



Executive Director, Americas Program
Wildlife Conservation Society

The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) seeks to recruit a visionary and dynamic leader to serve as Executive Director, Americas Program.

Mission and Background

The mission of WCS is to “save wildlife and wild places worldwide through science, conservation action, education, and inspiring people to value nature.” WCS envisions a world where wildlife thrives in healthy lands and seas, valued by societies that embrace and benefit from the diversity and integrity of life on earth. As human beings, we connect to nature with a force as strong as the pull of gravity. We depend on nature. Zoos, aquariums, botanical gardens, national parks, the conservation movement—indeed, the Wildlife Conservation Society—were all created with a desire to maintain and strengthen that connection.

When WCS was founded in 1895, the human population was approximately 1.5 billion; today it tops out at over 7.4 billion. And while the enormous growth in the world economy over the last century has improved conditions for humanity, it has come with a downside for wild nature. Today, over three quarters of the world’s land area and most of the world’s oceans have been significantly impacted in some form by human activities. While the rate of loss is slowing in temperate zones, the pace of change is accelerating in the tropics, with a tenth of wilderness lost since the late 1990s. Globally, only 15% of the planet’s original tropical forests and less than 5% of the natural grasslands remain. One third of the area historically covered with coral has been lost. Sixty percent of the world’s large mammals are now listed as threatened with extinction.

Amidst the exploding pressures on our Earth and its limited resources, WCS believe there is a way forward. At the heart of WCS’s strategy lie protected and conserved areas, a wide variety of sites of exceptional importance for nature that are, or warrant, special management by governments, communities and societies. These areas, both on land and sea, are nature’s strongholds. Using science and its wildlife expertise, WCS has supported governments and communities in the creation or expansion of 245 protected areas—from the remote mountains of Afghanistan to the windswept wilderness of Chile’s Tierra del Fuego. WCS strategy focuses on defending these strongholds where nature will be stewarded for now and the future.

Today, WCS does so in 16 critical regions, and focuses our efforts within the world's intact forests, coral reefs and wild rangelands, particularly in tropical regions and developing countries. The Americas program comprises 6 of these 16 regions. **WCS: 2020** represents the organization's most careful strategic thinking about its future identity and purpose as a global conservation organization. By 2020, WCS will be the premier science-based conservation organization, producing and disseminating the information and knowledge necessary to inform and improve conservation and management action in the wild places, and measuring the impact of our work on wildlife and wild places. Maintaining and expanding is a high priority. scientific capacity within WCS, including the training of the next generation of field and zoo conservation scientists. In addition, by 2020, WCS will build and activate a conservation movement—a diverse, influential, and enduring global community that is invested and empowered to save wildlife and wild places.

WCS work to inspire urban populations to appreciate, advance and advocate for nature. In one of the world's most influential cities, New York, we seek to accomplish this through our zoological parks and aquarium, and through education and media outreach. The goal of this work is to create a worldwide urban constituency for nature. Within this rubric WCS Wild Americas' communications and engagement effort is designed to celebrate the unique fact that the Americas region is at the same time both the wildest and the most urban part of the world. Vast intact spaces and intact wildlife assemblages coexist with mega-cities and the world's highest proportion of urban dwellers. Conservation success here will depend on both rural and urban residents valuing, supporting, and investing in wildlife and wild places, and WCS, with its long conservation history in the Americas, its commitment to science, and its on-the-ground presence, is uniquely positioned to succeed. WCS seek to align human livelihoods and prosperity with conservation objectives. For more information on the full range of programs and projects supported by the Wildlife Conservation Society please review their website at www.wcs.org.

Executive Director, Americas Program

The Executive Director of the Wildlife Conservation Society's Americas program is the senior leader for WCS's conservation programs in North America, Central America, the Caribbean, and South America. The Executive Director should possess sophisticated management, fundraising, and strategic capabilities. Moreover, the Executive Director must be able to direct, motivate and inspire a professional staff – treating all staff with respect, consideration and thoughtfulness. This person needs to bring genuine excitement and commitment to WCS's mission.

