

2024 Interim Strategic Plan

A next step along the trail...

By Sue McLeod, Board Member and Governance Committee Chair

As 2023 drew to a close so did KELT's current Strategic Plan, which inspired and guided our work beginning in 2019. And so the KELT Board embarks once again to reflect on our progress and craft a new Strategic Plan!

First and foremost as we look back at 2019 - 2023, we're proud of...

- Continuing our land conservation, restoration, and stewardship missions in spite of the staff changes and shifts in how work got done during the upheaval brought on by the pandemic.
- Using our Executive Director Succession Plan to smoothly name an interim Executive Director and select Becky Kolak as our new Executive Director. (By the way, that Succession Plan, adopted in 2017, also ensured that Becky was prepared for this new role.)
- Having a strong financial position, including reserve funds and sound financial management that allowed us to purchase our new Washington Street home in December 2022.
- Being responsive to the changes in the job market and workforce that enabled us to hire new staff to facilitate our land protection, education, communications, and operational programs.

We've been busy and are still working on challenges and opportunities faced during the upheaval of the last few years. The global pandemic, the national job market shifts, staff changes within KELT, and moving into our new home on Washington Street have justifiably diverted our attention. Just because we've been dealing with unexpected obstacles and opportunities, we haven't stopped improving and planning. We have much to be proud of and to do in 2024.

As we dig into the year, we're planning to...

- Renew our Land Trust Alliance (LTA) Accreditation, which was last renewed in 2019 and holds our work to the highest national standards.

- Conserve and restore an estimated 150-acres of habitat important to the plants, wildlife, and people of the Kennebec Estuary and Merrymeeting Bay region.
- Increase our strategic reserve funds and improve our policies and procedures for their management.
- On-board fully our amazing new staff members and create a cohesive and effective team.
- Update our Personnel Policy to ensure that we can continue to hire, train, retain, and reward the best land trust staff.
- Take the time to thoughtfully craft a new Strategic Plan covering the next five years.

Rather than rush to create a 'check-the-box' plan to encompass this present year, we've decided to catch our breath and reset our deadline. Our new Strategic Plan will cover the years of 2025 to 2030 and be published for the public by spring 2025.

Framing a new strategic plan is a fruitful process for KELT. We gather input from our annual donors and community partners. We look to our neighboring Land Trusts and fellow non-profits for inspiration. We reflect on what we've learned from past experience and imagine what the future might bring. We gather staff, board directors, and committee members together to synthesize a set of specific goals that further our mission and stretch us into new territory. We debate and revise and debate some more. When we're done, we present the plan to our donors and our communities across the region we proudly serve.

You're invited to join us on this next step along the trail -- flip this page to view our projected journey to create and share our new Strategic Plan. We look forward to your thoughts about how KELT can continue to fulfill its mission and goals. We want your ideas about how we can be a stronger community resource and more sustainable. We want your dreams and visions of new ways KELT can contribute to healthy habitats and healthy communities. You'll hear from us soon about how you can participate!

MAPPING THE PATH TO KELT'S

2025-2030 Strategic Plan

OUR VISION & MISSION:

We envision a thriving Kennebec Estuary with lands and waterways that support the health of natural systems and sustainable human uses. We strive to make the Kennebec Estuary Land Trust a vital community institution that protects and increases the quality of life in our area. Today and for generations to come, there will be deep appreciation of the significance of the Kennebec Estuary and widespread public support for its continued protection and recovery.

Our mission is to conserve, restore and instill appreciation of the land and water resources of the Kennebec Estuary to benefit today's communities and future generations.



Winter 2024

KELT staff will hold their first, annual retreat. Referencing KELT's former Strategic Plans, staff will reflect upon and share their perspectives and aspirations about the direction of KELT's mission-driven work. The result will be an outline of the Goals and Objectives of the new Plan.

Spring 2024



The drafted Goals and Objectives will be shared with board members, committee members, and expert volunteers, who span KELT's programmatic and operational work, in the effort to gather feedback on the direction and feasibility of the Plan. At KELT's Annual Meeting on April 9th, the Executive Director will share the timeline and the 2024 Interim Strategic Plan.



Summer 2024

To gain input from public audiences across the communities KELT serves, we will share widely a survey to collect what components of KELT's work are important to our donors, preserve visitors, partners, neighbors, volunteers, future supporters, program attendees, etc.



Autumn 2024

KELT's staff will incorporate the community input into the Plan to create a final version.

Spring 2025



The Plan will be released publicly at the Annual Meeting and through all of KELT's communication channels.



Winter 2025

KELT staff will finalize the layout of the Plan. It will go before the Board of Directors for discussion and acceptance.