



MASSACHUSETTS LAND TRUST COALITION

2016 STRATEGIC PLAN

PREAMBLE

The Mass Land Trust Coalition, (MLTC) is proud to present its 2016 – 2020 Strategic Plan

What follows is a document that provides on-going guidance and inspiration for the organization. It charts out a path where the integrity of MLTC's values are maintained; namely:

- Promote land trust successes by providing the educational tools and information necessary to advance their pace of land protection,
- Engage and assist the all-volunteer land trusts,
- Being effective and influential voice for all the Commonwealth's land trusts,
- Commitment to "best management practices" for all Massachusetts land trusts,
- Strengthen existing, and seek out new partnerships for the benefit of all land trusts, and
- Maintain a high level of professionalism throughout the organization.

The Strategic Plan includes a revised vision and mission statement. It also outlines a strategy that serves as the guiding document for board and staff in the coming years. The focus is on improving both the services MLTC provides to its members and on the organization's internal operations.

Background:

On May 18, 2016, MLTC held a retreat with Trustees and staff to determine the organization's future direction.

The daylong retreat included a morning group session on general vision, mission, and identifying what is important to the organization. The afternoon session involved breakout groups strategizing on Programming, Fundraising/Marketing, and Governance. The day concluded with each group presenting key elements in each category.

An ad-hoc committee, consisting of Trustees Karen Grey, Kathleen O'Donnell, John Page and Executive Director Marylynn Gentry was appointed to blend these elements into a strategic plan. The committee met over the summer and into the fall working to map out an operational strategy for the organization. The result is this document.

The Strategic Plan is in four (4) parts:

- 1. Programming**
- 2. Fundraising and Marketing**
- 3. Governance**
- 4. Timeline for task completions**

MLTC 2016 STRATEGIC PLAN

OUR VISION

MLTC envisions a healthy and diverse mix of protected lands created and sustained by a strong and united Massachusetts land conservation community.

OUR MISSION

MLTC works to advance land protection in Massachusetts by providing education, tools, networking, and advocacy support for land trusts and their partners.

SECTION I: PROGRAMMING

A. Provide Services to Membership:

1. Steering Committee:

- a. Continue evaluation of Steering Committee to assure value and utility to the land conservation community.

RESPONSIBLE PARTY: Coordinator, Outreach Coordinator, S.C. Chair and volunteer land trust staff

2. Conference:

- a. Annually review conference evaluations and adjust programming accordingly.

RESPONSIBLE PARTY: Staff, Conference Committee

- b. Investigate instituting an awards program that reflects MLTC's values- i.e. innovations, partnership, and/or challenge met.

RESPONSIBLE PARTY: Staff, Conference Committee

3. Communications:

- a. Enhance our communication efforts through e-news, website and social media through an Outreach Coordinator.

RESPONSIBLE PARTY: E.D., Outreach Coordinator

4. Member Outreach:

- a. Determine priority needs/challenges of land trusts with a set of regional forums hosted by Trustees. Establish follow-up programs based on outcomes.

RESPONSIBLE PARTY: Board, Staff

5. Member Feedback:

- a. Conduct a biennial member survey including a survey and phone canvass of inactive or struggling land trusts.

RESPONSIBLE PARTY: Outreach Coordinator

6. Program Additions

- a. Acknowledge that needs may change and develop solutions to help targeted outreach efforts based on the above results in #4 and #5. For example: assess workshops, develop a mentoring and/or circuit rider programs, provide merger or technical assistance for struggling land trusts, etc.
RESPONSIBLE PARTY: Staff
- b. Hold a minimum of three workshops per year that add value to member land trusts.
RESPONSIBLE PARTY: Staff and 3 LT volunteers

B. Foster and prioritize strategic partnerships to advance MLTC mission.:

1. Continually improve quality and content of state agency retreat. Canvass past active participants & use data from LT assessments to plan proposed agenda.
RESPONSIBLE PARTY: Bob Wilber, Bob O'Connor
2. Continue to broaden and strengthen our partnerships with other organizations – evaluate on an annual basis.
RESPONSIBLE PARTY: Staff, Board

