



KAWARTHA LAND TRUST

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# Kawartha Land Trust (KLT) Strategic Planning Terms of Reference: Habitat & Species Stewardship

## Why Habitat and Species Stewardship?

While the Kawarthas have a relatively high amount of natural cover compared to other parts of Ontario, threats to certain habitats and species remain. The current health of our ecosystems can be expressed in broad terms by the percent of forest and wetland cover across the landscape. We can estimate forest cover and wetland cover in the KLT service area using numbers calculated in 2018 by the Kawartha Region Conservation Authority and Otonabee Region Conservation Authority. The watersheds protected by these two conservation authorities cover 50% of KLT's service area.

Forest cover is high, averaging approximately 37% across the two watersheds. This is above the minimum 30% recommended by Environment Canada. Wetland cover, at 14%, is also above the minimum 10% that Environment Canada suggests.

These percentages, and the important natural features and processes they represent, are vulnerable to pressures from population increase, development, and unsustainable land management. We see every day how development continues despite regulations, particularly with features like our dwindling natural shoreline.

Certain natural features of importance have received government designation, such as provincially significant wetland and Area of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI). However, in many cases, legislation is all that protects these features.

It's not just the habitat features that need our attention. In the Kawarthas, the Natural Heritage Information Centre reports observations of 33 species that are listed by the federal or provincial governments as Special Concern, Threatened, or Endangered. According to government sites, an additional 21 species at risk have a confirmed or probable range that covers at least part of KLT's service area. KLT can impact the recovery of species at risk across the Kawarthas, and stop species that are not listed from becoming a conservation concern. Species of cultural importance to Williams Treaty First Nations and other Indigenous communities are also at risk.



## **KLT's Background with Habitat and Species Stewardship**

- KLT securement strategies and tools identify properties with designated features, intact habitat, and species at risk (SAR) as higher priorities than properties without these features.
- KLT land stewardship looks for species of conservation importance on our properties and plans management around these species.
- We work with partner organizations to identify rare or at-risk features on the landscape and contribute to research and stewardship.
- Landowner support programs inform landowners about the species and habitats on their property and the importance of their conservation. KLT supports landowners in planning and finding support for stewardship projects on their property.
- KLT communications and events celebrate and inform our audience about the species and habitats protected through our work.

## **Examples from the Sector**

[NCC conservation process](#)

[Couchiching Conservancy](#)

[Canadian Land Trust partnership to protect shoreline](#)

[U.S. land trust restoring rare ecological communities](#)

## **Your Participation**

- We want your expertise and vision to plan what impact we can have on habitat and species stewardship in the next eight years
- We want you to be bold and think creatively.
- We expect everyone to listen deeply. A simple protocol for careful listening and a process for making decisions will be presented by a facilitator at the first meeting of each group.
- You are not required to attend all meetings and can attend meetings for other strategies as you like. However, any decisions made at meetings where you are not present need to be considered final and will not be revisited due to absence.
- We expect participants to also help research their topic, possibly interviewing key informants who cannot participate in the meeting. A basic interview tool and instructions will be provided.
- We request that everyone read the information circulated in preparation for the meeting and participate in discussions.



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## Outcome

The working group will create a recommendation to the KLT Board, related to how a habitat and species stewardship approach will help us achieve our strategic objectives. It will address the following:

- Define the strategy. Include a metric that indicates what impact on habitat and species stewardship KLT will have accomplished by 2030.
- Describe eight years of tactics that KLT might use to best implement the strategy.
- Use the “KLT Toolkit” to inform the tactics. Propose new tools if required.
- Connect the tactics to progress toward KLT’s strategic objectives. Often a tactic will help achieve multiple strategic objectives.

## Milestones

Mid-May: First meeting

Late June: Draft circulated to the Board

October: Wrap-up

## Meetings

The Committee will meet bi-weekly starting mid-May and end in October. Meetings will be held in person in the KLT boardroom with an option to attend virtually if needed.

The designated KLT staff member will maintain written notes of all meetings, which will be shared with members of the Committee, KLT staff, Board members and other involved strategic planning committees and advisors.

## Resources

The Committee will receive the necessary resources from the KLT to fulfil its mandate, including administrative support from the designated KLT staff member and technical expertise from the



Director of Community Conservation and/or Executive Director.

## **KLT Toolkit**

When considering how we will create impact by enacting a habitat and species stewardship strategy, consider the following toolkit.

### **Permanent Protection**

We become owners of land to protect it forever against development. Donations of land and acquiring rights on land (CEAs) are major tools. Purchasing land is used to protect pieces of critical importance.

### **Land Stewardship**

We manage our lands to minimize impact, enhance nature, and invite the public to experience nature. We work with other conservation organizations to steward and restore their protected land.

### **Volunteers**

People power our impact. Boots in the mud or behind the scenes, our impact is because of the contributions of people who love the land.

### **Community Conservation**

Finding synergy between land protection and the needs of the community can make conservation projects relevant to more people and grow our impact. This can be achieved by listening and responding to the needs of the community.

### **Support Landowners**

Landowners will decide the future of our landscape. Our Partners in Conservation program thanks them for the care they take of their lands and helps them to take on stewardship and restoration projects.

### **Fundraising**

We bring in government investments in conservation to this region and increase conservation-minded philanthropical efforts. Individuals are inspired to donate because of their connections to our cause.

### **Communication**

We have a voice that can inspire and educate people on why land is worth protecting.

### **Partnerships**

We work with others with skills in social services, education, research, technology, environment, agriculture, and business to expand the impact of our land conservation efforts.



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## **Back End**

Good governance, technology, and systems are all critical enablers of our work.

