

Position Profile

*On behalf of our client, Belwin Conservancy,
CohenTaylor Executive Search Services
is conducting a retained executive search for its*

Executive Director



**BELWIN
CONSERVANCY**

Inspiring through Nature

Belwin Conservancy

Budget: ~ \$1,000,000

Facilities: 1,400 acres in Afton and West Lakeland Township that include an environmental education center for St. Paul Public Schools on 225 acres, over seven miles of hiking trails open to the public, an athletic complex, and more.

Ecology: Habitats represented include prairie, oak woodlands and savanna, wetlands, ponds, pine forests, streams, and goat prairies; includes over 100 different native and migratory bird species.

Visitors: 10,000 students learn on-site and over 150,000 guests come to the Lucy Winton Bell Athletic Fields annually

Work includes: [land management and stewardship](#), [ecological research](#), [environmental education](#), and [safe recreational facilities](#)

Key Partners: Minnesota Land Trust, Saint Paul Public Schools, Stillwater School District, community sports organizations, scientists, students and faculty from a range of institutions

Support: Supported by nearly 500 individual and household members and dozens of institutional donors.

Staff: Belwin Conservancy has a staff of 8 including a Program Director, Operations Director, and Development Manager, which does not include the St. Paul Public Schools or Lucy Winton Bell Athletic Fields staff working out of Belwin.

For more information visit:

www.belwin.org



Mission

Inspiring our connection to the natural world.

The Organization

History:

Belwin was created in 1970. However, land acquisition for the organization began when Charlie and Lucy Bell purchased 66 acres of land in Afton, Minnesota in 1959. At that time, subsistence farming in Afton was nearing the end of its viability. Parcels became available as people left the land so the Bells purchased additional adjacent property hoping to protect the area from being overdeveloped. By the early 1970's, Bells had purchased a total of about 500 acres.

In the early 1970's, the St. Paul Public School District was attempting to locate property in the St. Croix River Valley to use as an outdoor education laboratory. The Bells and the school district came together with Charlie and Lucy Bell creating a new nonprofit organization to which they donated close to half of their property and developed a cooperative agreement which allowed the school system to operate an exclusive program for their students with their own staff. This program continues today.

The land based started to expand in the late 1980's and with it programmatic offerings. And while there had always been outside community members on the board of Belwin, a



transition has taken place where today only one family member remains on the board as part of an evolution to a community-based organization.

Belwin Conservancy Today:

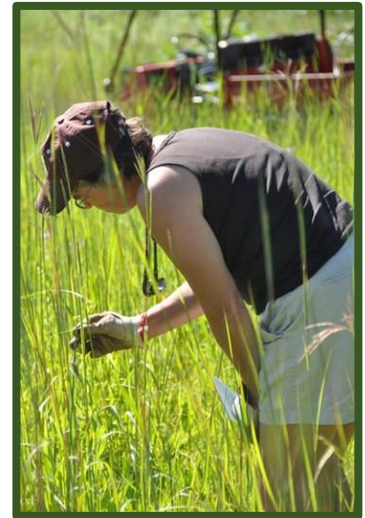
The Belwin Conservancy is one of the largest remaining undeveloped tracks of land in the Twin Cities, and is located 15 miles from downtown St. Paul, just a mile from the St. Croix River.

Belwin's property is incredibly diverse with woods, wetlands, remnant and restored tallgrass prairies, goat prairies, oak savannas, spring-fed streams, marshes, floating bogs, potholes, oak, and maple/basswood forest. Native plant communities found on Belwin property include dry sand-gravel prairie, oak forest, and three types of wetlands, including floodplain forest, seepage meadow, and rich fen. Five animal species and three plant species, considered rare by the Department of Natural Resources have been documented on Belwin property.

Belwin was first established in 1970 as a 225 acres outdoor education center for the St. Paul Public Schools under a unique partnership agreement. This program exists today in essentially the same partnership arrangement. Belwin manages the land and facilities while St. Paul Public Schools provides both the education staff and curriculum.

