EAGLE VALLEY LAND TRUST

STRATEGIC PLAN 2026-2029



FOREVER. FOR ALL.

Photo: Eaglevalleylt.org

ABOUT US

Mission Statement

Our mission is to protect forever, as a permanent legacy, the land we love including its scenic beauty, recreational opportunities, and wildlife habitats.

OUR PILLARS

Permanence

EVLT works first and foremost for the future. Conserving land provides immense long term benefit, but also comes with financial and opportunity costs. EVLT appreciates and considers this tradeoff with every project.

Integrity and Accountability

Public trust is foundational to successful conservation. The Eagle Valley Land Trust stands firm in a commitment to integrity, accountability, and transparency by maintaining accreditation with the Land Trust Alliance.

Pragmatism and Tradeoffs

We know that conservation is not suitable for every parcel and community. In our work, we look beyond the dichotomy of conservation versus development, open space versus housing and focus on building partnerships to foster land-based solutions that also meet community needs.

People Focused

EVLT is a people-first organization, dedicated to evolving with the needs of our community. We recognize that conservation around the world continues to be exclusionary and the benefits of conservation have been unevenly distributed. We are committed to leading our conservation movement with inclusivity at the forefront.

OUR ETHICS STATEMENT

As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, we are committed to providing public benefit. Board and staff members of EVLT are committed to integrity, pragmatism, and inclusion. Our conservation work is built on a foundation of trust and respect for each other, our stakeholders, and members of our community.

We conduct our conservation activities under the highest professional standards, in accordance with the Land Trust Alliance's Standards and Practices, and with honesty, fairness, and in good faith.

We recognize and appreciate our responsibility to the public, stakeholders, and our donors to be fiscally responsible, mindful of our long-term responsibility to the lands we protect, and dedicated to building a sustainable, capable land trust organization.

We are committed to leading with pragmatism and future mindedness and strive to build durable long term land-based solutions to community challenges. We actively work to avoid conflicts of interest and utilize charitable donations solely for the pursuit of our strategic goals.

We work cooperatively with other land trusts, government agencies, private individuals, and conservation organizations to advance high quality, lasting conservation projects.

Our organization values diverse voices, values, and opinions. Rigorous internal discourse and debate propel our team toward lasting solutions. Our strength comes from the unity behind our shared vision.

We strive to enhance the reputation and credibility of the land trust community, both in Colorado and across the country.

2026–2029 GOAL STATEMENTS

1. Conservation	Properties with high conservation values are protected through community-focused conservation.
2. Stewardship	Partnership with landowners ensures conserved lands provide conservation benefits forever.
3. Community Engagement	EVLT is recognized as the local nonprofit land conservation leader, ensuring that conservation benefits the community.
4. Resources	Abundant, sustainable funding and social capital ensure long-term conservation impact and perpetuity.
5. People	Outstanding and supportive board members and staff guide the organization toward success.
6. Systems	Robust processes, systems, and clear plans support the effectiveness of EVLT.

2026–2029 GOALS AND STRATEGIES

1. Conservation Goal: Properties with high conservation values are protected through community-focused conservation.	
A	Work with the community to implement the Conservation Strategy and 10 year goals.

B	Cultivate relationships with private and public landowners.
C	Leverage relationships with partners and major conservation institutions and galvanize community support to activate collaborative conservation projects.
D	Invest in innovative conservation tools and options for conservation.

2. Stewardship Goal: Partnership with landowners ensures conserved lands provide conservation benefits forever.	
E	Directly and continuously engage with owners of conserved properties.
F	Foster strong, trust-based relationships with conservation easement landowners to support long-term stewardship, ensure compliance, and uphold the integrity of our conservation goals.

3. Community Engagement Goal: EVLT is recognized as the local nonprofit land conservation leader, ensuring that conservation benefits the community.	
G	Strategically and selectively participate in community discussions where there is a conservation impact or threat, or community engagement opportunity, that is related to our mission.
H	Ensure equity and inclusion in community engagement efforts.
I	Double community engagement in programs to build greater involvement in, and awareness of, conservation.
J	Leverage the Conservation Center as a catalyst to double engagement, resources and conservation strategies.

4. Resources Goal: Abundant, sustainable funding and social capital ensure long-term conservation impact and perpetuity.	
K	Actively engage and steward individuals in support of EVLT's operations and project-specific needs.
L	Identify and solicit institutional funders whose priorities align with our programs and values.
M	Develop innovative conservation funding strategy for conservation projects.
N	Build awareness of the Land Trust and our relevance to community needs.

