

Executive Director

Reporting to the Board of Directors

San Andreas, CA

The Performing Animal Welfare Society (PAWS) is seeking an Executive Director to lead one of the nation's most respected wildlife sanctuary and animal advocacy organizations. Founded in 1984 by Pat Derby and Ed Stewart, PAWS is dedicated to the rescue and sanctuary of abused, abandoned, and retired captive wildlife, and public education regarding captive wildlife issues.

PAWS operates ARK 2000, a 2,300-acre sanctuary in the Sierra Nevada foothills of California, providing lifelong care for elephants, big cats, bears, and other rescued wildlife. As a true sanctuary, PAWS does not breed, buy, sell, or trade animals and is committed to providing residents with naturalistic habitats and the highest standards of science-based care. PAWS established the nation's first elephant sanctuary, helped to secure transformative protections for captive wildlife, contributed to the passage of the federal Big Cat Public Safety Act, and advanced numerous state and local initiatives to end the exploitation of wild animals in entertainment. PAWS has an annual operating budget of \$4–\$5 million and a dedicated team of 35 staff members and consultants. In addition, PAWS holds the International Captive Wildlife Conference every two years to bring together experts from across the globe to delve into the complex issues facing wild animals in entertainment, zoos and the exotic pet trade.

The future Executive Director (ED) will serve as PAWS' chief executive and strategic leader, responsible for advancing the organization's mission, overseeing sanctuary operations, ensuring financial sustainability, leading fundraising efforts, guiding advocacy initiatives, and partnering closely with the Board of Directors. The ED will champion PAWS' vision for ending captive wildlife exploitation while maintaining the organization's reputation as a world-class sanctuary and influential voice in animal welfare policy.

This is a fantastic opportunity for a leader who is passionate about animal rights. The ideal candidate will bring demonstrated nonprofit leadership experience, success in fundraising and donor cultivation, financial management expertise, experience working with engaged boards, and a proven ability to build, mentor, and inspire high-performing teams.

The anticipated salary range for this position is \$150,000–\$170,000 plus a benefits package.

This position is based in Calaveras County, CA. If you are interested in this role, please apply to Kittleman & Associates, LLC; for best consideration, candidates should submit a current resume and letter of introduction by August 7, 2026.

For additional information about PAWS, visit www.pawsweb.org.

https://mcusercontent.com/1252875d7f1dc66a8f6c002aa/files/755f9e02-632a-a1ab-d641-40b4033c470e/PAWS_Position_Guide.pdf

To apply, visit:

<https://www.kittlemansearch.com/opportunities/opportunity?id=sq8r65e9mtpcgxaqrc8a19yb6e&title=Executive%20Director%2C%20PAWS>

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