



# Blue Ridge Land Conservancy Goals 2016-18

## MISSION STATEMENT

Promoting the conservation of western Virginia's natural resources—farms, forests, waterways and rural landscapes.

### Goals:

- To educate landowners and professionals about conservation easements
- To hold and be good stewards of 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 Places:

- Family farms
- Rivers and streams
- Blue Ridge Parkway viewsheds
- Ridgetops and mountainsides
- Greenways and trails, including the Appalachian Trail

### Service Region:

Bedford, Botetourt, Craig, Floyd, Franklin, Montgomery, and Roanoke counties and the cities of Roanoke and Salem. (Other areas as determined by the Board.)

### **Awards (ad-hoc)**

Responsibilities: Solicit nominations from the board and staff for the A. Victor Thomas Environmental Stewardship Award, Landsaver Award and/or other awards as determined by the Board. Make recommendations for the recipients of these awards to the Board for approval.

### **Development Committee**

Responsibilities: Plan and execute fundraising to meet annual operating and long-term stewardship needs of the Land Conservancy.

#### **Goals:**

2016

- Implement yearly fundraising plan for sponsorships. Dollar amounts will be based on event budgets. All money to be raised by September 30.
- Work with a consultant to refine and jump-start monthly giving, annual giving, major giving and planned giving efforts. Build consultant's recommendations into the goals and objectives.
- Follow LTA plan to fully fund the stewardship fund.

2017

- Implement yearly fundraising plan for sponsorships. Dollar amounts will be based on event budgets. All money to be raised by September 30.
- Follow LTA plan to fully fund the stewardship fund.

2018

- Implement yearly fundraising plan for sponsorships. Dollar amounts will be based on event budgets. All money to be raised by September 30.

### **Education and Public Relations Committee**

Responsibilities: Responsible for constituent relations, publications, public education, public relations and the promotion of the Land Conservancy and enhancement of its image, including creation and execution of all educational programs, public relations and development materials, press releases and the tri-annual Saving Land magazine.

#### **Goals:**

- Educate broader community about organization and mission
  - o Maintain an up-to-date website.
  - o Maintain active social media presence on Facebook and Twitter
  - o Create informational, engaging tri-annual magazines and monthly e-news emails.

- o Create educational materials to share at the 2016 Conservation Celebration which will also be a 20th Anniversary celebration for the organization
- o Create handouts with basic Land Conservancy information to be distributed at community events by Fall 2016
- o Complete radio interview about the Land Conservancy's 20th anniversary by October 1, 2016
- Educate landowners and professionals about conservation easements.
  - o Working with the stewardship committee and designer, create and distribute a new landowner guide with conservation easement donor resource list by Dec. 31, 2016.
  - o Plan, design, and execute video shots for a series of short YouTube videos by June 30, 2017
  - o In October 2016, hold a series of landowner education events with the assistance of area professionals to give information to potential landowners. This will be done in support of the stewardship committee's land conservation plan.
- Continue elementary environmental education programs
  - o Grow Watershed Experience education programs to include 5 school districts by 2016
  - o Apply for grant funding to continue these programs in the future
- Promote, through sound estate planning, the retention of family lands.
  - o By December 2016, create a new pamphlet to distribute and post on website that focuses on estate planning/estate gifts.
- Generate press
  - o Work to advertise all special events and education programs are advertised in three different media:
    - Print (newspapers, magazines, land conservancy newsletter)
    - Video (tv stations, land conservancy videos)
    - Radio (local stations)
  - o Create educational article about the Land Conservancy's expanding education programs to be published Fall 2016
  - o Include public relations goals as part of event planning timelines
- Maintain a strong committee
  - o Meet at a regularly scheduled time every other month with at least 75% attendance.

### **Events Committee**

Responsibilities: Plan and carry out events to raise funds and promote the Land

Conservancy's mission.

Goals:

- Raise BRLC's profile in the community
- Raise money from special events to support the land conservancy's mission
- Honor and thank key supporters
- Generate positive publicity

Objectives

Ongoing

- Take time at Outdoor Adventures to educate participants on the organization and what BRLC does
- Continue to advertise "Friends" membership through public event advertisement
- Once the land conservation fund reaches the amount needed for reaccreditation, plan a special event/ceremony/occasion to honor fund supporters.
- Find creative new ways other than banners to thank and increase community exposure for special event sponsors.
- Work to advertise all special events in three different media: print(newspapers, magazines, land conservancy newsletter), video (tv stations, land conservancy video), and radio.
- Maintain a strong committee. Meet at a regularly scheduled time each month with at least 75% attendance.

2016

- In 2016, increase attendance to the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conservation Celebration to over 200.
- In 2016, continue summer-long Outdoor Adventures Series with one public event per month.
- In CY 2016, raise \$39,000 through major special events, including the Conservation Celebration and Outdoor Adventures Series
- In 2016, plan a special August event to celebrate past board members and directors as well as donors to the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary fund in conjunction with the Development Committee.

