



DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT
CATALINA ISLAND CONSERVANCY
LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA



CATALINA ISLAND
CONSERVANCY

Aspen Leadership Group is proud to partner with Catalina Island Conservancy in the search for a Director of Development.

The Director of Development will oversee all activities relating to a successful philanthropy program including the development and implementation of an annual coordinated fundraising strategy, a robust membership program, direct response appeals, major and planned giving initiatives, grants and sponsorships, special campaigns, and fundraising events that result in increased year-over-year fundraising revenue. The Director of Development will foster a culture of philanthropy and empower a highly collaborative team to fulfill clear, ambitious, and achievable goals. In partnership with the Chief of External Affairs, the Director of Development will lead the planning and execution of the Conservancy's next major comprehensive capital campaign, projected to begin this year following organizational visioning and strategic planning; develop a more ambitious approach to major and planned giving in order to increase overall giving at the highest levels and yield impactful gifts; grow memberships by 8% to 10% annually; build a best in class major gift program and campaign infrastructure; and increase unrestricted fundraising to support programmatic and operational needs.

Founded in 1972, the Catalina Island Conservancy, one of California's oldest and largest private land trusts, opens its wildlands for the public to enjoy in many ways. Just off the densely populated Southern California coast, Catalina Island is home to approximately 4,000 year-round residents and more than 60 endemic species of plants and animals found nowhere else on Earth. The Catalina Island Conservancy protects 88 percent of Catalina Island's approximately 48,000 acres, including the region's longest publicly accessible undeveloped coastline. The Conservancy is a research and conservation leader, protecting and restoring vulnerable habitats and species in its Mediterranean climate. Conservancy staff guide Island ecosystem recovery with the goal of generating a resilient, self-sustaining ecosystem with no endangered forms of life. The Conservancy offers recreational experiences and educational programs for not only the 300,000 annual visitors who choose to spend time in the unique and special Conservancy "Wildlands Ecosystems" but also inspires nearly 1.4 million visitors to other parts of the Island. Recreation, educational engagement service opportunities, and partnerships connect the Island's unique resources to people's lives, inspiring environmental stewardship and action. The Catalina Island Conservancy believes in responsible recreation for the stewardship of natural resources. The Conservancy provides access to Catalina Island's wildlands with nearly 165 miles of recreational roads and trails, and 62 miles of unspoiled beaches and coves for camping, biking, hiking, touring, and more.

Conservation is a key component of the work of the Conservancy. It preserves and restores the environment on Catalina, promoting and modeling ecologically sustainable communities to create a healthier future for the Island and the Planet. The Conservancy's conservation programs focus on resiliency of the Island and its plant and wildlife populations, partnerships with researchers and implementation of long-term studies, preservation of historic cultural resources, and synergy of conservation efforts in balance with education and recreation programming.

Preserving habitat via landscape ecology restoration is one of the major initiatives of the Conservancy. Catalina is home to nine endemic plant species and over 60 rare plant species. The Wildlife Program supports resilient native animal populations where rare and endemic Island fauna are not at risk. The wildlife team is actively conserving over 50 endemic species. Catalina Island is a haven for biodiversity with 16 unique and rare plant communities and at least 60 known species of plants and animals found nowhere else in the world. The Catalina Island Conservancy maintains active collaborations with partners in academia, research institutions, NGOs, and other land trusts to expand the knowledge and educational base for its own and society's management needs. Catalina Island is a living laboratory for the exploration of all manner of applied and theoretical questions. The Catalina Island Conservancy also hosts paid internships in collaboration with the American Conservation Experience ACE, USC, and CSULB. Students and young professionals spend time on Catalina Island, contributing to conservation efforts during a "learn-by-doing" experience.

The Conservancy provides formal classroom lessons and non-formal outdoor experiences designed to deliver nature-based engagement and experiential learning. Conservancy Education programs focus on dynamic educational experiences that engage and immerse learners in the science and culture of the Island and continue to deepen the public's relationship with the Conservancy and its work on Catalina. Adult learning programs offer opportunities to explore Catalina's wildlands through excursions and training as well as learning pathways accessible from home. These programs connect to current conservation research, promote opportunities for discourse and discussion, and empower learners to become active stewards of natural spaces on Catalina Island and beyond. Youth and family learning programs focus on connecting the youngest learners to the unique ecology and natural history of Catalina Island. School partnerships support educators and students from PreK to university. Special learning events and online materials allow families to connect to Catalina Island and learn about the work of the Conservancy.

