



STRATEGIC PLAN
2023 - 2025

CRESTED BUTTE LAND TRUST

STRATEGIC PLAN

2023-2025

VISION

We envision Crested Butte and the Gunnison Valley's quality of life protected and preserved into the future through thoughtful conservation and partnerships. We value our breathtaking valley to peak views, a variety of wildlife, and habitats, an expansive agricultural base, and year-round recreational pursuits. The community values the Crested Butte Land Trust as a vital institution which protects and contributes to the quality of life of our area.

MISSION

To forever protect and steward open lands for vistas, wildlife, recreation, and ranching, thus contributing to the Gunnison Valley's unique heritage and quality of life.

VALUES

- We partner with willing landowners to achieve mutual goals for conservation
- We focus on projects of high conservation value
- We pursue collaborative relationships with like-minded organizations throughout the Gunnison Valley
- We execute our work with integrity utilizing industry best practices
- We value the significant role ranching plays in the vitality of the Gunnison Valley
- We are non-political

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2023-2025

The priorities below summarize the primary areas of strategic planning focus over the next three years. The **Goals and Strategies** detailed on the following pages, thread through these priorities to make their outcomes possible.

Emphasize Conservation and Stewardship in the North Gunnison Valley

We will continue to maintain our focus on the north valley region, while recognizing the entirety of the Gunnison Valley requires the close attention of conservationists, including the Crested Butte Land Trust. We will invest resources in generating a map and database of the remaining unprotected landscapes and water resources in the north valley, determine their conservation value and priority, and identify strategies for landowner outreach and relationship building where appropriate. Ultimately the maps will include certain wildlife habitats and migration routes, wetlands, agricultural productivity, and other significant natural or man-made features. This mapping effort will also help us understand the scope of funding required to protect the remaining lands with high conservation value. Even as we look to acquire more fee lands and conservation easements, we will also increase our efforts to fund the stewardship of our existing conserved lands.

Expand and Deepen Relationships with Agricultural Producers

We will make a significant investment in building relationships and connections across the Gunnison Valley agricultural community. Protecting ranchland is one of our core values. While we will remain focused on the north valley, we will position ourselves to play a more central role in ranchland protection outside the north valley in the years to come. We will start with relationship building, including individual ranchers, farmers, and organizations that support agricultural land protection.

Expand Organizational Capability, Capacity and Resources to Better Address Current Needs and Meet the Challenges and Opportunities We Anticipate

We will ensure our organization can meet our challenges, adapting as needed by developing and recruiting the diverse set of skills, ideas, and capabilities across staff and board directors as required. The Land Trust will be favorably viewed by existing and potential employees, volunteers, directors, and outside parties for our commitment to mission and positive organizational culture and values, all supported by the physical and financial resources to deliver success. We will offer attractive compensation, move to a new, larger headquarters space, and explore ways to facilitate staff housing needs. We will continue to expand our fundraising through board and staff collaboration to provide the financial capability to forever protect new lands and steward the properties currently in conservation.

GOALS AND STRATEGIES 2023-2025

Goal 1: CONSERVATION - Protect and steward highest-value conservation land in the north Gunnison Valley with willing partners

- **Strategy A: Conservation Planning** - Develop conservation plans that prioritize among the many conservation opportunities and leverage our strengths to align proactively with community priorities.
- **Strategy B: Land Protection** - Actively use the tools of land conservation to protect priority lands within the Gunnison Valley.
- **Strategy C: Land Stewardship** - Provide long-range stewardship to lands with CBLT conservation interests including fee owned parcels and easements.

Goal 2: PARTNERSHIPS - Cultivate and maintain meaningful and mutually beneficial relationships with the individuals and organizations whose support is essential to our mission

- **Strategy A: Community Leaders** - Develop partnerships with influential local, state, and national nonprofit and government entities that share a mission to conserve open lands in our area and state.
- **Strategy B: Agricultural Producers** - Strengthen relationships with ranchland owners and the organizations aligned with agricultural interests and ranchland protection in the Gunnison Valley.
- **Strategy C: Community-Based Partners** - Be a willing partner with groups and individuals working to address mission-aligned infrastructure needs of the north valley.
- **Strategy D: Communications** - Develop and fund a communications plan for growing the awareness, brand, reputation, and support of CBLT among key constituent groups in the Gunnison Valley and the public at large.

