POSITION PROFILE

Chief Executive Officer

Native Plant Trust

Framingham, Massachusetts
ABOUT NATIVE PLANT TRUST

Native Plant Trust is the nation’s first plant conservation organization and the only one solely focused on New England’s native plants. The organization saves native plants in the wild, grows them for gardens and restorations, and educates others on their value and use. Native Plant Trust operates Garden in the Woods, a renowned native plant botanic garden that attracts visitors from all over the world, and Nasami Farm nursery, which grows native plants without pesticides from sustainably sourced seeds. Six unstaffed sanctuaries in Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont are open to the public; a seventh, in Maine, is the site of a long-term research project on a rare orchid.

On the ground, Native Plant Trust has achieved notable and lasting success—from banking seeds of imperiled species to restoring habitats to propagating hard-to-grow plants. Its education programs set the standard in the field, attract highly respected professional partners, and engage a wide range of people interested in plants. The staff also consistently develops methods and models that are adopted by colleagues across the nation. They publish books, technical reports, and online tools in conservation and horticulture. The decades-long leadership of a regional alliance focused on rare plants has strengthened conservation action in all six states and earned trust and influence in state and federal agencies. The organization’s active role in national and international coalitions not only amplifies its voice but also connects it to exciting work done elsewhere that can improve its effectiveness in New England.

MISSION:
Conserving and promoting New England’s native plants to ensure healthy, biologically diverse landscapes.

154
PUBLIC PROGRAMS
SERVING 4,122
PEOPLE

21,892
HOURS DONATING
BY 344 VOLUNTEERS
SERVING 4,122
In addition, Native Plant Trust is committed to a culture of inclusion, diversity, equity, and access (IDEA) and to being a welcoming and safe place for all who engage with it. The organization just completed a year-long IDEA pilot program with American Public Gardens Association that included in-depth training, resources, and the opportunity to collaborate with and learn from 20 other organizations. The internal IDEA Working Group leads the organization-wide conversation and documents suggestions for projects and programs for the organization to undertake—from alt text on online images to physical changes to buildings to cultural shifts. In addition, Native Plant Trust acknowledges the need for respectfully incorporating culturally diverse perspectives on plant life, scientific methods, and ways of interacting with plants, into its work.

Native Plant Trust accomplishes its mission with 32 year-round staff, seasonal interns (7), retail staff (15), and several hundred volunteers who monitor rare plant populations, conduct surveys, collect seeds, propagate plants, and serve as garden guides and work crews. With the exception of a senior research botanist based in Maine, the year-round staff are in three primary locations:

- Headquarters (16): administration, philanthropy, and conservation are moving in October to rented office space near Garden in the Woods
- Garden in the Woods (8): horticulture, public programs, retail manager
- Nasami Farm (7): nursery, rare plant seed technician, writer-editor

Native Plant Trust operates with a budget of $4.5 million funded primarily by philanthropy (including membership) and nearly $1.5 million in plant sales. Additional revenue streams for the organization include investment returns on an $8 million endowment, garden admissions, course fees, and contracts.
Native Plant Trust works in three core areas—conservation, horticulture, and education—with staff who collaborate across the disciplines to strengthen programs and ensure alignment.

**CONSERVATION:** Native Plant Trust’s conservation program focuses on saving rare and endangered plants, conserving and restoring habitats, and publishing research that will help prioritize conservation action or provide knowledge to the field. Key initiatives include:

- Banking the seeds from two-thirds of the populations of the 389 globally and regionally rare plants in New England, and monitoring rare plant populations in every country in the region
- Restoring or augmenting rare plant populations, in collaboration with state and federal agencies
- Restoring habitats, such as the 6-year project with the National Park Service to restore the summit of Cadillac Mountain in Acadia National Park
- Conducting research at the sanctuaries, including experiments on genetic diversity and assisted migration

**PROGRAMS & PARTNERSHIPS**

- **685 RARE PLANTS MONITORED**
- **108 RARE PLANTS POPULATIONS DISCOVERED**
- **83,000 SEED OF RARE SPECIES ADDED TO SEED ARK**
- **82 SEED COLLECTIONS FROM 57 RARE TAXA**
In recent years, the staff have published two books, including the definitive flora of the region (Yale University Press, 201), three technical reports, and the Go Botany website. Highlights include:

- The groundbreaking report Conerving Plant Diversity in New England provides a detailed roadmap for strategic land protection to save plant diversity—and thus overall biodiversity—in New England as the climate changes. A three-year collaboration with The Nature Conservancy, the report provides the information needed to save a range of habitats while achieving land conservation goals in the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation and the 30 by 30 standard adopted internationally.

