



Preserving Land for Community Benefit

Upper Saco Valley Land Trust Strategic Organizational Plan

2017 Revision

Adopted by the Board of Directors on June 19, 2017

Introduction

The Upper Saco Valley Land Trust (USVLT) first adopted its Strategic Organizational Plan (SOP) in November 2011. Since that time, USVLT has seen significant progress in:

- number of conservation projects completed (from 37 projects that protected 4,426 acres in 2011 to 59 projects that protect 11,124 acres in 2017);
- type of conservation projects completed (with more emphasis on projects that have a tangible and easily understood community benefit, such as safeguarding trailheads, as well as more emphasis on projects that are strategic from a conservation science perspective, such as protecting large tracts of unbroken habitat lands);
- staff capacity (with 1.5 full-time-equivalent positions in 2011 compared to 3.25 as projected by December 2017);
- staff leadership, having hired an Executive Director in February of 2012;
- operational budget (\$112,000 in 2012 compared to \$175,000 in 2017);
- organizational operations and level of professionalism, having received accreditation from the Land Trust Alliance's Accreditation Commission in 2016; and
- strategic direction with regards to recognizing the importance of projects that complement land protection work but may not be directly tied to acquisitions of conservation easement or land in fee (e.g., USVLT's new focuses on local food systems advocacy and water resource advocacy).

Further, during Board and staff retreats that occurred approximately yearly from 2013 through 2016, the Board of Directors has continued to brainstorm thoughtful strategic initiatives, spearhead both formal and informal undertakings, and generate ideas relating to future threats that will need to be addressed by our conservation community. (These retreats occurred on March 23, 2013; March 1, 2014; May 2, 2015; January 23, 2016 and November 12, 2016. Copies of materials generated during these retreats are available at the USVLT office.)

It is therefore appropriate and timely that the Board of Directors adopt a revised SOP that will chart the growth of the organization and direct its initiatives for the next decade.

Process & Terminology

The November 2011 SOP listed many initiatives and goals that that would be further refined upon the hiring of an Executive Director; the Executive Director then began work three months later. The first scheduled Board retreats stemmed from this need to address gaps within the 2011 SOP, as well as to address challenges relating to organizational work flow, to incentivize cross-committee communication, and to generate a spirit of conviviality. The retreats were iterative in nature: goals identified in prior retreats were revisited and modified as necessary. In March 2014, a “synthesis document” that summed up the various strategies and goals developed in different retreats was created in order to consolidate and streamline strategic organizational goals. Individual Board members were asked to rank different goals listed in the “synthesis document” in both 2014 and 2015; the results of this ranking process then was used to create a “goal-tracking spreadsheet.” This “goal-tracking spreadsheet” was then codified and simplified into a “strategy map.”

The 2017 revision to the SOP is therefore comprised of:

- 1) this narrative document that provides context and a history of USVLT’s process,
- 2) the “strategy map”, which itself serves as an executive summary for the “goal-tracking spreadsheet,” and
- 3) the “goal-tracking spreadsheet.”

The primary authors of this SOP are the Executive Director and members of the Board of Directors who serve on the Strategic Action Committee (“SACo”), which was formed in 2015 as a result of one of the Board retreats. While being shepherded at the committee level, the Board of Directors was able to review progress on the SOP revision at several regularly scheduled monthly meetings, and the November 2016 retreat was specifically focused on a “deep dive” into the “goal tracking spreadsheet.” A draft of the comprehensive SOP was available for review at the Board’s April 17th, 2017 meeting; it was then shared with the membership at USVLT’s Annual Meeting on May 6th, 2017, and formally adopted at the meeting of the Board of Directors on June 19th, 2017.

Iterative & Adaptive

This 2017 revision to the SOP is meant to be the result of an iterative and adaptive process – by annually revisiting goals first identified in 2011, the Board of USVLT was able to refine and further modify goals, with the intent of setting goals that are both achievable and significant with respect to benefitting the communities where we work.

Additionally, this 2017 revision to the SOP should itself be considered a “living document.” That is, the Board of USVLT should continue to revisit goals outlined in the “goal tracking spreadsheet” and adjust, edit, eliminate, or add as necessary. Changes to outlined goals may be necessary due to increased or limited operational funding, socioeconomic changes within the communities where we work, political realities at all levels of government, changes to staff, and changes within the USVLT Board of Directors itself. Change is to be expected, and it required that USVLT’s strategic planning process and the resulting SOP adjust accordingly and appropriately.

Relevance to Mission, “Strategy Map” and Consensus on Hierarchical Vocabulary

This section of the SOP aims to clarify the terminology used throughout the document and in the “goal tracking spreadsheet.” There is a hierarchy of terminology employed herein, such that granular, measurable action items can feed into strategic goals, all of which will inform a vision statement of where USVLT plans to be in 10 years in the future. The accompanying “strategy map” is a quick overview of USVLT's long-term plans, in the form of a simple, flow-chart diagram. Strategy maps also illustrate the order of steps by which a mission statement has been translated into action.

At its root, the SOP flows from USVLT’s Mission Statement. This Mission Statement is: *...to preserve the ecological systems and cultural values of the Upper Saco River Valley. We will provide for the continued well-being and availability of land for farming, forestry, recreation, and education, as well as for land remaining in its natural state, benefiting natural and human communities. We seek to achieve our mission through the forging and fostering of partnerships for land conservation, and through respectful stewardship, while being mindful of our heritage, our place, and our vision and responsibility for the future.*

A mission statement articulates and defines core organizational beliefs, reflecting values that motivate an organization’s work. On the “strategy map,” USVLT’s Mission Statement is placed at the bottom of the map because it represents the organization’s foundation.

The parameters of the mission then are broken into broad Strategic Priority Categories on which the Board have agreed and developed consensus over the course of many committee meetings, Board meetings and yearly Board retreats.

Listed underneath each category are the specific Strategic Goals USVLT will employ and measure against. Finally, on the “goal tracking spreadsheet,” there are several Indicators of Success / Action Items listed underneath each Strategic Goal (the Indicators of Success / Action Items are not listed on the “strategy map” due to readability, and because the “strategy map” serves as an executive summary). Additionally listed on the “goal tracking spreadsheet” are Growth Metrics.

A Vision Statement is placed at the top of the map, and provides the benchmark by which we'll measure our progress at some point in the future (10 years is the working date).

A complete strategic plan usually implements each strategy by means of specific Strategic Goals and Action Items, usually with deadlines and with a list of which part of an organization is charged with moving the stated Action Items forward.

