National Park is one of the most extraordinary places on the planet. Covering nearly 750,000 acres of California's Sierra Nevada, the park supports thousands of plant and animal species, including many found nowhere else, and has been home to American Indian people for millennia. Its granite domes, waterfalls, and 200-foot-tall giant sequoias gave rise to the National Park System. In the more than 150 years since it became a protected park, tens of millions of people have made their way to Yosemite.

In 1923, the Yosemite Natural History Association — now Yosemite Conservancy — became the first philanthropic partner organization in the park system. With support from generous donors, the Conservancy has worked with the National Park Service (NPS) to address Yosemite's most pressing needs and greatest opportunities. In celebration of its centennial, the Conservancy is launching a strategic campaign to ensure the park can thrive for the next 100 years and far beyond.

For 100 years, the Yosemite Conservancy has been dedicated to supporting the conservation of Yosemite's natural and cultural resources and helping people develop deep ties to the park. Thanks to generous donors, over the years the Conservancy has provided over \$152 million in grants to the park for more than 800 projects to restore trails and habitat, protect wildlife, provide educational programs, and more. The Conservancy's guided adventures and art classes, volunteer opportunities, wilderness services, and bookstores help people from across the country and world connect with Yosemite National Park.

Funding High-Priority Projects

- With support from donors, the Conservancy funds grants to the park for trail and habitat restoration, wildlife management, scientific research, visitor education, and more. Results of Conservancy-funded work is visible throughout the park, including at renovated overlooks, such as Tunnel View and Glacier Point; at Tenaya Lake and Lower Yosemite Fall; and in the restored Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias.
- Yosemite Conservancy receives support from a variety of sources, including: individual donations, estate gifts, and memorial gifts; grants from foundations and corporations; Yosemite license plates (issued by California Department of Motor Vehicles); and proceeds from our visitor programs, services, and bookstores.
- In 2023, Yosemite Conservancy supporters are funding more than 50 new grants to help repair trails, restore wetlands and wilderness, study and protect wildlife, make Yosemite's outreach more inclusive, inspire the next generation of park champions, and more. Major, multiyear Conservancy-supported projects opening this year include a new Welcome Center in Yosemite Village and restoration work at famous Bridalveil Fall.

Connecting People with Yosemite

- Visitors enjoy meaningful, memorable Yosemite experiences through the Conservancy's volunteer programs, art classes, and naturalist-led adventures. Our 2023 Outdoor Adventures include day hikes, backpacking trips, nature journaling workshops, and a series of in-depth Yosemite Field School courses on subjects such as climate change, geology, and history.
- The Conservancy's wilderness team processes wilderness permits, rents out bear-proof food canisters to backpackers, and helps manage the Ostrander Ski Hut.
- Bookstores online (shop.yosemite.org) and in the park offer top-quality products, including maps, guides, apparel, and books, including many from our long-running publishing program.
- Proceeds from Yosemite Conservancy's visitor programs, wilderness services and bookstores fund essential work in Yosemite.

Yosemite Conservancy is the only nonprofit dedicated to supporting Yosemite National Park. As Yosemite's official philanthropic partner and cooperating association, YC works closely with the park to fund high-priority projects and provide enriching educational programs. Additional information about Yosemite Conservancy can be found at yosemite.org.

The Role

The Chief Executive Officer of the Yosemite Conservancy is responsible for the administration of the organization's headquarters and all activities based in Yosemite National Park. The CEO is responsible for managing a team of 60 full-time staff and an annual budget of approximately \$25M. The current senior leadership team includes the Chief Development Officer, Chief Financial Officer, Chief Marketing and Communications Officer, Chief of Projects, and Chief of Yosemite Operations. Conservancy headquarters is located at 101 Montgomery Street, Suite 2450 in San Francisco and the majority of administrative staff are assigned to this location, including the current CEO.

