



Strategic Plan 2010 - 2015

Land Conservancy for Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox and Addington

Approved by the Board of Directors on June 9, 2010

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1. Introduction

What is a Strategic Plan?

The Strategic Plan is intended to express where the Land Conservancy wants to go, and how it will get there. The plan is intended to be a dynamic document, subject to revision and updating as new information and analysis of our progress and success dictate changes to the approaches being taken.

2. Mission and Vision

Mission Statement

The Land Conservancy's mission is to preserve and protect natural sites and landscapes in Kingston and Frontenac and Lennox and Addington Counties.

Guiding Vision

To create a Land Conservancy that people throughout Frontenac and Lennox and Addington Counties will recognize as a trustworthy and far-sighted organization, preserving and protecting natural sites and landscapes in this area. The communities will see value in our goal of protecting representative natural habitats, supporting biodiversity and connecting natural areas across the counties, and will respect efforts to encourage land stewardship through cooperation with other environmental organizations and support for landowners. The Land Conservancy will be seen as a key partner in protecting the ecological integrity of this part of Ontario.

3. Situation Analysis

The Land Conservancy celebrates its sixth birthday in June 2010. It has a strong Board and active Land Acquisition, Finance, and Mapping Committees. Membership has continued to climb during the years, though not yet reaching the 98 founding member number of 2004. It has the required Standards and Practices in place and an Assess Your Organization "audit" in 2009 by the Ontario Land Trust Alliance concluded that the organization should be "extremely proud" of its achievements to date.

The Land Conservancy owns two properties totaling 91.5 hectares and holds a conservation easement on a third property. In all, the Land Conservancy is now protecting 153.3 hectares of land in the area.

In 2009, the Land Conservancy partnered with the Community Foundation for Kingston and Area and established the endowed Natural Areas Protection Fund, with a goal of raising \$20,000 by 2011. This fund will provide grants for stewardship work. (Land Conservancy milestones are provided in Appendix A.)

3.1 *Organizational Description*

A. Key Features & Capabilities

The Land Conservancy provides a range of services and is capable of:

- Accepting and protecting donations of land
- Acquiring and protecting land through purchase for conservation purposes
- Accepting and sustaining land protection agreements (conservation easements)
- Providing access to charitable tax benefits, including Ecological Gifts receipts for donors
- Conducting and supporting land stewardship and education programs

All land and easement donations or purchases must meet the organization's acquisition criteria and be approved by the Board of Directors.

B. Location

The Land Conservancy's area of interest, Kingston, Frontenac County and Lennox and Addington County, is a geographically and demographically diverse region (See Appendix B).

C. Partner Organizations

The Land Conservancy's mission is to help preserve and protect the natural sites and landscapes of Kingston and Frontenac, Lennox and Addington Counties. A number of organizations are also pursuing donations of land and financial support, and the Land Conservancy will pursue strategic partnerships with those that complement its activities and fit within its mandate. The Board recognizes that such a cooperative approach not only benefits the larger community, but also allows the organization to expand its own capacity and reach.

Information about these partners can be found in Appendix C. In addition, there are several other parties with whom strong partnerships should be formed; see Appendix D.

D. Board of Directors

The Land Conservancy's board is strongly rooted in the local community, with members contributing a wide range of skills and experiences. Representatives are drawn from the area's business, education, health sciences and legal sectors. Most bring significant leadership experience with complementary community and conservation groups. This not only enhances managerial effectiveness, but also provides for a number of strategic partnership opportunities.

The organization draws strength from its all-volunteer structure. With no paid employees or board members, the Land Conservancy is united and driven solely by its people's passion for the regional environment and conservation issues. This dedication ensures a firm commitment to the group's mandate and mission.

The Land Conservancy has an 11-member Board of Directors, all of whom hold staggered two-year terms, and four of whom serve as officers of the corporation. Those officers are the president, vice president, secretary and treasurer. There are three permanent committees (Land Acquisition Committee, Finance Committee, Mapping Committee) in addition to ad hoc committees appointed by the Board as needed. Recognizing the importance and potential impact of its decisions, the Board may seek specialized advice for each transaction to supplement the strengths its members bring to the decision-making process. The Land Conservancy has an established relationship with a solicitor who has agreed to handle its work on a pro bono basis with the Land Conservancy only having to pay disbursement costs.

Additional information on governance can be found in Appendix E and in the LC-KFLA Bylaws.

E. What we offer to the community

The Land Conservancy offers the following value proposition for each stakeholder group:

Landowners: The Land Conservancy provides landowners with flexible long-term options for land preservation and protection that enable them to fulfill their wishes to protect their property in the long term and to access tax advantages, defend local attachments and, in some cases, reap immediate financial benefit while maintaining personal ties to the land. As a young and growing organization, the Land Conservancy is not subject to the same capacity limitations as some of the area's more established

organizations. Additionally, its focus on areas other than watersheds and wetlands meets the needs of a wider range of potential land donors.

