

Hunterdon Land Trust
Strategic Plan 2018-2022

IDENTITY STATEMENT

MISSION

Hunterdon Land Trust preserves the integrity of the rural landscapes in the Hunterdon County region by protecting and enhancing natural resources, and the cultural landscape of the historic Dvoor Farm, for public enjoyment and education.

VISION

Hunterdon Land Trust protects the most significant natural and cultural resources in the region that sustain healthy communities. If successful, the following is true:

The Hunterdon County region sustains a healthy lifestyle and embodies a unique sense of place. Its rural heritage and resilient natural systems that support and define the character of the region endure to provide recreational opportunities, local food, diverse wildlife habitat, scenic views, and ecological services, including clean air and water as well as climate and flood control. Current and future generations appreciate our rural heritage and the importance of preservation through connections to the cultural landscape of the historic Dvoor Farm, a model destination for education, recreation, and agritourism. Community members are not only connected to their heritage but also to each other and enjoy a sense of belonging.

COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

HLT has three assets that largely distinguish its competitive advantage.

Local Scope: HLT executes our work locally. While similar entities work throughout the region, HLT enjoys the status of being the premier land trust in Hunterdon County with deeper relationships to local partners and landowners than competitors. HLT has a strong reputation as a good organizational partner and collaborator. Given our scope of work, HLT has a unique opportunity to create a sense of community for those contributing to our mission-driven work.

Dvoor Farm: The historic Dvoor Farm, as HLT headquarters, is remarkable not only as a highly visible and beloved landmark of the community, but also for its unique ability to demonstrate all aspects of the work undertaken by HLT. The site, listed on both the New Jersey and National Register of Historic Places embodies the agricultural legacy of the region. In addition to supporting the farmers' market, the preserved 40-acre site has a cluster of 19th- and early 20th-century barns and a 1798 stone farmhouse that together illustrate the evolution of New Jersey's agricultural heritage. Management of the diverse natural landscape, including old-growth forest, a native grassland meadow and wetlands that protect the Walnut Brook, demonstrates best practice to educate and inspire visitors. The Dvoor Farm is representative of what the community desires to save and what HLT strives to protect. In total, the amenities and educational programming on site enhance visitors' appreciation of the value of HLT's work in the community. As a tourism destination, Dvoor Farm has the potential to financially support not only its own operations and maintenance but also the integrated suite of programs HLT executes.

Farmers' Market: To further support the region's agricultural legacy, Hunterdon Land Trust operates a producers'-only farmers' market at the historic Dvoor Farm. While no other land trust in the region hosts a market, most other markets are also not operated based on the same model. This market provides a unique experience on a historic preserved farm and has remained a successful endeavor over ten years. This asset

supports a strong rural economy, helps the farmers make a living and stay on their land to be good stewards of the resources HLT protects, and engages the public to appreciate the value of our work and join our efforts.

STRATEGY

(Goal) Strategic Priority 1: Protect biodiversity and ecological services to ensure resiliency of natural systems.

Programmatic Objective:

1. Preserve natural lands to create greenways that protect critical natural resources to sustain clean water and air, provide climate and flood control, and support diverse wildlife habitat.

Outcome:

Permanently preserve natural lands that include at least 800 acres of land with fresh water rankings of high importance or better and/or ecological rankings of high priority or better in the Conservation Blueprint map.

Operational Objective:

1. Implement best practices according to the Land Trust Alliance's updated Standards and Practices (2017).

Outcomes:

- Successfully renew HLT's Accreditation in 2019.
- Improve recordkeeping by fully inventorying land projects, management plans for fee-owned preserves, and HLT's obligations to properties owned by partners to create efficient tracking and management processes.

(Goal) Strategic Priority 2: Advance the value of preservation and foster a conservation ethic to increase stewardship capacity and grow support for HLT's work.

Programmatic Objectives:

1. Build an informed constituency.

Outcomes:

- Overhaul HLT website to reach mobile consumers, improve navigation, and support regular content updates.
- Engage new audiences and build partnerships through social media; reach 4500 total followers.
- Increase mailing list by 250 contacts.

2. Train Citizen Stewards (those who appreciate the natural and cultural heritage of the region and are informed and empowered to act to protect it).

Outcomes:

- Host 20 events/workshops to engage community in hands-on learning opportunities.

- Include actionable items in all communications.
 - Create 3 organized volunteer maintenance teams for fee-owned properties led by a committee member or other volunteer.
3. Build community through enhanced public access to preserved resources.

Outcomes:

- Ensure all preserves have clearly marked public access with signage and materials (e.g. map guides) to advertise such to the public.
- Implement the Dvoor Farm site plan to more fully utilize it as a model of the cultural landscape and a community destination for education and recreation; one additional facility (other than wagon house) is under development to be made publicly accessible.
- Host 10 events/workshops to promote appreciation for preserved resources.
- Host a well-attended producers'-only farmers' market with weekly average car counts of at least 430.

Organizational Objective:

1. Diversify both human and financial resources.

Outcomes:

- Add at least 10 individuals to committees and/or the Board to meet needs as identified by the Governance Committee.
- Increase individual giving by 20% from 2017 baseline.

(Goal) Strategic Priority 3: Support the rural economy of the region to enhance its agricultural viability.

Programmatic Objectives:

1. Protect quality farmland as defined by state and county plans and federal, state, and local funding sources.

Outcome:

- Permanently preserve 300 acres of farmland.

2. Support local farmers to promote successful and sustainable stewardship of farmland to ensure the resource remains in active use.

Outcome:

- Host a producers'-only farmers' market with a minimum of 15 farmer vendors.