

The Christensen Fund: backing the stewards of cultural and biological diversity

**JOB ANNOUNCEMENT:
PROGRAM OFFICER FOR THE GREATER SOUTHWEST**

August 2006

The Position

The Program Officer for the Greater Southwest is an existing position becoming vacant on September 1st, 2006, addressing opportunities to develop and support a significant portfolio of grantees in Northwest Mexico and the US Southwest around bio-cultural diversity issues. Dr. Enrique Salmón, who served from 2003-2006, was the founding Program Officer for The Christensen Fund in this position.

The Christensen Fund (TCF)

The Christensen Fund (www.christensenfund.org), founded in 1957 and located in Palo Alto in the San Francisco Bay Area, is an independent private foundation that has long supported international work in the arts and conservation science fields and now works with the following mission:

The Christensen Fund believes in the power of biological and cultural diversity to sustain and enrich a world faced with great change and uncertainty. We focus on the "bio-cultural" - the rich but neglected adaptive interweave of people and place, culture and ecology. The Fund's mission is to buttress the efforts of people and institutions who believe in a biodiverse world infused with artistic expression and work to secure ways of life and landscapes that are beautiful, bountiful and resilient.

We pursue this mission through place-based work in regions chosen for their potential to withstand and recover from the global erosion of diversity. We focus on backing the efforts of locally-recognized community custodians of this heritage, and their alliances with scholars, artists, advocates and others. We also fund international efforts to build global understanding of these issues. These are challenging goals, so we seek out imaginative, thoughtful and occasionally odd partners to learn with. The Fund works primarily through grant making, as well as through capacity and network building, knowledge generation, collaboration and mission-related investments.

Grant making in 2006 is projected at \$8m and is anticipated to rise to \$25m per year over the next five years. The Program Officer joins a growing team of 17 staff, including three other Program Officers responsible for a specific geographical region of the world (African Rift Valley, Central Asia and Turkey, and Northern Australia), and one (soon to be two) Program Officer(s) working to develop global programs. (For details of our background and programs please consult the website www.christensenfund.org.)

The Grant-making Responsibilities

For The Christensen Fund (TCF) the Greater Southwest Region includes the following areas: the Colorado Plateau and Rio Arriba in the USA, the Sonoran Desert on both sides of the US-Mexico border, and the Sierra Tarahumara in NW Mexico. TCF also supports activities in the San Francisco Bay Area among the diaspora from these regions or of institutions based here that connect to their aspirations.

With its focus on bio-cultural diversity and support for the local stewards and guardians of place, culture and environment, TCF makes grants to community-based organizations, NGOs, universities, arts and cultural centers and groups, tribal governments, museums and others around the themes of Landscape, Livelihoods and Foodways; Culture and Land; and Education, Leadership and Networking. We seek to support processes that are anchored in local realities and in the visions of traditional custodians who can secure a future for the unique richness of the cultures, landscapes and biodiversity of the Greater Southwest. To date grant making has supported a wide range of activities (see website for grants list), while developing a strategic focus on foodways as a point of deep connection between the land and the people. Future grant making is expected to build on this approach while deepening support for the efforts and organizations of the stewards, and increasing the amount of local grant making in Northwest Mexico.

We seek a visionary with imagination and energy to support real change. This person will be passionate about diversity and environmental and indigenous issues with a particular talent for understanding how to connect new ideas, traditional stewardship and funding institutions. S/he will be a networker and team player, finding allies everywhere while listening to local people. The grant budget for this program will grow from \$1.4m to perhaps over \$2m/year over the next several years.

Duties

Reporting to the Executive Director of The Christensen Fund, the Program Officer will be responsible for:

- Building on the first three years of grant making and the results obtained, while bringing new energy and vision for developing grant-making strategies and articulating them to potential grantees and other stakeholders
- Reviewing, developing and recommending grant proposals for approval and monitoring grantee implementation, working closely with Grants Administration colleagues
- Collaborating with other staff at The Christensen Fund and other foundations to craft, finance and implement programs
- Maintaining close knowledge of the ideas, issues and institutions working in his or her field of responsibility, and the situation of communities on the ground

The Christensen Fund: backing the stewards of cultural and biological diversity

- Partnering as appropriate with grantees to advance their institutional development and program achievement, and participating in their conferences and other events
- Helping grantees and other relevant organizations network and learn from each other locally, across the border, and internationally
- Working (including with outside reviewers) to evaluate the impact of grantees and grant-making strategies and recommending program adjustments accordingly
- Sharing expertise and imagination with other TCF staff in pursuit of the organization's overall programming and mission
- Presenting grant-making strategies, grant-making progress reviews, key proposed grants, impact evaluations and other briefings to the TCF Board of Trustees

This position will be based in the San Francisco Bay Area (Palo Alto) and require extensive travel to the priority areas, as well as internationally.

Traits and Skills

The staff of The Christensen comprise a diverse and lively-minded team who work with energy and humor to make a difference in a deeply troubled world.

The following are required characteristics for this position:

- Deep understanding of the connections between biological and cultural diversity
- Deep knowledge of the landscapes, cultures and institutions of the US Southwest and Northwest Mexico. A knowledge of traditional agricultural and foodways issues would be an advantage.
- Familiarity with realities of local stewardship and grassroots struggles among Indigenous and other place-based communities in the Greater Southwest region as well as with the institutions, associations and research groups working to support their efforts
- Superior written and oral communication skills in both Spanish and English, and an ability to listen to and respect applicants, grantees and other stakeholders
- Well organized and self-sufficient, able to manage time and work under pressure
- A demonstrated ability and inclination to work as part of a team

Education and Background

The Christensen Fund: backing the stewards of cultural and biological diversity

A graduate degree in an environmental or social science field is required with particular knowledge of bio-cultural diversity, stewardship, landscape, resilience and indigenous peoples.

Demonstrated commitment to the visions and struggles of place-based communities in the Greater Southwest is required. As such the successful candidate is likely to have combined participatory research and advocacy with practical engagement in supporting local initiatives and in putting ideas and creativity to work in support of change.

Prior employment in a grant-making foundation or non-profit, or experience partnering with such foundations, would be an advantage.

Compensation and Terms of Employment

Terms would be a three-year renewable contract, with relocation assistance.

The position is available immediately, and it is hoped that the new Program Officer can join the staff before the end of 2007.

An excellent salary and benefits package commensurate with qualifications and experience will be provided.

Program Officers at TCF are encouraged to maintain active intellectual and creative engagement in the development of their fields of specialty, in particular as these advance the mission and strategies of the TCF and its grantee communities.

Applications

To apply please send a cover letter and CV to resumes@christensenfund.org. If you prefer to send your application by post please send to: Mayumi Fujio Morrow, 394 University Avenue, Palo Alto CA 94301, USA, marked "Confidential - Application."

Applications must be received by Friday, September 15th, 2006.

*The Christensen Fund is an equal opportunities employer.
Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.*