Coastal Mountains Land Trust

Outreach Practices
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1. Purpose

The purpose of these Practices is to document the methods and actions taken to implement the Policies of the Board of Directors concerning Outreach and Educational activities.

2. Adoption and Revision of Practices

Staff prepare these Practices to document the processes of implementing the Policies of the Board. The Executive Committee reviews these Practices for consistency with Board Policies and the strategic plans of the Land Trust.

3. Goals and Objectives

The core goals of our Outreach program are to inform the public about the values of land conservation and the Land Trust program and to engage the public in experiencing and enjoying natural lands, as stated in our mission. These values include:

- Habitat protection
- Biological diversity
- Forest, water and agricultural resources
- Public access
- Scenic resources

Objectives of the Outreach program include:

- promoting public awareness of these values to generate broad-based knowledge and support by the community for the Land Trust's program;
- promoting public awareness of the essential role the Land Trust plays in the communities of our service region; and
- increasing awareness of the low-impact public recreation possibilities on conservation lands in the region.

The Outreach program is not a stand alone set of activities, but is, in essence, an extension of all the Land Trust programs into the public domain, and thus should be considered an ongoing role of both Board and staff in all instances of public interaction. Presently, the effectiveness of the Outreach program is assessed only by the indirectly related measures of increase in and retention of membership, and by attendance at events. As other more direct measurement methods are designed, and when feasible to be implemented, such measures could provide the Land Trust with more efficient and effective Outreach actions.

4. Implementation

The events program is planned and managed by the Membership Coordinator, with the assistance of volunteers and invited presenters and event leaders. Fees are not charged for outreach events, except in the few cases where the cost of the event is high enough to require reimbursement from participants in the event.

Other outreach activities such as the website, preserve trail maps, meetings with abutters to new preserves, etc. are planned and implemented by the Membership Coordinator in association with appropriate staff. The newsletter is developed by staff, a Board member editor, and a contracted designer.

5. Events Calendar

5.1 Event Criteria

The programs that comprise the yearly Events Calendar are selected to fulfill the goals and objectives stated in Section 3.

The overall Events Calendar should represent a diversity of topics, take place throughout the service region, and have some connection to land conservation, particularly the actual work of the Land Trust, as well as take place whenever possible and appropriate on our conservation lands. Selection of topics that may be controversial should comply with Board policy on public issues.

5.2 Calendar Preparation

All ideas for potential events are submitted to the Membership Coordinator. The Membership Coordinator then mulls and culls the various ideas, including popular events that have been held in past years, taking into consideration the above criteria as well as other activities of the Land Trust.

The draft calendar is prepared by the Membership Coordinator, in consultation with the Executive Director. The Membership Coordinator then arranges and coordinates each event, as well as coordinating Board and staff to attend particular events as the Land Trust representative. The calendar must be approved and fully completed by February 1 to be included in the first newsletter of the calendar year.

5.3 Event Publicity and Coordination

Prior to every Land Trust event, the Membership & Administrative Coordinator issues a press release (see 7.1, below).

When appropriate, event items are also sent to various newspaper calendars and posted on the local chamber of commerce website. The Events Calendar is included in each newsletter and on the Land Trust website, as well.

The publicity will make it clear to the public if advance registration and/or a fee is necessary for an event. All coordination of advance registration, fee collection, event cancellation or postponement, etc. is handled by the Membership Coordinator. S/he also makes any necessary arrangements for the speaker or leader of the event, and writes him or her a thank you note after the event has occurred.

5.4 Event Attendance

At least one Land Trust representative from the Board or staff is present at every Land Trust-sponsored event. This person is responsible for confirming attendance (if advance registration was necessary), ensuring that liability release forms (attached) are signed by participants, introducing the speaker or leader, briefly discussing the Land Trust and its connection to the event, pitching membership, providing the public with newsletters and/or other informational material, as well as generally representing the organization throughout the event. The representative will also carry the first aid kit.

6. Presentations

6.1 Informational Presentations

Land Trust representatives are sometimes asked by local organizations or town bodies such as a garden club, Rotary club, or conservation commission to do an informational presentation—a talk, Power Point presentation, slide show, etc. The Executive Director determines if this is appropriate, with regards to the Land Trust's mission, interests, and time management, and then confirms the most appropriate staff or Board member to do such a presentation.