It is expected that the new CEO will be housed in the San Francisco Bay Area. There is a second office in El Portal, CA (just outside of Yosemite) that houses approximately 30 in-park employees. The Chief Executive Officer reports to the Board of Trustees and is responsible for the organization's consistent achievement of its mission and financial objectives. Specific responsibilities of the CEO include:

Leadership and Management

- Provide leadership to the staff, Board of Trustees, Council, and other constituencies in executing the Conservancy's mission which is as follows: "We inspire people to support projects and programs that preserve Yosemite and enrich the visitor experience for all." The execution of this mission must be accomplished while providing the "margin of excellence" for Yosemite National Park.
- Work with the Board and staff to implement the Strategic Plan for 2023–2027; components of the plan include the following:
 - Focus people's connection and love of Yosemite into support for iconic projects and participation in programs.
 - Protect, preserve, and enhance Yosemite's natural and cultural resources.
 - Help all Yosemite visitors feel welcome and enjoy a positive experience in a World Heritage Site.
 - Be a prominent leader and collaborator inside and outside the park to support the long-term resilience of Yosemite's land and people.
 - Provide the systems and support needed to attract, retain, and empower the Conservancy workforce.
 - Foster culture and diversity across the staff, Board and Council as well as volunteers, vendors, and donors among others.
 - Provide the appropriate financial support for Yosemite's future while maintaining the Conservancy's overall financial strength.
- Lead the development of program, organizational and financial plans with the Board and staff and oversee the corresponding grants and projects as they are authorized and implemented.
- Serve as the primary spokesperson and advocate for the Conservancy; inspire and lead communication while demonstrating passion for the mission and clearly, enthusiastically, and effectively sharing it with many diverse audiences.
- Lead, inspire, mentor, and manage staff, including six direct reports and approximately 60 employees, plus additional seasonal employees, in the Conservancy's varied work sites in Yosemite.

Fundraising, Cultivation and Development

- Drive fundraising efforts in collaboration with the Council, the Board, staff, and volunteers; lead fundraising approaches with board and staff to major donors, organizations, institutions, and other key funding targets, both from established donors and new prospects.

Position Specification

Ref: Chief Executive Officer
Yosemite Conservancy

- Closely manage the Centennial Campaign and ensure its fundraising goal is achieved.
- Develop a strategy and a focus for broadening the Conservancy's membership base to retain current donors and include more diverse individuals.
- Work closely with the Board to broaden Council engagement in preparation for Council and Board succession.
- Inspire Yosemite donors to provide more than \$100 million in support between 2023–2027.
- Provide long-term opportunities to enhance and maintain capital and project investments.

Financial and Staff Oversight

- Work closely with the Conservancy's CFO and the Finance Committee chair to take responsibility for the Conservancy's annual budget and ensure the Conservancy's financial integrity.
- Work with Conservancy senior staff and the Human Resource director to provide for a positive, supportive, and productive working environment for all Conservancy employees.
- Manage employee housing units within El Portal and Yosemite West.

Sustaining and Growing Relationships and Partnerships

- Support, nurture, and maintain strong working relationships with key partners of the Conservancy — particularly the National Park Service and Yosemite National Park's superintendent and staff.
- Foster relationships with other organizations in support of the Conservancy mission and National Park Service requirements and processes (i.e. Aramark/Yosemite Hospitality, Ansel Adams Gallery, and National Park Friends Alliance).

Candidate Profile

Yosemite Conservancy is seeking an extraordinary leader of unquestioned personal and professional integrity, operational excellence, and practical experience potentially working with the National Park Service and/or the nonprofit, government and business sectors. The candidate will have the capacity to build constructive dialogue and collaboration among people, and across organizational structures and geography, while respecting legacy and promoting a culture of stewardship and service.

The ideal candidate will have experience working closely with a Board, staff, and other constituents to achieve ambitious goals in a fiscally responsible manner. The candidate will have outstanding communication skills, both written and verbal, and the ability to represent the organization, the Park and its mission effectively to a diverse array of audiences.

The candidate must be able to both shape and lead innovative strategies to support visionary ideas and execute against them. The ability to be nimble and manage change to meet the needs of a continuously evolving environment is important. The ideal candidate will exhibit a deep commitment to the mission and values of the organization and a passion for promoting and protecting Yosemite National Park. The candidate will recognize its global appeal, respect its history, and work to preserve its legacy for generations to come.

The ideal candidate is someone who is comfortable in a variety of contrasting settings — from the trail to Black Tie. Furthermore, the candidate should be: adaptable and able to modify style according to the needs of diverse groups; optimistic, confident, resilient; and charismatic and approachable to everyone.

In terms of the professional experiences desired, we would highlight the following:

- Demonstrated ability to build relationships/partnerships and influence in a multistakeholder environment. Relationship-building skills to establish, sustain and share strong personal and professional relationships with individual donors, trustees, volunteers, organizational partners (e.g., the National Park Service) and other groups.

