



Position Specification

Appalachian Mountain Club
President and Chief Executive Officer

Our Client

The Appalachian Mountain Club (“AMC”) is dedicated to the protection, enjoyment, and understanding of the outdoors. Founded in 1876, the AMC is the nation’s oldest conservation and recreation organization. At the heart of AMC’s mission, conservation and recreation go hand in hand, underpinned by the natural resources we cherish. Through its research, programming, land management, trail work, advocacy, and more, AMC protects and speaks up for the places we all love. AMC also is focused on the importance of creating a more inclusive outdoor space - this perspective informs every part of AMC so that the outdoors can continue to be the outdoors for everyone.

Today, AMC is a regional leader at the intersection of conservation, outdoor recreation, and environmental education, centered on a 12-state area ranging from the Potomac region to Maine. AMC has over 430,000 members, advocates and supporters, including 11 local chapters, more than 16,000 volunteers, and about 450 full time and seasonal staff. AMC’s annual operating budget is approximately \$60 million supported from a wide range of program revenue sources, in addition to governmental, institutional, and foundation grants, as well as individual charitable donations. Over the past 10 years the organization has raised in excess of \$75 million in capital contributions above and beyond its annual operating funding, and has an endowment of approximately \$90 million. AMC’s culture is pro-active, exciting, and continually challenging, with a strong culture of volunteerism. Its full-time, part-time, and seasonal staff are highly professional, very talented, passionate, and dedicated.

From Maine to New Jersey, AMC roadside and backcountry lodges, huts, and camps serve as outdoor recreation and environmental education centers, offering friendly staff, family-style meals, and organized activities. While AMC’s eight full service huts along the Appalachian Trail in New Hampshire are best known, overall the organization hosts more than 150,000 guest nights each year at its lodging destinations and many shelters and campgrounds. AMC’s goal is to promote environmentally responsible outdoor recreation and to further, in each individual, a conservation ethic.

Recreation

AMC offers more than 6,000 primarily volunteer-led trips and skill development workshops each year, from local chapter activities to major excursions worldwide, for every ability level and outdoor interest — from hiking and climbing to paddling, snowshoeing, and skiing. AMC teaches people skills to enjoy the outdoors safely and to care for the natural world through programs for children, teens, and adults, as well as outdoor leadership training. AMC’s staff of naturalists and educators offer both walk-on programs and multi-day trips based out of AMC’s destinations in Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, New York and New Jersey. The organization also publishes maps and hiking and paddling guides to help people plan their own adventures. Additionally, the AMC website includes trip ideas, gear lists, weather and safety information.

Conservation and Trails

The rise in outdoor recreation paired with the ongoing crisis of climate change highlights the importance of AMC’s conservation advocacy work across the region. AMC maintains more than 1,800 miles of trails throughout the Northeast, including nearly 350 miles of the Appalachian Trail in five states. In the Mid-Atlantic, AMC oversees a 100-mile Pennsylvania Highland Trail Network. The organization works with other conservation partners and local communities to protect trailheads, trail corridors, and riverways. AMC is a regional leader in conservation research, including, for example, research on effects of climate change on mountain ecosystems. In addition, AMC advocates for land conservation funding on behalf of critical projects across the region, with a focus in the Northern Forest and Mid-Atlantic Highlands regions. Working with their coalition partners and local communities, AMC builds grassroots

support for priority conservation projects. It uses science-based conservation mapping to pinpoint priority land protection areas and is a leader in advocating for land protection and funding to advance natural climate solutions.

Education

AMC has decades of experience in providing outdoor programs for youth and families, in many cases providing young people with their first backcountry experiences. When not impacted by Covid, AMC's educational approach is hands-on and place-based. With programs and facilities in spectacular outdoor settings, AMC helps kids and adults alike learn about the joys and rewards of outdoor exploration and adventure. In a typical year, AMC serves over 40,000 young people through its lodge- and hut-based family programs, school programs, guided teen adventures, and programs for at-risk youth, as well as local, close-to-home programs for families offered by AMC Chapters. The majority of the youth AMC reaches through its guided and formal programs are aged 11-18, while families with children of all ages are the primary audience at AMC's destinations. AMC aspires to expand its work with local, middle and high school students to involve every child as part of AMC's mission to connect (or re-connect) kids with the natural world around them and create the next generation of local stewards and conservationists.