Goal 3: CAPACITY – Increase organizational capacity, expertise, and infrastructure to sustain our work and impact.

- **Strategy A: Board of Directors** - Address the size, expertise, and engagement of the board of directors, including stronger connections to the agricultural community.
- **Strategy B: Staff** - Grow and sustain an engaged, professional, productive, and long-tenured staff.

- **Strategy C: Organizational Culture** - Ensure the organization's internal and external programs and practices respect all people, value differences, and enhance the community benefits of conservation.

Goal 4: REVENUE – Grow revenue targets for conservation, stewardship, and operations to keep pace with rising land values.

- **Strategy A: Revenue Strategy** - Create and implement annual development plans to support ongoing operations.
- **Strategy B: Individual Giving** - Board and staff collaborate to maintain and expand individual fundraising relationships and giving.
- **Strategy C: Planned Giving** - Use planned giving to grow the organization's ability to conserve and steward land.
- **Strategy D: Campaigns** - Develop special campaigns for transformative gifts for exceptional opportunities.
- **Strategy E: Grants** - Research and submit proposals for grants aligned with strategic plan priorities, with a focus on capacity building and special projects.

Goal 1: CONSERVATION - Protect and steward highest-value conservation land in north Gunnison Valley with willing partners

GOAL 1 - STRATEGY A	2023	NEXT		OUTCOMES
	ACTIVITIES			
STRATEGY A: CONSERVATION PLANNING <i>Develop conservation plans that prioritize among the many conservation opportunities and leverage our strengths to align proactively with community priorities</i>	Identify, inventory, and document highest value conservation lands within Gunnison Valley	Engage stakeholders to identify community conservation priorities	Develop focus areas for conservation opportunities and priorities	<i>Deliberate conservation planning will result in an updated Conservation Plan that will guide the next phase of land protection</i>
	Update ranking and criteria for conservation, with continued focus on the north Gunnison Valley and greater exploration of agricultural land conservation. Ensure ranchland protection continues to be an integral part of the plan.			

GOAL 1 - STRATEGY B	2023	NEXT		OUTCOMES
	ACTIVITIES			
STRATEGY B: LAND PROTECTION <i>Actively use the tools of land conservation to protect priority lands within the Gunnison Valley</i>	Utilitze the results of the current and pending conservation plan to prioritize the most impactful and strategic conservation opportunities in the Gunnison Valley			<i>Growth of the Land Trust's conservation program will advance the primary purpose of the organization's mission - Land Protection</i>
	Buy and own land with outstanding characteristics based upon priority locations and conservation attributes determined by the Conservation Plan	Utilize varied conservation tools for land protection including conservation land acquisition, CE aquisition, and trade land acquisition	Consider merits of fee vs CE property interests in future conservation deals	
	Develop reoccurring Opportunity Fund opportunities - See Goal 4, Strategy D - Campaigns	Develop a clear path to trade land divestment of backcountry parcels to federal government	Support partner agencies in protecting and growing State of Colorado conservation tax credit cap	

Goal 1: CONSERVATION - Protect and steward highest-value conservation land in north Gunnison Valley with willing partners

GOAL 1 - STRATEGY C	2023	NEXT	OUTCOMES
	ACTIVITIES		
STRATEGY C: LAND STEWARDSHIP <i>Provide long-range stewardship to lands with CBLT conservation interests including fee owned parcels and easements</i>	Identify current and near future land management needs and requirements to address those needs	Identify current and future infrastructure needs to support the land management program including work environment and staffing requirements	<i>Once protected, CBLT conservation lands and the species that depend on them, will receive long planning and land management</i> <i>Long range stewardship planning will support the case for a more robust stewardship endowment</i>
	Align stewardship goals with a campaign to raise proceeds for the Stewardship Fund to generate revenue to cover annual stewardship costs. Reference Goal 3, Also see Goal 4 - Special Campaigns - Organizational Capacity regarding possible capital campaign which could include fundraising for the Stewardship Endowment		
	Invest in technology that will increase the efficiency of CBLT's stewardship program	Develop improved conservation landowner engagement program	

