



Strategic Plan Goals and Strategies

Mission

The Essex Land Trust (ELT) acquires, preserves, and manages its open space to protect the environment and small-town character of the villages of Centerbrook, Essex, and Ivoryton for current and future generations. We provide our community with recreational and educational opportunities through strategic acquisitions and responsible stewardship of properties with significant environmental value.

Vision

A network of permanently protected preserves that gives people of all ages ample opportunities to enjoy the beauty of nature while safeguarding our waterways, wetlands, and supporting healthy wildlife habitats.

Values

The Essex Land Trust pursues its mission with an emphasis on:

- The connection between our community and the environment.
- The diversity of its citizens and the variety of their conservation and recreational interests.
- The commitment of our volunteers, the historic heritage of our properties and partnerships with community organizations and landowners.
- Acting ethically, with transparency, integrity, and respect, based on the highest professional standards and in a fiscally responsible way.

Strategic Focus Areas and Goals:

- *Stewardship: Proactively manage ELT preserves to sustain and enhance conservation values.*
- *Land Acquisition: Expand open space in the three villages of Essex.*
- *Community: Be a leader in Essex.*
- *Financial Health and Security: Plan and provide for sustainable financial resources.*
- *Organization: Continue as an efficient, effective, and forward-looking land trust.*

Strategic Goal 1 - Stewardship

Proactively manage ELT preserves to sustain and enhance conservation values while also meeting the community's need for appropriate passive recreational opportunities.

Strategy 1.1 Establish and maintain preserve specific plans that address the challenges of providing passive recreation, protecting habitat and water resources, controlling invasives and dealing with the impacts of climate change.



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Strategy 1.2 Develop and expand an appropriate number of qualified stewards to effectively manage our preserves.

Strategy 1.3 Plan and manage internal and external resources as required for technical skills, capacity, equipment, safety, etc.

Strategic Goal 2 – Land Acquisitions

Expand open space in the three villages of Essex through the acquisition of additional preserves consistent with the Essex Land Trust Mission with a focus on expanding current preserves and completing corridors with appropriate available funding.

Strategy 2.1 Develop and annually update a Land Acquisition Plan using ELT's Open Space Selection Criteria, proactively pursue properties targeted in the Plan and be responsive to other opportunities as they arise.

Strategic Goal 3 - Community

Be a leader in the Essex community in providing opportunities to support and participate in the Essex Land Trust's mission, activities, and programs.

Strategy 3.1 Increase community awareness of the Essex Land Trust.

Strategy 3.2 Promote membership engagement and growth.

Strategy 3.3 Pursue interactions with community organizations.

Strategy 3.4 Offer a broadly engaging series of programs and events.

Strategy 3.5 Provide environment related information to our community.

Strategic Goal 4 – Financial Health and Security

Plan and provide for sustainable financial resources that ensure future management and maintenance of preserves, annual operating expenses, and acquisitions of new properties.

Strategy 4.1 Develop and maintain a financial plan that identifies and addresses the long-term financial needs of the organization.

Strategy 4.2 Build our designated stewardship funds towards the level where our annual stewardship expenses are covered entirely with income generated from the designated stewardship accounts.

Strategy 4.3 Evaluate and implement additional sources of revenues including, but not limited to, membership levels and thresholds, legacy programs, expansion of corporate members, sponsorships, and grants.



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Strategic Goal 5 – Organization

Continue as an efficient, effective, and forward-looking organization, consistent with best practices and Land Trust Alliance (LTA) standards.

Strategy 5.1 Maintain an active and engaged Board focused on strategic planning, succession issues and the identification of needed skills for the Board, Committees, Stewards, and volunteers.

Strategy 5.2 Ensure that the organization maintains effective policies and practices and leverages appropriate digital tools and technologies.

Strategy 5.3 Grow and effectively deploy our volunteer roster to assist with trail maintenance, committee assignments, etc., to expand our talent pipeline for future stewards and Board members.

Strategy 5.4 Meet the Land Trust Accreditation (LTA) Commission Indicator Elements for our organization and the related documentation requirements.