

employment opportunity

# Executive Director

at



## The Partnership for the National Trails System

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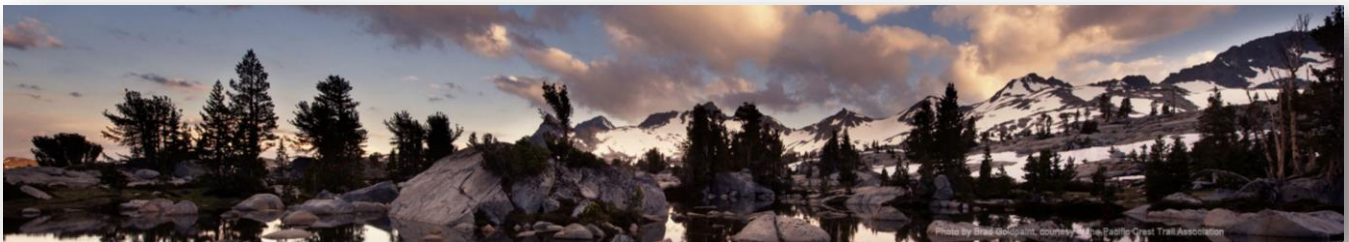
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# The Partnership for the National Trails System is hiring an Executive Director

**Peter Gray Executive Search is the Partnership's  
exclusively retained partner for this executive search**

*All images courtesy of The Partnership for the National Trails System, except where noted.  
Cover image, left: Appalachian Trail Conservancy. Right: Will Chavez, Cherokee Phoenix  
Below: Brad Goldpaint, courtesy of the Pacific Crest Trail Association*



## about the Partnership for the National Trails System

The [Partnership for the National Trails System](#) (PNTS, or “the Partnership”) is the only nationwide, nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting the extraordinary value of America’s 32 [National Scenic and Historic Trails](#) within the [National Trails System](#).

These include iconic scenic trails such as the [Appalachian Trail](#), the [Continental Divide Trail](#), and the [Pacific Crest Trail](#); and significant historic trails such as the [Lewis and Clark Trail](#), the [Trail of Tears](#), and the [Selma to Montgomery Trail](#).

The Partnership advocates on behalf of the National Trails System as a whole for land preservation and stewardship resources. It provides the private partners associated with each trail with resources to enhance their advocacy, professional trail skill sets, volunteer engagement, and nurturing of future conservationists.

Today, in addition to the Partnership’s 32 National Scenic & Historic Trail members, the Partnership has a growing network of [affiliate members](#) and works in close collaboration with the several [Federal agency partners](#) who have jurisdiction over the trails.

Since 2001, the Partnership has embodied the collaboration of the National Trails System Act and has advocated for the trails. The Partnership continues to seek new partnerships and relationships both within and outside the trails community to foster a strong National Trail System well-connected to communities, businesses, and civic groups.

## the Partnership's mission, vision, and purpose

- **Mission:** To empower, inspire and strengthen public and private partners to develop, preserve, promote and sustain the national scenic and historic trails.



- **Vision:** PNTS envisions a world-class system of National Scenic and Historic Trails that preserves natural and cultural values and provides recreational benefits for all.
- **Purpose:** The purpose of PNTS is to promote and support the efforts of National Scenic and Historic Trail organizations, to secure public and private resources and to serve as a collective voice for policy and action that supports national scenic and historic trails.

## what the Partnership does

- **Advocate** for Federal agency policy and legislation that preserves America's natural and historic heritage.
- **Introduce** young people through a variety of programs to the natural grandeur of America and inspiring episodes of our history.
- **Engage** diverse populations so that all Americans are included and welcomed to enjoy our premier long-distance trails.



*National Trails Guide*

- **Promote** healthful outdoor recreation and appreciation of cultural, historic, natural, and scenic values and resources.
- **Conserve** remarkable natural, cultural, scenic, and historic resources and places.
- **Celebrate** pathways across America and through our history.

## about the position

The Partnership seeks a dynamic leader who can oversee or participate in all aspects of the organization. The ideal candidate will bring strong administration, operational and fundraising skills, coupled with a readiness for learning and relationship building; gaining an understanding of the Partnership's history and current position; and developing a rapport with the staff, board, members, and strategic partners. They will demonstrate leadership, vision and an entrepreneurial spirit, building on the organization's current strengths and advancing the Partnership's long-term goals.

Reporting to the Board of Directors, the Executive Director provides overall leadership for the organization, with its current budget of over \$500,000 and team of five staff. The Executive Director is responsible for the planning, implementation and evaluation of the Partnership's operations and programs.

### **The Executive Director's major roles and activities include:**

- **Convening a community** of National Trails that provides forums for peer exchange, collaborative planning and the sharing of resources, including coordinating a System-wide action plan to set and advance goals.
  - System-wide, collaborative goal setting and action to advance priorities for National Historic & Scenic Trails; and
  - Next generation programs that provide opportunities for young professionals to explore careers in trails.
- **Generating resources and awareness** to elevate National Trails. Examples include:
  - A robust training program that includes online and in-person opportunities for learning;
  - An overall communications plan designed to promote National Trails, PNTS, its members and partners; and,
  - Special projects such as the recent Native Lands, National Trails project that provides training, resources and tools to help trail organizations and Indigenous communities develop more meaningful relationships.
- **Leading a coalition** to advance National Trails advocacy and policy priorities. Examples include:
  - Act as a collective voice that speaks on behalf of National Historic & Scenic Trails priorities;
  - The annual [Hike the Hill®](#) multi-day action aimed at increasing congressional and federal agency leader awareness and adequate funding of the National Trails System (a joint 26-year effort with the American Hiking Society); and,
  - Member informational and feedback forums.

