

Introduction

The Land Conservancy for Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox & Addington became a federally incorporated charity on June 23, 2004.

We are an all-volunteer regional land trust complementing the work of international, national, regional, and local conservation-minded organizations and residents.

The Kingston region has unique ecological features whose significance has been recognized, internationally, with the UNESCO designation of the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve, and the cross-border work of the Algonquin to Adirondacks Collaborative; nationally, with the Nature Conservancy of Canada declaring the Arch a priority area for conservation actions; and, regionally, with The Land Between's research on the area where the Canadian shield intersects with the St. Lawrence Lowlands. This five-year strategic plan covers 2023 – 2027. Key objectives remain as they were in the 2016 – 2020 plan:

- Conserve more land for nature
- Raise funds to support land acquisition and stewardship
- Increase organizational strength.

The years of the pandemic, 2020 – 2022, delayed work on the strategic plan. We are grateful to Bill Beattie, Clarity Leadership Group, for volunteering to get us back on track and guide us through this strategic planning process.

Mission

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

Guiding Vision

To create a Land Conservancy that people throughout Frontenac and Lennox & 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 significant 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.

The Land Conservancy adheres to the [Canadian Land Trust Standards and Practices](#).

Overview – 2016 – 2022

2015 baseline	2016–2020 strategic plan goals	2022 status
6 owned reserves	-	11 owned reserves
2 conservation easements	-	2 conservation easements
219 hectares protected	500 hectares protected	452 hectares protected
Endowed funds - \$28,000	Endowed funds - \$84,000	Endowed funds - \$160,000
123 members	200 members	173 members

What we do

We work with people to help them clarify and achieve their land conservation goals.

The Land Conservancy provides a range of services to assist landowners who want to conserve the natural values of their property. We:

- accept and protect conservation land acquired through donation, purchase, or by way of a conservation easement
- monitor conservation easements
- provide access to charitable tax benefits, including completing Ecological Gift applications when appropriate
- conduct and support land stewardship and education programs.

We are committed to taking good care of conservation lands that have been entrusted to us, in perpetuity.

Our efforts include building awareness of the importance of setting aside land for nature to preserve species habitats, to support species survival, and to mitigate the negative effects of climate change.

The Land Conservancy welcomes volunteers to assist with land stewardship, donations, and bequests to support its work.

Strategic Goals Survey

In February 2021, we sent out a survey to a cross-section of groups and individuals active on environmental issues and natural heritage protection asking for guidance on what goals the Land Conservancy should set for the next five years. We received 59 replies.

- 80% advised us to continue acquiring land; 20% advised us to stop growing
- 40% said do not open properties to public use; 44% said acquire a new property for public use; 16% said open properties to the public
- 56% said habitat loss was the greatest threat to nature; 31% said it was climate change.

Strategic Plan – Goals for the next five years

We decided to continue to set aside land for nature only and focus public access on the Depot Creek Nature Reserve which is our public use property. We hope to secure another reserve that is suitable for public use in the next five years, preferably in Lennox & Addington County.

We have opted for aspirational goals – to be ambitious.

By the end of 2027, we want to:

Goal: Have 800 hectares of land under protection

How we will get there:

- Be ready to respond to expressions of interest from landowners promptly
- Have funds reserved for land acquisition costs and set aside in the Natural Areas Protection Fund to cover the stewardship costs for new reserves
- Identify and mentor members and supporters who could take on the role as a site lead on new sites or take over a site when a site lead retires
- Meet with lawyers, tax advisors, financial planners, and real estate agents to provide information on land conservation options and the benefits to their clients of land gifts, part-gift/part-sale, and bequests.

Goal: Increase membership to 250

How we will get there:

- Add value to membership by inviting members to special nature events
- Have a membership drive
- Continue to build community awareness and support for our land conservation efforts through speaking engagements and regular social media posts

Goal: Be ready to respond to opportunities – build up a land acquisition financial reserve

How we will get there:

- Strengthen our relationship with our 12 top champion donors (donated over \$5,000 since 2016) and increase the number of champions to 24
- Establish a legacy donor circle to encourage bequests
- Identify and pursue grant opportunities to assist with land acquisition costs
- Explore partnerships with local businesses to build community awareness and financial support.

Goal: Maintain a strong, active, and skilled Board of Directors

How we will get there:

- Build committee depth by inviting more participation from non-Board members to the Land Acquisition Committee, Communications and Development Committee, and Mapping Committee
- Recruit Board members to broaden the skills on the Board, particularly with respect to finance, fundraising, and communications. Our Board has always had members with excellent field naturalist skills. We need to maintain this capacity.

- Offer training opportunities through the Ontario Land Trust Alliance and other groups to build skills and confidence among new board members
- Offer training opportunities to Land Acquisition Committee members, for example on how to approach landowners, use of navigation tools, wilderness emergency response
- Celebrate the achievements of this all-volunteer group and make sure others know that the work is fun and fulfilling.