A TIMELESS PLACE, AN ENDLESS PURPOSE: TURNING VISION INTO ACTION

The Conservancy's five-year strategic plan, [*A Timeless Place, an Endless Purpose: Turning Vision into Action*](#), details the visions, actions, and indicators of success that will fulfill its mission to be an exemplary steward of Island resources through a balance of conservation, education, and recreation. The Conservancy's vision is for a beautifully functioning Island ecosystem for all to enjoy. For more than 50 years, the Catalina Island Conservancy has embraced a mission set forth by its founders to maintain the integrity of one of the most important island ecosystems on Earth. Now is the time to execute the vision for Catalina Island and share with the world that successful ecosystem management can coexist with opportunities for nature recreation inclusive of people of all backgrounds and abilities.

The Conservancy's values not only reflect the importance of Catalina Island's ecosystems as natural wonders, but also of the people who enjoy and steward the incredible island. The Conservancy will invest in the organization, its team, audiences, and beautiful Catalina Island to bring five major visions into reality. The first of these is the completion of a major [Catalina Island Restoration Project](#) that will protect native plants and animals from extinction and enhance people's engagement and understanding of the Island.

Catalina Island Conservancy will come together as an organization-wide-cross-functional team to complete the gateway projects critical to conservation, education, and recreation success on Catalina Island—from managing the introduced mule deer herd and building out capacity and infrastructure to managing flora and fauna at a landscape level.

A mission-focused portfolio in which all Conservancy facilities, programs, and partnerships belong and clearly benefit the Conservancy’s mission and goals is the second vision. The Conservancy plans to conduct a thorough audit of every Conservancy facility, partnership, business, and program and ensure that, taking nothing for granted, each is set up in the short- and long-term best interests of the Conservancy.

A third vision is for the residents of Catalina Island, Los Angeles County, Southern California, and beyond to see the Conservancy as a premier recreation and learning destination, a model for balanced land conservation solutions, and an example of how to build successful cultural partnerships. The Conservancy will study who its key audiences are now, resolve who they want them to be, build clearly defined and messaged offerings to attract and satisfy those audiences, and engage in a long-term evaluation of how their needs are met, while prioritizing solutions that benefit the residents of Catalina Island as a whole.

The Conservancy also aims to be an action-oriented, collaborative, and successful team of leaders, staff, board, volunteers, and auxiliary groups where individuals feel supported and respected. This will be accomplished by investing in a healthy team, all-around staff recruitment and housing solutions, implementing clear decision-making procedures, enacting the Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion (DEAI) plan, and evolving the membership of board, volunteers, and auxiliary groups to meet current needs and be representative of the Conservancy’s audience.

A strong reputation for delivering on its mission and a popular investment option for philanthropists and partners interested in achieving large-scale conservation solutions is the final vision of the Conservancy’s strategic plan. To achieve this, the Conservancy will increase the number of times key decision-makers see its name, understand its mission, hear of its conservation, recreation, and educational accomplishments, and learn of major philanthropic investments.

REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS

The Director of Development will report to the Chief of External Affairs, Kirsten Peterson Johansen. The Director of Development will oversee a team of 15 current and proposed staff.

FROM THE CHIEF OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

With nearly 30 years of experience in fundraising and campaigns, my role at the Conservancy has reignited my passion for mission and the delight in creative storytelling to advance strategic priorities with philanthropy. Growing up in Lake Tahoe, I came to embrace nature and the great outdoors—recreating and protecting in equal measure. The arc of my career has been in environmental preservation, cultural heritage and museums, art and design, and conservation, working nationally and internationally for great causes and movements. I now have the opportunity to work on the ground—up close and in person—with amazing colleagues, generous donors, collaborative stakeholders, visiting scholars, scientists, and volunteers to restore Catalina Island for future generations. I am honored and humbled to be a part of the Catalina Island Conservancy at this dynamic moment in its long, distinguished history, in my native state of California, and working at the intersections of conservation, education, and recreation.

Catalina Island Conservancy is making it possible for the Island's plant and animal habitat be conserved and return to a thriving ecosystem. We're also improving the recreational experience through trail and campground enhancements. We are proud to make it possible for increased access and affordability to the Island for underserved children and families. It's an exciting and important time to join the organization. As Teddy Roosevelt said so well, "It is hard work, worth doing." I invite you to join me in this hard but meaningful and rewarding work.