The accompanying “strategy map” was created by open-source online software (<https://www.draw.io/>).

| STRATEGIC PRIORITY CATEGORY | INDICATORS OF SUCCESS / ACTION ITEMS | SOURCE* | RESPONSIBLE PARTY | 2016 STATUS | TIMELINE / GROWTH METRICS | | |
|--|--|--|-------------------|-------------|---------------------------|----------------|-------|
| | | | | | within 3 years | within 5 years | ...wi |
| 1. SAVING LAND | | | | | | | |
| Conservation Impact | | | | | | | |
| Concern: We are located in an area of NH/ME with very high natural resource values, rapidly increasing population, and high rates of conversion | | | | | | | |
| Goal: Continue on our successful path of conserving lands with high natural resource values | | | | | | | |
| | #USVLT projects (fee or CE) | de facto (core mission); 2011 SOP Goal 7 | Staff/ Land Comm | 56 | 67 | 75 | |
| | #partnership projects (we are not the lead org and take neither a fee interest nor a CE) | de facto (core mission); 2011 SOP Goal 7 | Staff/ Land Comm | 2 | 2 | 3 | |
| | #acres, total | de facto (core mission); 2011 SOP Goal 7 | Staff/ Land Comm | 11,013 | 13,800 | 15,600 | |
| | #miles of river frontage | Increased focus on water resources - see Section 6 | Staff/ Land Comm | 13.2 | 15.5 | 17.0 | |
| | of total acres protected, % wetland | Increased focus on water resources - see Section 6 | Staff/ Land Comm | 4.72% | 5.00% | 6.00% | |
| | of total acres protected, % farmland | Increased focus on ag resources - see Section 6 | Staff/ Land Comm | 6.52% | 9.00% | 11.00% | |
| Community Conservation | | | | | | | |
| Concern: We need to continue to be perceived as a relevant organization in the towns we serve by addressing community needs in our conservation work | | | | | | | |
| Goal: Continue on our successful path of spearheading community-oriented projects (even if small in acreage, e.g.) | | | | | | | |

Fig. 1: A screenshot of the Goal-Tracking Spreadsheet with labeled terminology.

Infusion into Committee & Staff Work Plans, and Instructions for the Goal-Tracking Spreadsheet

It is the intent that this SOP, and the “goal tracking spreadsheet” in particular, is revisited at least annually in order to determine work plans for USVLT’s standing committees and staff.

The “goal tracking spreadsheet” lists work groups and/or staff members that are in charge of moving each discrete Indicator of Success or Action Item forward. The Growth Metrics, as well as the variables by which they are measured, are further explained within the “Comments” section (farthest right column) of the “goal tracking spreadsheet.” Note that if a variable is quantifiable (i.e., numerical), the Growth Metrics will use numbers to set goals; if a variable is qualitative instead, or is a benchmark for starting such an Action Item within a defined future time period, a simple “X” will designate the timeframe that USVLT feels is appropriate for addressing the Action Item. A list of commonly used acronyms follows at the end of the “goal tracking spreadsheet.”

USVLT Strategy Map

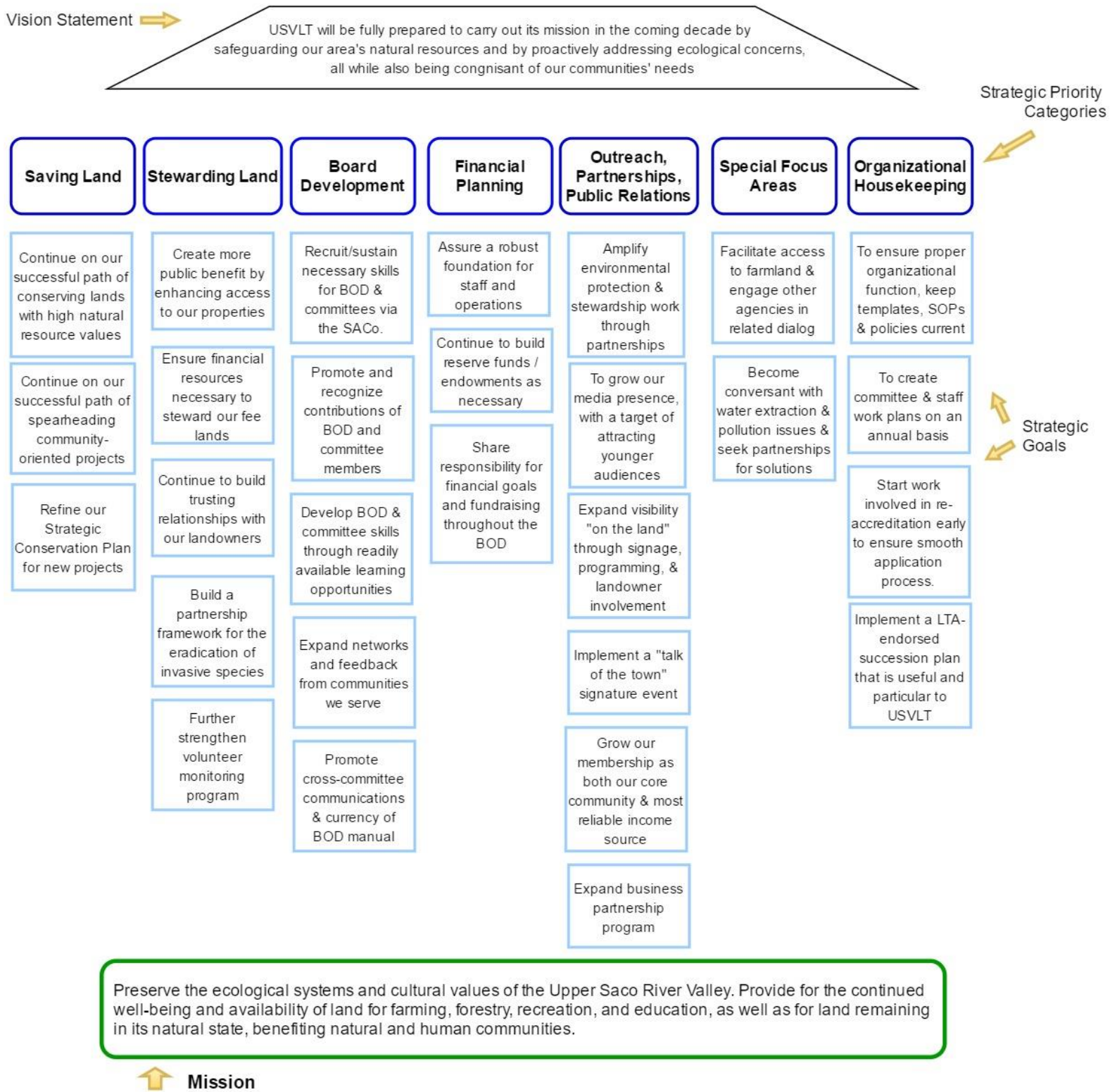


Fig. 2: The "Strategy Map" that lists Strategic Priority Categories and Strategic Goals.

