

CAPITAL REGION LAND CONSERVANCY

STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2027



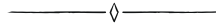
*The 2024-2027 Strategic Plan guides
Capital Region Land Conservancy's shared vision
to advance the organization's conservation mission.*

Introduction

Capital Region Land Conservancy's mission identifies our core organizational purpose in the region.

Our vision articulates our aspiration in serving our region.

Our values highlight the ways in which we seek to operate and form the foundation of our strategies, policies, and organizational decisions.



MISSION

The mission of the Capital Region Land Conservancy is to conserve the natural and historic resources of Virginia's Richmond region for the benefit of people and nature.

VISION

Capital Region Land Conservancy envisions a future where conservation of a regional network of healthy lands and waters results in thriving local communities and equitable access to nature for all.

EXPANDED SERVICE AREA

CRLC was founded in 2005 to serve the City of Richmond and surrounding counties: Charles City, Chesterfield, Goochland, Hanover, Henrico, New Kent, Powhatan, and Town of Ashland.

As the fastest growing region of Virginia, the CRLC service area meets the critical need for land conservation in the following areas:



Central Piedmont Wildlife Biodiversity Resilience Corridor along the Appomattox & James Rivers spanning portions of:

- Amelia County**
- Cumberland County**
- Dinwiddie County**
- Fluvanna County**



Areas not primarily served by another land trust within an hour drive time from Richmond including:

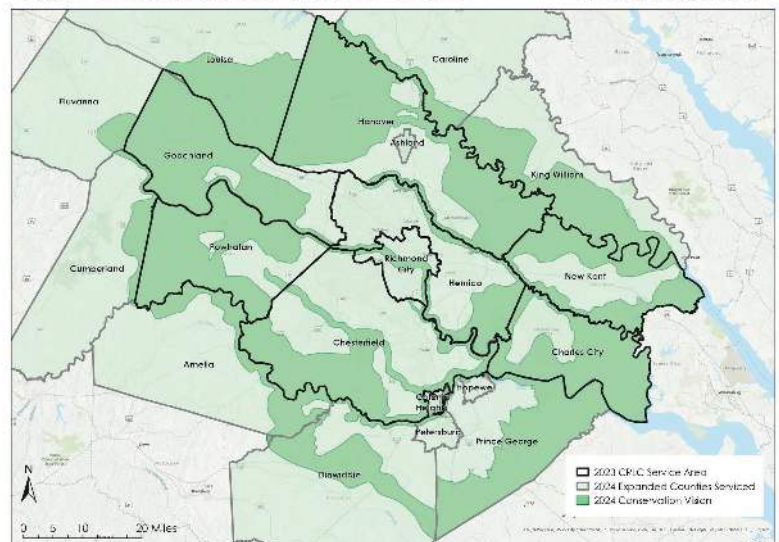
- City of Colonial Heights**
- City of Hopewell**
- City of Petersburg**
- Prince George County**



Pamunkey River & its tributaries in:

- Caroline County**
- King William County**
- Louisa County**

2024 CRLC Conservation Vision



Organizational Values



Integrity, Trust, and Excellence:

We strive to earn and maintain the trust of landowners, donors, partners, and the public by embracing the highest ethical standards, operating with transparency, and promoting innovative solutions. In our work, we strive for excellence and uphold the standards and practices expected of an accredited land trust.



Collaboration and Partnership:

We respect and value collaboration with local communities, governments, and partners to help craft conservation solutions that best serve communities in our service area and accomplish shared conservation goals.



Permanent Land Conservation and Stewardship:

We are committed to voluntary methods of land conservation such as land conservation easements and land acquisition to permanently conserve the natural and cultural resources of Virginia's Capital Region. We also commit to long-term monitoring of conservation easements and management of protected lands.



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:

We strive to create an inclusive and supportive conservation community comprised of people with diverse identities, backgrounds, and experiences representative of the region we serve. We believe all people benefit from nature and should have equitable access to parks and greenspaces.

Conservation Impact and Sense of Place:

We are dedicated to active and ongoing conservation efforts to sustain the health and well-being of communities, cultivate a strong sense of place, and promote care for our region's lands and waters.

Conservation Goals

10% by 2030

Through our efforts and that of our partners, we will increase permanent protected land in our service area from 6% to 10% by 2030, representing approximately 65,000 new acres.

CRLC will work toward this goal by focusing on large tracts of farmland, forestland, and other open spaces, while also significantly increasing equitable access to public lands in urbanized areas.

Land & Water Conservation

Capital Region Land Conservancy will be results-oriented and will strive for excellence as the preeminent land conservation organization in the Richmond region by facilitating and holding conservation easements on, or owning, appropriate lands while collaborating with local governments, community partners, and landowners.

CRLC has defined four conservation objectives in Land Conservation, Water Quality Improvement, Park and Trail Access, Stewardship and to achieve these, CRLC has developed strategies using a variety of tools and programs, including the examples mentioned.