—Kirsten Peterson Johansen, Chief of External Affairs

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

The Director of Development will

- serve as the organization's lead development officer and ensure strategic management of activities for donor identification, cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship;
- collaborate with the Chief of External Affairs, other senior administrators, and board leaders to create and execute a systematic, integrated plan on an annual and multi-year basis for development in concert with priority operational, program, and capital needs, setting measurable goals and objectives;
- provide strategic leadership for expansion of the donor pool, strengthening the fundraising performance of donors, including size and number of gifts, and use the power of data and analytics to deploy the development team and develop a compelling case for support and other messaging;
- in support of the development program, identify and refine financial needs and giving priorities on a regular basis in collaboration with senior colleagues and development team staff;
- participate in the planning, implementation, and successful outcomes of future capital campaigns;
- partner with the Chief of External Affairs and other senior administrators on Board of Directors engagement, leveraging the talent and resources of board members;
- recruit, hire, train, manage, coach, evaluate, and ensure the ongoing professional development of an effective staff;
- set appropriate annual goals and monitor progress on a regular basis to maximize staff performance, ensuring the utilization of appropriate metrics on an individual, team, and organizational basis;
- develop and maintain appropriate systems, processes, policies, and annual budgets to support development department activities and ensure adherence to all local, state, and federal regulations related to gift processing and administration;
- continually assess departmental processes and infrastructure to ensure support of the Conservancy's development goals;
- establish clear processes and collaborate with other departments within the organization to create an understanding and appreciation for the development function;
- regularly prepare detailed and transparent reports and analyses on development activities for the Chief of External Affairs and for broader dissemination and prepare additional reporting as appropriate for the broader community of donors and potential funders;
- in collaboration with the Chief Financial Officer, establish and monitor fundraising benchmarks;
- provide strategic guidance and mentorship to development staff in managing their portfolios of current and prospective donors, as well as ensuring alignment of giving prospects with volunteer leadership opportunities, committees, activities, and events that are appropriate to their interests or potential interests;

- model transparency and collaboration, while contributing to and driving an organization-wide culture of philanthropy;
- personally manage a portfolio of individual major and principal gift prospects and donors, moving them through the stages of cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship;
- develop written proposals, decks and presentations, gift agreements, gift acknowledgements, pledge payment reminders, and other materials needed to engage and steward major and principal gift donors and prospects;
- lead and oversee the development team in the creation and promotion of effective cultivation and solicitation opportunities that involve the Chief of External Affairs, senior administrators, board and volunteer leaders, and senior stakeholders;
- manage connections between prospective and current donors and leaders, including prioritizing the latter's role and involvement in development activities, implementing strategic communications, preparing reports, briefings, and other materials in support of this involvement, and ensuring additional staffing as needed;
- in collaboration with programmatic staff and the Institutional Giving Manager, oversee the development and annual updating of programmatic narratives and support materials for grant pursuits;
- in collaboration with colleagues and board members, oversee the planning and execution of special events, ensuring return on investment related to donor discovery, cultivation, recognition, and solicitation of major gifts;
- ensure high-quality, individualized, and meaningful stewardship of donors, including coordination with colleagues throughout the Conservancy; and
- maintain visibility in the philanthropic community and broadly promote the Conservancy by participating in key activities such as yacht club opening days, cruising group visits to the Island, prospective grantor site visits, CA Islands Symposium, and other activities to steward relationships and demonstrate thought leadership in advancing the Conservancy's mission.

LEADERSHIP

Wendy Latorre President and CEO

With a passion for telling stories that matter, Whitney Latorre has brought unique experience as an internationally recognized storyteller and educator, and as a dynamic innovator and leader to her role as President and CEO of Catalina Island Conservancy.

She joined the organization in July 2023 from National Geographic, part of The Walt Disney Company, where she led the charge to illuminate the wonder of the world as Vice President and Executive Director of Visuals. Latorre directed the organization's award-winning visual content, twice recognized as a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize; collaborated on initiatives to increase the organization's digital audience and engagement; spearheaded innovative projects in new media; and championed collaborations with For Freedoms, NASA, Rolex, and other stakeholders.

Earlier in her career, Latorre was the Director of Photography at *The New Yorker*, where she led initiatives with various stakeholders, including documenting more than 100 heads of state at the United Nations and earning a Peabody in collaboration with Human Rights Watch. She also played a pivotal role in advancing the public profile of *The New Yorker* across digital and social platforms.

Latorre began her career working in advocacy and communications at the Open Society Foundations. She has industry leadership experience as an adjunct professor at Columbia Journalism School and New York University's Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute; as inaugural Chair, Environment of the World Press Photo Contest in 2018 and as Global Chair of the World Press Photo Contest in 2019; and through her continued service on the advisory board of The Alexia at Syracuse University Newhouse School of Public Communications. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Barnard College and continued with graduate work in American Studies at Columbia University.

Kirsten Peterson Johansen

Chief of External Affairs

Kirsten Peterson Johansen joined the Catalina Island Conservancy as Chief of External Affairs, October 10, 2023. In this role, Johansen is responsible for leading development, membership, marketing, communications, campaigns, and special events. Working closely with President and CEO Whitney Latorre and the Executive Team, Johansen leads and inspires an integrated team, engages with devoted, generous board members, and partners with scientists and educators. Johansen's fundraising track record and experience working with notable conservation, cultural and educational institutions, and nonprofits are tremendous assets for the Conservancy. Her leadership, collaborative spirit, and development expertise will serve the Conservancy well as it enters a new, important phase of increasing visibility, reaching new audiences, and expanding its public and private financial support.

