In Perpetuity:
Governance and Capacity Building of Local Land Trusts in Ontario

by

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Author's Declaration Page

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

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Abstract

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This study examines the extent to which volunteer-run local land trusts in Ontario are governed in a manner that will allow them to protect valued ecosystems effectively in perpetuity. It also identifies needs and opportunities for building the capacities of land trusts as long term stewardship organizations. The primary academic contribution of this research is the identification of criteria for evaluating land trust governance and their ability to meet their conservation aims. The criteria are applied in a case study of the Niagara Land Trust, a local land trust in the process of incorporating. Specific recommendations are made to assist this organization to improve its operations.

The principal findings of this research are that some local land trusts have attained a level of governance which will allow them to protect land in perpetuity, but some land trusts have not. The failure of some land trusts could result in donors and government questioning the movement as a whole. Generally, the main gaps in capacity centre on weaknesses in financial sustainability, training/managing of volunteers, record-keeping, baseline inventories and continued monitoring, and the problem of requiring people to have specific professional skills in largely volunteer organizations.

The thesis concludes by offering specific suggestions to the Niagara Land Trust, the Ontario Land Trust Alliance and the Canadian Land Trust Alliance. Local land trusts have provided many communities with an attractive option for conserving land; strengthening the movement will ensure that this grassroots work can continue.

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List of Common Acronyms Used in This Thesis

Acronym	Description
BCLT	Land Trust Alliance of British Columbia
BoD	Board of Directors
CLTA	Canadian Land Trust Alliance
CSGVP	Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating
LTA	United States Land Trust Alliance
NCC	Nature Conservancy of Canada
NLT	Niagara Land Trust
NPO	Nonprofit Organization
NSGVP	National Survey of Giving, Volunteering, and Participating
NSNVO	National Survey of Nonprofit and Voluntary Organizations
OLTA	Ontario Land Trust Alliance

CHAPTER 1: Introduction to Local Land Trusts in Ontario

Introduction

Local land trusts across Ontario, Canada are rapidly proliferating. Ordinary citizens are becoming directly involved in the acquisition and preservation of land for future generations. With growing enthusiasm, the public is embracing the idea of volunteers managing land trusts which protect land across the province.

This study looks specifically at the governance of these local land trusts in Ontario. It evaluates the capacity of volunteers to conserve land in perpetuity and suggests gaps in capacity which should be addressed.

This chapter introduces the reader to the research problem, providing a brief history and identifying some of the challenges to the ecological integrity of the Niagara Peninsula, the location of the case study for this research. The Niagara Peninsula is a popular tourist destination with high quality farmland. The Niagara Peninsula is also home to approximately 500 000 people (Regional Niagara Public Health Department, 2003; A1.1b).

The Niagara Land Trust is a local land trust attempting to conserve the natural heritage of the Niagara Peninsula. While the Niagara Land Trust is at the beginning stages of its work, it is part of a growing local land trust movement across Ontario. There is a need for research into these Trusts, as significant donations of land, money, and securities have been made; while at the same time, few academic studies have been undertaken to ensure that land trusts can meet their conservation aims. This research will attempt to fill some of those research gaps.

Introduction to the Research Problem

The Niagara Peninsula is characterized by its ecological diversity and natural beauty. These characteristics, plus a unique microclimate and high quality agricultural lands have been crucial factors in the attractiveness of the area for residents and visitors, underpinnings its economic as well as ecological viability. Yet its long-term ecological integrity is threatened by a number of pressures, in part because of its natural attributes. Preserving these characteristics is therefore pivotal to the overall social, economic, and ecological health of the area.

Wedged between two Great Lakes, Ontario and Erie, the peninsula boasts plenty of unique watercourses. The Welland River, Twelve Mile Creek, Twenty Mile Creek and Forty Mile Creek all flow through the area (NPCA, 2007). Niagara is perhaps best known for two waterways, the Welland Canal provides a transportation link between Lakes Ontario and Erie and the Niagara River with Niagara Falls is a major tourist attraction.

Niagara's unique microclimate combined with rich soil results in some of the best farmland in Canada (Niagara Region, 2007).The Region is home to an expanding grape and wine industry, as well as an established tender fruit market. Seventy wineries in the area combine with Niagara Falls and the Shaw Festival in Niagara-on-the-Lake as major draws for the tourist industry (Tourism Niagara, 2007). Every year over twelve million visitors come to the peninsula to visit the falls and wineries (Niagara Region, 2007).

The Niagara Escarpment dominates the Niagara Peninsula's landscape. The Escarpment commences in Queenston and stretches all the way to Tobermory, with the Bruce Trail meandering along. The escarpment is home to a special richness of plants and animals. The rare Tulip and Cucumber trees can be found in Niagara, for example. The Niagara Escarpment is designated as a World Biosphere Reserve and is regulated under the Niagara Escarpment Plan of 1985 (CONE, 2007).

Despite all of these attractive natural features, the Niagara Peninsula is under ecological threat. One of Niagara's largest exports, is it environmental and mineral resources. Peat extraction, pits and quarries are a major source of income in the area (Niagara Region, 2007). The escarpment has faced intense pressures to expand some of these activities and to accommodate other developments over the past 50 years. Its proximity to the Greater Toronto Area means that the escarpment is an ideal source of aggregates for the area (CONE, 2007). Moreover, this proximity to the GTA and to major cities in the United States means that Niagara serves as a vital transportation link (Niagara Region, 2007). Therefore, there is large-scale pollution associated with the transportation of goods currently, and there are plans to create a new transportation "corridor" in the future.

Land use in Niagara historically focused on agriculture. The area was first settled by Loyalists, fleeing the American Revolution. Niagara became an important military region, with several bases protecting British North America. During this time, much of the area was cleared and burned for agriculture, providing a valuable source of potash and wheat for Europe. The pine and oak forests of the area were also important for ship building. Much of the timber was also exported to Europe. When the wheat crop failed in 1864, the fruit industry was born (Regional Municipality of Niagara, 2003; 3.1).

The characteristics that make Niagara an attractive agricultural area (proximity to water, transportation and favourable climate) are also what attract people to the area. Although the Region of Niagara has the ultimate responsibility for land use planning, the individual municipalities across the Region take different approaches to planning. Land use planning experts comment, "Growth pressure affects the area and differences in the application of policies at the local and regional level have negatively impacted agriculture" (Regional Municipality of Niagara, 2003; 3.9). Indeed, some municipal policies now permit suburban expansion into prime agricultural lands. Urban sprawl results in increasing pressure on the natural environment (SOLEC, 2000; 61). Niagara finds itself in a difficult predicament. Its natural features attract people to the area, but the additional urban sprawl results in the diminishment of ecological integrity. Regional planners caution that the "unique nature of the land base… elevates the importance of preservation (Regional Municipality of Niagara, 2003; 3.6), but adequate understanding of preservation needs, and effective means of fostering stewardship, are not yet in place.

Despite the development pressures, few scientific studies identify the overall ecological health and integrity or species richness and diversity of the area. The Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) commenced the first region-wide Natural Heritage Areas Inventory in August of 2006 (NPCA, 2007). However, the NPCA has had difficulty receiving landowner permission to walk properties (Roach, personal observation, 2007). This further complicates the matter of trying to put together a natural areas inventory of an already fragmented landscape.

Poor development policies and insufficient ecological knowledge plague most of the densely populated areas in Ontario. During a discussion of legal reforms in the provincial legislature to substantiate conservation easements, tools commonly used by land trusts, M.P.P. David Orazietti commented on the threats to biodiversity in Ontario. He said,

> But we face a Catch-22. The human activity that depends on biodiversity also threatens biodiversity. Our rapidly growing population in Ontario and around the globe is contributing to the equally rapid decline of biodiversity throughout the world… That is why it is so important to conserve and restore Ontario's biodiversity (Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 2005).

Land trusts offer an opportunity for private individuals to come together and conserve land. Their efforts focus on removing land from development pressures and holding that land in perpetuity.

Enter the Niagara Land Trust. A loose association of people came together in May of 2005 with the unifying idea of protecting Niagara's natural areas. Almost two years later, the Niagara Land Trust (NLT) has a stable and dedicated Founding Committee, who are on the verge of applying for incorporation and charitable status. The NLT has a comfortable operating budget and interested donors have approached the organization with land that they want to protect. The mission of the Niagara Land Trust is to "conserv[e] Niagara's natural heritage". A land trust can conserve land in a number of important ways, including fee simple acquisition, conservation easements, land swaps and private stewardship. The Niagara Land Trust intends to explore all available options for protecting land. A newly formed organization can create momentum within a community to conserve land. Prior to wholeheartedly embracing the concept of a land trust in Niagara, and indeed land trusts throughout Ontario, some fundamental questions about the organizations need to be addressed. These concerns hinge on the nature of local land trusts, their dependence on volunteers, and the trusts' ability to protect this land in perpetuity.

Land Trusts as Conservation Tools

According to the Canadian Land Trust Alliance, land trusts are

> charitable organizations that, as all or part of their mission, actively work to conserve land with natural, recreational, scenic, historical or agricultural value. These organizations create public benefit through education programs, "community services", and the creation of passive recreational opportunities thereby improving the quality of life for all citizens.
>
> Land trusts accept donations and bequests of land and conservation agreements and in some cases may purchase land or conservation agreements. The land is then permanently protected to preserve its conservation, heritage or agricultural values. Land trusts are supported with memberships and donations from generous residents in the community they serve (CLTA, 2007).

Some land trusts operate at a local level, as opposed to a provincial or national level. This study focuses on these trusts, which hold the same characteristics as other land trusts, except for the local focus.

