

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

REPORTS TO: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

FY 2026 ANNUAL BUDGET: \$2.5M

TOTAL STAFF: 8

SALARY: \$115,000 - \$135,000 Annually, DOE



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# PARTNERS IN MARINE CONSERVATION

The Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) is a marine conservation nonprofit that has spent over two decades restoring and protecting the Salish Sea through alliances with tribal nations, agencies, organizations, and donors to sustain one of the most ecologically vital and beautiful places in the Pacific Northwest. Through collaborative conservation, science-based restoration, derelict gear removal, and scholarships for emerging environmental advocates, the Foundation works every day to ensure these waters remain healthy for the communities, species, and future generations that depend on the Salish Sea.

## Executive Director Opportunity

This is a unique opportunity to lead a well-known and nationally recognized marine conservation organization. The incoming Executive Director will build visibility, grow and diversify funding, and deepen the community partnerships that sustain its mission and work, all while supporting the talented staff and partners who define us. This is a meaningful opportunity for a visionary, collaborative, grass-roots leader who shares our vision and commitment for a vibrant and healthy Salish Sea. The incoming Executive Director will achieve success by building on an already high-functioning organization to expand the scope and scale of our programs.



# THE ORGANIZATION

Since 2002, The Northwest Straits Foundation has pursued its mission to *restore and preserve the long-term health of the Salish Sea by fostering collaboration, encouraging stewardship and conservation, and implementing science-based restoration*, today and for future generations.

Headquartered in Bellingham, Washington, the NWSF is a regional marine conservation organization working on critical transboundary nearshore, habitat, and climate resilience projects to sustain the Salish Sea for marine life and people.



Our talented and experienced staff have built strong relationships within the community, effectively advocating for marine conservation and engaging stakeholders in meaningful ways. They manage the full lifecycle of restoration: from securing funding and conducting site assessments through permitting, construction, and multi-year stewardship of restored sites. Core programs include the Puget Sound Derelict Fishing Gear Removal Program, the Nearshore Restoration Program, the Shore Friendly Program, community outreach and education, and the Caroline Gibson Scholarship for emerging marine and environmental advocates.

Through dynamic partnerships we empower communities to take part in protecting and restoring the ecological function and natural beauty of our coastal waters thus ensuring thriving ecosystems and communities. We drive and coordinate dozens of regional partners and funders including local, state and federal agencies, tribal nations, regional fisheries groups, universities, nonprofits, and community volunteers. We operate at the site, community, and regional levels.

Always striving to improve and expand our impact and gain efficiency, in 2025 we embraced robotic derelict gear retrieval and continued to provide our expertise to shoreline landowners throughout the Salish Sea. We developed a new strategic plan to underpin our commitment to restoring and preserving the long-term health of the Salish Sea by fostering collaboration, encouraging stewardship and conservation, and implementing science-based restoration. NWSF has removed and reused or recycled thousands of ghost pots and nets throughout the Salish Sea.

Approximately 90% of our funding comes from multi-year public grants and contracts, with 10% from private foundations, corporations, and individual donors. Diversifying and expanding our private revenue stream is a strategic priority and a central responsibility of our incoming Executive Director. They will inherit an organization with a strong reputation, a skilled and passionate team, and real momentum to increase our visibility, deepen community and donor relationships, and ensure this critical work continues to grow in reach and impact.

For more information about the Northwest Straits Foundation and its programs please visit [here](#).

## Mission

Restore and preserve the long-term health of the Salish Sea by fostering collaboration, encouraging stewardship and conservation, and implementing science-based restoration.

## Vision

Achieve a more resilient marine and nearshore environment across the Salish Sea.



## Fast Facts

- 14,000 Nets and crab pots were collectively removed
- 879 Acres of marine habitat restored
- 5,759 Linear feet of shoreline restored
- 14 Scholarships awarded since 2022
- 10,000+ Volunteer hours

## THE POSITION

The incoming Executive Director will play a pivotal role in shaping the future of NWSF, ensuring momentum from past successes is maintained while strategically navigating challenges in the shifting funding landscape.

This individual will bring a broad perspective, vision, and ability to translate strategic goals into actionable plans. Building upon our legacy requires someone who is adept at fostering collaboration among diverse stakeholders, driving community engagement, and understanding the intricacies of nonprofit management, especially within the marine conservation sector.

The ED holds responsibility for organizational strategy, fundraising, board engagement, operational excellence, and cultural health, serving as NWSF's strategic voice, and external and internal champion. Day-to-day program management rests with a capable and trusted team. The ED's job is to create the conditions for that work to thrive.



# OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPACT

## SHORT TERM

### **Listen, learn, and earn trust.**

Absorb institutional knowledge through deep engagement with staff, board, and partners. Lead with curiosity and humility, ensuring every voice is heard and valued from the start.