Because so much of what the Executive Director will do involves communicating the organization's vision and building relationships with multiple stakeholders, the Executive Director must have the presence, humility and interpersonal skills to work effectively and professionally with a diverse range of people from different environments and sectors of society. The Executive Director promotes wildlife conservation and the role of WCS as a leading conservation organization within the larger scientific community, donors, governmental agencies and other non-governmental organizations through meetings, speaking engagements, media interviews, writing, and general communications.

The Executive Director directs attention to important conservation sites, species and/or issues; and influence policies and funding in support of these priorities. The Executive Director will serve as a member of the Senior Management Team of WCS's Global Conservation Program. The Executive Director has six direct reports (Regional Directors) and oversees a small administrative team based in New York. The expectation is that the Executive Director will be based in New York. The Executive Director reports to Senior Vice President for Field Conservation.

The broad objectives and responsibilities for the Executive Director are the following:

- Provide effective leadership and executive level management of WCS's conservation programs across the Americas, currently a \$30m annual program with approximately 300 staff dispersed across different countries
- Establish program priorities and high-level strategies and position the Americas program with respect to global conservation initiatives to maximize impact.
- Represent the Americas program broadly, engaging with and building relationships with donors (including individuals, government agencies, philanthropic foundations, development agencies).
- Provide leadership and support to Regional Directors, and senior technical and cross-cutting leaders by providing guidance and expertise to shape conservation strategies and establish programs and approaches to achieve these.
- Align financial and management support to program priorities; provide substantive conservation expertise to guide development of strategic initiatives and program implementation.
- Identify emerging conservation needs within the region and establish new programs and initiatives in response.
- Oversee the administration of all aspects of the Americas Program, in close coordination with the Senior Operations Manager, and with the support of other administrative and managerial staff in the program and supporting departments within WCS.
- Lead effort to maintain and increase financial support for programs, in collaboration with Americas and WCS Development staff.
- Work with the leadership teams of the Marine and Wildlife Health Programs to ensure both themes are well represented and integrated within the regional programs.

Professional Qualifications and Personal Attributes

The Executive Director ideally should possess the following professional qualifications and personal attributes:

Professional Qualifications:

- Familiarity with and a proven track record working on conservation issues in both Latin America and North America.
- Capacity to lead, inspire and mobilize people -- particularly leaders, staff, donors, and other key stakeholders.
- Possessing a management style that is results-oriented, but flexible; that respects the capabilities and independence of staff and provides them with a clear sense of direction.
- Visionary leader possessing an ability to increase the organization's fundraising standing by helping secure grants and investments from individuals and institutions.
- Proven record of success guiding a business or nonprofit enterprise and a deep familiarity with the budgeting processes.
- Bachelor's degree required with an advanced degree or equivalent experience strongly preferred.
- Strong work ethic and willingness to travel extensively, often for weekend and evening engagements.
- Fluency in English and Spanish required. Portuguese is also preferred.

Personal Attributes:

- Passionate commitment to the values and mission of WCS and a demonstrated conservation ethic.
- Personal creativity and strategic vision coupled with an ability to listen to others and learn from their best ideas – a sense of inquisitiveness and intellectual curiosity.
- Ability to inspire trust, lead and facilitate with strong interpersonal skills and move from ideas to action.
- A superb professional and personal presence.
- Ability to think strategically, tactically and creatively.

Compensation

Compensation for the Executive Director, Americas Program includes a competitive base salary, and a package of health and employee benefits.

How to apply

Interested candidates should submit a resume and cover letter responding specifically to the experience and qualifications being sought to: Daniel Sherman, President, Explore Company at resumes@explorecompany.com. Refer to WCS/EDAP in the subject line. No phone inquiries please.

The Wildlife Conservation Society is an equal opportunity employer and invites individuals who bring a diversity of culture, experience and ideas to apply.

All correspondence will remain confidential.