Standard 12: Fee Land Stewardship

Land trusts have a program of responsible stewardship for the land held in fee for conservation purposes.

Practice 12A: Funding Land Stewardship

1. Determine the immediate financial and management implications of each conservation property acquisition and estimate the long-term implications

2. Anticipate and track costs associated with long-term land management, stewardship and enforcement of conservation properties.

Practice 12A1: Determine the immediate financial and management implications of each conservation property acquisition and estimate the long-term implications

Practice 12A2: Anticipate and track costs associated with long-term land management, stewardship and enforcement of conservation properties.

It is the policy of the Blue Ridge Land Conservancy to understand, take into account and track the costs and sources of funding associated with each potential real estate purchase or receipt of gift before the project is approved. This includes costs related to project development and those related to long term management, stewardship and enforcement.

For donations of fee simple land the Conservancy intends to hold for its own use (environmental education, public recreation, etc.) and not transfer to another NGO or a public agency or sell as an asset, the Conservancy shall require a contribution into its stewardship fund for these costs. Depending on the circumstances, this may come from the donor, a grant, a fundraising campaign, or other source.

Adopted 04/4/2007; amended 12/2/2009, 09/2/2015; revised 4/4/2018

Blue Ridge Land Conservancy Practices

Standard 12: Fee Land Stewardship

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Practice 12B: Land Management and Stewardship

1. Develop a written land management plan for each conservation property within 12 months after acquiring the land to:

a. Identify the property's conservation values, including any significant cultural and natural features or those that have significant community value

b. Identify the overall management goals for the property

c. Identify activities to achieve the goals and to reduce any risks or threats to the conservation values

d. Specify the uses that are appropriate for the property, in keeping with the property's conservation values, any restrictions and donor or funder requirements

i. Provide public access opportunities as appropriate to the property and the land trust's mission

2. Manage each conservation property in accordance with its management plan, and review and update the plan as necessary

3. Perform administrative duties (such as paying insurance, filing required forms, keeping records) in a timely and responsible manner

4. Maintain the property in a manner that retains the land trust's public credibility, manages community expectations and minimizes risk

Practice 12B1: Determine the immediate financial and management implications of each conservation property acquisition and estimate the long-term implications

Practice 12B2: Anticipate and track costs associated with long-term land management, stewardship and enforcement of conservation properties.

Practice 12B3: Perform administrative duties (such as paying insurance, filing required forms, keeping records) in a timely and responsible manner

Practice 12B4: Maintain the property in a manner that retains the land trust's public credibility, manages community expectations and minimizes risk

It is the policy of the Blue Ridge Land Conservancy to be a good steward of any lands it owns for conservation purposes through purchase or gift. In the case of the transfer of a property with sufficient conservation values to a non-conservation agency or individual, a conservation easement shall be placed on the property prior to its sale.

For each owned property intended to be held by the Conservancy, a stewardship plan shall be drafted within 12 months after acquiring the land which considers the following:

- The property's conservation values, including any significant cultural and natural features or those that have significant community value;
- The overall management goals for the property
- Activities to achieve the goals and to reduce any risks or threats to the conservation values;
- Any restrictions and donor or funder requirements;
- Public access: whether and under what general circumstances it will be allowed;
- Property taxes: whether the land trust seeks exemption, seeks current use assessment, etc.;
- Contributions to the Stewardship Fund: where they come from, how to calculate how much is required;
- Frequency and procedures for monitoring: who monitors and when;
- Habitat manipulation: what type is allowed, under what circumstances;
- Use of properties for research;
- Use of properties for environmental education;
- Use of properties for public recreation;
- Prohibited activities on land trust properties

Standards for improvements

The Conservancy shall:

- Manage each conservation property in accordance with its management plan, and review and update the plan as necessary
- Perform administrative duties (such as paying insurance, filing required forms, keeping records) in a timely and responsible manner
- and maintain the property in a manner that retains the land trust's public credibility, manages community expectations and minimizes risk.

