



Sheridan
Community
LAND TRUST
Conservation | History | Recreation

Connecting people to land and history



Connecting People To Land And History

STRATEGIC PLAN 2023 - 2028



Mission and Vision

Mission

Sheridan Community Land Trust preserves our open spaces, healthy rivers and creeks, working ranches, wildlife habitat, and vibrant history, while expanding recreation opportunities to connect people with the places they love.

Vision

Connecting People To Land And History

Goal 1: Conservation of open spaces, healthy rivers and creeks, working ranches, and wildlife habitat.



25-year vision – Our community is actively engaged to conserve lands that are healthy natural areas and provide publicly accessible open spaces near our cities and towns. Working lands are conserved in geographic areas that are consistent with the 25-year growth of our communities. Water use is balanced cooperatively by users and regulators.

Specifically, we will ensure:

- 1) SCLT continues to use relevant data to implement regular conservation planning that focuses conservation work including permanent conservation and land stewardship to priority habitats, landscapes, wildlife movement, and climate resiliency.
- 2) Ten percent of the private lands in the County are permanently conserved.
- 3) SCLT conserves our communities' community's open space and viewsheds with a focus on ridgelines and sightlines. Ten percent of the private lands in the County are permanently conserved.
- 4) SCLT uses a broad suite of conservation tools (planning, Conservation Subdivision, proactive community measures) to ensure Sheridan County continues to be a viable mix of working lands and residential use. Ten percent of the private lands in the County are permanently conserved.
- 5) SCLT conserves ten percent of private lands that contributes to healthy watershed, creeks and rivers.
- 6) SCLT provides drought tools and resources that incorporate a wide set of perspectives and benefits all user groups.
- 7) SCLT creates outreach that engages community members of all backgrounds in conservation relevant to their daily lives.
- 8) SCLT advocates for maintaining the integrity of public lands. .
- 9) SCLT will blend conservation, historical preservation, and recreation at key locations.

Five-year goal - Conserve areas vital to local working lands, moving wildlife, provide steppingstones of habitat in developed areas, and partner with local groups to connect people to nature nearby.

5-year objectives:

- 1) Conservation projects have maximum impact for wildlife, key landscapes and habitat, climate resilience, viewshed, and productive working land priorities.
- 2) Increase the strategic application of conservation easements.
- 3) Conserve lands that have historic values and or recreation.
- 4) Increase understanding and relevancy of conservation among the local landowner community.
- 5) Increase support for conservation easements and land conservation at the public policy level.

5-year strategies and benchmarks:

- 1) Evaluation of conservation projects that are in alignment with our mission.
 - a. Every 5 years complete a conservation planning process that focuses our conservation priorities with considerations of wildlife, key landscapes and habitat, climate resilience, viewshed, and productive working land priorities.
 - b. Annually identify permanent conservation projects that meet the priorities of the conservation plan.
 - c. Review annually our outreach for new conservation agreements.
- 2) Provide multiple options to meet producer needs for conservation easements.
 - a. Annually develop one purchased conservation easement project and submit for funding to state and federal programs.
 - b. Complete ten conservation easements to qualify for NRCS to qualify for “reviewed entity”.
 - c. Annually develop and close at least one donated or purchased conservation easement.
 - d. Use the conservation revolving fund to increase our portfolio of donated conservation easements.
- 3) For legal conservation easement prioritize places with historic preservation values.
 - a. Develop internal processes to evaluate projects that are multi mission focused.
 - b. Every five years complete a conservation easement that includes historic preservation.
- 4) Provide conservation tools beyond conservation easements.
 - a. Annually deliver 1 - 2 community education pieces on conservation easements, wildlife friendly fencing, and watershed health.
 - b. Support community drought resiliency through improving access to information, education and workshops, and on-the-ground projects.
 - c. Volunteers are engaged in at least one project per year in an active land stewardship / conservation project.
 - d. Develop partnerships that increase the rate of conservation.
- 5) SCLT collaborates with the community of Wyoming land trust to educate law makers on policy affecting conservation easements, land management, and public ownership.
 - a. Attend Chamber Commerce legislative update.
 - b. Educate and advocate in Cheyenne during session.
- 6) SCLT collaborates with community leaders concerning ongoing and proposed land use arrangements / opportunities.

