

Allegheny Land Trust Strategic Plan 2014–2018



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**To serve as the lead land trust
conserving and stewarding lands
that support the scenic, recreational
and environmental well-being
of communities in Allegheny County
and its environs.**



Helping local people save local land

Table of Contents

Welcome from the President & CEO 3

Mission Statement & Strategic Priorities..... 5

Core Values 6

Detailed Strategic Priorities

 Land Conservation 8

 Urban Greening..... 10

 Stewardship..... 12

 Community Outreach 14

 Leadership and Sustainability..... 16

Performance Metrics 18

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409 Broad Street, Suite 206B
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Welcome

Dear Property Owners, Partners, Stakeholders and Friends:

In 2014, the Allegheny Land Trust (ALT) Board of Directors adopted a new five year strategic plan after a 24-month extensive engagement process which was meant to collect the thoughts, priorities and expectations of our stakeholders. At the same time, ALT experienced an executive leadership transition resulting in the creation of a Land Protection Director position, a Board of Directors transition to a governance and policy body and the hiring of a new President & CEO.



In September 2011, the consulting firm, Dewey & Kaye, was retained to work with ALT through a comprehensive strategic planning process to understand strengths and weaknesses, identify opportunities, gain partner perceptions and to assist with the creation of a new, multi-year strategic plan. Consultant Leslie Bonner worked directly with ALT through this process by creating a community survey, facilitating strategic planning retreats, analyzing survey results and compiling all input for reporting. Thirty-nine individuals, including ALT staff, Board, community partners and other key stakeholders completed the survey. Ms. Bonner also conducted twelve interviews with funders/donors to gain their perspectives. Reports generated from the survey results, donor interviews and the retreat included an Environmental Scan Report of Findings and Notes from the Strategic Planning Retreat.

Priorities and goals were established based on this information and were summarized in March 2012.

In early 2012, a transition was also underway which left a vacancy in executive leadership. ALT's Board decided to place strategic planning on temporary hold until a new leader was hired. Once new leadership was in place by September 2012, the strategic planning process resumed which included one-on-one interviews with each ALT Board and staff member to discover perspectives about the organization. It also included a review of critical documents like ALT's GREENPRINT and direct discussions with funders and partners.



We are confident the implementation of this strategic plan, with a focus on our core values, attention to our strategic priorities and the measurement of our results, will have a significant impact on ecological, water, stormwater, recreational, wildlife and scenic quality for our communities. It is our intent and should be your expectation that the dedicated and hardworking ALT Board, staff and volunteers will work tirelessly to realize the objectives within this plan.

Everyone must remember that plans are fluid. We must adjust to dynamic economic and financial conditions at the global, national, state and local levels which will ultimately influence even the best, well-written plan. Thank you for taking the time to review, comment, critique and discuss the concepts, goals and objectives in this plan. We are always available to discuss our plans with anyone interested in having that conversation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris J. Beichner".

Christopher J. Beichner
President & CEO

Mission Statement

To serve as the lead land trust conserving and stewarding lands that support the scenic, recreational and environmental well-being of communities in Allegheny County and its environs.

2014-2018 Strategic Priorities

1. **Land Conservation** - To permanently protect land meeting ALT's GREENPRINT criteria of ecological, water and scenic conservation values by purchase and receiving donation of fee simple or easement interests.
2. **Urban Greening** - To permanently protect land specifically in urban environments measured by criteria and standards relevant to the community's needs such as stormwater absorption, recreational opportunities, community involvement, greenway connections and property value increases.
3. **Stewardship** - To manage the perpetual maintenance of ALT's protected lands through the creation and implementation of property management plans, annual observations and monitoring of each property, policy creation for enhanced visitor experience, educational opportunities and volunteer engagement.
4. **Community Outreach** - To expand strategic outreach efforts through education and awareness of ALT goals, objectives and public benefits of land conservation to specific target audiences.
5. **Leadership & Sustainability** - To inspire organizational and financial sustainability through positive collaborations with strategic partners while being recognized as a local and national leader in land conservation.



