



KAWARTHA LAND TRUST

Protecting the land you love.

Strategic Plan 2016 – 2020

Approved November 2016

INTRODUCTION

The Kawartha Land Trust (KLT) is a non-governmental organization and registered charity dedicated to conserving the natural environment and enhancing quality of life in the Kawarthas. We do this by accepting donations of ecologically-significant lands and/or interests in lands and the connections between them, and engaging the community in support of this work to ensure these lands are cared for, in perpetuity.

Established in 2001, KLT has evolved into a robust and dynamic organization with a strong regional presence. KLT's work is focused on private land conservation, and complements the mandates and activities of other organizations and agencies in the area, including municipal, provincial and federal governments, conservation authorities, and other NGOs.

Conservation in the Kawarthas matters deeply to people who live in the region and beyond, and is becoming increasingly important in light of trends already in progress and on the horizon. KLT is a critical part of the solution, and the only non-government land conservation entity in the region.

Land in the Kawarthas will be under threat in the coming years. Local and regional growth projections such as those in the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe demonstrate that the development demand for land in the Kawartha region will be increasing.

At the same time two other factors are at play. First, we know that more and more people are coming to appreciate this landscape – the historic prairies, the shorelines, and the uniqueness of the transitional “Land Between” geography. People also understand the importance of protecting and connecting areas to afford corridors for wildlife and its contribution to biodiversity and species habitats.

Secondly, we know that due to current demographics, the next few years will see the largest inter-generational transfer of land and societal wealth ever seen.

These factors – regional growth, ecological awareness, and transfer of wealth – have come together to present a time-sensitive opportunity for KLT: now is the time to reach out to the community, building on our achievements to date and secure donations of land, money and time that will put the Kawartha Land Trust on a strong financial footing and protect these lands, their features and values in perpetuity.

As of September 2016, KLT protects 11 properties, comprising 1230 hectares (3040 acres) of important and diverse types of land. Six of these properties, totalling 952 hectares (2352 acres) were donations of land and are now owned by

KLT (fee simple). The additional five properties, 278 hectares (688 acres) have conservation agreements (easements) on title.

KLT relies on a large volunteer base of committed experts, community leaders, and a small staff team to accomplish its land securement and stewardship role in the community.

Our VISION

We envision a future where the Kawartha Region is characterized by natural spaces and connections that support healthy and representative ecosystems and landscapes. This deeply-connected landscape is founded on a mix of privately and publicly-protected lands, private land stewardship and a supportive policy framework.

Our MISSION

Our mission is “*caring for lands entrusted to us and helping others protect the land they love in the Kawarthas.*” By fulfilling our mission, we desire and expect that KLT will be recognized and trusted as a leader in conservation in the Kawarthas and will actively work with others to achieve our vision.

Our PRINCIPLES that we will operate by

- We complement the work of other conservation entities and organizations
- We value and strive to maintain donor confidence and volunteer engagement
- We value transparency, ethical practice, high service standards and accountability at all levels of our organization
- We are responsive, inclusive and collaborative, seeking and providing opportunities for a broad range of individuals and groups to join and support our conservation work
- We achieve our mission primarily through land donation and conservation agreements rather than through the purchase of property

OBJECTIVES

Our strategic objectives focus on our core activities – securing and stewarding lands – and the supporting functions of community engagement, fund development and organizational excellence that enable those outcomes. We have identified five objectives that will guide the organization over the next four years, helping to realize our vision for the future and deliver on our mission.

1. Protect important ecological sites and connecting lands

- Develop, implement and communicate a Securement Strategy by December 31, 2016, that:
 - o sets an objective of securing at least one new property per year
 - o adopts both proactive and reactive approaches to securement
 - o enables shorter-term approaches to conservation where they may reasonably lead to longer-term securement
 - o applies ecological and related criteria and methods to prioritize and rank securement opportunities
- work with other conservation partners to build collaborative and efficient securement approaches and projects
- work to enhance the broad policy framework and practices to support securement within and affecting the Kawartha region.

2. Ensure excellence in stewardship of KLT lands

- Develop policies for vegetation management, invasive species management and endangered species by end 2017
- develop policy for KLT involvement in stewardship activities and trails on non-KLT (i.e. non-secured) properties by end 2017
- Rationalize approach to public access to our properties by end 2017
- review and adjust the stewardship program to ensure effective delivery and to maximize volunteer engagement and longevity by end 2017
 - o ensure that any stewardship initiatives undertaken are consistent with KLT's capacity to deliver on a sustainable basis and with excellence
 - o develop organizational capacity to deliver through acquisition of appropriate equipment, supplies and storage facilities
- Work with the Ontario Land Trust Alliance (OLTA) to develop and implement a monitoring standard for conservation agreement properties by end of 2017

- develop and implement interim and long-term stewardship plans for Boyd Island and all other properties by end 2017

3. Raise funds to support land securement and stewardship

- continue to explore means of diversifying and strengthening funding sources
- develop and implement a donor management strategy by end 2017
 - o review our donor recognition program by end 2016
- double the number of legacy gifts from 12 to 24 by 2020
 - o develop a Legacy/Bequests outreach program
- double the number and average amount of annual gifts from 300 donors averaging \$150/year to 600 donors averaging \$300/year by 2020
- secure 3 new multi-year grants from foundations by 2020
- continue to look for government grant opportunities in line with KLT's mission

4. Engage the Kawartha community

- ensure varied and accessible opportunities for community engagement to build awareness and encourage volunteerism, support and land securement
- review and update the KLT Communication Strategy by end January 2017, including focus on enhanced public web presence
- continue to work with partners, volunteer groups, conservation organizations, academic institutions, all levels of government and the private sector
- rationalize and formalize partnerships and collaborative arrangements (e.g., through MOUs), taking into account risks to/benefits for KLT
- continue building our “community of interest” (increase number of contacts in our contact database by 10% per year)

5. Increase organizational strength

- conduct a high-level risk assessment by end of 2016
- develop an information management strategy by end of 2017 to focus information collection, management and security
 - o implement approved records management policy
- review KLT governance model including membership and adjust as necessary to ensure KLT is accountable to the community it serves by end 2017

- develop service standards to improve customer service by end 2017
- develop a staffing and succession plan that addresses expected future needs and contingencies by March 2017
- develop a volunteer recruitment, retention and recognition program by July 2017
 - o identify and prioritize skills and tasks to have volunteers support the professional work of the organization
 - o identify volunteers who can be trained to help with major gifts/leadership giving/ landowners.

IMPLEMENTATION

Within two months of approval of this plan by the KLT Board of Directors, an implementation plan with timelines, roles and responsibilities and metrics will be developed by KLT staff in consultation with committees and Board.

Progress on the implementation of the plan will be reported to the KLT Board of Directors quarterly.

NOTES ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS PLAN

This strategic plan was developed through a facilitated workshop attended by members of the KLT Board of Directors, staff, committee chairs and other volunteers. The insights captured through that process were refined through additional consultation with others both internal and external to the organization, including staff, committees, advisors and donors.

As part of the planning process an organizational assessment was completed and helped guide the objectives set out in this plan.

This strategic plan builds on the 2012-15 strategic plan, recognizing the progress made over the previous planning period and looking forward to the challenges and opportunities ahead. It sets out five key objectives for the organization to continue our growth and evolution over the next four years.