Goal 2: PARTNERSHIPS - Cultivate and maintain meaningful and mutually beneficial relationships with the individuals and organizations whose support is essential to our mission

GOAL 2 - STRATEGY A	2023	NEXT		OUTCOMES
	ACTIVITIES			
STRATEGY A: COMMUNITY LEADERS <i>Develop partnerships with influential local, state, and national nonprofit and government entities that share a mission to conserve open lands in our area and state</i>	Maintain an annual roster of community leaders across business sectors including local government, non-profit and private enterprise	Create a community leader engagement program with mulitple annual touchpoints	Seek opportunities to enagage leaders at each level of local government on topics aligned with CBLT's mission	<i>The Land Trust will be "top of mind" and "have a seat at the table" as an effective partner on community driven and mission aligned conservation projects</i>
	Pursue opportunities for CBLT staff and board to participate on identified committees			

GOAL 2 - STRATEGY B	2023	NEXT		OUTCOMES
	ACTIVITIES			
STRATEGY B: AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS <i>Strengthen relationships with ranchland owners and the organizations aligned with agricultural interests and ranchland protection in the Gunnison Valley</i>	Identify organizations and committees working to protect ranchlands in the Gunnison Valley	Seek opportunities to participate in committee work focused on conserving lands for agricultural productivity at a valley wide level	Build relationships with agricultural producers and leaders that will have a net benefit for agricultural land protection	<i>Enhanced relationships in the agricultural community will result in additional ranchland conservation opportunities and a more robust agricultural economy</i>
	Related to Goal 3, Strategy B - Expand ranching relationships to ensure smooth transition of land management upon retirement of legacy producers on CBLT fee owned ranch lands			<i>The Land Trust will have a better understanding of the role of farming in future land protection opportunities</i>
	Seek information and opportunities to learn more about the role of farming and regenerative agriculture in the Gunnison Valley for the purpose of advancing the Land Trust's land protection mission			

Goal 2: PARTNERSHIPS - Cultivate and maintain meaningful and mutually beneficial relationships with the individuals and organizations whose support is essential to our mission

GOAL 2 - STRATEGY C	2023	NEXT		OUTCOMES
	ACTIVITIES			
STRATEGY C: COMMUNITY-BASED PARTNERS <i>Be a willing partner with groups and individuals working to address mission-aligned infrastructure needs of the north valley</i>	Participate in community based planning efforts to ensure the Land Trust is informed on region-wide land use planning needs and trends	The Land Trust will track emerging tools to assist government partners to plan development, and conservation, with wildlife in mind	Seek opportunities to learn from groups focused on agricultural land protection including land for ranching and farming	<i>The Land Trust will have a robust network of community based partners that builds trust toward the goal of advancing conservation in the valley</i>
	Learn from community organizations working on complex planning initiatives such as affordable housing, transportation infrastructure and education about land use needs including the role of land conservation in community growth			
	Continue to seek partnership opportunities with like-minded organizations in the valley. Partnerships provide a means to amplify the organization's mission and audience, build trust, and strengthen opportunities for region-wide collaboration.			

GOAL 2 - STRATEGY D	2023	NEXT	OUTCOMES
	ACTIVITIES		
STRATEGY D: COMMUNICATIONS <i>Develop and fund a communications plan for growing the awareness, brand, reputation, and support of CBLT among key constituent groups in the Gunnison Valley and the public at large</i>	Seek a communication consultant to aid the Land Trust in developing a Communication Plan	Develop Communication Plan, lead by CBLT staff, and Development Committee of the board, to ensure engagement and alignment with the Board of Directors	<i>CBLT's communication program will improve the community's knowledge of our mission, past success and future potential as a valley-wide leader in conservation</i>
	Implement Communication Plan through print, web, and social media strategies that effectively tell the Land Trust's story while increasing supporter engagement		
	Measure annually the efficacy of the Communication Plan through the performance of the Annual Fund and special project campaigns		<i>Improved communications will lead to increased fundraising for the Annual Fund, Opportunity Fund and other campaigns</i>

Goal 3: ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY - Increase organizational capacity, expertise, and infrastructure to sustain our work and impact

