



NORTHCOAST REGIONAL LAND TRUST



STRATEGIC PLAN 2026 – 2030



707.822.2242 | P.O. Box 398 Bayside, CA 95524 | www.ncrlt.org



NORTHCOAST REGIONAL LAND TRUST

VISION

A resilient future for northwestern California communities, where productive landscapes, diverse habitats, healthy watersheds, and rural livelihoods are safeguarded by lasting care for the land.

MISSION

The Northcoast Regional Land Trust is committed to conserving northwestern California’s wild and working landscapes through voluntary partnerships that promote stewardship, sustain local economies, and protect land for its natural, educational, scenic, and historic values.

STATEMENT OF ETHICS

Adopted: December 12, 2025

Serving the tri-county region of Humboldt, Trinity, and Del Norte counties, the Northcoast Regional Land Trust’s work is grounded in a long-term vision for conservation—guided by credibility, collaboration, and care for the land. We honor the trust placed in us by landowners, donors, and the public by nurturing lasting relationships and maintaining a long-term commitment to the lands we protect.

As a nonprofit public benefit organization, we recognize our obligation to serve the public good. We uphold the highest professional and ethical standards, aligning our work with Land Trust Accreditation Commission Requirements and the Land Trust Alliance’s Standards and Practices. We work cooperatively with landowners, partner organizations, and government agencies to achieve lasting, high-quality conservation outcomes. We act with integrity, avoid conflicts of interest, and ensure that no improper private benefit is provided to our board members, staff, or others. We are committed to transparency, fiscal responsibility, and building a strong, enduring land trust for future generations.



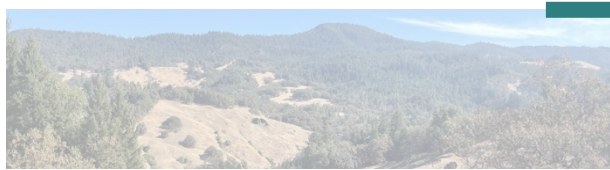
INTRODUCTION

The Northcoast Regional Land Trust represents a community that deeply values its land, water, and quality of life. With a geographic focus in Humboldt, Trinity, and Del Norte Counties, our organization is committed to the conservation and responsible stewardship of land in northwestern California, including the protection and restoration of healthy wildlife habitats, water quality, and biodiversity. We support not only the long-term economic vitality of our communities, our working lands, and our agricultural producers, but also an increasing reliance on local resources and the production of healthy local food. We promote a land ethic that involves people caring for land and water, respects long-term relationships to the land, and supports land-based livelihoods.

Inherent in our work is a spirit of collaboration. We lead by bringing together diverse community members to work toward a sustainable future for our region. By seeking common ground, identifying shared goals, and acting on areas of agreement, we maintain valuable relationships and continually build new partnerships to protect the places and livelihoods our community values so deeply.

This Strategic Plan is an update of a five-year plan originally developed in 2010 and updated in 2015 and 2020. It considers the progress made towards our original goals and objectives, the lessons learned, and our current understanding of the challenges and opportunities ahead. This document is intended for use by the Northcoast Regional Land Trust board, advisors, and staff, as well as our conservation partners, our supporters, and others interested in the work of the organization.

This Strategic Plan is divided into themes, goals, and activities. Themes are overarching organizational priorities to advance our mission, goals are the results we aim to achieve, and activities are the means by which we will achieve those goals. This document is organized accordingly based on three core themes:



Leading in Land Conservation and Stewardship in the Region



Building Community for Conservation



Increasing Organizational and Financial Sustainability



Leading in Land Conservation and Stewardship in the Region

GOAL 1.A: Continue to build a network of conserved farmlands, rangelands, forestlands and diverse habitats that support the long-term ecological and economic functionality of the region.

ACTIVITIES

1. Pursue the development and completion of at least three conservation easement projects that will protect interconnected landscapes, productive resource lands, and ecologically important habitats.
2. Pursue the strategic acquisition of properties that represent both ecological and working land values where such an acquisition is determined to be the best approach to achieve long-term conservation and stewardship goals.
3. Accept land donations and planned gifts of land that are determined by the Board to be strategically appropriate and will either directly or indirectly support land conservation.
4. Build relationships with landowner partners and consult with interested landowners about conservation options with NRLT.
5. Conduct annual, on-the-ground monitoring of all conservation properties to ensure that conservation values are being upheld and relationships with landowners and funding partners are being maintained.
6. Initiate conservation planning, policy advocacy, and landscape-level coordination on an as-needed basis to more successfully facilitate conservation successes in our region.
7. Develop a long-term plan for NRLT's Hansis Forest Property.
8. Develop a conservation easement for and strategically divest of NRLT's Martin Slough Property.

