



SUSQUEHANNA RIVERLANDS

PLAY. EXPLORE. EXPERIENCE.

Strategic Plan

October 2019

VISION

The natural lands along the Lower Susquehanna River remain protected, stewarded, and connected to each other and the surrounding communities.

MISSION

To **protect, preserve, and steward** the natural lands along the Lower Susquehanna River, emphasizing connectivity, eco-system health, and sustainable public access.

- **Protecting** land is related to policy and zoning.
- **Preserving** land is through land acquisition and easements.
- **Stewarding** land is caring for and maintaining land.

CORE VALUES

Community and Habitat
Collaboration and Perseverance
Protection and Stewardship
Connectivity and Accessibility

COLLABORATIVE STRUCTURE

The Susquehanna Riverlands Conservation Landscape is intentionally structured with a **Leadership Team** to guide its mission; this team established the Initiatives, Goals, and Tactics for the Strategic Plan. **Stakeholders**, with input from **Partner** organizations, will implement the tactics to achieve the goals.

Leadership Team serves as the executive body for the Susquehanna Riverlands Conservation Landscape (SRCL) and is charged with fulfilling its mission, goals and objectives. This team is also responsible for measuring progress and providing oversight of stakeholder members and partners. This team tracks the goals of the Strategic Plan using the Dashboard.

Stakeholder Work Groups set and complete tasks in order to advance the goals set by the Leadership Team. They are responsible for implementing vetted priorities, measuring progress and reporting on outcomes. As a prominent Stakeholder, a Leadership Team Representative might work with other Stakeholders and Partner Organizations to complete the tactics outlined to achieve the outcomes.

Partner Organization/s have the opportunity to work with Stakeholder Work Groups in areas relevant to their knowledge, experience and interest. Operating within the Susquehanna Riverlands, Partner Organizations provide feedback, ideas and talent to support the work of the Stakeholder Work Groups, thereby aiding in the success of the mission set by the Leadership Team.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

coLAB began working with the Susquehanna Riverlands Conservation Landscape (SRCL) Leadership Team in April 2019. The SRCL sought to re-examine their structure and define their path in a mission-focused strategic direction. Internal and external leads were identified to spearhead the Strategic Planning process.

The first phase of work focused on Information Gathering. Prior to coLAB's first facilitation session, members of the Leadership Team were asked to complete a survey regarding priorities of the Susquehanna Riverlands Conservation Landscape. The results demonstrated two points:

- Members of the Leadership Team are connected to the SRCL's mission to protect, preserve, and steward the lands along the Susquehanna River;
- Members of the Leadership Team seek greater clarity about their role in the SRCL, as well as the role of the SRCL as a separate entity from both the Lancaster Conservancy and the Susquehanna National Heritage Area.

During the April 2019 meeting of the Leadership Team, coLAB facilitated a strengths-based discussion about success for the SRCL, and specifically the Leadership Team. Participants strongly recognized the need to step back and define, "who or what is the Susquehanna Riverlands?" Following this meeting coLAB conducted an analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) with respect to Leadership Team members' organizations and their affiliation with the SRCL. This revealed the many capacities that are being brought into the SRCL and affirmed the frustration surrounding role definition and processes within the Leadership Team.

The next phase of work focused on Capacity Building. coLAB conducted sixteen Stakeholder interviews, analyzed the data for themes, and delivered a Summary Report focusing on the following areas:

- Vision and Mission
- Economic Development
- Tourism and National Distinction of Susquehanna Heritage
- Comparisons to Other Conservation Landscapes

As the process continued into the Strategic Planning phase, coLAB facilitated a

second session with the Leadership Team in June 2019, focusing on the vision, mission, core values, and strategic priority areas of the Susquehanna Riverlands Conservation Landscape. The priority areas were discussed and voted upon. The Leadership Team honed in on the SRCL being a place bounded by the Susquehanna River and the need to seize opportunities that will benefit the region.

The vision, mission, and core values were refined and the priorities were drafted into initiatives and goals during small group follow-up sessions. The goals were sent out to the Leadership Team and members were asked to contribute one tactic to each. A compilation of the tactics under each goal was distributed at the third session facilitated by coLAB in August 2019. Members of the Leadership Team divided up into small groups for each initiative to flush out the tactics for each goal.

