

Orient Land Trust Strategic Plan

Approved Final – January 2020

Vision Statement

Orient Land Trust (OLT) is a unique place of peace, community, and soothing waters that nourish the environment and inspire us to preserve it.

Mission Statement

Orient Land Trust is a nonprofit land trust dedicated to the preservation of Valley View Hot Springs (VVHS) and its view shed—including natural and biological resources, agricultural lands, wildlife habitat, open space, and historic and geologic features of the northern San Luis Valley—for the education and enjoyment of current and future generations.

To achieve this mission, Orient Land Trust is committed to:

- Operating as a well-organized, efficient, effective and fiscally sound organization
- Working within the greater land conservation community of the San Luis Valley—including public land management agencies—to protect contiguous lands with important conservation values from being sold, subdivided or overdeveloped.
- Utilize the conservation tool of acquiring land through fee simple purchase.
- Protecting the natural and biological resources as well as historic and cultural heritage of OLT lands such as The Everson Ranch and Orient Mine
- Maintaining low-impact, family-oriented clothing-optional recreation facilities with limited development to a diverse public at a minimal cost
- Embracing naturism through practice and education, collaboratively engaging other naturist organizations to improve outreach, education, and management methods.
- Encouraging scientific studies of the unique resources on OLT lands
- Encouraging lifelong learning through educational programs, community outreach and public appreciation of OLT lands
- Modeling, practicing, and teaching the ethics of sustainability and conservation through its stewardship values, commitment to land management best practices, and continuing relationships with conservation partners such as *The Nature Conservancy*.

Objectives, Goals and Strategies

Visitor Space Protection

Maintain and protect Valley View Hot Springs as an affordable, peaceful and family-friendly clothing-optional recreational facility that enhances the visitor experience year round.

- Maintain rustic lodging and camping opportunities for all visitors.

Strategies:

1. Maintain a current, comprehensive VVHS Master Site Plan that includes:
 - a. locations, descriptions, and design criteria for new facilities,
 - b. design criteria for renovation of existing structures,
 - c. a site map showing existing and proposed structures, walkways, camping, living areas and visitor amenities, and
 - d. facilities infrastructure mapping and manual.
 2. Stabilize and maintain existing structures while retaining functional and historic features, and monitor for needed repairs or renovation.
- Maintain capacity and group size limits to mitigate the impact of human use on the environment.
 - Provide a welcoming family-friendly environment.

Strategies:

1. Provide friendly, personal service that inspires trust, openness, and sharing.
 2. Create a balance between relaxation and programs.
 3. Encourage personal responsibility and self-governance through education and trust.
 4. Clearly communicate and affirm values and ethics.
 5. Maintain inclusive access for all age groups.
- Promote naturism along with social and environmental awareness.

Strategies

1. Present naturism as a healthy, responsible, and personal choice that helps connect people to their world through its principles of openness, body acceptance, choice, self-respect, respect for others, well-being, liberty, equality, the essential commonality among one another and nature.

2. Collaboratively engage other naturist organizations including The Naturist Society to improve outreach, education and management methods.
3. Demonstrate that a society without clothing has the same societal standards as one with clothing by maintaining and communicating policies governing expectations for guest behavior.

Conservation and Preservation

Follow the highest possible standards for land preservation, agricultural practices, and energy and water conservation.

- In Orient Land Trust's geographical area of concern, protect the view, wildlife corridors, dark skies and open space by utilizing appropriate conservation tools.

Strategies:

1. Maintain an inventory and assessment of potential conservation properties—including resources on these properties—as well as potential threats.
 2. Raise and maintain financial reserves to fund conservation projects to permanently protect neighboring properties.
 3. Develop and maintain relationships with neighboring landowners whose property is contiguous or in the direct view shed of OLT lands to build trusting connections while educating about the benefits of land conservation.
- Promote land stewardship with an emphasis on conservation, preservation and education over revenue priorities.

Strategies:

1. Maintain annual baseline monitoring for each OLT parcel not being monitored by another conservation organization.
2. Track conservation values, safety and legal requirements, the impact of climate change, environmental carrying capacities, and other useful measures on all OLT parcels.
3. Mitigate wildfire danger by:
 - a. cooperation with, and following the advice of experts, and
 - b. utilizing available resources.
4. Continually assess and mitigate negative visual and ecological impacts of activities and practices in and near OLT.
5. Maintain low impact and minimal development practices through conservation easements, capacity quotas, and other limits that preserve the environmental, historic, and recreational opportunities of each location.

