



Since 1978

Position Guide

Executive Director

<https://www.alwt.org/>



Since 1978

POSITION: Executive Director

REPORTS TO: Board of Directors

LOCATION: Tucson, Arizona

Mission

To preserve Southern Arizona's vanishing western landscapes, its farms and ranches, wildlife habitat and the waters that sustain them.

Core Values

- Work with willing landowners.
- Keep ranching and farming land in production and on the tax rolls.
- Make a positive difference in protection of land and water for a wide range of societal values.
- Avoid political controversies, work property by property.

Vision of Success

We envision connected, protected landscapes that support our western heritage and describe our way of life with a focus on:

- Native vegetation and habitat for wildlife
- Watershed function and water supply recharge
- Small family farms and ranches
- Scenic vistas and dark night skies
- Cultural and archaeological resources
- Opportunities for people to be close to, and educated by, nature

About Arizona Land and Water Trust

Arizona Land and Water Trust (ALWT) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that protects Southern Arizona's vanishing western landscapes, its farms and ranches, wildlife habitat, and the waters that sustain them. The Trust has been Accredited by the Land Trust Alliance since 2013 and in 2016 ALWT received the Alliance's Land Trust Excellence award and was asked to serve on its National Council. ALWT is the only land and water trust working exclusively in Arizona. Since its

founding in 1978, the organization has conserved over 67,000 acres of the ranch and farmland, riparian areas and wetlands that draw visitors and residents alike to the region.

ALWT takes an entrepreneurial approach to protecting the land, working with willing landowners, municipalities and other organizations to protect resources through donated or purchased conservation easements. As a nimble organization with great staff expertise and a talented board of directors, it can expeditiously pursue protection opportunities that may be more difficult for larger organizations or agencies. ALWT helps its public and private partners achieve their specific land protection goals by providing expert negotiation, limited risk capital, legal skills and leveraged funding. This partner-driven approach enables ALWT to act quickly and effectively to meet its conservation objectives as well as its partners'. ALWT protects conservation priorities not eligible for outside funding by raising capital through its revolving Land and Water Fund. In the face of climate change, and impending water shortages from the Colorado River, ALWT is positioned to secure and steward high priority conservation lands by developing and incorporating resilience adaptations into our work.

For nearly 10 years, ALWT partnered with Pima County to conserve land through the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan (SDCP) – protecting nearly 20,000 acres in Eastern Pima County fee title through a voter-approved general obligation bond. The SDCP called for the protection of the region's richest biological resources on both private and state land by working with willing sellers. Since 2008 ALWT has prioritized protection targets throughout a six-county area in southern Arizona utilizing The Nature Conservancy's biological richness and ecoregional planning data. Since 2008 ALWT has protected over 60,000 acres of conservation priorities in perpetuity, largely through the acquisition of property development rights or conservation easements and pass-through fee title acquisitions.

Recent successes include:

- Arizona Land and Water Trust partnered with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to permanently protect 477 acres of the Hayhook Ranch. Conservation of this ranch preserves important wilderness, protects cultural values, and improves public access to the 5,080-acre Coyote Mountains Wilderness Area located approximately 40 miles southwest of Tucson.
- Arizona Land and Water Trust protected the 2,190-acre Tombstone Ranch in Cochise County. The project permanently conserves native grasslands, water resources that provide critical wildlife habitat to a multitude of species and also provides public hunting access to the property and was completed in October 2020.
- Arizona Land and Water Trust partnered with the Department of Defense (DOD) and the Woods family of Elgin, south of Tucson, to permanently protect 160 acres of Mustang Ranch. The funds to purchase a conservation easement were provided by the DOD's Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration Program.
- Arizona Land and Water Trust recently partnered with owners of the Babacomari Ranch to permanently protect 2,488 acres of the historic cattle ranch. Conservation of this ranch

sustains its rich historical and cultural legacy, preserves habitat for wildlife and ensures the land will remain a working landscape for generations to come.

In addition to its role as land steward, ALWT also supports programs that carry out its purpose, including appropriate legislation, public education and outreach. ALWT believes the preservation of Southern Arizona's landscapes and ecosystems to be vital to the well-being of all residents, present and future. ALWT is dedicated to keeping the vast landscapes that underpin family ranches and farms in private ownership and agriculture production. Working landscapes and the natural landscapes they protect are increasingly threatened by urban encroachment and fragmentation, climate change and drought.

The Desert Rivers Program, launched in 2007, was established to restore desert streams and rivers in the Upper Gila, Lower San Pedro and Upper Santa Cruz watersheds. Through this program, ALWT incentivizes agricultural water use practices that reduce pressure on local surface water and groundwater supplies. Having worked with agricultural producers for over 40 years, ALWT understands the critical role that farmers and ranchers play in the stewardship of our desert waters. Leveraging funding from private and public partners, ALWT offers landowners the opportunity – and financial incentive – to support their local river or stream. Completely voluntary, market-based water transactions provide landowners with the flexibility to choose how to use their water, and where and when to conserve that water, in any given season.

ALWT's list of partners includes: the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Department of Defense, Pima County, the State of Arizona's Game and Fish Department and Arizona Commerce Authority, Arizona State Forestry Division, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Natural Resources Conservation Service and Conservation Districts, Nina Mason Pulliam Trust and Bonneville Environmental Foundation. With these partners the Trust has attracted over \$250M to land and water conservation and protected more than 50,000 acres to date.



ALWT has an operating budget of approximately \$1M, an endowment of \$1.3M, and total assets of over \$19M. It is supported by a staff of 6 professionals and governed by a 17-member Board of Directors.

