

LAND ACQUISITION, MANAGEMENT, AND DISPOSITION POLICY

Approved by the Board of Directors on September 19, 2024

Updated and approved by the Board of Directors on March 17, 2026



1. LAND ACQUISITION

- 1.1. ACRE will acquire lands located in the municipalities surrounding Gatineau Park, prioritizing lands found wholly or partially within the ecological corridors identified by Gatineau Park and the National Capital Commission or CREDDO. ACRE's primary area of land conservation is the Municipality of Chelsea.
- 1.2. Land can be acquired through donation and/or by purchase of fee simple interests and/or conservation easements.
- 1.3. ACRE may partner to obtain and own land and conservation easements from time to time, with municipalities, provincial and federal agencies, and other conservation organizations and agencies.
- 1.4. All letters of intention, offers or any other commitment to acquire lands, be they conditional or non-binding or otherwise, will be pre-approved by the Board of Directors.
- 1.5. All financial commitments to acquire lands will be approved by the Board of Directors.
- 1.6. Following Board approval of a potential land acquisition, the Executive Committee is authorized to represent ACRE and sign resolutions on behalf of the Board. The Executive Committee will keep the Board advised on all material developments and seek all necessary approvals before making any binding commitments on behalf of ACRE.
- 1.7. For purchases of land with a municipal assessment value of \$25,000 or more, conservation easements, and any donations of land valued at more than \$1,000, requiring charitable donation receipts, including Ecological Gifts, ACRE will obtain an independent appraisal that meets the requirements of Les normes de pratique professionnelle des évaluateurs agréés (for lands in Quebec) or the Canadian Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice (for lands outside Quebec). The appraisal will include a full narrative report and be prepared by an independent appraiser certified by the Appraisal Institute of Canada (AIC) or l'Ordre des évaluateurs agréés du Québec (OEAQ), with verifiable experience in conservation real estate. For purchasing lands and conservation easements valued at less than \$25,000, a short narrative report or a letter of opinion prepared by an AIC- or OEAQ-certified appraiser, a Canadian residential appraiser, or a licensed real estate professional is also acceptable. Certain funders may have other appraisal requirements. For example, appraisals of ecological gifts or land acquisitions supported by Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) must comply with the *Ecological Gifts Program: Guidelines for Appraisals*, and the final fair market value is included in the Notice of Determination of Fair Market Value of an Ecological Gift.

- 1.8. Legal review and technical expertise: ACRE will obtain a legal review of each land transaction or conservation easement, appropriate to its complexity, by a lawyer or notary experienced in real estate law. If deemed necessary based on the specifics of a transaction, ACRE will retain the services of experts in taxation, finance, real estate, and land and water management.
- 1.9. ACRE and its directors will refrain from providing specific legal, financial or tax advice to any outside party involved in a land transaction or conservation easements and will recommend that each party obtain independent advice.
- 1.10. In cases where land or a conservation easement is donated, ACRE will enter into a legally binding donor agreement with the landowner.
- 1.11. Purchasing land and conservation easements from “insiders” is subject to the following:
 - 1.11.1. “insiders” include, without limitation: directors, staff, members; parties related to board members or staff or members; significant contributors within the meaning of the Income Tax Act; persons who have the ability to influence the decisions of the ACRE; and those who have access to information that is not available to the general public;
 - 1.11.2. when entering into transactions with insiders, ACRE shall document how the transaction meets ACRE's land conservation objectives, follow all transaction policies and procedures; and ensure that there is no unacceptable undue advantage;
 - 1.11.3. for the purchase of lands or conservation easements from insiders, ACRE will also obtain a qualified independent appraisal.
- 1.12. Registration: All land transactions and conservation easements will be legally registered at the appropriate registry office in accordance with municipal and provincial laws.
- 1.13. Title and Subordination Investigation: ACRE will investigate the title of each property or interest in land that it intends to acquire, to ensure that negotiations take place with the correct owners and to identify all privileges, mortgages, mining leases, water rights, or charges against the property or other matters that may affect the transaction.

- 1.14. Environmental Due Diligence: ACRE will not knowingly acquire properties that are contaminated. Steps will be taken, where appropriate prior to completing the acquisition, to identify and document the presence or absence of hazardous or toxic materials on or near the property that could create future liabilities for the organization. These measures include at a minimum a physical inspection of the property and an investigation of the historic uses of the property. If deemed necessary, an environmental assessment will be carried out.
- 1.15. ACRE may acquire land and subdivide portion of it for resale in the case where some sections of the land do not meet ACRE's mandate.