GOAL-TRACKING SPREADSHEET

UPPER SACO VALLEY LAND TRUST - STRATEGIC ORGANIZATIONAL PLAN - 2017 REVISION

version 5/1/17

↓ STRATEGIC PRIORITY CATEGORY

↓ INDICATORS OF SUCCESS / ACTION ITEMS

1. SAVING LAND

Conservation Impact

Concern: We are located in an area of NH/ME with very high natural resource values, rapidly increasing population, and high rates of conversion

Goal: Continue on our successful path of conserving lands with high natural resource values

| INDICATORS OF SUCCESS / ACTION ITEMS | SOURCE* | RESPONSIBLE PARTY | 2016 STATUS |TIMELINE / GROWTH METRICS..... | | | COMMENTS on TIMELINE / GROWTH METRICS* |
|---|--|-------------------|-------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|---|
| | | | | ...within 3 years... | ...within 5 years... | ...within 10 years... | |
| # USVLT projects (fee or CE) | de facto (core mission); 2011 SOP Goal 7 | Staff/ Land Comm | 56 | 67 | 75 | 95 | Metric is based on past pace of land projects, and is equivalent to 4 high-quality projects/ year. It's assumed that this will be a mix of donated & purchased interests. We will not come close to "saturation" within 10 years, but might see some slowing down of projects. |
| # partnership projects (we are not the lead org and take neither a fee interest nor a CE) | de facto (core mission); 2011 SOP Goal 7 | Staff/ Land Comm | 2 | 2 | 3 | 5 | These are projects where, while we have helped in fundraising, we neither own the fee interest nor have a conservation easement interest. Metric shows low growth, as there's consensus that we should not actively seek out these projects, unless they are excellent, regionally significant projects where another organization takes the lead and comes to us for assistance. |
| # acres, total | de facto (core mission); 2011 SOP Goal 7 | Staff/ Land Comm | 11,013 | 13,800 | 15,600 | 20,000 | This metric is based on the number of total projects accomplished, and it is equivalent to each project averaging 200 acres (slightly larger average than current average). |
| # miles of river frontage | increased focus on water resources - see Section 6 | Staff/ Land Comm | 13.2 | 15.5 | 17.0 | 20.0 | This metric shows ambitious growth, but a few families could add significantly to this (Walker family in Fryeburg, etc.); should also caution that there are not many such large tracts left. |
| of total acres protected, % wetland | increased focus on water resources - see Section 6 | Staff/ Land Comm | 4.72% | 5.00% | 6.00% | 7.00% | This metric measures only "open" wetlands (not forested, or floodplain forested, etc.); 2026 goal would be equivalent to 1,400 acres of wetland - or 270% of current acreage (520); this would be 10% of all acquisitions targeted for 2026. |
| of total acres protected, % farmland | increased focus on ag resources - see Section 6 | Staff/ Land Comm | 6.52% | 9.00% | 11.00% | 15.00% | This metric measures "currently farmed" lands (as opposed to prime farmland soils); 2026 goal would be equivalent to 3,700 acres - or 515% of current acreage (718); this would be 33% of all new acquisitions targeted for 2026. |

Community Conservation

Concern: We need to continue to be perceived as a relevant organization in the towns we serve by addressing community needs in our conservation work

Goal: Continue on our successful path of spearheading community-oriented projects (even if small in acreage, e.g.)

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|------------------|------------------------|----|----|----|---|
| # projects with high community impact, typically not donated | Relevant to the Community Conservation work in Maine from 2014 - 2016 (Doug, Mona, William) | Staff/ Land Comm | 13 | 15 | 16 | 18 | Deciding what is a "community conservation" project is somewhat arbitrary, but the property either has to be open to public, have historical significance, a beloved view, etc.. These are the projects that communities will readily rally around -- and the majority of these projects are likely to be purchased interests. There is general consensus that we need to keep up our current track record of fundraising for community projects in order to engage communities & grow membership -- but also need to note that there are capacity issues involved with fundraising campaigns for purchased interests. Assumption behind metric: average of 1 project every other year. |
| Conduct community listening sessions | Community Conservation work; AYO transactional priority #2 | Staff/ All BOD | last conducted in 2013 | X | X | X | Need to continue to interface with service area communities to know which projects are of importance to them, and also to reach out to area neighbors of USVLT-fee-owned land for their input on management plans. This work is important, and timeline shows continued commitment. See also "effective partnerships" in Section 5, below. |
| Capture key landowner relationships in database | November 2016 retreat | Staff/ Land Comm | not started | X | X | | The new DPO database is set up to keep track of which large landowners within our service area with "target properties" have been approached, when, and by whom. We can also develop a list of "community conservation" variables (trails, views, public access, etc.). Timescale shows nearterm work to identify these landowners. |
| Maintain high-quality relationships with key landowners/ families | November 2016 retreat | Staff/ Land Comm | not started | | X | X | NOTE: this is about maintaining relationships with landowners/ landowner families with whom we have not yet done a project, or who have large tracts that are not yet conserved (as distinct from existing CE landowner - addressed under Stewardship, below). This is a natural follow up from the former indicator. Timescale shows mid-term and long-term work to maintain these landowner relationships. |
| Celebrating land projects/ special achievements | November 2016 retreat | Staff/ All BOD | not started | X | X | X | Celebrating our achievements will help identify which projects are, truly, community conservation projects (as well as helping to get the word out about other less community-oriented goals). Timescale shows nearterm focus and continued commitment. |

