

# Elk Valley Regional Land Trust

## Strategic Plan 2020 – 2025

### Our Vision

We see a future in which wildlife corridors and connected refuges are conserved on both the eastern and western slopes of the Elk Valley, and in which recreational use is permitted subject to the conservation imperative.

### Our Mission

Our mission is to acquire the lands, or rights in lands, necessary to protect continuous forest corridors in the Elk Valley, and the native animal and plant species within them.

### Our Values

Our core values are conservation, connectivity, stewardship and collaboration

**Conservation:** Our first and primary commitment is to the conservation of the natural environment in the Elk Valley, which has nourished wildlife and human life for thousands of years. We are committed to conserving that which exists, rehabilitating that which has been lost, and preserving a restored natural environment for future generations of all life.

**Connectivity:** We recognize that connectivity corridors are key to maintaining genetic diversity in wildlife populations. The Elk Valley is one of the most important connectivity corridors in the North America. We are specifically committed to ensuring that connectivity corridors in the Valley are conserved in preserved,

**Stewardship:** We believe that stewardship is the application of empirical and indigenous knowledge to the problems posed at the interface of the natural environment and the human environment. We believe that many of those problems are solvable by the application of knowledge, and that where there are not, it must be resolved in favour of the natural environment.

**Collaboration:** We know that working collaboratively can achieve greater impact We actively nurture relationships with volunteers, donors, staff, and community partners whose mandates and undertaking

**Trust:** Stewards are fiduciaries. The relationships which they enter involve trust and confidence. We believe that acting on the basis of the best available empirical knowledge, and where available indigenous knowledge, provides the foundation for trust and confidence in our conduct. We will always act on the basis of the best available evidence.

### Strategic Objectives

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As a newly formed land trust, operating in a relatively limited geographic area, we have identified four strategic objectives which will guide our work over the next five years. These objectives take particular account of the context of the Elk Valley, the 2018 Cumulative Effects Management Study, and Dr. Lambs Report of

### *Strategic Objective #1 - Establish a Strong Organizational Footing*

Establish EVRLT as a locally based and locally focused non-profit and charitable organization, which is integrated to the extent possible into the conservation and user fabric of the Valley.

This will be accomplished by:

- (a) incorporating the organization as a non-profit
- (b) prosecuting an application for and securing charitable status with CRA
- (c) prosecuting an application for and securing registration as an authorized recipient under the federal Eco-Gift program
- (d) broadening EVRLT's base in the community by inviting all conservation and user based organizations in the Valley to appoint directors to the EVRLT Board
- (e) amending EVRLT's bylaws to ensure that all member organizations can exercise an effective voice
- (f) address the perception that conservation and recreational use cannot be reconciled, that true conservationists cannot be recreationalists, and that recreational lists cannot be conservationists.
- (g) amending existing policies to provide more effective control over the organization's finances, its acquisition programs, and its stewardship program
- (h) continuing ongoing efforts to establish close and ongoing relations with indigenous peoples, whether in the Tobacco Plains Band, the Ktunaxa National Council, or both

### *Strategic Objective #2 - Identify, Secure and Protect Lands*

Broaden EVRLT's acquisition target from a single parcel of 8000 ha on the eastern slope of the Elk Valley to include multiple properties within the conductivity corridor on the western slope of the Valley.

This will be accomplished by;

- (a) articulating and defining a land acquisition process, criteria and strategy applicable to multiple properties;
- (b) identifying the conductivity corridor or "envelope" on the Western slope of the Elk Valley;

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- (c) identifying properties and the ownership of properties within that envelope;
- (d) prioritizing the acquisition of properties or rights in properties;
- (e) acquainting owners and other stakeholders with the tools available to, and benefits of dealing with, a land trust
- (f) opening discussions with owners and other stakeholders with a view to acquiring rights
- (g) acquiring such properties, or rights in such properties, as the trust's financial circumstances permit, recognizing that stewardship requires the expenditure of both capital and operating costs.

***Strategic Objective #3 - Establishing a Firm Financial Footing***

EVRLT has historically been funded by its initiating directors. In order to succeed in its mission EVRLT must establish outside sources of ongoing funding for operating expenses, length securement, and ongoing stewardship.

This will be accomplished by:

- (a) building relationships with local governments and grant making foundations
- (b) remodelling and relaunching EVRLT's social media presence,
- (c) surveying the range of income sources available to land trusts, selecting those sources which are most appropriate EVRLT's mission in the ELK Valley, and appealing to those sources directly
- (d) developing a local communications campaign that educates full and part-time residents as to the threats faced (per the 2018 Cumulative Effects Study), and the utility of a land trust in addressing those threats

**Implementing the Plan**

The EVRLT Board of the Directors looks forward to implementing this Plan, and to that end has retained its first Executive Director. The Board undertakes to:

- (a) support the Executive Director in the creation of a securement strategy, fund development plan, and operational plan by end of 2020.
- (b) monitor and measure effectiveness of the operational plan on a quarterly basis.
- (c) communicate progress to stakeholders on an annual basis.,
- (d) complete an annual review of the strategic plan to amend objectives and strategies as needed, and to
- (e) ensure measures to meet objectives are reflected in the annual operational plans and budgets.

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