Core Values

Today's non-profit organizations must be proactive, transparent and operate ethically and efficiently. While competition for resources increases and resource availability decreases, non-profits must have the focus and determination to act in a manner consistent with successful for-profit corporations. Historical perceptions of non-profits are that they cannot make a profit, they are not fiscally responsible and they are not accountable for their actions. This cannot be further from the truth.

ALT should be viewed as a mission-driven corporation led and managed with the same efficiency, accountability and fiscal responsibility as any profit-driven corporations. Furthermore, ALT should have measurable goals tracked on a monthly, annual and five- year basis to show results and community impact. We must be accountable for our actions and deliver measurable results. It is vital for us to follow a set of core values to ensure ALT is the best organization and community partner while following fair and ethical business practices that promote accountability and transparency in everything we do.



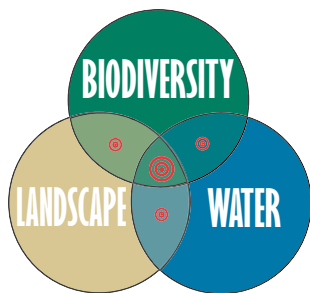
The Allegheny Land Trust will abide by the following core values by:

- ...taking a proactive and balanced approach to land conservation and stewardship to maximize the greatest public benefit.
- ...being accountable for our actions and inactions while always focusing on the best interest of the community first.
- ...seeking the highest levels of accreditation and excellence with our standards and practices.
- ...being inclusive and transparent when gathering community and partner input on important issues affecting land conservation.
- ...always striving to effectively and efficiently communicate our challenges and successes to our stakeholders.
- ...always serving and representing the organization ethically and with integrity.
- ...being fiscally responsible with our assets, investments and resources.



Strategic Priorities

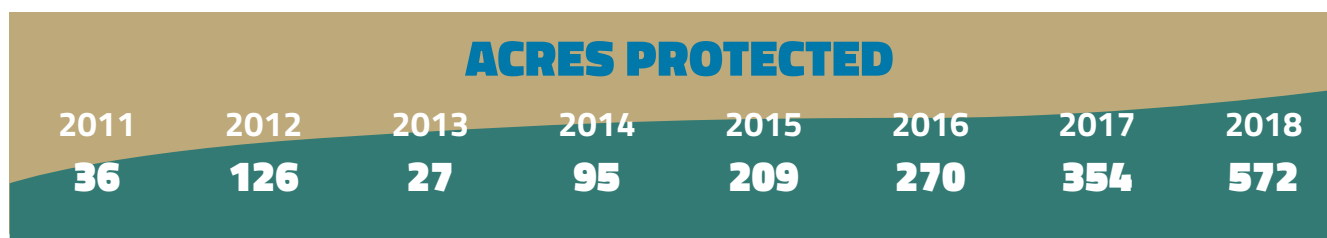
Land Conservation



ALT's land conservation goal is to permanently protect land meeting ALT's GREENPRINT criteria of ecological, water and scenic conservation values by purchase and receiving donation of fee simple or easement interests.

We intend to achieve this goal in the following ways:

- **GREENPRINT Implementation** – We will proactively expand land conservation through property acquisition by fee, accepting donations and other conservation tools throughout Allegheny County and surrounding communities. This will be done by working with property owners and partners to identify land to be protected and educate target audiences on the public benefits, values and importance of land conservation.
- **GREENPRINT Update** – We will update and expand upon the existing ALT GREENPRINT to reconfirm existing conservation priorities while increasing data collection and analysis of areas in Allegheny, Washington and adjoining counties. This will be done by retaining a qualified consultant to collect, analyze and map new data to be incorporated into a revised GREENPRINT for Allegheny County and a new GREENPRINT for Washington and adjoining counties.
- **Conservation Legacy Agreements** – We will proactively educate property owners on the public and tax benefits of conservation easements on their private property. This will be done by creating presentation materials that simplify the easement process and benefits associated with protecting private property.
- **Creative Conservation** – We will identify unique and innovative land conservation projects, similar to Wingfield Pines, which will conserve large parcels of land, have the potential to generate sustainable revenue and demonstrate ALT's creative leadership and approach to land protection. This will be done by working with strategic partners and funders to explore projects that would meet the needs of a particular community while advancing the mission of ALT.



