DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

The Open Land Trust

Beaufort, South Carolina

The Open Land Trust seeks for a thoughtful, relationship-oriented development professional who enjoys working collaboratively and can balance big-picture thinking with attention to detail.

About the Open Land Trust

Founded in 1971, the Open Land Trust is South Carolina's first and oldest land trust. For more than five decades, we have worked alongside landowners, communities, conservation partners, and local governments to protect the places that define the southern Lowcountry and ensure they remain part of this region for generations to come.

Our mission is simple and enduring: to protect and conserve Lowcountry land, forever.
What began with three community members taking a leap of faith to protect Beaufort's waterfront bluff has grown into one of the region's leading conservation organizations. Today, the Open Land Trust has permanently protected more than 40,000 acres across seven counties through 119 conservation easements and 49 fee-owned properties. Our work spans working farms and forests, historic landscapes, and places that preserve the cultural heritage and rural character of the Lowcountry.

The Open Land Trust is more than a typical land trust. We are a trusted community partner, known for bringing people together around a shared belief that some places are worth fighting for and protecting forever. Whether conserving a family farm, expanding public access to nature, supporting working lands, or helping communities shape their own future, we approach every project with collaboration, integrity, and a long-term commitment to stewardship.

Accredited by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, the Open Land Trust is based in Beaufort, South Carolina, and is guided by a dedicated professional staff and a committed 15-member volunteer Board of Directors.

To learn more, visit www.OpenLandTrust.org

Position Overview

The Director of Development works closely with the Executive Director, staff, and board to build strong relationships with the people who make Open Land Trust’s (OLT) work possible.

This position helps lead OLT’s fundraising and donor communications, with an emphasis on retaining and engaging current donors while expanding the organization’s donor and prospect base across its seven-county service area. The Director of Development will help ensure that donors at all levels feel appreciated, informed, and connected to the impact of their support.

The position calls for someone who is relationship-oriented, collaborative, organized, and adaptable, with the ability to see the bigger picture while building the practical systems and attending to the details that make a development program work. Strong written and visual storytelling is an important part of the role, helping OLT share meaningful stories about conservation, people, places, and the difference donor support makes.

Key Responsibilities

Donor Relationships & Stewardship

- Build and maintain strong relationships with donors and prospective donors, recognizing that donors at every level are important to OLT.
- Develop thoughtful approaches to donor appreciation, communication, retention, and engagement.
- Work with the Executive Director and board members to support donor cultivation and stewardship.
- Help create opportunities for donors and prospective supporters to connect with OLT's work, staff, conserved lands, and communities.

Fundraising & Donor Growth

- Plan and implement OLT's core fundraising activities, including annual appeals, monthly giving, planned giving, and donor events.
- Partner with the Executive Director to identify and cultivate prospective donors and expand OLT's network of supporters throughout its seven-county service area.
- Help strengthen major donor and prospect strategies through research, relationship-building, and consistent follow-up.
- Track fundraising results and donor information and use what is learned to strengthen future efforts.

Communications & Storytelling

- Develop donor-centered communications that help people understand the impact of their support and stay connected to OLT.
- Write compelling stories of change for appeals, newsletters, digital communications, donor materials, and other uses.
- Work collaboratively with staff to identify stories, photographs, project updates, and other content that bring OLT's conservation work to life.
- Stay current with effective donor communication and fundraising practices and bring useful ideas and approaches to OLT.

Collaboration & Systems

- Work closely with the Executive Director, conservation staff, board members, and volunteers so that fundraising and communications reflect the work and priorities of the organization.

- Participate comfortably in a range of donor and community settings, from one-on-one conversations and small groups to larger gatherings, contributing behind the scenes or as part of the front-facing team as appropriate.
- Maintain accurate donor records and help ensure timely acknowledgments, reporting, and follow-up.
- Develop and improve practical systems that make donor communications and fundraising more consistent and effective.
- Contribute as a collaborative member of a small staff, adapting as organizational needs and opportunities change. Will be responsible for overseeing related consultants, interns, and potentially additional staff as the organization grows.

Key Qualifications

The strongest candidates will bring:

- At least 3 years of experience in fundraising, nonprofit development, communications, or a related field.
- Strong writing and communication skills, including the ability to tell compelling stories about people, places, and the difference donor support makes.
- Experience building relationships with donors, volunteers, community members, or other stakeholders, and comfort engaging with people individually, in small groups, and at larger gatherings.
- Strong organizational skills and the ability to manage multiple priorities and follow through on details.
- A collaborative, adaptable approach to working with staff, board members, volunteers, and community partners.
- A high level of discretion and an ethical approach to all aspects of the work.
- A commitment to excellent service to OLT's many constituent groups.
- A demonstrated interest in learning and professional growth, including a willingness to learn and implement new systems and approaches.
- Comfort using donor databases and other digital tools, or the ability to learn new systems readily.
- Passion for OLT's mission, work, and approach.

Experience with major gifts, planned giving, monthly giving, donor research, or fundraising events is helpful but not required. We recognize that strong candidates may bring different combinations of experience and encourage applicants who meet many, but not necessarily all, of these qualifications to apply.

The above statements are intended to describe the general nature and level of work being performed by an employee assigned to this position. They are not intended to be an exhaustive list of all responsibilities, duties, and skills required. All staff members may be asked to perform duties outside their normal responsibilities from time to time or as needed.

Location & Logistics

The Open Land Trust is based in Beaufort, South Carolina. This is a full-time, exempt position requiring regular in-office presence as well as travel throughout OLT's seven-county service area to meet with landowners, partners, and community members. A valid driver's license and access to a vehicle are required, along with the ability to assist with event and program set-up/break down, and walk and hike protected properties across varied terrain and weather conditions.

Compensation & Benefits

Annual salary range is $60,000 to $75,000, commensurate with experience.

OLT offers a health and retirement benefits package designed to support the well-being of its staff.

This is an exempt position with generous paid time off, plus federal and state holidays. Training on Little Green Light and other professional development opportunities will be provided as part of the compensation package.

The Open Land Trust is an equal opportunity employer. All qualified candidates will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by applicable law.

How to Apply

Interested candidates should submit a resume and cover letter in PDF format describing their interest and qualifications to apply@openlandtrust.org.

Candidates are also encouraged, though not required, to include an example(s) of their work. This might be as a piece of writing, grant proposal, appeal letter, or another accomplishment that demonstrates their strengths for this role.

The position will remain open until filled. Applications will be reviewed starting November 1st. All inquiries and application materials will be handled confidentially.