2017

- In 2017, continue Outdoor Adventures Series with returning popular events from 2015/2016 as well as new ideas to generate interest in the events

- In Winter 2016-2017, approach local artists and landowners for a spring “Painting en Plein Aire” event
- In CY 2017, raise \$40,500 through major special events, including the Conservation Celebration and Outdoor Adventures Series

2018

- In CY 2018, raise \$42,000 through major special events, including the Conservation Celebration and Outdoor Adventures Series

### **Executive Committee**

Ongoing responsibilities: Meet on an as-needed basis to address issues in a timely fashion. The Executive Committee shall have and may exercise all of the authority of the Board of Trustees except to fill vacancies on the Board or on any of its committees, approve an amendment of the Articles of Incorporation, change or amend the by-laws, or approve a plan of merger or consolidation, a proposed transfer of substantially all of the Conservancy's assets or dissolution.

### **Finance Committee**

Ongoing responsibilities: Prepare the Land Conservancy’s annual budget for board approval, ensure that tax filings, annual audits, and day-to-day financial operations of the organization are carried out by the committee, staff and/or outside partners. Prepare financial reports for each meeting of the Board of Trustees and ensure that the board has a good understanding of the land conservancy’s financial position.

### **Government Relations Committee**

Responsibilities: Maintain active and open relations with government bodies and officials at the local, state and federal levels for the purpose of furthering land conservation causes consistent with BRLC’s mission. Make trustees, donors, easement donors and the general public aware of how they can assist in advocacy initiatives.

- Make a presentation to all seven county Boards of Supervisors in the BRLC service area and the Roanoke and Salem city councils each year. Also consider incorporated towns (New Castle, Fincastle, Troutville, Buchanan, Bedford, Rocky Mount, Boones Mill, Floyd, Blacksburg, Christiansburg and Vinton) on a biennial basis. Staff will create and maintain a spreadsheet with name and date of last visit along with any special notes by June 30, 2018.

- Meet with all federal and state elected officials in the six months following their (re)election. Staff will maintain a spreadsheet with name and date of last visit along with any special notes.
- Meet with all county planning dept. heads on a biennial basis. Staff will create and maintain a spreadsheet with name and date of last visit along with any special notes by June 30, 2017.
- As each municipality updates its comprehensive plan, staff will seek to actively participate in the process. Staff will create and maintain a list of comprehensive plan approval dates (plans are good for five years before requiring amending or readoption) by June 30, 2017.
- On a case-by-case basis, the committee will recommend positions or courses of action to the Board of Trustees on political or environmental issues that impact the mission of the land conservancy.
- If determined worthwhile, staff and trustees will attend the annual Conservation Lobby Day in Richmond and other meetings relating to the mission of the land conservancy.

#### **Nominating Committee**

Ongoing responsibilities: Interview and solicit new board members, based on Board needs. Prepare a slate of officers and committee chairs. Present its recommendations to the Board prior to the annual meeting.

- Recruit new trustees who have networking as a strength, i.e, “people who know people.”
- In the slate of trustees for the 2017-18 year, include representation from three of the six counties outside of the Roanoke Valley (defined as Roanoke, Salem and Roanoke County).
- Whenever possible, prioritize youth when adding trustees. If necessary, bring young, potential trustees up through the committees to gauge their interest and effectiveness before considering them for appointments as trustees.

#### **Stewardship Committee**

It is the responsibility of the Stewardship Committee to facilitate all land-related actions of the Conservancy, including reviewing proposed deeds of conservation easements and making recommendations to the Board on acceptance of such easements, as well as the purchase or sale of property, or acceptance of gifted properties by the Conservancy.

**Goals:**

- To ensure that all conservation easements held by the Conservancy are monitored annually, and that files relating to them are kept up to date.
- To assist in the evaluation of proposed conservation easements to ensure that they are consistent with the mission of the Conservancy.
- To review annually the Conservancy’s stewardship fee schedule for accepting easements, and its fees for reviewing reserved rights and amendment requests, and to make recommendations to the Board on any adjustments needed.
- To maintain a running list of potential conservation easement template revisions, and propose recommended changes to the Board at least annually.
- To keep members of the committee informed of issues that may impact the Conservancy’s acquisition and holding of conservation easements.

Objectives:

Ongoing

- Annually review and revise the current easement fee schedule including a schedule for reserved right fees and amendments.
- Maintain a running list of potential conservation easement template revisions. Review potential revisions annually and propose changes to the board each December (2016, 2017, 2018)
- Ensure that all properties are monitored on an annual basis.
- Ensure that up to date records and files are maintained on all properties.
- Maintain a strong committee that meets regularly and deals effectively with the review and approval of conservation easements and other stewardship policies.

2016

- By December 31, 2016, identify criteria for the land conservancy’s “ideal” property for use for education programs and special events (e.g., location, size, price, etc.)
- In the fall of 2016, hold three landowner workshops around the BRLC service area with local professionals to educate landowners on the benefits of conservation easements.
- Review and approve revisions to the land conservancy’s conservation easement guide by August 31, 2016.

2017

- By March 31, 2017, create a job description and seek board approval for inclusion in the FY 2017-18 budget for a part-time stewardship coordinator to monitor easements and meet with landowners regarding new conservation easements.
- By March 31, 2017, identify costs and a funding source for new BRLC easements signs for all properties protected by the land conservancy.

### **Strategic Planning Committee**

Ongoing responsibilities: Carry out long-range planning to fulfill the Conservancy's mission. Review the strategic plan annually. Assist staff in the preparation of the annual work plan prior to the start of each fiscal year. On a three-to-five year basis, conduct a strategic planning session and update the Conservancy's strategic plan.