



**East Coast  
Zoological  
Foundation**

**Brevard Zoo | Bowen Aquarium**

## **Controller**

*Brevard County, FL*

**Johnny Cooper, MPA, CFRE**  
Chief Executive Officer

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## About East Coast Zoological Foundation

East Coast Zoological Foundation (ECZF) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization located on Florida's Space Coast. Through Brevard Zoo, the forthcoming Bowen Aquarium and Conservation Center, and Restore Our Shores, ECZF advances animal wellbeing, conservation, education, and community engagement. **Its mission is to share the joy of nature to help wildlife and people thrive.**

ECZF receives no recurring government funding for its operations. Its work is supported through earned revenue, philanthropy, partnerships, grants, and the continued investment of the surrounding community.

### Brevard Zoo

Community has been central to Brevard Zoo since its beginning. More than 16,000 volunteers helped build the Zoo, which opened in 1994 and has grown into one of Florida's leading cultural and conservation institutions. Today, it welcomes 500,000+ guests annually and cares for more than 900 animals representing nearly 200 species.

Accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, Brevard Zoo is known for immersive experiences including kayaking through Expedition Africa, giraffe feedings, and a range of animal encounters. It is also home to the Sea Turtle Healing Center, which rehabilitates and releases wild sea turtles.

The Brevard Zoo was voted the 5th Best Zoo in the U.S. by *USA Today's 10 Best Readers' Choice Awards*, and has been in their Top 10 for 7 years running.

### Bowen Aquarium and Conservation Center

ECZF is preparing to break ground on the Bowen Aquarium in December 2026. Located on 14 acres of shoreline at Port Canaveral, the Aquarium will become ECZF's second major campus and a regional center for conservation, education, animal wellbeing, research, and public engagement. **The Aquarium is the central focus of ECZF's \$140 million Our Legacy Campaign**, the fundraising effort supporting its development.

Bowen Aquarium will focus on Florida's native wildlife and waterways, with particular emphasis on restoring the Indian River Lagoon and surrounding coastal ecosystems. It will also provide expanded medical and research facilities for the rehabilitation of sea turtles and manatees.

### Restore Our Shores

Restore Our Shores is ECZF's field-based conservation program focused on restoring and protecting the Indian River Lagoon. Its work includes building living shorelines, restoring oyster reefs, engaging community volunteers, and advancing practical, science-based approaches to improving the health and resilience of local waterways.

## The Opportunity

ECZF is preparing for substantial operational and financial growth. The organization continues to grow the award-winning Brevard Zoo while preparing to construct and operate Bowen Aquarium, manage the \$140 million Our Legacy Campaign, and meet the reporting and compliance requirements associated with tax-exempt bond financing.

The campaign adds substantial complexity to ECZF's accounting operation. The Controller must understand the financial mechanics of a major fundraising campaign, including pledges, contribution receivables, donor restrictions, releases from restriction, grants, gift documentation, and capital expenditures. Close coordination with Philanthropy will be essential to keeping accounting records, fundraising data, donor agreements, and project reporting aligned.

This is an opportunity to shape the accounting infrastructure of a respected, mission-driven organization as it becomes a significantly larger, multi-site enterprise. The finance function is also navigating a period of transition. ECZF has engaged an experienced nonprofit CPA as interim Controller to maintain the close, reporting, and essential accounting processes during the search.

The incoming Controller will be the visible and accessible leader of the accounting team, establishing confidence, consistency, and accountability while strengthening systems, controls, documentation, and working relationships. This person must understand the work at every level, remain closely connected to the team, and be willing to investigate and resolve issues when needed.

As ECZF continues to evolve its financial policies, procedures, and controls, the Controller will have meaningful latitude to identify opportunities and implement improvements in partnership with CFO David Lamadrid, who joined ECZF in October 2025.

## Position Summary

**ECZF seeks a Controller to lead the accounting operations of an approximately \$20 million nonprofit with about 275 employees and serve as the organization's primary steward of accounting integrity, financial controls, and reporting accuracy.** As Bowen Aquarium is developed and begins operating, this person will prepare the accounting function for substantial growth in revenue, staffing, and complexity.

Reporting to the Chief Financial Officer, the Controller will oversee day-to-day accounting operations, the monthly and annual close, financial statement preparation, audit readiness, internal controls, payroll accounting, nonprofit and campaign accounting, grant reporting, and capital project accounting.

