

**PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

*The mission of the Garden Conservancy is to save and share outstanding American gardens for the education and inspiration of the public.*

Since its founding in 1989 by renowned plantsman Frank Cabot, the Garden Conservancy has done more than any other national institution to save and share outstanding American gardens. A sector leader and highly respected resource in the horticultural world, the Conservancy seeks to develop and deepen public appreciation of gardens as integral elements of our national artistic and cultural heritage. This is achieved through the generous support and engagement of its dedicated and passionate membership base of Fellows, volunteers, and partners and supporters.

**SAVING**

The Garden Conservancy has helped save or restore more than 80 North American gardens, many of which are National Historic Landmarks or are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In partnership with garden owners, gardeners, communities, horticulturists, garden designers and historians, the Conservancy acts as an incubator and resource to help gardens achieve long-term existence. For example, the Ruth Bancroft Garden in Walnut Creek, California, the Conservancy's first project, is now a thriving public garden.

The Conservancy helps new and emerging public gardens become community-based public resources by drawing upon the expertise from their own dedicated staff, as well as that of their network of experts in all aspects of garden design, management and restoration. The Conservancy also contributes to the welfare of existing public gardens, helping them revitalize historic landscapes and manage both natural and manmade challenges to their survival.

**SHARING**

The Garden Conservancy's signature Open Days program harnesses the transformative power of experiencing gardens in person by visitation as the best way to learn about gardening and garden design. Since 1995, some 3,400 private gardens have participated, welcoming more than

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1,000,000 visitors in states across the country. In 2015, the Conservancy opened the gates to more than 308 private gardens in 22 states, allowing thousands of visitors to explore beautiful spaces not normally open to the public.

The Conservancy's lectures, symposia, publications, and garden-study tours share contemporary ideas relevant to horticulture, design, and preservation with its members and the public. Members of the Conservancy's Society of Fellows have traveled across the country and beyond, exploring beautiful gardens and historic landscapes. Each tour showcases noteworthy gardens characteristic of the region. To date, Conservancy tours have taken Fellows to 29 states and nine international destinations.

Regional groups affiliated with the Conservancy include the Garden Conservancy Northwest Network, a member-supported association of Pacific Northwest gardens and horticultural organizations dedicated to preserving historic green spaces and opening exceptional gardens for public enjoyment and educating people about horticultural practice, and the West Coast Council, an advisory group of board members, Fellows, and volunteers located on the West Coast.

The Conservancy's national office is located at Winter Hill, a historic Hudson Highlands home in scenic Garrison, New York. The Conservancy has an operating budget of \$3.9 million and an \$18 million endowment. The Conservancy is governed by a 29-member Board. There are currently 20 dedicated staff located in Garrison and two in a West Coast office at the Presidio in San Francisco.

### **BASIC FUNCTION**

Reporting to the Board, the President and CEO will provide strategic leadership, management, and direction for the Conservancy, and pursue a clear and impactful vision for the organization going forward. The President and CEO will drive his/her team to growth, build consensus around key goals, and then segue those priorities into actionable plans and strategies.

The President and CEO will be expected to serve as the principal ambassador for the Conservancy, broadly translating the mission of the organization to a wider public in order to attract new members, while engaging and reinvigorating long-time supporters. The President and CEO will identify new sources of financial and programmatic support and continue to enhance the Conservancy's presence and relevance nationally.

Specifically, this person will play a proactive, visible role in fundraising, including developing and implementing fundraising strategies that significantly increase the organization's base of financial support from individuals, foundations, and government and corporate sponsorships. To achieve these goals, the President and CEO must demonstrate his/her commitment to strengthening the Conservancy's educational outreach and programming in a way that is



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responsive to shifting demographics. He/she will embrace the notion of the Conservancy as an inclusive “big-tent” organization, engaging a broader base, while providing the resources and activities that amplify the appeal of the Conservancy to the broadest possible audience.

### **INSTITUTIONAL PRIORITIES**

The President and CEO must lead the Garden Conservancy to unleash its fullest potential and will have the following priorities:

- Understand the business of the Conservancy: its budget, resources, investments, partnerships, and other sources of support; lead strategic planning efforts that bring clarity to short- and long-term goals and objectives; establish a baseline for success across all programs, resources, and other activities to measure progress;
- Engage and gain the support of the Board; find ways to bring forth their best efforts; manage expectations and keep Board members well informed and up to date on the Conservancy’s institutional and fiscal standing;
- Quickly develop and clearly articulate a more forward-leaning fundraising strategy; create a strong consistent base of support; identify and cultivate new donors, tap into the passions and interests of long-time Conservancy members who may be waiting for the “next big idea” to support, and nurture the philanthropic interests of those with a greater capacity for giving who could enthusiastically support the organization at higher levels;
- Manage, supervise, and evaluate the Conservancy’s staff – the linchpin to the future success of the organization; provide appropriate direction and oversight of all activities; ensure that well-defined goals, clear responsibilities, and levels of accountability are in place to achieve excellence at all levels within the organization;
- Create and nurture an aspirational culture within the organization that brings out the best in each person; listen to staff and harness their energy and ideas; foster a culture of creativity, strategic thinking, transparency, collaboration, and accountability; strengthen inter-departmental communication; encourage and facilitate cross-departmental programming;
- Nurture membership and volunteer participation; assess member benefits and programs to ensure that members and Fellows are recognized and valued for their support of the Conservancy; clearly demonstrate the Conservancy’s appreciation of Open Days hosts and volunteers; encourage hosts, volunteers, and other institutional partners to expand their participation and support throughout the organization;