- 7) Across all mission areas expand our community's ownership and stewardship of our program through ambassadors and volunteers.
 - a. Develop volunteer appreciation program.
 - b. Annual hosting one events to appreciate our volunteers.
 - c. Quarterly provide behind the scenes information to volunteer/ambassadors to areas of interest.
- 8) Lead a conversation with other Wyoming based land trust to hire a lobbyist.
- 9) Lead a conversation with other Wyoming based land trust to hire an NRCS / Land Trust advocate.

Goal 2: Expanding recreation opportunities



25-year vision – Accessible recreation is available to all community members through a variety of year-round options including trails, pathways, and routes.

Specifically, we will ensure:

- 1) SCLT will create resources for the community to responsibly engage in recreation.
- 2) SCLT partners with a wide range of interest groups to create recreation opportunities across Sheridan County, including broad use of recreation from hikers and bikers to painters and folks doing yoga.
- 3) Outdoor recreation opportunities exist that are easily accessible to the Cities and Towns of Sheridan County.
- 4) Well maintained community trail systems are located within 50% of new subdivisions.
- 5) Each community trail system includes accessible trails and education across our missions.
- 6) The water trail system is built and maintained to the full extent outlined in the County Comp plan. Fifty percent of perennial hazards have been mitigated.
- 7) Growth of trail systems continue to balance human use with cultural and ecological value.
- 8) SCLT will blend conservation, historical preservation, and recreation at key locations.

Five-year goal – Develop recreation opportunities that include trails, paved pathways, and access points that further local priorities while prioritizing opportunities that combine recreation with conservation and / or history.

5-year objectives:

- 1) Increase public access to accessible trails.

- 2) Increase recreation opportunities outside of Sheridan or through means in addition to trails.
- 3) Increase the communities' knowledge and skillsets to confidently access available recreation and find connections through recreation to history and / or conservation.
- 4) Increase the communities' ownership of our trails.
- 5) Expand the safety of the Tongue River Water Trail.
- 6) Expand recreation access opportunities to new locations.
- 7) Maintain and provide trails that are in good to excellent condition.

5-year strategies and benchmarks:

- 1) Create accessible recreation trails or routes.
 - a. Identify a site.
 - b. One recreation project is completed.
- 2) Create a recreation trail that is located near communities not being closely served (e.g., Clearmont, Ranchester, Story, Dayton).
 - a. One recreation project is completed.
- 3) Host Discovery Session that aims to increase recreation skill sets.
 - a. Annually we provide two recreation themed Discovery Sessions.
- 4) Host Discovery Sessions that aim to increase our communities' understanding of connections through recreation to history / conservation.
 - a. Annually we provide two mixed-mission themed Discovery Sessions.
- 5) Across all mission areas expand our community's ownership and stewardship of our program through ambassadors and volunteers.
 - a. Develop volunteer appreciation program.
 - b. Host one annual volunteer appreciation event.
 - c. provide behind-the-scenes information to volunteer/ambassadors quarterly.
- 6) Reduce physical hazards and maintain access sites to the TRWT.
 - a. Annual clean up event.
 - b. Annual physical maintenance of the sites.
 - c. Develop permanent access agreements.
- 7) Maintain a list of potential recreation opportunities that articulate the recreation component of SCLT's mission.
 - a. Review annually our outreach for new trail agreements.
 - b. Annually review and edit list of potential trail sites.
 - c. Annually review alternate recreation needs for the community (land locked, climbers, non-motorized, snow grooming).
- 8) Maintain our recreation projects in good or excellent condition.
 - a. Annually assess the condition of existing recreation projects.
 - b. Annually ensure projects are maintained or improved.
- 9) Regularly gather community input on trail conditions.
 - a. Host an annual community meeting.
 - b. Develop trail condition reporting tools that augment the Sheridan Conditions / website.
- 10) SCLT collaborates with community leaders concerning ongoing and proposed land use arrangements / opportunities.