Following the meeting a small group worked to create focused connections from each initiative, to each goal, to each tactic. They finalized the work of the past months, and the contributions of the Leadership Team. The result: The Susquehanna Riverlands Conservation Landscape Strategic Plan.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES + GOALS OVERVIEW

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE #1: SEIZE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE SUSQUEHANNA RIVERLANDS PARTNERSHIP TO PROTECT, PRESERVE AND STEWARD

GOAL #1: Prioritize partners and projects dedicated to protecting the land along the river.

GOAL #2: Prioritize partners and projects dedicated to preserving the land along the river.

GOAL #3: Prioritize partners and projects dedicated to stewarding the land along the river.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE #2: PLAN FOR LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY OF THE SUSQUEHANNA RIVERLANDS

GOAL #1: Re-connect natural lands and habitats.

GOAL #2: Create opportunities for sustainable public access to the Susquehanna River, its tributaries, and surrounding natural lands.

GOAL #3: Foster a sense of respect, identity, and ownership of the Susquehanna Riverlands.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE #3: POSITION THE SUSQUEHANNA RIVERLANDS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE STATEWIDE CONSERVATION LANDSCAPE PROGRAM

GOAL #1: Define the roles and responsibilities of the Leadership Team as they relate to the Partnership.

GOAL #2: Define the roles and responsibilities of the Partnership as they relate to the natural lands along the river.

GOAL #3: Advance the goals and objectives of the DCNR Conservation Landscape program.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE #1: SEIZE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE SUSQUEHANNA RIVERLANDS PARTNERSHIP TO PROTECT, PRESERVE AND STEWARD

GOAL #1: Prioritize partners and projects dedicated to protecting the land along the river

	Tactics
Year One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Further develop and utilize the Conservancy’s LYNAS prioritization tool to include a broader spectrum of conservation values for criteria. - Develop an inventory of planning tools available and feasible for identifying and protecting natural and agricultural lands.
Year Three	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Utilize the Conservancy’s LYNAS prioritization tool and other inventoried planning tools to identify high-ranking natural and agricultural lands in the SRCL along with the municipalities in which they reside. - Develop an inventory of existing zoning ordinances of relevant municipalities that could be utilized to target and protect high- ranking natural and agricultural lands. - Fund a comprehensive conservation plan that includes all municipalities within the SRCL.
Year Five	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complete the comprehensive conservation plan. - Develop a model conservation zoning ordinance with all SRCL municipalities that can be applied to natural and agricultural lands in support of the comprehensive conservation plan.

GOAL #2: Prioritize partners and projects dedicated to preserving the land along the river

	Tactics
Year One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Further develop the Conservancy’s LYNAS prioritization tool to include a broader spectrum of conservation values for criteria.

Year Three	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Utilize the Conservancy’s LYNAS prioritization tool to identify and inventory high-ranking natural and agricultural lands in the SRCL. - Prioritize natural and agricultural lands for preservation and identify relevant landowners. - Establish a SRCL-specific land protection fund for land acquisitions and conservation easements.
Year Five	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Campaign to build the SRCL-specific land protection fund.

GOAL #3: Prioritize partners and projects dedicated to stewarding the land along the river

	Tactics
Year One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify all publicly-accessible natural lands and associated land-owners and land-managers within the SRCL. - Inventory all publicly-accessible natural lands within the SRCL along with the mission, vision and goals of each owner/manager. - Inventory each owner/manager needs and resources in respect to managing their publicly-accessible natural lands within the SRCL.
Year Three	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish a coalition of owners/managers of all publicly-accessible natural lands within the SRCL. - Develop and adopt a framework for sharing resources and managing publicly accessible natural lands holistically. - Align wayfinding and interpretive signage.
Year Five	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Campaign to build the Lower Susquehanna Endowment Fund (a.k.a. Ralph Goodno Fund).

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE #2: PLAN FOR LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY OF THE SUSQUEHANNA RIVERLANDS

GOAL #1: Re-connect natural lands and habitats

	Tactics
Year One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify and develop partnerships with science-based, landscape-oriented conservation agencies. - Compile and review natural resource inventories, mapping, and reports pertinent to SRCL.
Year Three	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Update natural resource inventories, mapping, and reports pertinent to SRCL. - Develop a landscape connection, restoration and habitat improvement comprehensive plan for the SRCL. - Collectively identify projects and funding opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify roles and responsibilities. - Prioritize projects.
Year Five	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complete at least one prioritized project.

