



# LAKES REGION CONSERVATION TRUST

## STRATEGIC PLAN 2019 – 2024

### **Our Vision**

Our vision is a future where conserved lands support thriving biodiversity, healthy watersheds, and vibrant human communities.

### **Our Mission**

The Lakes Region Conservation Trust (LRCT) is dedicated to the permanent conservation, stewardship, and respectful use of lands that define the character of the Lakes Region and its quality of life.

### **Our Role**

The Lakes Region Conservation Trust is a nonprofit, member-supported land trust and is a leading protector of the Lakes Region's natural heritage and guarantor of open space in the region. We are unique in having a region-wide focus and in connecting the work of towns, local groups, state-wide organizations, and volunteers to accomplish conservation projects that reflect community priorities and have region-wide importance. Our activities engage a dedicated and growing network of individuals who help make the Lakes Region a place where people embrace conservation and stewardship of our treasured lands. These actions will leave a legacy of conservation benefiting the entire region and its human and non-human inhabitants.

Guided by this Strategic Plan, LRCT will strengthen and expand our work during the next five years by:

- Conserving wild lands, valuable habitat for native plants and animals, and areas most resilient to climate change;
- Preserving scenic landscapes and community character;
- Protecting the quality of the region's precious water resources;
- Maintaining productive farm and forest land;
- Providing accessible open space for recreational and learning opportunities;
- Strengthening our capacity to conserve more land and steward the land that we conserve;
- Engaging volunteers in experiences of personal impact on the protection and enjoyment of our region's lands; and
- Develop sustained relationships with our communities to magnify the impact of our shared aspirations for conserving land.

## **Our Strategic Goals**

### **GOAL A: LAND CONSERVATION**

*Conservation of additional lands will be LRCT's highest priority. We will pursue a broad range of land conservation projects to benefit the region's human, animal, and plant communities, preserve the region's distinctive natural heritage and character, and strengthen the region's long-term resilience to a changing climate.*

1. Proactively develop and pursue land conservation opportunities utilizing LRCT's Lakes Region Strategic Conservation Plan and LRCT's Land Protection Policies, prioritizing large, interconnected tracts with region-wide significance, lands resilient to climate change, farmland, critical watersheds, and appropriate opportunities for public access.
2. Incorporate an integrated continuum of land management, stewardship, education, and financial planning in LRCT's land acquisition process to guide our work, facilitate community awareness of the value of land conservation, and maximize the protection of conservation values.
3. Magnify our impact through strategic partnering that enables LRCT and other conservation and community organizations to gain significant achievements through pursuit of shared goals.

### **GOAL B: STEWARDSHIP**

*Stewardship is our primary commitment to protecting conserved lands and the benefits that they provide forever, and it forges permanent connections with our dedicated volunteers and the communities in which we work.*

1. Expand and enhance our land stewardship program by implementing comprehensive land management plans and, working with partners, pursuing opportunities for forest management, habitat and stream restoration, invasive species control, and education, interpretation, and research.
2. Enhance LRCT's stewardship volunteer program to increase its value for LRCT and to provide a more enriching experience for volunteers.
3. Provide opportunities for public access, enjoyment, and learning on conserved lands, while effectively communicating the primacy of and reasons for land conservation.

## **GOAL C: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

*LRCT will build support for land conservation across the region by engaging residents and visitors of all ages in ways that raise understanding of the importance, benefits, and urgency of conserving and stewarding land.*

1. Develop sustained relationships with town boards and organizations interested in land conservation and stewardship by providing guidance and resources and by partnering on projects of mutual interest that provide public and ecological value.
2. Engage with educators and schools to facilitate use of LRCT lands as outdoor classrooms for delivering curriculum to young people and for connecting students and their families with LRCT's work.
3. Engage people of all ages in volunteering that draws them into deeper enjoyment, understanding, and ownership of the impact and value of LRCT's land conservation and stewardship work.

## **GOAL D: FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY**

*LRCT's responsibilities are perpetual. We are committed to securing the financial and human resources, and to maintaining the long-term organizational capacity, to fulfill these responsibilities.*

1. Build our financial management capability by developing a five-year rolling financial plan that reflects both the operations and resources, human and capital, called for by implementation of the Strategic Plan.
2. Strengthen relationships with our donors at all levels of giving and increase our one-on-one donor communication by both board and staff, to deepen donors' commitment to and appreciation for LRCT's work and our gratitude for their role in it.
3. Build and retain LRCT membership to provide growth in financial and community support for LRCT's work commensurate with our growth in landholdings, perpetual care of the land, and aspirations for future accomplishments.
4. Identify the operational and capital costs that ought to be covered by income from LRCT's endowment, define the size of the endowment need to meet these costs, and develop and implement initiatives to increase the endowment accordingly.

## **GOAL E: ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE**

*LRCT aspires to the highest standard of professional excellence and will strive to integrate and model sustainability throughout its operations.*

1. Maintain LRCT's accreditation with the Land Trust Alliance.
2. Develop a rolling five-year plan to size LRCT's human and capital capacity to match the breadth, scale, and complexity of our work.
3. Continue active board and committee recruitment, building from our accomplishments, our volunteer engagement, and our community relationships.
4. Increase energy efficiency and resource conservation at LRCT's facilities and in our activities.