Goal 3: Preserving vibrant history



25-year vision – Accessible, inclusive, and representative histories are preserved across Sheridan County through preservation, community education, and experiential and virtual storytelling.

Specifically, we will ensure:

- 1) Our program is robust with long term capacity and support from an audience representative of all our community members and visitors (age, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic background, mobility).
- 2) SCLT continues to use relevant data to implement regular planning that focuses on historic preservation to ensure relevant key historic sites / places from a wide view of history are perpetually preserved using the best tool for ensure preservation. Focus will be given to places that our community can directly interact with physically or through captured media.
- 3) SCLT will blend conservation, historical preservation, and recreation at key locations.
- 4) SCLT employs a wide set of tools and venues to ensure our history is actively and regularly shared with our community members and visitors.
- 5) Historic sites / places and diverse perspectives are incorporated into community education via walks, tours, media and other community programming.

5-year goal - Work with public and private property owners to permanently preserve and/or interpret significant historic structures and sites to maintain and enhance the region's character and economy. Work with local and regional community members and organizations to develop and publicly present historical education activities while crossing SCLT mission elements.

5-year objectives:

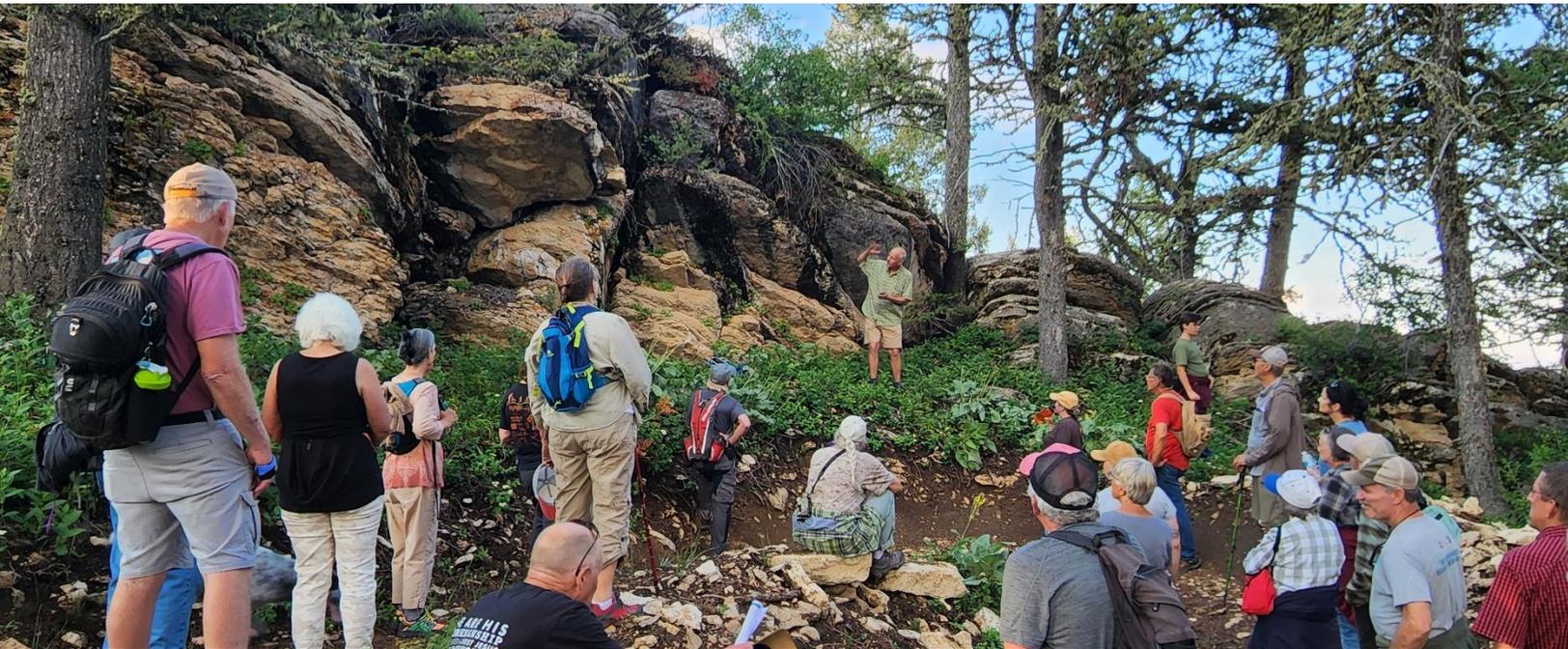
- 1) Expand historic education opportunities to include inclusion concepts and to reach a wide range of community members.
- 2) Collaborate with community leaders concerning ongoing and proposed land use arrangements / opportunities.
- 3) Focus our preservation work on key locations that are supported by local, regional, statewide, and national entities.
- 4) Prioritize historic preservation easements to places with public access, capture a diversity of historic perspectives and provide avenues for program partnerships.
- 5) Provide a wider range of historic preservation tools to build capacity for historic preservation projects.
- 6) Increase funding partnerships to ensure historic preservation programs, projects, and easements.
- 7) Increase the avenues allowing for our communities to access historic preservation opportunities.