GOAL-TRACKING SPREADSHEET

UPPER SACO VALLEY LAND TRUST - STRATEGIC ORGANIZATIONAL PLAN - 2017 REVISION

| ↓ INDICATORS OF SUCCESS / ACTION ITEMS | SOURCE* | RESPONSIBLE PARTY | 2016 STATUS | ...within 3 years... | ...within 5 years... | ...within 10 years... | COMMENTS on TIMELINE / GROWTH METRICS* |
|---|--------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|---|
| Strategic Conservation Planning - Update | | | | | | | |
| <p>Concern: We need to align our limited resources with projects that have the highest conservation value</p> <p>Goal: Refine our Strategic Conservation Plan and use the Plan to actively seek out and/or steer new projects</p> <p>Subgoal: conservation of strategic lands - how well is the strategy working? (Note: these stats assume that we're measuring against 2012 strategic focus areas, not revised focus areas that may be developed with addl data)</p> | | | | | | | |
| # acres of conservation land within high-ranking priority focus areas (USVLT <u>and</u> other orgs/ State/ Fed) | 2013 retreat objective | Staff/ Land Comm | 8142 | 9058 | 10077 | 11211 | "High-ranking" focus areas are those with a weighted average RDM* score of 34 to 44. There has been 25% growth in protected lands within high-ranking focus areas since 2009 (from 6482 acres to 8142 acres); future metrics are based on past performance and adjusted slightly upward to 3.75%/year (acknowledging that we need to be more proactive in seeking out projects within focus areas). |
| % of high-ranking focus areas conserved | | | 23.1% | 25.7% | 28.6% | 31.8% | FYI, up from 18.4% in 2009; future metrics are based on acreage counts above. |
| # acres of conservation land within mid-ranking priority focus areas (USVLT <u>and</u> other orgs/ State/ Fed) | 2013 retreat objective | Staff/ Land Comm | 10648 | 11686 | 12826 | 14076 | "Mid-ranking" focus areas are those with a weighted average RDM* score of 28 to 33. There has been 20% growth in protected lands within mid-ranking focus areas since 2009 (from 8893 acres to 10648 acres); future metrics are based on past performance and adjusted slightly upward to 3.25%/year (acknowledging that we need to be more proactive in seeking out projects within focus areas). |
| % of mid-ranking focus areas conserved | | | 27.1% | 29.7% | 32.6% | 35.8% | FYI, up from 23.6% in 2009; future metrics are based on acreage counts above. |
| # acres of conservation land within low-ranking priority focus areas (USVLT <u>and</u> other orgs/ State/ Fed) | 2013 retreat objective | Staff/ Land Comm | 4877 | 5170 | 5480 | 5809 | "Low-ranking" focus areas are those with a weighted average RDM* score of 21 to 27. There has been 11% growth in protected lands within low-ranking focus areas since 2009 (from 4382 acres to 4877 acres); future metrics are based on past performance and adjusted upward to 2%/year (acknowledging that we need to be more proactive in seeking out projects within focus areas). |
| % of low-ranking focus areas conserved | | | 10.8% | 11.4% | 12.1% | 12.9% | FYI, up from 9.7% in 2009; future metrics are based on acreage counts above. |
| Subgoal: Incorporate wildlife corridors into our natural resource inventory work to refine focus areas | | | | | | | |
| Research other LT's work in this area | 2013 retreat objective | Staff/ Land Comm | not started | | | X | This work is important, but capacity issues, coupled with the fact that our NRI is (only) 4 years old, necessitate delay. |
| Seek out grant funding specific to this expansion | 2013 retreat objective | Staff/ Land Comm | not started | | | X | " |
| Hire consultant to update plan | 2013 retreat objective | Staff/ Land Comm | not started | | | X | " |
| Subgoal: Incorporate threat analysis (i.e., how "developable" is the land in question? What areas are most susceptible to climate change impacts?) into our natural resource inventory work to help rank focus areas | | | | | | | |
| Research other LT's work in this area | 2013 retreat objective | Staff/ Land Comm | not started | | X | | This work is important, but capacity issues, coupled with the fact that our NRI is (only) 4 years old, necessitate delay. |
| Seek out grant funding specific to this expansion | 2013 retreat objective | Staff/ Land Comm | not started | | X | | " |
| Hire consultant to update plan | 2013 retreat objective | Staff/ Land Comm | not started | | X | | " |
| 2. STEWARDING LAND | | | | | | | |
| Public Access Improvement | | | | | | | |
| <p>Concern: We own and/or manage property that is well suited for public access, but has not yet been developed for such access and/or is poorly signed</p> <p>Goal: Create more public benefit by enhancing access to our properties</p> | | | | | | | |
| # properties with developed trailheads | Individual property management plans | Staff/ Land Comm | 7 | 9 | 10 | 12 | Extg: ATF, Hayes, Tin Mountain, Bear Paw, Foss, Old Pinkham Farm, Cranmore; Potential: LML, Simone, Burnell, Mt Surprise, new projects (such as the "community conservation" projects mentioned above). |
| # properties with developed parking areas | Individual property management plans | Staff/ Land Comm | 7 | 9 | 10 | 12 | Extg: ATF, Hayes, Tin Mountain, Bear Paw, Foss, Old Pinkham Farm, Cranmore; Potential: LML, Simone, Burnell, Mt Surprise, new projects (such as the "community conservation" projects mentioned above). |
| # properties with welcoming kiosks/ signage | Individual property management plans | Staff/ Land Comm | 5 | 7 | 9 | 11 | Extg: ATF, Hayes, Bear Paw, Foss, Old Pinkham Farm; Potential: LML, Simone, Burnell, Mt Surprise, new projects (such as the "community conservation" projects mentioned above). |

