preserving the present for the future

Crested Butte Land Trust

Strategic Plan
2014-2016

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Acknowledgments

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The Crested Butte Land Trust’s accomplishments over the past quarter century would not have been possible without the incredible dedication of its Board of Directors, staff, volunteers and funders. With your commitment, we have a more economically sound and environmentally healthy community.

2014 Crested Butte Land Trust Board of Directors:
Bill Reimer - President
Kiley Flint - Vice-President
Margery Feldberg - Treasurer
Karen Janssen - Secretary
Skip Berkshire
Ian Bresnahan
Charla Brown
Beth Hise
Fred Holbrook
Peter Kennel
John Simmons

2014 Crested Butte Land Trust Staff:
Ann Johnston - Executive Director
Danielle Beamer - Stewardship Director
Cassidy Brush - Membership Coordinator
Katie Onheiber - Outreach Coordinator
Hedda Peterson - Stewardship Coordinator

Photo: Matt Burt
Our First Decades

Nearly twenty-five years ago, the inspiration for the Crested Butte Land Trust came from a small group of engaged community members who recognized that their cherished landscapes were at risk – and that if these landscapes were lost, the unique character of our community would forever be extinguished.

Early efforts concentrated on preserving the green spaces between Crested Butte and Mt. Crested Butte. The first project involved protecting the wetlands of the Slate River, which frame the incredible views of Paradise Divide.

Since those first days, the Land Trust quickly expanded protection to include working family ranches and recreational trails. It has grown into a mature, professional, accredited organization which has worked with hundreds of landowners, their families, and conservation partners to protect more than 6,000 acres and secure more than 25 miles of single track trails for all to enjoy.

Where We Stand Today

We still face many challenges today – which threaten the overall health of our community. To ensure that our community can realize a wholesome balance between a robust economy and a healthy environment, we must step up the pace of our work. We must have viable working ranches. We must have open meadows for the elk to forage, fresh water for the beavers to dam, and healthy forests for the blue herons to nest and raise their young. And, we must have access to our public lands through a wide-ranging selection of hiking, biking, and Nordic trails. We must continue to soak up the alpenglow as it lights up Paradise Divide. Accomplishing all of these goals will keep our community unique and vibrant.

To really achieve land conservation, there is a pronounced need for a deliberate, cooperative method outside the function of government. Voluntary conservation is pro-active and financially stable. By working with willing landowners, the Land Trust has become a valued and trusted community institution. It has demonstrated strong leadership and a voluntary and financially efficient approach to land protection.

Fortunately, our community knows first-hand that open space has the distinct opportunity to benefit people from all walks of life. The Land Trust continues to provide meaningful ways to enjoy the lands we’ve conserved. By connecting kids of all ages, and families and friends to the land, we have created a strong sense of place in Crested Butte, and an increased understanding of the connectivity of the ecosystems in which we live.

As we move ahead to meet the goals of our second Strategic Plan, we look forward to building upon the success and passion of our individual supporters, as well as our founders, former board and staff members, volunteers, funders, and partners. All of you have devoted time, energy and enthusiasm to develop the Land Trust as Crested Butte’s community land conservation organization. Thank you!
Mission Statement

The mission of the Crested Butte Land Trust is to forever protect and steward open lands for vistas, recreation, wildlife and ranching, thus contributing to the preservation of Gunnison County’s unique heritage and quality of life.

Core Values Statement

- We work with willing landowners in partnership toward our shared conservation goals.
- We remain non-political.
- We focus on projects of high conservation value and in direct pursuit of our mission.
- We are community oriented, and strive to be the preeminent land conservation organization in our community. We strive to add value to the community by preserving and enhancing the quality of life in our community. We are fluid with how community values will change, and we respond to emerging opportunities.
- We strive for integrity in all of our work. We serve as an honest broker to landowners and partners and act in a transparent manner. We show sensitivity and respect to landowner and partner confidentiality, as necessary. We speak with one voice and support our decisions in a strong, unified way.
- We pursue collaborative relationships with like-minded organizations.

Long-Range Vision of Success

Crested Butte’s quality of life protected and preserved into the future. Notably present are secured open vistas, abundant wildlife and habitat, plentiful water resources, access to superior outdoor recreation activities and a thriving agricultural base. The community values the land trust as a vital contributing element of the quality of life of our area and views the trust as the preeminent land conservation organization in Crested Butte.
Strategic Goals 2014-2016

1. Create and implement a capital improvement / conservation plan including future properties to guide protection activity.

2. Maintain a high quality stewardship program that exceeds accreditation requirements that meets community and environmental needs.

3. Develop and maintain engaged and competent human resources at a sustainable level that facilitate the accomplishment of the goals of this plan.

4. Raise funds sufficient to accomplish the goals of this plan.

Goals & Objectives

Goal 1. Create and implement a capital improvement / conservation plan including future properties to guide protection activity.

1.1 Review each parcel in order to identify conservation values and target opportunities/needs.

1.2 Produce capital improvement / conservation plan for board adoption to identify priority areas and themes for board adoption including:
   • Adjoining parcels and connectivity
   • Wetlands and watershed function
   • Wildlife and species
   • Recreation
   • Enhanced stakeholder participation /collaboration
   • Ambassador properties

1.3 Engage landowners to help them identify their conservation interests and how the Trust might help.

1.4 Complete transactions.

12-Month Actions:

1.1.2 Update the conservation map.

1.2.1 Review and update existing plan.

1.2.2 Complete conservation plan in winter/ spring 2014-5

1.2.3 Upon completion of the conservation plan consider revising the goal statement

1.3.1 Develop an engagement strategy as part of the overall outreach plan

Oversight:
Lands Committee
Goal 2. Maintain a high quality stewardship program that continues to exceed accreditation requirements while meeting community and environmental needs.

