

# Freshwater Land Trust

Strategic Plan 2023 - 2027



## Overview

The mission and values of FLT guide the work each day.

To conserve and care for environmentally significant land throughout Central Alabama.

Accessibility

Connectivity

To connect the Red Rock Trail System throughout Jefferson County.

Responsibility

Sustainability

## Four-Year Strategic Priorities

FLT will focus on four priorities.

- Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure
- Conservation and Stewardship
- Communications and Outreach
- Organizational Excellence

## Purpose of Strategic Plan

This plan has four major purposes.

- Inform - share FLT's story
- Align - develop FLT's shared mission and values
- Guide - direct FLT's daily actions toward common goals
- Inspire - define FLT's aspirations and strive to meet them



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## Background

Since 1996 Freshwater Land Trust has conserved land critical for the protection of waterways and provided outdoor recreational opportunities that build healthier and happier communities. Freshwater Land Trust works on conservation and stewardship efforts throughout Central Alabama and is nationally accredited by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission.

Beginning in 2010, the building of the Red Rock Trail System in Jefferson County has been a core component of the organization's work. Through these land conservation and trail development efforts, communities across municipal lines are better connected, more residents enjoy the outdoors, more wildlife habitat is preserved, and water quality in our rivers and streams improved.

Freshwater Land Trust is well-known in the community as a professional organization. Its fundamental strength is developing and sustaining partnerships with governments, corporations, landowners, other nonprofits, and community groups.

## Capacities and Resources

**FLT is supported by a board of directors, staff, and partners.**

- Board - FLT's board of directors guide and support the organization.
- Staff - FLT's staff drive ongoing progress toward FLT's mission.
- Partners - Partners are municipalities, businesses, environmental groups, landowners, and community members.
- Resources - Resources include support from foundations and trusts, corporate supporters, government entities and agencies, and individual donors.



Strategic Priority	Strategic Goal	Objectives	Key Metrics
<p><b>Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure</b></p>	<p>To expand Red Rock Trail System, provide additional public access to FLT lands, and connect communities through outdoor recreation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand Red Rock Trail System</li> <li>Improve awareness of trails' benefits</li> <li>Increase funding and collaboration for Red Rock Trail System</li> <li>Open current and future FLT lands eligible for public access</li> <li>Promote equity of access to FLT lands and trails</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete 150 miles of Red Rock Trail System</li> <li>Build another 2 miles of Five Mile Creek Greenway in North Jefferson County</li> <li>Construct 4.5-mile Valley Creek Rails-to-Trails benefiting residents of Birmingham, Midfield, Fairfield, Brighton, and Lipscomb</li> <li>Partner with City of Birmingham to apply for a large transportation grant for Civil Rights District trails</li> <li>Add 50 trailhead signs and 500 trail blazes to existing Red Rock Trail System</li> <li>Increase number of new Red Rock Trail System users and funding partners</li> <li>Open 4 new public access properties</li> <li>Expand community partnerships to build awareness of Red Rock Trail System</li> </ul>
<p><b>Conservation and Stewardship</b></p>	<p>To conserve and care for ecologically significant and threatened land, especially near waterways, and maintain those lands for future generations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and prioritize conservation projects</li> <li>Identify and prioritize stewardship projects</li> <li>Secure and sustain financial resources for stewardship</li> <li>Help more people understand importance of FLT conservation and stewardship efforts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preserve 5,000 additional acres</li> <li>Acquire 2-3 properties in Turkey Creek using designated funds</li> <li>Utilize SEP funding for Valley Creek and Village Creek high priority stewardship projects</li> <li>Add 12 new land donors outside of Jefferson County</li> <li>Hire Land Stewardship Coordinator</li> <li>Secure at least 1 new stewardship grant per year</li> <li>Provide at least 2 opportunities per year for FLT board, junior board, and land committee members to visit FLT properties</li> <li>Conduct 20 conservation presentations throughout footprint</li> </ul>
<p><b>Communications and Outreach</b></p>	<p>To raise awareness of FLT's mission and ensure that messaging is clear and reaches diverse audiences</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clearly articulate mission and goals</li> <li>Increase brand awareness</li> <li>Expand outreach opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand media coverage, including doubling number of social media followers</li> <li>Generate more conservation opportunities for FLT through storytelling about successes</li> <li>Improve attendance at FLT events</li> <li>Create better public understanding of FLT's involvement in Red Rock Trail System</li> <li>Gain 200 additional individual donors</li> <li>Enlarge interest from footprint areas outside Jefferson County</li> <li>Revamp Freshwater Fans program to increase number of fans / returning fans each year</li> <li>Triple number of volunteers</li> </ul>
<p><b>Organizational Excellence</b></p>	<p>To grow financial support and improve internal management needed for FLT to implement its mission</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase financial stability</li> <li>Recruit and retain professional staff</li> <li>Involve FLT board and junior board in organization activities</li> <li>Amplify mission and organizational effectiveness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase operational funding by 50%</li> <li>Generate \$10 million of funding for Red Rock Action Plan</li> <li>Sustain staff excellence and increase opportunities for staff professional development</li> <li>Improve community representation on staff</li> <li>Diversify board and junior board membership</li> <li>Strengthen board and junior board engagement</li> <li>Maintain 100% FLT board and junior board giving</li> <li>Enhance office efficacy through technological advances and staffing needs</li> </ul>