Financial Donors: The Land Conservancy provides donors with the opportunity to contribute to a credible, far-sighted conservation organization that works independently of government programming and respects the wishes of its landowning donors and collaborates effectively with like-minded organizations. .

Conservation Partners: The Land Conservancy works with its local conservation partner groups to preserve natural environment corridors, and more isolated natural habitats, contributing to the integrity of the local ecosystem. It also provides an opportunity for local residents to protect green spaces.

Communities of Kingston and Frontenac, Lennox and Addington: The Land Conservancy protects natural habitat that supports the natural biodiversity of the region.

F. Long-term Growth Strategy

The Land Conservancy's long-term growth strategy is rooted in the following principles:

- Sustainable and manageable growth of property acquisitions.
- Commitment to sound financial practices.
- Development of a credible and respected reputation within the community and among members, volunteers and supporters.
- Development of strategic and mutually beneficial partnerships with individuals and organizations that may enhance the Land Conservancy's capacity.

3.2 Financial

A. Sources of Income

The Land Conservancy relies on four sources of revenue:

Memberships: As a volunteer-driven organization, ensuring a thriving membership is essential to the financial stability and success of the Land Conservancy.

Donations: Support for the Land Conservancy's ongoing operations will largely come from donations from individuals, private organizations, and foundations. The Land Conservancy will focus on obtaining land of appropriate ecological significance as determined by its acquisition criteria.

Fundraising: Fundraising activities are important both for the money they raise and the publicity they generate. The funds raised this way are expected to be quite small initially, given the organization capacity requirements of fundraising drives, but should grow significantly in the mid- and long- terms.

Grants: Grants have the potential to provide the Land Conservancy with working capital to support ongoing programs and organizational capacity development. Many private foundations and grantors will not provide financial support for land acquisition, although there are exceptions such as the EJLB Foundation. Past and potential future funders include organizations such as HIVA , TD Canada Trust Friend's of the Environment, the Community Foundation for Kingston and Area, and Frontenac and Lennox and Addington Stewardship Councils. The Ontario Trillium Foundation may be an additional source of grant funding.

Investment Income: The Land Conservancy has held and may hold from time to time various income-producing investments.

B. Expenses

The Land Conservancy's expenses include:

Land Acquisition:

Survey costs, appraisal fees, legal fees, etc.

Property Management: costs associated with preparation of management documents such as the Baseline Documentation Reports, Stewardship Plans, Forest Management Plans (e.g., photographs, maps, copying, binding, etc.).

Stewardship: property monitoring, maintenance, and habitat restoration.

Insurance: The Land Conservancy must obtain both general liability and directors & officers insurance for the organization. New properties will increase the cost of insurance due to the requirement to enhance liability and damage coverage.

Taxes: The taxes paid on each property represent an on-going mandatory expense for the Land Conservancy. Some lands may be eligible for a 75% reduction in taxes, and some lands may be tax-exempt under the Conservation Land Tax Incentive Program. .

Administration: General administrative fees may relate to overhead expenses, banking fees, legal and professional fees, Annual General Meeting expenses, and fundraising and development. Also included are expenses for knowledge-capital acquisition, such as conference attendance and continuing education for board members and active volunteers.

4. Goals and Objectives

Goals and Objectives

Implementation of the goals and objectives of the Land Conservancy is intended to result in maintenance or restoration of the area's ecological integrity.

The Land Conservancy's Goals

1. To continue to conserve natural landscapes by securing additional properties/easements.
2. Monitor and manage Land Conservancy lands owned or under protection so as to maintain or restore ecological integrity.
3. Ensure a fiscally sound and well-managed Land Conservancy organization, which respects the requirements of Canadian standards and practices for land trusts.
4. Build and maintain the Land Conservancy membership and volunteer base, through recruitment, training and good management.
5. Increase our public profile and stimulate public interest and engagement in land conservation actions.

Objectives in Support of Goals

GOAL 1: To conserve natural landscapes.

Overall objectives: To maintain the mixed rural and natural character of the area. To maintain functional core protected areas, linkages, corridors, and buffers, with particular concern for landscape-scale linkages between Algonquin and the Adirondacks and along The Land Between. To maintain existing (or restore degraded) areas of land and water to as natural a state as possible. To promote compatible land uses in the area surrounding and adjacent to Land Conservancy properties and promote sustainable use in the ecosystem. To conserve ecosystem biodiversity at all levels, including the landscape or community, population, species and genetic levels. To

conserve rare and/or representative habitats, and protect rare or threatened species. To conserve and restore linkages and connections between habitat fragments.

Specific objectives for 2010 to 2015:

1.1 Protect at least 300 hectares by the end of 2015, through a combination of land and easement donations, and land purchase. We will also attempt to protect natural heritage through partnerships such as stewardship agreements. We will solicit donations through means such as increasing our public profile (see Goal 5), and will initiate at least one fundraising campaign.

