



Aiken Land Conservancy

Strategic Plan
2012-2017

Members of the 2012 ALC Strategic Planning Committee

Larry Comegys

Wilkins Byrd

Holly Houghton

Paul Rideout

Harry Shealy

Margaret Shealy

Bennett Tucker

Brandon Heitkamp

Katie Roth

Meg Ferguson

For more information on the Aiken Land Conservancy, please visit the ALC website
www.ConserveAiken.org

or contact us at:

P.O. Box 3096, Aiken, SC 29802

855-ALC-LAND

Mission Statement

The mission of the Aiken Land Conservancy is to preserve natural and historic resources through land conservation.

Vision Statement

The Aiken Land Conservancy is a recognized and trusted leader in land conservation in South Carolina.

GOAL ONE: Pursue and ensure the conservation of key lands in and around Aiken County.

Objective 1: During the next five years, protect 5,000 acres of agricultural, recreational, forest, wetlands, and historic and natural areas through conservation easements or fee simple acquisitions.

Strategies

1. By December, 2012, the Land Acquisition, with ALC staff support, will identify specific geographic areas of Aiken County in which to concentrate conservation efforts.
2. Over the next two years ALC staff will work with City and County planning departments to identify, using GIS and county land records, specific parcels and landowners on which to concentrate land acquisition efforts.
3. The Land Acquisition Committee will develop and implement strategies to facilitate positive landowner relationships with the owners of identified conservation properties to explain the benefits and methods of land conservation.

Objective 2: Annually evaluate and update conservation education materials.

Strategies

1. The Education and PR Committees, working with ALC staff, will develop the following by June 2013
 - a. ALC brochure
 - b. PowerPoint presentation for land owners that explain the benefits and tax consequences of various methods of land conservation.
 - c. PowerPoint presentation for the general public explains the ALC and its mission
 - d. Update to ALC's website, www.conserveaiken.org
2. ALC staff will ensure that all landowner education materials are made available via the ALC website.
3. The PR Committee will conduct at least one special workshop annually for land owners and financial, real estate, and legal professionals to explain the benefits of land conservation and the potential tax benefits available.
4. The PR Committee will annually contact local civic organizations to inform them that ALC has available conservation materials and speakers to educate the public about land conservation (speakers bureau).

Objective 3: Develop and maintain collaborative partnerships with local, regional, and state conservation organizations, planning departments, the business community, and land trusts to ensure conservation of key land resources.

Strategies

1. Designate a member of the Board of Trustees or ALC staff to be the liaison with conservation organizations.
2. Ensure that ALC staff and board members attend regional meetings with other South Carolina land trusts.
3. Designate an ALC staff or board member to attend zoning, city, and county meetings to represent ALC interests.
4. By June 2013, the Fundraising Committee will identify a list of foundations and granting organizations from which ALC might seek funding.
5. The Fundraising Committee, with the assistance of ALC staff, will apply for funding from those organizations that are appropriate to ALC's mission; funding opportunities will be reevaluated annually thereafter.

GOAL TWO: Protect lands owned by the Conservancy and those on which ALC holds conservation easements by providing sound stewardship.

Objective 1: The Stewardship Committee will provide sound stewardship to ALC easements and fee-owned lands.

Strategies

1. The Stewardship Committee will conduct and document annual surveillance on all ALC fee-owned lands and easements and communicate these results to the landowner.
2. Within two years the Stewardship Committee will draft a site-specific management plan for each fee-owned land parcel and ensure that the management goals for each property are fulfilled. Management plans will be completed for all newly acquired properties within six months of acquisition.
3. The Stewardship Committee, working with ALC staff, will assign a stewardship point-of-contact for each ALC property within two years; POCs will be appointed for new properties at the time of acquisition. This POC will liaison with the Stewardship Committee and ALC staff to ensure that each property is adequately monitored.
4. The Stewardship Committee, working with ALC staff, will ensure that an action plan for addressing any stewardship concerns (easement violations, trespass, etc.) is implemented within 30 days of discovery.

Objective 2: Bring stewardship records for all ALC properties into compliance with Land Trust Alliance policies within three years.

Strategies

1. The Stewardship Committee, along with ALC staff, will ensure that each easement and fee-owned parcel has all necessary legal, ecological, and management documentation on file.
2. ALC staff, working with the Stewardship Committee, will convert easement and fee-owned parcel documentation to an electronic format so it can be made readily available for use by members and staff.
3. ALC staff, working with the Stewardship Committee and local planning department staff, will maintain and enhance a GIS-based map of ALC easements and fee-owned lands.

