

## Executive Director Job Description

# Henry L. Ferguson Museum and Land Trust



**Position:** Executive Director

**Reports to:** Board of Trustees

**Status:** Full time

**Location:** Fishers Island, NY 06390

**Compensation:** \$110,000-\$150,000, depending on experience, plus benefits, and Museum-provided housing.

### The Opportunity

The Museum and Land Trust are in an important period of growth and professionalization. For a couple of decades, the Museum had a single employee, the Museum Director. In the past decade, the work of the Museum and Land Trust has expanded, as has its staff accordingly. Currently the Museum has 4 full-time employees and 3 part-time employees, all of whom work on various programmatic areas of the organization. As its programs, staffing, community engagement, and organizational complexity have expanded both in the physical Museum and across the lands entrusted to us to manage, the Board has determined that the institution requires a full-time Executive Director to provide consistent, hands-on leadership across its twin pillars. The new Executive Director will oversee the Museum's growing programs and partnerships and the increasingly complex operations and administrative duties that have arisen from this growth.

The Executive Director will serve as the chief executive and administrative leader of the Museum and Land Trust. The ED will strengthen the systems, staff structure, financial management, and organizational practices needed for sustainable growth while preserving the institution's mission, character, and valued community relationships. This position calls for a leader who can think strategically, manage the details of a small organization, and bring the Museum and Land Trust together as one coordinated institution.

The HLFM/LT seeks an individual who thrives on challenge, is curious, a community builder with a sense of humor.

### About Fishers Island and The Henry L. Ferguson Museum and Land Trust

Founded in the 1960s, the Henry L. Ferguson Museum and Land Trust (HLFM/LT) is an anchor institution in the Fishers Island community. Its mission is to preserve our shared history and conserve the Island's natural habitats.

The Museum maintains permanent and temporary exhibitions devoted to the prehistory, history, culture, and natural history of the Island. Its educational and public programs include lectures, children's nature programs, field ecology experiences, nature walks, field trips, research collaborations, and volunteer opportunities. The HLFM/LT also owns and operates the Land Trust that protects approximately 400 acres, or about 15 percent of the Island, and conducts active land stewardship, habitat management, ecological research, and marine conservation work. Over the past decade, the Museum has collaborated with numerous scientists and research organizations, including New York Natural Heritage Program, NY Department of Environmental Conservation, Environmental Protection Agency and others to better understand and protect native ecosystems.

Located off the coast of Connecticut but part of New York State, Fishers Island is a small, interconnected community with dramatic coastal beauty, a strong sense of tradition, where many families have lived or seasonally visited for generations. As the crow flies, it is approximately seven miles long and a mile and a half

wide at its widest point. The small winter population of about 250 swells to several thousand in season when sailing, boating, fishing, golf, beach life, and a variety of conservation efforts shape the island's identity.

## **Responsibilities**

**Organizational Leadership and Strategy** - In 2025, The Board developed a five-year strategic plan. This position will provide overall leadership for the Museum and Land Trust and translate the Board's strategic direction into clear organizational priorities, work plans, and measurable progress, while ensuring that the Museum and Land Trust operate as one mission-driven institution with coordinated staff, resources, systems, communications, and goals. On an on-going basis, the ED will assess organizational needs and opportunities, recommend priorities, and execute Board directives.

**Staff Leadership and Human Resources** - As the organization has had rapid growth in staff, a key element of this position will be to foster a mission-centered culture that values the expertise and contributions of all staff. The ED will clarify appropriate distinctions between governance and management, while encouraging effective coordination among board committees and staff.

**Finance and Administration** - The ED is responsible for the annual operating budget in conjunction with the Finance Committee and the Board. The ED manages financial operations, internal controls, policies, and records.

**Operations Technology and Facilities** - The ED is responsible for developing and maintaining efficient, secure, and user-friendly administrative, financial, information technology, document management, and internal communication systems. This will include working with staff, the Board, and appropriate professionals to identify, prioritize, plan, and coordinate repairs, improvements, storage needs, and capital projects.

**Development and Membership** – The Museum is in solid financial health. The challenge is to coordinate the ongoing fundraising strategy in partnership with the Board, Development Committee, the Museum Director, and other staff. The ED will manage all internal and external systems and records.

**Communications** – The ED is responsible for managing and streamlining communications, which include newsletters, a website, and social media.

## **Qualifications**

### **Required Experience and Capabilities**

- Leadership experience in a nonprofit or mission-driven organization, with responsibility for management and operations.
- Ability to build, supervise, develop, and retain a strong staff team.
- Developing and managing budgets and financial statements.
- Fundraising, donor relations, grants, and other forms of nonprofit resource development.
- Written and oral communication skills.
- Managing competing priorities.

### **Particularly Valuable Experience**

- Leadership in a community-based organization, or other institution with related educational, cultural, or stewardship responsibilities.
- Leading an organization through growth.
- Working in a community where personal presence and discretion are essential.

The successful candidate need not be a museum professional or conservation scientist. The Museum seeks an experienced nonprofit leader who can work effectively with professionals in these fields, understand and value their expertise, and provide the leadership necessary to succeed.

### **Position Expectations**

Year-round residence on Fishers Island is preferred. Island housing is available and can be part of the overall compensation package. Candidates who reside on the mainland, who can maintain a substantial on-Island presence, will be fully considered.

This is a full-time, year-round executive position. Because the Museum and Land Trust serve both year-round and seasonal communities, the Executive Director must be available for occasional evening and weekend responsibilities and must be able to adjust their schedule to meet organizational and community needs. The responsibilities listed above describe the principal functions of the position and may evolve as the organization grows and its needs change.

### **Applications**

The Henry L. Ferguson Museum is an equal opportunity employer and views diversity, inclusion, and cultural competence as vital guiding principles in its work. To apply please send a resume, cover letter that describes how qualifications and experience match the needs and mission of the Henry L. Ferguson Museum, and names and contact information for three references to the President of the Museum's Board, Elizabeth McCance, at [emccance@fergusonmuseum.org](mailto:emccance@fergusonmuseum.org). Please put "Executive Director Search" in the subject line. Applications are due by December 7, 2026.