GOAL-TRACKING SPREADSHEET

UPPER SACO VALLEY LAND TRUST - STRATEGIC ORGANIZATIONAL PLAN - 2017 REVISION

| ↓ INDICATORS OF SUCCESS / ACTION ITEMS | SOURCE* | RESPONSIBLE PARTY | 2016 STATUS | ...within 3 years... | ...within 5 years... | ...within 10 years... | COMMENTS on TIMELINE / GROWTH METRICS* |
|--|---|---|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|---|
| Funding for Preserve Development | | | | | | | |
| <p>Concern: Some of our fee-lands (or CEs with active management roles) do not have dedicated stewardship funds</p> <p>Goal: Ensure we have the financial resources necessary to steward our fee lands for the foreseeable future with the establishment of a dedicated quasi-endowment fund</p> | | | | | | | |
| Meet LTA-advised levels of funding for current fee properties | AYO transactional priority #1&3 | Staff/ Stewardship Comm/ Devt Comm | Goal Met! | n/a | | | 2016 balance is sufficient for LTA's purposes; Board-designated fund was started by allocated excess operating funds in 2015, with additions made in 2016 |
| Conduct forestry activities as a way to start/ increase fund as necessary for new preserves | AYO transactional priority #1&3 | Staff/ Stewardship Comm/ Devt Comm | no longer necessary | | | X | forestry activities only needed if fund is running a deficit and if operating surplus cannot cover any additional requirements - revisit in 2025. |
| Seek specific grants for funding fee-land stewardship | AYO transactional priority #1&3 | Staff/ Stewardship Comm/ Devt Comm | no longer necessary | | | X | grants only needed if fund is running a deficit and if operating surplus cannot cover any additional requirements - revisit in 2025. |
| Relationship with Landowners of Easement Properties | | | | | | | |
| <p>Concern: LTs can be perceived as having a "policing" attitude in regards to stewardship responsibilities</p> <p>Goal: Continue to build trusting relationships with our landowners</p> | | | | | | | |
| Send two-way communications (monitoring notice, LO survey, follow-up letters, e.g.) 1x/yr | 2011 SOP Objective 1.2; 2014 Retreat Objective | Staff | Goal Met! | X | X | X | This is de-facto, already within scope of current work. Timelines shows that we need to continue our current efforts for the foreseeable future. |
| Need to increase landowner presence during monitoring visits; engage with landowners in asking questions about future uses; make monitoring form more well-rounded. | November 2016 Retreat | Staff | not started | X | X | X | Staff would be best positioned to arrange these monitoring visits with LO's; perhaps conduct every other year (in addition to volunteer monitor visits). Timeline shows new focus in the shortterm and into the foreseeable future. |
| Provide informational communications outside of monitoring requirements 1x/ yr | 2011 SOP Objective 1.2; 2014 Retreat Objective | Staff | Goal partially met | X | X | X | We need to dedicate more resources to this; timeline shows such increased dedication for the foreseeable future. |
| Encourage LO to send info packets to neighbors/ friends | 2014 retreat objective | Staff | Goal partially met | X | X | X | We need to dedicate more resources to this; timeline shows such increased dedication for the foreseeable future. |
| Invasive Species | | | | | | | |
| <p>Concern: Invasive species/ pests/ pathogens represent a "silent" threat to already conserved lands</p> <p>Goal: To build a strategic framework for the identification and eradication of invasive species, in partnership with landowners and other orgs</p> | | | | | | | |
| Tally up # LT easements & preserves where invasives are identified/ mapped | 2011 SOP Action 1.3.4 | Staff/ Stewardship Intership | not started | X? | | X | Consensus that this is not high priority in 2016, but to reassess in 2025 (or as needed) -- but also see next item regarding volunteer monitors and stewardship interns. |
| Empower volunteer monitors to begin the data collection process | 2011 SOP Action 1.3.1 | Land Comm/ Staff/ Stewardship Intership | not started | X | | | A preliminary approach to the "invasive problem" is to train volunteer monitors (and the Stewardship Intern) to identify the most common & noxious of these plants, and then to have locations mapped using a collectivized data-collection system (e.g., iMap Invasives in Maine). This work could start as early as 2017, with those volunteer monitors that are skilled in plant ID. |
| Link invasive spp to "threat analysis" in revised NRI | 2011 SOP Action 1.3.4; 2011 SOP Objective 7.3.b | Land Comm/ Staff/ Stewardship Intership | not started | | | X | Consensus that this is not high priority in 2016, but to reassess in 2025 (or as needed) |
| Begin strategizing plan for invasive eradication within specific, self-contained watersheds | 2011 SOP Action 1.3.4 | Staff/ Stewardship Intership | not started | | | X | Consensus that this is not high priority in 2016, but to reassess in 2025 (or as needed) |
| Volunteer Monitors | | | | | | | |
| <p>Concern: As our stewardship responsibilities grow, volunteer monitors need to represent USVLT interests and serve as ambassadors</p> <p>Goal: To further strengthen our volunteer monitoring program</p> | | | | | | | |
| Recruit new monitors and/or empower existing monitors to recruit/ train/ serve as ambassadors | 2011 SOP Action 1.2.1; 2013 retreat objective | Staff/ Stewardship Comm | Goal Met! | 5 | 8 | 20 | Currently at 40 monitors; goal is one monitor per property, or 60 by 2026 (likely maximum amount). Therefore, numbers reported under growth metrics show probable necessary increases. |
| Empower volunteer monitors to serve the LT in other ways (volunteer at public events, act in a role that's more of a docent, eg.) | November 2016 Retreat | Staff (LPS/ Devt Assoc) | not started | X | X | X | Task could be completed by simply alerting this group of dedicated volunteers to other, outside-normal-scope opportunities. Can start ASAP, and timeline shows increased dedication and effort. |
| Expand our current "volunteer monitor training" session so that it can serve as a refresher for current monitors and/or educational forum with outside speakers | 2011 SOP Action 1.3.1 | Staff/ Stewardship Comm | not started | | X | | Need some time to plan appropriately, so this will likely be developed in 2018 or 2019; a monthly speaker series could take place of this, too |
| Consider implementing an end-of-season get together that will 1) recognize and celebrate volunteer monitors & 2) serve as a "lessons learned" forum | 2011 SOP Objective 4.2 | Staff/ Stewardship Comm | not started | | X | | Need some time to plan appropriately, so this will likely be developed in 2018 or 2019; a monthly speaker series could take place of this, too |

GOAL-TRACKING SPREADSHEET

UPPER SACO VALLEY LAND TRUST - STRATEGIC ORGANIZATIONAL PLAN - 2017 REVISION

| ↓ INDICATORS OF SUCCESS / ACTION ITEMS | SOURCE* | RESPONSIBLE PARTY | 2016 STATUS | ...within 3 years... | ...within 5 years... | ...within 10 years... | COMMENTS on TIMELINE / GROWTH METRICS* |
|---|---|-------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|---|
| 3. BOARD DEVELOPMENT | | | | | | | |
| Board Nominations Process & Committee Capacity | | | | | | | |
| <p>Concern: USVLT needs to bring in new volunteers (committee level or BOD level) for fresh perspectives, energy, and capacity</p> <p>Goal: Through the SACo group, recruit and sustain engagement with community members that bring skills/attributes that fit our current needs</p> | | | | | | | |
| Conduct skills-gap analysis 1x/yr | 2013 retreat objective | SACo | Last completed in 2014-5 | X | X | X | We have a good template from winter of 2014-2015; need to dedicate more resources to this, and the timeline shows such increased dedication for foreseeable future. |
| Recruit 4+ new committee members/ yr | ...following from above objective | SACo | Goal partially met | X | X | X | We need to dedicate more resources to this, and the timeline shows such increased dedication for foreseeable future. |
| Recruit 2+ new Board members/ yr (or as needed to fill terms) | ...following from above objective | SACo | Goal partially met | X | X | X | We need to dedicate more resources to this, and the timeline shows such increased dedication for foreseeable future. |
| Board Evaluation & Recognition | | | | | | | |
| <p>Concern: USVLT Board members need to feel supported, inspired & valued</p> <p>Goal: Promote and recognize contributions of Board and committee members</p> | | | | | | | |
| Systematically evaluate Board performance (as a whole) 1x / yr | 2011 SOP Objective 6.1(c) | SACo | Goal partially met | X | X | X | We have a good template from winter of 2014-2015; need to dedicate more resources to this, and the timeline shows such increased dedication for foreseeable future. |
| Celebrate Board achievements at Board meetings! (intra-board communication) | November 2016 Retreat | All BOD | Goal not met | X | X | X | Develop appropriate and individualistic way of appreciating accomplishments; could be as simple as sharing achievements at BOD meetings. Timeline shows such increased dedication for foreseeable future. |
| Celebrate / recognize Board members' and volunteers' achievements | extrapolated from 2011 SOP Objective 6.1(d) | SACo | Goal partially met | X | X | X | We have had periodic "blurbs" about Board members in past newsletters, but may want to increase this type of recognition through social media and other outlets. Feedback to date on the importance of this sub-goal has been mixed. |
| Board Education | | | | | | | |
| <p>Concern: USVLT Board members need to feel educated on pertinent topics & supported and inspired to achieve educational goals</p> <p>Goal: Help develop skills of Board and Committee members through readily available learning opportunities; remove barriers to access</p> | | | | | | | |
| Have educational sessions at Board meetings 2x/yr | 2013 retreat objective | SACo | Goal not met | X | X | X | Need to dedicate more resources to this; timeline shows increased focus for foreseeable future. |
| Ensure that each Board member has a chance to share educational experiences with the rest of the Board | November 2016 Retreat | SACo/ BOD President/ ED | Goal partially met | X | X | X | Need to make sure that individual Board members are given the time within Board meetings to discuss items that they've recently learned and would like to share. Can achieve by simply leaving time in the agenda for such sharing. Timeline shows such increased dedication for foreseeable future. |
| Inspire Board to attend at least 1 workshop/ conference/ webinar per yr | 2011 SOP Objective 6.1(b) | SACo | Goal partially met | X | X | X | Satisfactory track record of success, but still need to dedicate some additional resources to this. Timeline shows increased focus for foreseeable future. |
| Governance Representation in Communities We Serve | | | | | | | |
| <p>Concern: USVLT needs input from diverse towns & constituencies/ "ears to the ground"</p> <p>Goal: Expand networks and feedback from communities we serve</p> | | | | | | | |
| Consider weighting lesser-served communities in Board recruitment work | ED concern | SACo | Goal not met | X | X | X | Current Board is drawn from fewer than half of the towns we serve. Timeline shows increased focus for foreseeable future. |
| Outreach to Towns' community leaders requesting recommendations for Board and committee placement | ED concern | SACo | Goal not met | X | X | X | Increasing representation on Board is primary goal, but, failing that, we need to explore other ways to bring in the voices of other communities. Explore the formation of an Advisory Committee, or encourage each current BOD to forge relationships with members of diff't Cons Comms, e.g. Can easily link with Land Committee outreach, too (e.g., sharing results from our NRI). Timeline shows increased focus for foreseeable future. |