Maine Woods

Another way that AMC is putting its principles into practice is through direct ownership of 100,000 acres of land in Maine's 100-Mile Wilderness region. In the largest investment AMC has ever made in its history, the organization has created a continuous conservation corridor within the 100-Mile Wilderness that stretches for over 60 miles to Baxter State Park. Within this corridor, AMC has created a recreation infrastructure that encompasses 130 miles of hiking and Nordic ski trails, providing access to some of the most glorious remote ponds in the eastern United States still populated by native brook trout; a series of full-service lodges allowing for multiple overnight ski trips; and a number of campgrounds and shelters. AMC's sustainable timber harvesting program and nature-based tourism operations are the basis for working with neighboring communities to promote their economic development. In 2021, the International Dark-Sky Association granted AMC's Maine Woods International Dark Sky Park status. Consistent with their conservation mission, protecting dark skies enhances human and ecological health. And due to its exceptional dark skies, the newly established Park is one of the best places for stargazing in the world.

AMC envisions a world where natural resources are healthy, loved, and always protected, and where the outdoors occupies a place of central importance in every person's life. More information can be found at <https://www.outdoors.org/> and in the [2021 annual report](#).

The Opportunity

As AMC approaches its 150th anniversary in 2026, the organization is at a watershed moment, poised to make important strategic choices. AMC's next President and Chief Executive Officer ("CEO") will embrace the organization's existing strengths and help determine its future path, balancing investment in the group's core mission with a desire to embrace a more concentrated focus. Leveraging AMC's strong leadership team, talented staff, passionate volunteer base and an exciting pipeline of projects, the next CEO will foster an inclusive culture that aims high and thinks big. Seizing on this opportunity will involve:

- Continuing to measure and scale the impact of AMC's programs, activities and advocacy efforts
- Elevating further the AMC brand and expanding its current leadership position as a powerful voice in conservation and outdoor education and recreation into new communities
- Expanding its membership base and fundraising capabilities
- Continuing AMC's strong record of financial stability
- Continuing to invest in and develop AMC's team

- Enabling AMC to meet its goals of diversity, equity and inclusion

The Role

AMC seeks a dynamic, visionary, and collaborative leader who can build upon the organization's strong legacy while recognizing that continued evolution is critical. Reporting to and working with the Board of Directors, the CEO has responsibility and is accountable for the strategic, programmatic, financial, and operational management of AMC. The CEO will provide strategic leadership and work collaboratively with AMC staff and the Board to develop and execute a compelling, powerful vision for the organization. Above all, they will be inspired by and dedicated to AMC's mission. They will support and encourage staff to scale existing activities, develop new approaches, and manage a portfolio of activities to maximize impact.

The President and CEO has oversight for the operations of a complex organization with multiple functional responsibilities, including management and development of revenue-generating activities; management of chapter relations and volunteer engagement; education, advocacy and community engagement programs; and the management and stewardship of physical facilities and other outdoor space. They supervise the activities of a senior management team and manage a total workforce of approximately 450 employees including 130 full time. They will foster a culture of accountability and empowerment, convening and leading constituencies from across the organization to achieve excellence.

This dynamic leader will grow the funding and operational capabilities required for AMC to achieve its goals. The CEO will bring an entrepreneurial mindset, passion for leading, and will further promote a collaborative, inclusive and supportive working environment that fosters trust and teamwork. The CEO will lead with respect and appreciation of the work and perspective of every individual AMC employs, partners with, and reaches through their programs and conservation work. They will act as AMC's primary champion for the organization among the individuals and communities that AMC serves.

Specific responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Drive short and long-term strategic planning in partnership with the Board and senior leadership
- Set priorities, focus organizational strategy and implement operationally
- Lead AMC's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) internally and programmatically, and enable AMC to achieve its DEI objectives
- Collaborate with local AMC chapter leadership and other volunteers, and other key partners to ensure coordination and effective communication in support of mutual goals and programmatic objectives
- Lead AMC in prioritizing, implementing, and enhancing its resources to create a sustained, profound, and lasting impact
- Serve as a visible champion of AMC, amplifying AMC's story and championing AMC to a wide range of audiences and stakeholders to inspire and motivate
- Utilize innovative technology and marketing platforms to strengthen AMC's engagement with critical constituencies such as visitors, members, donors, and the media
- Foster an entrepreneurial environment of creativity and innovation
- Lead, develop, and motivate diverse, high performing teams while fostering collaboration and inclusivity
- Ensure that all activities and programs meet the highest standards of ethics, governance, and transparency, and are aligned with AMC's core values

Candidate Profile

AMC seeks a strategic, imaginative, and inclusive CEO who has the vision, experience and credibility to lead and manage a large, complex, multi-stakeholder, geographically distributed organization. The successful candidate will be passionate about and committed to AMC's mission of protection, enjoyment, and understanding of the outdoors.

