**Policy 3.4 Project Selection, Criteria, Evaluation & Planning**

**Committee Responsible**: Preservation Committee

**Adopted**: **[DATE]**

**Amended**: **[DATE]**

**Purpose**

The Land Trust has established criteria for selecting conservation projects that will guide the actions of the Land Trust and shall be used when considering purchases or donations of fee land or conservation easements, amending conservation easements, and with regards to long term responsibilities of stewardship and monitoring of lands under the protection of the Land Trust. The Board retains discretion over project selection and will evaluate each project and proposal on its own merits after careful investigation of the property, its resources, and the potential public benefit. The review and evaluation of these projects will be documented, including the conservation values and public benefit, and be included as part of the permanent record for every property.

**Policy**

1. All properties proposed for protection will be evaluated based on conservation values and stewardship capacity.
2. The Land Trust, in accordance with IRS Regulation Sec. 170 (h), evaluates all properties under consideration based on their public benefit and conservation values it deems important to the long-term quality of life of the community and that are consistent with its mission. The Preservation Committee evaluates and recommends the acquisition of properties based on these values.
3. The following standards will guide the selection process:
4. Each project is consistent with the Land Trust’s mission
5. The Land Trust will inspect every property prior to acquisition to ensure it is consistent with the Land Trust’s conservation values and/or any potential threats to those values are identified and there will be clear documentation of the public benefit of each land and easement transaction
6. The Land Trust will obtain the property’s legal description in the deed and procure a survey if one exists to verify the boundaries. If no survey exists an acceptable substitute may be used; however, key boundaries or corners with adjoining tracts must be verified
7. Each project will meet federal and state requirements
8. The selection criteria will be transparent, and the Land Trust will communicate how projects are selected and approved – to land trust representatives, landowners and their advisors, and the interested public
9. The Land Trust will work with partners to create conservation priorities appropriate for the community
10. When working with or engaging partners, the Land Trust will ensure that the roles and responsibilities of each party are documented and agreed upon to achieve a working relationship that is mutually beneficial and in the best interest of the missions of the organizations involved
11. Each project being pursued will be consistent with the best use of the Land Trust’s resources
12. All projects will be reviewed by the Board for its final approval and implementation