

Standard 1: Mission

The land trust has a clear mission that serves a public interest, and all programs support that mission.

Practice 1A: Mission

The board adopts, and periodically reviews, a mission statement that specifies the public interest(s) served by the organization.

It is the policy of the Blue Ridge Land Conservancy to review periodically its mission statement to ensure that it specifies the public interests served by the organization.

Mission statement of the Conservancy:

The mission of the Blue Ridge Land Conservancy is to promote the conservation of western Virginia's natural resources—farms, forests, waterways, and rural landscapes.

Goals of the Conservancy:

- *To hold and be good stewards of conservation easements*
- *To educate landowners and professionals about conservation easements*
- *To promote, through sound estate planning, the retention of family lands critical to preserving our rural landscapes*
- *To assist local, state, and federal partners in the preservation of critical conservation lands*
- *To encourage land use planning which recognizes the importance of preserving our rural landscapes*
- *To encourage land development which minimizes impacts on the environment and creates sustainable communities*
- *To promote best management practices for forestry and agriculture*

Priority areas:

- *Ridgetops and mountaintops*
- *Rivers and streams*
- *Farmland*
- *Scenic views*
- *Lands adjacent to existing conservation areas*

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Practice 1B: Planning and Evaluation

The land trust regularly establishes strategic goals for implementing its mission and routinely evaluates programs, goals and activities to be sure they are consistent with the mission.

It is the policy of the Blue Ridge Land Conservancy to establish at regular intervals strategic goals for implementing its mission and routinely evaluating programs, goals, and activities to be sure they are consistent with the mission.

Each year, the Conservancy shall develop an annual work plan and budget for the upcoming year. The tasks in the annual work plan shall derive from the Conservancy's mission, goals, and priority areas.

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Practice 1C: Outreach

The land trust communicates its mission, goals and/or programs to members, donors, landowners, the general public, community leaders, conservation organizations and others in its service area as appropriate to carry out its mission.

It is the policy of the Blue Ridge Land Conservancy to communicate its mission, goals, priority areas, and programs to members, donors, landowners, the general public, community leaders, conservation organizations, and others in its service area as appropriate to carry out its mission.

This shall be accomplished by means of the following tools and practices:

- An annual slate of public programs for donors and other members of the public.
- Brochures that explain what the Conservancy is, who is on its Board, what its mission and goals are, and how the Conservancy achieves its objectives.
- Periodic newsletters that are mailed to Conservancy members, landowners, elected officials, government officials, members of the media, and others.
- Educational events including landowner meetings and participation in continuing education events for professionals.
- Public presentations to civic and service groups.
- Press releases sent to local media to share important Conservancy events and happenings.
- A website that serves both as a marketing tool and an information storehouse for landowners, members, and professionals.
- Social media and periodic e-newsletters
- Regular meetings with community leaders including elected officials.
- Public service announcements.

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Practice 1D: Ethics

The land trust upholds high standards of ethics in implementing its mission and in its governance and operations.

As a private, non-profit organization, the Blue Ridge Land Conservancy has an obligation to provide a public benefit and therefore strives to avoid any conflicts of interest or transactions which solely benefit any of its Board members, staff, or others within the organization.

The Conservancy shall conduct its land protection and organizational activities under the highest professional standards and in accordance with the Land Trust Alliance's Standards and Practices. It acknowledges the trust placed upon it by its donors, landowner partners, and the public by being fiscally responsible, by always considering its long-term responsibility to the lands it protects, and by building a sustainable land trust organization. In addition, it pledges to foster open and productive relationships with landowners, its fellow land trusts, and the general public and others.

The Conservancy strives to undertake only those actions which enhance the reputation and credibility of the land conservation community. When appropriate, the Conservancy shall work cooperatively with other land trusts, government agencies, private individuals, and conservation organizations to accomplish high-quality, lasting conservation of important lands.