

INDIAN RIVER LAKES CONSERVANCY STRATEGIC PLAN and GUIDING PRINCIPLES



VISION

A community united around water, land and biological resources as essential elements to our region's identity, economy and quality of life.

MISSION

To protect the unique resources of the Indian River Watershed for the benefit and enrichment of present and future generations.

4 FOCUS AREAS



4 GOALS



LAND AND WATER

To champion a region characterized by ample outdoor recreation opportunities, robust agricultural communities and inspiring scenic vistas.



COMMUNITY

To elevate the importance of land and water as part of our regional identity, and land and water conservation as a priority for maintaining a high quality of life and a robust economy.



FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

To develop the financial resources and financial stability to fulfill our goals and objectives.



GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT

To be led by a committed and dynamic group of individuals who work within an internal structure that ensures excellence, commitment and responsibility.

Introduction & Context

“Conservation is key to preserving many of the world’s natural beauty spots, so do your best to help by keeping to designated footpaths and being a discerning souvenir collector.” Sheherazade Goldsmith

People in New York State have a long tradition of connection with the land and a long history of conservation. Over 90 land trusts work in New York, preserving farmland, forests, rivers, lakes, mountains, canals, gardens, parks and preserves. They protect land throughout the state, spanning our North Country, the Adirondacks, the Finger Lakes, Tug Hill Plateau, Hudson River Valley, Catskill Mountains, the Thousand Islands region, and Long Island. Land trusts are also at work saving green space in cities like Albany, Buffalo and New York. These protected lands provide fresh food, clean water, wildlife habitat and opportunities for people to continue connecting with the land.

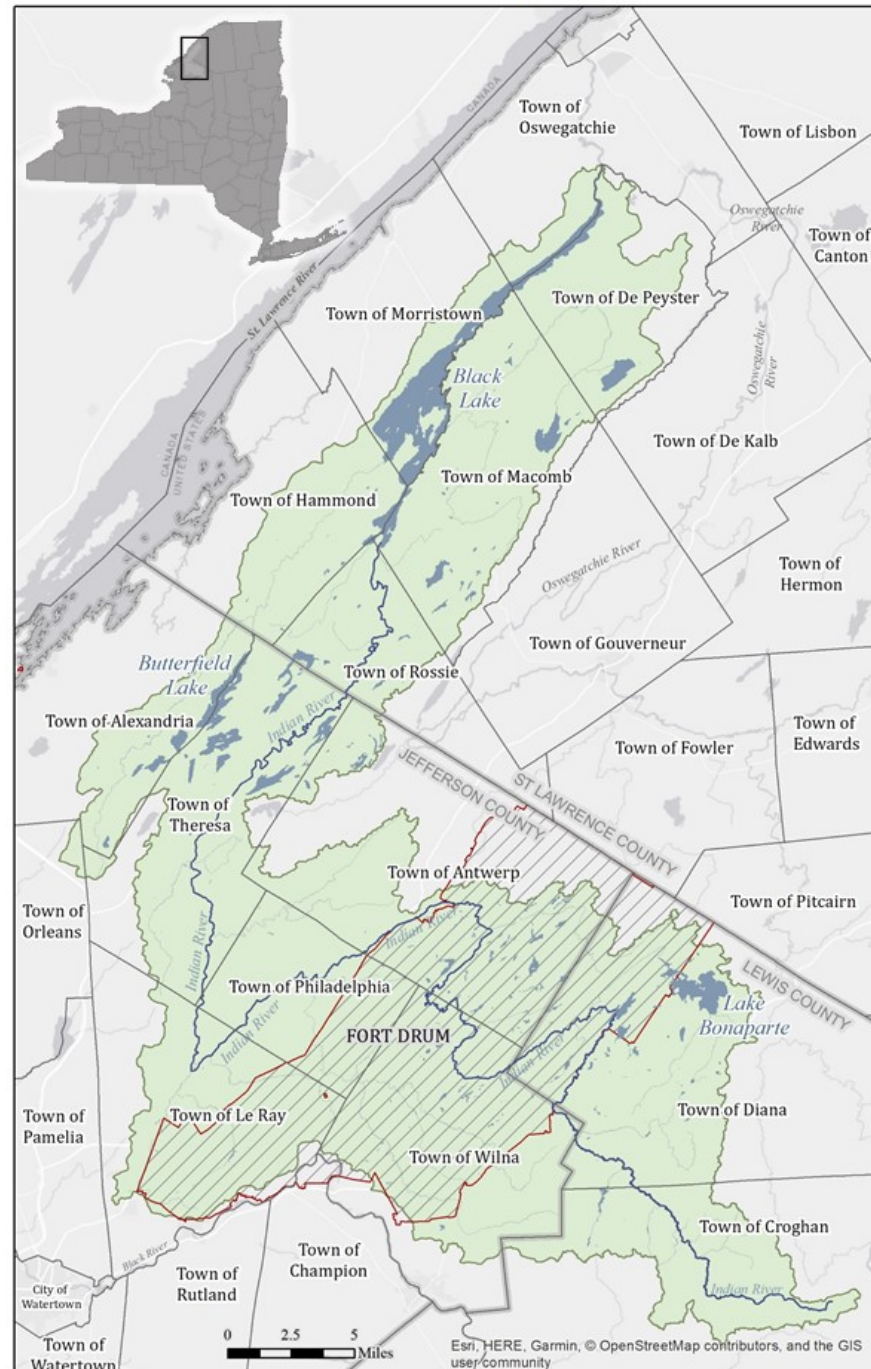
According to the most recent land trust census, as of 2010, New York land trusts have protected over 970,000 acres, which puts New York at #6 in acres protected through private land conservation. Yet, New York’s landscapes remain vulnerable. A growing population and rising land prices are intensifying development pressure. At the same time, pollution and climate change threaten to disrupt natural systems. Changes in political support could undermine land trusts’ work, even as they strive to respond to these challenges.