Land trusts have been established in Britain since the 1500s. The first land trust in the United States, The Trustees of Reservations, was founded in 1891 (Gustanski, Edwards-Jones and Squires, 1999; 84). In recent years, there has been major growth in the interest of land trusts. For example, there were 53 land trusts operating in the U.S. in 1950. Today, there are over 1 500 land trusts in the U.S., with representation in every state (LTA, 2006). In Canada, there has been a similar growth in interest and numbers in land trusts, although this interest started about 15 years ago (VanDenBelt, 2005).

There are many reasons for the proliferation of land trusts. Essentially, the reasons are punctuated by the need for more protection than the existing mechanisms for land protection have delivered or can reasonably be expected to deliver. In the U.S., for example, it is difficult for governments and other agencies to protect valued species when 95% of threatened or endangered flora and fauna. is on private property (Merenlender, Hunt-Singer and Guthey, 2004; 66). Existing government regulation and incentives have failed to protect farmland (Ryan and Hansel Walker, 2004; 183) in a comprehensive manner. Finally, government intervention is not always permanent. Land use plans can and do change. Alternatively, conservation easements are more permanent than environmental regulations and land-use zoning plans (Newburn, 2005; 1412). Moreover, the increased interest in land trusts could be due in part to a decrease in public money for land conservation (Campbell and Salus, 2003; 169) and/or rapid population growth coupled with similarly rapid development of land (Gustanski, Edwards-Jones and Squires, 1999; 84). Therefore, there is a need to engage new mechanisms to conserve land other than traditional land use planning.

Conservationists and academics have become increasingly skeptical about government's ability to conserve land. Gustanski et al (1999; 85) write, "For any number of reasons, the traditional government-driven regulatory paradigm that attempts to coerce people to protect land often falls short of intended government program goals". Land trusts are an attractive option because of their flexible approach and effective work (Hilts and Reid, 1993). Land trusts also provide a positive and proactive opportunity for citizens to conserve land (VanDenBelt, 2005).

While the benefits of land trusts have been noted, skepticism about their ability to protect land in perpetuity endures. Merenlender, et al (2004; 66) comment, “The widespread acceptance of conservation easements may result from disillusionment with one-size-fit[s]-all federal regulation and management, but the variability in the properties, organizations, and institutions involved means that assessing the outcome of this new approach to land conservation is extremely difficult”.

In spite of these potential difficulties, people and corporations are making significant donations of money and land to land trusts in Canada and abroad. For example, Patney (2000; 366) reports that in 1984, Prudential Insurance donated 118 000 acres adjacent to Alligator River in North Carolina to the Nature Conservancy; this donation was worth (U.S.) $50 million. On March 14, 2007 the Government of Canada announced a $225 million donation to the Nature Conservancy of Canada, “to acquire and preserve ecologically sensitive land in partnership with the private sector” (Government of Canada, 2007).

Individuals, corporations, or governments donating to a land trust expect that the land will be managed in perpetuity. At the same time however, there is insufficient evidence to support the idea that land trusts, run largely by volunteers, can indeed fulfill this promise (Merenlender, Huntsinger and Guthey, 2004; 68). Thus, there is a need to establish whether or not land trusts are governed in a manner that will allow them to effectively play an important role in protecting valued ecosystems

Land Trusts as Conservation Tools: The Need for Research

Land trusts as a conservation vehicle are understudied (Merenlender, Huntsinger and Guthey, 2004; 65). Campbell (2005; 574) contends that there is a lack of interdisciplinary research done in the realm of conservation biology generally. This, she argues, must be rectified in order to guide sound conservation decisions in the future. Van Heezik and Seddon (2005; 7, 12) agree with Campbell in arguing for interdisciplinary research to be undertaken in the field of conservation. They write, “Many conservation problems are symptoms of even larger, more complex difficulties that have multiple consequences for people and wildlife”.

In support of more emphasis on interdisciplinary research. Merenlender, Huntsinger and Guthey (2004; 65) write, “Our review of the literature showed that little information is available on (1) the resulting pattern of protected lands and resources being conserved, (2) the emerging institutions that hold conservation easements and the landowners they work with, and (3) the distribution of costs and benefits of land trusts and easements to communities and the general public”. In particular they stress the need for capacity to be developed within land trusts in order to ensure the permanence of the organization (68). Additionally, they conclude, “Interdisciplinary research is needed to determine the ecological and social consequences of acquiring …interest in private land for conservation purposes" (65).

The research in this thesis centres on the question of perpetuity. It addresses the following central research question:

> Are land trusts governed in a manner that will allow them to protect valued ecosystems effectively in perpetuity?

This research endeavours to fill some of the existing land trust literature gaps. Specifically, this research will examine the capacity of volunteers within a land trust to govern the organization in a manner that will allow them to protect valued ecosystems. It is important to examine the role of volunteers in land trusts because the vast majority of work in land trusts is undertaken by volunteers (VanDenBelt, 2005).

The relatively new enthusiasm for and rapid spread of land trusts is relevant to this thesis for a number of important reasons. Firstly, as land trusts are a new concept in North America and especially Canada, the area of research has not been adequately defined. Few comprehensive studies of the concept have been undertaken (Merenlender, et al, 2004; 65). Secondly, while land trusts have been created in response to evident need for them (Mackenzie, 2004; 273) these needs have not yet been well defined. Thus, there are important questions to be asked about the expectations for land trusts. For example, do land trusts indicate a failure of government to protect land (Ryan and Hansel Walker, 2004; 184)? What do land trusts say about the values of the people and communities that create them (Carson, 2005)? What is the full list of key benefits that land trusts should be delivering? This information helps set the context for answering the thesis question because it demonstrates that there could be an ecological and social imperative for land trusts.

Evaluating Local Land Trusts' Ability to Protect Valued Ecosystems

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of land trusts to achieve their conservation aims, six secondary research questions were explored:

1) What role do land trusts play in protecting / promoting valued ecosystems?
2) What is the governing system in place and is it effective in ensuring land protection?
3) Volunteers are responsible for setting up a land trust. Do volunteers have the capacity to effectively promote and manage land trusts now and into the future?
4) How do we assess the capacity of volunteers to manage land in perpetuity?
5) What gaps are there in the capacity of volunteers to manage land in perpetuity?
6) How do we build capacity in volunteers and land trusts in order to ensure long-term land conservation?

These secondary research questions are a logical extension of the primary point of inquiry. They highlight the specific emphasis placed on volunteer actions within a land trust in this study. This is appropriate because most land trusts depend in large part on volunteers to sustain their organization. Therefore, when addressing the ability of land trusts to fulfill their conservation aims, one must also address the ability of volunteers to manage a land trust in perpetuity. A complete rationale for these secondary research questions is presented in Chapter Two.

This thesis makes important contributions to the literature. Firstly, it contributes to the emerging literature on land trusts, providing a basic context of the organizations. Secondly, this thesis synthesizes previously disconnected literatures to provide answers to its central research problem. Thirdly, this thesis proposes a new set of criteria through which land trusts can be evaluated, by building on the strengths of the land trust and sustainability literatures. This building of the literature provides a necessary theoretical contribution to the land trust world.

This study employs qualitative triangulation to substantiate the findings from a literature review, key informant interviews, participant observation research and the Niagara Land Trust case study. The selection of the Niagara Land Trust as a case study is appropriate because it represents both a critical case, and a representative or typical case (Yin, 2003; 40-41). As the Niagara land trust is currently incorporating, key issues surrounding land trust governance are particularly salient.

The purpose of this study is to examine the concepts of land trusts, volunteerism and capacity using qualitative methods in order to inform other land trusts and conservation groups about what is necessary to ensure the long-term survival of the organization. Specifically, it addresses the issue of perpetuity, taking the particular lens of analyzing the capacity of volunteers to fulfill the role of stewards of land and other resources using the land trust vehicle.

This research begins with the recognition that it is likely impossible to know for sure if an organization can exist in perpetuity. While some land trusts may be governed in a manner that will allow them to protect valued ecosystems effectively over the very long term, others with similar structures and approaches may not succeed. The failure of another local land trust could have negative effects on the reputation of surrounding local land trusts, so it is important to consider preventative capacity building measures to mitigate the chance of failure. Institutional change over time is to be expected and to be encouraged, in order that land trusts continue to serve the needs of their local community. It is therefore important to consider specific steps that a local land trust can undertake in order to improve its chances at organizational success. Following the lead of the Canadian Land Trust Alliance and the United States' Land Trust Alliance this thesis develops criteria against which volunteers can evaluate a land trust. These criteria were developed through the literature review, key informant interviews and the researcher's own participant observation as a volunteer with the Niagara Land Trust. These criteria are applied to the NLT in order to demonstrate their effectiveness in Chapter 6.

The Significance of This Study to the Land Trust Movement

The research conducted will have significance for those currently involved in the land trust movement, such as researchers, current and past land trust members and the Canadian Land Trust Alliance (CLTA) and the Ontario Land Trust Alliance (OLTA). Equally, this thesis will serve the needs of the Founding Committee of the Niagara Land Trust, which has been the focus of the research into successful organizational capacity building for local land trusts. On a larger scale, this study will be significant for those interested in conservation biology issues, conservation planning policy makers, and those interested in environmental volunteerism. Particularly, this thesis will be important for local NGOs working on conservation issues, local landowners interested in land trusts and corporations interested in donating to a land trust. Finally, this work will be of interest to other researchers and the land trust community, which has an established tendency of sharing information.

Organization of Thesis

Six chapters follow this introduction of the research problem.

Chapter two outlines the methods employed to answer the study's principal and six secondary research questions. The research methods included a literature review, participant observer study, a case study and key informant interviews. These methods also contributed to the development of the criteria which were used to evaluate the NLT and represent a substantial academic contribution. Chapter two also highlights some of the limitations of the research design and provides a rationale for the selection of research methods.

