

Job Announcement
Full-Time Executive Director, Elakha Alliance



Issued: April 15, 2022

About the Elakha Alliance

The Elakha Alliance (www.elakhaalliance.org) is an Oregon-based nonprofit that includes conservationists, academics, lawyers, tribal members, and scientists. The Elakha Alliance's mission is to restore a healthy population of sea otters (*Enhydra lutris*) to the Oregon coast, and to thereby make Oregon's marine and coastal ecosystem more robust and resilient.

"Elakha" is the Chinook trading language word for sea otter. These mammals were once plentiful in coastal waters all along the Pacific Coast. For thousands of years, sea otters and coastal native peoples had strong relationships with each other and the nearshore marine environment. But in the 1700s and 1800s sea otters were decimated by hunting for their pelts, and by 1910 they were eliminated from Oregon.

Since then a catastrophic loss of kelp forests has occurred along the Pacific Coast due to a superabundance of herbivorous sea urchins and a super deficiency of their main predators, sea stars and sea otters. Until apex predators are returned, the urchins will continue to clearcut our kelp forests, resulting in loss of fish and invertebrate species diversity, carbon sequestration capacity, and ecosystem health and economic services. The goal of the Elakha Alliance is to reverse these trends. Reintroducing sea otters to Oregon is a logical step -- perhaps the only ecologically and practically sound proactive step available -- for restoring and sustaining the West Coast's magnificent underwater forests and their denizens.

The Elakha Alliance is governed by a board of directors (currently with 12 members). The Elakha Alliance is also served by an External Advisory Council, from which it seeks regular guidance. The "executive" function of the organization has been filled since the organization's 2018 founding by Board President, Bob Bailey, who has overseen a variety of contractors and a single employee (Outreach and Community Relations Director). Having raised and set aside sufficient funds, the Elakha Alliance board has determined the time is ripe to transition to a more traditional nonprofit leadership model by hiring its first Executive Director.

The Elakha Alliance is in the third year of implementing a five year Strategic Plan. A copy of this plan is available from Jonathan@ElakhaAlliance.org. This Strategic Plan and our recently completed [Feasibility Study](#) will guide and focus the activities of the Executive Director (E.D.).

General Attributes Sought for the Position

The single most important attribute for Elakha's E.D. is the aspiration for, and unwavering commitment to, returning sea otters to the Oregon Coast.

To help the Elakha Alliance achieve this goal, we seek an entrepreneurial, strategic thinking individual with excellent communication skills. The individual must be adaptable, and able to respond positively to opportunities and changing circumstances. The individual also must be an affable and outgoing "team player" who will reinforce Elakha's collaborative leadership style and motivate others within and outside the organization to embrace our shared vision. The E.D. will be expected to work closely and collaboratively with the Board President as duties transition, while also working with the Board of Directors as a whole, Elakha scientific advisors, the Elakha External Advisory Council, interested Tribes, and Elakha employees and contractors.

Must Have Skills and Experience

- Demonstrable success in fundraising (grant writing, individual donors, and corporate sponsors)
- Previous management or leadership experience with a nonprofit organization, government agency, or equivalent environment
- Experience working in roles that involve some combination of public policy development, science, and advocacy
- Experience working with Tribes and government agencies
- Capability of planning for, implementing, and documenting activities of a small organization without support staff
- Ability to communicate clearly and effectively in formal and informal settings, including via writing, public speaking, and one-on-one interactions
- Comfortable learning about scientific advances and using the best science available to guide planning of projects and their implementation
- Willingness to travel to attend meetings, interact with agency employees, external advisors, donors, etc. Access to a vehicle and valid driver's license are essential

Desirable Skills and Experience

- Knowledge of marine ecology, especially the role of sea otters in nearshore ecosystems
- Knowledge of Oregon coastal politics, players, and geographies
- Experience with personnel management and human resources
- Experience with nonprofit or agency budgeting and financial management
- Experience with nonprofit or agency communications (presentations, video, online)
- Experience interacting with a nonprofit Board of Directors
- Experience communicating via web pages, social media, and other online methods

Specific Responsibilities of the Position

Note: the job responsibilities listed below are for 2022. If/when funds are raised to add additional staff/contractors, the Executive Director and board leadership will adjust these as deemed appropriate at the time.