Position Specification

Ref: Chief Executive Officer
Yosemite Conservancy

- Demonstrated fundraising and/or success in revenue-generation, with proven ability to motivate and inspire prospects, donors, volunteers, and others to give generously relative to their individual philanthropic capacity, passion, and interests.
- Experienced people manager and organizational leader. Experience in executive management with demonstrated capacity to manage growth, develop and execute business plans, supervise personnel, and track performance.
- Experience working in cooperation with complex business partners or federal agency personnel, like the National Park Service, and in partnerships toward a common result with National Park Service or other public, private, and nonprofit partners.
- Presentation and communication skills in multiple contexts to articulate a compelling vision, strategy, and set of priorities whether as a public spokesperson to the media, a speaker to small or large groups, a leader of meetings, or one-on-one with individuals.
- Familiarity with and passionate interest in national parks. Ability to understand and work within the complex nature of a highly visible natural resources environment and the operational impacts from climate change.

In terms of the leadership competencies desired, we would highlight the following:

Passion for Yosemite National Park

- Exhibits knowledge of and passion for National Parks, particularly Yosemite
- Fundamental understanding of conservation ethics and current issues in the conservation field.
- A commitment to conservation and a personal love of the outdoors and appreciation for history, wildlife, or nature more broadly is essential.

Inspirational and Strategic Leadership

- Motivates all stakeholders associated with the Yosemite Conservancy to assist in achieving the organization's mission.
- Ability to think in new, creative, and innovative ways and see beyond today to where new opportunities exist.
- Builds consensus among multiple constituencies; manages various perspectives and focuses all constituents around a shared vision for the Conservancy.
- Strengthens an inspirational culture focused on strategic objectives, innovation, fiscal responsibility and enhancement of revenues.
- Builds a collaborative working environment, coaching, leading and empowering staff to achieve the highest levels of success for the institution and themselves.

Fundraising and Resource Development

- Ability to garner resources from the existing donor population as well as new donors in support of the organization's mission and goals.
- Demonstrated success as a fundraiser who enthusiastically embraces the responsibility of engaging the full range of Yosemite Conservancy's supporters, from major donors, to foundation and government funders and partners, to loyal supporters.
- Experienced in developing productive partnerships with peers in local and state government, nonprofit, philanthropic, and private sectors.
- A natural relationship builder who builds lasting connections with stakeholders, and approaches doing so with genuine interest in and respect for the philanthropic goals of donors.

Building Relationships and Using Influence

- Inspiring communicator who can articulate vision and direction to a wide audience as well as being effective one-on-one.
- Ability to connect and work collaboratively with Board members, staff, the general public, donors and corporate leaders, other Friends groups, and government and community officials.
- Ability to influence internally and externally through informed vision, political savvy and networking – while bringing multi-constituency sensitivity and demonstrated commitment to diversity and inclusion.
- Naturally connects and builds strong relationships with others; an outstanding communicator able to represent Yosemite Conservancy effectively and authentically to diverse audiences.
- Demonstrated personal and professional commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion; sensitive to and effective at operating in an environment with a wide range of constituent communities.
- Able to develop productive relationships with Board members and Council members.
- A consensus builder, able to successfully drive groups to agreement and align diverse stakeholders with organization

Team Management and Operational Excellence

- Demonstrates strong emotional intelligence and the ability to attract and recruit top talent, motivate the team, delegate effectively, and manage performance; widely viewed as a strong developer of others.
- Operates with a clear focus on organizational goals amid multiple competing risks and demands, and structures the leadership team to effectively achieve organizational goals. Drives accountability and makes difficult decisions when needed.
- Proactively engages and supports workplace dialogue around diversity topics resulting in a reinforcement of employee values and inclusive behaviors.
- Encourages others to share the spotlight, and visibly celebrates and supports the success of the team.
- A leader who is self-reflective and aware of their own limitations; leads by example and drives the organization's performance with an attitude of continuous improvement; open to feedback and self-improvement.

Compensation

The estimated base salary for this position is approximately \$300,000. The salary of the finalist selected for this role will be determined based on various factors, including, but not limited to, scope of role, level of experience, accomplishments, internal equity, budget, and subject to Fair Market Value evaluation. The base compensation range listed is a good faith determination of potential base compensation at the time of this job advertisement and may be modified in the future.

Contact

Russell Reynolds Associates has been exclusively retained for this search. Given the need for confidentiality throughout this process, prospective candidates are invited to reach out directly to our search consultants at YosemiteConservancy@russellreynolds.com with a resume and brief expression of interest.