ECZF's current budgeted finance structure comprises 6.5 full-time equivalent positions: the CFO, Controller, Accounting Manager, Senior Accountant, Accounts Payable Clerk, Accounts Receivable Specialist, and part-time Cash Room Clerk.

The Controller will directly lead and develop the accounting staff, creating clear expectations, improving communication, encouraging cross-training, and building a stable team culture. Success requires both strong technical accounting capability and the ability to communicate well, earn trust, and translate accounting requirements for colleagues throughout the organization.

This must be a genuinely hands-on leader who can perform, review, or troubleshoot the work for which the department is responsible. Experience in a larger or more specialized organization can translate well, provided the candidate has maintained direct ownership of core accounting processes and is comfortable working closely with details.

Substantive nonprofit accounting experience is required. The successful candidate must understand donor restrictions, grants, contribution revenue, campaign pledges, capital activity, and nonprofit financial reporting from the outset. Strong analytical skills will also allow the Controller to support budgeting, forecasting, and organizational decision-making in partnership with the CFO.

## What Success Looks Like

### Initial Priorities

- Establish trust with the finance team, CFO, department heads, auditors, and other key partners while learning how Accounting can better support operations across ECZF.
- Assess the organization's accounting systems, processes, controls, reporting practices, staffing needs, and current risks, including the funding structure, pledges, donor restrictions, and construction activity associated with the Our Legacy Campaign.
- Complete the transition from the interim Controller, assume ownership of the close, reconciliations, financial statements, audit preparation, and compliance calendar, and establish clear team expectations and priorities.

### Within the First Six Months

- Deliver accurate, timely financial reporting supported by stronger close procedures, reconciliations, documentation, review practices, and internal controls.
- Strengthen nonprofit, grant, campaign, donor-restricted, and capital project accounting, including consistent reconciliation and communication between Finance and Philanthropy.

- Build a cohesive, cross-trained accounting team and provide more useful information to the CFO and department leaders, creating greater operational stability and allowing the CFO to focus on financing, planning, and growth.

#### **Longer-Term**

- Build a scalable accounting infrastructure capable of supporting Brevard Zoo, Bowen Aquarium, Restore Our Shores, and ECZF's expanded financial, compliance, and public reporting requirements.
- Maintain reliable accounting throughout the \$140 million campaign and Aquarium construction while improving visibility into net assets with and without donor restrictions.
- Help shape the finance team's long-term structure, maintain a strong and practical control environment, and establish Accounting as a responsive and trusted organizational partner.

## **Essential Job Functions**

The Controller will provide hands-on leadership across ECZF's accounting function while strengthening the systems, controls, and team practices needed for continued growth. Key responsibilities include:

#### **Accounting Operations and Financial Reporting**

- Lead all day-to-day accounting functions, including accounts payable, accounts receivable, general ledger maintenance, bank and investment account activity, cash management, and reconciliations.
- Direct the monthly and annual close, ensuring that postings, accruals, reconciliations, and financial entries are complete, accurate, and timely.
- Prepare financial statements and reporting packages for the CFO, executive leadership, Finance Committee, Board, and other stakeholders, including clear budget and variance analysis.
- Maintain the chart of accounts, supporting documentation, and proper classification of revenue, expenses, assets, liabilities, and net assets with and without donor restrictions in accordance with GAAP and FASB ASC 958.

#### **Internal Controls and Compliance**

- Assess, document, implement, and continually strengthen internal controls, accounting policies, standard procedures, segregation of duties, approval processes, safeguards, and audit trails.
- Oversee the purchasing-card program, including approvals, controls, reconciliation, documentation, and compliance.

- Maintain compliance with applicable federal, state, and local financial and tax requirements, including IRS requirements for tax-exempt organizations and ECZF's records-retention policy.
- Support the CFO in reviewing contracts, renewals, and financial commitments, and lead the implementation of improvements addressing identified accounting, process, and control risks.

#### **Audit, Tax, Payroll, and Benefits**

- Serve as the primary staff liaison for the annual external audit, coordinating schedules, supporting documentation, confirmations, auditor requests, and implementation of accepted recommendations.
- Lead or support the preparation of the annual audit, IRS Form 990, tax returns, sales-tax filings, and other required financial, fiduciary, and legal reports.
- Ensure accurate and timely payroll processing and accounting in close partnership with Human Resources, including payroll review, account reconciliations, tax filings, related liabilities, and FLSA compliance.
- Coordinate accounting for employee benefits, including health insurance, 403(b) retirement contributions, and leave accruals.