### **Roll out the organization's new name.**

Following a strategic planning process, the Board and staff selected a new name for the organization that the new ED will promote to our funders, partners, and communities. The board is excited to introduce the name we've chosen to our community, rooted in restoration, possibility, and our achievements.

### **Cultivate and support the board.**

The board is engaged and motivated. Build strong individual relationships, understand each member's strengths and networks, and create clear pathways for members to contribute as ambassadors, connectors, and advocates. Embrace and support their role as advocates for the organization's work and role in our community by sustaining and supporting their participation in events, activities, and presentations.

## LONG TERM

### **Grow and diversify the funding base.**

Build a stronger revenue pipeline by cultivating donors, deepening foundation relationships, and securing capacity-building support.

### **Lead strategic evolution while protecting what works.**

Working in close partnership with staff and board, guide NWSF through its next phase of growth. Honor the programs and culture that have defined the organization while creating space for innovation, expanded impact, and long-term resilience in a shifting conservation landscape.

### **Deepen community presence and lead with hope.**

Deepen our alignment and collaboration with affinity groups, tribal and agency partners, scholarship alumni, and the conservation community to achieve NWSF's vision and mission of a healthy Salish Sea. Champion a public narrative centered on solutions, restoration, and possibility. Build NWSF's visibility as a hopeful, credible, community-rooted voice for the Salish Sea.



# LEADERSHIP PROFILE

To fulfill NWSF's mission, we invite candidates to apply for the Executive Director position. The ideal candidate will possess the following qualifications:

- Demonstrated experience in nonprofit leadership and management, particularly within environmental or marine conservation organizations.
- Skilled at cultivating donor relationships, securing funding, and managing organizational development initiatives.
- Proven ability to engage and inspire diverse stakeholders and build strong connections within the Salish Sea community.
- A strategic thinker who can envision and define long-term goals, translating them into effective annual plans.
- Excellent communication and public relations skills, with the capacity to be an authentic and engaging representative of NWSF.
- A collaborative leadership style that empowers staff, fosters teamwork, and encourages professional growth.
- Familiarity with the unique challenges and opportunities in the marine conservation landscape of the Pacific Northwest.
- Strong understanding of public and private funding environments, including grant writing and stewardship of donor contributions.



We look forward to welcoming a leader who embodies our values and is passionate about ensuring the ongoing success of our programs and initiatives. Together, we can continue our critical work protecting and restoring the Salish Sea for generations to come.

# COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION



## Inclusion

We acknowledge that our work takes place on the ancestral lands and waters of Coast Salish Peoples. We honor all Coast Salish Tribes and First Nations who have stewarded the Salish Sea since time immemorial.

We recognize the cultural, spiritual, and ecological significance of these lands and waters to Coast Salish peoples, and we strive to honor this legacy through respectful, reciprocal partnerships and place-based restoration. This acknowledgment is part of our ongoing commitment to listen, learn, and support Indigenous leadership in protecting the Salish Sea.

## DEI

We envision a broad, diverse, and inclusive group of individuals engaged in the health of their local ecosystems to ensure a thriving, resilient, and healthy Salish Sea. Our hope is that pursuing an equitable approach to marine conservation will engage, empower, and benefit all who inhabit the Salish Sea region.



# COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

This is a full-time salaried position with a salary range of \$115,000 - \$135,000 DOE, requiring a willingness to work some evenings and weekends with occasional travel. This hybrid role requires frequent, regular in-person presence with staff, donors, and partners across the greater Salish Sea. Must be authorized to work in the United States.

## Benefits

NWSF offers generous employee benefits including:

- 100% Employer paid premium for employee medical, dental, group life & LTD insurance
- 3 weeks' vacation per year
- 96 hours of sick leave per year
- 11 paid holidays
- 3% Simple IRA match
- Up to \$60 a month cell phone reimbursement



*We are committed to providing equal opportunity in all of our employment practices, including selection, hiring, promotion, transfer, and compensation, to all qualified applicants and employees without regard to Race, Color, National Origin, Sex, Creed, Disability-Sensory, Mental or Physical, HIV, AIDS, and Hepatitis C, Age, Marital Status, Pregnancy or Maternity, Sexual Orientation or Gender.*

## To Be Considered

If you're excited about this opportunity but don't check every qualification listed, we still want to hear from you, and we encourage you to apply.

This role will remain open until filled with a priority deadline of July 31, 2026. Candidate materials are reviewed continuously, and screening interviews with Valtas will begin on a rolling basis in June. Cover letters (two pages or less) addressed to the Board of Directors, and a resume can be submitted to Valtas [here](#).

You may direct questions to Amy Burton at [Amy@Valtasgroup.com](mailto:Amy@Valtasgroup.com)

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