The Indian River Lakes system, located on the St. Lawrence River plain in Jefferson and St. Lawrence Counties, consists of 18 natural lakes. These lakes range from shallow, highly productive warm water lakes to deep, cold water lakes. The region takes its name from the Indian River, a picturesque mostly slow-moving river that begins as a small stream at Indian River Village and flows almost 100 miles to Black Lake. The varied geology of the region greatly contributes to the diversity of species found throughout the woodlands, wetlands and numerous lakes of the area.

Through tools we currently have, or need to develop, we can leverage private philanthropy and public funding to accomplish timely projects in the face of immense challenge. As we look to the future, we are inspired to think BIG. We must push ourselves to proactively conserve that which we hold most dear – the land, water, geology and biological resources. It is our hope that future generations will have the opportunity to experience and enjoy the quiet woodlands, rocky vistas, clean waters, and the captivating landscapes and shorelines that make this region so unique. This plan outlines our goals to capitalize on the incredible opportunities and to ensure that the Indian River Watershed maintains the quality of life that defines our region.

Why	We believe in a strong, vibrant, and united community
How	By being a champion for our region and exhibiting leadership through excellence and innovation
What	We conserve and steward land and water resources to protect the richness and beauty of our natural resources for future generations & to encourage public access to this natural beauty

Indian River Watershed



Vision

A community united around water, land and biological resources as essential elements to our region's identity, economy and quality of life.

Mission

To protect the unique resources of the Indian River Watershed for the benefit and enrichment of present and future generations.

Core Values

Authenticity in representing the communities of the Indian River watershed.

Integrity in our actions as responsible, caring, and trustworthy partners and advocates.

Championship of land and water conservation in the Indian River watershed area.

Innovation and vision in our programs and partnerships.

Strategic Imperatives – Focus Areas

Protect the unique geology, diverse ecosystems, habitats and water quality.

Learn and share with our community the importance of protecting our natural habitats.