The Opportunity

The next Executive Director of ALWT will join the organization at a critical time. The important work of ALWT over the past four decades has laid a foundation for further ambitious land protection projects. There are two key initiatives that are driving the future impact of ALWT: the Sopori Creek and Farm campaign and the development of the Land and Water Fund.

ALWT is raising \$8 million to protect and develop programs at Sopori Creek and Farm. Sopori Farm is a unique 1,300-acre area with rare grandfathered-water rights, irrigated farmland, a rich biotic community and a storied history. The land is currently owned by developers and subject to

development. It lies amidst 25,000 acres of protected land—connecting a vital riparian corridor along the Sopori Creek with the Santa Cruz River. Sopori Creek and Farm offers a rare opportunity to become the headquarters for planning the future of Southern Arizona’s farming and ranching. Once protected, this location will provide farmers and ranchers a place where key issues, such as climate change, water shortages and land succession can be explored. It will be a nationally recognized center of excellence in sustainable land use practices.

The farms, ranches, desert rivers and stunning vistas that draw people to Southern Arizona are under the pressures of cyclic growth, drought and climate change. Much of the scenic beauty and the integrity of the natural systems in the region is seamlessly integrated with working landscapes. In addition to growth and drought, farmers and ranchers often face a diminishing agricultural infrastructure and few succession planning options. With the continuing loss of ranch and farmland, ongoing drought and the eventual return of rising land prices, the future of working landscapes will be decided within the next 10 years. It is within this time frame that ALWT must protect as much of southern Arizona’s key landscapes as possible through the recently launched Land and Water Fund.

Over the past ten years alone, ALWT has protected thousands of acres of important conservation lands worth over \$75 million, through sophisticated land transactions that meet the needs and goals of landowners and agency partners while furthering ALWT’s interests in land and water protection. ALWT knows it must greatly increase its capacity to conserve and protect land and water. To do so, they have initiated an effort to raise \$2M to establish a revolving fund to facilitate the strategic acquisition of threatened lands and waters by leveraging other public and/or private funding.

The next Executive Director will work with the Board of Directors, staff and partners to drive activities across these important initiatives, and others, to fulfill the mission of ALWT.

Position Summary

Reporting to the general supervision of the Board of Directors, the Executive Director is responsible for guiding the vision, mission, values, position, and strategic program goals of the Arizona Land and Water Trust, ensuring protection and stewardship of its high-quality natural ecosystems, serving as ALWT’s principal spokesperson, providing leadership for the staff, and building/sustaining/reinforcing strong relationships between the organization and the communities of which it is a part. The Executive Director has primary responsibility for ensuring the financial sustainability, stakeholder relationships, and excellence of the brand and position of the organization in the community, region, and nationally.

Candidate Profile

Arizona Land and Water Trust seeks a leader and advocate who is passionate about its mission and legacy, committed to its longstanding standards of excellence, supportive of its culture, and strategic about its future potential. The person must be ready to join with the Board to lead ALWT in pursuing new strategic goals in land protection, conservation and stewardship through a proven ability in strategic leadership, fundraising, program management and oversight, collaborative ventures, and constituency building.

The ideal candidate will have a background that includes a high-level of strategic leadership and management combined with an extraordinary understanding of relationship-driven philanthropy, partnership and constituent management with an emphasis on understanding the culture of landowners. The ability to strategize, conceptualize, plan, organize, critically analyze, and follow through with programs, projects, budgets, staff, Board of Directors and advisory committee members, other volunteers, and a variety of constituencies is required. Successful candidates will possess strong management and team-building skills, including ability to set clear priorities, realistic but ambitious goals, and delegate effectively.

The ideal candidate must have experience and proven success in expanding, diversifying and sustaining an organization's funding base by raising significant resources from individuals, foundations, corporations, and public entities on behalf of its mission and organization. Demonstrated written and verbal communication/presentation skills, as well as the ability to articulate ALWT's mission with passion, enthusiasm and a focus toward action to a variety of audiences is required.

The successful candidate will exhibit exceptional interpersonal skills to effectively interact with Board, staff, environmental advocates and policy leaders, landowners, governmental officials, donors and other key stakeholders. They will have the ability to balance and tactfully negotiate among opposing viewpoints within and outside the organization and to compromise when necessary. High sensitivity to work with diverse personalities, ability to listen as well as give advice, to respect the views and abilities of others, and to collaborate with integrity, consistency, good judgment, and a sense of humor are important. A commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion is required.

The ideal candidate will be a strong and effective leader; a strong listener with an inclusive, team-oriented management style that inspires, empowers, motivates, and develops staff. The candidate will also have a keen ability to establish and maintain a productive and positive organizational culture with all stakeholders (i.e. staff, Board, donors, members and partners). A genuine and authentic connection to nature and the outdoors is required as well as an understanding of how to communicate with landowners who often hold the asset ALWT is committed to protecting.

Executive level achievement in the fields of conservation, environmental education, advocacy, policy, law and/or related fields is preferred but not required. Nonprofit management experience is desired. A bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university is required; a master's degree is desired.

Compensation

The target salary for this position is \$110,000 - \$130,000 with some flexibility. Benefits include a robust health care package which include medical, dental and vision benefits, paid time off for vacation, family care, mental and physical health, religious holidays, civic duties and bereavement, as well as the opportunity to participate in a retirement plan.

To apply, please submit a current resume and letter of introduction to Kittleman & Associates, LLC at <https://bit.ly/3NrZEhw> (click on the Apply button at the bottom of the page).

For more information about Arizona Land and Water Trust, please visit www.alwt.org