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The Nature Conservancy is governed as a single, tax-exempt 501(c) (3) organization by a worldwide, volunteer Board of Directors and is managed from its worldwide office in Arlington, Virginia USA. Because the Conservancy is organized as a single organization rather than as separate local legal entities, ultimate responsibility for the operation of The Nature Conservancy lies with its Board of Directors. Although the Board of Directors cannot delegate its broad legal and fiduciary responsibilities, it does delegate responsibility for day-to-day operations to the president and chief executive officer, who in turn delegates responsibilities to his or her executive team.

To achieve the Conservancy's place-based mission, the Board of Directors has established chapters of The Nature Conservancy at the state and country level. Each state and country program is run by a director who manages the program's annual plan and budget in support of the Conservancy's mission and goals. State and country directors are managed through clear reporting channels back to the president and, through the president's office, to the Board of Directors. All U.S. state and several

country programs are advised and assisted by volunteer Boards of Trustees. The Boards of Trustees advise chapters on strategic issues, assist in setting goals and, importantly, subject the chapter's work to additional critical thinking.