2.1 Modernize and populate the stewardship database to improve institutional knowledge.

2.2 Execute at least one ambassador project.

2.3 Enhance all fee title lands to be safe, aesthetic and functional for their conservation values.

2.4 Maintain relationships with easement donors and monitor easements to ensure continued 100% compliance.

2.5 Serve as a resource to easement donors for land stewardship.

2.6 Contact landowners acquiring property with easements as early as possible.

12-Month Actions:

2.1.3 Interface with conservation mapping needs from the conservation plan

2.2.2 Make decision on Alpenglow Farm

2.3.1 Develop and implement annual stewardship plan

2.4.1 Implement monitoring schedule

2.4.2 Develop an engagement strategy as part of the overall outreach plan

2.4.3 Reach out to realtors about alerting purchasers of land with easements

Oversight:
Lands Committee
Goal 3. Develop and maintain engaged and competent human resources at a sustainable level that facilitate the accomplishment of the goals of this plan.

3.1 Ensure an adequate number of board & staff.

3.2 Adequately train human resources to meet their roles & responsibilities in the organization
   • Board will strive to attend 2 educational opportunities / year, e.g. participate in ease
     ment monitoring or stewardship visit per year, participate in an LTA webinar, etc to
     serve as ambassadors in the community
   • Include funds for staff training in annual budget

3.3 Ensure that workloads are appropriate and manageable as determined in annual evaluation and annual planning.

3.4 Engage community through volunteer opportunities by increasing volunteer participation by 10% per year
   • Provide meaningful & diverse opportunities for volunteers
   • Better promote volunteer recognition program

3.5 Develop an engagement strategy as part of the overall outreach plan

12-Month Actions:

3.1.1 Update board matrix and develop recruiting plan based on a governing board

3.2.1 Incorporate learning opportunities in staff annual performance objectives

3.3.1 Ensure that staffing capacity analysis appears in every project or program plan

3.3.2 Add staff capacity analysis in fy 2015-6 plan and budget

3.4.1 Set targets for volunteer engagement

3.5.1 Develop an engagement strategy as part of the overall outreach plan

Oversight:
Lands Committee
Goal 4. Raise funds sufficient to accomplish the goals of this plan.

4.1 Revise annual and long-range fundraising plan and implement to align with the uses of funds driven by this plan.

4.2 Develop a capital campaign plan for board adoption.

4.3 Develop an outreach plan to engage target audiences in support of the goals of this plan:
   • Ranchers and landowners to increase donations by promoting understanding of elements and benefits
   • Local residents and visitors toward responsible use, donations, volunteerism
   • Other organizations toward partnerships
   • Board members and volunteers
   • Position the Trust as supportive local land trust applauding large transactions by other conservation organizations and available to assist as appropriate
   • Pursue a long-term solution that preserves the 1% program, restores the positive relationship between 1% and the trust and supports the donor’s choice of gift recipient.

12-Month Actions:

4.1.1 Implement annual fundraising plan

4.1.2 Plan and implement to increase operational fundraising by 20% to fund planned staff growth

4.2.1 Finalize capital campaign plan for board approval

4.3.1 Develop outreach plan for board approval

Oversight:
Development Committee
Role of the Board

- Raise funds
- Set a strategic work plan for the board and committees based on this strategic plan
- Recruit board members
- Approve annual operating budget
- Monitor progress
- Maintain a positive impression in the community – serve as ambassadors aligned with staff
- Report back to the community
- Approve projects and programs

Role and Responsibility Practices

- Board members maintain chain of command by requesting from Ann if they need staff support
- Be active volunteers in chain of command to the project leader
- Call Bill with questions on chain of command
- Provide regular, timely updates by committees
Board-Staff Relationship

Staff hope that the tone and tenor of the relationship between the board and staff would reflect the professional qualifications of the staff and engage the experience and knowledge bases of both staff and board in a complementary way.

Staff offer these principles:

1. Respect staff and board roles. Trust staff process and expertise.
   a. When reviewing from staff, understand that staff will ensure it complies with accreditation and state/national law.

2. Treat staff professionally: treat staff’s input as professionally as you would each other’s. While staff values personal relationships, professional respect is favored.
   a. In committee meetings we encourage you to feel comfortable soliciting staff advice.
   b. Consider a more collaborative approach as opposed to a top-down approach, so that staff, who are the conservation professionals, are included in discussions.

3. We encourage board members to think optimistically, collaboratively and strategically, instead of heavily focusing on oversight and trying to find errors.

4. We request that the board better govern its own behavior when a board member is behaving in such a way that undermines the relationship with staff.

Basic Principles of Board-Staff Relationship

1. Identify who has decision rights and what input process you will use.
2. Focus on the issue, not the person.
   a. Use an inanimate 3rd party object (e.g, chart or document) to focus on the issue
3. Assume positive intention.
4. Take initiative to make things better.
5. Strive to maintain everyone’s self-esteem.
6. Recognize the Waterline. The board has a responsibility to safeguard the reputation and effectiveness of the organization. The board needs to judge the location of the waterline on the hull of the boat and prevent any holes in the boat below the waterline.
Appendix

How to Use This Plan

- Set goals around it
- Measure and report on results regularly (e.g. quarterly)
- Use it as a communication tool with the community
- Develop action plans
- Judge opportunities against it

Board of Directors

The Crested Butte Land Trust Strategic Plan 2014-2016 was adopted on Friday, March 7, 2014 by the Land Trust’s Board of Directors.