- Flora Conservanda, which analyzes the data on all the rare plant populations in the region; ranks them by state, regional, and global status; and sets conservation priorities. The third edition will be published in late 2023. It is a collaboration between Native Plant Trust and professional botanists from state and federal agencies and other nonprofit organizations in its New England Plant Conservation Program.

In addition, Native Plant Trust partners with leading institutions around the world and is active with national alliances focused on influencing policy. These include:

- Center for Plant Conservation
- Botanic Gardens Conservation International
- Millennium Seed Bank of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew
- Smithsonian’s North American Orchid Conservation Center
- Bureau of Land Management’s Seeds of Success program
- Plant Conservation Alliance

For its innovation and impact, Native Plant Trust was among the first organizations worldwide to receive Advanced Conservation Practitioner accreditation by London-based Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI), which included an endorsement by an International Advisory Council representing six continents.
HORTICULTURE: Native Plant Trust is a leader in ecological horticulture and native plant propagation, with a renowned botanic garden, an industry-leading nursery, and a long history of publishing books and articles to help others grow native plants.

The horticulture program operates at two locations:

- **Garden in the Woods**: A 45-acre native plant botanic garden outside Boston that attracts visitors from around the world. It is a showcase for using native plants in a naturalistic setting and demonstrates the principles of ecological horticulture—gardening to enhance habitat and food webs for wildlife.

- **Nasami Farm**: Set on 75 acres in the Connecticut River Valley of western Massachusetts, Nasami Farm hosts the organization’s nursery, which grows New England native plants from sustainably sourced seed. The nursery team also does research on the propagation of hard-to-grow native species that are either good plants for restoration projects or for home gardens.

The horticulture and conservation departments are collaborating on the new **Northeast Seed Network**, a major initiative with start-up funding from the US Fish & Wildlife Service, to create a supply of seed of New England plants from sustainably managed sources to meet the increased demand.

- The goal of the network is to recruit partners to grow native plants in seed-increase plots, or seed-producing gardens, for use in restoration projects and by nurseries to grow plants for sale.

- Native Plant Trust will staff the network and be the hub for both training and seed processing. With private funding, it is currently constructing additional seed-processing and storage infrastructure at Nasami Farm.


Recent publications and tools include:

- **The Northeast Native Plant Primer: 235 Plants for an Earth-Friendly Garden** (Timber Press 2022)

- **Native Plants for New England Gardens** (Globe Pequot Press 2018)

- Online tools such as **Garden Plant Finder** and the new “Gardening for Pollinators” manual.
EDUCATION: Native Plant Trust runs one of the country’s most robust programs in native plant education, with 150-200 online and in-person classes, field studies, and public programs. The Public Programs department also oversees interpretation at Garden in the Woods by training the Garden guides, training teacher-naturalists to run school tours that meet state curriculum standards, and developing interpretive signs and audio tours.

Highlights of the program include:

- The basic and advanced certificate programs in Botany & Conservation and Horticulture & Design. Native Plant Trust pioneered certificates in native plant studies in 1987; these programs remain models in the field and attract both respected instructors and a wide range of people from across the country.

- Two symposia each year focused on important topics in conservation and horticulture, including plant-pollinator interactions, the effect of climate change on plant life, and, most recently the online “Need for Seed,” which drew 750 people nationwide for two days focused on building sustainable seed networks.

- New interdisciplinary programs with artists—musicians, writers, engravers—exploring the world of plants. This includes a new artist-in-residence program at Garden in the Woods.

With a wealth of regional data; established infrastructure like its seed bank, garden, nursery, and sanctuaries, and robust educational programs, Native Plant Trust is uniquely poised for continued leadership in its field.

For more information, please visit the Native Plant Trust website.
WHAT’S NEXT

Today, Native Plant Trust is stronger and more effective than at any time in its nearly 125-year history. With dedicated members and supporters, talented staff, a robust and active volunteer corps, and valuable partners across New England and the country, the organization is able to achieve more than its modest size would suggest is possible.

Native Plant Trust enters the next phase of its work at a time when awareness of the importance of native plants is growing. Success relies on inspiring, engaging, and collaborating with a wide range of individuals and organizations, who take actions both large and small to save plants and improve the landscape.

With those partners, Native Plant Trust can achieve an ambitious vision: New England’s native plants will exist in vigorous populations within healthy, evolving ecosystems, and people across the region will actively protect them in the wild and use them in their gardens for their beauty and ecological value.

To learn more about the organization’s priorities and values, please see its 15-year vision statement “Leadership in a Rapidly Changing World.”
THE OPPORTUNITY

Native Plant Trust seeks a dynamic leader and accomplished fundraiser as its next Chief Executive Officer (“CEO”). As the organization approaches its 125th anniversary, the talented staff and energized board are eager to realize an ambitious vision focused on the twin environmental crises of biodiversity loss and climate change.

