

Standard 11: Conservation Easement Stewardship

The land trust has a program of responsible stewardship for its easements.

A land trust that accepts and holds conservation easements commits itself to their annual stewardship in perpetuity, to enforcement of their terms, and to building positive landowner and community relationships to support the land trust's conservation programs and enforcement actions. A land trust that fails to do so may eventually lose its credibility, could cause its easement program to be invalidated, may erode public confidence in easements, and ultimately risk the protection of the land. Not all land trusts have the capacity to hold easements in perpetuity and may achieve their conservation goals through partnerships with other organizations, fee ownership or other conservation methods. These practices will help ensure that the conservation values protected by conservation easements are sustained over time.

Practice 11A: Funding Easement Stewardship

The land trust determines the long-term stewardship and enforcement expenses of each easement transaction and secures the dedicated or operating funds to cover current and future expenses. If funds are not secured at or before the completion of the transaction, the land trust has a plan to secure these funds and has a policy committing the funds to this purpose. (See 6G.)

Blue Ridge Land Conservancy- Land Stewardship Funding

It is the policy of the Blue Ridge Land Conservancy (BRLC) to understand and take into account the costs and sources of funding associated with each potential real estate project before the project is approved. This includes costs related to project development (initial project costs, property report preparation, initial stewardship costs) and those related to long-term management and enforcement (monitoring and ongoing easement management, encouraging voluntary compliance and enforcement.)

All projects brought to the Board of Trustees for approval will address estimated costs and potential sources of funding.

1. Generally, BRLC will use its operating funds or other available designated funding source to cover those costs associated with initial project development.
2. BRLC will require that each easement be endowed sufficiently to support the long-term management and enforcement cost associated with the easement with a required contribution to the BRLC's Stewardship Endowment Fund as per the attached schedule. The fee shall be paid either at the time of recordation or on a payment schedule specified in a contractual agreement. The fee schedule will be re-visited annually by the Stewardship Committee to assure that BRLC has sufficient funding to meet its long term stewardship obligations. The required contribution may be paid by the landowner, paid from grant funding, or obtained from another source acceptable to the Board.
3. All stewardship contributions will be pooled to provide an endowment to support BRLC's stewardship program. In addition, the Development Committee will place a

priority on securing endowment funding sufficient to meeting our current stewardship obligations, based on the cost analysis.

4. BRLC will require compensation from the requesting party for costs associated with deed amendments.