

2024-2028

Strategic Plan

THE THOUSAND ISLANDS LAND TRUST



1000
ISLANDS
LAND TRUST



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The Thousand Islands Land Trust works to conserve the natural beauty, diverse wildlife habitats, water quality and outdoor recreation opportunities of the Thousand Islands region, for present and future generations.



PHOTO | Carleton Island © Terra Bach

COVER PHOTO | Crooked Creek © Spencer Busler





FOUNDATION

- 📍 **The land trust landscape is evolving**, with a growing focus on engaging more diverse populations, addressing climate resilience, and ensuring long-term stewardship of our region's critical natural resources.
- 📍 **Rising land prices in the Thousand Islands** and across St. Lawrence River Valley, driven by economic development and renewable energy pressures, intensify the need for conservation.
- 📍 **Biodiversity, wildlife habitat, and water quality** are under increasing threat.
- 📍 In response, **our conservation programs have expanded** to include science-based habitat restoration and mitigation, supported by private, state, and federal funding.
- 📍 **Since 2018, our protected acres have grown by over 20%**, with focus extending beyond the Thousand Islands to the Algonquin to Adirondacks (A2A) Wildway and key bird conservation areas along Eastern Lake Ontario that support the broader Atlantic Flyway.

Today, we are a regionally recognized organization with the potential to build on our shared success, capitalize on new opportunities, and strengthen our foundation for a sustainable future.



Mission

Working to conserve the natural beauty, diverse wildlife habitats, water quality and outdoor recreation opportunities of the Thousand Islands region, for present and future generations.

Vision

Our vision is a legacy of protected natural places, to enhance the vitality of our communities while inspiring current and future generations.

We strive to be a leader in land conservation and environmental stewardship, positioning to conserve, restore, and enhance the unique lands that support wildlife habitat, biodiversity, water quality, climate resilience, and environmental sustainability.

Our land conservation work provides local benefits while holding global significance improving both the communities we serve and the region's overall quality of life, with a focus area spanning from the eastern end of Lake Ontario (Henderson Harbor) to Massena, and from the St. Lawrence River to the Blue Line of Adirondack Park.





We prioritize landscape-scale conservation projects that positively **impact** the overall ecological health of the region, designed for the protection of our flyways, wildways and waterways.



Through science-based stewardship, proactive conservation, and community engagement, we work as an **effective** nonprofit that continues to deliver on state and federal grants as a means to accelerate the pace of land conservation in the North Country.



PHOTOS CLOCKWISE | Summer season © TILT; Turk's-cap lily © Terra Bach; Spring Stewardship Day 2023 © TILT; Blind Bay © Chris Murray Photography; Ichthyologist Day 2023 © Terra Bach; MacSherry Trail © Terra Bach

An aerial photograph of a large body of water, likely a lake or river, surrounded by dense forests. The trees are in various shades of green, yellow, and orange, indicating autumn. Several small islands and peninsulas are visible, some with buildings and docks. The water is calm, reflecting the surrounding landscape. A dark brown rectangular box is overlaid on the bottom left of the image, containing the word 'HIGHLIGHTS' in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters.

HIGHLIGHTS

Amplify focus on the ecological importance of the broader St. Lawrence River Watershed.

The organization will advance a variety of innovative conservation tools and best practices, such as habitat restoration, sustainable land management, community engagement, and expanded partnerships, going beyond traditional methods like land acquisition or conservation easements.

Showcase TILT Signature Preserves as community assets that actively foster engagement.

Our Land Trust commits to assessing opportunities to improve public access and enhance recreational experiences, fostering stronger connections between people and the natural landscape. Signature Preserves fully embody our mission, reflecting TILT's commitment to conserving the natural beauty, diverse wildlife habitats, water quality, and outdoor recreation opportunities of the Thousand Islands region for present and future generations.



PHOTO | Garlock Property © Chris Murray Photography

Expand conservation footprint.

In addition to staying focused on our cherished islands and tributaries, the TILT team will work to protect critical wetlands and grasslands of the Eastern Lake Ontario Flyway and improve habitat connectivity across the A2A Wildway.

Engage the community to bring together supporters to address critical issues like climate change, water quality, habitat connectivity, and bird migration.

The Land Trust will foster a lasting impact in the Thousand Islands region by advancing conservation efforts in the A2A Wildway, protecting vital flyways, and safeguarding water and fisheries. Through these initiatives, we aim to raise awareness of the importance of preserving the A2A Wildway, the Atlantic Flyway, and our cherished St. Lawrence River.

PRIORITIES

1

Land conservation priorities: St Lawrence River Islands and Tributaries, U.S. A2A, and Lake Ontario Flyway

- 📍 Advance landscape-scale conservation by expanding Signature Preserves that showcase the Thousand Islands region's unique natural, cultural, and recreational resources while connecting people to the land.

2

Science-based ecological land management

- 📍 Expand conservation collaboratives that accelerate science-based habitat restoration and mitigation.
- 📍 Coupled with effective ecological management, permanent land conservation will provide a foundation for the long-term protection of our region's waterways, flyways and wildways.

3

Zenda Farms Preserve serves as premier example of TILT's mission

- 📍 Zenda Farms embodies TILT's values advancing best land management, science-based habitat restoration, and educational and recreational programs that inspire conservation.
- 📍 Its rich history and agricultural heritage are featured in the *TILT Discovery Center: Gateway to the Outdoors*.

4

Regional position and influence

- 📍 Develop conservation projects and outreach that build upon the organization's local and regional presence.
- 📍 Build a broader network of stakeholders who recognize land conservation and stewardship as a pathway for positive local impact, with global significance.
- 📍 The organization will further develop an advocacy foundation to protect conservation assets, support environmental regulations and secure state and federal funding.
- 📍 The Discovery Center: Gateway to the Outdoors will serve as TILT's Welcome Center providing an inviting entry point to connect visitors with TILT's land conservation mission.

5

Dynamic staff and resources to achieve outcomes efficiently and effectively

- 📍 Attract and retain talent to advance strategic initiatives in land conservation, and environmental education.
- 📍 Expand staff capacity to improve efficiency, broaden reach, and ensure resources for long-term conservation success.

6

Financial stability and long-term sustainability

- 📍 Build permanent designated funds and endowments to ensure the perpetual nature of TILT's mission.
- 📍 Strengthen fundraising programs—including planned giving, major gifts and foundation grants—while increasing visibility, engagement, and support through strategic marketing and communications.

40 Years

1985



2025

MILEST

10



Signature Preserves

21.5



Miles of T

350

Parcels
Conserved



10,000

TILTrekers

137



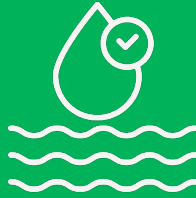
Conservation
Easements

150

Volunteers

TONES

52



Miles of Shoreline, Creek,
and Marsh Frontage



Trails



10,000

Community Members
at Events



40 Years
Conserving the
Place We Love

900



Annual
Supporters



1,300

Trees Planted



15,000

Acres Conserved



MOVING FORWARD

Our **long-term goal** is to responsibly protect and steward natural landscapes, ensuring their ecological health and accessibility today, and for future generations. Through science-driven conservation, community engagement, and sustainable management practices, we strive to create a lasting, positive impact on the land, wildlife, and communities we serve.





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PHOTO | Grindstone Island Nature Trail © Chris Murray Photography

