



Protecting the **land we love** for a healthy and sustainable future.



KAWARTHA LAND TRUST

Strategic Plan
2023–2030

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We respectfully acknowledge that Kawartha Land Trust is located within Treaty 20 Michi Saagiig Anishnaabeg territory on the traditional homelands and territory of the Michi Saagiig and Chippewa Nations, collectively known as the Williams Treaties First Nations.

We offer our gratitude to First Nations for their care for and teachings about our Earth and our relationship to it. Kawartha Land Trust strives to honour these teachings through stewardship, respect for the land we protect, and expanded collaboration with Williams Treaties First Nations and other Indigenous peoples.





Vision

Abundant natural and productive lands that are embraced, protected, and conserved by the people of the Kawarthas to sustain and enrich life.

Mission

Caring for lands entrusted to us and helping others protect the land they love in the Kawarthas.

Our Values and Commitments

Conserving land and biodiversity: We value natural environments, healthy ecosystems, and diverse landscapes and are committed to protecting and restoring them so that the many benefits they provide may be sustained.

Engaging in focused climate action: With global goals and Canadian commitments as guideposts, we will work to maximize the contribution of natural climate solutions to the health and wellbeing of people in the Kawarthas.

Acting with integrity and transparency: We value the trust and confidence placed in us and will demonstrate integrity and transparency in our conservation decisions, actions, and advocacy.

Embracing creativity, adaptability, and the joy of our work: We welcome new ideas and ways of thinking, experimenting when and where it is appropriate, and finding joy in our accomplishments and the hope that these activities generate.

Working for the benefit of all: “Widening the circle” of those we engage with, and who share in the benefits of our collective activity, is important. KLT will consult and collaborate with community members to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion in all areas of our work.

Honouring the Williams Treaties: Acknowledging that we live and work on a landscape governed by Indigenous rights, treaties, diverse perspectives, and settlements, KLT is committed to strengthening our understanding of our treaty obligations and creating ethical space to collaborate with Williams Treaties First Nations in the spirit of reciprocity.

The Kawartha Land Trust Story and Our Core Purpose

Protecting the land you love.

These five declarative and evocative words are Kawartha Land Trust's (KLT) call to action. These words invite you to conserve and protect the land you love and to leave, as your legacy, a healthier planet that benefits others, now and for generations to come.



These five words involve some complexity and KLT's thinking and objectives are evolving, as is the entire conservation movement's in Canada and abroad. With those thoughts in mind, here is the KLT story, which conveys an abiding purpose, newly developing dimensions, and an increasing sense of urgency.

KLT began its life as the Kawartha Heritage Conservancy (KHC), a fledgling not-for-profit organization incorporated in 2001. KHC soon evolved to become Kawartha Land Trust, with the new name reflecting its focus.

While the name changed, the Kawarthas remained our focus — a rich and varied region of lakes and rivers that stretches from rolling agricultural lands in the south to the granite of the Canadian Shield in the north. The region and its lands support wildlife, produce food, enable deep connections between people and nature, and form a much-loved landscape that includes a tapestry of the “lands you love”—forests, fields, wetlands, and others.



Our purpose is to protect and enhance the health and vitality of the land and the variety of life these lands support in the Kawarthas. We envision a future where, despite continuing growth and change, nature and people will exist in harmony.

This vision is compelling, but it is neither static nor idyllic. All living things rely upon clean air and water and healthy soil. Multiple threats to the health of the planet, including a rapidly changing climate, and accelerating loss of species demand immediate global and local action.

While KLT's new strategic plan is focused on the Kawarthas, it is part of broader Canadian and global efforts to halt and reverse nature loss, with targets aligned with the 2030 and 2050 objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

KLT's new strategic plan also recognizes that the land conservation movement has at times excluded some voices and perspectives. We commit to connecting diverse populations with land and working to address barriers to access and participation in conservation efforts. This will result in stronger and more durable outcomes for people and nature.

A third evolution in KLT's focus involves the scope of lands in our work today and tomorrow's image of the future. Conservation movements are increasingly recognizing that a broader approach to "lands" – from natural environments to farms and managed forests – is required. Integrating our plans with those of other organizations is the best way to achieve more and to tap into the many and varied attachments to "the land you love" there are in the Kawarthas.