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|---|--|---|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|--|
| Intra-Board Communication & Resources | | | | | | | |
| <p>Concern: USVLT Board members need to have a "manual" within easy reach & know what's going on organizationally</p> <p>Goal: Continue to implement cross-committee communication; update Board Manual periodically and keep document alive & useful</p> | | | | | | | |
| Implement cross-committee intra-organtl communications strategy | 2013 retreat objective | Exec Comm with feedback from entire BOD | Goal partially met | X | X | X | This has been a past issue between LC and DC; staff is uniquely positioned to alert whole Board about potential miscommunication or lack of communication. Need to dedicate more resources to this, and the timeline shows such increased dedication for foreseeable future. |
| Better "on-boarding" process - BOD pairings, e.g. | November 2016 Retreat | SACo | Goal not met | X | X | X | Need to make transition smoother for new Board members, above and beyond review of Board Binder. Assign new Board members with veteran Board members who can serve as a coach/ liaison, etc. Timeline shows such increased dedication for foreseeable future. |
| Annual review of Board Binder | 2013 retreat objective; AYO organizational priority #1 | Staff | Goal Met! | X | X | X | New Board binder "online" as of 2015. Timeline shows sustained focus, as annual review will be necessary to update contact lists, revised policies, etc. |
| 4. FINANCIAL PLANNING | | | | | | | |
| Capacity | | | | | | | |
| <p>Concern: USVLT needs the financial resources necessary to complete work well and address staff & committee capacity issues</p> <p>Goal: Assure a robust foundation for staff and operations</p> | | | | | | | |
| Convene meetings of the Finance Committee 4x/yr (or as needed) | de facto (Bylaw requirement) | Finance Comm/ Devt Comm | In process | X | X | X | Need to dedicate more resources to this, and the timeline shows such increased dedication for foreseeable future. |
| Establish a 5-year financial plan (with input from the strat org plan) | 2011 SOP objective 3.1; 2013 retreat objective; AYO organizational priority #2 | Finance Comm/ Devt Comm | Goal not met | X | X | X | Need to dedicate more resources to this, and the timeline shows such increased dedication for foreseeable future. |
| Recruit addl members to the Finance Committee | ...following from above objective | Finance Comm/ Devt Comm | In process | X | X | X | Need to dedicate more resources to this, and the timeline shows such increased dedication for foreseeable future. |
| Plan for new staff positions to address capacity needs | ...following from above objective / January 2016 retreat | Finance Comm/ Devt Comm | Goal not met | X | X | X | Need to dedicate more resources to this, and the timeline shows such increased dedication for foreseeable future. |
| Long-term Financial Health | | | | | | | |
| <p>Concern: USVLT needs the financial resources necessary to make good on promises</p> <p>Goal: Continue to build reserve funds/ endowments as necessary</p> | | | | | | | |
| Continue to allocate \$1500/ project for legal defense | LTA-required minimum contribution | Finance Comm/ Devt Comm | Goal Met! | X | X | X | Timeline shows continued focus, as contributions will be needed on a per-project basis. |
| Continue to allocate at least \$3000/ project to stewardship endowment | LTA-recommended contribution | Finance Comm/ Devt Comm | Goal Met! | X | X | X | Timeline shows continued focus, as contributions will be needed on a per-project basis. |
| Consider creation of operational endowment in the financial plan | 2013 retreat objective; AYO organizational priority #2 | Finance Comm/ Devt Comm | In process | X | X | | Will be wrapped into capital campaign; see next row. |
| Consider a multi-faceted capital campaign to address long-term financial needs | January 2016 retreat focus/ goal | Finance Comm/ Devt Comm | In process | X | X | | Initial meetings with contract staff/ fundraiser occurring in 2016; need to make sure timing is right for staff, Board, and our donors. Goal is to move on this topic in the next few years. |
| Board Buy-In | | | | | | | |
| <p>Concern: Fundraising needs to be considered a "full-board" activity to fully engage our board</p> <p>Goal: To share the responsibility of fundraising and financial goal-setting with the full board</p> | | | | | | | |
| 100% of Board members contribute financially to USVLT | 2013 retreat objective | Devt Comm/ Executive Comm | Goal partially met | X | X | X | Institutional need in order to attract additional large grants/ funders. Timeline shows sustained focus. |
| 100% of Board members are involved in some aspects of the "fundraising cycle" | 2013 retreat objective | Devt Comm/ Executive Comm | Goal partially met | X | X | X | Rick Jenkinson and Susan Beane currently spearheading and refining this work. Timeline shows sustained focus. |

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|--|---------|-------------------|-------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|--|
|--|---------|-------------------|-------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|--|