Adopted 04/4/2007; amended 12/2/2009, 09/2/2015; revised 4/4/2018

Standard 12: Fee Land Stewardship

Land trusts have a program of responsible stewardship for the land held in fee for conservation purposes.

Practice 12D: Monitoring Land Trust Properties

1. Determine the boundaries of land trust properties and physically mark them to the extent possible or necessary

2. Inspect properties at least once per calendar year for potential management problems and promptly document the inspection

3. Address management problems, including encroachments, trespass and other ownership challenges, in an appropriate and timely manner and document the actions taken

Practice 12D1: Determine the boundaries of land trust properties and physically mark them to the extent possible or necessary

Practice 12D2: Inspect properties at least once per calendar year for potential management problems and promptly document the inspection

Practice 12D3: Address management problems, including encroachments, trespass and other ownership challenges, in an appropriate and timely manner and document the actions taken

It is the policy of the Conservancy that it shall determine the boundaries of land trust properties and physically mark them to the extent possible or necessary; monitors any lands it holds in full for conservation purposes at least annually and promptly document the inspection, and address management problems, including encroachments, trespass and other ownership challenges, in an appropriate and timely manner and document the actions taken. The form below shall be used as a template to document the monitoring visit:

Blue Ridge Land Conservancy - Fee Simple Land Monitoring Report

1. Property Name:

   Acreage:

   Location:

2. Background:

3. Conservation Easement? Date:

   Summary of Easement (if applicable):

Purpose:

Use Limitations:

Reserved Rights:

Amendment(s):

4. Monitoring Activities:

5. Past & Current Land Use:

6. Future Land Use/Management Plans:

7. Boundary clarity, issues & posting:

8. Potential Easement or Management Plan Violation Issues:

9. Any signs of trespass or encroachment visible

10. Are the restrictions in the easement being complied with, to the best of your knowledge and observation? Describe:

11. Follow-up:

12. Visit Attendees:

13. Monitor's Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

14. Materials included with this report:

Aerial Photos: Maps: Ground Photos: Illustrations:

Adopted 04/4/2007, 09/2/2015; revised 4/4/2018

Standard 12: Fee Land Stewardship

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Practice 12D: Contingency Strategy

1. Take reasonable steps to provide for the continuing protection of conservation properties in the event the land trust ceases to exist or can no longer own or manage them.

Practice 12D1: Take reasonable steps to provide for the continuing protection of conservation properties in the event the land trust ceases to exist or can no longer own or manage them.

It is the policy of the Blue Ridge Land Conservancy that in accordance with its Articles of Incorporation and the Code of Virginia, in the event of the dissolution of the Conservancy, the assets of the Conservancy, including its conservation easements and fee-owned conservation lands, shall be distributed to the Virginia Outdoors Foundation; or, if it is then not in existence, to one or more charitable, scientific or educational organizations. If such an organization were to receive conservation easements from the Conservancy, it shall qualify under the IRS code and the code of Virginia as a qualified holder of conservation easements.

To be prepared for this possibility, the Conservancy shall maintain adequate legal defense and stewardship funds as determined by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, as well as accurate and up-to-date records, all of which shall be transferred to the Virginia Outdoors Foundation or other organizations should such a scenario take place.

Adopted 09/2/2015; revised 4/4/2018

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Practice 12E: Condemnation

1. If a conservation property is threatened with condemnation, take steps to avoid or mitigate harm to conservation values and document the actions taken.

Practice 12E1: If a conservation property is threatened with condemnation, take steps to avoid or mitigate harm to conservation values and document the actions taken.

Because condemnation of conservation land is a rare and complex issue, it is the policy of the Blue Ridge Land Conservancy to consult with its legal counsel and develop a plan of action that is specific to the circumstances of the threatened condemnation. The overriding principles of any plan shall be the Conservancy's duty to defend its owned lands, avoiding or mitigating harm to conservation values and documenting the actions taken, the likelihood of defeating the condemnation through various legal and non-legal means, possibilities for negotiating a favorable settlement in the event that the condemnation cannot be defeated, and receiving fair compensation by the condemning body in the event the condemnation occurs.

Adopted 09/2/2015; revised 4/4/2018