Enjoy captivating landscapes, conserve our natural heritage and provide public access.

Forever steward the woodlands, vistas and waters for this and future generations.

GOAL 1: Land and Water

To champion a region characterized by ample outdoor recreation opportunities, rural agricultural communities, and inspiring scenic vistas and shorelines.

Strategic Priorities:

1. Ensure that opportunities for expanding public open spaces are realized by doing what we can to facilitate and advance tangible and viable projects, and lend our support and expertise to initiatives that further this objective.

We will be successful if we:

- Increase the amount of conserved land in our region
 - Achieve permanent conservation protection of open spaces not permanently conserved
 - Advance public open space throughout our region in partnership with communities
 - Complete projects that “fill the gaps” and contribute to existing conserved acreage
2. Maintain the natural character, identity, ecological integrity, and quality of life of our region through projects that contribute to providing access landscape-scale conservation, and other strategic projects or partnerships that further conservation.

We will be successful if we:

- Improve and maintain water quality in the lakes, rivers and streams of our watershed
 - Form strategic alliances with partners to achieve greater scale, pace, and impact
 - Cultivate strategic alliances with business, educational institutions, development, and municipal interests to include conservation in our area into planning discussions
3. Ensure that our land and water stewardship programs are characterized by excellence, technological innovation, and efficiency.

We will be successful if we:

- With our community partners, develop a strategic watershed plan
- Actively expand our habitat improvement programs
- Insure other remediation programs are properly designed, implemented and monitored
- Operate within a risk management plan
- Achieve increases in program efficiency

GOAL 2: COMMUNITY

To elevate the importance of land and water as part of our regional identity, and land conservation and water protection as a priority for improving the quality of life and being a catalyst in the local economy.

Strategic Priorities:

1. Build a network of land and water conservation advocates that provides vocal and financial support for permanent land protection and water quality improvements in the Indian River Watershed.

We will be successful if we:

- Develop a community engagement initiative rooted in a comprehensive communications framework
- Create a strong business partnership program
- Launch and cultivate a robust and ever-expanding giving program
- Increase the number of donors at least 10% year over year
- Advance conservation initiatives within our community that addresses some of the challenges that conservation faces.

2. Participate in public policy initiatives that maintain or strengthen land conservation at the local, state, and federal levels.

We will be successful if we:

- Work with our strategic partners to defend state and federal tax incentives for conservation
- Communicate with elected officials on the need to expand funding for land conservation and water quality improvements at the local, state, and federal levels
- Work with our strategic partners to advance industry changes within New York State that enhance conservation for the future

3. Enhance awareness and understanding of the role land conservation and water quality play in a high quality of life.

We will be successful if we:

- Periodically, advance a signature project that highlights the intersections between land conservation, water quality, and a healthy community and economy
- Engage the community in active land and water conservation projects through fundraising, volunteering, and other outreach opportunities

- Develop and implement a diverse, multifaceted education program including experiential learning, hands on activities, for all ages.
- Build an expert network in local educational institutions

GOAL 3: FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

To develop the financial resources and financial stability to advance land conservation priorities

Strategic Priorities:

1. Create a budget that supports the successful execution of the strategic plan.

We will be successful if we:

- Diversify funding avenues by building revenue streams focused on increasing unrestricted giving
- Operate annually under a comprehensive fundraising plan
- Build and consistently grow a major gifts program

2. Obtain the financial resources to complete land and water conservation goals.

We will be successful if we:

- Continue to take full advantage of grant sources such as the New York State Conservation Partnership Program
- Identify and participate, where possible, in larger, regional studies, programs, etc. i.e. St. Lawrence Watershed Plan
- Explore project-based individual giving fundraising through a pilot project, like a watershed plan

3. Build a Stewardship Fund that will serve as a strong foundation to serve both the current needs and those of perpetuity.