Conclusion

The Land Conservancy has a dedicated group of volunteers who are passionate about conserving habitats in this region. We have the expertise to double the land under our care over the next five years. We believe that we can count on loyal members, donors, and new supporters to contribute to acquisitions when the time comes, and volunteers to be new site leads.

We all recognize the need to conserve spaces for nature.

We are optimistic about our capacity to continue to build this regional land trust.

Appendix A – Status Report 2016 – 2022

\$1,249,000 -- Appraised value of properties owned by the Land Conservancy, November 2022.

\$160,000 – funds endowed in the Natural Areas Protection Fund with the Community Foundation for Kingston & Area. The standard practice is to set aside permanently a reasonable amount of money for the long-term stewardship of any acquired property, to cover expenses such as property taxes, insurance, monitoring, and maintenance. We use 10% of the property's appraised value as a starting point and increase the percentage for a property that has more management challenges. For a conservation easement, where our responsibilities relate to monitoring not ownership, we endow at least \$5,000.

\$??? Operating expenses – 2022

\$??? Property taxes - 2022

Grants and Fundraising

The 2016-2020 strategic plan set a \$100,000 fundraising goal. With the opportunity to secure an 80-hectare property through a part donation, part purchase arrangement, we undertook a fundraising campaign beginning in August 2018 with a \$250,000 goal. We reached \$254,000 and were able to secure the property and pay the stewardship endowment for three other property donations.

We received **land conservation grants totalling \$43,500** from the Natural Heritage Conservation Program and the Greenlands Conservation Partnership Program to cover land acquisition costs, such as survey, appraisals, and legal fees, for four of the five properties acquired between 2016 and 2022.

We also received **grants totalling \$52,000** to prepare a Natural Heritage Plan (Ontario Trillium Foundation); to develop a Passport to Nature program (Nature Canada, The Gosling Foundation, and Community Foundation for Kingston & Area); to host workshops on Canadian tax rules for American landowners (Ontario Land Trust Alliance); and to hire a summer student to complete her master's course requirements with field work and report writing (Eco Canada Co-op program and The Gosling Foundation).

Awards

Cataraqui Conservation Foundation, Conservation Stewardship Award (2017)

Publications

- Depot Creek Nature Reserve card with walking trails map
- "We need nature" booklet with natural heritage information about the region and maps
- "Passport to Nature – Join us outside" with outdoor activities to join

- [“A Natural Heritage Plan for the Land Conservancy for Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox and Addington”](#) with a land acquisition strategy
- “Unique Nature” 3-part email series available from our website.

Communications

During the last several years, we have worked hard to strengthen our communications capacity. Sending out information to members and supporters is now organized through a data base and much less time consuming than it used to be. Posting on social media has become routine and we are seeing steady increases in followers.

- Facebook = 820
- LinkedIn = 45
- Instagram = 286.

This social media presence has helped us promote events and drawn people to outdoor activities (pre-COVID) and online webinars. We have express permission to send emails to **255** email address in addition to emails to members and donors.

Hosted events

- Eight Passport to Nature events, 2019
- Webinars
 - World Migratory Bird Day, May 2020
 - International Trails Day, June 2020
 - Winter Birds, January 2021
 - Attract Nature to Your Yard, March 2021
 - Turtles of Kingston, May 2021
 - Winter Birds, January 2022

Speaking invitations

- 14 Island and Mink Lake Association Annual Meeting, August 2017
- Rotary Club of Kingston, August 2021

Event Displays

2017

- Kingston Symphony – March
- K & P Trail opening – June
- Sydenham Lakes & Trails Festival, July
- Friends of the Napanee – September

2018

- Three workshops with American Friends of Canadian Land Trusts – (1) for accountants, lawyers, financial advisors and (2) for property owners
- Table at Friends of the Salmon River AGM

2019

- Table at Friends of the Salmon River AGM

Student Projects

- Rotman School of Business – database and property fact sheets (November 2016)
- Fleming College
 - Best practices for Bobolink, Eastern Meadowlark, DCNR (2015)
 - Baseline Documentation Report, video, Fourth Lake Nature Reserve (2017)
 - Volunteer Monitoring Manual (2018)
- Queen’s University, Engineering – bridge options, Depot Creek Nature Reserve (2018)
- Queen’s University, Smith School of Business – Professor Dacin, case study (2020)
- Queen’s University, Smith School of Business – ExMBA student on carbon offsets (2020)
- Queen’s University Pro Bono Law (2021)
 - Trespass on Conservation Lands
 - Natural Burials
- Trent University Placement Student, Bio-environmental Monitoring and Assessment (2021)

Conservation Partnerships

- Kingston Field Naturalists, Sylvester-Gallagher Nature Reserve (2018)
- Passport to Nature 2019 promoted events led by nine other local conservation-minded organizations
- Town of Greater Napanee, Davy property transfer to Town (November 2022)