

Mrs. Whitney Standefer-Smith, Esq.  
1192 Abby Lane  
Hixson, TN 37343

October 11, 2018

Mr. Mike Pollock, Executive Director  
Lula Lake Land Trust

Dear Mr. Pollock:

I hope that this letter finds you well. I am writing to you as a hopeful candidate to take up the role you are leaving as Executive Director of Lula Lake Land Trust. As I am certain that choosing your successor is a process close to your heart, I want to be forthright about not only my excellent qualifications but also address my potential weaknesses.

Let's discuss the bad news first. You will not see anything in the way of conservation field experience or land management on my resume or a great deal in the way of nonprofit development experience (though there is some). My guess is that you will receive applications which shine with these credentials. It is not my intention to pretend that I am equal in these areas. You already have a Land Manager and a Development Director on the team. My philosophy is that the Executive Director should be the coach and quarterback of that team. As such, I would use my own expertise to support them, guide them to do their jobs at an optimal level, pitch-in where I am needed, trust them, and learn from their expertise without letting my pride get in the way.

However, like a quarterback, I agree that I should bring a set of skills to the team not already covered. This is why I would be the best fit. I would be surprised if you have another candidate with my education, experience in, and passion for conservation and land use law; who has experience in project development and community outreach in a nonprofit setting, who has experience jumping between formal and physical settings, who has a background in the financial industry, and who has counseled and helped launch over a dozen businesses (including successful sponsorship negotiations with The North Face and Black Diamond Equipment). I could recite my resume here, but I will let it speak for itself.

This leads me to what my resume will not tell you: my why. Obviously, like every candidate you will receive, I love Lula Lake. But, why do I want this job? Why do I want to leave my current one? The answer is one I think you will understand. The grant which funds the program I have built is coming to an end with no possibility of renewal. I have been offered a different position within Legal Aid, but this new position would take me even further from what I set out at the top environmental law school in the country to do: conservation. It therefore seems well-timed that this land trust I admire is looking for an Executive Director. Even more unlikely but true, the proposed start date range would allow me time to complete my current grant period at Legal Aid of East Tennessee.

I hope to hear from you regarding my qualifications. As I have said, I love Lula Lake Land Trust. That love almost kept me from applying: the magnitude of being the trusted with a treasure like this is almost overwhelming. But that is also why I felt I had a responsibility to offer my credentials as a possibility for the next stage of Lula Lake. That said, I know I am preaching to the choir. If not me, I trust that you will choose an even better candidate. Therefore, no matter the outcome of this selection, I look forward to the future of Lula Lake Land Trust.

Sincerely,

Whitney Standefer-Smith