1.2 Develop a Natural Heritage Action Plan. This plan would identify core areas, linkages, corridors, and buffers of primary interest for acquisition. This will be accomplished by using existing municipal and agency documents (e.g., CRCA's Natural Heritage Study and NCC's Blueprint) and ongoing provincial efforts (e.g., Site District 6E-15). In addition, we will work with the Mapping Committee to identify other areas in our region that are adjacent to or will complement current protected areas

1.3 Use the land acquisition criteria and policies to respond to unsolicited offers of donations of land or conservation easements, as identified in the Natural Heritage Action Plan.

1.4 Establish strategies for raising acquisition support funds for new projects. This will be initiated in the establishment of a Fundraising Committee, which will develop a Fundraising Plan of Action, which will include strategies for acquiring lands on short notice.

Goal 2. Monitor and manage Land Conservancy lands.

Overall objectives: To maintain natural processes on Land Conservancy properties, where possible, including wildfire. To better understand and, where feasible, manage exotic species. To promote ecosystem restoration wherever feasible.

Specific objectives for 2010 to 2015:

2.1 Have baseline reports and management plans in place for every LC property or conservation easement within one year of acquisition, including a consistent framework for annual review to ensure they are updated with any new relevant issues.

2.2 Raise adequate funds by the end of 2011 (\$ 20,000) to ensure that Stewardship Fund Endowment partnership with the Community Foundation for Kingston and Area can be matched under the OLTA and Community Foundations of Canada project. This fund will generate a grant every year for use on stewardship activities.

2.3 Develop a Property Management Team for each Land Conservancy property and easement.

2.4 Use the Monitoring Policy guide to implement a system of monitoring specific for each of the Land Conservancy properties or easements.

Goal 3: Ensure a fiscally sound and well-managed Land Conservancy organization.

Overall objectives: As the well-being of the Land Conservancy depends on strong and careful organizational fiscal management, our objective is to draw on the experience and knowledge of our members, and to seek new members that can further strengthen our Board. The Land Conservancy will respect the requirements of Canadian standards and practices for land trusts.

Specific objectives for 2010 to 2015:

3.1 Develop a diversity of funding sources sufficient to sustain core operations, with a target mix for the operating budget of 1/3 grants, 1/3 memberships & donations, and 1/3 other sources (e.g., fundraising, investments, etc.) by end of 2015.

3.2 Manage operating and acquisition funds to produce optimum income on an ongoing basis.

3.3 Maintain a system of financial monitoring, which includes Board approval of an annual budget and ongoing tracking of income and expenditures with reporting at each Board meeting.

3.4 Develop a system of performance measures for tracking organizational effectiveness including progress on the objectives of this Strategic Plan, and report on these measures annually (as part of the annual report presented at the AGM).

3.5 Complete all the high and medium priority recommendations in the Assess Your Organization report.

3.6 Have a succession plan for the Board. Establish a Sub-committee in 2010 to develop this plan.

Goal 4: Build and maintain the Land Conservancy membership and volunteer base, through recruitment, training and good management.

Overall objectives: As the well-being of the Land Conservancy depends on a strong membership, our objective is to continue to expand membership and to educate new and continuing members.

Specific objectives for 2010 to 2015:

4.1 Build a membership base of 110 by the end of 2015, with interim targets set by the Board at the beginning of each year. Increase the diversity of ages, and home locations for new members, so that at least 20% of members live in a rural area outside Kingston.

4.2 Recruit 10 new volunteers for committees, property management and special projects.

4.3 Communicate with members at least 2 times per year, or when news worthy accomplishments are completed. Provide opportunities for members to participate in special events and attend educational presentations.

Goal 5: Increase our public profile, stimulate public interest and engagement in land conservation actions.

Overall objectives: To support large-scale planning processes through sharing information, as a basis for informed planning decisions, and to assist in innovative and practical local implementation of provincial policy statements. To encourage compatible and sustainable use and development within our area of interest. To gain public support of and commitment to the maintenance of Land Conservancy properties in as natural a state as possible. To develop a strategy for broadening efforts at

informing and educating all ecosystem stakeholders. To support and encourage private stewardship efforts committed to conservation of natural resources.

Specific objectives for 2010 to 2015:

5.1 Maintain effective relations with local media and seek media exposure at least one to two times each year.

5.2 Develop a fully-developed web site that offers visitors information about our work and the region, and provides links to partners, and update the website at least twice annually.

5.3 Build strong relationships with other local organizations, including lake associations, through means such as attendance at AGMs, joint projects, sharing our display at events, etc.

5.4 Begin to pro-actively contact targeted landowners to encourage stewardship, conservation easements, or land donations.

5.5 Strengthen relationships with municipalities and conservation partners, and develop or cooperate in joint conservation projects with these or other conservation organizations (e.g., Kingston Field Naturalists or Friends of the Salmon River).