



General Counsel & Litigation Director

Earth Island Institute description

Earth Island Institute is a nonprofit environmental organization that has been at the forefront of efforts to protect the planet and its inhabitants for more than forty years. Earth Island supports grassroots activists through a powerful network of about 80 projects working in the United States and around the world. Earth Island's projects safeguard forests, oceans, and wildlife; support youth, women's environmental leadership, and historically-excluded communities; respond to climate change; and advance environmental justice, sustainability, and resilience. Earth Island further inspires action through the New Leaders Initiative and its annual Brower Youth Awards, which provides youth leaders with recognition and mentoring; *Earth Island Journal*, which provides unparalleled coverage of global environmental news and perspectives; and Earth Island Advocates, which uses the law to strengthen environmental protections. For more information, please visit earthisland.org.

Position overview

We believe that individuals and communities play a key role in environmental problem solving and in shaping the environmental movement, bolstered by organizational resources and a peer network that can scale their efforts. The General Counsel & Litigation Director ("general counsel") will be an ambassador for this perspective, and for Earth Island's multifaceted effort to make an impact by empowering the leaders in our network, growing the next generation of change makers, and amplifying the issues they work on.

This position will oversee Earth Island Advocates, the litigation arm of Earth Island, and act as legal advisor to Earth Island and the Board of Directors on a range of matters. They will supervise the work of pro bono attorneys and law students in connection with environmental advocacy and litigation and, along with the Board of Directors and other senior staff, devise and implement the organization's litigation strategies. The general counsel will also be charged with helping to grow Earth Island Advocates, and serve as the spokesperson for Earth Island's legal efforts.

The general counsel will be an executive-level member of the Earth Island team who will oversee all legal and governance matters within the organization, and serve as staff liaison to appropriate committees of the Earth Island Board of Directors (e.g., Litigation Approval, Governance, etc.). This exempt position is part of the management team, and reports directly

to the chief executive officer. The general counsel will have supervisory responsibilities of legal and non-legal staff that directly support Earth Island's legal department.

In all aspects of their role, the general counsel strives to deliver quality results in a manner that is respectful and supportive of others, and contributes to a strong team environment. This position has a direct impact on the programmatic and operational performance of the organization, as well as Earth Island's reputation among partners and community members.

This position is an excellent match for someone who enjoys taking initiative and thinking creatively about legal strategies; is a problem-solver by nature; has had steadily increasing legal responsibilities; and seeks to join a dynamic, innovative, and impactful organization.

Core responsibilities

- Develop and manage pro-active litigation and strategy, including advising on settlement, that supports the goals and objectives of Earth Island and its projects;
- Build and manage a network of pro-bono attorneys, law students, and consultants who work on Earth Island litigation and regulatory matters;
- Provide legal and risk management advice and judgment on a wide range of legal matters related to Earth Island's operations, including but not limited to contract, intellectual property, employment, and tax;
- Oversee grants and contracts compliance;
- Participate in the definition and development of policies, procedures, and programs related to legal and risk management;
- Assume responsibility for ensuring that the company conducts its business in compliance with applicable laws and regulations;
- Keep current on new and emerging laws, policy developments, and best practices related to compliance programs, with a focus on those relating to tax-exempt organizations;
- Serve as corporate secretary;
- Assist the president of the Board and the chief executive officer in connection with governance and the operation of the Board of Directors;
- Serve as the spokesperson for Earth Island's legal efforts and for Earth Island Advocates; and
- Other duties and responsibilities as assigned.

Qualifications

We strongly encourage individuals from underrepresented backgrounds, including women and people of color, to apply. Research has shown that these groups are often less likely to apply unless they meet 100% of the listed qualifications. At Earth Island, we value diversity and believe that a range of perspectives contributes to our success. If you have at least 60% of the qualifications listed and a growth mindset, we encourage you to submit your application.

- J.D. from an accredited law school;

- Seven years of experience as an attorney, with at least five years of litigation experience in state and/or federal courts;
- Admission to the Bar of the State of California (preferred), or to the bar of another state and willingness to obtain registered in-house counsel status in California;
- Creative litigation skills;
- Familiarity or willingness to learn legal substantive areas as applied to 501(c)(3) organizations, including governance, contract, employment and other day-to-day matters to the extent not already conversant;
- Demonstrated excellence in writing and verbal communication;
- Ability to lead in an environment of change;
- Ability to earn influence without authority and naturally seek to support both small projects and large strategic goals;
- Demonstrated strong planning skills, including the ability to anticipate tasks, set priorities, meet deadlines, and function smoothly under quick deadlines and shifting priorities;
- Exceptional interpersonal communication and relationship-building skills;
- Ability to demonstrate sensitivity to and appreciation for diverse viewpoints, different communication styles, and a wide range of diverse colleagues and project partners;
- Humble curiosity, creativity, and initiative with a willingness to accept and take on new challenges;
- Demonstrated ability to develop and maintain positive and productive relationships with staff, Board, donors, volunteers, and other stakeholders;
- Computer proficient with a comprehensive working knowledge of MS Word and MS Excel;
- Familiarity with some or all of the following systems: Nifty, Adobe, DocuSign, and Google Suite; and
- Ability to work some weekday evenings and weekends as required.

Compensation, hours, and location

This is a full-time, exempt position with a starting salary of \$132,000-142,000. Earth Island (Network Services) has adopted a compensation philosophy and set of practices to promote equity, remove bias — whether implicit or explicit — in the salary adjustment process, and to promote transparency around salaries. Each position has a grade and has a corresponding range of pay based on our peer market pay practices and an employee’s tenure in a job. Full benefits include medical, dental, vision, and life insurance, 13 paid holidays per year, a week-long winter break, paid vacation and sick leave, and a 401(k) plan with employer match.

The position is based in Earth Island’s Berkeley, California office, with at least two full days per week in the office and attendance at other regular in-person meetings and gatherings.

Application

Please send your resume along with a cover letter expressing your interest in Earth Island and how your qualifications align with the responsibilities of this position, and your LinkedIn profile (optional), to jobs@earthisland.org with “General Counsel” in the subject line.

Application initial review timeline

Applications sent in by April 12th will be considered for priority review. Applicants may receive contact prior to April 12th to participate in a short screening call. The position will be open until filled.

Covid-19 Considerations

EII is committed to protecting the health of our employees. To this end, EII employees are required to be vaccinated or provide documentation of medical or religious exemption. We will continue to evaluate these policies and practices informed by public health guidance and employee needs.

Earth Island Institute provides equal employment opportunities to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, marital status, amnesty, or status as a covered veteran in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local laws.

We strongly encourage applications from women, people of color, and bilingual and bicultural individuals, as well as members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender communities. Earth Island Institute is committed to our role in addressing barriers to engagement as we work collectively toward a future of environmental wellbeing for all. We value diversity and inclusion and we look forward to reviewing applications from all who are qualified to apply.

Reasonable accommodation will be made so that qualified disabled applicants may participate in the application process. If you seek an accommodation, please send an email to Michelle Thompson at HR@earthisland.org.