



## **PRESIDENT & DIRECTOR**

*“Environmental science, policy, and education for sustainable well-being”*

### **THE SEARCH**

The Woods Hole Research Center, a worldwide leader in work at the intersection of land use change, climate change, and human well-being, seeks a President & Director. This is a rare opportunity to lead an \$8 million nonprofit institution with a remarkable history of achievement in scientific research, educational outreach, and policy design.

The President & Director is the Chief Executive Officer of the Center, serves as its principal public spokesperson and philanthropic fundraiser, and provides vision and leadership for its outstanding interdisciplinary staff team. Reporting to a 22-member Board of Directors and serving as member of that Board, the President & Director leads a staff of 50, including 15 Principal Investigators working on programs and initiatives around the world.

The new President/Director will be a person of exceptional intellectual vision and scientific judgment, a proven leader and team builder who listens well and communicates persuasively, and a person who embraces the pressing work of the Center with passion. As the organization’s leader, the President/Director will have an important platform from which to influence global environmental policy and enhance public understanding and support.

A six-member Board search committee has been established to conduct this search. The committee will be assisted by Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm based in Boston. Inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed in confidence to the search firm.

### **BACKGROUND**

Founded in 1985 by ecologist George M. Woodwell, the Woods Hole Research Center is dedicated to science, education, and public policy for a habitable earth. An independent, non-partisan institution, the Center has steadfastly focused on how the planet’s land and soil, fresh water, vegetation, and climate function as a system – one that critically underpins the human enterprise – and on what needs to be done to keep it functioning.

In just twenty-four years, the Center has had a significant role in exploring how the Earth works as a biophysical system, in offering ground-tested policy innovations, and in helping to define the climate disruption issue, both cause and cure. It showed the profound importance of forests when others were skeptical or denied it. It had a major role in creating the World Commission

on Forests and Sustainable Development and in helping to develop the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and it is playing an increasingly key role in providing specialized original research and expertise to inform ongoing UNFCCC global negotiations. Since its creation, the Center has been particularly active and influential in the Amazon region; staff working in Brazil co-founded the Instituto de Pesquisa Ambiental da Amazônia (IPAM), a sister institution now regarded as a leading research institution in the Amazon.

Currently the Center is home to 50 staff engaged in cutting edge scientific research, global environmental policy, environmental economics, and education. The organization sponsors programs or initiatives in the Amazon, the Arctic, Africa, Russia, Boreal North America, the Mid-Atlantic, New England, and Cape Cod. Programs focus on the science and economics of the global carbon cycle, global nitrogen cycle, forest function, landcover/ land use, water cycles and chemicals in the environment, science in public affairs, and education, and most recently, providing vital data and enabling better appraisals of the trends in forests that influence their role in the global carbon budget. The Center works locally and regionally, assisting communities with resource management, and internationally, promoting policies that stabilize climate and protect the integrity of the planet.

The Center is one of five private and public scientific research institutions based in Woods Hole, Massachusetts, including the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, the Marine Biological Laboratory, a National Marine Fisheries Service Laboratory, and a field station of the US Geological Survey. The smallest of these institutions, the Center is widely recognized for its leadership in its areas of expertise and is regularly sought out by larger institutions as a partner and by regional and national governments as an advisor.

## **CURRENT SITUATION**

Today, the work of the Woods Hole Research Center is as vital and relevant as it has ever been. Awareness has risen sharply over the past few years among policy makers, private sector leaders, and the public alike that environmental conditions and processes — and, above all, those connected to global climate — are both crucial to human well-being and increasingly imperiled. Management of the world's soils and forests, along with management of the global energy system, will be a key determinant of whether the ongoing human disruption of global climate can be stopped short of catastrophe. The increased awareness on these points is creating correspondingly increased demands for the kinds of scientific answers, policy proposals, inter-institutional collaborations, and educational activities at which the Center excels.

The Center's contributions have always been far out of proportion to its size (currently 50 employees, with a research budget of \$6.5 million for FY2009). This is due both to the exceptional caliber and commitment of its staff and to the Center's unique complement of world-class integrative science, policy leadership, and solution-building field programs. The Center is in the midst of increasing its staff size by 20% and it intends to raise funds to renovate a newly purchased property and building on its 10-acre campus.

The biggest challenge for recruiting and retaining researchers at the Center is the stress associated with working in a nearly 100% "soft money" environment. The current \$3.5 million endowment generates only about 3% of the Center's annual expenditures; the balance must be raised from grants from government agencies and foundations, for which the PIs must write

proposals. About 15% of expenditures are supported by donations to the Center's annual fund, making less than 20% in total from annual fund and endowment combined.

The organization has historically been unusually successful in attracting soft money support, with nearly a 50% success ratio for its grant proposals. Since July 1, 2008, the Center has obtained more than \$11 million in grants funding, ensuring its continued stability over the near term. Although the organization will continue to rely heavily on restricted grant support, it is essential that it increase its "hard money" resources, both to alleviate the pressures on the PIs and to provide flexibility for the Center to respond quickly to changing opportunities and take best advantage of its independence, agility, and breadth. At this time of heightened public awareness and in the face of an urgent need for its unique expertise, the Center is well positioned to diversify and expand its funding base, and it intends to do so aggressively.