5. People Goal: Outstanding and supportive board members and staff guide the organization toward success.	
O	Recruit inspired, diverse, and committed board of directors and governing volunteers.
P	Invest in and retain passionate, skilled staff members to ensure the professional capacity of the organization.

6. Systems Goal: Robust processes, systems, and clear plans support the effectiveness of EVLT.	
Q	Improve EVLT's business processes and technology.
R	Meet all legal and ethical standards and practice requirements.

2026–2029 DRAFT Strategic Plan

Goal #1: Conservation: Properties with high conservation values are protected through community-focused conservation.

	Strategy	2026	2027	2028	2029	Outcomes
A	Work with the community to implement the Conservation Strategy and 10 year goals to double conservation in the next 10 years	Review selection criteria and Conservation Plan annually and update as necessary			Refine project selection criteria to reflect conservation priorities. Use selection criteria to develop internal and external Conservation Plans.	• 6-9 new high impact conservation projects completed, totaling over 6,000 acres. • Mapping tool is developed and used to guide outreach and decision-making. • All conservation projects meet criteria for priority and focus. • Project selection criteria are current for all decisions. • At least 1 success in each Conservation Priority in the Conservation Strategy. • New conservation projects protect/promote climate resilience. • 2-6 pilot programs combining natural climate solutions are implemented.
		Identify and complete 2-4 conservation projects each year based on conservation criteria and landowner interest.			Identify and prioritize properties having both our conservation criteria and landowner interest (internal resource).	
		Target conservation easement priorities in historically underrepresented areas.				
		Participate actively in climate action programs and projects.				
B	Cultivate relationships with private and public landowners.	Execute landowner engagement plan. Assess success of landowner engagement plan and improve plan as necessary.			Develop priorities for landowner outreach and engagement based on conservation plan priorities. Identify and prioritize top 75 landowners based on conservation criteria.	• Expanded engagement with 30+ prospective landowners through outreach tied to priorities identified in the Conservation Strategy. • 50 prospective landowners participate in an EVLT workshop or event. • EVLT remains a recognized and trusted conservation community partner. • 2 EVLT CE landowners are actively communicating with their communities.
		Manage 3-6 landowner conversations in support of proactive conservation priorities.				
		Convene EVLT-hosted workshops and events to build relationships with landowners interested in conserving their land and working with EVLT.				
		Continuously build interest and develop relationships through periodic landowner contact in support of proactive conservation priorities.				
		Build and maintain strong relationships with elected officials, partners, funders, and influencers.			Identify critical partnerships, funders, elected officials, and influencers.	
		Leverage relationships and networks of existing easement partners among landowners to promote benefits of the Land Trust.				

C	Leverage relationships with partners and major conservation institutions and galvanize community support to activate collaborative conservation projects.	Participate actively in collaborative efforts identified as priorities to ensure a prominent role for conservation in community planning and work with local partners to incorporate conservation priorities in land use decisions.			Review and evaluate participation in local and regional collaborative conservation efforts.	• Participation in local and regional collaborative conservation efforts is meeting EVLT and community goals. • Of the projects completed, 2-4 are collaborative and signature properties. • Conservation Strategy informs community land use decisions.
		Work with local partners to incorporate conservation priorities in land use decisions.				
		Pursue conservation of 1-2 collaborative/signature properties and strategies for conservation.			Identify 5 signature/high visibility properties and strategies for conservation.	
D	Invest in innovative conservation tools and options for conservation.	Identify and pursue innovative conservation strategies/tools.				• 2 new conservation tools piloted, e.g. access easements or cooperative agreements. • Innovative fundraising and financing strategy is underway. • Evaluation of emerging tools is complete and informs use of tools moving forward.
		Identify and pursue 1 project with expanded conservation options or new funding source.			Build innovative conservation tools and investment strategy.	

Goal #2: Stewardship: Partnership with landowners ensures conserved lands provide conservation benefits forever.

	Strategy	2026	2027	2028	2029	Outcomes
E	Directly and continuously engage with owners of conserved properties.	Contact all current landowners according to Stewardship Plan.				• Number of contacts made increased by 50% over 2025. • Landowner conflicts maintained at 0%.
		Actively engage and educate new owners of conserved properties.				
F	Foster strong, trust-based relationships with conservation easement landowners to support long-term stewardship, ensure compliance, and uphold the integrity of our conservation goals.	Review and Implement Stewardship Plan.			Refine and update Stewardship Plan based on LTA standards and practices.	• Every easement monitored annually. • More than 90% of easement issues resolved within three months. • Outstanding issues resolved within one year. • Annual stewardship cost calculation updated annually. • Stewardship Fund goal and capitalization plan meet benchmarks. • 2 Volunteer Restoration Projects (meeting landowner needs) are completed per year.
		Resolve any outstanding landowner issues.				
		Plan and facilitate restoration projects to support landowners with stewardship issues caused by factors beyond their control.				
		Manage annual stewardship roles, including monitoring, response to landowner requests, amendments, and other landowner interactions.				
		Evaluate costs of legal defense, management, and annual monitoring.	Develop long-term capitalization plan for stewardship funding.	Implement stewardship capitalization plan.		

