

Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation

Job Posting: President/CEO

Location: Elizabeth, Illinois

The Opportunity

The Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation (JDCF) seeks a dynamic and experienced President/CEO to lead the organization in conserving the natural, agricultural, and cultural heritage of Jo Daviess County, Illinois. This is an exceptional opportunity for a visionary leader to make a significant impact on local and regional conservation efforts, community engagement, and the long-term sustainability of a vital land trust that has gained national attention.

About Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation (JDCF)

JDCF works to preserve and steward land and water for the lasting well-being of all people and wildlife. JDCF is dedicated to protecting and enhancing the natural beauty, diverse ecosystems, and working lands of Jo Daviess County and surrounding areas. Our efforts contribute to clean air and water, provide essential wildlife habitat, support local agriculture, and offer opportunities for the community to connect with nature. Through a combination of land protection strategies, public access initiatives, educational programs, and initiatives to foster partnerships with Native American tribes, JDCF strives to ensure a healthy and vibrant environment for current and future generations.

In our 35-year history, JDCF has protected over 7500 acres of land and water. JDCF proudly owns and manages eleven preserves, nine of which are open to the general public for outdoor recreation. JDCF serves as our county park system, helping make Jo Daviess County a great place to live and visit. JDCF's protected properties contain rare habitats for endangered and threatened species, over 20 miles of public trails, and globally significant Native American cultural sites. JDCF is recognized as a regional leader when it comes to partnering with Tribal Nations on protecting, stewarding, and interpreting Indigenous landscapes. These accomplishments along with professional staff of 17 fulltime positions and dozens of committed volunteers have made JDCF one of the strongest and most impactful conservation land trusts in the Upper Midwest.

The Jo Daviess County Driftless Area in northwestern Illinois is a unique geological region characterized by its rugged landscape, rolling prairies, bluffs and Mississippi River views, that was left untouched by the last glacial period. The area attracts more than 1 million visitors annually who come to experience the landscape, recreation, and historic villages. The lifestyle in Jo Daviess County is easy and affordable, with lots of amenities and high-quality schools.

Key Competencies for the Ideal Candidate

- **Leadership:** Demonstrates the ability to work with and lead others through and toward a shared vision and values; strategic and insightful; community-minded and mission-focused. A team player and builder, recognizing the Board's role.
- **Interpersonal and Communication:** Able to attract, inspire, collaborate with, and motivate others. Strong advocacy skills, active listening, ability to build trust easily and create enduring relationships. Deals well with conflict and handles adversity with grace.

Communicates effectively and strategically at multiple levels. Dynamic, energetic, and charismatic ambassador. Experience with marketing, branding, and strategic positioning; strong public presentation and writing skills.

- **Business and Management:** Non-profit management experience, ensuring operational compliance with all laws, regulations, and land trust requirements. Knowledge of land trust conservation standard programs and operating procedures. Understands and implements financial management systems, and controls. Skilled in all aspects of fundraising and development: grant-writing, annual giving, major gifts and endowment building. Oversees the management of JDCF properties and land trust operations of the organization, including conservation easements, and a dozen fee-owned lands with extensive public access. Develops a team environment and fosters empowerment.
- **Personal Attributes:** Demonstrated passion for the organization's mission. Self-starter, goal-driven, with a record of impactful conservation results. Possesses sound judgment, persistence, and stamina. Practices self-awareness and manages time effectively.

Physical Requirements

The job responsibilities include significant time spent in diverse natural areas, traveling unpaved roads, and in both front and backcountry.

Salary and Benefits

This is a full-time, salaried, exempt position with a starting salary commensurate with experience and qualifications and within the framework of the organization's annual budget.

Application Guidelines

Candidates should email a cover letter and resume to apply@jdcf.org. All material will be kept confidential. JDCF is an Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action Employer, which encourages applications from candidates from diverse backgrounds and cultures.

Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation is an Equal Opportunity Employer

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JOB DESCRIPTION

Revised: November 1, 2025

Position: President/CEO

Supervisor: Chairperson of the Board of Directors

Location: Elizabeth, IL

Status: Full-time, salaried, exempt

Application deadline: Feb. 1, 2026

Position Summary

The President/CEO is the senior management leader of the Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation, reporting to the Chairperson of the Board of Directors. This position is responsible for the overall financial sustainability, administration, programs, staff, strategic direction and public image of the organization. Other key duties include fundraising, marketing, budgeting, land trust operations, government relations (including tribal governments), and community outreach.

Essential Functions

Mission and Strategy

- Works with the Board and staff to ensure that JDCF's mission is fulfilled through programs including land preservation, land and water stewardship and education and outreach, strategic planning, and community engagement.
- Leads organizational strategic planning to ensure JDCF can successfully fulfill its Mission and Strategic Plan.
- Enhances JDCF's reputation by being active and visible in the community and by building relationships with individuals, tribal partners, landowners, foundations, corporations, governments, and private organizations.
- Develops a compelling, forward-looking vision for JDCF that expands its impact.

Financial Performance and Viability

- Develops and maintains a diversity of funding streams sufficient to ensure the financial health and viability of the organization.
- Organizes and leads major fundraising activities, grant writing, and other revenue development necessary to support JDCF's mission.
- Manages the fiscal integrity of JDCF; by ensuring annual budget is prepared and regular financial reports are provided to the Board.
- Reviews and approves contracts for services consistent with organizational policies.
- Demonstrates success generating new revenue streams and improving fiscal results.

Organization Operations

- Manages and uses appropriate resources to meet organizational goals.
- Hires, retains, supervises, collaborates with, and supports a diverse, competent, and qualified staff.
- Effectively administers JDCF's programs and operations.
- Maintain accreditation through the Land Trust Accreditation Commission
- Executes all notes, agreements, financial documents, and other legal instruments on behalf of the organization.
- Oversees the management of JDCF properties and land trust operations of the

- organization, including conservation easements and public access sites.
- Participates in essential outdoor activities, including land stewardship projects, fundraising events, and public and community outreach.
- Serves as JDCF's primary spokesperson to the organization's constituents, the media, and the greater community.
- Must be able to work weekends and holidays as required to support JDCF events.

Board Governance

- Leads JDCF in a manner that supports and guides the organization's mission as defined by the Board of Directors.
- Communicates effectively with the Board and provides, in a timely and accurate manner, all information necessary for the Board to function properly and to make informed decisions.
- Establishes clear role expectations with the Board to maximize its contributions and support of the President/CEO.

Required Knowledge, Skills, and Experience

- Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university with five or more years of senior nonprofit management experience.
- Executive-level experience with natural resource protection, conservation, or environmental action organizations.
- Demonstrated success in working with community organizations and with diverse groups.
- A history of successfully generating new revenue streams and improving fiscal results.
- Demonstrated fundraising experience and excellent donor relations skills are essential.
- Demonstrated success in establishing relationships with individuals and organizations of influence, including funders, partner agencies, and volunteers.
- Demonstrated information technology skills, including social media literacy.
- Understanding of Microsoft Office and Google Suite software.
- Must have a genuine love for the outdoors and a commitment to protecting our natural resources.
- Able to spend time outdoors in diverse natural areas.

Preferred Knowledge, Skills, and Experience

- Master's degree and 10 or more years of nonprofit management experience.
- Experience working with Tribal Nations & related organizations.
- Experience leading or supporting diversity, equity, inclusion efforts in an organization.

Salary and Benefits

- This is a full-time salaried exempt position.
- Starting salary is \$120,000 to \$150,000 per year. Annual salary increases are based on performance and available annual budget.
- Two weeks paid vacation after 6 months of employment. Additional paid vacation is available depending on length of employment.
- Thirteen paid sick days and ten paid holidays per year.
- Group health insurance plan for employees.
- Eligibility for enrollment in JDCF's retirement plan after two consecutive years of

employment.

- Flexible, “family-first” work schedule.
- Being part of a growing, dynamic, and impactful organization.
- Living in the Driftless Area of Jo Daviess County – a beautiful landscape of rolling hills, deep river valleys, a thriving tourist industry, low cost of living, and excellent recreational, entertainment, and educational opportunities.

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