



Position Description: Environmental Planning Program Director

About Whitebark Institute

Whitebark Institute is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to addressing environmental challenges and fostering resilient communities in California's Eastern Sierra. Our work prioritizes landscape and community adaptation to climate change, particularly wildfire risk reduction. We play a key role in advancing the region's wildfire resilience efforts in communities throughout the Eastern Sierra by bringing together local scientists, environmental planners, government agencies, educators, communities, and businesses to collaboratively develop, plan, finance, and restore healthy landscapes in Inyo, Mono, and Alpine Counties.

Whitebark Institute makes an impact in our communities and provides a great place to work. We are a small, growing organization with a skilled staff that brings experience from a multitude of scientific disciplines and applied areas of expertise. With an indescribable passion for this place, Whitebark is made up of talented outdoor enthusiasts who care deeply about where we work and live. Collaboration is one of our core values, and we recognize that a healthy work-life balance is essential to our long-term success.

About the Position

The **Environmental Planning Program Director** will provide strategic leadership and vision for Whitebark's environmental planning initiatives, ensuring alignment with our mission and long-term goals. This role will lead the development of projects that enhance environmental resilience and will guide projects through environmental compliance and permitting processes. The director will cultivate partnerships with federal, state, and local agencies, and work closely with community stakeholders to develop and plan projects rooted in collaboration.

This position is ideal for a forward-thinking leader who seeks to advance their career as both an environmental practitioner and a strategic leader. The Director will play a pivotal role in shaping the future of environmental planning and project development at Whitebark.

Reporting Structure

This role is part of the Whitebark Leadership Team and reports to the **Executive Director**. The Environmental Planning Program Director will work collaboratively with other leadership team members and program staff to drive an integrated approach to regional project development and environmental compliance.



Key Responsibilities

Strategic Leadership & Program Development:

- Establish and implement the strategic direction for Whitebark's environmental planning program, ensuring alignment with organizational goals and environmental planning efforts.
- Develop and oversee a portfolio of projects that enhance wildfire resilience, habitat restoration, sustainable recreation economy, and community-driven environmental planning efforts.
- Hire, mentor, and lead a team of environmental professionals, fostering a collaborative, high-performance culture.
- Identify opportunities for programmatic growth and innovative approaches to environmental planning and compliance.

Project Development & Partnership Building:

- Lead project design and planning efforts, ensuring projects align with regional environmental priorities.
- Cultivate and sustain partnerships with local, state, and federal agencies, Native Nations, community-based organizations, and other stakeholders.
- Work collaboratively with the Community Engagement Team to engage partners, small businesses, Tribal representatives, and local experts to ensure projects reflect community interests and environmental needs.
- Shape the vision and strategic direction of the Eastern Sierra Wildfire Alliance (ESWA) in collaboration with the Executive Director, to enhance and leverage regional collaboration for wildfire resilience. Work with ESWA partners to align projects with regional priorities, drive strategic initiatives, and strengthen partnerships that enhance wildfire adaptation efforts across the Eastern Sierra.

Environmental Compliance & Technical Oversight:

- Lead National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) processes in close cooperation with federal, state, and local agency partners. The director will be expected to identify appropriate and strategic levels of environmental analysis, identify relevant scientific specialties, consulting partners and other technical project needs to successfully deliver projects in accordance with statutory limitations and within project budget.
- Oversee all aspects of environmental compliance, including environmental analysis, permitting, and regulatory documentation. Oversee the completion of Categorical Exclusions, Environmental Assessments, Environmental Impact Statements, Negative Declarations and Environmental Impact Reports, as appropriate.
- Direct interdisciplinary teams in executing environmental compliance tasks, ensuring adherence to CEQA, NEPA, Endangered Species Act, and other relevant regulations.



- Work directly with agency partners under their authority to complete Section 106 and Section 7 consultation processes and ensure compliance with Endangered Species Act, Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, and National Historic Preservation Act and other regulations.
- Develop process improvements and technical strategies to streamline environmental review and permitting. Continually communicate with Lead Agency partners to assure alignment and adjust schedule as individual project needs arise.

Funding & Program Sustainability:

- Provide strategic leadership in managing and expanding funding sources for the Environmental Planning Program, ensuring financial sustainability and alignment with Whitebark's mission.
- Oversee the administration and management of grant-funded projects, ensuring compliance, reporting, and effective use of resources.
- Identify and pursue diverse funding opportunities, including grants, contracts, and partnerships, to support program growth and resilience.
- Explore and develop potential revenue-generating opportunities that align with the program's expertise and services, to include expansion of opportunities for fee for service work.
- Maintain financial oversight of program budgets, tracking expenditures and ensuring resources are allocated efficiently to ensure successful delivery of grant funded projects within the broader Environmental Planning program.

Qualifications:

Required:

- **Education:** Bachelor's degree in Environmental Planning, Environmental Science, Planning, or related field or equivalent experience.
- **Experience:** Minimum **10 years** of experience in environmental planning or a related field, including at least **5 years in a leadership role**.
- Strong knowledge of environmental regulations, including **CEQA, NEPA, ESA, NHPA, CWA**, and others. Significant experience working within the Section 7 consultation process will be considered a plus.
- Demonstrated experience working with governmental agencies and understanding environmental regulatory frameworks.
- Proven ability to develop and manage complex environmental projects, balancing multiple diverse partner interests and funding sources.
- Strong proficiency in collaborative cloud-based platforms that enhance efficiency in cross-functional planning and project management. This includes, but is not limited to, the Office 365 suite (Word, Excel, SharePoint, OneNote, PowerPoint), ESRI suite, Asana or other project management tools, and time management software.
- Strong leadership, strategic planning, and organizational skills.



- Excellent communication and interpersonal abilities, with experience engaging diverse communities and partners, including government agencies, Native Nations, and local communities.
- Ability to manage multiple projects and deadlines with a high level of detail.
- Passion for environmental conservation and community resilience.

Preferred:

- Advanced degree in Environmental Planning, Environmental Policy, or a related field.
- Experience working in California's Eastern Sierra region, with strong local knowledge and connections.
- Additional certifications or specialized training in project management, environmental compliance, or community engagement methodologies, technical tools and associated platforms.

Compensation & Benefits

This is a full-time, year-round position with a salary range of \$115,000 - \$135,000, commensurate with experience and qualifications.

Benefits include:

- **Health Insurance:** 75% employer-paid medical, plus 100% employer-paid dental, vision, and life insurance.
- **Retirement:** Employer-contributed retirement program.
- **Paid Time Off:** Generous Vacation Time Policy and an additional 11 paid holidays per year.
- **Work Environment:** Hybrid work options and flexible scheduling, provided client, subcontractor, and Whitebark team needs are met.

How to Apply

Interested candidates should submit a **resume, cover letter, and references** to

administrator@whitebarkinstitute.org . Applications are encouraged to be submitted before March 14, 2025.

Whitebark Institute is an Equal Opportunity Employer. We celebrate diversity and are committed to creating an inclusive work environment for all employees.