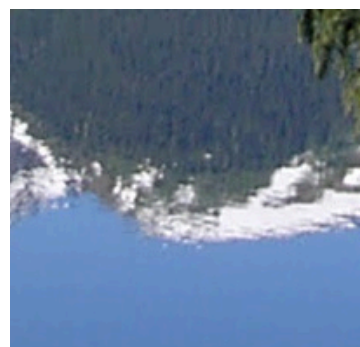
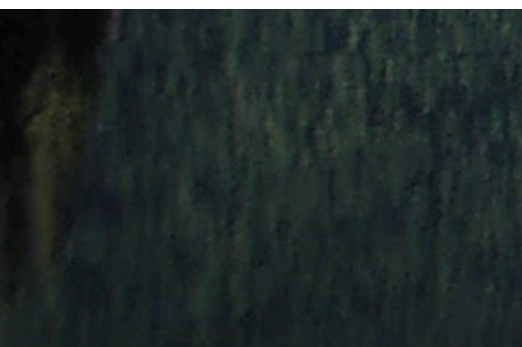
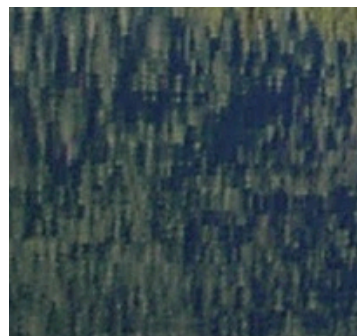
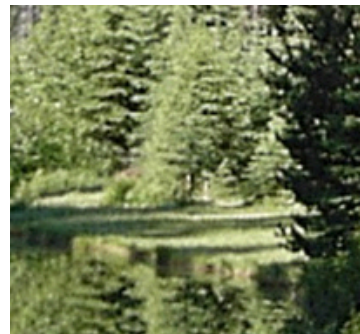
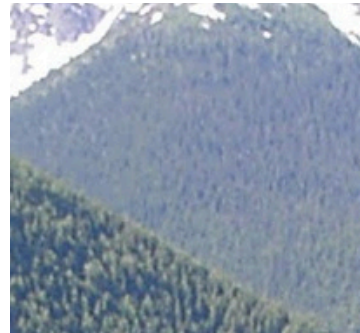




2025 Federal Election Toolkit for Land Trusts



Land Trust Leaders and Friends,

Canadians are united in their commitment to conserve what makes us Canadian. This includes our unique and iconic natural heritage. As stewards and conservationists of Canada's natural legacy, your role is vital.

With a federal election on the horizon, the time to act is now. This is a critical opportunity to **raise the importance of our conservation efforts and demonstrate their significance - not just for our ecosystems, but for the health of our land, our water, and our communities.** This election poses a unique opportunity to reinforce our commitment and demonstrate to candidates, parties, and voters the critical importance of land trusts in achieving Canada's ecological objectives, especially as we aspire to contribute to the national and international goals associated with nature conservation.

We reach out today to underscore the urgency of this movement and to invite your active participation. Specifically, we ask you:

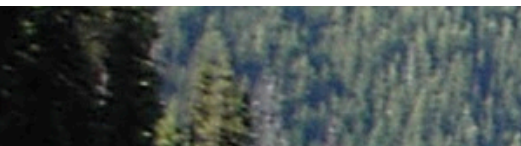
- 1. Pledge to vote for nature** (see page 2) and **encourage your supporters to do the same.**
- 2. Engage directly with your local candidates** (see page 3), **advocating for stronger commitment to conservation.**
- 3. Provide a support letter to ACLT to become a signatory on the future Natural Heritage Conservation Fund-Land Trust Conservation Fund** (see page 4).

This guide is designed to equip you with the tools you need to amplify the message of nature conservation during the 2025 federal election.

Let's unite to ensure that our next government prioritizes the conservation of natural spaces. Together, we can make sure the parties and candidates understand that Canadians want nature conservation to be at the heart of their platforms.

We are grateful for your leadership in this vital cause,

Renata Woodward
Executive Director
Alliance of Canadian Land Trusts



Action 1: Pledge to Vote for Nature

ACLT and its regional alliance partners are excited to be joining Nature Canada in their Vote for Nature campaign.

Nature Canada has released a straightforward Nature Platform which outlines what nature needs from the next government (including accountability) and we want to show the candidates that nature conservation is our priority.

Voters in Canada have the opportunity to Pledge to Vote for Nature by casting ballots for candidates who share our values and will stand up for a healthy thriving planet.