Chapter three, the academic literature review, overviews some of the key concepts that inform this thesis. Drawing from a wide variety of journals and disciplines, the chapter synthesizes literature from a number of fields, especially: land trusts, conservation biology, volunteerism, social capital and capacity building. The general lack of academic literature being produced on the subject of land trusts necessitates a broader reading of the existing literature in order to gain understanding of some of the related topics. This literature review highlights the need for conservation of natural resources through a community-based process and provides context for the arguments presented in the second literature review chapter.

The second literature review chapter, Chapter four, looks more closely at primary literature produced by and for land trust participants. Due to the lack of academic writing in the field, this chapter builds on some of the "grey" literature of books, pamphlets, websites, and reviews of land trusts produced by researchers, land trusts themselves, or their umbrella agencies. The strength of using this approach is that it offers the author important insight into the primary concerns of land trust participants and thus, allows the author to make practical recommendations on how to improve local land trust governance. This chapter answers sequentially the six secondary research questions and uses the information to develop a set of criteria with which to describe the "ideal situation" for land trusts. This criteria is later verified and built upon from the information gleaned by the key informant interviews.

Chapter 5's purpose is to introduce the reader to the case study of the Niagara Land Trust. It commences by providing an academic rationale for the choice of case study and a description of the researcher's participant observation. The chapter then provides the context of the Niagara Land Trust, describing its history, members and other relevant background information. The goal of chapter 5 is to set the stage for the following chapter, in which the Niagara Land Trust is evaluated using the criteria developed through the literature review and the key informant interviews.

Chapter 6 presents the findings and analysis of this research. The main themes of the literature reviews are presented. Additionally, the themes from the key informant interviews are summarized and their contributions to the criteria are highlighted. A comparison between the main themes of the key informant interviews and the literature reviews is drawn, illustrating their similarities and differences. The criteria that were developed through the literature review and the interviews are next applied to the case study of the Niagara Land Trust. This serves the dual purpose of providing feedback to the NLT and testing the criteria for their applicability. Areas of success and those in need of improvement for the Niagara Land Trust are highlighted.

The final chapter of the thesis, Chapter 7, defines the academic and applied contributions of the research. It summarizes the main arguments that were made throughout the thesis and offers recommendations to the case study group, the Ontario Land Trust Alliance and the Canadian Land Trust Alliance. Chapter 7 argues that many of the key issues that local land trusts are facing are similar to other not-for-profit organizations. This suggests that the various sectors of non-profit, conservation literature can draw important lessons from each other. Finally, this chapter suggests areas for future research.

Conclusions

This chapter introduced the reader to the Niagara Peninsula, providing multiple reasons why the area is unique and wonderful. Unfortunately, the development pressures that the region is experiencing are not unique. Much of the landscape in Southern Ontario is under enormous development pressure (Hilts and Reid, 1993; 5). Land trusts are proliferating at the same time that these areas are under development threat. Land trusts are not necessarily linked to an anti-development movement; they are, however, a reflection of the needs perceived by the communities and individuals which create them.

There is a lack of literature on land trusts generally, and an established need for future research. This study endeavours to fill some of the existing gaps within the literature and to provide a unique theoretical contribution by using a variety of literatures in confluence. Concentrating on preserving land in perpetuity through the actions of volunteers is also a unique theoretical slant. This research also endeavours to have an applied contribution. The development of the criteria provide an opportunity to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of local land trusts and to make specific recommendations on how to improve land trust governance. Local land trusts have provided many communities with an attractive option for conserving land; strengthening the movement will ensure that this grassroots work can continue.

CHAPTER 2: Explanation of the Methodological Approach

Introduction

This research employs qualitative triangulation in order to enhance credibility and dependability of the research. Triangulation provides allowances for changing conditions and situations which may occur throughout the study by using overlapping research methods. Methodological triangulation utilizes several data gathering procedures in order to create overlapping data which can be used to cross-validate the research conclusions (Brown, 2005; 33, 31). There are four main data gathering procedures used in this study: a review of the literature, participant observation, case study data and key informant interviews. The research is both inductive and deductive in nature. The literature reviews and expert interviews help to identify the key concepts highlighted in the conceptual framework. The conceptual framework, in turn, informs a list of "ideal criteria" with which to judge land trusts in general, and the Niagara Land Trust in particular. The particular case study of the Niagara Land Trust also helps to inform the development of the "ideal criteria" and test their practical application.

One component of the research methods for the case study is participant observer experience. Participant observation is defined as "a method of data collection that involves watching and studying a particular culture or social group in order to describe, explain, and interpret the meaning of its actions" (Wabash College, 2006). In my capacity as the secretary for the Founding Committee of the Niagara Land Trust, research can be conducted in an interactive manner. This allows a unique perspective to be taken when analyzing land trusts' effectiveness generally and the Niagara Land Trust in particular as the audience receives information that is both academic and anecdotal in nature.

The literature reviews covers both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources included government publications, Ontario Land Trust Alliance publications, Niagara Land Trust meeting minutes and land trust websites and other documents. Secondary sources focused on academic publications and the "grey literature" of publications and other documents from organizations in the field. The major literature topics consulted are land trusts, conservation biology, volunteerism, social capital, stewardship, capacity and capacity building.

Key informant interviews were conducted in addition to the case study, literature reviews and participant observation. The role of the interviews was to fill gaps not contained within the primary and secondary literature and to verify or dispute conclusions reached throughout the thesis. Interviewees were selected based on their known expertise in the field of land trusts, volunteerism and capacity building. Experts in the field of land trusts were selected, along with members of the Niagara Land Trust. These interviews were conducted in person, whenever possible, otherwise, by phone. The interviews consisted of questions based on the primary research question and the six secondary research questions. Additional questions were asked if required for clarification and supplementary depth. Point form notes were taken of the respondent's comments and a tape recorder was employed at the discretion of the interviewee. Whenever possible, the interview was encouraged to develop into a two-way conversation, rather than a question and answer session. No follow-up interviews were necessary.

The partner organization, the Niagara Land Trust, was selected due to this researcher's previous relationship with the conservation movement in the Niagara Region. The already developed relationship with conservation-minded individuals aided in the ability to work effectively as a participant observer. Developing reciprocity between the researcher and the subjects is an important element in participant observer research (Baxter-Moore, Carroll and Church, 1994; 242).

Reliance on a case study of the Niagara Land Trust meets several methodological criteria. Yin (2003; 30) argues that when the existing knowledge base of a subject is poor – as in the case of land trusts – the existing literature is insufficient for the development of theoretical statements. In these cases, it is appropriate for an exploratory case study to be undertaken. The use of a case study in the outlined circumstances can lead to the development of analytical generalizations in the form of policy (Yin, 2003; 33). The use of a single case study is appropriate for this study for two reasons. Firstly, the Niagara Land Trust represents a critical case, in respect to land trusts in general. This is because the Niagara Land Trust meets the conditions for testing the theory of the ideal criteria (Yin, 2003; 40). As the Niagara Land Trust is in its development stages, it is still in the process of creating its organizational form. Testing and applying theories of capacity are appropriate under the circumstances. Secondly, the use of a single case study is appropriate because the Niagara Land Trust is also a representative or typical case. The lessons learned from this particular case study are informative about the average experience (Yin, 2003; 41). The Niagara Land Trust is not developing in isolation. It has sought the expertise and experience of OLTA, other land trusts and Ian Attridge, a lawyer who currently works with five other land trusts and has helped incorporate approximately 1/3 of land trusts in Ontario (Attridge, 2006). As a result of this interaction, specifically the use of several land trusts' incorporation, by-law and land acquisition criteria, the Niagara Land Trust can be said to be a representative case.

Plan for the Research

The research was conducted as follows: firstly, literature reviews were undertaken to achieve two specific aims. The literature reviews helped to answer the six secondary research questions regarding land trust governance. Secondly, the literature reviews were used to define the key concepts and provide criteria with which the Niagara Land Trust was evaluated. The goal of developing the concepts is to create ideal criteria with which land trusts and the Niagara Land Trust specifically, can be evaluated. At the same time, it is important to note that concepts are both value and theory laden (Baxter-Moore, Carroll and Church, 1994; 161). The second step was to conduct key informant and Niagara Land

Trust participant interviews to help fill any gaps left after the literature reviews. The interview questions were designed to cover the primary research question and the six secondary research questions identified in the research problem. The key informant interviews helped to verify or dispute any of the findings from the literature reviews. Equally, because the key informant interviews were broken up between land trust experts and Niagara Land Trust participants the ability to compare between the two groups will be present. Thirdly, the criteria developed through the literature reviews were analyzed in light of the findings from the key informant interviews. Some adjustments that were necessary were made at this point. The fourth step was to apply the criteria to the Niagara Land Trust to test their validity. Conclusions regarding the capacity of the Niagara Land Trust were reached, and analyzed to discover their applicability to the land trust movement in general. Information surrounding land trusts was gathered through both primary and secondary sources. Using the criteria, the researcher was able to evaluate the areas in which land trusts are succeeding and the areas in which they require work. This information was then applied to the Niagara Land Trust, to help inform future policy about such matters as volunteerism, capacity building and other governance issues. The fifth step was to identify conclusions and policy ramifications from this study. The analysis of land trusts generally helped to inform recommendations for the development of the Niagara Land Trust. The final step was to answer all of the research questions, based on the literature reviews, key informant interviews, case study and participant observation.

This research is organized around six secondary questions that provide the information necessary to answer the primary research question. The six secondary research questions were answered using the literature reviews, and then these conclusions were tested based on the answers from the key informant interviewees and the Niagara Land Trust participants. The interview questions were based on the six secondary research questions and the primary research question. Areas of specific focus to answer the secondary research questions are identified below.

1) What role do land trusts play in protecting / promoting valued ecosystems?

Analysis focused on the role and goals of land trusts and the necessity of protecting and promoting valued ecosystems. Information gleaned from researcher’s experience as a participant observer was incorporated. Also, the case study of the Niagara Land Trust was employed.