Implementation Timeline:	January 1, 2014 to December 31, 2018
Primary Board Responsibility:	Land Protection Committee
Secondary Board Responsibility:	Development Committee Investment Committee
Primary Staff Responsibility:	Land Protection Director
Secondary Staff Responsibility:	President & CEO Development Director Development Associate Program Assistant
Budget:	\$6,500,000 over five years

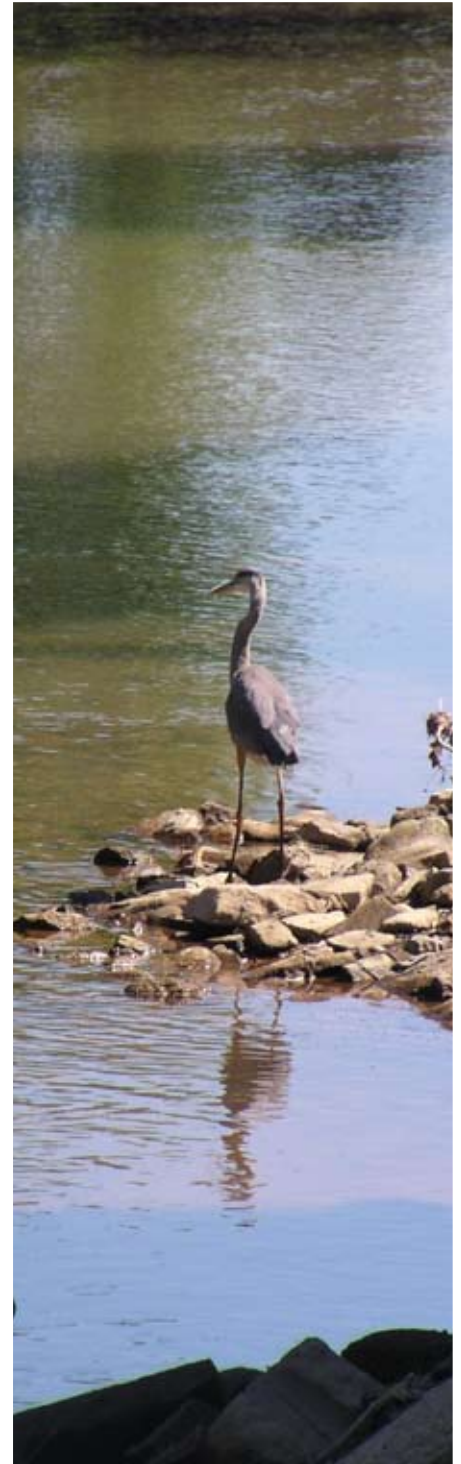


Urban Greening

ALT's urban greening goal is to permanently protect land specifically in urban environments measured by criteria and standards relevant to the community's needs such as stormwater absorption, recreational opportunities, community involvement, greenway connections and property value increases.

We intend to achieve this goal in the following ways:

- **Strategic Urban Partnering** – We will be a strategic partner and visible leader for groups interested in protecting urban land, especially where green space can be permanently protected, where there is community support and where there is public benefit to conserving the land. This will be done by creating criteria for urban conservation and working in cooperation with land bank entities, community groups, non-profits and municipalities to assist with permanent protection of urban lands.
- **Urban Conservation Criteria** – We will establish written criteria that will rank a set of expectations when identifying urban conservation projects. Criteria could include the overall size of the potential area, strong community support, ability to obtain stewardship resources or partnerships, connection to a local or regional stormwater solution, connections with other parks, greenways or open space. This will be done through committee input, writing and recommendation of urban criteria with Board approval.
- **Land Banks** – We will be a trusted partner with Allegheny County, Councils of Government, the City of Pittsburgh and other strategic partners to repurpose urban land from a community liability into an asset. This will be done by participating in the formation of a county land bank and providing technical assistance on the value of protected land for conservation purposes.
- **Stormwater Solutions** – We will proactively advocate for land conservation as a natural complement to other green infrastructure solutions being proposed as part of ALCOSAN's mandate to follow the Clean Water Act. This will be done by working with ALCOSAN, 3 Rivers Wet Weather, municipalities and others to build awareness for conserved lands as a natural, lower cost solution for water runoff control and management. This could include pilot projects in rural, suburban and urban areas to show results.