GOAL 3 - STRATEGY A	2023	NEXT		OUTCOMES
	ACTIVITIES			
STRATEGY A: BOARD OF DIRECTORS <i>Address the size, expertise, and engagement of the board of directors, including stronger connections to the agricultural community</i>	Plan for board succession to ensure sufficient board membership including enough directors to actively participate in committee work	Identify, cultivate and recruit board members from both ends of the valley including full and part-time residents	Seek board representation from the agriculture community including ranching and farming	CBLT Board of Directors will: 1. Be representative of our valley's culture and values 2. Be of the right size and diversity to sustain and support the pace of the organization's growth
	Launch a Board of Directors Development Committee that will aid the organization's strategic acquisition of new supporters, retain current supporters and expand development activity into Planned Giving and Major Gift programs			
	Improved board orientation program through the inclusion of conservation, stewardship and donor engagement training			

GOAL 3 - STRATEGY B	2023	NEXT		OUTCOMES
	ACTIVITIES			
STRATEGY B: STAFF <i>Grow and sustain an engaged, professional, productive, and long-tenured staff</i>	Establish and provide employee compensation and benefits needed to retain and attract a quality workforce	Develop a pay and benefits policy that will allow wage and career growth for the current and future staff		<i>Employment at CBLT will be considered a career opportunity for bright and innovative people</i>
	Explore feasibility of developing a new home base at the Niccoli Homestead/Glacier Farm, considering existing alternatives	Establish a new home base to support the current needs and future capacity of the Land Trust office environment	Explore options to support affordable housing for staff	
	Pending the results from the Niccoli Homestead/Glacier Farm feasibility study, begin exploring a capital campaign to address work place needs, housing potential and partnerships at the parcel			<i>CBLT will determine the feasibility of creating employee housing for current and/or future staff</i>
	Create a plan to ensure staff is ready for generational management succession on CBLT owned ranch parcels			

Goal 3: ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY - Increase organizational capacity, expertise, and infrastructure to sustain our work and impact

GOAL 3 - STRATEGY C	2023	NEXT	OUTCOMES
	ACTIVITIES		
STRATEGY C: ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE Ensure the organization's internal and external programs and practices respect all people, value differences, and enhance the community benefits of conservation	In relation to land conservation in the Gunnison Valley, staff and board will discuss current and potential projects and programs that include diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice, and seek formal training on these topics		CBLT will gain a better understanding of how our work can enhance a positive, productive work environment and community culture in the Gunnison Valley
	Provide professional development opportunities for the staff to expand their knowledge of conservation, stewardship and fundraising practices for the advancement of the organization and the community we serve		
	Seek knowledge of mission-aligned innovative practices that can help expand the benefits of conservation to more people across the Gunnison Valley		

Goal 4: REVENUE - Grow revenue targets for conservation, stewardship, and operations to keep pace with rising land values

GOAL 4 - STRATEGY A	2023	NEXT	OUTCOMES
	ACTIVITIES		
STRATEGY A: REVENUE STRATEGY <i>Create and implement annual development plans to support ongoing operations</i>	Development Committee creates and implements annual Development Plan to inform the annual budget and increase board engagement in fundraising activities. See Goal 3, Strategy A		<i>Greater annual fundraising performance through annual planning and more robust board member involvement</i>
	Development Committee reviews annual Development Plan periodically and at fiscal year-end to (1) evaluate efficacy of current year development activities and (2) create a future year revenue budget based on Development Plan recommendations.		

GOAL 4 - STRATEGY B	2023	NEXT	OUTCOMES
	ACTIVITIES		
STRATEGY B: INDIVIDUAL GIVING <i>Board and staff collaborate to maintain and expand individual fundraising relationships and giving</i>	Staff and board receive training on best practices for donor communication and engagement		<i>Increased donor acquisition and retention through improved engagement</i>
	Staff supports board engagement with donor base through an annual donor outreach plan		
	Annually review donor outreach plan by analyzing donor acquisition and retention		

Goal 4: REVENUE - Grow revenue targets for conservation, stewardship, and operations to keep pace with rising land values costs