2) What is the governing system in place and is it effective in ensuring land protection?

This question was answered through the use of primary and secondary literature and key informant interviews to fill any voids left through the literature reviews. Topics consulted included conservation biology, government land protection strategies, corporate land protection initiatives and conservation volunteer agencies. The case study of the Niagara Land Trust was analyzed to add context to the debate.

3) Volunteers are responsible for setting up a land trust. Do volunteers have the capacity to effectively promote and manage land trusts now and into the future?

Secondary literature on volunteerism and community-based management was consulted. Primary information provided by OLTA and the U.S. LTA also provided the basis of analysis. Key informant interviews were undertaken to answer this question. The researcher's experience as a participant observer and information collected through the case study provided specific examples.

4) How do we assess the capacity of volunteers to manage land in perpetuity?

Secondary literature on volunteerism, land trusts, capacity, social and community-based management were consulted. Key informant interviews tested the conclusions.

5) What gaps are there in the capacity of volunteers to manage land in perpetuity?

Secondary literature on volunteerism, land trusts, capacity, social and community-based management was consulted. Expert interviews highlighted areas of concern. The researcher's experience as a participant observer and information collected through the case study provided specific examples.

6) How do we build capacity in volunteers and land trusts in order to ensure long-term land conservation?

Key informant interviews provided suggestions. Secondary literature on volunteerism, capacity, capacity building and social capital helped to develop concepts. Experiences from the case study and the researcher's participant observer status also contributed to answering this question.

The proceeding section provided a careful explanation as to how the research plan will be implemented. Specifically, it focused on answering the six secondary research questions. In the next section, a description of the literature reviews, including its key concepts, will be highlighted.

The Literature Reviews

The literature reviews was conducted using both primary and secondary literature sources. The literature search was started by employing all of the academic search engines available through the University of Waterloo, using the search terms, "volunteerism", "volunteers", "capacity", "capacity building", "social capital", "conservation biology", "stewardship", "land trusts", "land conservation" and "conservation covenants". Once academic literature had been exhausted, books on the subjects of land trusts and environmental volunteering were also consulted.

The literature review is arranged into two chapters. The first chapter is designed to provide the reader context for the ensuing debate. Therefore, it provides a brief overview of the major arguments emerging in the relevant field. The second chapter is designed to answer the six secondary research questions and to develop the criteria with which to evaluate the capacity of land trusts. This section is arranged to follow the order sequentially of the questions, and uses both primary and secondary literature sources to answer them.

Criteria

A number of main themes can be identified with respect to the literature concerning the governing of land trusts. The Canadian Land Trust Alliance has developed a set of *Standards and Practices* designed to help strengthen land trusts in Canada. These standards are primarily focused on legal matters, to the detriment of other considerations such as land trusts' actual capacity to govern effectively. Therefore, Gibson's (2001) sustainability principles were included within the analysis to broaden the scope of the criteria. The criteria were developed based on the main themes that emerged from the literature reviews, a careful reading of the Canadian Land Trust Alliance's *Canadian Land Trust Standards and Practices* and Gibson's sustainability principles. The criteria were reassessed and expanded/adjusted for the particular application in light of the contributions from the key informant interviewees and the Niagara Land Trust Participants.

<u>Key Informant Interviews of Land Trust Participants</u>

Interviewees were sought based on their knowledge of land trusts. For the key informant interviews, potential interviewees were selected based on their credentials and affiliation with the land trust movement in Canada. Potential interviewees were contacted using their professional contact information and advised of the study being undertaken. Participation of the interviewees was completely voluntary. Once the interviewee had indicated an interest in participating in the study, a date and time for the interview was selected. The interviewee was required to read, understand and sign a consent form for participation in the study. The interviews were conducted in person if appropriate otherwise, the interviews were conducted over the phone. The interviews followed the seven question outline, but usually developed into an open-ended conversation. Notes were taken during the interview, as well as the interview being taped for clarification, at the discretion of the interviewee. Interviewees were also asked to recommend additional people to contact. The use of a snowball sample is appropriate when there is a target group that needs to be researched (Baxter-Moore, Carroll and Church, 1994; 377). The information was then entered into my thesis after all of the interviews were completed.

Members of the Niagara Land Trust have been aware of this study for several months. At the June 2006 meeting, I gave a brief overview of the study and made them aware that I was applying for Ethics Approval to begin conducting interviews. I asked members of the Niagara Land Trust to consider being interviewed, and let them know that I would send out additional information about the study upon Ethics Approval. I sent out an email providing details about the interview and asking those interested in being interviewed to reply. Those interested in participating in an interview received a follow-up email thanking them for their interest and asking for times that they were available to be interviewed.

Once they had responded, a date and time for the interview was selected. The interview was conducted in person if appropriate otherwise, the interview was conducted over the phone. The interviewee was required to read, understand and sign a Consent form for participation in the study. The interviews followed the seven question outline. Notes were taken during the interview and tape recorded at the discretion of the participant. The information was then entered into my thesis after all of the interviews were completed.

The two interview groups received separate, but related, interview questions. Listed below are the interview questions asked, and a justification as to how the interview questions were selected:

Interview Questions (for Key Informants):

1) What role do land trusts play in protecting and promoting valued ecosystems?

2) Describe the governing system in place in terms of land protection. Where is the existing governing system successful and what areas need to be improved? How do land trusts fit into that governing system?

3) What role do volunteers play in a land trust? Do volunteers have the capacity to manage land in perpetuity?

4) How would you recommend assessing the capacity of volunteers and land trusts to manage land in perpetuity?

5) What gaps in capacity do you think volunteers and land trusts have in terms of fulfilling their conservation aims?

6) How do we build capacity in volunteers and land trusts in order to protect land in perpetuity?

7) Are land trusts governed in a way that will allow them to conserve land in perpetuity?

Interview Questions Justification

The interview questions posed to the key informants are based on the primary research question and the six secondary questions. Basing interview questions on the research questions helps to improve theoretical analysis (Strauss and Corbin, 1998; 205). The order of the questions follows the six secondary research questions, and concludes with the primary research question. The reason why the interview questions are based on the six secondary research questions first is because the questions are arranged in such a way that they are supposed to create an argument. The six previous interview questions also are meant to prompt the interviewee to consider a range of situations prior to answering the seventh and final question. The similarity between the interview questions and the research questions will also make comparison amongst the answers more relevant. Interviewees provided a method through which the conclusions reached by the literature reviews can be tested. In this manner, the key informant interviewees will consider the role of land trusts, volunteers, capacity assessment and building, and perpetuity prior to commenting on whether or not land trusts are governed in a way that will allow them to conserve land in perpetuity. Open-ended interview questions are appropriate when there is not a definite or finite set of answers to the questions posed (Carey, Morgan and Oxtoby, 1996; 1).

The first interview question is taken directly from the first of the six secondary research questions. It was decided to keep the question the same, because it is open-ended and would not lead the interviewee to respond in a contrived manner. From this question, I was hoping to produce a large list of possible roles of land trusts. Using key informant interviews can also help to produce information that was not available through the literature reviews.

The second question is a modified version of secondary research question #2. The reason why this question was modified was to provide more information and clarification to the interviewee. It states specifically that the interviewee should talk about the governing system in place in terms of land protection. The second part of the question is divided in such a way to encourage a listing of both positive and negative attributes of the governing system. This area was under-considered in the information available for the literature review. The third part of the question is designed to orient land trusts within the larger governing system. This might be helpful for assessing the governance of land trusts in the seventh question.

The third question begins by asking the key informant interviewee what the role of volunteers is in a land trust. This is slightly different from the third secondary research question, because I wanted to give the interviewees the opportunity to describe the extent that volunteers are involved (or not involved) in land trusts. Once the interviewee had commented on the extent to which volunteers are involved in a land trust, I wanted the interviewee to comment specifically on the capacity of volunteers to manage land in perpetuity. This is important because it provided context for the next three questions and is an important part of the governance issue identified in interview question seven.

The fourth question is intentionally broad to allow the interviewee the utmost creativity in answering it. Using a broad question here is important because it will allow me to assess my own mechanism for assessing land trusts in comparison to the key informant interviewee answers. For this question, I was hoping for divergent answers, to help influence the final criteria within which the case study would be analyzed. Leaving the question fairly broad, with limited direction for the interviewees should help to fulfill this aim.

Question five is similar to secondary research question five, with a slight distinction. The second part of the question reads “fulfilling their conservation aims”. The reason why I ended the question in this manner was to allow the interviewee to determine what a land trust’s conservation aims would be, and not be limited by my previous assertion that land trusts aim primarily to manage land [for ecological purposes and other objectives compatible with the ecological purposes] in perpetuity. In this way, interviewees were able to answer a question about what gaps exist in capacity of volunteers and land trusts and also identify what the primary conservation goals of land trusts are.

Interview question six is exactly the same as secondary research question six. The question was not altered because it is open-ended, and provides little lead for the interviewee, other than identifying protecting land in perpetuity as a goal. Identifying perpetuity for a goal is reasonable given that that is the mandate of land trusts (see Brewer, 2003). Interview question six is important for the overall inquiry because it identifies mechanisms through which land trusts can improve themselves. This is applicable to the case study, because it will provide suggestions through which the Niagara Land Trust can strengthen its capacity. As the Niagara Land Trust is a critical case (see Yin, 2003 for explanation), having suggestions for strengthening capacity could be pivotal to its development.

The final interview question is based on the primary research question. The goal was that the answers provided in question seven be influenced by the answers that the key informant interviewees offered throughout the interview. In this manner, the seventh and final interview question is a culmination of all of the previous conversation. The seventh question is designed to touch on all of the themes identified throughout the interview, including governance, capacity, volunteerism and land trusts.

Interview Questions (for Niagara Land Trust Volunteers):

1) What role do you envision the Niagara Land Trust playing in protecting and promoting valued ecosystems?

