

Chief Executive Officer

RECRUITMENT PROFILE

The employees and Board members of the Sonoran Institute are passionate about the West and are dedicated to creating livable communities, healthy landscapes, and resilient economies. Based in Tucson, Arizona, the Institute thrives on collaboration and innovation, both culturally and through program execution. The Sonoran Institute also has offices in Phoenix, Arizona; Bozeman, Montana; Glenwood Springs, Colorado; Sheridan, Wyoming; and Mexicali, Baja California.



Executive Leadership Opportunity

With its trademark collaborative approach, the Sonoran Institute is a leading voice for conservation in the West, and has a national reputation for helping communities make wise decisions about growth, development, and protecting their natural resources. Building on 22 years of successful leadership, a new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) will lead an organization with a solid foundation, a track record for achieving conservation results, and a thriving team of motivated employees. The new CEO will have a unique opportunity to strengthen the organization's existing footprint, and to creatively expand it.

Based in Tucson, Arizona, and reporting to the Board of Directors, the CEO is responsible for providing inspiration and strategic leadership for the Institute by working with a dynamic leadership team to establish long-range goals, strategies, plans, and policies. The CEO oversees all organizational activities and ensures that the initiatives of the Institute are carried out in a manner consistent with the organization's mission, vision, programs, and policies as defined by the Board of Directors. The CEO is the organization's lead spokesperson and its most visible representative to direct the Institute's policy agenda. The CEO works closely with the Chief Development Officer in fundraising activities for the organization.

The new, urban headquarters of the Institute in downtown Tucson exudes a feeling of confidence and professionalism in a casual environment. Though the atmosphere is relaxed, the quality of work is of the highest caliber. Open and freewheeling discussions on current topics are heard throughout the office. Our staff and Board of Directors are educated about the issues, passionate about conservation, committed to collaboration, and eager to make change.

Located in southeast Arizona, Tucson is an outdoor-focused, family-oriented small city surrounded by the natural beauty of the Sonoran Desert. Encircled by protected public lands—including Saguaro National Park, Coronado National Forest, Las Cienegas National Conservation Area, Ironwood Forest National Monument, Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge, and a host of state and county parks—Tucson enjoys a reputation for having an exceptional quality of life and first-class outdoor recreational opportunities. Tucson also enjoys more sunshine than just about any other major city in the United States, and is home to the University of Arizona, a premier academic and research institution.



Key Sonoran Institute Accomplishments

- Helped to secure formal recognition by Congress of the 27 million-acre National Landscape Conservation System and to boost funding for the system (2009).
- Working with nonprofits and the United States and Mexico governments, created a restoration plan for the Colorado River Delta, established a Water Trust in Mexico to acquire water rights for conservation purposes, and created new wetlands that now serve as an important stopover for migrating birds along the Pacific Flyway (2005-2012).
- Led efforts to get Congress’s unanimous approval to establish the 45,000-acre Las Cienegas National Conservation Area in SE Arizona (2000). Led efforts to expand Saguaro National Park.
- Led an innovative, landowner-based initiative to protect the 90,000-acre San Rafael Valley from ex-urban development.
- Assisted in raising more than \$225 million in funds for conservation through local open space bonds, development agreements, and small grants.
- Helped seed the creation of numerous enduring community-based conservation groups across the West, including the Beartooth Front Community Forum (Montana); the Salmon Valley Partnership (Idaho); the Morongo Basin Open Space Group (California); the Rincon Institute (Arizona); the International Sonoran Desert Alliance (Mexico-Arizona), and others.
- Trained and assisted more than 30 rural counties and local jurisdictions throughout the West on managing growth, leading to new comprehensive land-use plans, codes, and ordinances.

Sonoran Institute Overview

The Sonoran Institute envisions a West where civil dialogue and collaboration are hallmarks of decision making. Since 1990, the Institute has been bringing together diverse interests to create livable communities and forge effective and enduring conservation solutions through work in community planning and design, public lands protection and management, policy reform, energy sustainability, drought and climate change adaptation and mitigation, and prosperity within the changing economy in the West.

Strategic Plan

Our strategic plan identifies four key “Legacy” landscapes for focused, long-term conservation initiatives. The Institute’s strategic plan also calls for Westwide research and policy initiatives to address growth and sustainability challenges in the West.

Northern Rockies: Covering Montana, Idaho and Wyoming, this region harbors some of the country’s most important wild land resources. People move to the region for its stunning beauty and high quality of life. Growth levels have created challenges; poorly planned growth drives up taxpayer costs, threatens the economic future of communities, and degrades high-quality rural landscapes. We promote smart growth principles and economic development around existing natural and cultural assets to protect scenic vistas, open spaces, small-town character, and wild lands.

