



WESTSIDE
WATER AUTHORITY

AN EXCITING OPPORTUNITY TO APPLY FOR THE POSITION OF

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Recruitment services provided by Ralph Andersen & Associates

An Outstanding Opportunity

This is an outstanding opportunity for a senior-level professional to become the Executive Director of the Westside Water Authority (WWA), a newly created Joint Powers Authority located in Bakersfield, California. This newly formed organization focuses on the delivery of agricultural water to a relatively small, but prominent group of landowners in the San Joaquin Valley. The WWA was created to allow for the combined water management of resources, staff, and facilities of four existing water districts.

The Board of WWA is actively seeking a confident and dynamic leader to guide the agency to maximize the management of its water resources such as water banking, transfers, and exchanges. WWA's combined 378,000 acre-feet of State Water Project (SWP) Table A contract supply accounts for nearly 10% of the total SWP water supply contracts in the State of California. This puts the WWA and its new Executive Director in a position to influence decision-makers in the region as well as in Sacramento on water issues and projects that are critical to its users and stakeholders. From time-to-time, the WWA organization will have unique needs and goals apart from other water agencies in the region, and as such, the creation of this new entity will allow the Board to further pursue additional water resource opportunities, as appropriate. In support of this, the Executive Director will bring collaboration, facilitation, and management skills complemented by innovative ideas.

Ideally, the Executive Director will need broad knowledge of California water issues and be able to engage with elected officials, regulators, and other stakeholders on policy issues that impact the WWA members. As an alternative, the Board believes the skills needed for this leadership position may be transferable from another industry for a select few candidates. As a result, the Board may consider senior-level experienced executives in related industries (e.g. agri-business, oil, gas, etc.) or local government executives who are able to demonstrate transferable executive level skills including knowledge of the region.

Focused and working primarily in the greater Bakersfield area, the Executive Director will be actively engaged in a wide range of local, regional, federal, and statewide water related matters in addition to overseeing the consolidated management and operations of its four-member water districts. Periodic day trips (estimated to be 1-3 times per month) to Sacramento may be required, at times throughout the year, to work with legislators and other key individuals at the State Capitol.

This is a rare opportunity to provide leadership combined with management skills to facilitate the delivery of agricultural water in the San Joaquin Valley. The willingness of the Board to look broadly for this new leadership positions allows a traditional water professional to pursue this or alternatively other senior-level executives.

Organizational Overview

The WWA was recently created and is comprised of four water districts: Dudley Ridge Water District, Lost Hills Water District, Berrenda Mesa Water District, and Belridge Water Storage District. The districts supply irrigation water for agricultural purposes on the western side of Kings and Kern Counties. Most of this supply is comprised of surface water deliveries from the SWP.

The seven member WWA Board of Directors (Board) consists of representatives from each of the four districts. Three districts are member units of the Kern County Water Agency (KCWA), which contracts with the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) for SWP water while the fourth district contracts directly with DWR.

The four districts have been working together for several years on a variety of water resource management issues and have previously created related entities to handle regulatory compliance with the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program and the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act. Additionally, the four districts working in conjunction with one other water district, have leveraged their resources to acquire supplemental water via both annual and multi-year water transfers and exchanges. The Board desires further integration and leveraging of its combined water resources, its significant water and energy expenditures, and its combined \$71 million annual operating budget. The WWA has 25 full-time employees.

The Board has created the Executive Director position to maximize the strength of its combined SWP entitlements, to consolidate the management and operations of the four districts, and to influence decisions made at the State and federal level, including developing a significant presence in Sacramento. Various activities in Sacramento affect the WWA such as SWP and DWR decisions and operations, legislative proposals and actions, and regulatory proposals and pronouncements. The Board desires to have an effective presence in Sacramento to positively influence these elements. The successful candidate will modify the organization's structure to further address the Board's goal of expanding the WWA's water resource programs, the efficient operations of the four systems, and the related governmental affairs objectives at the regional, State, and federal levels.

Westside Water Authority's purpose and mission can be summarized in four key areas:

- ◇ Deliver water
- ◇ Preserve water
- ◇ Acquire supplemental water
- ◇ Explore and enhance water resource assets

In addition to the WWA Board meetings, each of the four member districts have five directors and generally conduct quarterly Board meetings within their respective service areas. The Executive Director will lead staff efforts for the various Board meetings and create a regional presence as the WWA's leader and representative.

Responsibilities of the Position

The Executive Director will develop and lead a small team to represent the WWA at State Water Project, Department of Water Resources, and other meetings in Sacramento; represent its members with the Kern County Water Agency; and manage operations, Board meetings, and other meetings in the Bakersfield area and, as needed, throughout the Central Valley.

The creation of this Executive Director position combines two general manager positions and going forward provides the opportunity to restructure the organization for effectiveness and efficiency to further the Board's goals.