Coordination of the presentation schedule, as well as use of presentation equipment and any display materials should be done through the Membership Coordinator.

Any stipend staff or Board may receive for such a presentation is signed over to the Land Trust or made as a direct donation to the Land Trust from the organization.

6.2 Presence at Other Events

The Land Trust is occasionally asked to participate in various fairs, festivals, conferences, or other extra-organizational events. The Executive Director determines if this is appropriate, with regards to the Land Trust's mission, interests, and time management, and then confirms the most appropriate staff or Board members to attend with the Land Trust booth or display.

For such events, the fold-out display (see 6.3 below) is adapted to the venue and displayed there along with supplementary materials. These may include newsletters, campaign brochures, maps, and volunteer sign-up sheets, as well as merchandise to be offered for sale if appropriate and allowed at the event.

The Membership Coordinator and other Board and/or staff also frequently attend monthly "After Hours" events at local businesses, sponsored by the two local chambers of commerce, in order to broaden our public presence and encourage business member support.

6.3 Fold-Out Display

The Land Trust possesses a big, portable, fold-out display to which various materials may be attached by Velcro. The display is thus adaptable for a particular event or presentation. A selection of information materials that may be used on the display is maintained by Land Trust staff and stored in the conference room. General items that are usually present on the display include a current map of the service region, the mission statement, and a current list of protected land totals. Other items that may be displayed include photographs of Land Trust properties and people enjoying them, maps, trail maps, campaign progress charts, newspaper clippings, and announcements of merchandise for sale.

6.4 Presentor Training

Staff will provide detailed instruction for those Board members interested in making presentations on behalf of the Land Trust. This instruction includes hands-on training with the Power Point projector and related equipment, review of the general introductory Power Point presentation and accompanying script, and a collection of Land Trust reference materials for background information. A potential presentor must be thoroughly grounded in these materials and familiar with operating the Power Point projector, as well as narrating the presentation and comfortably answering questions it may generate about the Land Trust. A staff member will accompany a new presentor for his/her first public presentation(s), until the new presentor is comfortable presenting solo.

7. Publicity

7.1 Press Releases

Press releases announcing Land Trust events, recent acquistions, and other significant news are written by Land Trust staff and submitted to the Executive Director for review and comment before being disseminated to appropriate media outlets (including the Land Trust's own website). The Land Trust attempts to maintain a regular presence in the local press, for name recognition, as well as to gain further support for our program.

All press is distributed from the Land Trust office by the Membership & Adminstrative Coordinator, who, when necessary, coordinates a press schedule with the Executive Director, or with the appropriate person at another organization in the case of jointly sponsored events.

All press should include appropriate contact information and event/news details, as well as a brief paragraph that states the Land Trust's mission. Photos included with press should be properly credited if not generated by Land Trust Board or staff.

With some exceptions determined by the Executive Director and with explicit donor permission, donation amounts are not included in any publicity.

When appropriate, calendar items are also sent to newspapers, radio stations, websites and other media outlets.

7.2 Inquiries from Media

The Executive Director or Membership and Administrative Coordinator generally respond to all calls, inquiries, requests for information, or interview requests from the press and other media, taking into consideration at all times landowner and donor confidentiality.

8. Internet

8.1 Email Outreach

Member email addresses are kept in the member's record in the membership database. Sharing of one's email address with the Land Trust is considered tacit approval for the Land Trust itself to use it, although email addresses are not sold or shared for any reason outside the Land Trust.

Occasionally, with the Executive Director's approval, the Land Trust may send out email messages to alert its members, or selected groups of its members, about unusual news, an upcoming special event, or an urgent action item.

8.2 Land Trust Website

The Land Trust website is maintained and updated on a regular basis by staff to keep it dynamic and up-to-date. Current core pages include:

- Mission
- Contact Us
- Membership
- Volunteer Info
- Recent News
- Conservation Lands
- Conservation Options
- Events Calendar
- Ducktrap Coalition
- Links
- Natural History Calendar
- Photo Gallery

The website also features buttons to make a secure donation or become a member, and downloadable pdf files of our most recent newsletters, the membership remittance envelope, the volunteer form, capital campaign brochures, and the planned giving brochure.

All content posted to the website is reviewed and approved by the Membership and Administrative Coordinator.

Donations and information requests made through the website are received directly and processed by the Membership & Administrative Coordinator.