As Belwin has grown its land holdings it has also created other programs and partnerships. Examples of this include:

- Over 40 years of nature-based offerings delivered by Belwin's naturalist and arts partners.
- The Lucy Winton Bell Athletic Fields, a sports complex on 50 acres of the property in partnership with the Valley Athletic Association and St. Croix Soccer Club that has 8 soccer fields, 4 baseball fields, 2 football fields, and which experiences about 150,000 visits annually.
- An observatory in partnership with the Minnesota Astronomical Society that features a 10" refracting telescope.
- A bison herd, can be seen 5-6 months a year, via observation platforms, in collaboration with North Star Bison on 160 acres of restored prairie.
- Over seven miles of hiking trails open to the public.
- A willingness to allow its property to be used for environmental research, which has over the years been utilized by numerous colleges and universities for a wide variety of projects by their scientists, students and faculty.
- An active native habitat restoration program primarily focused on prairie and savannas.
- A land acquisition program, mostly focused today on inholdings within the existing borders.



The Opportunity

The land acquisition phase, which consumed the organizations focus in the 1990s and early 2000s, has reached a logical end in which there are only a few infill parcels left to acquire as part of its master plan. The major restoration work has been completed, but it is also important to maintain acquisition progress and expand as appropriate.



Belwin is entering an exciting new phase which involves desire to expand and strengthen its existing programs and partnerships, as well as develop new program offerings. This will involve building new support bases and models to fund this program expansion. The focus is on creating and managing uses on its land that both respect wildlife and natural process, and provide environmental learning and recreation to the community it serves, through partnerships and self-created program initiatives. A major initiative is an art and nature program seeking to bring environmental awareness to an audience primarily interested in art. This new initiative is making strides, and a general master plan has been created.

The Role



The new Executive Director will be responsible for managing existing programs, growing program offerings, and augmenting funding structures needed for this expansion. Belwin's endowment and user fees currently cover over half its annual budget. To expand its programs, it will have to grow its fundraising capacity, for both annual and capital needs. While expansion is exciting, Belwin does not want to jeopardize its existing programs or land management.

Key Accountabilities:

The Executive Director will have overall strategic and operational responsibility for the Belwin Conservancy's staff and programs, as well as the expansion and execution of its mission. Specific responsibilities include:

- Overseeing the management of the organization's diverse operations and programs in a fiscally responsible way.
- Expanding the cultivation of donors and the funds raised from major donors, foundations, corporations and government funders.



- Serve as the external face of Belwin, managing partner relationships and cultivating new ones.
- Work with the Board of Directors to effectively expand its capacity.
- Developing budgets and overseeing their administration.
- Leading, coaching, developing, and retaining Belwin’s high-performance, seven-person team, including three direct reports: a Program Director, Development Manager and an Operations Director.
- Deepening and refining all aspects of communications—from web presence to external relations, with the goal of creating a stronger brand.

The Ideal Candidate

The Ideal Candidate for Belwin Conservancy’s next leader should be a positive, collaborative leader that can focus on the present while keeping in mind the long-term vision of the organization. He or she should be as comfortable building relationships with large, institutional partners as they are giving a donor a tour of the grounds on a rainy, spring day.



- Passion for environmental protection and education, with demonstrated connection to the mission.
- At least 10 years of senior non-profit management experience, and a proven track record of effectively leading an outcomes-based organization and staff.
- Specific examples of having developed and operationalized strategies that have taken an organization to the next stage of growth
- Fundraising skills and demonstrated success in both operation and capital arenas, including direct solicitation of potential donors and grant writing
- Experience in program development and expansion
- Excellence in organizational management, with the ability to coach staff, manage, and develop high-performance teams
- Aptitude for setting and achieving strategic objectives, and managing a budget
- Past success working with a Board of Directors, with the experience and ability to cultivate new board members
- Strong marketing and public relations experience, with the ability to engage a wide range of stakeholders and cultures
- Strong written and verbal communication skills; a persuasive and passionate communicator with excellent interpersonal and multidisciplinary project skills
- Ability to work effectively in collaboration with diverse groups of people
- Action-oriented, entrepreneurial, and adaptable leader, with a demonstrated innovative approach to business planning
- Qualities such as passion, idealism, integrity, positivity, commitment to mission, and ability to self-direct



For more information or to send your credentials, please email info@cohentaylor.com. All inquiries will remain confidential.