2) How do you envision the Niagara Land Trust fitting into the existing governing system in terms of land protection? What gaps were there in the existing governing system that prompted the creation of the Niagara Land Trust and where has that governing system been successful?

3) What role have volunteers played in the Niagara Land Trust and what role do you see them playing in the future? Do volunteers have the capacity to manage land in perpetuity?

4) How would you assess the capacity of the Niagara Land Trust -including its volunteers- to manage land in perpetuity?

5) What gaps in capacity do the Niagara Land Trust and its volunteers have in fulfilling its aims?

6) How would you build capacity in the Niagara Land Trust and its volunteers in order to protect land in perpetuity?

7) Are land trusts generally and the Niagara Land Trust specifically governed in a way to protect land in perpetuity?

The interview questions for the Niagara Land Trust Volunteers are similarly based on the six secondary research questions and the primary thesis question. The Niagara Land Trust Volunteers interviews followed the same format of seven open-ended questions and were about the same topics. The difference between the two sets of interviews is that the Niagara Land Trust interviews are personalized to reflect the interviewees' relationship with the Niagara Land Trust, and perhaps their limited knowledge of the land trust movement as a whole. Additionally, because the Niagara Land Trust is in the process of incorporation, many of the questions have an orientation towards the future, to reflect the fact that the Niagara Land Trust has not begun fulfilling its mandate.

Question one is a future oriented question based on secondary research question one. The question is locale specific, and offered the interviewees an opportunity to brainstorm some of the areas that they believe that the Niagara Land Trust could contribute to. This question allowed me to evaluate whether the volunteers at the Niagara Land Trust are envisioning roles similar to those identified in the literature and the key informant interviews, or if they are suggesting a different path for the Niagara Land Trust. This allowed me to comment on the creativity of their mission and also whether or not their visions are congruent with each other's, which could have an impact for strategic planning in the future.

Question two is also future oriented and more specific than the secondary research question two. The question also asks the interviewee to identify gaps that exist in the governing structure, which prompted the creation of the Niagara Land Trust. This allows the question to be much more locale specific, and provides an example that could be used in the discussion of the existing governing structure. The question also asks the interviewee to identify where the governing system has been successful, to help fill a gap in the land trust literature.

Question three probes the interviewee to identify what role volunteers have played in the Niagara Land Trust thus far and to identify what they think their contribution will be in the future. This question is important to the larger research questions because it identifies some of the roles that volunteers play, and provides a specific example with which to bolster or contrast what is identified in the literature reviews. The second part of the question asks the interviewee to answer on a larger scale if volunteers have the capacity to fulfill land trust aims. The use of locale specific questions and general land trust questions is beneficial because it provides an opportunity to discuss where the two scales contrast and/or are similar.

Question four is also locale specific. Its aim is to get the interviewees to identify criteria for success of the land trust, with a specific land trust in mind. The question also reminds the interviewees of the researcher's focus on volunteerism and the general land trust goal of managing land in perpetuity. The answers supplied for question four provided a neat comparison between what the key informant interviews identified as important criteria, what the literature reviews identified and finally, what the Niagara Land Trust volunteers identified.

Question five asked the volunteers to identify both the goals and gaps in capacity of the Niagara Land Trust. The goals identified by the interviewees were compared with the goals identified in the literature reviews and the key informant interviews. Similarly, the gaps in capacity identified were also evaluated in comparison to what the literature review and key informant interviews said. This provided a method of triangulation that is important in evaluating research (WHO, 2006).

Question six tasked the interviewee to identify methods through which additional capacity could be built in the Niagara Land Trust and its volunteers. It identifies a goal of protecting land in perpetuity and then asked the interviewee to backcast in order to achieve that goal. The methods that the interviewees suggested for building capacity were once again compared with what is identified in the literature reviews and key informant interviews. Additionally, the use of the Niagara Land Trust specifically can provide an example to highlight arguments made within the rest of the thesis.

Question seven concludes the interview and is a culmination of all of the interview questions. This question was designed to have the interviewee comment on the land trust movement generally, as well as the Niagara Land Trust specifically. The case study provided an example for the discussion of the governance of land trusts, and helped inform the author's conclusion regarding the future of land trusts.

The Niagara Land Trust Case Study and Participant Observation

The Niagara Land Trust was selected as the case study for this research. Participants of this group approached the researcher to complete a study on the organization. The researcher has participated on both the Steering Committee and the Founding Committee of the organization and is active on sub-committees as well. Currently, the researcher holds the position of Secretary on the Founding Committee board, an executive position and has access to the meeting minutes.

The Niagara Land Trust served as a case study with which to test the criteria developed within the literature and tested by the key informant and Niagara Land Trust participant interviews. The criteria were applied to the NLT and conclusions were drawn as to the successes and failures of the organization. Information for the application of the criteria was collected through both the interviews and participant observation by the researcher. The case study served as a mechanism through which to highlight some of the arguments made within the literature reviews and the interviews. Additionally, the case study served as a representative land trust. General conclusions were made about the land trust movement, based on the evidence collected from this case study.

Rationale for the Methodological Approach

There are several benefits to undertaking the thesis using the methods that have been outlined in the above paragraphs. Employing a participant observer research method allows for a more in depth analysis of land trusts in general. The use of a case study provides an applied contribution to an otherwise theoretical work. Participant observer status has also been noted to be particularly effective whilst studying an under-researched phenomenon. Land trusts are an under-researched phenomenon (Merenlender, et al, 2004; 65).

The use of key informant interviews allows the researcher to get information from individuals, who are assumed to be expert and representative (Baxter-Moore, Carroll and Church, 1994; 224). Employing a personal interview method increases the odds of a high rate of response. Additionally, it allows for the use of follow-up questions for clarification. Baxter-Moore et al (1994; 236-237) comment, "interviewing is also an invaluable tool in *interpretive social science…*in that interviews may help us to understand how people perceive the 'social meaning' of their actions within a specific cultural context…each respondent is assumed to possess unique information that is not shared by members of a wider population".

Case studies are beneficial for social science research and this research particularly, in a number of important ways. Firstly, they are good research tools when "the focus [is] on contemporary as opposed to historical phenomenon" (Yin, 2003; 1). As land trusts are a relatively new phenomenon, and understudied, they are good candidates for contemporary research. Case studies also bring vibrancy to the research. Yin comments, "the case study method allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events" (2003; 2). As such, case studies are beneficial when the boundaries between the phenomenon being studied and the context within which the phenomenon takes place are not evident. Surveys, for example, lack the ability to effectively evaluate the context within which the phenomenon takes place (Yin, 2003; 13). Land trusts are not a phenomenon which exists in isolation. Carson (2005) described that land trusts develop in large part as a result of the community in which they are based.

Limitations of the Research Design

The proposed methods also have several drawbacks and limitations. The use of interviews can be time-consuming, for multiple reasons. Conducting interviews over the phone could help to reduce the amount of time spent to conduct the interviews, but could also harm the interview process through limiting the rapport that is built up between the interviewer and the interviewee. Additionally, it could limit the ability to ask follow- up questions. Interviews in general risk that the interviewee will be affected by interviewer bias. Interviewer bias is defined as when "the characteristics of the interviewer, such as race or gender, alter the way that some respondents answer survey questions" (Baxter-Moore, Carroll and Church, 1994; 226). Furthermore, the effectiveness of the interviews may be jeopardized by the ability of the interviewer to build trust and candor with the interviewee.

The participant observer method of studying phenomenon also presents some drawbacks. Given the researcher's intimate relationship with the Niagara Land Trust, it might be difficult for the researcher to evaluate the organization effectively, given the researcher's biases. The evaluation of one's own work could present a significant problem with the researcher either being overly critical or defensive of their contributions. Being a participant observer could also limit the candor that the observed exhibit. The Hawthorne Effect, where people's reactions change as a result of being studied, could occur (Baxter-Moore, Carroll and Church, 1994; 94). It is also pertinent that the researcher report information within the context that it is given and that there is the possibility for people to contribute confidentially to the work (Baxter-Moore, Carroll and Church, 1994; 236). This will help to build trust amongst the study's participants. The researcher has allowed for confidentiality amongst participants to minimize any of these issues. Finally, the use of the participant observer method requires a lot of field work and effort (Yin, 2003; 10).

Case study research has been criticized by some for a "lack of rigor [sic]" (Yin, 2003; 10). Furthermore, some critics have argued that case study experiments can be biased, because the researcher decides what elements to include and research. Finally, case study research has also been criticized because it is only generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations (Yin, 2003; 10). This means that the case study undertaken in this research will only be applicable to other case studies of a similar topic at a theoretical level. At the same time however, case study research remains an important strategy for social science research because they are useful when exploring under-researched phenomenon (Wabash College, 2006).

In spite of some of the limitations of these research methodologies, they remain the best methods through which to answer the proposed research question. The use of case studies, for example, provides "rich, detailed data" (Wabash College, 2006) which otherwise might not be available. Participant observation "is ideal for developing an understanding of how individuals respond to, interact with, and make use of various institutional resources" (Wabash College, 2006) and allows the researcher to examine participants in a relaxed setting. Therefore, while the limitations highlighted within this section merit recognition and attention, they are not grounds for rejecting the proposed approach.

Conclusion

This study employs a triangulated research method to come to its conclusions, using both inductive and deductive reasoning. The researcher conducted literature reviews, key informant and NLT participant interviews, a case study and participant observation to draw conclusions about the state of land trust governance generally. Employing multiple research methods allowed the researcher to reaffirm any conclusions drawn throughout the thesis.