#### **Campaign, Grant, and Capital Project Accounting**

- Lead accounting and financial reporting for ECZF's \$140 million Our Legacy Campaign, including gifts, pledges, contribution receivables, donor restrictions, conditions, releases from restriction, and other recognition and reporting considerations.
- Establish regular reconciliation among Sage Intacct, Raiser's Edge, donor agreements, pledge schedules, fundraising records, and campaign reports in close partnership with Philanthropy.
- Oversee grant and donor-restricted fund accounting, ensuring resources are recorded, reconciled, reported, and used in accordance with donor and funder requirements, including preparation of grant drawdown requests.
- Maintain capital project accounts for Bowen Aquarium and other initiatives, coordinate budget-to-actual reporting with project leaders and develop processes capable of supporting Aquarium construction and future multi-site operations.

#### **Budgeting and Analytical Support**

- Lead the preparation of ECZF's annual budget in partnership with the CFO and organizational leaders.
- Analyze monthly, quarterly, and annual results against budgets, forecasts, and prior periods, identifying variances, trends, risks, cost pressures, and opportunities.
- Monitor departmental spending and headcount, coordinate with departments, and translate financial information into useful reporting and commentary for non-financial leaders.

- Support cash-flow forecasting, multi-year projections, scenario planning, and other financial analysis requested by the CFO.

### **Team Leadership and Organizational Partnership**

- Lead, supervise, coach, and develop the accounting staff, including hiring, onboarding, performance planning, evaluation, professional development, and clear accountability.
- Establish clear roles and expectations while building cross-training, redundancy, and continuity across essential accounting functions.
- Develop strong working relationships across the institution and its campuses, positioning Accounting as a responsive and trusted internal partner.
- Work effectively with auditors, banks, consultants, vendors, government partners, and other stakeholders; remain current on relevant accounting standards, systems, and regulatory developments; and perform other duties and special projects as assigned.

## **Qualifications**

The successful candidate will bring strong technical accounting expertise, substantive nonprofit experience, and the ability to lead a team while remaining closely engaged in the work. Specific qualifications include:

- Bachelor's degree in accounting.
- At least five to seven years of progressive accounting experience, including two or more years leading staff.
- Experience as a Controller, Assistant Controller, Director of Accounting, or comparable in-house accounting leader.
- Substantive nonprofit accounting experience, including GAAP, FASB ASC 958, donor restrictions, contribution revenue, and grants.
- Direct responsibility for close, financial statements, general ledger integrity, reconciliations, audits, Form 990, and regulatory filings.
- Experience strengthening accounting processes, documentation, internal controls, and financial systems.
- Demonstrated ability to lead, coach, and develop accounting staff while remaining hands-on across the function.
- Strong analytical, organizational, communication, and problem-solving skills.
- Ability to work independently, manage competing priorities, meet deadlines, and explain financial information to non-financial colleagues.
- Experience with capital campaigns, construction accounting, tax-exempt financing and compliance, or multi-site operations is strongly preferred.

- Strong proficiency with Microsoft Office, particularly Excel, and experience managing and optimizing accounting systems; experience with Sage Intacct, Raiser's Edge, and Paycor is preferred.
- CPA license is welcome but not required.

### **Leadership Attributes**

The ideal candidate will be:

- Visible, accessible, and closely engaged with the accounting team.
- Clear and consistent in setting expectations, making decisions, and holding others accountable.
- Practical and hands-on, with the judgment to move comfortably between detailed accounting work and broader organizational priorities.
- Skilled at building trust with department leaders and positioning Accounting as a responsive internal partner.
- Adaptable and steady in a growing organization where systems, roles, and operating needs continue to evolve.
- Guided by integrity, discretion, and a genuine commitment to ECZF's mission.

## **Leadership & Key Colleagues** *(Please do not contact ECZF or its leaders directly)*

### **David Lamadrid, Chief Financial Officer** *(direct supervisor)*

David Lamadrid joined ECZF as Chief Financial Officer in October 2025. He brings more than 25 years of financial leadership experience primarily in the medical device, clinical research, and equipment rental industries, spanning private equity-backed organizations as well as public companies, from start-ups to middle-market businesses. His background includes scaling organizations, raising equity and debt financing, strengthening financial infrastructure, building high-performing finance teams, and connecting finance with strategy and operations to drive growth and sustainability.