How you can help:

- Pledge to Vote for Nature by adding your name [here](#).
- Share the Nature Platform and Vote for Nature pledge with your followers, supporters, friends, and family. For a sample email text and social media posts, [click here](#), with captions that can be found [here](#).

Action 2: Speak With Your Local Candidates

It's important that your local candidates, of all political stripes, hear directly from you, the leaders of the land trust movement.

This is why we are asking you, and fellow land trust organizations across Canada, to raise the profile of nature conservation with your local candidates. **You can do this by:**

- Reconnecting with the MPs that you have previously connected with on this topic by setting up follow up meetings.
- Asking them key questions about nature conservation when they come knocking on your door.
- Attending local candidates' debates and asking a question related to nature conservation.
- Encouraging your members and supporters to do the same!

Please see the brief on pages 5-7 and do not hesitate to contact us if you need more information on how to connect and communicate with your MP or candidate.

Key Questions for Candidates

- How will you ensure that all Canadians, regardless of whether they live in urban or rural areas, have access to nature?
- Local and regional land trusts are key players in protecting vital green spaces and ensuring access to nature for Canadians. How will you support these local land conservation efforts?
- How will you ensure green spaces are maintained for future generations?
- How will your government balance conservation with the needs of urban and rural communities?

Action 3: Support ACLT's Proposal to become a signatory of the NHCP-LTCF if renewed in 2026

As you know, the Alliance of Canadian Land Trusts (ACLT) was created to represent and support local and regional land trusts across Canada. The original vision for the ACLT includes the leadership role within the Natural Heritage Conservation Program - Land Trust Conservation Fund (NHCP-LTCF) on behalf of and for land trusts.

We are asking for your support to make this a reality. Please copy and paste, or adjust as desired, the template letter of support below onto your letterhead and send it to Renata at info@acoc.ca.

Please see the Template Letter on page 8

Some background:

The Canadian Land Trust Working Group, now ACLT, has been negotiating the NHCP-LTCF since 2016. The fund was previously administered by the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) and then Wildlife Habitat Canada (WHC) since 2017.

As it stands, ACLT plays a part in delivering the funds, but has no power to make decisions in the best interest of land trusts and is not on equal footing with the other NHCP partners. On behalf of land trusts, ACLT has made recommendations to improve the program, but many of them have not been implemented. The solution is for ACLT to become a signatory to the LTCF portion of the program.

Thank you for your dedicated efforts to protect Canada's natural heritage and for your commitment to securing sustainable funding for land trusts. If you have any questions or need further assistance, please feel free to contact us at any time.

Renata Woodward
Executive Director
Alliance of Canadian Land Trusts



info@acoc.ca



(506) 261-1260

Investing in Communities through Private Land Conservation



The **Alliance of Canadian Land Trusts** (ACLT) represents and supports 150 local and regional land trusts across Canada. ACLT, its regional alliance partners, and local and regional land trusts protect nature through the stewardship and conservation of private land in Canada's **most vital landscapes**.

Local and regional land trusts have demonstrated capacity to acquire ecologically sensitive private lands and steward the land over the long term, providing access to nature for current and future generations. A total of **150 local and regional land trusts** are led by more than **13,000 staff** and volunteers who manage **5700+ properties** - and conserve over **255,000 hectares** of land - worth more than **\$1.8 billion**.

Federal government support is needed to expand protected areas and help local and regional land trusts steward the land in perpetuity for all Canadians to enjoy. Land trusts' efforts are concentrated in southern Canada, where communities are critical to the success of conservation efforts. The programs proposed herein represent a long-term investment in the development of local and regional organizations with intimate knowledge of their landscapes and a strong grounding in local and regional communities across southern Canada.

Recommendations

1. Renewal of the Natural Heritage Conservation Fund (NHCP)

- Renew the NHCP beyond 2026.
- Designate ACLT as the national representative of regional and local land trusts within the NHCP-Land Trust Conservation Fund (NHCP-LTCF) by including ACLT as a signatory on the Contribution Agreement.

2. Redesign of the NHCP-LTCF program and increase the share of funds for local and regional land trusts

- Rename and redesign the NHCP-LTCF into an **NHCP Southern Landscapes Fund** (SLF) and increase funding to **\$25 million per year for five years**, starting in 2026. The NHCP-SLF will be a safe investment of critical funding that will continue to support local and regional land trusts in southern Canada to conserve private land. It would seek to fund projects that address multiple and interconnected **biodiversity priorities**. Regional and local land trusts have the capacity to achieve significantly more under a redesigned program. The SLF will deliver outcomes related to expanding protected areas, restoring degraded landscapes, protecting species at risk, adapting to climate change, improving land management, and mobilizing private resources. At \$25 million per year, this fund will deliver an **additional 15,000 hectares of conserved land per year** across southern Canada.
- The potential to expand and improve the NHCP-LTCF is great. The tables below show that in 2023-24, the NHCP-LTCF supported only 31 of 990, or **3%, of the projects** and only 5,741 of 54,710, or **10%, of the hectares** delivered nationally by local and regional land trusts.