Implementation Timeline:	January 1, 2014 to December 31, 2018
Primary Board Responsibility:	Urban Greening Committee
Secondary Board Responsibility:	Land Protection Committee Development Committee
Primary Staff Responsibility:	President & CEO
Secondary Staff Responsibility:	Land Protection Director Stewardship Director Development Director Development Associate Program Assistant
Budget:	\$375,000 over five years



Stewardship

ALT's stewardship goal is to manage the perpetual maintenance of ALT's protected lands through the creation and implementation of property management plans, annual observations and monitoring of each property, policy creation for enhanced visitor experience, educational opportunities and volunteer engagement.

We intend to achieve this goal in the following ways:

- **Property Management Plans** – We will establish realistic and detailed management plans for each conservation area protected by ALT to ensure that each property has a vision implemented in a cost-effective and efficient way. This will be done by identifying the top conservation values of each property and determining how they will be best maintained and enhanced in the long-term.
- **Volunteer Recruitment and Management** – We will actively recruit and manage new and existing volunteers to ensure the perpetual maintenance of ALT's properties. This will be done by working through partners such as Pittsburgh Cares and Volunteer Match to identify motivated volunteers and enroll them as ALT site stewards, part of the Urban EcoSteward program or the creation of "friends of" groups for a particular conservation area. We will also approach corporations, K-12 schools, universities, youth associations and other entities to recruit groups to volunteer at ALT properties and develop the best way(s) to communicate effectively with each individual or group of volunteers.
- **Data Management** – We will identify and implement the best tool(s) available to track property management plan results, volunteer accomplishments, scientific investigations and reporting and electronically map the unique attributes of each conservation area. This will be done by researching available tools to meet our data management needs and to develop a new tool if one does not meet our current and future needs.
- **Electronic Mapping** – We will update and standardize electronic mapping information for each new and existing conservation area ALT protects. This will be done by increasing available data points and the efficient management of GIS technology to make sure maps are created for each conservation area as part of management plans, to be used by volunteers and for general public use.
- **Recreational and Quality of Life Enhancement** – We will make strong efforts to offer ALT properties as valuable resources for recreational opportunities like hiking, biking, hunting, fishing, historic exploration and bird watching. This will be done by creating or maintaining a trail plan(s) and network(s) on certain properties with a greater public interest to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience. Master plans for each of ALT's premier properties will be created to maximize public interest and usage.

VOLUNTEERS AND VOLUNTEER HOURS

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
VOLUNTEERS	500	550	580	615	655	695	725
VOLUNTEER HOURS	5000	5500	5800	6150	6550	6950	7250

Implementation Timeline:	January 1, 2014 to December 31, 2018
Primary Board Responsibility:	Stewardship Committee
Secondary Board Responsibility:	Development Committee Investment Committee
Primary Staff Responsibility:	Stewardship Director
Secondary Staff Responsibility:	President & CEO Stewardship Coordinator Development Director Development Associate Program Assistant
Budget:	\$3,500,000 over five years



Community Outreach

ALT's community outreach goal is to expand strategic outreach efforts through education and awareness of ALT goals, objectives and public benefits of land conservation to specific target audiences. Outreach efforts could include, but may not be limited to, website, electronic communications, social media, radio, television, one-on-one interactions, group presentations, educational sessions and fundraisers.