Fourth, KLT, which works on Treaty 20 Michi Saagiig territory and in the traditional territory of the Michi Saagiig and Chippewa Nations, acknowledge that we are all treaty people and have both an individual and organizational responsibility to understand and fulfill treaty commitments. We recognize that the Williams Treaties First Nations have leadership roles concerning lands that have spiritual, cultural, and traditional importance and that it is essential, as a land-focused organization, to partner with Indigenous communities to align our conservation and stewardship efforts with theirs.



As we look to the future, it is clear that, to generate creative solutions to the issues we face while deepening the connections between people and the land, KLT will need to assume a greater leadership role and expand our collaboration with other organizations with responsibilities for conservation and for educating, encouraging, and inspiring the next generation of conservation leaders.

KLT has an abiding purpose to care for the lands entrusted to us and help others protect the land they love in the Kawarthas. To sustain this inheritance, KLT is widening the circle. Our reach in terms of communities and diverse populations is growing. We are strengthening connections between people and the lands and natural environments they value. The pace and approaches we are taking to our work are changing in response to the world of the 2020s and beyond.

Come join us — help protect and enjoy the land you love.

Strategic Priorities



1

Protecting and conserving the lands we love.

Our goal:

Protect and conserve land and biodiversity in the Kawarthas, particularly in ecologically important habitats, to achieve significant conservation outcomes. By setting and achieving annual targets, we will work with urgency, contribute to a sustainable future, and deepen the culture of conservation in the Kawarthas.

Trail cam photo of a Black Bear at Cation Wildlife Preserve

Our strategies:

- 1.1.** Permanently conserving important habitats, especially those for species at risk and cultural keystone species — species of exceptional significance to Indigenous peoples.
- 1.2.** Conserving sites with potential for restoration, expansion of protected areas, improvement of landscape connectivity, and habitat quality.
- 1.3.** Conserving and stewarding natural shorelines along lakes and rivers to contribute to healthy aquatic habitats.
- 1.4.** Undertaking approaches to land care, knowledge, and protection that combine the values of Indigenous ways of knowing, western scientific perspectives, and Indigenous and treaty rights.
- 1.5.** Working with private landowners in the Kawarthas to encourage and facilitate conservation action across the region, improving landscape connectivity, habitat quality, and ecosystem health.



2

Implementing natural climate solutions in the Kawarthas.

Our goal:

Integrate climate action with our well-established core work to protect, conserve, and restore the natural environment. Our climate action plan will emphasize natural climate solutions, including land protection, tree planting, ecological restoration, and climate-friendly agricultural practices. We will develop and state specific goals within the first year of this plan, ensuring that these are clearly articulated, quantified, and subsequently tracked.

Our strategies:

- 2.1. Evaluating and protecting lands that sequester the greatest amounts of carbon and ensuring the carbon is not released, thereby avoiding increased greenhouse gas emissions.
- 2.2. Increasing carbon sequestration in the forests, wetlands, and grasslands of the Kawarthas through tree planting, grassland improvement, and other restoration and climate-friendly ideas.
- 2.3. Planning and implementing projects that use green infrastructure, such as new and restored wetlands, to protect the Kawarthas from future climate disasters.
- 2.4. Encouraging and supporting broad community participation and responsibility for natural climate solutions and making the Kawarthas a leader in seeking and implementing natural climate solutions.

3

Including farms and managed forests.



Kidd Farm CEA

Our goal:

Working lands — particularly farms and managed forests — are important parts of the land we love in the Kawarthas. These lands sustain us, provide livelihoods, and embody a “way of life.” Taking a broader and more inclusive approach to conserving farmland and managed forests will ensure that the contributions these lands make to a healthy and sustainable future are continued and enhanced.

Our strategies:

3.1. Protecting farmland with an emphasis on contributions to natural climate solutions, protecting wildlife corridors, improving soil health, maintaining biodiversity, and advancing sustainable agriculture and food production.

3.2. Parallel to 3.1, working with woodlot owners, and those who manage and harvest forests, to advance sustainable forest management and, in so doing, to enhance the contributions that forests make to natural climate solutions, biodiversity and the landscape of the Kawarthas.

3.3. Developing priorities and parameters to guide this work with the flexibility to evolve as circumstances change.

3.4. Learning how to better support the harvest rights of Indigenous people in the region, recognizing that honourable harvest is a form of reciprocity with the land, not an act of destruction.

