



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR POSITION DESCRIPTION

OARS seeks a mission-driven Executive Director to lead the organization in restoring the health and building the resilience of the Sudbury, Assabet, and Concord River watershed in MetroWest/Central Massachusetts for all people and wildlife. See oars3rivers.org.

The Organization

OARS is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization supported by over 1,200 members, numerous watershed-based corporate and foundation funders, and state and federal agencies. Founded by concerned citizens in 1986 as the Organization for the Assabet River (OAR), we added the Sudbury and Concord Rivers in 2011, becoming OARS. The current Executive Director is retiring after 18 years with OARS.

OARS uses science, stewardship, advocacy, education, and recreation to achieve our goals. We are well-respected and have a seat at the table in decision-making at all levels due to our thoughtful and science-based advocacy. The data from our citizen science-based water quality monitoring program, now in its 31st year, is used by the EPA and Mass Dept. of Environmental Protection (DEP) in implementing the Clean Water Act. We use a River Report Card to communicate our results to the public. On-the-ground ecological restoration projects include dam removal, nature-based solutions to manage stormwater and build climate resilience, and management of invasive water chestnut. Our educational programs introduce children in underserved communities to hands-on natural science inquiry. OARS' popular annual river cleanup, Wild & Scenic Film Festival, river maps, river recreation opportunities, and *Otter News* further engage our communities. Building climate resilience and ecological health, especially within diverse and underrepresented communities, is our priority.

OARS achieves its success through strong partnerships, providing both leadership and teamwork. The next Executive Director will play a critical role in continuing to build our capacity to address the challenges and opportunities of the coming decades.

The Executive Director Position

The Executive Director (ED) is the Chief Executive Officer of OARS and reports to a 12-member Board of Directors. The ED leads a staff of four (plus additional summer staff and interns), ensures that projects contribute to achieving our mission and are carried out successfully, and takes advantage of new opportunities.

The Board seeks an accomplished leader who has a passion for our mission of restoring and protecting riverine environments. The ideal candidate will demonstrate a proven ability in strategic leadership, fundraising (including grant-writing, securing major gifts, and cultivating individual donors), environmental policy analysis and advocacy, fiscal management, staff management and development, project management and accountability, collaboration and constituency-building. OARS encourages those with a strong background in a relevant field who have not been an executive but would like it as the next step in their career to apply.

The ideal candidate will be an effective team leader who can foster diversity and inclusion among the organization's staff, Board, and membership. This individual must be confident and thoughtful, and have the interpersonal skills to work effectively, collegially, and collaboratively with municipalities and other stakeholders across the region. The successful candidate will be both realistic and inspirational, forward-looking and strategic, and mindful of OARS' legacy.

Key Responsibilities

- *Leadership*: Drive implementation of strategic, innovative, effective, science-driven watershed conservation, restoration, and stewardship and recreation programs, projects, and policies that improve the rivers for all people and wildlife. Lead staff in implementing the OARS Strategic Plan.
- *Policy, Planning, and Advocacy*: Work with Board, staff, and partner organizations to analyze, develop, and advocate for positions on relevant legislation, regulations, policies, and plans; present OARS' position in comment letters, public meetings, and hearings.
- *Management*: Direct the day-to-day management of OARS and ensure the effective administration of all internal operations. Supervise staff, interns, and volunteers; evaluate staff performance; administer appropriate personnel policies; attract, hire, and recruit and retain staff needed to advance the strategic plan. Formulate projects with staff members in their program areas (currently: River Science, Ecological Restoration, Education, Development and Engagement, and Administration and Finance). Undertake direct program work in special projects as appropriate; coordinate annual work plans.
- *Community Relations*: Serve as the chief spokesperson for OARS; represent OARS at a variety of functions within a wide range of partnerships; develop strong relationships with people and communities representing the demographic diversity within the watershed; communicate OARS' work and successes; ensure that OARS is properly represented and known to its various constituencies, including local, state, and federal officials and agencies.
- *Finance and Budgeting*: Work with the Treasurer and staff to develop the annual budget and to track the budget over the fiscal year. Oversee all financial operations, records, and reports. Oversee proper management of investments, funds, and assets; control costs, and authorize purchases and disbursements. Ensure timely completion of annual audit and tax filings, legal compliance, and annual reporting to members at the Annual Meeting.
- *Development*: Oversee OARS fundraising activities; work with the Board's Development and Investment Committee and staff to establish and execute fundraising plans and develop fundraising materials; work with the Committee and staff to secure major gifts, host fundraising events, and on other development programs.
- *Grants and Contracts*: Work closely with staff to develop high-quality grant applications; execute grant and contract agreements, ensuring fulfillment of all requirements; ensure timely reporting to all donors.
- *Board Coordination*: Engage and work closely with the Board of Directors; keep Directors informed of activities; work with the President of the Board to develop agendas for Board and Executive Committee meetings; assist other Board committees as needed; assure optimal communication between Board and staff.

