

Executive Director

Location: Fort Bragg /
Mendocino County, CA

Position Type: Full-Time,
Exempt



**MENDOCINO
LAND TRUST**

Mendocino Land Trust

The Mendocino Land Trust (MLT) is an accredited, private, nonprofit conservation organization with an annual operating budget of \$2-4M. MLT is dedicated to conserving important natural resources, working lands, wild spaces, and public access in Mendocino County. MLT works with willing landowners, regional partners, and local communities to protect coastal redwoods, pristine rivers, and wildlife corridors.

Over its rich 50-year history, MLT has deepened its partnerships with small-scale farmers, coastal communities, and Indigenous tribal nations. MLT is proud to lead bold regional initiatives, including historic fundraising and partnership efforts that have successfully facilitated multi-million dollar, thousands-of-acre acquisitions for both permanent conservation and tribal land return. The organization is on the path to soon protect 50,000 acres of redwoods, pygmy forests, coastal prairies, oak woodlands, ranches, and vineyards, and has achieved remarkable growth in recent years.

MLT manages 18 miles of trail, nine public access properties, and has more than 15 miles of additional trail and several public access properties in development. Our current priorities also include advancing climate resilience, ancestral land returns to Tribes, ecological restoration projects, and expansion of the California Coastal Trail, the Great Redwood Trail, and the Lost Coast Trail.



Regional Overview

An Ecological Marvel of Land and Sea - Mendocino County is a place of breathtaking ecological diversity and profound conservation significance. Stretching from the dramatic, wind-swept bluffs and delicate estuaries of the Pacific Coast through the towering canopy of old-growth redwood forests to the oak woodlands and chaparral of eastern peaks, the region serves as a vital sanctuary for an incredible array of biodiversity. Its pristine river systems provide some of the best spawning habitats for imperiled wild Coho salmon, Chinook salmon, and steelhead trout, while inland oak woodlands and chaparral run deep with wildlife corridors. The County is also increasingly recognized as a pivotal landscape for climate resilience and carbon sequestration.

A Vibrant, Engaged, and Inspired Community to Call Home - Mendocino County runs ninety miles along California's North Coast, from the redwood-and-rocky-shore country south of the Lost Coast down through Fort Bragg, the village of Mendocino, the wine and farming communities of Anderson Valley, and the smaller coastal towns of Point Arena and Gualala. The County is roughly the size of Delaware and Rhode Island combined, with fewer than 90,000 residents.

Fort Bragg, population about 7,000, is the County's largest coastal city and home to Mendocino Land Trust. Once a timber and fishing town, it is now a hub for arts, food, outdoor recreation, and small-scale enterprise. The city offers a hospital and access to working forests, salmon-bearing rivers, and miles of public beach and trail. Ukiah, the county seat about ninety minutes inland, anchors the County's agricultural and government center.

The region has a long tradition of independence, environmental stewardship, and rural community living. It was the heart of the back-to-the-land movement in the 1960s and 1970s. That ethic, shaped by longtime residents, Indigenous communities, farmers, foresters, and newcomers, still defines Mendocino County's vision for its land and future.

Position Overview: Executive Director

Strategic Visionary Leadership & Conservation Urgency

- **Strategic Planning:** Collaborate with staff and the Board. Develop and execute long-term strategic and annual work plans. Ensure all plans align with MLT's mission and meet accreditation standards.
- **Collaborative Leadership:** Provide visionary guidance that respects MLT's culture of consensus and inclusive decision-making.
- **Growth & Partnerships:** Drive organizational growth (particularly inland), champion conservation policy, and build regional credibility.
- **Core Priorities:** Advance indigenous/community partnerships, climate resilience, equitable access, and voluntary land conservation/acquisition.
- **Program Oversight:** Ensure land protection, stewardship, restoration, and public access programs maximize mission impact and conservation urgency.
- **External Alliance:** Represent MLT and participate with the Land Trust Alliance, the California Council of Land Trusts, and peer organizations.
- **Ambassadorship:** Lead staff and board in regional outreach—connecting deeply with landowners, community members, local and state officials, agency partners, media, Tribal Nations, and diverse communities.

Operations & Staff Management

- **Team Empowerment:** Support, mentor, and retain a high-performing staff, fostering a transparent, inclusive, and collaborative work environment.
- **Board Governance:** Maintain a strong partnership with the Board of Directors, facilitate the work of Board officers and committees, and provide regular updates on strategic goals, risk management, and organizational health.
- **Risk & Compliance:** Ensure full legal, regulatory, and Land Trust Alliance Standards and Practices compliance across all land transactions, stewardship obligations, and non-profit operations.

Funding & Financial Sustainability

- **Fundraising Leadership:** Partner with the development team and Board to diversify and expand revenue streams, cultivating major donors, foundations, and corporate sponsors by effectively telling the story of MLT's mission.
- **Grant Management:** Oversee the pursuit, compliance, and reporting of public and private grants to secure consistent project funding.
- **Fiscal Oversight:** Manage the organization's budget, ensuring long-term financial health, accurate forecasting, and responsible asset allocation.

Desired Skills & Experience

MLT seeks an inspiring, down-to-earth leader who brings deep humility, warmth, and a genuine love for rural community life to conservation work in Mendocino County.

Conservation Background

- **Conservation Commitment:** A genuine, abiding dedication to land conservation, public access, and protecting working lands and native habitats.
- **Standards & Accreditation:** Familiarity with Land Trust Alliance standards and practices preferred.
- **Local Knowledge:** Desirable understanding of Mendocino County communities, rural culture, and local natural resource issues.
- **Forward-Looking Vision:** Ability to modernize MLT so the organization can sustainably grow and evolve.

Relationships & Connections

- **Relationship Builder:** A track record of connecting with diverse groups—from rural landowners and farmers to conservation advocates.
- **Indigenous Partnerships:** Experience working with Indigenous communities and a commitment to supporting land return projects.
- **Rural Cultural Fit:** Clear fit with the unique rural community dynamics of Mendocino County.
- **Equity Focus:** MLT is an equity-centered organization.

Fundraising

- **Relationship-Driven Development:** Skilled in fundraising, viewing development as a shared investment in place rather than a mere transaction.
- **Proven Fundraising Track Record:** Experienced in securing major and planned gifts through relationship-driven cultivation.

We recognize that a variety of educational, work, and life experiences may contribute to a candidate's preparedness for a position, and encourage you to apply even if you do not meet all of the preferred qualifications listed above.

Compensation & Requirements

- Status: Full-time, exempt, benefit-eligible position.
- Compensation: \$110,000-130,000 commensurate with experience.
- Benefits: A comprehensive benefits package is provided, including health insurance, retirement contributions, and generous paid time off.
- Location: Based out of the Mendocino Land Trust offices in Fort Bragg, CA, with regular travel throughout Mendocino County. A consistent, hybrid, or in-person presence is required to effectively engage with the local community, board, staff, and partners.
- Flexibility: The role requires the flexibility to work occasional evenings and weekends for events, donor engagement, and community programs.

MLT is committed to equal employment opportunities regardless of any protected characteristic, including race, color, genetic information, creed, national origin, religion, sex, affectional or sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, ancestry, age, marital status, or protected veteran status, and will not discriminate against anyone on the basis of a disability. We support an inclusive workplace where staff excel based on personal merit, qualification, experience, ability, and job performance.

To Apply

Applications should be submitted to sarah@mendocinolandtrust.org and include a tailored resume and a cover letter describing your specific qualifications and what you will bring to the Mendocino Land Trust.

Mendocino Land Trust is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

