

Santa Fe Conservation Trust
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SUCCESSION PLAN
Policy 2015-02
Adopted on: December 1, 2015
Updated on: _____

Purpose:

The purpose of this succession plan is to outline an approach for eventual or sudden change in the executive director (ED) position.

Rationale:

Every organization experiences turnover. Some turnover is planned (e.g. Board members have term limits), some is episodic (nobody stays in a job forever), and some represents surprises (illnesses and abrupt job changes do happen). Whatever the cause, turnover happens and our organization is planning for its orderly transition.

The role of the executive director is pivotal. He sets priorities, maintains many of our most valuable relationships and interacts with the board as necessary. He raises most of the funds for our organization.

There is no stated second in command who could take over the organization on short notice should the need arise. Should the executive director leave the organization or have an interruption in his ability to serve, the organization should have a workable plan to put into action.

This succession plan considers the **eventual transition of the executive director**, naming of an **interim executive director** should transition happen suddenly.

Executive Director Long-range Plan:

The executive director might consider taking these steps toward moving the organization forward:

1. Identify within existing staff a potential successor and delegate steadily more work to build the experience base of that person. If no such person is on staff at this time, consider reviewing the overall staffing pattern to create a deputy director opportunity (if staff size and capacity allows for such).

If the Santa Fe Conservation Trust (SFCT) Executive Director left today, the person designated to be Interim Executive Director would be: Melissa Houser.

2. Orient the new staff.
3. Conduct talent scouting while out in the community working with partners and donors, to find leads on new staff as existing staff move up. In the case of the

SFCT, with additional fund raising initiatives, this becomes more likely if, for example, the Trust is able to hire a project manager.

Executive Director Interim Plan:

In the case of the Executive Director's sudden departure or interruption in service, the organization will take these steps.

1. Board Chair Actions:

- a. The Board chair appoints an interim executive director. The board chair consults with other board members as appropriate in making this decision.
- b. The Board chair at this time should work with the executive director to identify one or two people (perhaps even outside the organization) who could serve as interim director on short notice.
- c. The board chair informs the board and key external audiences, including but not limited to:
 - i. Land Trust Alliance
 - ii. All other New Mexico-based land trust organizations,
 - iii. City of Santa Fe—appropriate offices/personnel,
 - iv. Santa Fe County—appropriate offices/personnel,
 - v. Santa Fe Community Foundation,
 - vi. Other appropriate Santa Fe nonprofit organizations and businesses,
 - vii. Important donors,
 - viii. Other important partners (people and organizations who would need to know before a public announcement).

2. Board Actions:

- a. The Board identifies its vital roles to support interim ED, given the interim ED's strengths and weaknesses and pressing needs of the organization, and
- b. Then identifies tasks, timelines, persons responsible and a check-in schedule (Board chair) to ensure that tasks are getting accomplished.

3. Depending on the nature of the ED's situation, the board begins recruiting process or prepares for interim ED performance appraisal on three-month basis.



Sandra Massengill, Secretary

12.1.15

Date