2. **LAND MANAGEMENT**

- 2.1. ACRE lands will be managed and used for purposes consistent with ACRE's mandate which includes education, recreation, conservation and preservation of natural ecosystems. The lands will not be used for mining, industrial, commercial, agricultural, or other activities that are inconsistent with the ACRE's Mandate.
- 2.2. ACRE lands are accessible to the public, subject to considerations of conservation, safety, insurance and other land management concerns.
- 2.3. ACRE will honour any agreed upon conditions set by donors of ecological gifts regarding the use of the lands or access to those lands. These conditions will be established in a letter signed by ACRE and the donor(s) of the ecological gift and the letter will be attached to the deed of the property. In exceptional cases, ACRE could honour the wishes of a donor of an ecological gift to restrict public access. Such wishes will only be considered if they align with ACRE's conservation objectives and if any financial donors involved in the land acquisition are informed prior to their donation.
- 2.4. The Board of Directors will approve land management plans as may be necessary for particular ACRE lands. These plans will guide activities on the land. The management plans may be updated as necessary to take into account new conditions or management issues relating to ownership or conservation easements.
- 2.5. ACRE will undertake to have a land stewardship/caretaker or a group of land stewards/caretakers who will work together as a team on land stewardship matters for particular lands.
- 2.6. The land stewards/caretakers have an important role in successful land conservation that includes the following activities:
 - 2.6.1. regularly visit all lands to maintain up-to-date knowledge of the status of the properties;
 - 2.6.2. maintain informal communications with adjacent landowners and other persons with an interest in the property;

- 2.6.3. notify ACRE of any use of the property inconsistent with ACRE's Mandate or the land management plan associated with the particular ACRE land;
 - 2.6.4. assist in the maintenance of the land, maintaining their ecological integrity, and public safety;
 - 2.6.5. contribute to updates or necessary revisions to the land management plan;
 - 2.6.6. contribute to ACRE's decisions related to the lands such as trail locations and maintenance, fences, rehabilitating or maintaining the ecological integrity of the lands; and
 - 2.6.7. meet with the Board of Directors as may be necessary to discuss any management issues related to the lands.
 - 2.6.8. perform any other specific activities described in conservation easements.
- 2.7. Land stewards / caretakers will not incur any expenses or financial or any other commitments related to the lands without seeking the prior approval from the President and the Treasurer for purchases of \$5,000 or less, and from the ACRE Board of Directors for purchases over \$5,000, in accordance with the Purchasing Policy in ACRE's Financial Management Policy. The annual budget process is described in the Financial Management Policy.
- 2.8. ACRE will maintain general liability insurance on all its lands in the amount of no less than \$1,000,000.00.
- 2.9. ACRE will seek to place all conservation lands that it owns under municipal conservation zoning and examine other similar mechanisms to ensure the long-term conservation of the properties.
- 2.10. ACRE will seek tax exempt status for all its properties.

3. LAND DISPOSITION

- 3.1. ACRE's mandate includes the conservation of ecologically significant lands. As such, ACRE will not encumber, mortgage, sell or transfer lands or conservation easements in a manner that does not respect its mandate.
- 3.2. ACRE will not sell or transfer ecologically significant lands or conservation easements, unless the lands are sold or transferred to another land trust organization, government or agency that will maintain the ecological significance of the lands.
- 3.3. If ACRE has received a donation of lands without significant ecological value, ACRE may sell such lands in a manner that respects any stated expectations or understanding of the donor when the donation of the lands was made.

- 3.4. ACRE will not mortgage, encumber or use ecologically significant lands as security to finance the purchase of other lands or borrow money.
- 3.5. Before transferring ecologically significant lands or conservation easements, ACRE will consider whether the recipient of the lands or easements has the capacity to assume the long-term stewardship necessary to maintain the ecological significance of the lands. If such capacity exists, ACRE will transfer to the recipient the amount from the Stewardship Endowment Fund that is allocated to these lands or easements.
- 3.6. ACRE will make efforts to obtain fair market value if it sells or transfers lands that have no ecological significance for fair market value. Before doing so, ACRE will obtain a report by a qualified ecologist confirming that the lands are not ecologically significant.
- 3.7. The Board of Directors must approve any sale or transfer of ACRE lands or conservation easements.
- 3.8. If a transfer involves lands or conservation easements that have been donated or purchased with funds raised by donations, ACRE shall make efforts to advise donors of the potential transfer and the rationale for doing so.
- 3.9. If a transfer involves lands or conservation easements held under the Ecological Gifts Program or other land trust program, ACRE will seek the necessary authorization before any transfer occurs.
- 3.10. While not anticipated, if ACRE were to sell a property to insiders, ACRE will obtain the services of a real estate agent to market the property widely to ensure that the property is being sold at market price and to avoid the reality or perception that the sale is inappropriately benefiting an insider.

4. POLICY REVIEW

- 4.1. The Land Acquisition, Management, and Disposition Policy will be reviewed every two years and whenever there is a material change in circumstances.