We will be successful if we:

- Build a planned giving program
- Balance investment expenses with appropriate level of service
- Evaluate our Stewardship Fund fee policy
- Maximize opportunities for increasing our Stewardship Fund

GOAL 4: GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT

To be led by a committed and dynamic group of individuals who work within an internal structure that ensures excellence, commitment, and responsibility.

Strategic Priorities:

1. We will strictly follow industry best practices and standards, and exceed or lead in innovating those practices where applicable.

We will be successful if we:

- Maintain accreditation status with Land Trust Accreditation Commission and certification with State of New York
- Participate in initiatives (whether internal or through partnerships) that push us to innovate how we do business
- Share our expertise through leadership opportunities, speaking engagements, conference presentations, etc.
- Exhibit leadership through actions, initiatives, and projects at local, regional and state levels that allows land conservation to operate from a position of strength, trust, and goodwill across the state

2. Provide a supportive work atmosphere, competitive salaries and benefits, and professional development and leadership opportunities to staff in order to attract and retain excellent employees.

We will be successful if we:

- Strive for low turnover rate
- Make sure salaries and benefits are competitive with other like-sized, regional organization
- Establish a plan for future funding employee benefits, i.e. healthcare
- Provide support for development opportunities for all staff, based on a plan created by the ED

3. The Board of Directors will operate in a framework that enhances Director engagement, improves accountability, and builds Board leadership.

We will be successful if we:

- Create an appropriate committee and governance structure that supports the goals of the organization
- Increase our board membership with a composition of members that supports the goals of the organization
- Exhibit high levels of trustee engagement, initiative, self-education in serving the organization, and participation in 'public relations activities' (e.g. attending conferences, hosting fundraising events, etc.)

Strategic Challenges and Emerging Opportunities

An in-depth internal and external evaluation of IRLC activities was conducted in 2018. From 18 issues and concerns voiced by IRLC stakeholders, the following strategic challenges and opportunities emerged:

Leading, managing, and coordinating watershed-wide efforts to protect and improve water quality for a fishable, swimmable, and drinkable future in a time of climate uncertainty. Opportunity: To become the leader in the community for implementing practices used to protect our natural resources.

Mitigating the effects of land use change and development through a combination of educational programming, technical assistance to local governments, and land acquisition and/or easements. Opportunity: To become the go to resource in the local community related to land use topics and issues.

Educating men, women, and children, from various constituencies about this unique place and nature in general so that they can appreciate and benefit from what is around them, and also help steward, advocate, and support land and water protection. Opportunity: To enhance our relationships with public education and outreach that will in turn yield greater reach in the community.

Recruiting new supporters from the community and beyond who will embrace IRLC's vision/mission and become committed or dedicated donors, board members, volunteers, partners, and advocates. Opportunity: Develop a stronger base of thought leaders and a wider base of supporters from which to draw.

Sustaining a strong IRLC by building diverse and consistent funding that can support a capable, passionate, and mission-focused staff. Accomplish a carefully designed and well diversified fundraising effort to sustain our mission and long-term goals. (The challenge is to take the worry off where the next dollar will come from.)

Developing increasing capacity and resources to acquire, steward, maintain, manage, understand, and protect critical terrestrial and aquatic habitats, corridors, and landscapes within its existing portfolio and new fee properties or eventually easements. Opportunity: Position IRLC for a successful future; increase the efficiency of the stewardship process and develop a deeper understanding of actual stewardship costs.

Communicating with IRLC members and the community-at-large about the educational, recreational, ecological resources the IRLC brings.
Opportunity: Build a community understanding of the IRLC and how we can work together to positively impact quality of life in the region in many ways.

Increasing the economic and social vitality of the area.