GOAL #2 Create opportunities for sustainable public access to the Susquehanna River, its tributaries, and surrounding natural lands.

	Tactics
Year One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Compile an inventory of all publicly accessible properties and review passive recreation plans respective of SRCL. - Identify and develop partnerships with land-managers and organized user-groups.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide technical assistance for user-groups to professionalize their organizations.
Year Three	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a comprehensive passive public recreation access plan for SRCL. - Prioritize projects. - Align user-group efforts with SRCL comprehensive passive public recreation access plan. - Identify and pursue funding opportunities.
Year Five	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complete one prioritized project.

GOAL #3: Foster a sense of respect, identity, and ownership of the Susquehanna Riverlands.

	Tactics
Year One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Update and maintain publications and website. Develop interpretive displays at key visitor locations. - Host bi-annual Partnership Summits. - Host an annual SRCL public event.
Year Three	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complete a return-on-environment study for the SRCL. - Align with Susquehanna National Heritage Area management plan for branding and marketing. - Determine the need and responsibility to update and maintain publications and website. - Align the passive recreation and restoration and habitat improvement comprehensive plans as an addition to the integrated land management plan. - Host bi-annual Partnership Summits. - Host an annual SRCL public event.
Year Five	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review the need and responsibility to update and maintain publications and website. - Align wayfinding and interpretive signage. - Host bi-annual Partnership Summits. - Host an annual SRCL public event.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE #3: POSITION THE SUSQUEHANNA RIVERLANDS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE STATEWIDE CONSERVATION LANDSCAPE PROGRAM

GOAL #1: Define the roles and responsibilities of the Leadership Team as they relate to the Partnership.

	Tactics
Year One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify roles and responsibilities necessary to advance strategic priorities. - Identify and engage agencies with missions and resources specific to the roles and responsibilities necessary to advance strategic priorities. - Determine level of commitment of each identified agency and solidify a Leadership Team. - Host bi-annual Partnership Summits.
Year Three	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a framework for Leadership respective of SRCL vision, mission, and core values that facilitates goal articulation, vetting, adoption, and delegation. - Assess the need for, and implement (if deemed necessary), work groups lead by Leadership Team members to partner with stakeholders to advance a specific goal or strategic priority. - Host bi-annual Partnership Summits. - Disseminate SRCL information quarterly.
Year Five	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review Leadership roles, responsibilities, and commitments and make necessary changes. - Vet proposals from stakeholders for potential goals and tactic evolution or additions. - Host bi-annual Partnership Summits. - Disseminate SRCL information quarterly.

GOAL #2 Define the roles and responsibilities of the Partnership as they relate to the natural lands along the river.

	Tactics
Year One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify and inventory potential stakeholders in respects the SRCL mission, vision, core values, and strategic plan. - Invite each identified agency to attend bi-annual Partnership Summits. - Identify each agency’s involvement, investment, mission, resources, and commitment to the mission and strategic initiatives of the SRCL.
Year Three	<p>Engage select agencies in work groups led by at least one Leadership Team member to advance strategic initiatives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work groups strategize to advance goals and complete tactics. - Leadership Team members represent work groups at Leadership Team meetings to evolve or add goals and tactics.
Year Five	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review process and make necessary changes.

GOAL #3: Advance the goals and objectives of the DCNR Conservation Landscape program.

	Tactics
Year One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Present DCNR with complete SRCL Strategic Plan. - Clarify DCNR process and expectations. - Clarify DCNR roles and responsibilities. - Clarify Lancaster Conservancy roles and responsibilities as the External Lead. - Engage in development of the Susquehanna National

	<p>Heritage Area management plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SRCL Leadership representatives attend the annual State CL conference.
Year Three	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engage all DCNR relevant programs and ensure involvement of relevant programs within a Leadership and stakeholder capacity. - Clarify roles and responsibilities of Leadership Team membership. - Review and clarify the role of the SRCL within the Susquehanna National Heritage Area management plan. - Identify gaps and overlaps of the SRCL and Susquehanna National Heritage Area mission and goals. - SRCL Leadership representatives attend the annual State CL conference.
Year Five	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clarify roles and responsibilities of work groups as representatives of SRCL stakeholders. - Work with Susquehanna Heritage to address gaps and overlaps of the SRCL and Susquehanna National Heritage Area mission and goals.