Ideal Qualifications and Attributes

The Executive Director will understand and embrace the OARS mission and will have significant environmental, leadership, management, and fundraising experience, including all or most of the following:

- Master's degree in an environmental science, environmental law, environmental engineering, nonprofit management, business administration, public policy, or a related field; or comparable work experience.
- Experience working in a nonprofit and achieving mission-driven goals. Strong commitment to public service with an entrepreneurial attitude, balanced with the ability to respect, galvanize, organize, and coordinate diverse constituent groups.
- Working knowledge of watershed science, ecological restoration, and associated environmental concerns. Familiarity with environmental policy, especially as it relates to water. Intellectually curious and committed to keeping up with emerging knowledge relevant to watershed restoration and management. Familiarity with the OARS watershed is a plus.
- Strong organizational and people management skills. Commitment to maintaining high standards of organizational integrity. Ability to ensure ongoing excellence in programs, finance and administration, fundraising, communications, and business processes and systems.
- Commitment to and experience in achieving diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging goals.
- Track record of successful fundraising: major gifts, corporate donations and sponsorships, and grant proposals resulting in awards from private foundations and/or government agencies. Experience with managing large state or federal grants and capital campaigns is desirable.
- Experience working with municipal, state, and federal agencies.
- Experience working with a Board of Directors, deepening individual relationships, and furthering Director engagement.
- Strong marketing and outreach skills and an appreciation of their role in fundraising. Excellent verbal and writing skills, with a high degree of comfort presenting to a variety of audiences.
- Demonstrated ability to perform within budgetary constraints, achieving goals while delivering a consistently break-even or profitable bottom line. Excellent track record in project management.
- Proficiency in Microsoft Office Suite; awareness of relevant emerging technologies; familiarity with spatial databases (ArcGIS), Customer Relationship Management systems (Bloomerang), and accounting systems (QuickBooks) are a plus. Familiarity with technologies to improve communications with Board, staff, and members is also desirable.
- Ability to drive throughout the watershed and to work early mornings, evenings, and weekends as needed.

Position Type

Full-time, flexible hours, hybrid office; Part-time 30–35 hrs. considered for the right candidate. The office is located in the Bradford Mill community near the West Concord commuter rail station and the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail.

Compensation

The salary and benefits package is competitive for an Executive Director leading a small nonprofit organization and will be determined by the Board of Directors based on experience and qualifications. Salary range \$85,000–100,000 plus benefits including three weeks paid vacation, paid time off, and negotiable health insurance and retirement options. With the potential for growth and professional development.

How to Apply

Applications will be accepted until the position is filled and reviewed as they are received. Please submit a resume and a compelling cover letter to the President of the Board of Directors at president@oars3rivers.org with “Executive Director Search—[YOUR LAST NAME]” as the subject line. No phone calls, please.

OARS is an Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action Employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, national origin, genetics, disability, age, or veteran status.

August 25, 2023