Goal #3: Community Engagement: EVLT is recognized as the local nonprofit land conservation leader, ensuring that conservation benefits the community.

	Strategy	2026	2027	2028	2029	Outcomes
G	Strategically and selectively participate in community discussions where there is a conservation impact or threat, or community engagement opportunity, that is related to our mission.	Continue participating, and evaluating participation in, and leading local and regional collaborative efforts around land conservation and community engagement. Ensure participation is meeting stated goals.			Review and evaluate participation in local and regional collaborative efforts around conservation and community engagement.	• Through coalition engagement, EVLT informs local land use decisions. • Staff and board actively participate in KIC and LTA roundtables, meetings, and programs. • EVLT board or staff member actively representing EVLT at each identified collaborative effort is reporting out during committee and board meetings on progress towards stated goals and objectives. • EVLT's profile is elevated with respect to community issues including wildlife advocacy, affordable housing, etc. • 2-6 pilot programs combining natural climate solutions are identified.
		Ensure committee is achieving action items and stated goals.			Identify and deliver EVLT-specific outcomes within each community effort.	
		Participate actively in climate action programs and projects.				
H	Ensure equity and inclusion in community engagement efforts.	Conduct a variety of outreach activities within diverse communities; utilize input in conservation planning.				• EVLT designs programs and outreach strategies to engage a broad and representative cross-section of Eagle County residents. The focus is on reducing barriers to participation and expanding pathways for community members to connect with conservation work and local landscapes. • Conservation priorities are informed by diverse community engagement. • Community partnerships maintained and established with new affinity groups. • EVLT is actively engaged in Exploremos. • Community Engagement Committee meets regularly, supports ongoing programming, and helps to recruit committee members.
		Ensure any outreach materials are translated and accessible.				
		Implement Outreach Plan.			Update Outreach Goals and Plan.	
		Continue to engage Community Engagement Committee and recruit committee members to the board.				
		Review and Implement Tribal Engagement Framework.				
		Continue as a leading partner within Exploremos, including as host of the Gear Library.				
I	Double community engagement in programs to build greater involvement in, and awareness of, conservation.	Engage program participants in grassroots fundraising.				• Future Conservationists is a meaningful stepping stone for conservation careers. • Diverse volunteers are engaged in restoration projects. • Participation in EVLT's community programs
		Continue/expand on successful community programs. Carry out one new pilot program.				
		Continue to develop and implement Future Conservationists youth engagement programming.				
		Support volunteer restoration projects focused on meeting landowner needs and building relationships with diverse volunteers.				

						increases by 50% to 500 participants per year. • Program participants are engaged in long-term support for the mission. • Board member "hosts" solicited for all community programs. • 50% of participants make POR donations. • Community engagement programs meet budget goals.
J	Leverage the Conservation Center as a catalyst to double engagement, resources, and conservation strategies.	Implement programming at the Conservation Center.			Develop metrics for engagement, program impact, and resource generation tied to the Conservation Center. Develop MOUs with key partners.	• All phases of the Conservation Center project are complete. • The Conservation Center is positioned as community-owned. • The Conservation Center serves as a hub for regional conservation coalitions and collaborative efforts. • Programs are hosted at the Conservation Center by community partners.
		Complete Phase 2 of the Conservation Center.				

Goal #4: Resources: Abundant, sustainable funding and social capital ensure long-term conservation impact and perpetuity.

