ABOUT WESTERN RESOURCE ADVOCATES

Founded in 1989, Western Resource Advocates (WRA) is dedicated to protecting the West’s land, air, and water to ensure that vibrant communities exist in balance with nature. We use law, science, and economics to craft innovative solutions to the most pressing conservation issues in the region within four core program areas: Clean Energy and Climate, Healthy Rivers, Clean Air and Water, and Western Lands.

In the face of population growth and climate change, the Western United States needs a strong and effective advocacy voice at the regional level to address changes that are already underway and to steer the West towards a sustainable future. WRA has aggressive plans to tackle these challenges. We envision a future in the West where:

- Western rivers and lakes will have abundant clean water to support habitat for fish and wildlife, communities and agriculture, and world class recreational opportunities. The Colorado River will flow to the sea;
- Our homes, buildings and transportation systems will be powered by clean energy. The West will prosper in a zero-carbon economy;
- Half of Western landscapes and habitat will be protected and connected to support thriving wildlife populations and unparalleled opportunities to enjoy the West’s natural beauty; and
- The West will have clean air and clean water to support healthy communities and vital habitat.

For more information on Western Resource Advocates, please visit https://westernresourceadvocates.org/

THE OPPORTUNITY

WRA is rapidly expanding its work in several program areas and states in order to increase its impact. Over the past three years, the organization has increased its annual budget by more than 70% and its regional staff capacity by more than 60%. Near-term plans include a continued build out of our Climate Fix initiative, further development of our Healthy Rivers strategic plan, the creation of a long-term plan for Western Lands, and the creation of a new program area focused on addressing air and water quality. Taking advantage of WRA’s widely acknowledged policy expertise and established credibility on water, energy and lands issues, the growing organization will work to build relationships with grass-tops leaders and decision-makers, partner with key organizations, re-establish the West’s leadership on conservation policy, and protect the resources that make the West the nation’s best place to live. The incoming VP of Programs and Strategy will play a crucial role in meeting these objectives.

POSITION SUMMARY

Leading a team of six senior-level direct reports who collectively manage more than 30 employees, the Vice President of Programs and Strategy is an executive-level leadership position that plays a key role in developing long-term strategic plans that align WRA’s vision, culture and strategy in order to advance an ambitious and focused conservation agenda in the Western United States. While serving as the organization’s senior staff
manager and executive-level partner to the organization’s President, the Vice President of Programs and Strategy will bring a strategic focus to the development of multi-faceted advocacy plans that leverage changes in clean energy, healthy rivers, Western lands and air and water quality policy throughout our seven-state region. Working closely with the President and the senior leadership team, the VP of Programs and Strategy approves work plans and creates other structures that help our staff become more effective; builds internal collaboration and strength across our programs, states and departments; fosters effective political and strategic engagement throughout our Western region; promotes strategic communications that furthers our policy goals, increases organizational visibility and builds our reputation; and, cultivates an inclusive climate that promotes excellence and an engaging organizational culture.

CANDIDATE PROFILE

The ideal candidate will have the following personal competencies and characteristics:

Program Development and Planning
Elevate the organization’s programming by engaging the staff in planning processes that enable WRA to meet the organization’s vision and goals and increase the organization’s focus on making strategic decisions that are reflective of the larger environmental and political landscape in the West.

- Work with WRA Program Directors to build campaign and program plans that ensure the effective execution of WRA’s policy, advocacy and litigation programs;
- Work with the President and WRA program directors to inspire staff to pursue creative, effective solutions to environmental challenges;
- Work with the WRA program staff to ensure that WRA policy solutions are not only appropriate to address the challenges of the West, but also to ensure that those solutions receive increasing support in key decision-making forums throughout the West;
- Build the organization’s effectiveness at achieving policy victories through program and staffing plans that increase investment and resources by marrying our policy expertise and operations with effective strategic decision-making;
- Promote collaboration, synergy and effective communication to encourage cross-program planning and work; and,
- Review and approve proposals for administrative and court litigation.

Political Capacity
The Vice President of Programs and Strategy will work in close partnership with the President, program leaders, and the Government Affairs Director to ensure that WRA has smart, well-developed and strategic approaches to advance our work and to achieve high-level goals that lead to victories in the challenging political environments of the West. The organization’s capacity should be aligned to advance policy wins in core regulatory arenas and to build relationships and our effectiveness at the executive and administrative levels, and in state legislative forums where there are opportunities for policy victories. The VP of Programs and Strategy will supervise the work of the Government Affairs Director and the WRA team to:

- Develop a sharper focus on pivotal legislative, executive- and administrative-level policy that will tip the scales to progress;
- Foster important program partnerships with local, regional and national organizations, including communities of color and lower income communities, in order to increase our impact in the West;
- Build strategic alliances with traditional and nontraditional partners that increase our influence;
Western Resource Advocates
Vice President of Programs and Strategy
Boulder, CO

- Leverage political strategies to build our long-term relationships with influential decision-makers in the region;
- Work with the President and program leaders to ensure that WRA pursues the most politically informed public policy opportunities throughout the Western United States; and,
- Take advantage of pressing environmental concerns in communities throughout the region.