5-year strategies and benchmarks:

- 1) Work with local and regional community members and organizations to develop and publicly present historic education activities related to local and regional history while aligning with SCLT mission elements.
 - a. Maintain the TBT series.
 - b. Maintain the Explore History program.
 - c. Provide two to three per year history programs/ projects that build historic preservation relationships.
 - d. As capacity allows, provide presentations to community organizations upon request.
 - e. Annually evaluate if existing historic education materials can be recycled into a new format / audience.
 - f. Provide digital versions of at least 50% of public programs.
- 2) Participate and utilize the Sheridan County Preservation Plan, SHPO, National Registry, and being on the Certified Local Government (SCHPC).
 - a. Annually review the public planning documents and public projects.
 - b. Participate in revisions of planning documents when available.
 - c. Active participation in SCHPC to stay up to date on local preservation inquiries and development of SCLT and Sheridan County partnership for preservation projects/ HPEs.
- 3) Develop a benchmark system to prioritize our capacity to pursue historic preservation.
 - a. With the HPE working group, create an internal prioritization document modelled off the CE program's process document.
 - b. Work with HPE working group on the findings from preservation research and concept of combined CE/HPEs to create an internal prioritization document modelled off the CE program's future process document.
 - c. Review annually our outreach for new historic preservation easements.

- 4) Expand the Historic Working Group to offer a range of volunteer opportunities with historic education activities, preservation projects and historical preservation easement process.
 - a. Develop volunteer opportunities to lead and participate in SCLT walking tours, Explore History programs, research toward programs, and “hands-on” preservation projects.
 - b. Maintain a historic working group for the capacity and growth to pursue legal historic preservation.
 - c. Review annually our outreach with new methods to engage community members in volunteer opportunities and volunteer appreciation.
- 5) Research and develop program stability strategies to pursue historical preservation.
 - a. Research stewardship funding and other restoration/ interpretation opportunities for property owners.
 - b. Increase capacity for SCLT Historic Program Manager to manage easement/ preservation project program.
 - c. Work with SCHPC on opportunities with Sheridan County for partnerships with preservation projects and HPE program.
- 6) Use the guidance from the 2022 Historic Feasibility Study to expand the toolset SCLT uses for historic preservation projects. Build capacity for important historic properties and sites for potential protection through the expansion of HPE tools and community networks.
 - a. Create a ranking system of the top three tools coming from the Study that directs the utilization of these tools.
 - b. At least twice annually engage with the SCLT HPE working group and historic preservation commission.
- 7) Cultivate relationships with private foundations as well as state and federal funding sources to expand the History Program’s budget to cover preservation projects, community programs, personnel, and HPEs.
 - a. Continue to research and apply for funding from a wide net of sources.
 - b. Identify sources of funding that provide capacity for historic preservation easements and historic preservation projects.
- 8) Expand the tools for “public access” to experience local and regional history and historic preservation.
 - a. Regularly explore new media.
 - b. Develop engagement through direct activities for volunteer opportunities with historic preservation.

