



Strategic Plan 2007 - 2009

Executive Summary

The Challenge

In the early 1990's a group of concerned citizens met to discuss their concerns about the disappearance of natural spaces along the Rideau Waterway and the methods available to preserve these spaces. Out of these early meetings grew the idea to form a land trust.

The Rideau Waterway Land Trust Foundation (RWLT) was incorporated in the spring of 1996 as a non-profit organization with charitable status. From these humble beginnings, the RWLT grew quickly to become one of the leading community based land trusts in Canada.

With this growth came great successes but also great challenges. With a growing membership of 600 families, a core of active volunteers and a staff of two, the RWLT has been able to preserve 13 significant properties through ownership and conservation easement while expanding its area of interest to include the Rideau Corridor.

In 2006 the RWLT conducted a thorough Organizational Assessment in all areas of governance, program development and delivery. It also carried out an extensive dialogue with its members; the community it serves; and provincial and national organizations.

It became evident that if the RWLT was to meet the expectations placed on it by the community, it would have to expand the capacity of the organization to deliver its land preservation programs. The community has demonstrated its willingness to support the organization both in volunteer time and financial donations.

As a first step in a commitment to increase the capacity of the RWLT to deliver expanded voluntary long term land preservation in the Rideau Corridor, a Strategic Plan 2007 – 2009 was developed and approved by the Board of Directors on April 27, 2007.

Vision

Nature has a future because our communities care.

Mission

To preserve important natural lands and habitat in the Rideau Corridor and foster a healthy future for our communities.

Guiding Principles

- We focus on the preservation of land that supports plants, animals and clean water.
- Our actions are inclusive and for the benefit of the community.
- We welcome the participation of those who appreciate the importance of nature.
- We strive for the right balance between access and the protection of conservation values.
- We partner with other organizations on mutually beneficial activities.

Long-Term Goals

- All important natural land within our geographic area is protected.
- All members of the public appreciate the importance of natural areas.
- Our organization is sustainable.
- Our organization merits the trust placed in it by the community.

Strategic Directions

1. Finalize our criteria and strategy for land acquisition.
2. Carry out strategic acquisitions.
3. Strengthen our land management.
4. Enhance our human resources and skills.
5. Build a diversified fundraising program.
6. Build greater public awareness.

Strategic Objectives

1. Finalize Criteria & Strategy for Land Acquisition

- Criteria are defined, confirmed and used as the basis for priority-setting.
- RWLT is focused on acquiring larger parcels of land within its land management capacity.
- RWLT has a plan for key additional properties linking ecologically important lands.
- The significant properties (e.g. Rock Dunder) will be expanded as opportunities arise.

Action Steps

- Establish a task force (task force will include ED).
- Develop a report reviewing existing policy.
- Make recommendations for land selection criteria.
- Create recommendations for calculating stewardship and legal defense funds.
- Identify lands that fit criteria using available resources.
- Prioritize key areas and properties for acquisition.

2. Carry out Strategic Acquisitions

- Priorities are developed in accordance with the land acquisition criteria.
- A proactive land securement program is designed to secure significant lands identified.
- Partnerships with other organizations will continue to be developed to advance the acquisition process.
- All land acquisition volunteers and partners are familiar with the land acquisition criteria.

Action Steps

- Develop a process for strategic acquisition.
- Recruit land securement volunteers.
- Train volunteers and staff.
- Propose a capital budget.
- Implement.

3. Strengthen Our Land Management

- All RWLT land holdings and agreements are properly documented and managed.
- A management plan and sub-committee are in place for each property.
- A formalized monitoring system is in place for all properties.
- All land management volunteers receive training.

Action Steps

- Review and implement RWLT Records policy concerning all RWLT properties.
- Develop management and monitoring plans for all properties, including conservation agreements.
- Determine and accurately mark property boundaries of all properties.
- Develop a monitoring template.
- Develop a training manual to assist land stewardship volunteers in performing their monitoring duties.
- Provide training for land stewardship volunteers.

4. Enhance our Human Resources and Skills



- RWLT has an expanded Board clear about its roles and responsibilities, and with the necessary skills, education and support.
- RWLT has a new committee structure based on priorities, each with specified responsibilities, rationalized reporting and sufficient volunteers.
- RWLT has a well oriented, engaged, managed and significantly larger volunteer base.
- The staff level is sustained to achieve program needs.

Action Steps

- Establish a task force (task force will include ED).
- Develop a report defining board, staff and committee roles.
- Complete a board matrix.
- Identify potential board members and key committee members.
- Complete the development of a recruitment package.
- Recruit board members and committee leaders.
- Develop a preliminary board manual.
- Complete board orientation.

5. Build a Diversified Fundraising Program

- The organization is financially sound and provides for future growth with the implementation of an effective fundraising plan.
- Membership is increased.
- Fundraising is focused on program delivery, with sufficient administrative support for the programs.

Action Steps

- Develop program and capital (functional) budgets.
- Identify and recruit fundraising board and committee (at least 50% of board members main activity will be fundraising and all board members will participate in fundraising activities).
- Develop a comprehensive fundraising plan including budgets.
- Conduct fundraising training sessions.
- Implement the fundraising plan.

6. Build Greater Public Awareness



- The community is knowledgeable about the benefits of natural lands and RWLT's role in the preservation of these lands.
- The community is aware of RWLT properties and which ones are accessible.
- Related organizations and agencies are knowledgeable about RWLT's plans, role and interest in partnering.
- Owners of important natural lands are aware of RWLT.

Action Steps

- Make presentations to service clubs/organizations such as Lions Clubs, Kiwanis Clubs, Chamber of Commerce, and Cottagers' Associations.
- Make presentations to students at elementary and high schools to build awareness of the RWLT, it's work, and how the RWLT land preservation programs help the environment.
- Have informative articles about the activities of the RWLT published in local newspapers or via other news media.
- Contact and arrange information sharing sessions with neighbouring land trusts and conservation authorities.
- Continue publication and distribution of RWLT's newsletter; to be distributed to membership and all identified stakeholders.

Review Commitment

This strategic plan will be reviewed annually or as changes emerge and revised as needed. A complete review will be conducted no later than three years from approval.

Conclusion

The next two decades will prove to be pivotal in the history of land in the Rideau Corridor. Either we will develop the vision and resources to preserve our natural landscapes, or we will lose those places forever. The RWLT is determined to accelerate the pace and quality of land conservation in the Rideau Corridor, and we will develop the policies, tools and training that our organization needs to achieve its conservation goals.

This strategic plan provides a clear focus for RWLT's work from 2007 - 2009. RWLT will develop an implementation plan with measurable goals, including a plan to build a financially sustainable organization to accomplish those goals. To achieve its strategic goals, RWLT will pursue close working partnerships with funders and local, provincial and national conservation groups. Through these partnerships, we aspire to create a vast regional network of greenways that will enrich our communities for all time.



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