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ECOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA

esa

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Opportunity

The Ecological Society of America ([ESA](#)) seeks a dynamic and engaged Executive Director (ED). The ED provides vision and direction to a vibrant scientific society by connecting scientists across multi-faceted disciplines and promoting ecological science through publications, events, and educational programs.

The position calls for a dynamic leader and spokesperson who brings proven managerial and organizational leadership skills and outstanding abilities in communication, collaboration, and member service. An understanding of ecology and a passion for the role of science in society are essential.

This position is hybrid in Washington, DC.

About ESA

Established in 1915, the Ecological Society of America is a nonpartisan, nonprofit scientific organization committed to advancing the science of ecology, fostering research and communication among scientists, and promoting the responsible application of ecological data and principles to solve environmental problems. ESA is now a diverse global community of more than 9,000 scientists, researchers, decision-makers, policymakers, and educators who are dedicated to understanding and stewardship of life on Earth.

Committed both to serving members and serving society, ESA fulfills its mission through a wide range of services, programs, and initiatives. Members receive a suite of publications, convene annually for a multi-day conference to share and discuss research and relevant public policy, and connect with colleagues through over 40 regional and special interest sections and chapters. The Society also promotes ecology through policy, media outreach, education, diversity initiatives, workshops, and professional certification. ESA's suite of respected publications comprises hybrid journals such as its flagship *Ecology*; *Ecological Monographs*; *Ecological Applications*; and *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment*, alongside the fully Open Access journals *Ecosphere* and *Earth Stewardship*.

With its headquarters in Washington, DC, ESA has a staff of 30 and an annual budget of approximately \$7 million.

The Executive Director (ED) Role

Reporting to the ESA Governing Board and working in close partnership with its President, the Executive Director is the chief staff officer of ESA with oversight of all its activities and responsibility for its financial wellbeing.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities

Leadership/Governance

- Lead the implementation of the strategic plan and ensure that ESA's organizational structure and resource allocation are well-aligned with its direction and goals; continuously review the implementation and set standard metrics to measure progress.
- Provide disciplined organizational vision and management, ensuring long-term financial sustainability.
- Collaborate with the ESA President and members of the Governing Board to assess and address issues affecting ESA's mission, vision, goals, and operations.
- Effectively lead ESA staff, promoting high standards of excellence and accountability. Foster a culture of openness, accessibility, inclusivity, and teamwork.
- Raise the profile of ecology as a dynamic, highly impactful and interdisciplinary field of study and to position ESA as an influential voice for the discipline.
- Support and coalesce members as they play more prominent, public-facing roles. Nurture and develop diverse new and younger leaders for ESA and the profession while still drawing upon and energizing key leaders of the past.
- Maintain the Society's standards of academic rigor and respect even as it works to influence public policy.
- Set a standard for diversity and inclusion within and among ESA's membership, board, staff, and partners, and in the field of ecology as a whole.

Communications & Advocacy

- Oversee all communication and outreach efforts including journals, publications, educational materials, website content, and social media
- Ensure a strong ongoing partnership with its publisher, Wiley, upholding the rigor and quality of ESA publications while keeping close watch on trends, opportunities, and potential threats to the publishing enterprise.
- Support efforts of the Editors-in-Chief and publishing staff to improve and promote existing journals and evaluate the impact of open access on the portfolio; monitor publishing revenue and ensure priorities established in the strategic plan are met, including evaluating the total number of journal submissions and usage data.
- Increase the visibility of ESA broadly and boost its presence in Washington, DC.
- Forge productive relationships with public officials, governmental and non-governmental agencies, and the media. Make the case for the relevance of ecological sciences to issues of economic prosperity, equity, human health and wellbeing, climate change, and other major societal concerns.
- Pursue new and enhanced revenue sources for the Society, including where possible, philanthropic support.

Contribute to Member and Organizational Success

- Retain, grow, and broaden the Society's membership, including the organizational membership program.
- Help make ESA even more relevant and accessible to today's multi-faceted community of ecologists, including those in academia, government, and the private sector, so that members value and deepen their connection to the organization.
- Support members' professional development and help them forge connections to colleagues across sectors and disciplines. Pursue innovations to advance collaboration, skill-building, and action at the chapter and section levels.
- Strengthen internal technology capabilities to better serve ESA membership and reach decision-makers and the public.
- Continue to build, strengthen, and promote the ESA certification program. Ensure programming is furthering diverse career opportunities for ecologists and setting professional standards for members and nonmembers alike.
- Support DE&I work across the Society, including the Diversity Committee; inclusive meeting practices; hiring of editorial fellows; SEEDs funding; and increasing Indigenous voices.
- Plan and execute the Society's vitally important annual conference and related activities.
- Oversee the implementation and development of all educational activities, professional resources, meetings, training programs and materials, research products, programs, and services to fulfill the Society's mission and strategy.
- Measure member satisfaction with the Society's meetings, educational programs, and scientific publications and programs and offer improvement suggestions, as needed.
- Coordinate development and execution of fundraising initiatives supporting program priorities and activities; identify and report key results to Society leadership.

Management/Administration

- Work with the senior staff to identify and implement activities that foster a culture of openness and teamwork. Build consensus on how to best share information and use in-office time.
- With Director of Finance, maintain transparency around budgets and provide monthly financial reports to Directors.
- Work with senior staff to prioritize their workloads and provide adequate resources and support to carry out their work.
- Lead the staff to implement strategic plan priorities and align with the budget. Communicate how priorities align with staff, committees and Governing Board.
- Develop a standard set of metrics for staff to use to report back to the Governing Board to communicate progress towards goals.

Skills, Experience, and Qualifications

- Proven leader with 10+ years of experience in an Executive Director, COO, or senior-level position within an organization of comparable budget size. Experience in a scientific nonprofit organization or association is highly desired, and experience working closely with or reporting to an engaged board is preferred.
- A bachelor's degree is required. A master's degree in business or a related field preferred. CAE credential a plus.
- Proven track record in revenue growth and diversification, especially in a scientific organization, with discipline and focus in setting clear priorities, meeting or exceeding goals, delegating effectively, and running a fiscally sound operation.
- Experience with government relations and a wide network of contacts in DC. Experience building productive partnerships and strategic alliances.

Personal Qualities and Competencies

- Ability to innovate, inspire and mobilize others and understand and leverage technology.
- Passion for science and the vital work of scientists in society. Appreciation for the role of research and the challenges facing researchers today.
- Proven understanding of the science/policy interface. Sound political judgment and media savvy.
- Knowledge, interest, and experience with new communications technologies and platforms. Inventiveness in how the use of these technologies might enhance ESA's purposes and its members' work and careers.
- Understanding of the dynamics of a membership organization. The ability to listen well, communicate widely and frequently, and promote a sense of common purpose.
- A management style that is goal-oriented but flexible, which respects the capabilities, resourcefulness, and independence of staff members, delegates to them as appropriate, and provides them with a clear sense of direction.
- Cultural competence. Demonstrated commitment to advancing diversity and inclusion.
- Strong writing and public speaking skills.
- Integrity, good humor, diplomacy, patience, warmth, resilience, and considerable energy.

Compensation

The starting salary for this position is \$225,000 - \$275,000. A competitive compensation package will be offered to attract an outstanding candidate.

To Apply

To apply, please send a cover letter and current resume (Microsoft Word® format preferred) [here](#). The cover letter should outline how your experience fits the requirements of the position as this will be an important factor in considering your candidacy.

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Additional Information

For more information, contact:

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