The research design has some limitations. Identifying these limitations, however, and managing for them allowed the researcher to minimize their impact. The rationale for using the research methods identified was carefully provided. The methods identified are undertaken throughout the rest of this thesis and will begin with the literature review in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3: Key Concepts: Review of the Academic Literature

Introduction

Land trusts, conservation biology, volunteerism, social capital and capacity building are all inter-related areas of inquiry. The purpose of this chapter is to highlight main themes emerging from these fields. Explorations of these five concepts provide a framework for understanding the variables that influence land trusts and their governance. The objective of Chapter 3 is to provide a context for the reader for the arguments directly related to land trusts presented in Chapter 4.

Chapter 3 begins by presenting to the reader the main academic literature on land trusts. The literature consistently argues that land trusts as a whole are understudied. By contrast, community land trusts, organizations concerned with ensuring adequate housing for at risk people, are garnering a lot of attention. Most of the current literature on land trusts is devoted to introducing the concept and highlighting the need for local stewardship initiatives. Conservation biology, on the other hand, is an established discipline with active intellectual debate. For example, within the literature there is a clear distinction between equilibrium and complex systems biologists. Furthermore, there are many academics that are pushing for increasing interdisciplinarity within the field; this union of disciplines could help to implement some of the principles of conservation.

The literature on volunteerism is equally divergent, depending on the scope and purpose of the research. For example, many psychology researchers are focusing on the motivations behind volunteering, whereas others emphasize the potential career benefits that volunteering may have. The concept of volunteerism is directly tied to that of social capital. Social capital seeks to explain the level of cohesion within a given community. The building of social capital contributes directly to community building. Social capital therefore can be pivotal to building capacity within a community. The literature on capacity building is oftentimes contradictory. While most of the authors agreed that building capacity within a community is necessary to promote sustainable resource decisions, the methods to build that capacity differed widely. Some researchers emphasized top down approaches, whereas others argued for bottom up solutions.

Chapter 3 is intended to provide a context for understanding the primary arguments of this thesis. The goal of this chapter is to synthesize previously divergent literature in order to set the stage for answering the research questions.

The History and Purpose of Land Trusts

There is a lack of scholarly information available on land trusts (Shaw, 2003; 108). The vast majority of academic research has focused on community land trusts, which differ from ecological land trusts in their scope and mandate. Community land trusts centre on providing land tenure and security for the urban poor. They do so through providing rights to people, such as the right to occupy land, restrict others on land, to dispose of the property, to buy and/or inherit the property, to cultivate on the property and to sublet the property. Overall, a community land trust's purpose is "to make land tenure sustainable and to minimize the negative effects of the land market on poor people" (Taylor, 2004; 278). Taylor's (2004; 280) study found community land trusts to be largely effective at supplying rights and achieving their aim. Community land trusts have usually been limited to small geographic regions, but they are beginning to be applied more broadly (Taylor, 2004; 286). The focus of this research is (ecological) land trusts.

In contrast to a community land trust, (ecological) land trusts focus on the conservation and preservation of land. The Ontario Land Trust Alliance defines land trusts as "non-profit, charitable organizations which have as one of their core activities the acquisition of land or interests in land (like conservation easements) for the purpose of conservation" (OLTA, 2005). OLTA only works with (ecological) land trusts. Furthermore, land trusts do not focus on the provision of rights to people interested in the land trust, although, their actions do result in the provision of collective rights to participants of a land trust. This is because (ecological) land trusts aim to preserve the valued land qualities of an area, for an overall community benefit. Although the mandate of individual land trusts can differ substantially, the ultimate goal remains the acquisition of land for the purposes of conservation.

As non-profit organizations, land trusts are distinct from government organizations, even though they might share the same mandate of land protection. Moreover, land trusts are also distinct from businesses due to their non-profit focus (Shaw, 2003; 114). In some academic literature however, the possibility of partnerships between land trusts and governments has been emphasized. Land trusts have been praised for their ability to build coalitions, and their potential to save governments money through establishing connections with local landowners and providing volunteers for government initiatives. On the other hand, land trusts are still distinct from local governments because land trusts usually only have one goal (acquisition of land / conservation easements) as compared to local governments, which have many (Shaw, 2003; 109, 111). Land trusts however could have multiple secondary goals, such as stewardship, education and maintaining productive lands.

There is a long history of land trusts in Europe. Land trusts have existed for over 500 years in Britain. In North America, the United States is the leader in the proliferation of trusts; there are currently approximately 1 500 land trusts. The State of Maine has 60 land trusts, which indicates that land trusts are not equally distributed throughout the country (Carson, 2005). Research suggests that the majority of American land trusts are located in the Northeast (USLTA, 2005). Some land trusts also protect municipal parks within a city (Carson, 2005).

Canada has between 80 and 100 land trusts with Ontario containing between 35 and 50 of that total. The numbers are uncertain because not every land trust belongs to an umbrella agency such as the Ontario Land Trust Alliance or the Land Trust Alliance of British

Columbia. Land trusts can be run by a field naturalists club, a national land trust organization like the Nature Conservancy or by a local group of concerned individuals (Carson, 2005). The Nature Conservancy of Canada has been working since 1962 and has protected 1.8 million acres of land (VanDenBelt, 2005). In effect, land trusts vary widely in their scope and composition. This is largely a result of the communities that create them, because they are community formed and directed. In Canada, the majority of land trusts are incorporated. Finally, most land trusts are governed by a collection of community members as a community project. This aspect of governance gives them a degree of integrity (Carson, 2005).

There are many reasons for the proliferation of land trusts in Ontario. In Southern Ontario, ecosystems face a variety of risks. All of these risks contribute to the loss of valued biodiversity. These risks include: habitat loss, the presence of invasive species, pollution, human population growth and over-harvesting. Hounsell (2005) argues that in Southern Ontario, the vast array of threats to the environment warrant the formation of land trusts. He states that in order to manage threats to biodiversity, a more radical approach is required (Hounsell, 2005). Such an approach could entail the creation of an organization that is designed to help correct some of the failures of market and government to protect valuable conservation land. A land trust could be used as a "third option" to work in tandem with government and market to fill the gaps in the latter two's stewardship provisions. Additionally, land trusts could help to establish a new land ethic, Hounsell (2005) argues, and are essential because the vast majority of land in Southern Ontario is private. Therefore, a non-public organization is required to protect the land, because the government cannot do enough (Hounsell, 2005). Other academics have noted similar private property restrictions (see Merenlender, Huntsinger and Guthey, 2004 and Patney, 2000).

VanDenBelt (2005) focuses on the formation of land trusts. He argues that land trusts are beneficial for three reasons. Firstly, they are positive. They are not working against land acquisition, but for it to contribute more protected land. Secondly, they are proactive. Land trusts are not a reactionary response to a problem; rather they are a desire by their advocates to make a plan for the future. Finally, land trusts are permanent. The interests in the lands are held in trust. He however emphasizes that land trusts are not a cure-all for environmental ills. In effect, they are a tool, not a solution. In order to achieve conservation objectives, a change in culture is required and a multi-plan approach must be undertaken (VanDenBelt, 2005).

VanDenBelt (2005) also highlights some areas where land trusts could be limited in their capacity. Specifically, he mentions the requirement of getting the right people to join the board. This is because land trusts are largely run by volunteers and "image is everything". Therefore, he suggests that land trusts in the development stages should look for respected people with local connections. He also notes that it is easier for a land trust to keep a member, than to recruit a new one. This illustrates the tremendous difficulty in achieving land conservation in perpetuity through a volunteer organization. VanDenBelt highlights partnership opportunities as a mechanism for land trusts to achieve more, in terms of their conservation goals. He stresses that it is essential for land trusts to have the requisite funding to carry out their operations. This is particularly pertinent to ensure that land can be managed in perpetuity (VanDenBelt, 2005). This is another challenge that land trusts face in their quest to protect land. They have to have the ability to manage land for eternity, in spite of having limited and insecure funding for projects and upkeep of the land trust.

Coupled with the financial challenges that land trusts face, it is clear from a literature search that there is a hole in academic literature when it comes to ecological land trusts. There is a lack of peer reviewed literature on the subject and the vast majority of information provided to Canadian land trusts is through the Ontario Land Trust Alliance, or through information sharing amongst participants (VanDenBelt, 2005; Carson, 2005). This lack of information is both a detriment to future studies, but it could also be seen as an opportunity. The land trust community is a vibrant community, where information is readily shared amongst participants. This culture is reinforced through the Ontario Land Trust Alliance whose mandate is to "encourage the land trust movement throughout Ontario" and to "provide administrative and professional support to a province-wide network of members who adhere to an acceptable set of standards and practices regarding the broad spectrum of land trust activities" (OLTA, 2005).

Land trusts' main goal remains the conservation of land. Understanding land trusts and their mandate, however, involves understanding the conservation pressures that land in Canada is currently facing and has faced in the past. To get a better understanding of the context in which land trusts operate, an understanding of the conservation pressures and the science behind it is necessary. In the following section, some of the challenges that Canadian ecosystems are facing is discussed, along with the science of conservation biology, which aims to rectify some of these conservation issues.

The Conservation Imperative

Fazey, Fischer and Lindenmayer (2005; 63) argue that Western conservation values have changed, they comment,

> Over the last 150 years there have been significant changes in western conservation ethics and values. During the 19th century and first half of the 20th century, the careful use of natural resources was advocated mainly for the need for spiritual satisfaction or for the conservation of limited resources for future human use. Most recently, there has been increasing recognition of the need to care for the function and integrity of natural processes and systems, and that all components of nature have intrinsic value

In 1978, the First International Conference on Conservation Biology took place. In 1985, Soule's article "What is Conservation Biology?" clearly defined the parameters of conservation biology as an applied discipline (Fazey, Fischer and Lindenmayer, 2005; 63, 64, 70). Soule's article argued that conservation biology is both a science and a art. As an art, it is a crisis discipline science, wherein decisions have to be made without knowing all of the information. This crisis characteristic sets conservation biology apart from other biological sciences (727). Soule defined conservation biology's activities as follows: it "addresses the biology of species, communities, and ecosystems that are perturbed, either directly or indirectly, by human activities or other agents. Its goal is to provide principles and tools for preserving biological diversity" (1985; 727). Although conservation biology takes its techniques from a broad spectrum of fields, it is different from other natural resource sciences because it emphasizes the protection of species and ecosystems over sustainable use (727-728). Conservation biology, Soule (1985) contends, is holistic in its approach because it addresses environmental issues at their macroscopic level and because it requires a multidisciplinary approach to study each phenomenon (728). Due to its mission and/or crisis-oriented approach, conservation biology is guided by two types of postulates: functional (mechanical) and ethical (normative).