This context offers the new CEO an exciting opportunity to lead a successful, well-run organization through a period of strategic direction setting, growth and impact. To meet the needs of the future, the next CEO will need to substantially build funding to invest in staff development and hiring, technology, and facilities.

The Board of Trustees is committed to ambitious growth and to preparing for a comprehensive campaign that will include funding for such projects as:

- Revamping Go Botany: an invaluable resource used by nearly 100,000 people a month. The program is a decade old and in need of both content and technical revision.
- Continuing the investment in staff salaries and benefits while strategically adding positions.
- Supporting core programs, such as the Plant Conservation Volunteers, nursery, and Northeast Seed Network.
- Building the endowment and endowing key positions.

The Board and retiring Executive Director have built a strong foundation for the new CEO including:

- Approving the creation of two new senior positions to support the CEO: a Director of Finance and Operations to handle the day-to-day financial and contracting responsibilities currently done by the Executive Director and to oversee staff and consultants; and a Director of Communications to provide strategic guidance, take over management of staff and consultants, and prepare for the 125th anniversary and eventual fundraising campaign.
- Ensuring that core systems—from accounting to HR to a new phone system—are solid and will not need immediate attention. Resources for the new CEO include the 15-year vision, an initial draft of a 5-year strategic plan, and an 18-month communications plan to help guide the transition and the hiring and budgeting for a new Director of Communications.
With the 125th anniversary approaching in 2025, the new CEO has the opportunity to take the helm and position Native Plant Trust for the future. The next leader will also be tasked with completing the rebranding interrupted by the pandemic (the organization changed its name in April 2019 from New England Wild Flower Society).

The next leader should have the ability to be:

- A visionary and strategic leader to guide the organization’s growth.
- A dynamic ambassador and fundraiser who can amplify the organization’s strong brand and reputation and leverage them to raise funds from a variety of sources.
- A relationship builder to work with leadership staff to inspire staff, the Board of Trustees, the public, and partners to new heights.
- An effective manager of business operations with the ability to delegate to and deploy human resources and financial capital in a productive and collegial work environment.

As its most public ambassador, the CEO will represent Native Plant Trust across New England and nationally as it continues to expand its reach. This includes building partnerships with organizations in the broader science, conservation, and horticulture fields, academia, funders (individual and institutional), community organizations, policymakers, and beyond.
Key responsibilities include:

**STRATEGY**

- Collaborate with the Board, staff, and key constituents to shape, define, and effectively implement long-term goals. Lead the Board and staff in identifying initiatives that expand the organization’s capacity to serve its many constituents.

- With the Board and senior staff, forge strategies for continued leadership and innovation in the primary program areas. Work with staff to ensure the quality, scope, and suitability of programs.

- With the Board and senior staff, set priorities for investment among and within program areas, to ensure that early investment has returns that support subsequent phases.

- Ensure the organization embodies its values and its commitment to equity and diversity. Build out the IDEA strategy and ensure it is woven into the fabric of the organization’s culture and work.

- Pursue partnerships to improve accessibility to a wider range of audiences, and build on established partnerships to amplify impact across New England and beyond.

**FUNDRAISING**

- Grow philanthropic support: annual giving, capital campaigns, designated gifts, and grants. Lead the development and execution of fundraising strategies in partnership with the philanthropy team and Board. Develop and maintain relationships with leadership-gift donors and prospects, including individuals, foundations, and corporations.

- Engage Board members as active participants in fundraising efforts and in cultivating and identifying potential Trustees and donors.
PUBLIC PRESENCE AND RELATIONSHIPS

Cultivate and steward relationships with a broad range of constituents, including more diverse communities, donors and funders, scientific and educational institutions, policymakers, cross-sector partners, and more.

- Communicate effectively to amplify Native Plant Trust’s voice, build constituencies for native plants, and move native plants to the forefront of key sectors.
- Harness the organization’s convening power to amplify impact through other conservation organizations, professional/scientific organizations, and federal/state/local government.
- Act as a public spokesperson and advocate for Native Plant Trust through public speaking, media interviews, publishing, social media, and by attending industry events.

MANAGEMENT

Oversee operations with an eye toward collaboration among departments. Work with the Director of Finance and Operations, the other senior staff, and the Board to set achievable budgets, develop and implement policies and procedures, and evaluate performance against the strategic goals.

