**SAMPLE LAND TRUST LAND PROTECTION GUIDELINES**

*Our Land Trust protects land that has significant conservation value and public benefit and that generally falls into one of the following four categories.*

1. Community and Scenic Lands – Lands that give community residents and visitors a “sense of place.”
2. Community and Recreational Lands
* Land that helps define a community’s sense of place and heritage or community character, such as a treasured vista or landscape, gateway, or historically important lands.
* Land where people come together for a common activity, such as trails and community recreation lands.
* Lands that provide access to stream corridors and public access for swimming, paddling, fishing, and other water-related recreational opportunities.
* Land that offers opportunity for experiential education.
* Land with natural attributes to which the public gains substantial and meaningful legal access.
1. Scenic Lands
* Land that is prominently visible from public lands, trails, waterways, or roadways; and
* Features scenic views and/or viewsheds; and
* Makes a significant contribution to the character of the town or county.
1. Lands with unique features and land protecting biological diversity – Land that possesses unique or valuable natural resources and contributes to biological diversity
2. Lands with unique features:
* Undeveloped lands along streams, rivers, lakes and ponds.
* Significant geological sites or outstanding water resources such as waterfalls, cliffs or gorges.
* Grasslands.
1. Biological diversity:
* Land that offers habitat for rare, endangered, or threatened animals or plants.
* High quality habitat for flora and fauna, including game species.
1. Water protection lands – Land that protects watershed and/or water quality
* Land lying within the aquifer protection area or recharge areas of public water supplies.
* Land bordering a tributary of the Big River.
1. Working lands -- Land that currently supports or contributes, or has the potential to support or contribute, to productive forestry and/or farming enterprises.
* Land that supports the wood products industry.
* Land that features prime agricultural soils or otherwise promotes agriculture.

Characteristics Enhancing Conservation Value

*Our Land Trust will give higher priority to land conservation projects that*

* Consist of a single large parcel or several contiguous ones
* Advance principles of smart growth and community and neighborhood revitalization
* Contain steep slopes
* Are threatened by imminent or near-term development
* Contain lands of high conservation value that other conservation organizations are unable or unwilling to protect
* Expand or buffer OLT’s protected lands
* Abut state-owned protected lands

Characteristics Diminishing Conservation Value

*Our Land Trust will generally not participate in conservation projects*

* That OLT cannot feasibly maintain and/or steward – land with buildings provide special challenges for maintenance and stewardship;
* That do not have clear title;
* Involving the retention of reserved rights, which, if exercised, would threaten or degrade conservation values;
* Potentially containing hazardous wastes or other forms of contamination;
* Containing degraded conservation resources that cannot feasibly be restored;
* Having little or no public benefit and primarily benefit a single landowner or developer.