



Position Description: Environmental Planning & Collaborative Projects 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 wildfire resilience by aligning evidence-based solutions and collaborative partnerships. 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 aims to positively impact our communities while providing a great place to work. We are a small, growing organization with a talented 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 outdoor enthusiasts who care deeply about where we work and live. Our values emphasize place-based impact and collaboration that is action-oriented, adaptive, and grounded with integrity.

About the Position

The **Environmental Planning & Collaborative Projects Director** will provide strategic vision, leadership, and delivery of Whitebark's environmental planning program and regional collaboration initiatives, ensuring alignment with our mission and goals. This role will lead the development of projects that enhance environmental resilience and will guide projects through various stages including, but not limited to project development, environmental compliance and permitting, and grant proposal preparation. The Director oversees a team of two environmental planners responsible for project delivery and will cultivate partnerships with Tribes, federal, state, and local agencies, and communities to enhance regional capacity for wildfire resilience by advancing strategic projects rooted in collaboration.

This position is ideal for a forward-thinking leader who seeks to advance their career leading environmental planning efforts while supporting strategic partnerships. The Director will play a pivotal role in shaping the future of programs that leverage expertise and align resources to advance regional wildfire resilience, including environmental planning and collaborative project development in the Eastern Sierra.

Reporting Structure

This role is part of the Whitebark Leadership Team and reports to the **Executive Director**. The Environmental Planning & Collaborative Projects Director will work closely with other leadership team members and program staff to drive an integrated approach to regional project development, capacity alignment, 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 projects that enhance wildfire resilience, habitat restoration, sustainable recreation economy, and community-driven climate adaptation planning efforts.
- Mentor and lead the environmental planning team, fostering a collaborative, high-performance culture.
- Identify opportunities and innovative approaches to collaborative project development, environmental planning and compliance, and permitting that support efforts of strategic partners while enhancing regional resilience.
- Support organizational growth and programmatic impact by strengthening internal systems, workflows, and staff resources both independently and in coordination with other managers and directors.
- Serve as an active member of the Leadership Team and contribute to organizational planning, budgeting, and policy development as well as priorities and initiatives that strengthen Whitebark's culture, collaboration, and long-term effectiveness.

Project Development & Partnership:

- Lead project design and planning efforts, ensuring projects align with regional environmental priorities.
- Cultivate and sustain partnerships with local, state, and federal agencies, Tribes, and community-based organizations to understand partner needs and support projects that enhance wildfire resilience for Eastern Sierra landscapes and communities from Coleville to Lone Pine.
- Work collaboratively across the organization to engage partners, small businesses, Tribal representatives, and local experts to ensure projects reflect community interests and environmental needs.
- Oversee project management activities within the Environmental Planning Program, ensuring successful execution of all phases of a project lifecycle through effective coordination of internal staff and external partners.
- Enhance and leverage regional collaboration for wildfire resilience through the Eastern Sierra Wildfire Alliance (ESWA), in coordination with the Executive Director and lead partners. Work with ESWA partners to align projects with regional priorities, drive strategic initiatives, and strengthen partnerships that advance wildfire adaptation efforts across the Eastern Sierra.

Environmental Compliance & Technical Oversight:

- Provide strategic leadership for 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, relevant scientific specialties, consulting partners, and other technical project needs to successfully deliver projects in accordance with statutory limitations and within project budget.
- Provide strategic oversight of environmental compliance efforts, including environmental analysis, permitting, and regulatory documentation, ensuring projects meet applicable federal, state, and local regulatory requirements through effective coordination of staff, consultants, and agency partners.
- Guide interdisciplinary teams to ensure environmental compliance activities are executed in accordance with 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 with other staff and project partners to streamline environmental review and permitting.



- Maintain ongoing communication with Lead Agency partners to ensure alignment on project objectives, proactively adjusting schedules and priorities to accommodate evolving project needs.

Funding & Program Sustainability:

- Provide strategic leadership in managing and expanding grants and other funding opportunities that support project development, environmental planning, and wildfire resilience, 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 and organizational needs.
- Explore and develop potential revenue-generating opportunities that align with the program and organization expertise and services, in coordination with the Leadership Team.
- Maintain financial oversight of program budgets, tracking expenditures and ensuring resources are allocated efficiently to deliver successful, grant funded projects.

Qualifications

Required:

- **Education:** Bachelor's degree in Environmental Planning, Environmental Science or related field, or equivalent experience.
- **Experience:** Minimum **10 years** of experience in environmental planning, project development, regional collaboration, 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.
- Demonstrated experience working with governmental agencies and land managers and understanding environmental regulatory frameworks.
- Proven ability to develop and manage complex relationships as well as 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, 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, Tribes, 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.
- Significant experience working within the Section 7 consultation process will be considered a plus.
- 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 remote work options in Mono or Inyo Counties, CA 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 September 15, 2026.

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