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- Continue to strengthen the Conservancy brand, raising awareness of the organization and its programs through external relations, publications, and local and national press and social media, while reinforcing the reputation of the Conservancy as a relevant leader and trusted partner in the horticultural and gardening community.

### **PROGRAMMATIC OBJECTIVES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Additionally, the President and CEO will take ownership of the Garden Conservancy's programs, balancing the intellectual and aesthetic nature of its offerings, and be responsible for the following:

#### **OPEN DAYS**

As the Conservancy's primary public activity, the Open Days program could and should:

- Expand the level of engagement and engage a much broader audience (i.e., more cities and people);
- Find synergies with and integrate Open Days with other departments and programs;
- Move in direction that broadens the focus, definition, and reach of Open Days gardens, including, for example, edible gardens, orchards, dry gardens, etc.;

#### **PRESERVATION**

At heart of the Conservancy's mission, but not the part that is easily accessible to the general public, the Preservation Department could and should:

- Identify new projects and partnerships in support of garden preservation efforts across the United States;
- Leverage specific projects as vehicles for fundraising support, new membership and development;



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### **EDUCATION**

As one of the Conservancy's primary benefits of membership, the Education Department could and should:

- Develop educational activities and programs that are geared toward reaching the broadest possible audience – across a range of age-appropriate, academic, social, and intellectual activities;
- Explore new ideas around youth programming and membership, curricula development, lectures, etc.;
- Where appropriate, integrate educational activities within Open Days initiatives;

### **ADDITIONALLY**

- Reinvigorate the Conservancy's Garden Study Tours and ensure that the Fellows Program remains as an important stabilizing resource/benefit within the organization;
- Tap into the Conservancy's greatest assets – real gardeners across the country; engage the vibrant west coast and southeast networks of stakeholders, including, but not limited to, the West Coast Council and the Garden Conservancy Northwest Network.

### **IDEAL EXPERIENCE AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS**

The President and CEO will be a creative and entrepreneurial leader who strongly believes in the mission of the Conservancy. Additionally, he/she will be or have:

- Proven managerial, problem-solving, and strategic-planning capabilities, ideally, on a national level in a highly collaborative environment in a public or nonprofit setting; significant private-sector experience may also be considered;
- A person who can affect and manage change; able to manage multiple priorities and engagement strategies, ranging from the broad and strategic to the narrow and tactical, with the ability to grow an organization in size, impact, and visibility;
- Experience aligning strategic plans with organizational capacity and fiscal resources; financial acumen with the ability to oversee the budget of a nonprofit institution;

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- A persuasive and accomplished fundraiser, with the ability to develop and execute a development plan and connect with untapped philanthropic resources; strong external relations skills, with the ability to identify potential partnerships and other revenue-generating opportunities;
- A proven track record of effective and respected management; success in building and retaining staff; with the strength to engage, inspire, and unite others to new levels of effectiveness and programmatic impact; and doing so initially with limited resources and sources of support; able to breakdown silos and manage effectively in all directions;
- Strong organizational skills, with a track record of success creating an environment that coalesces others around the vision of the Conservancy, its goals and their successful achievement; experience addressing the needs of internal and external stakeholders from wide-ranging socioeconomic, cultural, and geographic backgrounds;
- Gardening or horticultural experience is less important than knowing how to raise awareness, increase funds, and generate enthusiasm for a mission-driven organization;
- Tech savvy, with the ability and comfort in navigating emerging digital and internet opportunities and in enhancing the Conservancy's social media presence;
- Comfortable with travel; able to balance external responsibilities with day-to-day, in-house management priorities;
- Experience communicating passionately, clearly, and concisely, both in writing and verbally; comfortable with both formal and extemporaneous presentations to a variety of audiences;
- An engaging personality and professional demeanor; a person who leads with enthusiasm, who can motivate others in a similar vein; able to make tough decisions and bring clarity to the Conservancy's plans and activities; a smart, quick study who will engage and be embraced by the garden community;
- A resourceful person with integrity and a strong work ethic; willingness to work in the trenches and get their hands dirty – to plant seeds and ideas.

*Please send applications or nominations to Mark Tarnacki at  
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The Garden Conservancy  
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