We intend to achieve this goal in the following ways:

- **Redefine Brand** – We will redefine ALT's brand to ensure our target audiences are aware of who we are and what we do. This will be done by conducting extensive market research to determine who our target audiences are, why they are our targets, how do they best attain information, how they can get involved in land conservation and/or stewardship and what most influences their decision making. A visual rebrand of ALT will then be customized to ensure we are reaching the audiences we intend to reach through our website, social media, newsletters, etc.
- **Communications Plan** – We will craft a communications plan that launches, promotes and supports the ALT brand. This will be done by looking holistically at all current and potential communication methods to determine which methods will be used to best reach our target audiences. A communications plan will look at all avenues of outreach and will likely include a website overhaul and social media integration with ALT's website. We will integrate an electronic newsletter with ALT's website, reduce printed newsletters except to audiences who still prefer it as a primary source of information and bolster underutilized tools like apps, blogs, audio and video outreach to best tell ALT's story or to provide the best information in a timely manner.
- **Municipal Outreach Program** – We will expand efforts to reach out to local government officials in Allegheny, Washington and adjoining counties to serve as a resource for land conservation and stewardship education, advocacy and planning. This will be done by proactively attending and participating in meetings held by Councils of Government, the Local Government Academy, Allegheny Conference, Allegheny League of Municipalities, CONNECT, Pittsburgh Community Reinvestment Group and other valuable partners.
- **Speaker Series Presentations** – We will target outreach efforts to influential groups to expand ALT's mission and the message of land conservation with the effort to attract property owners interested in protecting their land, individuals willing to contribute to ALT or to identify volunteers to help maintain the properties we protect. This will be done by proactively contacting groups like chambers of commerce, business associations, service organizations, religious groups, senior citizen centers and other groups to provide a presentation or materials to be distributed to their membership.
- **Educational Programs** – We will work with respected partners to offer a variety of educational programming on ALT properties to increase conservation awareness, expand youth involvement, enhance volunteer recruitment strategies and to involve new people with ALT.

This will be done by embracing more opportunities with partner organizations to build a program where ALT is providing valuable resources related to land management, water testing, bird migration, wildlife habitat and a variety of other educational components that could be explored and shared with the general public.

Implementation Timeline: January 1, 2014 to December 31, 2018

Primary Board Responsibility: Marketing & Outreach Committee

Secondary Board Responsibility: Development Committee
Stewardship Committee

Primary Staff Responsibility: Marketing Coordinator

Secondary Staff Responsibility: President & CEO
Development Director
Stewardship Director
Development Associate
Program Assistant

Budget: \$500,000 over five years



Leadership & Sustainability

ALT's leadership and sustainability goal is to inspire organizational and financial sustainability through positive collaborations with strategic partners while being recognized as a local and national leader in land conservation.

We intend to achieve this goal in the following ways:

- **Collaborations and Mergers** – We will advance positive collaborations and potential mergers with other land trusts, conservancies, trail groups, community groups, municipalities, watershed groups and other strategic partners to leverage resources, overcome daily challenges and to achieve shared results for efficient and effective land conservation in Allegheny, Washington and adjoining counties. This will be done by reconvening those who participated in the 2005 Land Trust Collaboration Feasibility Study to discuss opportunities and challenges facing each organization and to determine feasibility for future collaborations or mergers.
- **Washington County** – We will work with Washington County officials and officials from adjoining counties to determine the need for a greater conservation presence and if ALT should be the community land trust providing that presence. This will be done by having transparent conversations with County Commissioners, Departments of Planning, Conservation Districts, Watershed Associations and others to determine if ALT can offer a positive conservation impact beyond the conservation areas already protected by ALT in the county.
- **Accreditation** – We will remain a leader in land conservation locally, statewide and nationally by renewing our accreditation status to the Land Trust Accreditation Commission. This will be done by applying for accreditation renewal beginning in 2014 and inspire aspiring to achieve results meeting the highest national quality standards. We will also promote ALT's success by proactively seeking state and national venues to share stories about our land conservation and stewardship projects, focusing on the innovative and creative approaches to conservation, community engagement, financing, volunteer recruitment, etc.
- **Diversifying Revenues** – We will diversify ALT's revenues to rely less on traditional sources of operating and capital income and more on new or unique opportunities to meet our mission. This will be done by engaging the Board to be more proactive in organizational fundraising and by utilizing the appropriate committees to explore and implement opportunities with individual and planned giving, corporate contributions, merchandise sales, unrestricted investment properties, utilizing ALT property as a financial asset, consulting services and many more opportunities. We will be entrepreneurial as we think outside the box to identify opportunities to fully investigate.
- **President's Advisory Council** – We will bring together the greatest minds of ALT's 20-year history to form a President's Advisory Council which will serve in an advisory role to identify and facilitate new major donor engagements, attract new investment opportunities, increase volunteer and Board recruitment and to provide input to future visioning. This will be done by approaching past Board members, funders, elected officials and other stakeholders to convene a meeting of the President's Advisory Council to establish a defined purpose, roles and responsibilities for the council and its members.