5. OUTREACH, PARTNERSHIPS & PUBLIC RELATIONS

| Effective Partnerships | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---------------------------------|--------------------|---|---|---|---|
| <p>Concern: "Going it alone" is not nearly as effective as partnering with other organizations already tackling similar/ same issues</p> <p>Goal: To amplify environmental/ stewardship work through effective partnerships</p> | | | | | | | |
| Conduct stakeholder mtngs refining conservation focus areas and/or refining conservation values | 2011 SOP Objective 5.1; 2013 retreat objective | Outreach /Land Comm | Goal not met | | X | X | Likely to occur as we update our NRI (see Section 1), but also useful outside of NRI parameters if we would like to conduct "community listening" sessions (e.g., similar to Maine's Midcoast Conservancy recent "listening" sessions in each town they serve). Timeline is tagged to NRI update process. |
| Recreational community outreach | 2013 retreat objective; Heightened focus at November 2016 retreat | Devt Comm/ Outreach Comm/ Staff | Goal partially met | X | X | X | Cross-listed goal; see below under Membership Growth |
| Convene roundtable discussions with other Land Trusts | 2011 SOP Objective 5.2 | Staff | Goal partially met | X | X | X | already occurring sporadically (as hosted by NHLTC or MLTN) - timeline shows continued focus. |
| Conduct mtngs (w/ public &/or partner orgs) for input specific to fee-land mngmnt | AYO transactional priority #2 | Outreach /Land Comm | Goal not met | X | X | | Pertinent to current fee-owned lands and future acquisitions; ED believes this is an immediate priority; timetable shows nearterm focus |

| USVLT Known in Media | | | | | | | |
|--|---|-------|------------------|---|---|---|---|
| <p>Concern: We need to stay active/ current in the eyes of our supporters and other community members</p> <p>Goal: To continue to grow our media presence, with a target of attracting younger audiences</p> | | | | | | | |
| Bulk email platforms - at least 12x / yr | 2011 SOP Action 1.3.5; 2013 retreat objective | Staff | Goal Met! | X | X | X | Goal met due to increased focus in 2015 and 2016. Timeline shows sustained efforts / focus. |
| Website & Facebook - regular, recurring updates; Facebook posts at least 1x wk | 2011 SOP Action 1.3.5; 2013 retreat objective | Staff | Goal Met! | X | X | X | Goal met due to increased focus in 2015 and 2016. Timeline shows sustained efforts / focus. |
| Press releases - aim for 8 topical press releases /yr | 2011 SOP Action 1.3.5; 2013 retreat objective | Staff | Goal Met! | X | X | X | Goal met due to increased focus in 2015 and 2016. Timeline shows sustained efforts / focus. |
| Easement Exploration Series - aim for 8 series / yr on varied topics | 2011 SOP Action 1.3.5; 2013 retreat objective | Staff | Goal Met! | X | X | X | Goal met due to increased focus in 2015 and 2016. Timeline shows sustained efforts / focus. |

| USVLT Known on the Land | | | | | | | |
|---|------------------------|-------|--------------|---|---|---|---|
| <p>Concern: We need to increase our visual recognition/ branding</p> <p>Goal: Expand USVLT's visibility "on the land" through signage, programming, & landowner involvement</p> | | | | | | | |
| Availability of land for teaching/ enjoyment | 2013 retreat objective | Staff | Goal not met | X | X | X | General consensus that this is an important item for sustained focus with partnership organizations such as Tin Mountain. Timeline shows sustained focus. |
| Design custom signs for well-visited preserves; roadside signs; etc. | | Staff | Goal not met | X | | | General consensus that both the design of and installation of signage is an important action item for nearterm focus. |
| Inform (by mail) neighbors of conserved lands to foster sense of community | 2013 retreat objective | Staff | Goal not met | | X | | General consensus that this is an important action item; slight postponement due to capacity issues. |

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|--|--|---------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|---|
| Initiate Signature Event | | | | | | | |
| <p>Concern: We need to expand our organization's visibility in the communities we serve and be recognized as a community-oriented non-profit</p> <p>Goal: To implement a signature event and/or grow current programming into a signature event that is the "Talk of the town"</p> | | | | | | | |
| Convene subcommittee meeting | 2011 SOP Objective 4.3 | Outreach Comm/ Devt Comm/ Staff | Goal Met! | | | | |
| Initiate planning | 2011 SOP Objective 4.3 | Outreach Comm/ Devt Comm/ Staff | In process | X | | | Planning is underway; timeline shows continued planning in immediate near-term. |
| Host event | 2011 SOP Objective 4.3 | Outreach Comm/ Devt Comm/ Staff | | X | | | Timeline shows execution of goal within 3 years. |
| Membership Growth | | | | | | | |
| <p>Concern: Membership is core to what we do; without strong membership, we will lose momentum/ focus/ funds</p> <p>Goal: To continue to grow our membership as both our "core community" and our most reliable source of income</p> | | | | | | | |
| Grow membership 5-10% annually for five years | 2011 SOP objective 4.1; 2013 retreat objective | Devt Comm/ Outreach Comm/ Staff | 520 | 600 | 660 | 1,030 | Former goal of 15-20 percent growth was lowered based on feedback and track record of successful membership campaigns; strongest growth of membership tied to new land projects for which we fundraise; growth rate adjusted downward due to capacity issues and availability of such community-oriented fundraising projects. Timeline shows sustained focus at 5% growth in years 1-5, per original goal, and then with similar trajectory out to 10-year mark. |
| Outreach events to non-constituents (library/ rotary/ etc.) - 4x/yr | 2011 SOP objective 4.1; 2013 retreat objective | Devt Comm/ Outreach Comm/ Staff | Goal Partially Met | X | X | X | Easy, low-hanging fruit. Encourage Board members to use existing peer networks that would result in enlisting staff (or Board) to give presentations, etc. Timeline shows nearterm action and sustained focus. |
| Maine residents - targeted mailing | 2011 SOP objective 4.1; 2013 retreat objective | Devt Comm/ Outreach Comm/ Staff | Goal not met | X | X | | Timeline shows nearterm action. |
| Younger/ recreational communities - targeted focus on inclusiveness between groups/ clubs/ other 501(c3) | 2011 SOP objective 4.1; 2013 retreat objective | Devt Comm/ Outreach Comm/ Staff | Goal Partially Met | X | X | X | Recently established links with Mtn Bking/ Climbing community, mostly due to Board member cross-over and EES events; Timeline shows sustained efforts to cultivate these relationships. |
| Business Partnerships | | | | | | | |
| <p>Concern: With a strong retail economy, we need to continue to grow our business partners to remain healthy/ seen/ known</p> <p>Goal: To continue to grow our business partnership program</p> | | | | | | | |
| Recruit 1 Contribute to Place partners / yr | 2011 SOP Action 4.5.5; 2013 retreat objective | Staff | Goal Partially Met | X | X | X | Great success to date with respect to outreach (due to hiring Devt Associate), but no one has signed up for the opt-out CTP program. Reduced goal from 2 new CTP partners/ yr to 1 based on feedback. Timeline shows immediate and sustained efforts. |
| Recruit 6 other biz partners (1% for the planet, Valley-Made, etc.) | 2011 SOP Action 4.5.5; 2013 retreat objective | Staff | Goal Partially Met | X | X | X | Hiring Devt Associate has made these goals achievable. Timeline shows immediate and sustained efforts. |
| Strengthen partnerships by providing resources/ support/ training | 2011 SOP Action 4.5.5; 2013 retreat objective | Staff | Goal Met! | X | X | X | Hiring Devt Associate has made these goals achievable. Timeline shows immediate and sustained efforts. |

