



Job Description:
Tribal Land Recovery Manager
First Light

Mentored by The Nature Conservancy in Maine and Maine Coast Heritage Trust

Summary

The Tribal Land Recovery Manager will serve as a resource to Wabanaki communities, Tribal governments, and organizations to facilitate and accomplish priority land acquisitions for all Wabanaki communities in Maine. This newly created position calls for a person who is innovative and able to work independently, an excellent communicator, has a solid familiarity with real estate, and a strong interest in Tribal land return. The position will involve establishing and maintaining communication lines and relationships with Wabanaki communities to ensure Tribal priorities and Tribal processes are followed for any acquisition. It will also involve learning or having a solid understanding of the different Tribal considerations and process steps for real estate acquisitions, some understanding of tax law and real estate law, and an ability to work with multiple contractors and experts to accomplish multiple real estate acquisitions by Tribal governments and entities.

This position is part of [First Light](#), an effort that has been underway for over five years. First Light is a collaboration in Maine between hundreds of leaders, 65 land-focused organizations (including The Nature Conservancy and Maine Coast Heritage Trust), and five Wabanaki Tribal communities: Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians; Mi'kmaq Nation; Passamaquoddy Tribe at Indian Township; Passamaquoddy Tribe at Sipayik; and Penobscot Nation. Together, the First Light community works to re-learn history, recenter Indigenous voice, and return land, resources and power to Wabanaki Tribes. We take direction and guidance from the Wabanaki Commission on Land and Stewardship *Nil yut ktahkomiq nik* (the whole earth is our home). This position offers an opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to an important body of work as the Wabanaki Commission seeks to regain access to culturally important lands, while the conservation community in Maine learns to work in partnership with Wabanaki Tribes. As such, the role also represents a learning opportunity, and mentorship from conservation leaders within the First Light community will be provided.

The Land Recovery Manager will be employed by New Learning Journey, the 501c3 that manages First Light. The full-time position is funded for two years.

The Land Recovery Manager must be able to reside within a reasonable proximity of the Wabanaki Communities in Maine (e.g., ideally in Washington, Aroostook, or Penobscot Counties), and will be expected to be able to travel among these Wabanaki communities

regularly and throughout the state as land projects are underway. The Manager must be capable of remote work, may work from a home or remote office, and may also use office space that will be made available by The Nature Conservancy, Maine Coast Heritage Trust, and First Light.

Essential Job Functions

1. Work within the space of the Wabanaki Commission and Wabanaki communities to develop a clear understanding of each Tribal community's land acquisition process steps and acquisition priorities;
2. Facilitate and carry out land transactions by gift or purchase throughout the land area we now call Maine. This includes successfully negotiating and closing multiple real-estate acquisitions and transactions ranging from simple to complex in nature;
3. Have a willing ability to work autonomously while also collaborating and staying in communication with multiple entities including Tribal governments, landowners and various nonprofit organizations;
4. Serve as a point person and knowledgeable and respected acquisition specialist for all Tribal communities, as well as for landowners and organizations facilitating and/or funding projects;
5. Oversee multiple contractors and maintain professional relationships with surveyors, attorneys, and other contractors who perform various duties in relation to land projects;
6. Communicate with landholders of all types, their attorneys, and other advisors around land projects, including clarifying when to help landholders obtain financial and other advice to ensure clear and sound transactions;
7. Work extensively with departments within Wabanaki Tribal communities to take a project from the early planning stages to completion. This may include support for Tribal communities in: developing their vision for a property; developing short and long-term budgets to cover acquisition-related and ongoing expenses; coordinating and updating Wabanaki partners on transaction steps like appraisals, surveys and negotiations; and developing project summaries to support fundraising and communications;
8. Regularly develop and present written descriptions and updates on projects to the Wabanaki Commission on Land and Stewardship and appropriate Tribal Councils, and obtain guidance and authorizations as appropriate for each land project;
9. Perform due diligence, keep careful records and develop a transferable digital and paper filing system for every and all transactions as well as processes developed among the Tribal communities for project prioritization and completion.

Education and Experience

Education and/or experience in a field such as natural resources, business, law, real estate, or communications is required. Specific experience in land use and conservation work, project management and related fields is preferred. Experience or education in Wabanaki or Tribal culture/studies or international relations also preferred.

Qualifications

- Energetic desire to develop relationships that help Tribal communities recover lands;
- Experience in land acquisition preferred. This could include individual or team experience in identifying, negotiating, and closing land transactions;
- Cultural humility, and respect and experience in working with a variety of diverse partners and individuals;
- Ability to manage a large and diverse project load (including a portfolio of 8 - 10 land projects at different stages), complete assignments, update partners, and work within established budgets;
- Strong organizational, planning, and multi-tasking skills with attention to detail and follow-up;
- Interest in learning Tribal government functions and decision-making steps within each Tribal community, and developing relationships with Tribal natural resource departments or other designated point people;
- Patience and persistence to accomplish projects while navigating delays and challenges with grace, particularly when working with diverse timelines;
- Ability to transition between the small details of land transactions and the big picture of communicating with partners about this work;
- Demonstrated capacity and willingness to learn new skills;
- Excellent interpersonal skills and ability to communicate in writing or speaking;
- Experience with remote work preferred;
- Working knowledge of Maine geography, culture, flora, and fauna preferred;
- Proficiency in word processing, email, and basic databases.

Working Conditions and Physical Demands

Office work is performed in a normal office environment not subject to extremes of noise, temperature, odor, etc. The ideal candidate will have regular access to a car and be capable of walking lands and boundaries and occasionally paddling or riding in a boat. Field work may be performed outside in all weather conditions. Occasional evening or weekend meetings will be necessary.

Compensation

\$60,000 - \$65,000 annual salary, plus paid time off. We will provide financial support for healthcare and retirement savings up to 10% of the salary.

How to Apply

To apply, please send us your responses to the following questions:

1. What is land recovery (or land back, land return) and why does it matter?
2. How does your previous work and personal experience prepare you to help the First Light community pursue land recovery work?

Please take as much space as you need to respond to these questions— you may feel you need anywhere from a paragraph to a page to convey your response. We are interested in hearing your big-picture perspective as well as specific contributions that relate to this role.

To submit your application, please send your question responses and a 1-page resume to firstlighthire@gmail.com by Friday, August 19, 2022.

The Hiring Committee will review applications and set up first-round Zoom interviews to begin in early September. Second-round interviews will ideally occur in person in mid to late September. During second-round interviews, applicants will have a chance to meet with representatives from the Wabanaki Commission, as well as staff at TNC Maine, Maine Coast Heritage Trust, and First Light.

We intend to complete the hiring process in late September.

Contacts for Questions About this Position

Peter Forbes, First Light Catalyst: peter@peterforbes.org

Ellie Oldach, First Light Program Manager: firstlightmaine@gmail.com

Alex Mas, Associate State Director/Director of Conservation for TNC Maine: amas@tnc.org

Ciona Ulbrich, Senior Project Manager for Maine Coast Heritage Trust: culbrich@mcht.org

Inclusivity Statement

Much of our work seeks to reshape the legacy of conservation. As part of that, we hope to recruit, mentor, and support employees in this work who bring different backgrounds, stories and experiences to this field. We encourage applicants from all cultures, races, colors, religions, sexes, national or regional origins, ages, disability status, sexual orientation, gender identity, military, protected veteran status or other status protected by law.

We offer accommodations for individual needs in our job application process. Please send a note to firstlighthire@gmail.com to discuss how we can meet your needs to apply for this position.

You can also view, download, and share this posting at <https://firstlightlearningjourney.net/hiring/>.