Tracing the history of conservation biology, Van Heezik and Seddon (2005; 7) comment that wildlife biology and conservation biology has converged because stakeholders have begun to change. In the past, wildlife biology was dominated by the interests of hunters. Over time, this has changed and the stakeholders in both subjects have become primarily non-consumptive users. Additionally, the impacts of the changing political climate and the many ecological crises that have occurred have helped precipitate this convergence. Van Heezik and Seddon (2005; 7) place great emphasis on the role of politics and policy. They write, "The failure of traditional conservation approaches to stem the accelerating loss of biodiversity has caused some workers to consider that wildlife managers or conservation biologists can be effective only through their influence on policy-making processes". Moreover, they state that "Many conservation problems are symptoms of even larger, more complex difficulties that have multiple consequences for people and wildlife" (Van Heezik and Seddon, 2005; 12). As such, these authors place the emphasis on expanding conservation biology to include multiple viewpoints and interdisciplinary research.

In Chhatre and Saberwal's opinion, conservation biology's principles are not being implemented due to a lack of political will. They write, "There seems to be a worldwide lack of political will for conservation that leads, inevitably, to an undermining of conservation policy" (2005; 310). Moreover, they argue that conservation biology is not only limited by political will, but also through more direct threats. There are conflicts between the desire to conserve and the desire to preserve livelihoods. Also, there are conflicts between the larger agenda of conserving biodiversity and local interests. Human presence in an ecosystem and their associated resource use directly threatens biological diversity (Chhatre and Saberwal, 2005; 311-312). These conflicts highlighted by the authors play a direct role in the ability of a land trust to secure land in perpetuity and to manage the land, and the institution itself. In order to secure land in the first place, a land trust must convince the local citizens that it is in their best interest to conserve the land. Soliciting interest could be particularly difficult if the conservation of that land is in direct conflict with a person's livelihood. Moreover, land trusts as institutions must find a way to resolve the impact of arguments between conservation and livelihoods and local interests and ecological stewardship, in order to go forth and secure land. Chhatre and Saberwal (2005; 313) offer a mechanism with which to overcome these obstacles. They comment, "conservation organizations the world over devised a number of variants of the same theme: local communities need to be provided a stake in the conservation process to improve the conservation record".

Increasingly, analysts have emphasized the desire for conservation biology to be more interdisciplinary (see Campbell, 2005; Fazey, Fischer and Lindenmayer, 2005; and Van Heezik and Seddon, 2005) in terms of recognizing a social science component to the research. Finding the right amount of interdisciplinary consciousness however involves a delicate balancing. Most authors agree that the principles of conservation biology must remain the same, while at the same time, recognizing that conservation does not occur in isolation of human elements. In a study of recent (2001) conservation biology publications, Fazey, Fischer and Lindenmayer (2005) found that most articles were not cross-disciplinary and only 12.6% of the articles tested or reviewed conservation actions. In response, they suggested that conservation biologists should "provid[e] closer and clearer links with other disciplines and research approaches, and with policy and management" (2005; 63). Campbell (2005; 574-575) effectively demonstrated some of the drawbacks of interdisciplinary research in conservation biology, at the same as she supported it. For example, interdisciplinary research tends to be discredited because of the newness of the journals that publish it. Additionally, in the academic setting, traditional departments do not see interdisciplinary journal publications as being appropriate for tenure boards. All of this can amount to a lack of money and other support for interdisciplinary research (Campbell, 2005; 574-575).

In recent years, a somewhat competitive view has been put forth by complex system thinkers related to the principles of ecosystems integrity and succession. Complex systems thinking has been greatly influenced by catastrophe theory and nonequilibrium thermodynamics. Complex systems thinkers emphasize that ecosystems are dynamic entities; their organization can be non-linear, discontinuous, multivalued and unpredictable. Therefore, they challenge the traditional understanding of ecosystem integrity, wherein a system that can maintain its organization while enduring changing environmental conditions is said to have integrity (Kay, 1991; 483). Instead, they assert that since an ecosystem is always changing, integrity always has to be re-attained. Consequently, what constitutes ecosystem integrity is still up for debate (Kay, 1991; 484. 488). Complex systems theorists do agree broadly with traditional conservation biologists that the key to maintaining ecosystems is to promote biodiversity which serves as the basis for resilience (Lister and Kay, 2000; 194). Complex systems theorists however do question saving particular ecosystems for the sake of particular species, because ecosystems can change into a new state, thus jeopardizing the livelihood of that species in that particular property. As a result of some of these debates, conservation planning is currently changing to reflect some of these new ideas (Lister and Kay, 2000; 211).

In summary, conservation biologists are beginning to recognize that they cannot work in isolation to protect valued ecosystems and species. This finding is fairly consistent throughout the literature. There is acknowledgement that attending to the world's conservation and biodiversity problems requires a multi-pronged, multi-stakeholder approach by conservation biologists. Interdisciplinary research can contribute to this effort through engaging non-traditional stakeholders in the conservation biology process. These efforts to engage interdisciplinary research, however, are not without their drawbacks and detractors. In the future, conservation biologists will have to make a conscious effort to manage these competing interests.

The multi-stakeholder approach can be facilitated through the acknowledgement of the skills and aptitudes that volunteers bring to the conservation movement. Increasingly, government agencies and scientists are partnering with local groups and individuals to work towards solutions to conservation issues. The heightened interest in volunteerism will be examined in the following section.

Key Debates Within the Field of Volunteerism

The bulk of research into volunteerism has been concentrated in the psychology field (see Nelson and Norton, 2005; Mattis, et al, 2004 for examples of personality studies undertaken). In spite of this disciplinary focus, volunteering has multiple definitions and contexts. The definition of volunteering has been informed from papers across a variety of disciplines, such as psychology and corporate social responsibility. The concept of volunteerism can be described as a planned, long-term helping behaviour which requires time and effort (Nelson and Norton, 2005; 424). Volunteering is also an act of philanthropy, which can occur in a variety of forms, such as giving time, money or service (Butts, 2003). In this context, volunteerism is defined as a form of altruism, intended to provide service for the "greater good". Volunteerism at the same time can provide benefits for the individual participants such as a sense of self-worth, workplace skills and an opportunity to network as well. Butts (2003; 60) defines philanthropy (a close associate of volunteerism) "as a voluntary action for the public good. Philanthropy is directed to improving the quality of life and fostering preservation of values through giving of time, money, or associations".

In the literature, volunteerism is seen overall to be a beneficial contribution to the world. Bloom and Kilgore (2003; 431) write, "Volunteering is recognized globally not only as a valuable source of labor [sic], but as a means to facilitate individual participation in civic life, foster community, and support democracy". They further argue that volunteerism leads to many substantial benefits, such as people feeling empowered and able to participate in self-governance, which in turn can lead to the development of social capital (2003; 432). Butts (2003) argues that volunteerism is also important because it is positively re-enforcing: volunteering becomes a life-long habit. People who volunteered at a young age are more likely to volunteer when they are older. Volunteerism is also important because all people, in Butts opinion, are capable of being a philanthropist. Thus, volunteerism can be seen as a part of civic engagement (Butts, 2003; 67-69).

Nelson and Norton (2005; 424) point out that volunteering might have a similar effect on long-term behaviour. They write, "The act of volunteering, moreover, has consequences for long-term behavior [sic]: a split-second decision to volunteer may lead to weeks, months, or even years of commitment". At the same time, however, they emphasize that volunteerism is influenced more by stable personality traits than circumstance, because volunteering requires a long-term commitment (Nelson and Norton, 2005; 424). This stance is in contrast to Butts' (2003) idea that anyone is cable of being a philanthropist. Nelson and Norton (2005) also recognized a potential for people to believe themselves to be possible volunteers more so than they actually would. This is because volunteerism is believed to be a positive aspect of someone's personality. Therefore, most people see themselves as more likely than others to volunteer (Nelson and Norton, 2005; 424). There might be certain types of people who are more likely to volunteer. For example, Mattis et al (2004; 261) found that people who regularly attended church were more likely to volunteer.

Gazley and Brudney (2005) as well as Peterson (2004) took a more pragmatic stance in regards to volunteerism in terms of their capacity to offer benefits to governments and businesses. Gazley and Brudney (2005) concentrated their research on the government's use of volunteers. They found that 26% of individuals in the United States volunteer for government and of these volunteers, 85% of them were involved at the level of local city or county government. They determined this to be a form of "new governance" where volunteers act in concert with local and state agencies. At the same time however, governments have demonstrated a lack of capacity to utilize volunteers effectively and there has been some resistance to governmental volunteers from political figures and labour representatives. These concerns are particularly pertinent because Gazley and Brudney's (2005; 132) research found that people volunteer for government because of cutbacks at a time of increased service demands. Bloom and Kilgore (2003; 432) has similar findings. At the same time, volunteer coordinators worry that a "crowding out" will occur wherein volunteers will leave one area to go to another. This would be particularly detrimental because Gazley and Brudney's (2005; 137) research has found volunteers to produce good quality work and for the most part to be reliable. However, their "findings suggest that public managers are generally eager to involve volunteers and not particularly concerned about their ability to secure volunteers or the quality of volunteers they engage-- but they are stymied by a lack of resources to effectively engage and manage volunteers" (Gazley and Brudney, 2005; 137).