At ECZF, he leads financial strategy, capital planning, financing, and development of the finance function during significant growth and organizational expansion. He views the Controller as a trusted partner who will lead accounting operations, surface issues and opportunities, and help build the systems and team ECZF needs for the future.

### **Keith Winsten, Chief Executive Officer**

Keith Winsten has served Brevard Zoo since 2004 and brings more than 35 years of experience in nonprofit administration, communications, wildlife conservation, and environmental education. His work in conservation education and exhibit development has received national recognition, and he has helped develop professional training programs in the United States and internationally.

Keith has held numerous leadership roles within the Association of Zoos and Aquariums and remains actively engaged in regional conservation and civic initiatives. He is leading ECZF through the development of Bowen Aquarium and the organization's evolution into a larger, multi-campus conservation institution.

### **Anthony Rivera, Chief Operating Officer**

Anthony Rivera brings more than 30 years of experience in attractions, hospitality, guest experience, strategic planning, technology integration, and organizational operations. Before joining ECZF, he held senior leadership positions at Clearwater Marine Aquarium, Georgia Aquarium, Top of the Rock, Madame Tussauds New York, and the American Museum of Natural History.

Anthony leads ECZF's operational strategy and will be an important partner as accounting systems and reporting practices evolve to support multiple campuses and greater organizational complexity.

### **Beth Thedy, Chief Human Resources Officer**

Dr. Beth Thedy has served as Chief Human Resources Officer for ECZF since November 2023, where she leads the full human resources function and oversees enterprise risk management, insurance, and related governance. She is deeply committed to the Foundation's mission and to its leadership in conservation and sustainability.

Before joining ECZF, Dr. Thedy spent more than 32 years as an educator and administrator with Brevard Public Schools, where she held progressively senior leadership roles. As Deputy Superintendent and Chief Human Resources Officer, she led human resources for one of the county's largest employers, overseeing recruitment, workforce planning, compensation, employee relations, and policy compliance. She led district-wide programs, managed complex budgets and regulatory requirements, and built strong partnerships with families, staff, and community stakeholders.

Dr. Thedy is known for combining strategic executive leadership with hands-on operational insight, earning the trust of senior leaders and frontline staff alike. A lifelong educator at heart, her strengths include investing in people, developing leaders, and building strong, capable teams. She brings a steady, risk-minded approach to governance and compliance, balancing organizational protection with the flexibility needed to support growth, including ECZF's expansion to its second campus, Bowen Aquarium.

### **Jon Brangan, Chief Zoological Officer**

Jon has been in the Zoo world for the past 40 years. He walked in as a teenage volunteer and never walked out. As many have said, he found his passion. This passion has taken him on a journey that has allowed him to work in Zoos in VA, RI, OR and FL. Jon's current role is as Deputy Director at our beloved Brevard Zoo where he has been for the past 21 years. As CZO, Jon oversees daily operations of the Animal, Veterinary, Facilities, and Volunteer Programs. Jon is also the project lead for the future Aquarium.

## Robyn Ducharme, Chief Philanthropy Officer

Robyn Ducharme serves as Chief Philanthropy Officer for the ECZF, where she leads all philanthropic strategy and fundraising efforts in support of the organization's mission to inspire people to care about animals and nature.

With more than 25 years of experience in nonprofit leadership, Robyn brings deep expertise in strategic revenue growth, major and planned giving, donor engagement, and mission-aligned philanthropy. Prior to joining ECZF, she served as Vice President of Philanthropy at the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, where she managed a \$78 million national fundraising portfolio and led high-performing teams across individual giving, corporate partnerships, and foundation relations. Her tenure was marked by securing transformational gifts, launching a pioneering venture philanthropy initiative, and receiving the organization's largest-ever planned gift.

Robyn's background also includes senior leadership roles at the American Red Cross, YMCA, and Easter Seals, where she led disaster relief fundraising, community-based programming, and access-driven initiatives for children and families. She is known for her ability to mobilize teams, foster collaborative partnerships, and deliver innovative fundraising strategies under both every day and high-pressure conditions.

## Reporting Relationships

The Controller reports directly to the Chief Financial Officer and has the following supervisory responsibilities:

- **Accounting Manager** (*vacant*)
  - Senior Accountant
  - Accounts Payable Clerk
  - Accounts Receivable Specialist
  - Part-time Cash Room Clerk

The Controller will work closely with Human Resources, Philanthropy, Operations, Aquarium project leadership, department heads, external auditors, banking partners, consultants, and the Finance Committee.

