

Conservation First Policy

Policy Name	Conservation First Policy
Date Adopted by Board	September 9, 2022
Date Last Reviewed	

1. Conservation

The mission of the Land Trust is to conserve and protect the natural environment in the Elk Valley. To that end, it acquires lands, or rights in lands, and manages those lands, for the purpose of conserving, rehabilitating and protecting the natural environment, in all of its aspects. To that end, the Land Trust will, with the advice of scientists and other experts, develop a Stewardship Plan and the Management Plan for each property which it acquires.

2. Recreational Use

The Land Trust also seeks to ensure that lands which have historically been used for recreational purposes by members of the public remain available for such use, if and to the extent that scientific evidence establishes that the use (i) is sustainable in that it is not damaging to the health and diversity of the natural environment, (ii) consistent with the conservation, rehabilitation and preservation goals that the Trust articulates in the Stewardship Plans which it develops in respect of each property, and (iii) consistent with such limitations on use as are imposed in a management plan.

3. Conservation First Principle

The Land Trusts acquires, conserves, preserves and operates lands on a Conservation First Principle. Specifically, the Land Trust will not permit a any use to be made of land which is not sustainable, in the sense that it is materially damaging to the natural environment or wildlife, whether in itself or cumulatively together with any other cause, or to Trust's efforts to conserve, rehabilitate and protect the natural environment or wildlife on those lands.

4. Exceptions To The Conservation First Principle

The Land Trust recognizes two exceptions to the Conservation First Principle.

a. Trade Lands

The first exception relates to "trade lands", which are that lands are gifted to the Land Trust but which, in the judgement of the Land Trust, do not meet its criteria for acquisition for the purpose of conservation, rehabilitation or preservation. Trade lands are acquired for the purposes of subsequent resale.

b. Zoned Lands

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The second exception relates to “zoned lands”. These are areas within a parcel that are or may be zoned by municipal or regional governments for uses other than conservation (herein, “zoned lands”).

The Land Trust may except zoned lands from the Conservation First Principle and enter into agreements to monetize or permit zoned lands to be monetized **if and only if a special majority consisting of not less than three quarters of the members of the Board of the Trust** are satisfied that:

- The objective of acquiring, conserving, rehabilitating or preserving the property as a whole cannot be achieved without monetizing the zoned lands.
- The portion of the property excepted from the Conservation First Principle does not exceed 10% of the area of the property acquired as a whole.
- The activity to be carried out on the zoned lands will not materially impact the conservation, rehabilitation and preservation values and objectives established by a draft Stewardship Plan for the balance of the property
- The activity will not materially impact the functioning of a wildlife corridor.
- The activity will be carried out a manner that minimizes impacts on the natural environment generally.

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