

Bethlehem Land Trust
Strategic Plan
3-year plan
May 2014

MISSION STATEMENT

To permanently protect and preserve local farmland, fields, forests, and wetlands through acquisition or easement; to conserve the natural, scenic, and historic resources of these properties and educate the public about them; and, where feasible, to provide access for their enjoyment by the community at large.

STRATEGIC GOALS

Goal #1: To Benefit the Community Through Effective Conservation of Agricultural, Scenic, and Environmentally Sensitive Land

Actions:

- 1a) Develop land acquisition guidelines—criteria for evaluating potential acquisitions and donations (done, Spring 2011!)
- 1b) Regularly update a property wish list—identify valuable properties and potential donors
 - Focus on donation & easement or bargain sale properties
 - Select one to pursue
- 1c) Utilize the communication and fundraising tools to be developed under Goal #3

Goal #2: To Ensure and Enhance Stewardship of Existing Properties and Future Acquisitions

Actions:

- 2a) Review and update monitoring guidelines
- 2b) Enlist non-board volunteers
- 2c) Create a stewardship budget
- 2d) Develop stewardship fee guidelines (for easements)
- 2e) Implement regular stewardship practices

Goal #3: To Expand Visibility, Broaden Constituency, and Strengthen Fiscal Position

Actions:

- 3a) Identify and utilize promotional opportunities
 - Establish an attainable balance of press releases, events, and information sessions
 - Develop and participate in community activities to promote our name and purpose (e.g. sponsorship, etc.)
- 3b) Increase and Strengthen membership among the community
 - Create and define levels of membership (various increments of support)
 - Create and define benefits of membership (e.g. picnic, newsletter, discount on table at dinner/auction)
 - Reach out to neighbors who may be especially valuable
 - Develop volunteer opportunities and encourage participation
- 3c) Improve and invite public access
 - Communicate through signage and website
 - Enhance/maintain trails
- 3d) Create an effective website
- 3e) Increase our presence on the radar of official town business
 - Involve/inform local government in BLT

3f) Effectively communicate preservation/conservation options and benefits with potential donors and the community at large

- Develop guidelines and create a presentation package for donor communication—to enable clear and consistent communication
- Develop processes and materials that educate the public about our natural resources

3g) Develop fund-raising guidelines

3h) Identify fund-raising opportunities and mechanisms

- Continue the annual dinner/auction
- Evaluate and implement others (e.g. host 2 social informational sessions annually)

Goal #4: To Operate According to Professional and Legal Conventions

Actions:

4a) Define and build an effective Board of Directors

- Follow conventional wisdom to include the "four W's" (workers, worriers, wealthy, wise) on the Board
- Identify skills needed in new Board members and recruit specific talents (reach out specifically to workers and wealthy)
- Review by-laws (esp. terms) and adjust if necessary
- Educate Board members on all aspects of good land trust management.
- Appoint Board members to take on specific responsibilities
- Establish an Advisory Council to supplement or provide skills and knowledge not possessed by Board of Directors

4b) Have fiscal clarity

- Commission conventional Financial Statements
- Conduct an audit of the books every five years

- 4c) Adhere to LTA (Land Trust Alliance) Standards and Practices
- 4d) Assess progress and create an Action Plan annually in January
- 4e) Review Strategic Plan at beginning of every third year (in January Board Meeting) and implement changes as needed
- 4f) Develop, maintain, and learn through communication with other land trusts—neighboring, but also especially effective Trusts regardless of locale