*\*Bold indicates a direct report within the current structure.*

## Compensation & Benefits

**The salary range for this position is approximately \$110,000 to \$130,000.** New employees are eligible for company insurance benefits on the first day of the month following 60 days of continuous full-time employment. Benefits include:

- Medical, Dental, and Vision insurance
- Life and Short-term disability insurance
- Voluntary long-term disability, accident, critical illness options
- Voluntary term life and AD+D coverage
- Health Savings Account (HSA) for eligible employees
- 403(b) retirement plan with a discretionary match up to 3% of base salary
- Paid time off begins at 17 days annually, increases to 23 days after two years and 28 days after four years, with a maximum carryover of 240 hours.
- Bereavement leave offered in the event of the loss of a family member, a companion pet, or a Zoo animal in an employee's direct care
- Employee assistance program
- Zoo membership and tickets
- Admission to local attractions through AttractionShare

**As a reflection of our firm's commitment to equity and equal pay, salary ranges or salary starting points are published for every search we conduct. The practice of withholding salary information can perpetuate wage disparities and place certain candidates at a disadvantage during negotiations.**

## Location & Work Expectations

**This is a full-time, exempt position based in Melbourne, Florida.** The successful candidate must reside in or relocate to the Brevard County region.

The finance team currently works a hybrid schedule, generally three days onsite and two days remotely. The Controller must maintain a consistent onsite presence, with the final schedule established in partnership with the CFO.

Occasional travel and evening or weekend work may be required, particularly during audits, year-end close, major projects, or organizational events. The role is primarily office-based but may involve movement between indoor and outdoor facilities, exposure to Florida weather, and occasional lifting of up to 20 pounds.

## Submission Instructions *(read carefully)*

[Cooper Coleman](#) is leading this search on behalf of the East Coast Zoological Foundation. **To apply, please [visit this link](#) ([www.coopercoleman.com/current-searches](http://www.coopercoleman.com/current-searches)).** **All expressions of interest should be made only through the online application**, and all inquiries will be held in confidence.

A cover letter is not required with your initial application but is welcome to help us understand your fitness for and interest in this role during our initial evaluation. Candidates invited for interviews will be asked to provide a thoughtful letter of interest indicating their specific qualifications for the opportunity, desire to join ECZF, and connection to its mission.

*Cooper Coleman LLC is committed to providing equal employment opportunities to all qualified candidates and will refer candidates without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation or identity, age, ability, veteran status, or any legally protected basis.*

## EEO & Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion

East Coast Zoological Society of Florida, Inc., dba Brevard Zoo, is committed to providing equal employment opportunities to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, and gender identity), national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by applicable federal, state, or local law.

ECZF does not tolerate discrimination or harassment in any aspect of employment, including recruitment, hiring, promotion, compensation, benefits, training, transfer, termination, or any other terms and conditions of employment. Employees and applicants are encouraged to report any concerns regarding discrimination or harassment, and retaliation for reporting such concerns is strictly prohibited.

Brevard Zoo is committed to an inclusive environment where employees are encouraged to be their authentic selves, and values the diverse qualities, perspectives, and experiences of all individuals.

## Background Checks & Credentials Verification

Before sending your resume for this position, please read it over for accuracy. Cooper Coleman verifies its candidates' employment and academic credentials at the time of offer. ECZF conducts background checks and drug screening as conditions of employment. Required screenings must be completed before the successful candidate's start date.

## About Florida's Space Coast

Brevard County is located on Florida's Atlantic Coast, approximately 55 miles east of Orlando. The region is home to Port Canaveral, Kennedy Space Center, the Indian River Lagoon, Atlantic beaches, and a significant aerospace and technology sector. It offers coastal living with convenient access to Central Florida.

The Space Coast is home to Port Canaveral, Kennedy Space Center, the Indian River Lagoon, and numerous coastal communities. It offers a distinctive combination of professional opportunity, outdoor recreation, and connection to Florida's natural environment.

## Follow ECZF & Stay Connected



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## About Cooper Coleman

Cooper Coleman is a nationally ranked executive search firm partnering exclusively with nonprofit organizations, foundations, and cultural, research, and academic institutions. We move organizations forward by placing the right leaders in the right roles at the right time, and we help to strengthen management and fundraising capacity to amplify their mission and impact.



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