Goal 4: Connect people with the places they love



25-year vision – Our communities are more deeply connected to the places they love, our stories past and present, and empowered to participate with and care for them.

Specifically, we will ensure:

- 1) SCLT provides a platform for community driven education, expert-led shared experiences, engagement, and generational transfer of knowledge that are available to all.
- 2) SCLT has extensive and meaningful partnerships with other community organizations.
- 3) SCLT has created tangible changes to the lives of our community members.
- 4) That we are integral to the daily lives of our community.

5 year goal - All community members near and far recognize SCLT as a trusted organization which connects them to land and history.

5-year objectives:

- 1) Connect community members to all our mission elements.
- 2) SCLT adapts and modifies our programs through community input.
- 3) SCLT reaches former community members.
- 4) Approach our work with intention to include equitable economic and social diversity.
- 5) Ensure we have broad materials in a variety of locations to introduce new community members to SCLT's programs.
- 6) Create structures for volunteers and "hands-on" discovery for a wide range of age groups.
- 7) Create structures that enhance life skills for youth and young adults for initiatives related to our programs.

5-year strategies and benchmarks:

- 1) Provide educational opportunities that invite community members to connect with multiple mission elements.
 - a. Annually provides at least one Discovery Sessions in each mission area.
 - b. Annually provides a fundraiser that combines community education across mission areas.
- 2) SCLT receives proactive and retroactive community feedback on the effectiveness of our program's work.
 - a. Annually gather feedback from volunteers as to why they volunteer and how we can best appreciate them.
 - b. After each program / annually survey external participants.
- 3) SCLT participates and uses externally produced feedback / surveys to inform the priorities within our program's work.
 - a. When appropriate and available SCLT participates in external efforts.
 - b. Review annually the Sheridan Parks and Recreation Master Plan, City of Sheridan Pathway plan.
 - c. Review annually the Sheridan County Comprehensive Plans.
 - d. Review annually the Sheridan County Historic Preservation Plan and Historic Preservation Feasibility Study.
 - e. Review annually other produced survey (Chamber of Commerce, CVC Listen Circles).
- 4) SCLT presents educational opportunities through a wide range of media.
 - a. Research one new media format per year.
- 5) Welcome former and new community members to participate in our programs.
 - a. Annually adapt a portion of outreach to include venues identified through community feedback and market trends to reach new audiences (visit with STT).
 - b. Annually evaluate the broad set of materials in Sheridan County Chamber of Commerce Welcome Packet.
- 6) Marketing materials include representations of people from multiples ethnicities and people of more than one race in our materials.
 - a. Annually evaluate appropriate approaches to placing our materials in front of a diverse community.
 - b. Produce materials which include diverse depictions of people in our community when possible.
- 7) Update volunteer handbook and volunteer segment of the website that includes an inventory of task/roles that volunteers can participate in and how their help furthers the larger mission.
- 8) Expand our current volunteer appreciation and community building within volunteers.
 - a. Appreciate volunteers at the volunteer opportunity.
 - b. Host a volunteer appreciation that crosses all missions (e.g., Trailfest 2022 model).
 - c. At least one personal touch with each volunteer per year.
 - d. Incorporate intra-volunteer community building at volunteer events.
 - e. Continue City Day / Earth Day cleanup as our major appreciation event for trails.
 - f. Host one main conservation initiative day with appreciation.
- 9) Host AmeriCorps members / Interns / WCC Crews / Department of Workforce Services that incorporates professional development / mentorship for the members.
 - a. Annually evaluate if needed capacity can come through such a program.
 - b. Annually evaluate our structure for providing mentorship through these opportunities.

Goal 5: Stewardship

5 year goal - Maintain and grow an adequate stewardship program for legal agreements that demonstrates SCLT's commitment to its historic, access and trail, and conservation easements.

5-year objectives:

- 1) Meet the legal requirements for our agreements that include an ongoing legal obligation.
- 2) Use the best available tools and technology to meet legal stewardship requirements.
- 3) Minimize SCLT's legal risk in easement agreements.