- Lead the staff and public’s adjustment to the new structure, with HQ no longer based at Garden in the Woods.
- Attract, energize, and develop the most promising talent to the staff, Board, and Council.
- Scale the multi-site infrastructure and support services to provide superb employee productivity/satisfaction and membership experience.
- Strengthen nursery operations to support burgeoning retail demand, dissemination of best practices to the trade, and build the seed/genetics program.
- Continue implementation and adaptation of Garden in the Woods’ Master Plan, ensuring a vibrant experience that attracts and motivates a diverse and energized population of visitors and showcases the organization’s expertise.
CANDIDATE PROFILE

A PASSION FOR THE MISSION

The CEO brings a deep passion for Native Plant Trust’s mission of “Conserving and promoting New England’s native plants to ensure healthy, biologically diverse landscapes.” The CEO possesses a leadership style that inspires collective, strategic, and urgent action to save endangered species, ensure the protection of the most important places, and create better-connected, better-designed, and more resilient landscapes. An appreciation for the role of native plants in resilient ecosystems is critical, along with the innate desire to prompt people to action in support of this work. Finally, the CEO is committed to including those whose ancestral homelands are utilized by the organization and those who may be disproportionately affected by environmental issues who have had little voice in the organizations.

A VISIONARY & STRATEGIC LEADER

The CEO is a curious and forward-thinking leader able to develop and articulate a vision while inspiring people to implement it. The ideal candidate has a proven track record of leveraging insights from the staff, Board, donors, community members, and key constituents to develop an organization-wide strategy that addresses the rapidly changing needs of both the organization and the sector at large. The CEO recognizes the uniqueness of Native Plant Trust’s position in its local, regional, national, and international spheres of influence and proactively seeks out opportunities to increase the organization’s profile, relevance, and impact to advance its mission and strategic priorities. The CEO leads with sincerity, honesty, and credibility, and possesses the highest levels of personal and professional integrity and ethics.

A DYNAMIC AMBASSADOR & RELATIONSHIP BUILDER

The ideal candidate is a charismatic leader and natural ambassador with a record of engagement with communities underserved or ignored by environmental and horticulture organizations. This leader has a positive personality and humble disposition and also possesses strong ‘people skills’, political savvy, and outstanding communication abilities that inspire people to take action. The person has experience in successfully translating scientific information to the public, donors, policymakers, and the media. As the lead spokesperson for Native Plant Trust, the CEO inspires trust and confidence and excels at developing strategies to amplify the organization’s brand and reputation throughout New England and far beyond. Internally, The CEO supports, strengthens, and motivates both Board members and staff to achieve impact through creativity and collaboration.
AN ENERGETIC & SUCCESSFUL FUNDRAISER

Importantly, the CEO enjoys fundraising and can clearly and enthusiastically convey the organization’s mission, value proposition, and strategic goals to existing and potential new supporters, including major donors, foundations, government agencies, and others. The CEO is the lead major gifts fundraiser for the organization and works closely with the Director of Philanthropy, Board leadership, and the Development Committee to set fundraising targets, build effective fundraising strategies, and ensure that professional and volunteer staffing levels and capacity match the goal. The ideal candidate has demonstrated success in securing gifts of six figures and more and experience with capital campaigns.

A MANAGEMENT & BUSINESS LEADER

The CEO is a welcoming and accessible leader with the ability to set clear priorities, delegate, and guide investment in people and systems. The ideal candidate has a proven track record of setting ambitious goals and effectively deploying resources and human capital to achieve outcomes. The CEO has experience being a “magnet” for mission-driven professionals who are intent on delivering large-scale impact and creating a culture of transparency, collaboration, and buy-in. The CEO possesses the proven ability to leverage the talents of a dynamic staff and provide a productive work environment with professional growth opportunities that result in team cohesion and camaraderie. This leader is also fiscally responsible and, with the Board and Director of Finance and Operations, ensures that all accounting, fund development, and personnel practices meet the highest standards of the profession.
COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

Salary is competitive and commensurate with experience. The salary range for this role is $210,000 - $250,000 with a generous benefits package.

CONTACT

Koya Partners, the executive search firm that specializes in mission-driven search, has been exclusively retained for this engagement. Anne McCarthy, Claire Hunt, and Kaley Blaszinski are leading the search. To make recommendations or to express interest in this role please email nativeplanttrust@koyapartners.com. All nominations, inquiries, and discussions will be considered strictly confidential.

Koya Partners is committed to providing an accessible search process for all, including individuals living with disabilities. If you need assistance expressing interest online or in any aspect of the recruitment process, please email nativeplanttrust@koyapartners.com or NonprofitSearchOps@divsearch.com.

ABOUT KOYA PARTNERS

Koya Partners, a part of Diversified Search Group, is a leading executive search and strategic advising firm dedicated to connecting exceptionally talented people with mission-driven clients. Our founding philosophy—The Right Person in the Right Place Can Change the World—guides our work as we partner with nonprofits & NGOs, institutions of higher education, responsible businesses, and social enterprises in local communities and around the world.

Learn more about how we can help you with your search on the Koya Partners website.