The Executive Director position will have the following responsibilities:

- Providing leadership for development and implementation of WWA strategies, policies, and programs for water resource management;
- Building a small, yet dynamic team to oversee water resource, administrative, governmental affairs, and operational functions;
- Creating, revising, and filling positions to compliment the skills and experiences of the new Executive Director;
- Influencing activities in Sacramento, at the federal level, and with KCWA for the benefit of the WWA and its stakeholders; being a regional leader;
- Engaging in acquisitions of short- and long-term supplemental water supplies through water transfer and exchange programs;
- Managing existing SWP water supply and groundwater banking programs;

- Exploring new opportunities for water banking and other water-related assets;
- Representing the WWA with landowners, policymakers, regulators, and local, State, and Federal agencies to advance the WWA's interests;
- Overseeing board meetings for the WWA (approximately 10 per year) and with each individual district board (approximately 3-4 per year per district);
- Directing and managing WWA staff responsible for regulatory programs compliance (including Sustainable Ground Management Act, Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program, and Basin Plan amendments), district finances, and personnel; and
- Overseeing capital improvement projects.

The Ideal Candidate

This position is well-suited to an experienced, motivated, and well-rounded executive who enjoys working and leading a small group of dedicated staff and, at the same time, is able to effectively communicate the best interests of the land-owners of the WWA.

Ideally, extensive experience and expertise with California water issues and the ability to work with State Water Project contractors and Department of Water Resources' management is sought. Alternatively, experience as a senior manager in a related resource-oriented industry, such as oil and gas, would have similar desired personal attributes and leadership qualities.

The Board believes the ideal candidate will possess many of the following attributes:

- An energetic, self-motivated leader with good communication and delegation skills;
- Skilled at building relationships, negotiating transactions, and challenging others;
- Innovative and creative; an entrepreneurial management style; embracing best business practices for a public agency;
- Ability to provide strong leadership to a policy-making Board;



- Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with all Board members, landowners, and water users;
- Strong experience developing, managing, and motivating staff over various organizational departments and locations; and
- Excellent public speaking and interpersonal skills with the ability to present a wide variety of audiences, including the public, stakeholders, and regulatory personnel in a clear and concise manner.

Preferred Education and Experience

Education: Degree in business, engineering, agriculture, or law is preferred.

Experience: Requires a minimum of ten (10) years of relevant professional management experience. Experience may be drawn from a wide array of qualifying experiences including a) career in public service (city, county, special district, or utility district); b) private enterprise (such as oil and gas industry, agribusiness, or similar type organization); c) water resources; d) water rights; or e) water law.

Compensation

The annual salary for the Executive Director is highly competitive and commensurate with qualifications and responsibilities like other water agencies of comparable size and scope. Salary offered will range between \$250,000 to \$300,000 annually, dependent upon a candidate's leadership skills and experience. A multi-year employment agreement will be negotiated with the selected candidate and may also include moving and relocation experience to relocate to the Bakersfield area.

The salary is supported by an executive-level benefits package including:

- WWA-provided vehicle that is home garaged (include gas, insurance, and maintenance / repairs);
- Medical, Dental, Vision for Employee plus family (The entire cost of employee coverage and 85% of dependent coverage is paid for by the WWA for medical and dental, and 100% for vision);
- Life insurance in the amount of \$150,000;
- Defined Contribution - the WWA will contribute 5% of an employee's annual salary to the plan. In addition, the WWA will match dollar for dollar up to an additional 5% of the employee's annual salary (for a total of 10%) in the Plan on behalf of the employee, provided the employee defers 5% or more to his/her 457 plan annually;
- Participation in 457 Deferred Compensation Program;

- Generous vacation, sick, holiday, and personal leave allowances;
- Business related expense reimbursement and use of WWA credit card;
- Portable computer and related software; and
- Cell phone purchase and related cell coverage allowance.

Important to note, the Westside Water Authority is a non-CalPERS agency for retirement and healthcare purposes.

Candidates should be aware that employees of the WWA do contribute to Social Security and the mandated Medicare deductions.

Further details regarding compensation and benefits may be directed to the Ralph Andersen & Associates' Search Team.

To Be Considered

This is a **confidential recruitment** and will be handled accordingly throughout the various stages of the process. References **will not** be contacted until mutual interest has been established. This recruitment is considered open until a final selection is made. Candidates are encouraged to **apply immediately and before August 14, 2020**. Resumes will be reviewed upon submittal and highly qualified candidates will be scheduled for video interviews with Ralph Andersen & Associates. The most highly qualified candidates will be invited for an initial video interview with Search Committee (representatives of the four districts). Top candidates invited to continue in the process will have other follow-up meetings and receive a tour of the districts which extends over a large geographic area. The top candidates (typically 1 to 3) will be presented to the full WWA Board for final selection with appropriate social distancing in-place.

A detailed background and extensive reference checks will be conducted later in the process on the top candidate.

Ideally, the new Executive Director will join the Westside Water Authority in October (or a mutually agreed upon start date). Both the Board and the Interim Executive Director desire a smooth transition and every effort will be made to ensure that this happens.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit electronically to Ralph Andersen & Associates at apply@ralphandersen.com and should include a compelling cover letter and comprehensive resume.

Confidential inquiries are welcomed to the Search Team: Mr. John Rossi (john@ralphandersen.com) or Ms. Heather Renschler (heather@ralphandersen.com) at (916) 630-4900.