Appendices

Appendix 1: IRLC Strategic Planning Methodology

In late 2017, IRLC retained Dr. Ann Ruzow Holland, AICP, a professional planner and social scientist to help design and coordinate a strategic planning process and product over a 12-month period. The goal of the strategic planning process was to produce a well-vetted, practical, and reasonable, and tactical trajectory for IRLC during the years 2019-2023. In order to reach this goal, Dr. Ruzow Holland used a special social science method called Participatory Action Research* (PAR) to.:

- Design and frame the plan.
- Collect and analyze data and commentary from a variety of sources.
- Interface with constituencies and ask for feedback of all kinds.
- Evaluate past and current program outcomes.
- Prospectively trend based upon economic outlook, institutional interests, and constituency unmet needs.
- Conduct reflective thinking and dialogue.
- Work collaboratively as a team with the Board and Staff to build the strategic plan.

In addition to reviewing earlier strategic and other planning documents, the planning team conducted three online digital surveys (Inner, Middle, and Outer Circle Stakeholders), identified and interviewed key stakeholders, and hosted a planning retreat. The results were comprehensive and representative of the IRLC constituency and help shape and inform the content of this strategic planning document.

Additional information on specific methods of data collection, analysis, or the presentation of results are available upon request.

*Participatory Action Research is a social science approach that emphasizes participation and action. It seeks to understand the world by trying to change it, collaboratively, and following reflection. PAR emphasizes collective inquiry and experimentation grounded in experience and social history.

Appendix 2: Strategic Implementation Plan

GOAL 1: Land and Water

To champion a region characterized by ample outdoor recreation opportunities, rural agricultural communities, and inspiring scenic vistas and shorelines.

Strategic Priorities:

1. Ensure that opportunities for expanding public open spaces are realized by doing what we can to facilitate and advance tangible and viable projects, and lend our support and expertise to initiatives that further this objective.

Supporting Tasks to Achieve Success

- ✓ Shift New Land Acquisitions to Proactive Mode: Strategic Conservation Plan (Greenprint) (6. B.2. Retreat Priority#2)
 - Prepare an IRLC service area strategic conservation plan (Greenprint). Map conservation priorities, based on a clear goal and rationale. Work with A2A to 1) improve connectivity to the larger landscape, and 2) evaluate and experiment with applying A2A's emerging connectivity criteria to local conservation efforts.
- ✓ Evaluate existing policy for evaluating and selecting conservation projects. (6. B.3. also, LTA Accreditation Standard 8).
 - Include a cost/benefit-efficiency standard and prioritization process. Base consideration on capacity and expertise in-house and resources necessary to support ongoing monitoring and management. Establish criteria for accepting easements.

2. Maintain the natural character, identity, ecological integrity, and quality of life of our region through projects that contribute to providing access landscape-scale conservation, and other strategic projects or partnerships that further conservation.

Supporting Tasks to Achieve Success

- ✓ Focus Communications and Messaging (1. A.2.)
 - Engage in multiple levels of outreach and marketing to reach the general public, community and business leaders, Lake Associations' leaders, members, and other lakeside residents.
 - Identify and cultivate important regional people and organizations in order to improve visibility and recognition.
 - "Friendraise" Offer social and informal opportunities to get together talk about land/water conservation topics and meet like-minded residents.
 - Expand visibility through public speaking throughout the larger region, using existing IRLC speaker series plus other opportunities at libraries, Kiwanis, Rotary and/or other service organizations.
- ✓ Use partnerships with other organizations, including Ducks Unlimited, and other conservancies, when suitable to achieve IRLC's mission. (6>B.1. and Retreat Priority #2)
 - Capitalize on the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant funds to conserve watershed wetland habitat in the IRLC watershed.
 - Participate with A2A as appropriate/feasible to create an international regional land trust network and opportunities for shared learning experiences. Participate in A2A's planned 2019 Science Symposium.

3. Ensure that our land and water stewardship programs are characterized by excellence, technological innovation, and efficiency.

Supporting Tasks to Achieve Success

- ✓ Stewardship Planning and Management on Existing Properties (6.A. and Retreat Priority #1)
- ✓ Audit existing stewardship activities at each of the IRLC properties (6. A.1.).
 - Initiate a baseline and subsequent annual review and update of individual properties' management plans for adequacy and appropriateness. Updated management plans will consider the status of invasives, appropriateness of managing for the "young forest initiative"
- ✓ Determine whether property monitoring schedule is adequate and routine records are updated and accurate (6. A.2.).
 - Establish and maintain a trail safety and maintenance program, particularly after weather events that might create issues.

- ✓ Establish an annual capital plan for each property, including trail development, public access, signage, interpretation and facility development (6. A.3.).
 - Inventory assets and needs of the respective properties in terms of capital improvements

GOAL 2: COMMUNITY

To elevate the importance of land and water as part of our regional identity, and land conservation and water protection as a priority for improving the quality of life and being a catalyst in the local economy.

Strategic Priorities:

1. Build a network of land and water conservation advocates that provides vocal and financial support for permanent land protection and water quality improvements in the Indian River Watershed.

Supporting Tasks to Achieve Success

- ✓ IRLC Branding, Communications, and Messaging Content (1. A.3.)
 - Prime stakeholders by peaking their interest in the various benefits IRLC provides.
 - Use multiple types of messaging and scripting to build appeal to various audiences, emphasizing areas of importance to the different constituency groups.
 - Refresh and regularly update the IRLC Website.
 - Continue to expand the use of other social media used by a younger demographic.
- ✓ Increase and broaden interactions with our neighbors and communities through a wide variety of activities and collaborative projects (1.A.). Relationship-Building (5.A. and Retreat Priorities #1 and #2)
 - Develop and sustain relationships with lake associations. Cultivate a clear, compelling, and relevant message for them. Find ways to integrate association activities with those of IRLC, especially in water quality and watershed planning activities and programs. Attend all lake association meetings to update, listen, recruit, etc.
 - Continue to develop and support relationships with area school districts to augment their environmental and outdoor education programming during and after school.
 - Create, grow, and sustain college-based internships with schools such as SUNY Oneonta, St. Lawrence University, Paul Smiths College, Cornell, SUNY ESF, and others that support interpretation, restoration, and educational programs.
 - Evaluate a local high school mini-internship program.
 - Build relationships with agricultural producers and farmers. Understand what they carry as concerns with respect of land protection and create a win-win message and solution that IRLC can market. Speak with various land trusts who

work directly with farmers and develop a set of best practice “messages” and programs that support these important stakeholders.

✓ *Government Communications and Messaging (1.A.1)*

- Continue to build strong partnerships with appropriate local, county, state and federal government agencies and with a wide array of water quality organizations that can provide technical and operating support.
- Attend town board and planning board meetings regularly to become a well-known and respected partner.
- Invite local government officials, including Town Supervisors out to tour properties and personally invite them to attend scheduled events,
- Schedule individual “listening” sessions with local government officials, exchange ideas, and discuss the public benefits that IRLC provides.
- Reach out to the local municipalities (including their planning boards), try to get on their email lists, attend local meetings when necessary.
- Explore common interests and concerns associated with water quality and watershed management. Build a rapport first on common ground issues and concerns, then move to other, more controversial or tricky subjects once trust and respect has been developed. Reach out to Jefferson County Planning, so they know IRLC is an important stakeholder in the local area.
- Work with local governments to strengthen their regulations and their enforcement practices.

3. Enhance awareness and understanding of the role land conservation and water quality play in a high quality of life.

Supporting Tasks to Achieve Success

✓ *Build and Sustain Land and Water-based Educational, Restoration, and Interpretive Programs (5.B.) (5. B.1.)*

- Continue to provide free children’s summer camp underwritten by donors.
- Continue planning and offering an annual Indian River Watershed Conference.
- Continue expanding grass roots educational effort focused on all local cottage owners and other residents, using local peer-to-peer discussions supported by well-respected expert presentations.

✓ *Expand programming to widen “reach” and serve all ages and constituencies (5. B.2.)*

- Expand Water Quality Conference to provide adjunct field trips to demonstration sites that use best management practices projects to handle invasives, human waste to prevent pollution of bodies of water, and lakeshore management to minimize pollution from surface and ground water runoff.