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|---|---|------------------------------|------------------|--|----------------------|-----------------------|--|
| 6. SPECIAL FOCUS AREAS | | | | | | | |
| Agriculture | | | | | | | |
| <p>Concern: We need to play an active role in keeping farmland in farming, and recruiting new farmers to the area; saving land is only first step</p> <p>Goal: To facilitate easy access to land (\$, logistics, support); to bridge other org's conversations around this topic</p> | | | | | | | |
| Actively research what other area orgs are doing to facilitate access to the land | 2015 retreat objective | Contract employee | Goal Met! | | | | Timeline not needed (discrete goal met). |
| Conduct gap analysis of action needed in this area | 2015 retreat objective | Contract employee | Goal Met! | | | | Timeline not needed (discrete goal met). |
| Create plan of action / seek funding/ hire position to address needs discovered in gap analysis | 2015 retreat objective | Ag Steering Comm | Goal Met! | | | | Timeline not needed (discrete goal met). |
| Continue to conserve farmland and facilitate farmland access | 2015 retreat objective; de facto (core mission) | Land Committee | In process | <i>See Section 1 - "Saving Land: Conservation Impact" for metrics associated with increased focus on this topic.</i> | | | |
| Water | | | | | | | |
| <p>Concern: Water pollution (point-source and non-point-source) and extraction are growing concerns as we learn more about our regional aquifer and its importance in the communities we serve</p> <p>Goal: To become conversant with water extraction and pollution (surface water and groundwater) issues & seek partnerships for solutions</p> | | | | | | | |
| Organize 2+ specific Board/ staff workshops with trusted/ knowledgeable experts | 2015 retreat objective | SACo/ Water committee (new?) | Goal not met | X | | | Near-term action, as necessary. |
| Actively research what other area orgs are doing to study water extraction and any policy action taken to date | 2015 retreat objective | SACo/ Water committee (new?) | Goal Met! | | | | Timeline not needed (discrete goal met). |
| Conduct gap analysis of action needed in this area | 2015 retreat objective | SACo/ Water committee (new?) | In process | X | | | Near-term action, as necessary. |
| Create plan of action / seek funding/ hire position to address needs discovered in gap analysis | 2015 retreat objective | SACo/ Water committee (new?) | In process | X | | | Near-term action, as necessary. |
| Continue to conserve lands with highly valuable water-related resources (wetlands, river frontage, etc.) | 2015 retreat objective; de facto (core mission) | Land Committee | In process | <i>See Section 1 - "Saving Land: Conservation Impact" for metrics associated with increased focus on this topic.</i> | | | |

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|--|---------|--|--------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|---|
| 7. ORGANIZATIONAL HOUSEKEEPING | | | | | | | |
| Policy, Procedure & Standard Template Revisions | | | | | | | |
| <p>Concern: We need to ensure that our policies, procedures and template documents reflect what we do. Goal: To ensure proper organizational function, keep templates, SOPs and policies current</p> | | | | | | | |
| Together with annual review of Board binder, review Board-approved policies and update | new | Staff/ Exec Comm | Goal not met | X | X | X | Timeline shows near-term and sustained focus. |
| Update Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) annually (eg the "admin process document") and create new SOPs as needed/warranted | new | Staff/ Exec Comm | Goal not met | X | X | X | Timeline shows near-term and sustained focus. |
| Periodically review CE templates, introductory landowner packet information, fundraising materials & solicitation handouts, membership forms, timesheets, milage and reimbursement sheets, etc. | new | Staff/ Exec Comm | Goal not met | X | X | X | Timeline shows near-term and sustained focus. |
| Annual Work Plans | | | | | | | |
| <p>Concern: Committees and staff need clear goals outlined in order to streamline work and complete long-delayed tasks Goal: To create committee & staff work plans on an annual basis</p> | | | | | | | |
| Implement staff work plans, based on newly adopted Strategic Organizational Plan | new | Staff/ Exec Comm | Goal not met | X | X | X | Timeline shows near-term and sustained focus. |
| Implement committee work plans, based on the newly adopted Strategic Organizational Plan | new | Land Comm & Devt Comm with staff input | Goal not met | X | X | X | Timeline shows near-term and sustained focus. |
| Re-Accreditation | | | | | | | |
| <p>Concern: We should be prepared for re-accreditation in 2020 Goal: Start work involved in re-accreditation early to ensure smooth application process.</p> | | | | | | | |
| Review new/ updated Standards & Practices as published by LTA | new | Staff/ Exec Comm | Goal not met | X | | | Timeline shows near-term and sustained focus. |
| Prepare re-accreditation application | new | Staff/ Exec Comm | Goal not met | | X | | Timeline shows focus at time of re-accreditation (2020) |
| Succession Planning | | | | | | | |
| <p>Concern: We should be prepared for the imminent or eventual departure of key staff & Board (and, this is likely to be a new LTA requirement/ new element of Standards & Practices) Goal: To create a Succession Plan that meets LTA's requirements and is useful and particular to USVLT</p> | | | | | | | |
| Review template documents, as available | new | Staff/ Exec Comm | Goal not met | X | | | Near-term action, as necessary. |
| Work with Executive Committee to craft a Succession Plan for Board adoption | new | Staff/ Exec Comm | Goal not met | | X | | Timeline shows focus at time of re-accreditation (2020) |

*** EXPLANATION OF ACRONYMS**

AYO = Assessing Your Organization, conducted by the Executive Committee in 2014

SOP = Strategic Organization Plan, last official update November 2011

NRI = Natural Resource Inventory, published in 2012, synonymous with "Phase I" of the SCP

SCP = Strategic Conservation Planning process (as distinct from the SOP process), which occurred from 2010 through 2013

RDM = Resource Data Model, the GIS-based computer model that produced weighted scores for the Focus Areas identified in the NRI

LTA = Land Trust Alliance, a national land conservation oversight non-profit, which produces Standards and Practices and runs the independent Accreditation Commission