



MANAGING DIRECTOR

TITLE: Managing Director
TYPE: Full-time, Exempt
LOCATION: Helena, MT
SALARY: \$125,000-\$150,000/year DOE
BENEFITS: Health insurance, employer retirement contribution (12%), 401(k), and paid leave
APPLY BY: March 31, 2026

Position Summary

The Montana Land Reliance (MLR) is seeking a Managing Director to serve as an executive-level leader focused on fundraising, donor engagement, public policy and advocacy, and landowner relationships. This role is one of three Managing Directors and is intentionally external-facing, with primary responsibility for building philanthropic support, strengthening trust with landowners, and representing MLR with key partners, funders, and decision-makers. The Managing Director plays a hands-on role in major gift fundraising and donor stewardship, actively managing donor and landowner relationships and participating directly in solicitation efforts. This position is expected to translate strong, long-term relationships into durable conservation outcomes that advance MLR's mission. In addition, the Managing Director serves as a senior advocate for private working lands conservation, engaging directly in state and federal policy arenas. This includes working with Montana state agencies and the Legislature, federal agencies, national conservation and agricultural partners, and members of Congress to advance policies, funding programs, and incentives that support landowners and working lands conservation. The role requires the ability to represent MLR effectively in complex policy discussions and elevate landowner perspectives in both Montana and national policy conversations. This role is well suited for a relationship-driven leader who is comfortable initiating conversations, asking for support, and serving as a visible and credible ambassador for private working lands conservation.

About MLR

MLR is an accredited, nonprofit land trust that partners with private landowners to permanently protect Montana's agricultural lands, fish and wildlife habitat, and open space. Since 1978, MLR has helped more than 1,000 families conserve over 1.4 million acres of working lands, wildlife habitat, and open space across the state. MLR runs like a business and is one of the most focused and efficient land trusts in the country. The lasting benefits of MLR's work are the perpetuation of a lifestyle and an economy that relies on responsibly managed private land and increasingly valuable Montana open spaces that will continue to nourish the spirit of future generations. To learn more, visit www.mtlandreliance.org.

Essential Functions (Duties and Responsibilities)

Fundraising & Revenue Generation

- Maintain and actively manage a personal portfolio of major donors and prospective donors, including regular in-person meetings, calls, and stewardship touchpoints.
- Co-lead major gift solicitations in coordination with the Philanthropy Director, including preparing ask strategies, proposal content, and follow-up.
- Secure philanthropic support through direct donor engagement, foundation relationships, and targeted campaigns tied to conservation priorities.
- Participate directly in planned giving cultivation, including identifying prospects, initiating conversations, and coordinating with advisors as appropriate.

- Represent MLR in donor meetings, site visits, events, and cultivation opportunities statewide and nationally.
- Contribute to annual fundraising planning and revenue forecasting, with clear accountability for assigned fundraising targets.

Public Affairs & Advocacy

- Serve as a senior organizational representative in strategic public policy and advocacy efforts that advance private working lands conservation, conservation easement programs, public and private funding mechanisms, and landowner incentives.
- Engage directly with Montana state agencies, the Governor's Office, the Legislature, congressional offices, and relevant federal agencies to advocate for policies and programs that support landowners and conservation outcomes.
- Represent MLR in national policy forums, coalitions, and partner organizations, elevating Montana landowner perspectives in federal policy discussions and funding decisions.
- Build and maintain productive relationships with policymakers, agency leadership, conservation and agricultural partners, and industry stakeholders to support long-term conservation capacity.
- Coordinate closely with the Landowner Advocacy Manager and senior staff to align advocacy priorities, messaging, and external engagement strategies.
- Act as a public spokesperson for the organization at policy meetings, legislative briefings, fundraising and donor events, landowner gatherings, conferences, and educational seminars.
- Monitor emerging policy issues and funding opportunities that may affect private land conservation and advise on strategic responses.
- Support joint advocacy efforts that strengthen the effectiveness and credibility of private land conservation at the state and national levels.

Landowner Relationships & External Partnerships

- Build and maintain trusted relationships with landowners, agricultural producers, and families across Montana.
- Serve as a senior organizational contact for complex or high-profile landowner relationships, particularly where trust, discretion, or long-term stewardship confidence is essential.
- Participate in landowner meetings, easement closings, and stewardship discussions as appropriate to reinforce organizational credibility and continuity.
- Strengthen partnerships with conservation organizations, agricultural groups, and public agencies to support project development and funding alignment.

Staff Oversight

- Act as the executive lead for the Philanthropy Director and oversee the Landowner Advocacy Manager and Communications Manager.
- Set clear priorities and expectations for staff roles that directly support external engagement and communications.
- Ensure staff efforts are aligned with revenue generation, donor stewardship, and relationship-building goals rather than duplicative or unfocused activity.
- Ensure compliance with employment laws and best practices.

Qualifications

- Undergraduate degree required.
- 10+ years of experience required.
- Demonstrated experience in fundraising, major gift cultivation, or relationship-based development, preferably in a conservation, agricultural, land trust, or mission-driven nonprofit setting.
- Strong understanding of Montana's agricultural landscape, including production agriculture, ranching operations, and working lands conservation.
- Demonstrated experience in public affairs and advocacy and the proven ability to build and maintain relationships with local, state, and federal lawmakers.
- Proven ability to build trust and long-term relationships with landowners, agricultural producers, donors, and community leaders.

- Experience engaging directly with donors, including preparing for and participating in solicitation conversations and stewardship activities.
- Knowledge of conservation easements, private land conservation tools, and agricultural land protection strategies.
- Ability to represent the organization effectively with landowners, funders, partners, and public officials in both formal and informal settings.
- Excellent communication skills, with the ability to translate complex conservation and agricultural topics for donors and non-technical audiences.
- Experience working with or alongside a Board of Directors in a nonprofit or mission-driven organization.
- Willingness and ability to travel regularly within Montana and nationally.
- Deep professional or personal experience in Montana production agriculture, ranch management, or farming.
- Familiarity with state and federal conservation funding programs that support working lands (e.g., ACEP-ALE, state conservation programs).
- Prior experience engaging with rural and agricultural communities.
- Experience collaborating with agricultural organizations, producer groups, or conservation partners.
- Knowledge of Montana land use, water rights, or agricultural policy environments.
- Relationship-oriented and comfortable initiating conversations with landowners and donors.
- Ability to work collaboratively within a shared leadership structure while maintaining individual accountability.
- Strong computer skills, including Microsoft Office Suite. Salesforce experience preferred.
- Valid driver's license.

How to Apply

Email a cover letter and resume in PDF format to Katie Stokes at katie@mtlandreliance.org with the subject heading "Managing Director: [Your Last Name]."

The application deadline is March 31, 2026. **MLR is an equal opportunity employer.**