8.3 Other Websites

The Land Trust maintains a presence on other websites, as well, including those of the Maine Land Trust Network, the Maine Association of Non-Profits, and the Camden-Rockport-Lincolnville Chamber of Commerce events calendar.

Entries on such websites are updated on a regular basis by the Membership & Administrative Coordinator.

9. Newsletter

9.1 Production

The Land Trust newsletter *Landscapes* is developed by staff, a Board member editor, and a contracted designer.

Landscapes is printed three times a year, in mid-March, mid-June, and early October, to correspond with our subsequent membership renewal/Annual Appeal mailings.

9.2 Distribution

All active members receive the newsletter, as well as various foundations, land owners in our campaign focus areas, members of the Ducktrap Coalition, and various other Maine land trusts.

In addition, newsletters are distributed for free on a regular basis at various public locations throughout the service region, including libraries, town offices, stores, chambers of commerce, and other appropriate venues. As stated above, newsletters are always available in conjunction with Land Trust presence at any public events, as well, including outings, talks, presentations, and along with the fold-out display.

9.3 Content

Final content of each newsletter is determined by the staff and Board member editor. However, some items present in every newsletter include:

- a header with our logo, address, and a list of towns in our service region
- our mission statement
- a list of current needs

- in-kind donation and volunteer acknowledgements
- Events Calendar
- information on our website
- general organizational information panel

Once a year the newsletter includes an insert that contains the entire membership list by category, a list of foundations and other supporting organizations, members of the Summit Circle, and memorial gifts. In addition, this insert includes reports to the membership on the annual financial and land conservation matters. This insert is considered our Annual Report, as required by the IRS.

10. Photographs

The Land Trust maintains an extensive collection of print and digital photographs and slides for outreach purposes. Print photographs and slides are collected and categorized by subject in three-ring binders available in the conference room. Digital photographs are maintained on individual staff computers, with some ideal photographs being archived on computer disks that are stored in a fireproof file. But primarily, all digital photographs suitable for general useage are stored in the "officeshare" file on a networked external hard drive. Staff should transfer appropriate photographs into this shared file on a regular and ongoing basis.

On disks and in the shared file, for easy identification purposes, photographs are named thus: PhotosubjectNumber-date.jpg; for instance, PerpallWetland1-5.15.05.jpg. Category folders include, but are not limited to, Bald & Ragged, Passy Greenway, Ducktrap Watershed, Beech Hill, Preserves, Easements, Flora, Fauna, People & Outings, Maps, and Volunteers.

Unless the photographer is a staff person, his/her permission is always solicited before a photograph may be used in the newsletter, on the website, or in other forms of outreach or publicity. Proper credit is included with the photograph, as well.

11. Preserve and Trail Outreach

11.1 Trail map brochures

Various trail map/preserve brochures have been developed by the Conservation Lands Manager to be shared with the general public. These may be distributed according to the Land Trust's public access practices, in which preserves are rated as to preferred amount of public usage. Trail map brochures for preserves that have been judged to withstand the highest amount of public usage, such as the Passagassawakeag Greenway properties and Beech Hill Preserve, can be distributed more broadly. Greenway maps, for instance, are made available at the Belfast Area Chamber of Commerce, and maps for Beech

Hill trails, the Harkness Preserve Nature Trail etc. are distributed at trailhead kiosks. Trail map brochures for other, lower usage properties are shared with individuals who request them but are not mass distributed in any way.

These brochures include: preserve and trail maps, directions, a brief history of the preserve, trail details including level of difficulty and features of interest, regulations for preserve use, and contact information.

11.2 Trailhead Kiosks

The Conservation Lands Manager and Membership & Administrative Coordinator determine what informational items should be displayed on each trailhead kiosk. These may include: a preserve history, a "permanent" trail map, a box containing paper trail map brochures and/or membership remittance envelopes, regulations for preserve use, general Land Trust information, and, if the preserve is part a campaign focal area, campaign information, maps and/or brochures.

Kiosks are monitored by Land Trust staff and volunteer stewardship volunteers and updated as necessary.

11.3 Preserve Abutters

Upon acquisition of a new preserve property, Land Trust staff coordinate a meeting with land owner abutters to the property. These informational meetings are held in order to apprise abutters of any management plans we may have for the property, as well as to introduce them to who we are and what we do and address any questions or concerns they may have about their new neighbor.