



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Upper Saranac Foundation protects the water quality, natural beauty, and recreational value of the Upper Saranac watershed through science-based solutions, stewardship, and education.

The Upper Saranac Foundation (USF) is dedicated to preserving, enhancing, and protecting the natural beauty and environmental quality of the Upper Saranac watershed. USF works to ensure clean water, healthy ecosystems, and sustainable recreational opportunities for generations to come. Established in 1989, USF was founded as a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) to address urgent environmental and infrastructure needs. USF remains at the forefront of conservation efforts, championing initiatives to protect water quality, combat invasive species, and foster ecological stewardship. Through ongoing research, advocacy, and strong community support, the Foundation continues to safeguard the Upper Saranac watershed's health, preserving its natural beauty and ecological integrity.

USF adopted the **Upper Saranac Watershed Management Plan** in 2022 (view here: https://usfoundation.net/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/Upper-Saranac-Watershed-Management-Plan-Action-Agenda_final.pdf), which provides a science-based roadmap for protecting water quality and ecological integrity across the watershed. The plan outlines coordinated strategies to address current and emerging threats while supporting long-term environmental, social, and economic benefits for residents and visitors. It also helps the Foundation stay ahead of challenges such as Eurasian watermilfoil and other aquatic invasive species, harmful algal blooms, road salt impacts, and climate-driven changes before they cause lasting harm.

Emphasizing proactive monitoring, adaptive management, and prevention, the plan directs limited resources where they can have the greatest impact while supporting informed land-use decisions, responsible recreation, and effective stewardship.

Governed by a 12-member Board of Directors, USF has an annual budget of \$400,000 and an endowment of \$2.5 million. USF is led by the Executive Director, who manages an office manager, a five-person team of seasonal divers, and volunteers.



Upper Saranac Foundation

Executive Director

Page 2.

THE POSITION

Reporting to the Board of Directors, the Executive Director will provide direction, management, and leadership for the Upper Saranac Foundation and pursue an impactful vision for the preservation of the Upper Saranac watershed. The Executive Director will steward USF through its next stage of growth and development, build consensus around key goals and action plans as reflected within the **Upper Saranac Watershed Management Plan**, and, in partnership with the Board, move those priorities forward.

With a critical eye towards USF's core programs and focus areas – **Water Quality, Aquatic Invasive Species, Responsible Recreational Use, Stewardship and Development, Watershed Management** – the Executive Director will quickly learn and set priority to key strengths within its current programs, partnerships, and initiatives. This person will build on this distinct narrative in the larger context of regional watershed management, climate change, and educational and recreational resource conversations, developing new programs and, as appropriate, ensuring that new initiatives align with the vision of the Foundation.

The Executive Director will enhance USF's presence and relevance and communicate and work closely with and gain the buy-in and support of local property owners within the Upper Saranac Lake community and beyond. In so doing, the Executive Director will position the organization as a critical partner, resource, and asset for the surrounding communities and region.

The Executive Director will serve as Lake Manager, overseeing the Bartlett Carry Dam, managing USF's aquatic invasive species prevention and management programs, supervising the seasonal dive crew, coordinating field operations, managing equipment and logistics, and using ArcGIS mapping and other spatial data tools to document and manage field work.

It is expected that the Executive Director will live in the Adirondacks – preferably in or close to the Upper Saranac watershed.

PRIORITIES AND KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

The Executive Director will oversee USF's operations, programs, finances, and staff and have the following priorities.

- Take a principal role in implementing and executing the organization's watershed management plan; explore new directions for advocacy and be proactive in the identification of new and emerging threats to the Upper Saranac watershed as related to climate change, water quality impacts, and other man-made and natural influences.



PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

Upper Saranac Foundation

Executive Director

Page 3.

- Raise awareness of USF's efficacy and impact; strengthen USF's modes of communication including newsletters and other publications, local and regional press, and social media while reinforcing USF's reputation as a relevant leader in watershed management and preservation and a trusted partner to other likeminded organizations.
- Serve as the primary liaison to the Board of Directors and engage regularly with the Board Chair; develop and manage both organization-level and project-level budgets while also keeping Board members well informed and updated on USF throughout the year.
- In partnership with the Board, champion best practices and behaviors that support improved water quality and recreational use within the watershed, including land use code improvements, species propagation and protection, and responsible development.
- Establish and maintain respectful connections with property owners; tap into the interests of long-time stakeholders and new individual and institutional donors alike; cultivate the next generation of supporters and future leaders.
- Begin to formulate and reinforce relationships with current and potential new institutional partners, local community leaders, town boards, academics, the general public, and other collaborators including but not limited to the Adirondack Council, Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program, Adirondack Lakes Alliance, the Adirondack Watershed Institute of Paul Smith's College, and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.
- Develop priorities and implement a set of programs and initiatives to advance sustainable watershed management practices while ensuring that USF's staffing and resources are well aligned with its strategic vision.

IDEAL EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS

The Executive Director will provide stewardship, raise awareness, and grow the mission of the Upper Saranac Foundation, and will be or have:

- A professional demeanor with an engaging personality; the ability to bring vision to USF's plans and initiatives; an aptitude to effect change and manage multiple priorities in service to the Upper Saranac community.



PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

Upper Saranac Foundation

Executive Director

Page 4.

- A nonprofit management background, with demonstrated interest in the environment, watershed preservation, and water quality, including but not limited to issues such as invasive species, pollution, recreational boat impacts, and climate change.
- Some experience with aquatic invasive species management, including field experience, or similar comparable experience would be valuable; familiarity with GIS/ArcGIS and the ability to use mapping and spatial data as management tools would also be useful.
- A history of working with legislators, state agencies, researchers, and interest groups related to environmental policies is a plus.
- Strong interpersonal skills: the ability to connect and build relationships with a variety of persons and entities with varying interests and personalities; comfort speaking publicly and serving as the face of the organization.
- Experience, skill, and desire to serve as both a manager and caretaker of the watershed and an external voice and leader with the ability to engage communities and partners.
- Proven experience as a grant writer and the ability to connect with other philanthropic resources and identify potential partnerships and other revenue-generating opportunities.
- The ability to communicate clearly and concisely, both in writing and verbally; the ability to enhance USF's social media presence, along with the ability to navigate or become proficient in emerging digital and Internet opportunities.
- A resourceful person with integrity and a strong work ethic; willingness to work with and through the dedicated Board of Directors and the greater Upper Saranac Lake community.
- Self-motivated, with a sense of humor and the ability to maintain balance and perspective.

COMPENSATION

The compensation range for this position is \$100,000 to \$120,000.

Please send applications or nominations to Mark Tarnacki at:

UpperSaranacFoundation@PhillipsOppenheim.com.

Upper Saranac Foundation
October 2026



PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM