

Forest Lakes Mutual Water Company

Executive search for the position of General Manager



Recruitment Announcement

The Forest Lakes Mutual Water Company (FLMWC or Company) is recruiting for its next General Manager (GM). The incumbent GM has announced her retirement after more than eleven years with the Company, effective March 2025, which presents an opportunity for knowledge transfer and job shadowing.

About The Company

FLMWC serves a small community in the census-designated town of Felton in the San Lorenzo Valley of unincorporated Santa Cruz County that is nestled in a mixed redwood forest in the Santa Cruz Mountains and proximate to the City of Santa Cruz. Information on the Company, including a five-year strategic plan, can be found at <https://www.forestlakesfelton.com/>.

FLMWC is a private nonprofit corporation formed in 1925 that provides water to 327 service connections in the Forest Lakes service area and maintains private roadways within. As a mutual water company organized under the California Corporations Code, FLMWC is independently owned by shareholders and operated by a staff of four employees, with the expected addition of an operations manager in 2025.

FLMWC is unique in that its water system is independent from other larger systems, is well-run with no regulatory compliance issues, and has its own fire protection reservoir. In short, there are not many independent water companies of this type and character in the region.

FLMWC is governed by a seven-member Board of Directors elected to two-year terms on a rotating basis. The Board of Directors is responsible for adopting policies for the efficient and effective operation of the Company. The current year budget, including operating and capital, is \$959,086. The Company has minimal debt consisting of a low-interest loan with the Small Business Administration, mainly for landslide repair resulting from the winter storms of 2017.

Note: While FLMWC operates in similar fashion to and must abide by many of the same regulations as governmental entities such as water districts or towns, the Company is *not* a local government, making this a unique opportunity for CalPERS (PERS) retirees who wish to continue their career working for a private entity without annual hours restrictions such as those required by PERS.

The Position

The General Manager provides overall direction of activities and functions of the Company in accordance with policies adopted by the Board of Directors. In addition to the day-to-day management of the Company, the General Manager is responsible for representing Forest Lakes in all manner of public and private affairs on a local, regional, and statewide basis. Principal responsibilities of the General Manager include the following:

- Directing and managing the construction and maintenance of water infrastructure including wells and distribution and treatment facilities

- Ensuring strict compliance with applicable regulations, including the Company's fire protection reservoir
- Maintaining private roads and recreation facilities operation
- Providing excellent customer service and diplomatic community relations
- Performing administrative, legal, financial, and human resources functions
- Implementing the Board-approved strategic plan
- Representing the Company on all inter-agency matters
- Preparing for and attending monthly Board meetings and ad hoc committee meetings
- Directing staff on policies, procedures, and company operations
- Monitoring legislation, industry trends, and issues affecting the Company and community

The Ideal Candidate

The ideal candidate will possess the knowledge, skills and abilities to effectively manage a small, independently owned and operated private water system with limited resources. As such, it is essential for the General Manager to take a hands-on approach in managing Company operations. The ideal candidate will demonstrate the following attributes:

- Planning, organizing, directing and integrating work at the executive level
- Planning, supervising and evaluating the work of others
- Working collaboratively and effectively with the Board of Directors, Company employees, other utilities and governmental agencies, shareholders, and others contacted in the course of the work
- Planning, establishing and implementing programs, services, capital improvements, goals and objectives, policies and procedures
- Monitoring and controlling fiscal and revenue activities
- Analyzing complex management and operations problems, evaluating alternatives, and directing changes
- Reading, interpreting and utilizing manufacturer's specifications, operations manuals, piping schematics, water system maps, plans, blueprints, etc.
- Communicating effectively orally and in writing, including preparing clear, concise, accurate, and effective written reports and making presentations
- Organizing a heavy workload and setting priorities without losing track of less urgent tasks
- Proficiency in Microsoft Office products such as Outlook, Word and Excel
- Ability to consistently exercise sound judgment, ethics and integrity; be self-disciplined, engaged, flexible and resourceful; remain diplomatic in contentious situations; and be dedicated to the organization

Minimum Education and Experience

The minimum qualifying education and experience include the following:

Possession of a high school diploma plus at least two years of progressively responsible experience in managing and supervising employees. Experience in construction trades and the water utility field is highly desired, as is post-secondary education and familiarity with public or private water agencies, and other relatable experience such as negotiating/administering contracts for services.

Compensation and Benefits

The salary for the General Manager is anticipated to be consistent with market conditions for a small, private nonprofit mutual water company. Additionally, the Company offers employee medical, dental and vision benefits, an employer-contribution IRA, paid time off, paid and floating holidays, and flexible/hybrid work scheduling.

To Be Considered for the Position

To be considered for this position, candidates must submit a cover letter and resume to hrforestlakes@gmail.com. Candidate resumes will be screened by the Company's Human Resources Committee. The Committee will also conduct initial interviews with promising candidates, either virtually or in person. Finalists will be invited to additional in-person interviews to be held in a Board executive session not open to the public.

This is a confidential recruitment and will be handled accordingly. References will not be contacted until mutual interest has been established.

The recruitment is considered open until a final selection is made. However, interested candidates are encouraged to apply by November 3, 2024 for early consideration. Employment by the Company is contingent upon passing a background check.

Confidential inquiries are welcome. Please contact Pete Gonda, Board President, at 831-345-0025. Alternatively, a preliminary discussion may be arranged by sending an email to pgonda@gmail.com.