6. Utilize agricultural best practices for improved soil health, wildlife habitat, and agricultural heritage regarding irrigation use and livestock.
 7. Promote organic farming and ranching and model chemical-free agricultural practices.
 8. Follow principles of permaculture in the production of food and fiber on agricultural land.
- Strive for off-grid energy use and a small carbon footprint for all components of OLT.
Strategies:
 1. Utilize geothermal energy sources to heat all VVHS buildings.
 2. Minimize energy consumption through increased insulation, more efficient appliances, load control devices, timing devices and other appropriate tools.
 3. Increase efficiency of VVHS electrical system to reduce dependence on diesel back-up generator.
 4. In addition to utilizing hydro-electric energy, move toward other alternative energy sources such as solar to replace on-grid electrical use.

 - Protect water resources.
Strategies:
 1. Provide sanitation facilities that serve the needs of visitors and residents, and which meet state and local requirements for environmental protection, hygiene and safety.
 2. Assess impact of climate change and drought conditions on multiple uses of hot springs water—including power generation, irrigation, recreation etc.—to determine what, if any, uses must be modified.
 3. Explore options to limit introduction of chemicals such as sun block into the hot springs.

Research and Education

Facilitate scientific research around OLT resources, and promote educational programs and activities suitable for adults and children.

- Encourage collaboration with scientists, universities, government agencies and others for scientific studies of OLT resources including geology, biology, hydrology and energy.

Strategies

1. Facilitate research on concerns such as White Nose Syndrome in bats.
 2. Continue encouragement of studies such as the Dark Sky Initiative.
- Develop and demonstrate conservation models and programs that teach thoughtful use of limited resources, including energy, water, material goods and land, to reduce each individual's impact on these resources and to adjust for environmental changes such as drought.

Strategies

1. Provide information to visitors explaining VVHS off-grid energy and their part in it.
 2. Develop educational information about the water cycle of the hot springs, including educating visitors to understand the role of the hydroelectric plant in providing heated water to the Apple Tree Pools.
- Provide regular educational programs and activities for guests of all ages.

Strategies

1. Utilize volunteers where possible to continue to provide educational tours and programs including astronomy, bat colony viewing, Orient Mine history, geology, and tours of the hydroelectric system.
2. Develop opportunities for visitors to learn about and visit the Everson Ranch, focusing on its history and current efforts to restore it as a working ranch.
3. Develop and promote Naturism education opportunities

Staff Development, Project Management and Community Relations

Maintain OLT as a responsible citizen of the San Luis Valley.

- Maintain a professional staff with expertise in conservation practices, agriculture, energy, finance and accounting, fund raising, and resort management.

Strategies

1. Attract and keep team members who are positive, engaged, productive, helpful, caring and who enjoy their work and service.
2. Provide professional development for staff and volunteers.
3. Consistent with how OLT has been recognized in the past, continue to provide a decent sustainable living wage for all employees relative to life in the San Luis Valley.

4. Provide insurance coverage for eligible employees.
 5. Provide housing opportunities for employees when necessary.
 6. Develop a plan for replacement and training of key personnel.
- Provide an organizational structure that facilitates accomplishment of OLT's mission and objectives.

Strategies:

1. Create and implement a fundraising plan utilizing a diversity of sources with minimal administrative or other up-front costs.
 2. Secure current and future data assets in compliance with current industry standards to assure privacy and user-level accountability.
 3. Procure grants to fund Everson Ranch programs and improvements or other conservation projects.
 4. Continue developing public support and mutually beneficial relationships, seeking grants and charitable donations of cash, volunteer service, property and in-kind contributions.
 5. Offer educational internship and volunteer opportunities that actively support OLT's mission, including sponsored youth internships.
 6. Encourage volunteer and community involvement at the Everson Ranch by providing a kitchen and bath facility to support rustic camping.
 7. Continue to pay property taxes on OLT lands in support of county and local communities (not required as a nonprofit organization).
- Follow sound fiscal and project development practices that facilitate accomplishment of OLT's mission and objectives.

Strategies:

1. Follow best management practices which include annual operational budgeting, annual audits, program budgets for key programs, and capital budgets with a time horizon of two or more years.
2. Evaluate proposed projects for suitability using established tools that include:
 - a. input from diverse stakeholders,
 - b. impact on ecosystems and resources,
 - c. long term costs and
 - d. maintenance requirements.
 - e. proposed competing projects.