Johansen brings nearly 30 years of experience to her role at Catalina Island Conservancy. She most recently served as Assistant Dean of the USC School of Architecture, for Advancement, where from February 2018 to October 2023 she strategically led a team, stewarded two dynamic voluntary boards, and engaged thousands of alumni, donors, prospects, partners, parents, corporate and foundation funders, locally, nationally, and globally. Prior, Johansen held leadership roles at the Phoenix Art Museum, National Park Foundation (philanthropic arm of the National Park Service), Smithsonian Institution, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Originally from Lake Tahoe, Johansen received her Bachelor of Arts Degree from Pepperdine University and her Master's Degree in Public Policy from the Sol Price School of Public Administration at the University of Southern California, and a Certificate of Nonprofit Management from Georgetown University.

PREFERRED COMPETENCIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

Catalina Island Conservancy seeks a Director of Development with

- a commitment to the mission of Catalina Island Conservancy—to be an exemplary steward of Island resources through a balance of conservation, education, and recreation;
- experience in change management and in setting and exceeding philanthropic goals;
- knowledge of and fundamental adherence to the principles, ethics, and best practices of modern fundraising, including the integration of various giving programs to diversify the funding base and cultivate greater donor commitments;
- excellent interpersonal, verbal, and written communications skills;
- an ability to develop and sustain impactful relationships with a diversity of constituencies, serve as a highly visible and public-facing ambassador of the Conservancy, and produce concise, articulate, and compelling narratives for philanthropic support;
- a history of providing strategic and operational leadership, including creating and managing budgets, while ensuring efficient processes and resource allocation;
- an ability to recruit, manage, coach, motivate, and ensure ongoing professional development of a high-performing staff while fostering a transparent and collegial work environment that increases staff effectiveness;

- a commitment to and understanding of how to build diversity, equity, and inclusion in the development function and cultural competence with respect to issues such as racial, cultural, religious, sexual, and gender identity;
- a history of developing the case for support and strategic fundraising plans, and then executing those plans to achieve fundraising goals and objectives;
- experience cultivating, training, and working collaboratively with senior-level colleagues, board members, and other high-level stakeholders on successful development-related activities;
- a history of personally identifying, cultivating, soliciting, and stewarding major gifts with significant institutional impact from individual and institutional donors;
- an ability to utilize new methods of constituent engagement and connectivity and a drive to innovate in developing advancement best practices;
- an ability to extract and analyze data to make effective, efficient decisions about donor strategy and process;
- an understanding of computer software and modern data management practices and innovations that can streamline advancement processes and contribute to the integration of related functions;
- an understanding of the players, strategies, and trends in giving on the U.S. West Coast and fundraising success therein as well as an ability to access these networks seamlessly and with aplomb;
- a passion for the many diverse aspects of the Catalina Island Conservancy's work and an ability to authentically engage and inspire others as a senior representative of the organization;
- unimpeachable integrity and a commitment to the highest standards of professionalism; mature judgment in handling sensitive information;
- a values-driven commitment to personal and professional development and an ability to lead by example and with humility;
- a desire to elevate institutional goals and values beyond personal gain, ensuring efforts are mission-focused and quality driven; and
- the interpersonal skills needed to develop and sustain impactful relationships with an array of diverse constituencies.

A bachelor's degree or an equivalent combination of education and experience and at least eight years of experience in nonprofit fundraising, serving in roles with progressive levels of responsibility, including experience with individual giving, institutional giving, major gifts, annual fund and membership, planned and capital giving, prospect research, stewardship, special events, and development operations is preferred for this role. Catalina Island Conservancy will consider candidates with a broad range of backgrounds. If you are excited about this role and feel that you can contribute to the Conservancy, but your experience does not exactly align with every qualification listed above, we encourage you to apply.

SALARY AND BENEFITS

The salary range for this position is \$160,000 to \$180,000 annually. Catalina Island Conservancy offers a comprehensive package of benefits.

LOCATION

This is a hybrid position based on the Catalina Island Conservancy's Long Beach, California campus. As a campus-based institution, the Conservancy places a high value on the in-person experience, cross-team collaboration, and strong community building to create a vibrant campus for its staff and stakeholders. The Director of Development should expect to work in-person, on-campus a minimum of three days per week.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

All applications must be accompanied by a cover letter and résumé. ***Cover letters should be responsive to the mission of Catalina Island Conservancy as well as the responsibilities and qualifications presented in the prospectus.*** Review of applications will begin immediately and will continue until the successful candidate has been selected.

To apply for this position, visit: [Director of Development, Catalina Island Conservancy](#).

To nominate a candidate, please contact Clare McCully, claremccully@aspenleadershipgroup.com.

All inquiries will be held in confidence.