Conservation Achieved 2023 - 2024		
	Area Protected (ha)	Projects
Canada Total	54,710	980
(NHCP) Government Funded	5,741	31
Difference	48,969	949

National Land Trusts Project and Hectare Details		
	Area Protected (ha)	Projects
Fee-simple	20,098	432
Easements	16,871	106
Land conserved and held by others	17,597	433
Nature Reserves (QC)	143	9

3. Create a Canada Conservation Investment Fund

- Establish a new **\$150 million** endowment fund that will create a long-term funding stream to strengthen the capacity of local and regional land trusts to care for natural spaces in perpetuity. Federal funding to expand protected areas is **critical to nature conservation**, and to uphold the designation of "permanent" protection, perpetual stewardship is imperative.
- By creating an endowment fund, the Canada Conservation Investment Fund will help ensure the long-term care of Canada's network of privately conserved areas. The Fund will encourage **private investments** in conservation, nurture the growth, diversity, and **capacity of the local and regional** land trust sector, **catalyze job creation and retention**, and contribute to the **expansion of land conservation** programs. The structure of the Fund could be modelled on the successful Canada Cultural Investment Fund and administered by either the Government of Canada or the ACLT.

The Importance of Southern Landscapes

Canada's southern landscapes are some of the country's most biodiversity-rich areas. At the same time, more than **80% of the population** lives in southern Canada and most economic activity occurs in the south. This overlay of **nature and economic activity** requires a solution that benefits both, as well as the families and communities in these regions. Land trusts can provide a solution where both **nature and humans can thrive**.

Canadians love nature, and we're proud of our **natural heritage**. However, with changing economic realities and societal norms, fewer Canadians have access to nature. Spending time in nature on a regular basis has myriad health benefits, both for **physical and mental well-being**. For this reason, it is imperative that natural spaces are within close geographical proximity to populated areas.

Background

First launched by the federal government in 2007 as the Natural Areas Conservation Program, the NHCP has protected significant tracts of ecologically sensitive land across the country. The program creates permanent conservation solutions through collaboration between landowners, Indigenous communities, industry, and other levels of government. The NHCP has protected more than **840,000 hectares** of ecologically sensitive lands including grasslands, forests, lakes, and wetlands. The program has a successful legacy, one worth building on while introducing important improvements.

More recently, Canada was instrumental in the creation of the **Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework**, and has committed to its 23 targets (including the commitment to protect 30% of Canada's land, freshwater, and ocean by 2030). **Canada's 2030 Nature Strategy** was released in June 2024 to advance work on these targets.

Letter of support

Dear ECCC,

Re: Support for the Alliance of Canadian Land Trusts (ACLT) in Representing and Supporting the Land Trusts Sector

I am writing on behalf of [Land Trust], a proud member and supporter of the Alliance of Canadian Land Trusts (ACLT). We strongly believe that ACLT should serve as the signatory and decision maker for the Natural Heritage Conservation Program - Land Trust Conservation Fund (NHCP-LTCF). ACLT is well-positioned to manage these essential programs, advancing land conservation across Canada.

ACLT plays a crucial role in representing land trusts, advocating for the sector, and facilitating collaboration between partners. As the representative of land trusts, ACLT ensures the sector's interests are advocated for, positioning us as equal partners to organizations like NCC and DUC within the NHCP program. Additionally, there is an ongoing need for land trusts to build capacity in order to strengthen their efforts in conservation. ACLT, together with its regional alliance partners, is uniquely equipped to help land trusts achieve this goal through support, resources, and coordination.

ACLT and their regional alliance partner's deep experience in land conservation, alongside its established relationships with partners, ensures effective allocation of NHCP-LTCF funds to benefit land trusts across the country. Their leadership and coordination with regional partners will ensure equitable distribution and support for conservation initiatives, while also helping land trusts build the capacity they need to succeed.

For these reasons, [Land Trust] strongly supports ACLT as the signatory and decision maker for the NHCP-LTCF and urges Environment Canada and Climate Change to recognize the value of entrusting this responsibility to ACLT.

Thank you for considering this important matter. Please feel free to contact me for further information. Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Title]

[Organization Name]

[Contact Information]