GOAL 1.B: Continue to facilitate habitat restoration and land stewardship projects that provide outcomes important to ecological resilience, resource production, natural diversity, and other public benefits.

ACTIVITIES

1. Engage in habitat restoration and stewardship projects that model innovative forms of land management such as fuels reduction, prescribed fire, wetland restoration, and oak woodland restoration. Prioritize projects that are in collaboration with landowner partners.



2. Continue to support and engage with the landowner-led Redwood Creek estuary restoration project. Support conservation easement development and strategic divestment of NRLT’s McNamara Dairy property, ideally as part of the Redwood Creek estuary restoration project.
3. Facilitate continued stewardship and restoration of Freshwater Farms Reserve including the Wood Creek Phase III Restoration Project.
4. Maintain and regularly update the management plan for Freshwater Farms Reserve and any other property where NRLT will retain a long-term interest. Engage in management and stewardship activities as necessary across all NRLT-held fee properties.
5. Support projects that remediate legacy land-use impacts (including former cannabis cultivation) to restore compatible working land uses as well as ecological connectivity and watershed function.

GOAL 1.C: Build and maintain lasting relationships with landowners, land managers, funding partners, government agencies, tribes, volunteers, and other key partners to more successfully leverage resources and attain shared conservation goals.

ACTIVITIES

1. Engage and seek opportunities to partner with tribal groups and a broad cross-section of community organizations on conservation and restoration projects.
2. Participate in land trust consortia such as the Land Trust Alliance, California Council of Land Trusts, and the Northern Region Council of California Land Trusts to stay abreast of current issues, learn from and support peers, and take collective action towards shared goals.
3. Participate in discussions at the local, state, and national levels about issues that directly relate to NRLT’s ability to carry out our mission; collaborate with other partners to support relevant advocacy efforts, funding mechanisms, policy positions, programs, and legislation.
4. Collaborate with local partners to plan for and take action to address long-term ecological challenges such as sea level rise, wildfire, drought, and climate change.
5. Support local land trusts and other community organizations, especially those without paid staff or with limited resources, by providing information and other pertinent resources.





Building Community for Conservation

GOAL 2.A: Provide opportunities for people to connect with wild and working landscapes, learn about land conservation and stewardship, and deepen community support for carrying out NRLT’s mission.

ACTIVITIES

1. As part of NRLT’s annual and 5-year fund development planning processes, assess existing outreach and community engagement programs and activities, identify strategies to increase engagement and deepen connections to NRLT’s work, and develop metrics to evaluate success.
2. Provide opportunities for community members to connect with and learn about wild and working lands including educational field trips, interpretive walks, volunteer stewardship events, informational presentations, research projects, and citizen science activities.
3. Provide a range of educational experiences for people of all ages including the topics of land stewardship, agriculture, resource production, habitat restoration, and sea level rise around Humboldt Bay.
4. Work with key partners to further develop Freshwater Farms Reserve as a welcoming and inclusive community resource that connects people to NRLT’s work, enables people to connect to the outdoors, and provides a learning site for all ages.
5. Partner with local educational institutions and provide opportunities for learning and research.
6. Increase opportunities for people to connect with conservation properties beyond Freshwater Farms Reserve in collaboration with interested landowner partners.

GOAL 2.B: Maintain and improve outreach materials across various platforms to build credibility, increase recognition, and broaden support for NRLT’s mission and programmatic priorities.

ACTIVITIES

1. Develop compelling narratives and engaging multi-media experiences such as through written, audio, and visual media that articulate both the scope and significance of NRLT’s work.



2. Provide regular media communications that inform and educate the community about conservation, stewardship, and noteworthy NRLT activities and accomplishments.
3. Maintain a professional, up-to-date, and engaging website and social media presence.

GOAL 2.C: Create education and engagement opportunities for landowners and other community members about the ecological and social benefits of protecting and stewarding wild and working lands.

ACTIVITIES

1. Develop, maintain, and provide informational resources (including links to programs and services) for landowners and other community partners interested in land conservation and stewardship. Prioritize updating NRLT's Guide for Landowners, website, and key print materials.
2. Lead and/or support at least one workshop per year on average tailored to the needs and interests of landowners including topics such as conservation, stewardship, and estate planning options.
3. Lead and/or support at least one outreach activity per year on average in geographic areas not typically served in our tri-county region.
4. Strategically engage in and, as funding allows, seek opportunities to conduct landowner and community engagement processes to provide a platform for connection and build a shared vision.