Fundraising. The E.D. is the chief development officer – i.e., the person with overall responsibility for fundraising to support the organization. Duties will include identifying and cultivating relationships with potential individual, foundation, and agency donors; preparing, submitting, and tracking grant proposals to private foundations, government agencies, individuals, and other potential funders; submitting required performance and close-out documents; and assisting Board members in fundraising within their personal networks.

Finances: The E.D. is the chief financial officer. Duties will include budgeting and reporting, in concert with an outside bookkeeping firm; consulting with the Treasurer, and Board committees, and members to ensure the financial health and integrity of the organization; providing monthly financial reports to the Board; and ensuring that adequate and legally required financial records are kept and made available to Board members, outside auditors, and government agencies.

Human Resources: The E.D. is the chief human resources officer. As of April 2022, key employees/contractors are a full-time Outreach and Community Relations Director and a three-quarters time South Coast Liaison. Human Resources duties will include hiring and supervising employees and contractors; maintaining employee and contractor records; cultivating positive and respectful relationships with employees and contractors; assisting employees and contractors in maintaining and improving their job performance, including updating job descriptions as necessary; and conducting annual, written evaluations of employees and contractors (i.e., evaluations that provide opportunities for feedback from evaluatees, including suggestions to the E.D. about how to improve his/her own job performance).

Science and Policy: The E.D. is the chief scientific officer. Duties will include promoting the scientific rationale for the mission of the organization and consulting/contracting with scientific and technical committees and other scientific and policy experts to ensure that the strategic objectives of the organization are being met.

Strategic Planning: The E.D. is the chief strategic planner. Duties will include periodically reviewing the Strategic Plan to evaluate progress; collaborating with the Board President and Board as a whole to ensure that Elakha's mission and operations continue to be aligned with the Strategic Plan; and consulting with the Board and, as needed, outside individuals, organizations, and agencies to make judicious amendments to the Strategic Plan.

Communications and Partner Engagement: The E.D. leads interactions between Elakha and its external advisors. Duties will include creating and maintaining clear and productive communications with Alliance partners, participants, and donors; quarterly reporting to the external Advisory Council and others on the activities of the organization; and making judicious decisions about when to seek advice and engagement from the Board, Advisory Council members, agency employees, and other external partners.

Board Engagement: The E.D. reports to the Board, while working to deepen board engagement in the organization. Duties will include scheduling, organizing, and participating in Board meetings and other committee meetings as needed; maintaining positive and supportive professional and personal relationships with Board members; collaborating with the Board President and the Board as a whole in strategic planning, fundraising, and other matters; and helping to recruit new Board members as needed.

Compensation and Benefits

- Starting salary range is \$90-\$110K, negotiable based on qualifications and experience
- Starting Health Care stipend of \$400 per month
- Generous vacation and wellness benefits

Office

The Elakha Alliance is a virtual organization, with no fixed office. We expect the Executive Director to provide a home office or an equivalent remote location for their work with access to communication devices (e.g., a laptop, cell phone, printer).

How to Apply and the Selection Process

Please submit a resume and a cover letter. The cover letter should address:

- What motivated you to apply for Elakha's E.D. position
- How your skills and experience match up with Elakha's needs
- How your skills and experience match up with specific responsibilities of the position
- The date you could commence working

Submit your materials to Elakha's strategic advisor, Jonathan Poisner (jonathan@elakhaalliance.org).

Review of applications will begin on May 15, 2022. Finalists will be interviewed by the Search Committee. The search will remain open until the position is filled.

The Elakha Alliance is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer. All qualified candidates will receive consideration regardless of sex, sexual orientation, gender, race, color, age, or any other characteristic. The Elakha Alliance is committed to reflecting the diversity of Oregon's communities in our Board, employees, and contractors. We strive to ensure that our internal culture, business practices, and programs are welcoming and advance our diversity goals.