- Expand Citizen Science Activities including: Water Sampling, Invasive Species Management, Trash Pickup, Trail Camera Monitoring and Maintenance, Bird and other wildlife count, and Habitat Rehabilitation and Restoration.
- Work with area hospitals and clinics to develop a wellness program where medical facility can tap into IRLC facilities and trails.

✓ *When feasible, add a part time or per diem naturalist and educator to the IRLC staff (5.C.).*

GOAL 3: FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

To develop the financial resources and financial stability to advance land conservation priorities

(Standards: Including 2C1(a), 3A2(b), 6A2, 6A3, 6A4, 6C1)

Strategic Priorities:

- 1. Create a budget that supports the successful execution of the strategic plan.**
- 2. Obtain the financial resources to complete land and water conservation goals.**
- 3. Build a Stewardship Fund that will serve as a strong foundation to serve both the current needs and those of perpetuity.**

Supporting Tasks to Achieve Success

- ✓ *Muster and stabilize financial resources, including operational, endowment, and reserve funds to support existing and growth opportunities (3. Retreat Priority #1 and LTA Standard 5).*
 - Continue to expand IRLC fundraising skills and methods to create a program able to fully support all regular operating activities (with the current level of staffing) while preparing to build a significant endowment to support future growth. (3.A. and 2016-2018 Strategic Plan)
 - Create a diversified fundraising plan, where any-one source represents no more than 20% of your fundraising goals. Emphasize building and diversifying donor base-triangle-middle group-1-5K annual donors.
 - Cultivate the Estate Attorney network for legacy donations and donor-advised funds.
 - Mine the donor lists for other regional organizations.
 - Fundraise to create, at a minimum, a 2 Million Endowment legacy that supports ongoing staff, including an Executive Director Endowment now and in 15 years' time.
 - Focus on periodic capital campaigns, and annual giving.
 - Build the Stewardship Reserve fund.

- Continually review and rewrite the “Case Statement” and encourage feedback from donors on its usefulness and relevance.
- ✓ Geographic Targets (3. A.3.)
 - Diversify high end donors living, working, and recreating in the larger service area.
 - Map out IRLC assets using a GIS database. Include at least service area, membership, land/program locations, and constituency base. Document gaps in service/donor base if geographic center moves more centrally from Redwood. For example, gaps already noted include Carthage, Alexandria Bay, Theresa, Antwerp, Black Lake, and the environs of Baker Woods.
- ✓ Capacity-Building (3. A.1.)
 - Create a supportive environment for members to drive and lead fundraising. Encourage existing board members to take leadership and make connections, help build sense of place and acceptance within the community, introduce IRLC to folks with deep pockets. Recruit new members who can step up to the plate and help raise money.
- ✓ Accountability (3. A.4.)
 - Outline a specific schedule and calendar of board activities and contact points that can be updated and reviewed periodically by the committee and the Board.
 - Share accountability for actions and follow up. Make fundraising everyone’s business.
- ✓ Expand periodic and perennial grant-writing capacity to include exploring potential sources of funding, and creating a regular calendar of submissions (3.B.).

GOAL 4: GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT

To be led by a committed and dynamic group of individuals who work within an internal structure that ensures excellence, commitment, and responsibility.

Strategic Priorities:

1. We will strictly follow industry best practices and standards, and exceed or lead in innovating those practices where applicable.

Supporting Tasks to Achieve Success

- ✓ Move forward with well-defined plans for reaccreditation (4.A. and Retreat Priority #1).
 - Work closely with, and review progress with Board Accreditation Committee.
- ✓ Design, deploy, and monitor an integrated grants and contracts compliance system (4.B. and Retreat Priority #2)
- ✓ Conduct periodic review of financial management and accountability systems in order to grow systems as organization grows (4.C. and Retreat Priority #2).
- ✓ Evaluate expanded facilities. Study feasibility of building a year-round education center (4.D.).