5-year strategies and benchmarks:

- 1) Maintain and evaluate an annual stewardship process that provides consistency and transparency for both the landowner and / or property owners as well as SCLT.
 - a. Annually ensure all legal agreements are in full compliance with their terms.
 - b. Monitoring required by legal agreements is performed annually and fully documented.
 - c. Guarantee that title companies are updated annually on all easements and agreements and their implications for the property.
 - d. Review annually our outreach to emphasize stewardship for easement agreements.
- 2) Use database software to track agreements that require stewardship.
 - a. Update annually the data in our stewardship database.
- 3) Maintain and ensure staff capacity for the annual stewardship of legal agreements.

Goal 6: Funding

5 year goal - Secure sustainable and diverse funding to support SCLT's mission.

5-year objectives:

- 1) Strategically secure, grow, and manage project funding, unrestricted funding, and endowed support from a wide range of sources including public and private entities while ensuring alignment with SCLT's vision.
- 2) Raise organizational support through that is meaningful and appeals to our supporters.

5-year strategies and benchmarks:

- 1) Identify and cultivate relationships with private foundations and public organizations in order to secure funding for SCLT programs and operations.
 - a. Secure funding from public organizations including local, state, and federal sources for at least 30% of the annual operating budget.
 - b. Secure funding from individual donors and foundations for at least 35% of the annual operating budget.
- 2) Identify and cultivate relationships with private individuals who share SCLT's mission.
 - a. Secure annual funding from at least 375 individuals and increase the number of individuals annually by 5%.
 - b. Secure annual funding from 80 major donors (over \$1k) and increase 5% annually.
 - c. Retain 50% of annually contributing members and move at least 10% of donors to a higher level each year.
 - d. Increase the number of people who have identified the land trust as a beneficiary in their estate plans or in another manner of future planned giving.
- 3) Identify and execute opportunities to attract support from local businesses.
 - a. Secure annual funding from at least 50 business supporters to 50 by July 2024 and increase the number by 5% annually.
- 4) Attract and retain strategic donors by highlighting SCLT projects.
 - a. Celebrate three major projects per year in our annual marketing materials.
- 5) Develop Outreach and Marketing plan to gain a broad-based support which appropriately stewards all levels of supporter.
 - a. Annual review and revise the SCLT Fundraising Plan.
- 6) Steward all donors.
- 7) Align the Fundraising Plan with the current 5-year Strategic Plan.
- 8) Seek to continue and increase the Optional 1-cent Funding and Excise Tax across all mission areas and special projects.
 - a. Increase Optional 1-cent Funding from the City of Sheridan to \$35,000 / year and from Sheridan County to \$35,000 / year.
 - b. Annual review County and City funding through 1-cent for appropriate request for project specific funding.
- 9) 100% of board members donate to SCLT and assist in annual fundraising efforts.
- 10) Maintain our revolving conservation fund.
- 11) Ensure all endowments have a current endowment plan including an investment strategy.
 - a. Annually revise and update endowment plan(s) including an investment strategy for all endowments.

- 12) Raise stewardship endowment for every conservation easement or historic preservation easement either through landowner donation or funds raised from other sources.
 - a. The Stewardship Endowment is funded at a level commensurate to cover annual stewardship expenses associated with SCLT easements.

Goal 7: Marketing and Outreach

5 year goal - Community members near and far recognize SCLT as a trusted community organization in the areas of our mission.

5-year objectives:

- 1) Community members who engage with SCLT for easement agreements understand our commitment to stewardship.
- 2) Increase community awareness of SCLT in Sheridan County and effectively emphasize and convey the public and private benefits of SCLT's mission.
- 3) Establish SCLT as a trusted source for conservation, history, and recreation information in the greater Sheridan region.