Objective 3: The Board of Trustees will ensure that sufficient funds are available to provide sound stewardship of easements into the future.

Strategies

1. When accepting new easements, the Land Acquisition Committee will apply the ALC Endowment Calculation Policy.
2. The Board of Trustees will maintain a Legal Defense Fund as part of each endowment received. Interest accrued on these funds shall be used only for legal defense associated with ALC easements.

GOAL THREE: Sustain organizational growth through the development and wise management of human and financial resources.

Objective 1: Increase membership by 50% per year over the next five years, based on 2012 levels, by improving communication with members and potential members through newsletters, the ALC website, e-mail, and local news media.

Strategies

1. The PR Committee, along with ALC staff, will develop and implement a membership policy.
2. ALC staff, with assistance as necessary from board members, will produce at least three newsletters annually for distribution to all Conservancy members and interested parties.
3. ALC staff will implement a system of e-mail alerts to keep members informed of conservation-related news and events.
4. ALC staff will keep the Conservancy website up to date with information for existing and potential members by reviewing web content at least monthly.
5. To publicize Conservancy activities, ALC staff and board members will strive to have ALC-related news appear at least six times each year in local media outlets, including one publication of significant local impact, such as The Aiken Horse.
6. ALC staff will contact Conservancy members through mailings and the newsletter to encourage them to renew their memberships each year.
7. The Conservancy will host at least one “members” event annually, in addition to the annual meeting, to involve more members in ALC activities.

Objective 2: Double fundraising revenue for the next five years, based on a 2012 baseline.

Strategies

1. ALC staff and board members will plan and execute small fundraising events annually for selected donors or potential donors of monetary or land resources.
2. ALC will participate in and/or organize a large event annually to raise funds and public awareness of land conservation options.
3. To raise public awareness of ALC and its mission, the Fundraising Committee will identify and work toward an annual ALC-branded fundraising event, implementation of which will include participation of the entire Board of Trustees.
4. ALC board members will commit to an annual donation to the Conservancy.

Objective 3: The Finance Committee will ensure that Conservancy monetary resources and investments are managed to provide maximum return that reflects the ALC investment philosophy, and that organizational operations are efficient and cost effective.

Strategies

1. The Finance Committee will develop a 3-year financial plan by June 2013.
2. The Finance Committee will develop and implement an Investment and Budget Policy and procedures by 2014.
3. The Finance Committee will develop a Policy on the Sale or Transfer of Assets, including real property by 2015.
4. The Executive Committee will evaluate the composition and scope of ALC investments at least once every year and make adjustments as necessary.

GOAL FOUR: Improve ALC organizational operations.

Objective 1: Achieve Land Trust Alliance (LTA) accreditation by 2017.

Strategies

1. ALC staff will develop and implement a Records Policy that ensures compliance with LTA Standards and Practices.
2. The Board will develop and implement a Personnel Policy that complies with federal and state laws.
3. The Board will review progress toward Strategic Plan objectives semi-annually (preferably in March and September) and adjust organizational activities as necessary to maintain momentum toward achievement of goals.

Objective 2: The Board of Trustees will ensure that Conservancy business is conducted in accordance with ALC Bylaws.

Strategies

1. The PR Committee, along with ALC staff, will develop and implement a Communications Policy.
2. The Board Development Committee will identify and recruit potential new board members who bring needed skills and experience to the Board of Trustees and to the Advisory Council.
3. The Board Development Committee will develop and implement a systematic process to train and evaluate board members by June 2013.
4. At least annually, ALC staff will provide Board members updated policies, procedures, and other documents necessary for organizational governance.
5. The Executive Committee will evaluate the performance of the Executive Director and other staff annually and provide feedback as needed.

Objective 3: Establish committees that operate effectively and efficiently with a clear purpose and report regularly to the Board on committee activities.

Strategies

1. All committees will develop and implement an annual operating plan consistent with the stipulations of this Strategic Plan. Each committee plan will include a list of annual priorities, meeting schedule, and event schedule, and will be updated annually.
2. The Board Development Committee will ensure that all committees are adequately staffed.
3. To increase the participation of Conservancy members in ALC governance, within two years the composition of each ALC committee will be reconstituted to include at least 25% non-board members.
4. The PR Committee will develop a list of volunteer opportunities that will be publicized on the ALC website to encourage increased participation by members in Conservancy activities.

For more information on the Aiken Land Conservancy,
please visit the ALC website www.ConserveAiken.org
or contact us at the address below:

P.O. Box 3096
Aiken, SC 29802