Communications and Outreach
Working with the Communications and Marketing Director, the VP of Programs and Strategy will seek to develop long-term plans that leverage sophisticated communications tools and tactics to build our influence with key target audiences and decision-makers, increase our influence as critical thought leaders on Western conservation issues, and help shape the dominant framing on conservation issues used by decision-makers and the media on water, energy and land issues. The VP of Programs and Strategy will work with the Communications and Marketing Director to ensure that WRA executes a strategic communications plan that provides our various audiences with timely and useful information, increases organizational visibility and builds the organization’s reputation and credibility. The Vice President of Programs and Strategy supervises the work of the Communications and Marketing Director, to:

- Develop and drive multi-faceted communications plans to advance WRA’s programmatic agenda, using a combination of earned media, creative outreach, and engaging website and digital content;
- Increase WRA’s visibility; build the organization’s reputation and credibility; expand outreach to decision-makers, members of the public and our funders; and position WRA as a thought leader on Western conservation issues; and
- Create new opportunities for WRA to be in front of audiences, ranging from political and business leaders to friends and funders, potential allies, and other advocacy groups.

Staff Management and Organizational Culture
The VP of Programs and Strategy will provide inclusive leadership, direction and coordinated planning efforts to ensure that the organization’s plans are aligned with our mission and strategic vision; that our program and staff plans are effective tools for reaching our objectives; and to promote strong staff morale, a sense of camaraderie, and a motivated and positive organizational culture. This includes:

- Working with program team leaders to ensure highly effective plans that are aligned with our strategic plan;
- Building an entrepreneurial culture where staff are encouraged to develop new and more robust programming, with increased attention to building relationships and working with nontraditional allies;
- Playing a lead role in strategic planning processes, staff trainings, meetings and gatherings;
- Ensuring that all members of WRA staff have individualized annual work plans and that each member of our staff receives an annual review that includes meaningful and authentic feedback from their staff supervisor;
- Identifying and promoting staff development opportunities that build the organization’s competencies and that also provide our staff with challenging opportunities to learn, grow and build their skills;
- Fostering leadership among all staff by facilitating agenda-setting among the leadership team and broader leadership team participation.
- Creating opportunities for our board and our staff to engage with one another on both a professional and a personal level.

Desired Background and Personal Attributes
The successful candidate will have a minimum of 10 years of programmatic and/or campaign experience in a conservation or political organizing organization with a track record in building, maintaining and developing staff.
The candidate sought is dynamic, results-oriented, influential with multiple internal and external stakeholders, flexible, and a proactive team leader who can positively guide both strategic and tactical goals and initiatives.

Other qualifications include:

- **Strategic Thinking** – Demonstrated keen sense of politics, ability to devise complex and varied strategies to achieve objectives, and understanding of how decisions are made in Western political and policy forums;
- **Campaign Leadership** – Experience in developing complex and multi-faceted campaign plans on either issue-based advocacy campaigns and/or candidate campaigns, including campaign strategy, campaign planning and development, and successful execution of campaign plans;
- **Staff Management** – Senior and mid-level experience managing high-level staff in multiple locations, including issue experts and demonstrated experience in building work plans, and managing change and growth to match strategic, organizational, and campaign objectives;
- **Initiative to take on new projects and continually exhibit a positive, proactive attitude towards all tasks and people;**
- **Intellectual curiosity, coupled with an innovative and entrepreneurial drive comfortable with change and ambiguity as well as possessing a strong bias for action;**
- **Creativity, patience, drive, and a sense of humor;**
- **Genuine passion for the mission and work of WRA; and,**
- **Demonstrated ability to recognize and leverage different dimensions of diversity across the organization and externally to support the mission and work of WRA.**

**COMPENSATION**

Competitive salary based on relative experience. WRA’s excellent benefits package includes health, dental and vision coverage, a 401(k) retirement plan, life & disability insurance, 3-week paid vacation leave, parental leave, sabbatical leave after five years, and a public transit EcoPass (for employees based in the Boulder/Denver area). Position is full-time exempt.

**CONTACT**

WRA has exclusively retained the services of Koya Leadership Partners to help with this hire. Please submit a compelling cover letter and resume here. All inquiries and discussions will be considered strictly confidential.

Diversity and inclusion are a critical component of our business strategy, mission and vision. We welcome candidates from an array of backgrounds and experiences to join our team.

Western Resource Advocates is an equal opportunity employer (EOE) and encourages applications from qualified individuals regardless of race, color, religion, gender, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, marital status, amnesty, or veteran status.
Western Resource Advocates
Vice President of Programs and Strategy
Boulder, CO

ABOUT KOYA LEADERSHIP PARTNERS

Koya Leadership Partners is a national retained executive search and human capital consulting firm that works exclusively with nonprofits and social enterprises. We deliver measurable results, finding exceptionally talented people who truly fit the unique culture of our client organizations and ensuring that organizations have the resources and strategies to support them. For more information about Koya Leadership Partners, visit www.koyapartners.com.