

EXECUTIVE SEARCH ANNOUNCEMENT

The Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area is seeking candidates for the position of Executive Director. The search is now open and will continue through January 31, 2018. A complete position description is attached as well as an Executive Summary of the Strategic Plan Update. Interested candidates are encouraged to review the web site, www.yumaheritage.com with particular attention to documents in the “Resources” section, including the original Management Plan, State Parks Master Plan, a recent NPS evaluation, and recent Annual Reports.

POSITION DESCRIPTION

YCNHAC – NONPROFIT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Executive Director is the key leader and manager of Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area Corporation (YCNHAC) which was established in 2002 with an annual budget of approximately \$2.5 million, located in southwestern Arizona. The Executive Director is responsible for overseeing administration and programs, including:

- Enhancing the historic resources of the community, particularly within the Yuma Crossing National Historic Landmark, including the direct management of two state historic parks;
- Undertaking restoration of and improving public access to the Colorado River;
- Initiating redevelopment projects at the request of the City of Yuma, subject to YCNHA board approval; and,
- Managing and conducting partner and public relations, fundraising, marketing, and community outreach.

The position reports directly to the Board of Directors with concurrence of the Yuma City Administrator and coordinates closely with the City of Yuma’s City Administrator and staff.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Oversight of ongoing program of work involving multiple and diverse projects, ensuring efficient administration and careful financial management.
- Initiate redevelopment projects at the request of the City of Yuma, subject to YCNHA board approval.
- Retain and grow the working relationships between the organization and the Arizona Congressional delegation, the National Park Service, the Alliance of National Heritage Areas, and key local partners such as the City of Yuma, Quechan Indian Tribe, Yuma Visitors Bureau, Arizona Game and Fish Department, Arizona State Parks and Trails, Arizona Historical Society, Yuma farming community, the Bureau of Reclamation, and state legislative representatives.
- Maintain and grow new sources of grant funding and develop new revenue streams through partnerships with the public, philanthropic, and private sectors.
- Advance a communications program—from web presence and social media to paid advertising and media relations—with a goal of increasing attendance and creating stronger brand awareness.
- Promote YCNHA’s role as an advocate for the Lower Colorado River.

- Guide the development of a new and updated 15-year management plan, building upon current accomplishments and expanding the vision for the organization while remaining flexible to new opportunities.
- Develop a Phasing Plan to implement a master plan for the two state parks under YCNHA management.
- Maintain absolute confidentiality of work-related issues and information.
- Perform other duties as required or assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS:

1. Bachelor's Degree, with five years of executive management experience in history, preservation, natural resources, recreation, tourism, marketing, community development, archeology, or resource management, or combination thereof.
2. The ability to guide the preparation and management of a complex budget, involving multiple streams of revenue.
3. The ability to manage and develop high-performance employees within a culture of innovation and empowerment.
4. Past success in working with a board of directors, and possess strong marketing, public relations, and fund-raising experience with strong written and verbal communication skills.
5. Experience in overseeing grant writing and grant management.
6. Action-oriented with an entrepreneurial and innovative approach to management and program development and the ability to work effectively in collaboration with diverse groups of people.
7. Some working knowledge of the unique cultural and heritage aspects of the desert southwest is a plus.

COMPENSATION/BENEFITS:

The position carries with it a salary and benefits package commensurate with other National Heritage Areas around the nation. Salary range is \$85,000 to \$125,000.

TO APPLY:

Interested individuals should email their cover letter, resume and two references no later than January 31, 2018 to yumacrossing@yumaaz.gov . Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis, so the YCNHAC encourages qualified candidates to apply early. To obtain more information about the YCNHAC please visit the website: <http://www.yumaheritage.com>.

The Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area Corporation is an EEO/AA employer. All qualified applicants who are eligible for employment will be considered for this job without discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex or national origin.

Executive Summary of the Strategic Plan Update

BACKGROUND

Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area is a complex mix of place setting, place making, place protecting and place promoting projects that span skill sets from planning and design, public/private financing, unusual partnership building, multiple revenue stream financing, historic and cultural preservation, environmental protection, special events planning, community involvement, and local, state and national advocacy. The organization has a remarkable chemistry that requires high level cooperation, collaboration, creativity, flexibility and adaptability to change. And YCNHA is in a state of change and transition now. Continued growth and success is assured, provided the stewardship of this transition is managed well and with the same skills and dedication that have been applied to the “Renaissance” of Yuma since YCNHA was created in 2000.

This report is a result of both considerable planning by the staff and a staff and Board retreat held on May 10-12, 2017. The discussions at the retreat built upon two documents: the [2015 National Park Service evaluation of the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area](#) and a document prepared by staff entitled “Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area Strategic Plan Review and Update 2017”. Together, the two documents detailed the accomplishments of the past 15 years as well as set forth a vision and program of work for the next 15 years.

The transition planning effort was precipitated by two factors. First, the only Executive Director that YCNHA has had since its inception is retiring in mid-2018. Second, the [original management plan](#) approved in 2002 (many parts of which have been completed) needs to be updated for the next 15 years. For that reason, the planning exercise focused on the near term transition (1-3 years) and the long term mission and goals of the organization.

Critical elements which emerged from the retreat are described below with more detailed recommendations associated for each element found in the body of the report.

WORK PLAN PRIORITIES

YCNHA has been on a progressive path forward with successful projects in riverfront development, downtown revitalization, historic preservation and restoration of two state parks. The momentum of these projects must be continued so YCNHA remains a key component of Yuma’s relevance for partnership and viability. Following are Near Term and Long Term priorities articulated by YCNHA staff and BOD.