Land Conservation

a. Conserve lands in the Central Piedmont Wildlife Biodiversity Resilience Corridor designated in the Virginia Wildlife Corridor Action Plan that passes along the Appomattox and James Rivers in the southwestern portion of CRLC's service area.

b. Conserve lands in eastern Henrico County and Charles City County in the Route 5 corridor along core battlefield priorities of the National Park Service, and in proximity to the Varina LandLab Conservation Area.

c. Protect critical lands along the Pamunkey River and its tributaries from New Kent and King William westward to Hanover, Caroline, and Louisa counties through tools like the National Resource Conservation Service's Regional Conservation Protection Partnership, Department of Defense Sentinel Landscape Program, and the Virginia Department of Forestry's Forest Legacy Program.

Conservation Goals

d. Identify and conserve prime farmland, forestland, and cultural resources in the rural portions of our service area that connect protected lands and represent large acreages of significant resources designated by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation's ConserveVirginia 3.0 model.

e. Partner with local governments on land conservation efforts.

f. Conduct programs to educate landowners on the choices available for the conservation and stewardship of their land, especially conservation easements.

Water Quality Improvement

a. Improve water quality in the City of Richmond through tools like the Virginia Conservation Assistance Program.

b. Target protection and restoration of riparian properties that enhance water quality and provide flooding resilience along the James, Chickahominy, Pamunkey, and Appomattox Rivers.

c. Work with established mitigation partners to both protect land and implement wetland and stream restoration.

Park & Trail Access

a. Ensure equitable access to parks within a 10-minute walk in the urbanized areas of our region, using the Trust for Public Land's ParkServe model to protect greenspaces, enhance community health, and mitigate climate impacts like flooding and heat islands.

b. Grow the James River Park System by adding land identified in the James River Park Master Plan and facilitate park and trail acquisition with all localities across the Richmond region.

Stewardship

a. Promote environmental awareness through land stewardship, public access, and environmental education at the Varina LandLab Conservation Area, where CRLC is working to enhance wildlife habitat and demonstrate effective restoration efforts.

b. Steward and monitor on a regular basis all conservation easements held and lands owned by CRLC.

c. Create agreements with partner organizations to provide public access and educational programming on CRLC-owned lands.



14,000

*Acres Protected
since 2023*

Conservation Goals

GOVERNANCE, OPERATIONS & SUSTAINABLE FUNDING

CRLC will have a well governed and stable organizational structure, sufficient and high performing operating capacity, and sustainable financial support.

Governance

- a. Recruit, train, and retain a diverse, strong, and engaged Board to ensure knowledge and skills can collectively achieve conservation excellence.
- b. Engage the Executive Committee of the Board in organizational governance, progress toward strategic objectives, and leadership succession.
- c. Renew and continue accreditation by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission by adhering to the highest ethical standards reflected in the Land Trust Standards and Practices for excellence and conservation permanence.

Operations

- a. Attract and retain employees as a preferred employer by increasing benefits for health care, disability, retirement, and paid time off for full-time employees.
- b. Increase staff capacity to a total of 8-10 full-time employees including positions for fundraising, conservation, and operations to implement strategic goals.

Sustainable Funding

- a. Increase annual donors and average gifts by 20% yearly through 2027.
- b. Grow a major gift program and increase individual, corporation, and foundation giving incrementally each year.
- c. Implement annual fundraising plans and raise sufficient unrestricted revenue in support of annual operating budget.
- d. Make blended requests to donors to include annual giving, major gifts, and estate planning.
- e. Explore a campaign to increase unrestricted and sustainable funding and grow endowment.
- f. Aspire to maintain operating reserves equal to or greater than six months or 50% of the annual operating budget.

COMMUNICATIONS & OUTREACH

CRLC will be recognized and relevant to the community & valued by our members as an effective, trusted conservation organization.

Awareness, Publicity & Relevance

- a. Grow public awareness and name recognition of CRLC as the local authority on land conservation and build public enthusiasm for CRLC through effective public relations and media coverage.

Conservation Goals

b. Engage diverse participation, representative of the people and places that comprise our region.

c. Cultivate a strong land ethic that conveys urgency for the care of our natural resources and importance of voluntary land conservation through purchase and conservation easements.

d. Evaluate CRLC's brand to align with strategic goals and develop brand assets for use in communications.

e. What we want people to know: We are a land trust, we conserve land, we have the tools to do this, we serve you, we make an impact, land matters, there are many reasons to care, we need your help, this is how you can help, we achieve results.



Advocacy

a. Advocate for local, state, and federal policies and programs that support land conservation efforts.

b. Engage the broader land trust community to educate the general public as well as policy and decision makers at all levels.

c. Work with the conservation community to improve methods and tools to educate landowners and their advisors.

Programs

a. Participate in public events and activities in rural and urban communities that reach target audiences and align with CRLC's strategic goals.

b. Provide opportunities for the public to access conserved lands, including guided hikes and nature walks.

c. Provide educational experiences for the general public, targeted workshops for landowners, and cultivate current and future conservation supporters.

d. Cultivate active volunteers to support CRLC's land stewardship, events, and fundraising.

e. Host at least one annual fundraising event a year to cultivate donors and gather CRLC's community all under one tent.



PROTECT ^{THE} PLACES AND LAND YOU LOVE



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**CAPITAL REGION
LAND
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