- **Endowments** – We will expand upon and create new endowments to fulfill the mission of ALT. This will be done by targeting non-traditional investment revenues and dedicating revenues to increase the size of the Stewardship Endowment, create a new Operating Endowment, create a new Land Protection Endowment and to create a new Investment Endowment.

Implementation Timeline: January 1, 2014 to December 31, 2018

Primary Board Responsibility: Investment Committee

Secondary Board Responsibility: Development Committee

Primary Staff Responsibility: President & CEO

Secondary Staff Responsibility: Development Director
Development Associate
Program Assistant

Budget: \$910,000 over five years



2014 - 2018 Performance Metrics

Land Conservation	FIVE YEAR GOALS	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	% TO DATE
Number of fee simple acres protected	750						
Number of conservation easement acres protected	750						
Number of new municipalities with acres protected	10						
Number of group outreach presentations conducted	60						
Amount of stormwater (gallons) absorbed from new properties	1,000,000,000						
Number of updated GREENPRINT reports produced	1						
Number of innovative conservation projects in progress	2						
Amount of funding secured for direct land conservation	\$6,500,000						
Urban Greening							
Number of urban conservation criteria reports produced	1						
Number of urban conservation projects identified	15						
Number of urban conservation projects completed	5						
Number of acres protected	15						
Amount of funding secured for urban land conservation	\$375,000						
Stewardship							
Number of new or revised property management plans	15						
Number of volunteers	3,000						
Number of volunteer hours	27,000						
Amount of in-kind volunteer community investment (\$23.00/hour)	\$621,000						
Number of new corporate/group stewardship relationships created	10						
Number of trail/master plans completed for existing properties	3						
Number of miles of new trails created on ALT protected properties	10						
Number of miles of existing trails maintained on ALT protected properties	15						
Amount of garbage (pounds) removed from ALT protected properties	200,000						
Number of group outreach presentations conducted	60						
Number of conservation data management software tools implemented	1						
Number of new electronic property maps created	20						
Amount of funding secured for direct stewardship activities	\$3,500,000						
Community Outreach							
Number of new brands defined for ALT	1						
Number of new communication plans launched	1						
Number of municipalities met with through Municipal Outreach Program	196						
Number of presentations made to business and service organizations	60						
Number of positive media (newspaper, radio, television, etc.)	300						
Number of marketing literature distributed to the public	120,000						
Number of new educational programs conducted with partners	20						
Number of people attending new educational programs	1,000						
Number of new contacts to ALT database	5,000						
Number of new donors	1,100						
Number of support letters/testimonials	100						
Amount of funding secured for direct community outreach activities	\$500,000.00						
Leadership & Sustainability							
Number of collaboration and merger meetings held with strategic partners	10						
Number of national reaccreditations	1						
Number of state and national presentations	5						
Number of investment projects undertaken	30						
Amount in Stewardship Endowment by end of 2018 (\$850,000 in 2013)	\$3,000,000						
Number of new Operating Endowments created	1						
Amount in Operating Endowment by the end of 2018 (\$540,000 in 2013)	\$3,000,000						
Number of new Land Protection Endowments created	1						
Amount in Land Protection Endowment by the end of 2018 (\$200,000 in 2013)	\$3,000,000						
Number of new Investment Endowments created	1						
Amount in Investment Endowment by the end of 2018 (\$0 in 2013)	\$1,000,000						
Number of President Advisory Council meetings	20						
Amount of funding secured for direct leadership activities	\$910,000						