GOAL 2.D: Broaden NRLT's community of support through engagement opportunities that support a culture of collaboration, appreciation for diversity, and a commitment to inclusion.

ACTIVITIES

1. Maintain an inclusive organizational culture where diverse perspectives can be shared, listened to, and respected.
2. Engage the diverse communities we serve by providing varied and accessible educational, recreational, and volunteer opportunities.
3. Develop educational materials in coordination with diverse partners to better reflect local cultural values, practices, and traditions.
4. Continue to cultivate lasting relationships and engage in collaborative programs and activities with tribes, underserved rural communities, and diverse community groups.
5. Provide training and engagement opportunities for staff, board members, and advisors to support a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion.



Increasing Organizational and Financial Sustainability

GOAL 3.A: Support and maintain an engaged, capable Board of Directors and organizational Advisors.

ACTIVITIES

1. Actively maintain a balance of perspectives, expertise, and regional representation among board members and advisors through strategic ongoing recruitment of community leaders.
2. Educate and inspire board members and advisors through regular opportunities to learn about NRLT’s work including through visits to conservation properties.
3. Establish internal mechanisms (such as completed Statements of Commitment) that allow board members and advisors to be actively involved and achieve their commitments.
4. Provide regular opportunities to the board of directors and advisors to build governance and fundraising skills, and keep current on land conservation tools, trends, and funding opportunities.

GOAL 3.B: Support, retain, and recruit high-quality, professional staff.

ACTIVITIES

1. Maintain open communication and foster ongoing opportunities for dialogue between the Executive Director, supervisors, and staff related to performance, workload, and organizational priorities including through regular staff meetings, team check-ins, and annual evaluations.
2. Engage staff in developing annual employee work plans, prioritizing responsibilities, and assessing progress on a regular basis. Provide staff with opportunities to be creative within their respective work plans and ensure alignment with this Strategic Plan.
3. Maintain accurate and up-to-date position descriptions to delineate clear roles, responsibilities, and expectations.
4. Continually assess staffing levels and staffing structures to maintain realistic workloads and expectations of staff, achieve delineated goals and deliverables, and provide sufficient cross training to insulate the organization in times of change.



5. Annually assess and provide competitive wages, benefit packages, and reward staff for their positive contributions. Strive to provide compensation packages that are competitive with commensurate positions in the nonprofit, private, and public sectors.
6. Develop and maintain a wage schedule for key positions to clearly show opportunities for advancement in the organization and support budget processes.
7. Continually assess staff training needs and encourage staff members to pursue professional development opportunities.
8. Assess and ensure that staff are provided the necessary facilities, infrastructure, and resources to professionally implement programs. Maintain an office space of sufficient size to comfortably accommodate NRLT personnel and activities.

GOAL 3.C: Maintain internal processes that foster organizational focus, effectiveness, and stability.

ACTIVITIES

1. Update NRLT's Strategic Plan, Regional Atlas (formerly the Regional Action Plan), and Fund Development and Community Engagement Plan at least every five years and review annually to ensure that NRLT programs and activities are aligned.
2. Develop an annual Work Plan consistent with goals set forth in NRLT's Strategic Plan, Regional Action Plan, and Fund Development and Community Engagement Plan.
3. Maintain accreditation through the Land Trust Accreditation Commission; review annually and ensure alignment with NRLT Standards & Practices, Land Trust Alliance Standards & Practices, and Land Trust Accreditation Requirements.
4. Develop and maintain strong internal controls to safeguard assets, minimize risks, and increase operational efficiency.
5. Review bylaws and governing documents annually to maintain familiarity; take corrective action as necessary.
6. Maintain institutional memory through thoughtful recruitment and retention of NRLT's board of directors, advisors, and staff.

GOAL 3.D: Increase financial capacity to support the organization and its programmatic priorities.

ACTIVITIES

1. Conduct annual and long-term financial planning to set goals, make informed decisions, and secure the resources necessary to carry out our mission and implement the Strategic Plan.



2. Annually assess and maintain diverse funding sources (e.g., individual giving, government grants, foundation grants, annual celebration, fee for service contracts) so as not to become overly reliant on any one revenue source.
3. Emphasize fund development as a core organizational activity and emphasize long-term relationships in all efforts to raise funds.
4. Develop the capabilities of, and a culture of fundraising in, the board of directors, advisors, and staff.
5. Achieve 100% board member and advisor giving with each individual annually contributing a personally significant cash gift to NRLT.



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