2. Provide a supportive work atmosphere, competitive salaries and benefits, and professional development and leadership opportunities to staff in order to attract and retain excellent employees.

Supporting Tasks to Achieve Success

- ✓ Support New Executive Director's Role (2.B. and Retreat Priority #2).
 - IRLC should self-monitor the demands and situation experienced by the new Executive Director in order to adapt and modify job responsibilities if necessary.
 - Continue to evaluate and continue to adjust decision-making protocol from one led by the Board to one led by the Executive Director in real time. i.e. Defer first point of contact on IRLC matters to the Executive Director for evaluation and go/no go action. Enable Executive Director to refer to Board on an as-needed basis. Flow of information should be both-ways.
 - Agree to a set of criteria for new activities using a decision-rubric constructed and adopted by both board and staff. Train the board and its committees in the chain of command protocols.

- ✓ Establish and maintain a volunteer recruiting, training, management and recognition program to expand our human resources. (2.C. and 2016-2018 Strategic Plan) (See 2. A.6. and Priorities 5 and 6.)
- ✓ Create a Five-Year Staffing Plan (2. F.).
 - The Board will annually reevaluate and adjust staff and volunteer roles and responsibilities as necessary and will regularly evaluate and act on future staffing needs.

3. The Board of Directors will operate in a framework that enhances Director engagement, improves accountability, and builds Board leadership. [Standards 1, 2, 3, 4, and 9.]

Supporting Tasks to Achieve Success

- ✓ Intentionally Manage the Board Leadership Succession Planning (2.A. and Retreat Priority #1).
 - Timeline-Draft a timeline for leadership successions that are planned.
 - Emergency Leadership Transition Plan- Adopt an Emergency Leadership Transition Plan to address the timely delegation of duties and authority whenever there is an unexpected transition or interruption in key leadership. (Standard 7)
 - Leadership Development Opportunities for Board- Identify leadership development opportunities for board members to expand their leadership skills so that the organization will have a "deeper bench" of future leaders. Attend LTA State Symposium and/or LTA National Rally. Commit to learning about managing the organization.
 - A messaging/communications strategy during transitions- Communicate: What will IRLC say to stakeholders before, during, and after a transition of leadership? Thoughtful communications are needed in order to support the organization during the transition process.
 - Recruitment and incubation of volunteers to ultimately populate board/staff/volunteers' roster. (See 2C and Priorities 5 and 6)
 - Ways to retain founding leadership investments- Find important and valuable ways for the founding leadership team to remain highly invested in IRLC. The new leadership should actively seek new and good ways for the founding leadership to volunteer and to stay involved.
- ✓ Diversify representation on the board of directors and respective committees (2.D.).
 - Continually assess board capacity and recruit members who fill the competency "gaps." Ensure that assessment criteria used in recruitment is reviewed annually and updated.
 - Target specific recruitment efforts to include next generation conservationists, Military Retirees residing in region, Jefferson County Young Professionals and Leadership Programs. Continue to seek out existing and future champions of land and water conservation and environmental education.

- Use term limits (for board members or officers) to provide a sense of finite commitments and tenure for prospective and active involvement.
 - Evaluate training and leadership development opportunities. Cultivate recruits on a deliberate IRLC Leadership Pathway by starting them with specific projects and activities as volunteers with a fixed time commitment. Help willing candidates learn and obtain the tools they need to take on added duties. Serving as committee chairs is an excellent occasion to learn.
 - Recruit people who embrace the IRLC mission/vision, can actively fundraise, and can contribute complementary governance skills. Let candidates know they are encouraged to take on officer responsibilities.
- ✓ Maintain and monitor Board and Operating Committee accountability (2.E.).
- The number, roles, structure, and membership of Board-level Committees and Teams will be regularly reviewed and adjusted to ensure effective performance.
 - Encourage each Committee and Team to prepare one-year and three-year work plans which will be reviewed and approved by the Board annually. (2016-2019 Strategic Plan)

Appendix 3: Operating Plan Summary Template (Excel)