

Bethlehem Land Trust Land Acquisition Criteria

June 2011

Bethlehem Land Trust 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.

Land Acquisition Criteria: The Board of Directors will use the following criteria when evaluating the acquisition or conveyance of specific property.

"A-Level" Desirable Attributes, at least one of which must be present:

- Contiguity with existing protected open space or greenbelts (of any ownership).
- Presence of, or potential for, public access and recreational value.
- Contiguity with other desirable and potentially obtainable—but not currently preserved—property.
- Wetland or watercourse.
- Native biodiversity; habitat for plant or animal species classified by the state or federal government as rare, endangered, or threatened.

"B-Level" Desirable Attributes, any of which will be considered an enhancement:

- Specific educational, scenic, historic, or archeological value.
- Enhances the overall presence of the BLT among Bethlehem residents and the Land Trust community at large.
- Vistas, open (non-forested), or agricultural land.
- Woodland or forestry value.

Feasibility factors that must be assessed with positive conclusion.

- _____ Cost of land and fundraising considerations.
- _____ Risk or liability factors (public safety, free of contamination).
- _____ Can the property be properly maintained by the BLT: Is there a stewardship endowment included; what are the short- and long-term commitments required?
- _____ Title, survey, and related documentation be in order: Donor to provide unless stipulated otherwise.
- _____ In the event there is a potential donation of out-of-town property: the conveyance must stipulate the property may be resold by the BLT. A possible exception is property adjacent to the Bethlehem town line and contiguous with currently or potentially preserved open space, which may be deemed desirable for the BLT to retain.