TIMELINE	BOARD RESPONSIBILITY	STAFF RESPONSIBILITY
December 31, 2018	Land Protection Comm	Land Protection Director
December 31, 2018	Land Protection Comm	Land Protection Director
December 31, 2018	Land Protection Comm	Land Protection Director
December 31, 2018	Land Protection Comm	Land Protection Director
December 31, 2018	Land Protection Comm	Land Protection Director
December 31, 2018	Land Protection Comm	Land Protection Director
December 31, 2018	Land Protection Comm	Land Protection Director
December 31, 2018	Development and Investment Comm	President & CEO, Development Director, Development Associate, Land Protection Director
June 30, 2014	Urban Greening Comm	President & CEO, Stewardship Director
December 31, 2018	Urban Greening and Land Protection Comm	President & CEO, Land Protection Director
December 31, 2018	Urban Greening and Land Protection Comm	Land Protection Director
December 31, 2018	Urban Greening and Land Protection Comm	Land Protection Director
December 31, 2018	Development Comm	President & CEO, Development Director, Development Associate
December 31, 2018	Stewardship Comm	Stewardship Director
December 31, 2018	Stewardship Comm	Stewardship Coordinator
December 31, 2018	Stewardship Comm	Stewardship Coordinator
December 31, 2018	Stewardship Comm	Stewardship Coordinator
December 31, 2018	Stewardship Comm	Stewardship Director
December 31, 2018	Stewardship Comm	Stewardship Director
December 31, 2018	Stewardship Comm	Stewardship Director
December 31, 2018	Stewardship Comm	Stewardship Director
December 31, 2018	Stewardship Comm	Stewardship Coordinator
December 31, 2018	Stewardship Comm	Stewardship Director
December 31, 2018	Stewardship Comm	Stewardship Director
December 31, 2018	Stewardship Comm	Stewardship Coordinator
December 31, 2018	Development and Investment Comm	President & CEO, Development Director, Development Associate, Stewardship Director
June 30, 2014	Marketing & Outreach Comm	President & CEO, Marketing Coordinator
September 30, 2014	Marketing & Outreach Comm	President & CEO, Marketing Coordinator
December 31, 2018	Marketing & Outreach Comm	President & CEO, Marketing Coordinator
December 31, 2018	Marketing & Outreach Comm	President & CEO, Marketing Coordinator
December 31, 2018	Marketing & Outreach Comm	Marketing Coordinator
December 31, 2018	Marketing & Outreach Comm	Marketing Coordinator
December 31, 2018	Marketing & Outreach Comm	Marketing Coordinator
December 31, 2018	Marketing & Outreach Comm	Marketing Coordinator
December 31, 2018	Marketing & Outreach Comm	Marketing Coordinator
December 31, 2018	Marketing & Outreach Comm	Marketing Coordinator
December 31, 2018	Development and Marketing & Outreach Comm	President & CEO, Development Director, Development Associate
December 31, 2018	Marketing & Outreach Comm	Marketing Coordinator
December 31, 2018	Development and Investment Comm	President & CEO, Development Director, Development Associate, Marketing Coordinator
December 31, 2018	Full Board	President & CEO
December 31, 2015	Full Board	President & CEO
December 31, 2018	Marketing & Outreach Comm	President & CEO, Marketing Coordinator
December 31, 2018	Investment Comm	President & CEO
December 31, 2018	Investment Comm	President & CEO
March 31, 2014	Investment Comm	President & CEO
December 31, 2018	Investment Comm	President & CEO
June 30, 2014	Investment Comm	President & CEO
December 31, 2018	Investment Comm	President & CEO
December 31, 2014	Investment Comm	President & CEO
December 31, 2018	Investment Comm	President & CEO
December 31, 2018	Board Chair	President & CEO
December 31, 2018	Development and Investment Comm	President & CEO, Development Director, Development Associate, Marketing Coordinator

Allegheny Land Trust Strategic Plan 2014–2018



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