They must be intellectually curious, and a thoughtful and pragmatic leader with the ability to lead the staff, members and volunteers in delivering AMC's activities and programs, while maintaining commitment to quality and equitable access. The next CEO must possess significant business, management, and leadership acumen to shape and successfully implement innovative and visionary strategies, while managing change as necessary to meet the demands of a continuously evolving environment.

The successful candidate must be an outstanding leader of people and a relationship builder, with very high organizational EQ. This leader will be a unifier who fosters collaboration across chapters, divisions and departments to lead an innovative vision committed to positioning AMC as exemplar in outdoor conservation, recreation and education. They will be an exceptional communicator, with the ability to develop, articulate, and rally diverse constituent groups behind the short-term and long-term vision for the organization. The CEO will bring a team-based approach to working with colleagues and have a strong capacity to work with many different constituents. They will inspire trust and respect from across the organization, and will serve as a credible and compelling representative of AMC. The CEO will have unquestioned integrity, credibility and character, and the presence to influence an entire organization of mission-driven and passionate people. This leader will have a track-record of advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion within their own organization and a demonstrated commitment to AMC's DEI objectives.

While experience in land-based or outdoor-focused organizations is not a requirement, a track record of working with large-scale, multi-site, volunteer and/or member driven organizations is especially valuable.

AMCs next CEO will have the following additional competencies and attributes:

Strategic and Operational Acumen

- Energetic, innovative thinker with the ability to collaboratively build and execute a vision for the future
- Ability to set clear and challenging goals while committing the organization to improved performance and continued financial stability; tenacious and accountable in driving results
- Ability to challenge leadership and staff to explore new opportunities and take appropriate risks
- Excellent judgment – exhibiting wisdom in making decisions, balancing a variety of factors to achieve optimal outcomes using creative problem solving skills
- The ability to effectively balance the desire/need for broad change with an understanding of how much change the organization is capable of handling, to create realistic goals and implementation plans that are achievable and successful

Fundraising

- Demonstrated success as an enthusiastic fundraiser who will embrace the role of engaging major donors as partners to realize the promise of AMC's mission
- A sophisticated understanding of donor cultivation and stewardship, annual giving, capital campaigns, corporate giving, and planned giving
- Emotional intelligence and intellect needed to secure, retain, cultivate, and inspire prospective donors, members, and partners

Leadership, Management and Communications

- Excellent interpersonal skills, and the capacity to build strong relationships with staff, board members, volunteers, chapter leaders, members, and donors
- Direct, effective communicator and active listener who can lead different internal and external teams and effectively partner with the Board of Directors
- A tireless advocate on issues of equity, access and inclusion
- Highly developed management skills to inspire, empower, and grow a strong executive team and the confidence to delegate important management responsibilities to that team
- The ability to attract and recruit top talent, motivate, support and develop the team, delegate effectively and manage performance; widely viewed as a strong developer of others
- Relationship-builder with a wide range of important constituencies including educators, policymakers, ed-tech collaborators, government, nonprofit organizations/NGOs, business, and community leaders
- Highly skilled at developing and leading a diverse, motivated, and collaborative staff
- A capacity to prioritize effectively to deliver results
- Experienced leader and manager of people and organizations, who can speak directly and ensure accountability

Relationships and Influence

- Naturally connects and builds strong relationships with others, demonstrating strong emotional intelligence and an ability to communicate clearly and persuasively
- Inspires trust and followership in others through compelling influence, powerful charisma, passion in their beliefs, and active drive
- Encourages others to share the spotlight and visibly celebrates and supports the success of the team
- Creates a sense of purpose/meaning for the team that generates followership beyond their own personality and engages others to the greater purpose for the organization as a whole

Personal Attributes

- Empathy
- Confident, self-aware and humble
- Unquestionable integrity and authenticity
- Spirit of innovation and creative problem-solving
- High energy, focus, and drive
- Familiarity and ease with a diverse set of constituencies
- Willingness and ability to travel throughout AMC's geographic footprint
- The ability to inspire
- Strength of personality and robustness of intellect

Contact

Inquiries, nominations, and applications are invited. All inquiries and discussions will be considered strictly confidential. Interested candidates should submit their interest and resume to:

Meredith Rosenberg, Stefanie Lukasko, and Jamie Hechinger

Russell Reynolds Associates

AMC_CEO@russellreynolds.com