4

Connecting people and communities to the land.



Seed gathering at Ballyduff Trails

Our goal:

As more and more Canadians live in towns and cities, the conservation movement strives to reconnect them — or sometimes connect them for the first time — to the land and the life it supports. Our goal is to make those connections by providing people in the Kawarthas and beyond with abundant opportunities to experience and appreciate nature and, increasingly, to value and support conservation.

Our strategies:

- 4.1. Advancing KLT's commitment to supporting diversity, inclusion, and equity and supporting diverse voices in the conservation movement in the Kawarthas.
- 4.2. Using a community conservation approach to work with partners and Indigenous communities to protect land, support wellness, justice and learning, and create an overall culture of conservation in the region.
- 4.3. Creating new places and opportunities for people in the Kawarthas to deepen their connection to the land and the biodiversity the land supports and to enjoy the sense of well-being that being outdoors provides.
- 4.4. Creating new public trails in the Kawarthas and building upon existing ones.
- 4.5. Developing robust volunteer and stewardship activities so that more people can have an experience in nature and with the land.



5

Partnering, leading, and embracing a wider horizon of positive influence and action.

Map Turtle released at a KLT-protected wetland

Our goal:

At KLT, we recognize that our success as an organization is founded on our beautiful, bountiful region and the love of the land that it engenders in remarkable and generous people. Urgent conservation challenges call for us all to do the most we can and together we can achieve more. We will make our resources more broadly available and seek the same from partners within the Kawarthas and beyond our region. We will strive for excellence in our partnerships and the wise exercise of leadership.

Our strategies:

- 5.1. Continuing KLT’s collaborative work with landowners to provide stewardship and climate solutions guidance and support on their lands and creating a collaborative culture of conservation in the Kawarthas.
- 5.2. Working with Trent University, Fleming College, and other organizations to seek and contribute to research that will inform local conservation efforts and accomplishments.
- 5.3. Partnering with Williams Treaties First Nations in the Kawarthas and their land-related initiatives to make valued contributions to our national commitment to Truth and Reconciliation.
- 5.4. Providing KLT staff and land as partners and resources for educators, researchers, and others dedicated to conservation and to developing the next generation of conservation leaders.
- 5.5. Using an “open source” philosophy to KLT’s work, contributing actively to conservation beyond the Kawarthas, thereby strengthening provincial and national efforts.
- 5.6. Continuing to enhance collaboration with other conservation organizations, landowners, and the community to plan and implement actions to protect and conserve land and biodiversity across the Kawarthas and taking a leadership role where required.

6

Strengthening KLT: its people, resources and capabilities.



Dock installation at Big (Boyd/Chiminis) Island

Our goal:

We have set out ambitious plans to guide us through the next several years. Achieving these plans will require focused leadership and adequate resources. Our goal is that Kawartha Land Trust will function at a high level and will be widely known, highly respected, and sought after as a partner in the Kawarthas and in the conservation movement across Canada.

Our strategies:

- 6.1.** Using this strategic plan as a *starting point* for concerted work to measure and achieve results. It will serve as a guide for Annual Implementation Plans and become a prominent resource for staff, directors, donors, volunteers, partners, and the community, engaging them in both the mid-term (the 2030 horizon) and shorter planning cycles to be developed within the 2023–2030 plan.
- 6.2.** Ensuring that staff performance, contributions to KLT, and training/development are both individual and organizational responsibilities, with opportunities to learn both within and outside the organization.
- 6.3.** Through ongoing learning and training, creating an organizational culture that understands, values, and honours our role as treaty people, working in reciprocity with Williams Treaties First Nations to advance land and biodiversity initiatives. Our commitment to learning reflects the importance of examining the implications of conservation in colonialism and the opportunities of conservation for reconciliation.
- 6.4.** Using KLT’s robust governance structure as an active and evolving means to connect with communities and to debate, develop, and refine priorities while also evaluating their achievements.
- 6.5.** Recognizing that so many of KLT’s goals and priorities demand high quality, regular and engaging communications, place an organizational priority on two-way external and internal communications. In that context, provide updates on the achievements related to strategic priorities and any new opportunities the organization decides to pursue.



KAWARTHA LAND TRUST

Protecting the land you love.

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