Near Term Priorities: 1-3 Years

1. Maintain Key YCNHA Districts Initiatives:

- West Wetlands improvements, including clearing and restoration linking Gateway Park and West Wetlands;
- Bring East Wetlands maintenance operations in-house;
- Develop phasing plan for State Parks master plan and begin initial implementation;
- Finalize Campus Plan for Old Town South and determine YCNHA’s role in the project with City. Based on a clear understanding of its role with the City of Yuma and other community leaders, YCNHA will help implement the campus plan for

- Old Town South;
- Develop and implement marketing and communications plan which helps better define YCNHA to the community and outside target audiences.

2. Ensure financial integrity and security of the organization, which involves the Finance Director with the Board and new ED.

3. Preserve and nurture the culture of the organization, which encourages initiative, reasonable risk-taking and discourages micro-management.

4. Implement a more active and involved role of the Board during this transition period. Each Board member will provide mentorship for the new ED on a particular district, while avoiding the pitfalls of micro-managing the new ED. There was particular focus on a group of Board members who will work closely with the new ED and Finance Director to ensure that the organization's complex financial resources are understood and well-managed.

5. Ongoing advocacy in Congress is critical to the success of the YCNHA. The current ED is willing to assist in this effort as well as mentor the new ED to ensure stable funding and ongoing authorization. The same is the case with nurturing existing partnerships at the local and state level.

6. Develop and implement a communications and marketing plan which lays the foundation for more awareness by and support from the local and broader communities.

7. Undertake planning and preliminary actions for the establishment of an endowment fund which is intended to serve the long-term needs of Yuma's riverfront.

Long Term Priorities: 3-10 Years

1. Fully implement the plan for an endowment which will ensure that the high-quality of development and restoration along Yuma's riverfront is maintained and enhanced.

2. Full implementation of the master plan for the Yuma Territorial Prison State Historic Park. The management team there is generating revenues which can be used to match and leverage grants to implement the phasing plan.

3. The Colorado River State Historic Park is an enormous undertaking and requires both assistance from Congress and private foundations as well as a designated leader of the park "on the ground" well into the future.

4. Expand the role of the YCNHA as an advocate for the Lower Colorado River and a leader in its protection as a natural and cultural resource. Maintaining and enhancing the East Wetlands is the foundation of this effort.

The administration of the YCNHA, as well as each of the 7 districts outlined in the original management plan, have a great number of needs and challenges. Some are deemed more urgent and/ or important as set forth in the Near Term and Long-Term sections. But the new management plan must be open to and flexible enough to respond to other emerging opportunities. The board and staff retreat identified some additional potential historic, environmental, cultural, and economic issues which will require further discussion and community engagement.

MOMENTUM

Revised YCNHA Vision and Mission Statements

During the Board workshop, the YCNHA Vision and Mission Statements were reviewed and revised to more specifically articulate the direction and areas of focus and influence for the organization going forward.

Vision

Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area (YCNHA) serves as an advocate, with key partners, to protect the Lower Colorado River, and its rich history.

Mission

Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area (YCNHA) exists to:

- Restore the Lower Colorado River wetlands and habitats;
- Assure river access through riverfront parks;
- Tell the unique cultural and agricultural story of the area;
- Manage two state parks to preserve and bring history to life; and
- Promote private investment in the downtown and along the riverfront.

More people, near and far, need to know about the tourism, economic development, community restoration and civic pride resources that YCNHA represents and has helped to create. A Marketing and Communications Plan is needed to articulate what YCNHA is, how Yuma is special, the significant relationship of Yuma and the Colorado River, and who should be encouraged to visit and support Yuma and YCNHA, among other things. Such an important place should be strongly and clearly promoted.

One important consideration for the Communications Plan is to consider internal communications training, strategies, and best practices for the YCNHA staff and BOD. As has been mentioned, YCNHA is a complex organization that has thrived on application of individual strengths and creativity to “get the job done”. As with any organization, sometimes there is not enough time to communicate effectively within and among team members. Clear job descriptions and annual evaluations are needed to provide a feedback loop and input on what is working related to the organizational annual work plan and as a complement to a supportive management style. During this transition period, internal staff communications skill building and training will be helpful, if not critical, to continued growth for staff, partners and the organization.

A key component of past YCNHA successes has been leveraging funding from partners, grants and foundations. Economic conditions and priorities have changed and YCNHA must adapt to, create and seek out new sources of funding to maintain momentum on priority projects. A Funding Plan that clarifies needs and opportunities, strategic phases of implementation, and

possible and likely sources of revenues, funds and grants is critically needed. Elements of a Funding Plan can be important components of the Marketing and Communications Plan recommended in this report.

PARTNERS

As a newly formed entity, YCNHA made a point of reaching out to as many potential partners as might be relevant. Some took hold more strongly than others, and some may be more ready for productive partnership now. Regardless, mutually beneficial partnership is, and will remain, the foundation upon which YCNHA stands and grows. An identified list of high priority partnerships to maintain and/or cultivate is found in the body of this report, as well as important partners that may be vulnerable for some reason.

POLITICAL RELATIONS: WASHINGTON DC & ANHA

YCNHA has presented its needs and priorities to local, state and national elected officials to garner support for projects and the organization. Especially at the national level, YCNHA's presence and participation during annual trips to Washington, D.C. has been critical for productive relationships with the AZ Congressional delegation, NPS and the Alliance for National Heritage Areas. In fact, YCNHA plays a pivotal role in ANHA helping to develop a Strategic Plan for reauthorization in 2022, and current ED serves on the Executive Board as Treasurer. These activities must continue, preferably with the current Executive Director staying involved for two to three years as a consultant to this aspect of YCNHA.

Locally, relationships between YCNHA and COY are strong and mutually dependent and beneficial resulting in broad partnerships and leveraged funds to maximize outcomes. Especially important is a deep and effective relationship with the Quechan Tribe and their projects along the Colorado River.