## experience sought

A strong candidate would be comfortable navigating the following areas, with deep expertise in some of these areas:

- **Nonprofit leadership** experience, including knowledge and involvement with advocacy and policy.
- Demonstrated **affinity for the Partnership's mission** of supporting national scenic and historic trails.
- **People management** experience encompassing day-to-day team leadership, employee performance reviews, conflict resolution, recruiting, hiring and termination. Remote team management experience preferred.
- Demonstrated competencies in **diversity, equity, and inclusion** to foster a workplace culture of belonging; to strengthen relationships with the Partnership's diverse partners and stakeholders; and to build a broader and more collaborative national trails community, in keeping with the Partnership's [Statement of Inclusion](#).



*Trust for Public Land*

- **Nonprofit development** experience including major donor relations, fundraising campaigns, and pursuit and management of grants.
- **External communications/public relations** experience to represent the Partnership to its partner organizations, in its member communities, and in the media.
- **Financial and administrative management** experience, notably in budget management, as well as other areas including audit compliance, and human resources administration.
- Familiarity with **nonprofit governance** for successful engagement with a nonprofit Board of Directors.

## statement of inclusion

The Partnership recognizes that national trails are a powerful way to connect with nature, history, and culture. The Partnership also recognizes there are historical injustices that have resulted in barriers that prevent people from accessing trails and their resources.



Joni Packard

On February 8, 2020, the Partnership Board approved this Statement of Inclusion:

*The Partnership for the National Trails System (Partnership) recognizes that national trails are a powerful way to connect with nature, history, and culture. These trails cultivate a society that values protection and stewardship for our natural, cultural, historic, and scenic resources. We also recognize there are historical injustices that have resulted in barriers that prevent people from accessing trails and their resources. The national trails community perceives these obstacles as moral and strategic opportunities to bridge gaps and expand our capacity to protect and promote the National Trails System. We are committed to actively overcoming these obstacles as a community and enacting positive systemic change within our trails network and extended outreach.*

*The Partnership will foster an inclusive National Scenic and Historic Trails community that values and engages the perspectives and contributions of all individuals beyond social, political, and cultural boundaries. This includes acknowledgement of original inhabitants and their historic legacy to these sites. We will work to ensure equal opportunities for everyone to access our National Scenic and Historic Trails as well as feel valued and represented. The Partnership will identify barriers that prevent people from accessing trails and their resources. In turn, we will strive to find solutions to reduce these barriers and aid groups and individuals in overcoming them through direct outreach or other means. As a continually learning organization, we will encourage our members to routinely evaluate and prioritize representation, access, and cultural identity within the programs they offer to the public. We are dedicated to building a broader and more collaborative national trails community, including people of varied backgrounds and identities.*

*The Partnership is a dynamic organization that seeks to infuse its values in all aspects of its work. We are committed to perpetual growth and learning, and strive to recognize and understand our biases. We are cognizant that intention in thought is not enough, and so we aspire to put intention into action. In doing so, we will continually observe successes and mistakes in our efforts to enhance equity and challenge ourselves to dismantle barriers, while constructing potential opportunities to learn, change, and consistently remain accountable.*

*In championing a culture of **justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion**, the Partnership aspires to cultivate greater strength and resilience within the Partnership and beyond our network as we welcome all to protect, enjoy, and support the National Trails System and public lands.*

Employment Opportunity: Executive Director at the [Partnership for the National Trails System](#)

## job location: remote/flexible

As an organization that advocates for its nationwide network of member organizations and collaborates closely with several Federal agencies, the Partnership is headquartered in Washington, DC.

The Partnership's staff is geographically dispersed and accustomed to working effectively as a remote/virtual team.

The Executive Director can live anywhere in the US, provided they have the flexibility to travel on Partnership business and the ability to lead the organization and its team remotely.

## salary

The Partnership's Executive Director position has a salary of \$105,000.



*Sarah L. Voisin, Washington Post*



Employment Opportunity: Executive Director at the [Partnership for the National Trails System](#)

interested?

Please **apply confidentially**: [bit.ly/PNTS-apply](https://bit.ly/PNTS-apply)

The position is open until filled. It was announced on May 22, 2023. Rather than setting an application deadline, we are considering applications and holding interviews on a rolling basis. For best consideration, please apply promptly; and please complete all questions in the application, including the cover letter/personal statement. Our goal is to fill this position by August.



*Philip Kramer, mountaineers.org*

The Partnership has exclusively retained [Peter Gray Executive Search](#) to conduct the search for its new Executive Director. Peter Gray Executive Search is a social impact executive search firm in Madison, Wisconsin.

The Partnership and Peter Gray Executive Search are equal opportunity employers, committed to attracting candidates representing a diverse range of backgrounds. The Partnership strongly believes it benefits from the perspectives and talents of a racially and culturally diverse staff.

## about peter gray executive search



**Peter Gray** (he/him) is a recovering Wall Street recruiter who now recruits social impact leaders and fight bias in hiring.

As founder and CEO of [Peter Gray Executive Search](#), he guides nonprofit organizations and social impact employers through [leadership succession](#) and other [strategic hiring](#). He also [trains](#) employers on diversifying hiring outcomes, and [coaches](#) individuals on overcoming bias in job search and career advancement.

Peter began his career in executive search at Korn Ferry in New York City. He gives back as a volunteer adviser, fundraiser, and board member for nonprofit and civic organizations. He chairs the Boys & Girls Clubs of Dane County's [Move 'n' Groove for Boys & Girls Clubs](#) campaign, which has raised over \$10 million for youth development.

Peter holds a BA from Harvard University, and an MBA from Columbia Business School.

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