Western Colorado: Our work in western Colorado is guided by a vision of healthy rivers and landscapes, where compact, walkable communities are powered by renewable energy, connected by transit, and surrounded by working ranches and





wildlife habitat. Through place-based projects and region-wide training, research and outreach, we work with local partners to share a more sustainable future for the region.

Sun Corridor: The fastest growing metropolitan area in the United States stretches from north of Phoenix, to the south and east of Tucson. More than 10 million people are projected to live in this corridor by 2030. The Sun Corridor Team is focused on three goals: advance the availability of clean, renewable energy; conserve more than one million acres for future generations; and encourage state policies to protect Arizona's remaining free-flowing rivers.

Colorado River Delta: What remains of the Colorado River Delta is an important wetland, a stopover for migrating birds, and a leading source of freshwater to the Upper Gulf of California. The Institute is working to restore the Delta, to assist native people and other local communities with conservation efforts, and to ensure that development protects environmentally sensitive areas and creates local economic opportunities.

The Institute has an active Westwide partnership with the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. Called Western Lands and Communities (WLC), this program focuses on shaping growth, sustaining cities, protecting resources, and empowering communities in the Intermountain West. The Institute is restructuring its other Westwide programs into a number of focused thematic areas, with the goal of promoting conservation, renewable energy, sustainability and smart growth, and improved water management in the Colorado River Basin.



Sonoran Institute Facts

Established in 1990. Recently celebrated its 20th anniversary

- 2012 operating budget of \$5.4 million
- Employs 52 fulltime employees in six offices, including Mexico
- Overseen by a Board of Directors, which currently has 21 members
- The CEO directly supervises a:
 - Chief Program Officer
 - Chief Financial & Administrative Officer
 - Chief Development Officer
 - Executive Assistant

Key Responsibilities

The CEO is responsible for all the executive functions of the organization, including:

- Ensuring that the mission and core values of the Sonoran Institute are put into practice.
- Leading planning in support of the growth objectives of the organization.
- Cultivating major donors and foundations.
- Leading efforts to identify collaboration opportunities across the West.
- Inspiring and mentoring employees.
- Fostering a high-energy, goal-driven, team-oriented, accountable organization.
- Reporting to the Board of Directors and Executive Committee.



Executive and Leadership Qualifications

Education

An undergraduate degree from an accredited university or college—advanced degree preferred. The Institute is open to a diversity of educational backgrounds, including: urban and land-use planning, business, public policy, environmental sciences, and resource management. Advanced training or experience in nonprofit or business management is desirable.

Experience

Ten or more years in a leadership position, preferably for a nonprofit organization related to conservation that includes responsibilities for strategic planning, program planning, budgeting, implementation, evaluation, and fundraising, as well as staff development and management. Knowledge of the West and Western land-use and conservation issues is desirable. Demonstrated ability to join an entrepreneurial, multi-disciplinary organization with a binational/regional focus. Demonstrated ability to define new programmatic paths and approaches for the organization, thereby taking the organization to a broader and deeper level of influence Westwide. Experience working in concert with an active and engaged nonprofit board.

Competencies and Personal Characteristics

- Experience in leading multi-stakeholder, collaborative processes producing tangible outcomes.
- Experience in advocating administrative and legislative policy reforms at the local, state, and federal levels.
- Experience in serving as a lead spokesperson for campaigns and in generating coverage in the print and electronic media.

- Experience in directing strategic planning or other organizational development activities involving both staff and board of a nonprofit organization.
- Demonstrated success in raising funds from foundations, government agencies, and individual donors.
- Excellent communication skills, with the ability to speak persuasively and passionately in positive or negative situations as ambassador for the Sonoran Institute vision.
- Proven ability to lead by inspiring and motivating others to perform well, to act collaboratively and to represent the Sonoran Institute with distinction.
- Demonstrated management skills that include planning, decision-making, facilitating, and process improvement.
- A delegator with experience in supervising staff, providing regular performance feedback, and developing subordinates' skills to encourage personal growth.
- Proven ability to exhibit sound, ethical, and accurate judgments, and to make timely decisions.
- Ability to maintain a sense of humor and exhibit grace under pressure.
- An innovator with the ability to synthesize competing or disparate points of view/perspectives.
- Ability to read and understand financial statements and make sound and prudent business decisions.

Compensation includes a competitive salary and a comprehensive benefits program. Requires local, state and regional, and international travel, including to Mexico.

The Sonoran Institute has retained the services of SBR Nonprofit Executive Search. To learn more about this career opportunity, please send your resume, expression of interest, salary history, and requirements to Kara Teising, Partner at kteising@thinkingahead.com

Sonoran Institute is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Accepting applications until Aug. 1, 2012.



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Shaping the Future of the West