GOAL 4 - STRATEGY C	2023	NEXT	OUTCOMES
	ACTIVITIES		
STRATEGY C: PLANNED GIVING Use planned giving to grow the organization's ability to conserve and steward land	Staff and board receive training on best practices for planned giving		Increase the pace of building the Stewardship Endowment, Opportunity Fund and Annual Fund through Planned Giving
	Board and staff to create a planned giving policy to determine the best application of estate gifts including options for donors to restrict gifts for specific purposes such as stewardship, land aquisition, capital needs or operations		
	Develop communciation and outreach plan to increase the visibility of CBLT's planned giving program		Enhance donor engagement through planned giving

GOAL 4 - STRATEGY D	2023	NEXT	OUTCOMES
	ACTIVITIES		
STRATEGY D: CAMPAIGNS Explore special campaigns for transformative gifts for exceptional opportunities	Create a formal Opportunity Fund campaign to intentionally grow and replenish the conservation acquisition account		A well targeted Capital Campaign will transform and enhance the role of CBLT in the community through donor engagement and public visibility of the organization's mission
	Train staff and board on capital campaigns and identify opportunities during current planning cycle (2023-2025)		
	Pending results of Niccoli Homestead/Glacier Farm feasibility study, launch Capital Campaign to support operational needs. See Goal 3, Strategy B.		Consistently replenished Opportunity Fund will ensure seed capital for conservation acquisitions

Goal 4: REVENUE - CBLT will strive to grow our revenue targets for conservation, stewardship, and operations to keep pace with rising land and operational costs

GOAL 4 - STRATEGY E	2023	NEXT		OUTCOMES
	ACTIVITIES			
STRATEGY E: GRANTS <i>Research and submit proposals for grants aligned with strategic plan priorities, with a focus on capacity building and special projects</i>	Seek grant support for:	1. Conservation acquisitions	2. Land management projects	<i>Grants will appropriately support the organization's annual revenue goals, funding for special projects and, to a lesser extent, annual operating needs</i>
	3. Organizational capacity building	4. Professional development	5. Annual operating support	
	Incorporate grant funding needs and likely sources into annual Development Plan			

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Crested Butte Land Trust would like to acknowledge and thank partners and community members from across the Gunnison Valley for their thoughtful insights that helped inform the Crested Butte Land Trust's 2023 – 2025 Strategic Plan.

Board of Directors

Chris Riopelle
Erica Sollberger
Henson Moore
Jerry Clark
Jill Indovino
John Simmons
Kiley Flint
Kelly Harrison
Laura Tomlinson
Michael Smith - Emeritus
Mike Higuera
Peter Dea
Roger Cesario - Emeritus
Terri Von Dohlen
Zach Chenault

Staff

Ashley UpChurch - Development Director
Jake Jones - Executive Director
Jess Forbes - Development and Outreach Coordinator
Jon Mugglestone - Stewardship Director
Peter Horgan - Stewardship Manager

Community Stakeholders

Amy Nolan - Executive Director, Crested Butte Devo
Ashley Bembenek - Executive Director, Coal Creek Watershed Coalition
Chris Haver - Town Council Member, Town of Crested Butte
Cynthia Saenz - Vice President of Emigrantes Unidos of Gunnison, Spanish Interpreter at GVH
Dara McDonald - Town Manager, Town of Crested Butte
Dave Ochs - Executive Director, Crested Butte Mountain Bike Association
Greg Sund - Town Manager, Town of Mt Crested Butte
Hedda Peterson - Executive Director, Crested Butte Nordic
Holly Conn - Executive Director, Mountain Roots Food Project
Ixchel Ibarra - Community Leader and Member of Emigrantes Unidos
Janna Hansen - Director of Parks, Rec, Open Space and Trails, Town of Crested Butte
Joey Carpenter - Manager of Parks Rec Open Space and Trails, Town of Crested Butte
John Chandler - Member, Backcountry Hunters and Anglers
Lauren Koelliker - Executive Director, Valley Housing Fund
Magdaleno Diaz - University Center at Western Colorado University, Cora and Spanish Interpreter at GVH
Ricardo Esqueda - Community Outreach Liaison, City of Gunnison
Shane Cox - Board President, Gunnison County Stockgrowers Association
Stacy McPhail - Executive Director, Gunnison Ranchland Conservation Legacy
Yazmin Molina - Multicultural Resource Office Coordinator with DHHS

Facilitators

Rich Bruer - Solid Ground Consulting
Marc Smiley - Solid Ground Consulting

Cover Photo – Jerry Clark