	Strategy	2026	2027	2028	2029	Outcomes
K	Actively engage and steward individuals in support of EVLT's operations needs.	Implement Annual Fundraising Plan.				• All donors are thanked within 1 week of receipt of a gift. • Annual renewal rate 67%. • 50% increase in annual donors. • 35% program participant to donor conversion. • Lead endowment gift secured. • 50% of endowment raised. • Planned giving materials available. • 30 known planned gifts.
		Two mixers or fundraisers per year using tiered invite system.				
		Implement Planned Giving and Endowment Plan. Host at least one planned giving/endowment cultivation event each year.			Create Planned Giving and Endowment Plan. Create Planned Giving and Endowment materials. Reach out directly to people with potential for planned giving.	
L	Identify and solicit institutional funders whose priorities align with our programs and values.	Develop donation-for-service program through facility rentals.				• Rental fees cover Conservation Center operating and maintenance costs. • At least 50% of grant applications are successful. • Farm to Fork meets goals annually. • 4 new institutional funders engaged.
		Implement Land and Rivers Program.				
		Implement Grant Strategy.			Evaluate, refine, and update grant tracking and solicitation system.	
		Implement Farm to Fork.			Evaluate, refine, and update Farm to Fork.	
M	Develop Innovative Conservation Funding Strategy for Conservation Projects.	Implement innovative funding and financing strategy.			Develop innovative funding and financing	• Sufficient funds available for conservation projects. • 3 new funding sources are utilized.

					strategy to support Conservation Strategy implementation.	• Innovative funding and financing strategy is underway to support Conservation Strategy implementation.
N	Build awareness of the Land Trust and our relevance to community needs.	Secure funding for local coalitions and collaborative efforts.				• 50% increase in social media followers. • 50% Newsletter audience growth. • Website traffic doubled. • EVLT Style Guide informs all communications. • Community members and organizations contact EVLT with land use questions and concerns. • Conservation Center loan is paid off or refinanced. • Phase 2 of Conservation Center is complete.
		Leverage Community Conservation programs and activities.				
		Maintain and update EVLT website.				
		Leverage Conservation Center and Capital Campaign.				

Goal #5: People: Outstanding and supportive board members and staff guide the organization toward success.

	Strategy	2026	2027	2028	2029	Outcomes
O	Recruit inspired, diverse, and committed board of directors and governing volunteers.	Use board member work plans to support and engage board members.			Develop work plans for each board member.	• Add 4-8 new board members. • All board members have work plans. • More than 5 advisory (non-voting) committee members. • Leadership succession plan in place for all officer positions. • Board recruitment seeks to engage individuals whose skills, perspectives, lived experience, and community connections reflect the broad racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and generational makeup of Eagle County.
		Implement board member recruitment program.				
		Implement leadership succession plans for all officer and committee chairs.			Develop leadership succession plan for all officer positions.	
		Revisit Culture Compact annually.				
		Conduct annual board training.				
P	Invest in and retain passionate, skilled staff members to ensure the professional capacity of the organization.	Update compensation and benefits based on current industry standards.	Maintain capacity to pursue and advance deals with long time frames.	Update compensation and benefits based on current industry standards.	Maintain capacity to pursue and advance deals with long time frames.	• Full staffing according to Strategic Plan and Organizational Plan. • Compensation and benefits are in line with industry standards. • Staff retention is consistent with industry standards or better. • Organizational Plan is accurate and updated based on organizational needs. • Tasks are delegated efficiently and based on staff's strengths and interests. • Staff recruitment practices are designed to reach a
		Grow capacity as needed through addition of new staff, training, and increased efficiency.				
		Implement and refine employee evaluation and support strategies.			Update employee evaluation and support strategies.	
		Revisit Culture Compact annually.				

			broad and representative pool of qualified candidates.

Goal #6: Systems: Robust processes, systems, and clear plans support the effectiveness of EVLT.

	Strategy	2026	2027	2028	2029	Outcomes
Q	Improve EVLT's business processes and technology.	Annual plans are updated and approved prior to the beginning of the year.				• Strategic Plan reviewed and updated annually. • Annual plans are approved prior tothe beginning of each year. • Budget is approved prior to the beginning of each year. • Budget is realistic and updated. • Plans evaluated yearly and more extensively every three years. • Investment Policies evaluated annually and updated as necessary. • Financial information available, organized, and presented appropriately. • Technology available to support existing and emerging programs. • Conservation Center is maintained and operating effectively. • Staff have necessary equipment and resources to complete job duties.
		Budget is updated and approved prior to the beginning of the year. Budget is updated through the year as appropriate.				
				Complete ten-year financial forecast.	Implement a financial plan to support forecast. Update financial plan as necessary.	
		Review and refine Strategic Plan.			Prepare to update Strategic Plan.	
		Implement IT maintenance plan.				
		Implement Conservation Center Operations Plan.				
		Maintain GIS resources.				
R	Meet all legal and ethical standards and practice requirements.	Complete annual audit, required registrations, and filings.				• LTA accreditation current and in good standing. • Annual audit current with no issues. • All certificates and registrations are current.
					Prepare for Land Trust reaccreditation.	