5-year strategies and benchmarks:

- 1) Develop materials that explain SCLT's stewardship role, responsibility, and costs to educate potential easement landowners and / or property owners.
 - a. Identify our key audiences and develop approaches to personalize our outreach.
 - b. Maintain talking points on how to be effective SCLT ambassadors.
 - c. Review marketing solutions to expand our reach.
- 2) Provide information focused on landowners, landowner advisors and other relevant professionals.
- 3) Target designated properties that fit within priorities for conservation and/or historic preservation.
- 4) Identify and prioritize key audiences and the best tools with which to reach them.
- 5) Participate in public events and activities that reach target audiences.
 - a. Participate in at least two public events annually.
- 6) Seek diverse opportunities to publicize successful projects.
 - a. Contact target audiences through four appearances per year to local organizations.
 - b. Participate in local media opportunities at least quarterly.
- 7) Collaborate with conservation and cultural groups to help connect people to the land.
- 8) Provide materials and outreach on public policies and programs that support effective conservation, recreation, historic preservation, and growth that is consistent with our mission.
- 9) Utilize marketing strategies that reach diverse populations.
- 10) Maintain consistent contact with local elected officials.

Goal 8: Best Practices

5 year goal - Improve and protect SCLT's professional reputation of excellence in all SCLT undertakes.

5-year objectives:

- 1) SCLT has a strong reputation for fiscal management, legal transactions, and community partnerships.

5-year strategies and benchmarks:

- 1) Maintain best practices identified through LTA accreditation.
 - a. Consult LTA Accreditation Commission annually to report progress on standards and practices and to ascertain any changes to the accreditation program.
 - b. Complete and implement current LTA standards and practices.
- 2) Continue to build trusted community relationships.
- 3) Remaining neutral in community projects that are outside of our direct involvement.
- 4) SCLT follows appropriate financial transparency practices.
 - a. 990s are posted annually on the SCLT website.
 - b. SCLT maintains a positive presence on charity rating website(s).

Goal 9: Organizational Capacity

5 year goal - Ensure that an efficient and effective team of people is working at the highest sustainable level to accomplish SCLT's mission.

5-year objectives:

- 1) All areas of SCLT's mission are supported by the board and staff.
- 2) SCLT has a strong organizational culture which supports our team, volunteers, and attracts top talent that aligns with our organization values.
- 3) SCLT is a rewarding place to volunteer.
- 4) SCLT has consistency through board and staff transitions with external relationships and internal processes.
- 5) Secure board leadership committed to providing time, talent, and treasure to SCLT.

5-year strategies and benchmarks:

- 1) Ensure that the Board and Committees are composed of members with strong and diverse backgrounds, capable and ready to leverage relationships and experience for SCLT's mission.
- 2) Maintain a board leadership succession, relationship and data succession, and retention strategy for the board.
 - a. Ensure with all transition of employees and volunteers that digital resources are documented and transferred.
 - b. Continue board development (recruiting, orientation and training) including adding a process for leadership succession.
- 3) Develop a staff leadership succession, relationship and data succession, and retention strategy for staff.
 - a. Include growth and development options for staff positions in retention strategy.
 - b. Ensure a system is in place that guides employees and volunteers to document contacts, sources of information, ongoing plans, programs, and policies to ease the transition for the successor.
- 4) Build and support a professional staff that is commensurate with SCLT needs, opportunities, professional growth, and can be adequately funded.
 - a. Annually connect team members to training opportunities.
- 5) Provide time together as a team to recognize and understand the direction of the organization.
- 6) Evaluate staffing roles to ensure capacity is optimal balance of workload and work life.
- 7) Build and grow a volunteer force that understands SCLT's mission and is excited to share this passion.
 - a. Develop and review volunteer opportunities across all of SCLT's work.
 - b. Develop volunteer appreciation program.
 - c. Annual hosting one events to appreciate our volunteers.
 - d. Quarterly provide behind the scenes information to volunteer/ambassadors to areas of interest.
- 8) Revitalize working groups.
- 9) Explore the need for volunteering roles such as a "junior board" for folks to be more engaged than "regular" volunteer but short of a full board member.
- 10) Establish partnerships that build rapport with communities and their leaders while bringing focused and tangible public benefits.

- 11) Across all mission areas expand our community's ownership and stewardship of our program through ambassadors and volunteers.
- 12) Maintain and adopt governance policies and calendars.
 - a. Annually review and update SCLT committees and workgroups for effectiveness and connection to Strategic Plan.
 - b. Annually review Staff Handbook and staff benefits.