

(This search was completed in January, 2003, with the appointment of James Lyons, professor in natural resources management at the Yale University School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. From 1993 to 2001, he was Under Secretary at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, with responsibility for the U.S. Forest Service and the Natural Resources Conservation Service.)

Job Announcement

GCA Casey Trees Endowment Fund Executive Director

(Posted: October 21, 2002)

GCA Casey Trees Endowment Fund, a nonprofit organization established by The Garden Club of America (GCA) in 2001 to increase the number of trees in Washington, DC, has retained Slesinger Management Services to recruit an Executive Director. This is an exceptional opportunity for an individual who has both strong leadership and management skills, and is committed to working on an issue that has significant economic, health, and environmental implications for the nation's capital. Applications will be accepted until this position is filled.

The Organization

GCA Casey Trees was established last year as a result of a \$50 million endowment grant from the Eugene B. Casey Foundation to The Garden Club of America. A *Washington Post* article in 1999 inspired Mrs. Eugene B. Casey to make this significant gift. The article featured color satellite photographs that documented a 64 percent loss of healthy tree cover over Washington, DC, between 1973 and 1997.

The loss of trees does more than make a city less attractive. Trees remove pollutants from the air. They reduce energy costs by providing shade and lowering outdoor temperatures. They reduce storm water run-off, which otherwise flows into and pollutes rivers. They attract tourists, who stimulate the local economy, such as during the world-famous Cherry Blossom Festival that takes place in Washington each spring. Trees increase property values.

The number of trees in the nation's capital has been declining steadily over the past thirty years, partly due to development—the construction of new houses and buildings—and partly due to fiscal and other challenges that made it difficult for the DC Government to give high priority to caring for trees. Fortunately, current local government leaders recognize the importance of trees, and are eager to work with GCA Casey Trees.

Stated simply, the mission of GCA Casey Trees is to restore, enhance, and protect the tree canopy of the District of Columbia, and to do so by working cooperatively with the DC Government, relevant federal agencies, and numerous community organizations. One of its first activities has been to carry out a comprehensive inventory of street trees, using geographic information system (GIS) technology. The inventory was completed in August, with the assistance of several hundred citizens who volunteered their time. Key activities in the short-

term include educating the public and government officials about the environmental and economic benefits of trees, engaging more citizens in tree management through the development of a “Citizen Forester” program, and, of course, planting trees.

GCA Casey Trees finances its work from investment earnings from its \$50 million endowment. Under the current 4 percent spending policy set by the board, the organization’s annual operating budget is \$2 million. For the foreseeable future, GCA Casey Trees does not intend to seek money from other sources.

GCA Casey Trees has a staff of eight, including the executive director, director of programs, GIS director, and office manager. The organization is governed by a board of directors consisting of 13 people, all of whom have had leadership positions at The Garden Club of America (and live for the most part in the Washington/Baltimore metropolitan area). GCA Casey Trees Endowment Fund itself is a 501(c)(3) support organization of The Garden Club of America.

For more information about GCA Casey Trees, go to its website at <http://www.CaseyTrees.org>. For information about The Garden Club of America, go to <http://www.GCAmerica.org>.

Principal Responsibilities of the Executive Director

The Executive Director will be responsible for the full range of CEO responsibilities common in a young, nonprofit organization, with the exception of not having to raise money.

Key responsibilities include:

1. Developing a five-year strategic plan in close partnership with the board of directors, which is currently in the midst of clarifying its own governance responsibilities and setting key priorities for the organization.
2. Developing and implementing programs that reflect the organization’s mission.
3. Developing partnerships and other relationships with the DC Government, relevant federal agencies such as the National Arboretum and the National Park Service, and a diverse set of neighborhood and community organizations throughout the District of Columbia.
4. Overseeing the organization’s financial management, including setting the annual operating budget and monitoring expenditures throughout the year. (The Fund’s investments are managed by an outside advisory firm.)
5. Supervising and guiding the staff, most of whom have been with the organization for less than one year.
6. Serving as the organization’s spokesperson, including discussing before the media and in public settings the goals and programs of GCA Casey Trees.
7. Developing and supporting the board of directors so it can most effectively carry out its governance responsibilities.
8. Overseeing the day-to-day operations of an organization whose work will be carried out by a small staff and a potentially large corps of volunteers.

Desired Skills and Personal Characteristics

The Executive Director should be:

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1. Able to supervise and guide a staff made up of dedicated professionals, some of whom have deep technical or industry expertise in areas such as urban forestry and landscape architecture.
2. An effective manager, including being exceptionally well organized and capable of insuring that projects are carried out on time, within budget, and with superb execution.
3. Able to develop a strong working relationship with a board of directors made up of individuals deeply committed to the success of GCA Casey Trees.
4. Knowledgeable about the work of nonprofit organizations, especially those that are start-ups and work at the local level.
5. A confident and persuasive speaker, able to motivate others to collaborate with GCA Casey Trees.
6. A good listener, capable of drawing on the skills and expertise of staff, board members, and leaders of other organizations that can help GCA Casey Trees carry out its mission.
7. Knowledgeable about the Washington, DC, metropolitan area—although the search committee will consider candidates unfamiliar with the region if they have strong relevant experience elsewhere.
8. Committed to the mission of the organization, and the ways in which the organization can contribute to the quality of life in Washington, DC.
9. Able to acquire an adequate understanding of the health, environmental, economic, and aesthetic issues related to trees in an urban setting.
10. Creative and entrepreneurially oriented to help GCA Casey Trees find the best ways to carry out its mission. The board will expect the executive director to identify and recommend programs and services that the organization should adopt, not just implement ideas that originate within the board.

Desired Experience

The Executive Director should have at least ten years of nonprofit or relevant management experience, ideally including some start-up experience since the organization is only about one-year-old. Experience in urban forestry or related fields is desirable, but not required.

Compensation

Salary will be commensurate with experience and qualifications. Compensation also includes a comprehensive benefits package.

To Apply

Please **e-mail** (or mail) a cover letter, resume, and three-year salary history (which will be held in strict confidence) to:

Larry H. Slesinger
 Slesinger Management Services
 5016 Westpath Terrace
 Bethesda, MD 20816
 Tel.: 301-320-0680
 E-mail: Larry@SlesingerManagement.com (attached files in MS Word only)

(This job announcement can also be found at www.SlesingerManagement.com.)

GCA Casey Trees is an Equal Opportunity Employer.