### Leadership Transition

In December 2008, Director John P. Holdren stepped down from the Center when he was selected by President Obama as the nominee for the Assistant to the President for Science and Technology and Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy. A physicist, aerospace engineer, and specialist in energy technology and policy, Holdren became the Center's second Director in 2005. Over his tenure as Director, the Center's budget nearly doubled, and its prominence in its niche continued to rise.

The organization is now at a critical moment in its evolution. With its focus and expertise at the core of the public debate about economic and environmental sustainability, the Center's leadership is needed now more than ever. It is seeking a President & Director who sees the potential of this small but vital organization and who has the skills and vision to move it forward.

### **THE PRESIDENT & DIRECTOR**

The President & Director is the Chief Executive Officer of the Woods Hole Research Center, reporting to its Board of Directors and serving as a member of that Board.

Building upon the groundwork of a 2008 Strategic Plan, the President & Director will be expected to develop and articulate a long-term vision for the Center's unique role in environmental research, policy, and education, and then mobilize its internal and external stakeholders around that vision.

In close partnership with the staff and Board, the President & Director will be expected to:

- Provide strong, entrepreneurial leadership for the Center, ensuring that it continues, and wherever possible, enhances its high level of excellence and impact. Advance the organization's position as a world leader in identifying and addressing key scientific challenges to the world's terrestrial ecosystems and to human well-being.
- Increase the Center's visibility. Communicate clear accessible messages and themes that will resonate not only with scientific leaders and policymakers but also with the business community and the broader public.

- Provide strong leadership at the national and international level in helping to shape the agenda for climate and bioscience research over the next decade.
- Coalesce and inspire staff around the Center's mission and vision for the future. Foster strategic collaboration across the institution and ensure that individual contributions and initiatives contribute to the organization's collective goals.
- Expand and diversify the Center's funding base by reaching individual supporters and by tapping new foundation, corporate, governmental, and intergovernmental sources. Significantly increase both endowment and annual fund support. Lead fundraising through Board engagement, through personal efforts, and through a strong and well-supported development department.
- Sustain the Center's supportive, collegial, and equitable working environment that nurtures and encourages creativity and innovation at all levels. Ensure open channels of communication and promote transparency of decision-making.
- Ensure that the Center is well managed, fiscally and administratively.

### **THE IDEAL CANDIDATE**

For this important role, the Center seeks an exceptional leader who is passionate about the organization's scientific and public policy missions, committed to its longstanding standards of excellence, supportive of its creative and collegial culture, and farsighted about its future potential.

Although it is likely that the Center's next President & Director will be a highly regarded natural scientist with strong policy interests and expertise, the Board is willing to consider less traditional candidates who have demonstrated exceptional ability to understand and communicate complex scientific ideas. The President must be fluent enough with the relevant scientific and policy issues to be a highly credible representative of the Center among audiences ranging from the general public to the uppermost levels of scientists and policymakers. The position calls for vision, breadth, and good judgment; proven intellectual leadership skills; a keen sense of public policy as well as of natural resource management on the ground; an enthusiasm for fund raising; demonstrated financial and staff management experience; and the collegial bent and deft interpersonal ability to lead and motivate within an independent research environment.

While no one candidate will embody every quality, the successful candidate will bring many of the following professional qualifications and personal qualities:

- Scientific credibility. The intellectual vision and disposition of a gifted science generalist; exceptional scientific judgment and an appreciation for both disciplinary and interdisciplinary science. A capacity to synthesize and see the big picture.
- Standing, or at least potential, as a visible, valuable contributor in global environmental and policy circles. Experience and relationships, preferably at high levels, in the science policy community nationally and internationally.

- Organizational leadership experience, ideally leading an organization or major program through institutional growth.
- Exceptional communication skills. The ability to relate well to both scientists and non-scientists alike and to convey complex concepts to lay audiences. Public presence.
- A management style which is goal-oriented but flexible, which respects the capabilities and independence of staff members in accomplishing organizational objectives but provides them with a clear sense of direction. Willingness to circulate widely, communicate openly, listen well, and learn from others.
- Experience raising private and government funds and willingness to be actively engaged in resource development. Ability to attract new supporters while maintaining strong relationships with existing donors.
- Demonstrated management and financial experience sufficient to oversee a complex research and education enterprise in a changing environment.
- Experience working closely and successfully with a governing board.
- The highest level of integrity. Creativity, resilience, flexibility, tenacity, and very high energy.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO APPLY**

All inquiries, nominations, and applications may be directed in confidence to:

Karen Wilcox, Vice President  
*or*  
Maggie Gilmore, Senior Associate

ISAACSON, MILLER  
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Electronic submission of materials is strongly preferred.

Additional information about the Woods Hole Research Center can be found at [www.whrc.org](http://www.whrc.org).

*The Woods Hole Research Center is an equal opportunity employer  
and welcomes a diverse pool of applicants in this search.*

*April 1, 2009*