C. Foster a relationship with LTA that benefits Massachusetts land trusts

1. Seek programming partnership.
RESPONSIBLE PARTY: Staff

D. Encourage best practices for land trusts

1. Annually review status to ensure that Standards & Practices remain relevant for ALL MA land trusts to aspire to.
RESPONSIBLE PARTY: Board
2. Promote the importance of Standards and Practices to all MA land trusts.
RESPONSIBLE PARTY: Steering Committee, Board

E. Be effective advocates for land conservation issues:

1. Draft charge and establish an Advocacy Committee.
RESPONSIBLE PARTY: E.D.
2. Evaluate MLTC's advocacy agenda on an annual basis to ensure emphasis on priority issues. Develop listing of Conservation Advocacy Priorities (by category, e.g. Land protection, water, wildlife, botanical, land use, air, etc.); prioritize with statement of potential MLTC investments for each class of issue.
RESPONSIBLE PARTY: E.D., Advocacy Committee

3. Advocacy committee develops a written statement with protocol for managing issues.
RESPONSIBLE PARTY: E.D., Board of Trustees
4. Canvass Mass Easement Defense Subcommittee (MEDS) group to assess their role and relationship to MLTC.
RESPONSIBLE PARTY: E.D.

SECTION II.

FUNDRAISING AND MARKETING

A. Create new sponsorships models for E-news, conference, special events

1. Develop a pricing list and seek sponsors for E-News.
RESPONSIBLE PARTY: Outreach Coordinator
2. Develop additional sponsorship opportunities for the conference, workshops, roundtables, service providers, etc.
RESPONSIBLE PARTY: Staff, Development Committee
3. Explore fee for service providers listed on website directory.
RESPONSIBLE PARTY: Development Committee

B. Improve website, E-news, and social media outlets

1. Redesign and rebuild website to make it easier to use and maintain.
RESPONSIBLE PARTY: Outreach Coordinator
2. Explore potential use of other social media outlets.
RESPONSIBLE PARTY: Outreach Coordinator

C. Increase Grants/foundations/major donors/ and membership giving

1. Develop an annual fundraising plan, including seeking matching challenge grants, grant opportunities, and increasing membership in the “Friend” and “Business” categories.
RESPONSIBLE PARTY: Development Committee, E.D.
2. Develop a policy for accepting donations and grants.
RESPONSIBLE PARTY: Development Committee
3. Develop a case statement to use when seeking funding sources.
RESPONSIBLE PARTY: E.D., Development Committee
4. Evaluate budget needs against program and services.
RESPONSIBLE PARTY: E.D., Finance, Development, Board

5. Explore planned giving (gifts, bequests and endowments).
RESPONSIBLE PARTY: Development Committee

SECTION III.

GOVERNANCE AND STAFFING

A. Establish a Governance Committee

1. Draft committee charge.
RESPONSIBLE PARTY: E.D., President
2. MLTC board president appoints Governance Committee Chair.
RESPONSIBLE PARTY: President
3. Chair recruits a Governance Committee (including S.C. member).
RESPONSIBLE PARTY: Governance Chair
4. Review all organizational policies, procedures, and standing committees. Make recommended updates to the board as needed.
RESPONSIBLE PARTY: Governance Committee
5. Review, clarify, and modify if needed the roles of the board, staff and Steering Committee.
RESPONSIBLE PARTY: Governance Committee
6. Review by-laws.
RESPONSIBLE PARTY: Governance Committee, Board, SC Chair
7. Develop board succession and recruitment strategy focused on needed board skill set(s) and goals for board diversity. Governance Committee will work with the board to develop a list of Trustee desired skill sets.
RESPONSIBLE PARTY: Governance Committee, Board
8. Review and make recommendations to board regarding board leadership succession.
RESPONSIBLE PARTY: Governance Committee

B. Assure appropriate personnel, management and staffing.

1. Develop job descriptions for the E.D. and staff
RESPONSIBLE PARTY: E.D., Board
2. Review current personnel policies and recommend changes if needed.
RESPONSIBLE PARTY: E.D.

3. Subcommittee reviews E.D. annually. Salary review will be based on compensation comparability. Board reviews E.D. job description and updates as needed as recommended by the E.D.

RESPONSIBLE PARTY: President, VP, Treasurer

4. E.D. assesses staffing capacity and develops staffing plans for MLTC including succession plans.

RESPONSIBLE PARTY: E.D.