In slight contrast to the constraints that Gazley and Brudney (2005) mention, Peterson (2004; 615) highlights some of the potential career benefits for volunteers. In an article written about corporate volunteerism, he comments that volunteerism can be used to enhance and develop workplace skills. Volunteering can enhance particular job skills such as: teamwork skills, written and verbal communication skills, project management skills, leadership and people skills. At the same time, however, Peterson (2004; 616) emphasizes that the union between volunteer agencies and corporations will not always be seamless. Due to very different cultures between most corporations and volunteer agencies, sharing information can be difficult since volunteer agencies are not always as organized or efficiently run as corporations, or as narrow in their organizations.

Curtis and Novhuy (1999) undertook a study of Australia's Landcare conservation program. Landcare is a federal government program which encourages participatory rural development through the use of satellite agencies. Their study of volunteerism found that most literature on volunteers focuses mostly on volunteers working for little or no money and their attributes, including the tendency for volunteers to be middle aged, highly educated, property owners, with high occupational status and that volunteer with other organizations (101). Their research pointed to an increasing number of conservation programs being run by volunteers or through government partnerships. Overall, their research found that for conservation programs to be successful, there must be group coordination in volunteer programs (Curtis and Novhuys, 1999; 101, 107).

In Canada, several studies on volunteerism have been undertaken at the national level. In 1997, Statistics Canada undertook its first comprehensive look at voluntary organizations across Canada. Conducted every three years, The National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (NSGVP) was renamed the Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (CSGVP) in 2004 (Lasby, 2004; 1) . The CSGVP found that 27% of Canadians volunteered for a nonprofit organization, donating an average of 162 hours per year of their time. The majority of volunteering, however, was completed by a minority of volunteers: 73% of all volunteer hours were completed by 25% of volunteers (Lasby, 2004; 2).

Volunteers were most often motivated to volunteer for an organization by their belief or cause. The survey found that volunteers of different personal and economic characteristics varied widely in their motivations to volunteer. For example, people between the ages of 15 and 24 often volunteered to improve job opportunities whereas volunteers aged 65 or older often volunteered due to religious motivations (Lasby, 2004; 6). An “average” volunteer in Canada is a married (or in common-law relationship) woman, between the ages of 35 to 54, with a university degree and employed part-time (Lasby, 2004; 4, 3). CSGVP found that the motivation to volunteer was not contingent on household income, although those with lower incomes sometimes faced financial barriers to volunteering (Lasby, 2004; 8, 11).

Insufficient time was the most common barrier to volunteering (Lasby, 2004; 9). This barrier prevented non-volunteers from starting to volunteer and existing volunteers from taking on more tasks. Individuals were often reluctant to make a year-round commitment to volunteering, another time related barrier (Lasby, 2004; 11). Overall, Canadians who are exposed to volunteering from an early age through such experiences as seeing role models volunteer, being helped by others or belonging to a youth group were more likely to volunteer in adulthood (Lasby, 2004; 12). This demonstrates that targeting youth is an important long-term investment in the field of volunteerism. Actions undertaken today to include youth in volunteer initiatives help to cultivate future volunteers in Canada.

The Canadian Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (CSGVP) found that people volunteer for a variety of reasons, which are largely influenced by their level of education, age, employment status and income. These volunteers bring to their respective organizations different experiences and expectations. In order to attract more volunteers to a particular organization, the NPO must understand these motivations and barriers (Lasby, 2004; 14). This will help to create volunteer opportunities which are beneficial for both the volunteer and the organization.

Focusing on the Niagara Region, the 1997 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering, and Participating found that 79% of people in Niagara made financial donations to NPOs. The average person donated $283, with $65.4 million being donated across the peninsula over a year. People in Niagara were more likely to donate to religious organizations than any other type of organization: 59% of the total value of donations. Moreover, 33% of volunteer hours went to religious organizations in Niagara, whereas the Ontario average was 20%. Thirty-four percent of people in Niagara volunteered, working the equivalent of 6, 950 full-time jobs in volunteer hours. The survey also found that the top 5% of donors in Niagara donated more money to charity than their counterparts, province-wide.

The National Survey of Giving, Volunteering, and Participating is not the only nation-wide survey on volunteering. In 2003, nine organizations undertook a comprehensive survey of incorporated nonprofit organizations across Canada, with the goal of understanding the organizations which address "needs and interests of citizens that governments and the private sector do not" (Ministry of Industry, 2005; 3). The National Survey of Nonprofit and Voluntary Organizations (NSNVO) found that there are approximately 161, 000 nonprofit/ voluntary organization in Canada. Half of these are federally registered charities. These organizations are working in a variety of fields, with the purpose of serving the public and their members. The majority of these organizations work at the local level. While these organizations complete a lot of important work across Canada, many of them are having difficulty fulfilling their missions (Ministry of Industry, 2005; 4). These challenges are related to institutional capacity, including insufficient human and financial resources, and planning for the future (Ministry of Industry, 2005; 5).

Organizations across Canada report 139 million memberships. In 2003, non-profit and voluntary organizations received $112 billion and employed approximately 2 million people. More than 2 billion volunteer hours were also donated, the equivalent of an additional 1 million full-time jobs. There are large differences in financial capacity amongst the organizations. For example, 1% of organizations have annual revenues greater than $10 million. Typically, these organizations include hospitals, universities and colleges. In total 1% of organizations receive 59% of revenues, have 46% of paid staff and 20% of volunteer positions. On the other hand, greater than 50% of organizations are run exclusively by volunteers (Ministry of Industry, 2005; 5).

The extensive reliance on volunteers is a key characteristic of the non-profit sector. The 161, 000 organizations report a combined total of 19 million volunteers, indicating that many Canadians volunteer for a variety of organizations. In spite of Canadians' enthusiasm for volunteering, over 50% of organizations report difficulty recruiting board and non-board volunteers. Organizations with less than 10 members experienced the least amount of difficulty recruiting non-board volunteers, but had trouble recruiting volunteers for the board of directors. The opposite is true for organizations with more than 10 members. These organizations were also more likely to report having difficulty attracting the *type* of volunteers that they required (Imagine Canada, 2006a).

Another challenge that nonprofits commonly face is a lack of funding. Approximately half of the organizations surveyed through the NSNVO report difficulty obtaining funding. Interestingly, organizations with higher annual revenues were more likely to report difficulty obtaining funding from other organizations. There are a variety of funding challenges that nonprofits face. Listed in order of importance, these challenges include: a reduction in government funding, a desire for funders to support projects and not operations, and external agencies pressuring nonprofits to change their programs to receive funding (Imagine Canada, 2006b). Overall, these financial challenges could cause difficulties for voluntary organizations to fulfill their aims.

In sum, the academic literature on volunteerism is quite divergent. While information provided by nonacademic sources remains quite upbeat and positive about the act of volunteering, other researchers take a more pragmatic approach. Psychologists emphasize the motivations behind volunteering and point to the limitations of self-reporting activities. It appears that there is not a great deal of interdisciplinary research taking place in this field. This could be one reason why the available information is so divergent and at times, contradictory. Due to the disciplinary focus of most of the academic literature, its findings are often not directly applicable to this thesis. While understanding the psychology behind volunteerism is important, the primary interest of this thesis is understanding the capacity of volunteers. For this reason, this thesis will focus primarily on the nonprofit volunteer research, particularly that related to land trusts and the two national surveys completed on volunteerism in Canada. This research will provide better context for the arguments due to its focus on capacity and governance.

Volunteering is an important mechanism through which citizens can become engaged in their local community. Communities with a strong tradition of volunteering appear to have stronger social ties and improved governance. Understanding the context of volunteering, beyond psychological arguments is important for understanding the role of citizens within a community. Social capital studies the role of citizens within a community and how they can bring about positive change. Social capital relates to local land trusts because those trusts are largely shaped by the community that they are created by. In the following section, the concept of social capital is introduced and arguments about how it contributes to community building are put forth. This section fits within the larger argument that land trusts are a reflection of their community and its governance.

The Role of Social Capital

Social capital is an emerging concept which seeks to explain social cohesion within a community. Definitions of social capital are numerous, but share several characteristics. For example, Krishna (2004; 292) defines social capital as "the quality of human relations within some well-defined social group that enables members of this group to act in cooperation with one another for achieving mutual benefits". Landman (2004; 38) classifies social capital as "the presence of effective human networks and social cohesion, which are manifested in effective institutions and processes where people can co-operate for mutual advantage". While social capital requires a long time to develop, it can be developed quite readily if the right elements such as community support and existing social ties are present (Roseland, 2000; 82). Allen (2001; 120) writes, "Social capital develops as the collective action takes on a community focus versus that of a specific individual or organization".

Social capital contributes to community building in a number of ways. Firstly, the more connected people are, the higher the amount of social capital. Social capital is built through networks: including networks of civil society and family; values and beliefs which lead to reciprocity and trust; and finally, rules and institutions, which are developed through norms (Landman, 2004; 40, 44). All of the elements which contribute to social capital are also elements which contribute to community building. Thus, through encouraging social networks to develop, one is also developing the elements of community building. This is critical, researchers argue, because more people are needed to be involved in development in order to make it more sustainable (Landman, 2004; 38). This is because additional people could contribute unique experiences to the planning process, and thus, make it more inclusive. Social capital contributes to community building additionally, as it can develop as a result of solving problems (Allen, 2001; 120). Social capital is also beneficial to community building, because it can help to solve the problem of the commons (Landman, 2001; 38). As social capital leads to people feeling more involved and included, they necessarily want to protect something that they feel a responsibility to. Social capital can help solve the problem of no one taking stewardship over the commons, because in areas where there is high social capital; people tend to feel a sense of communal obligation. Social capital therefore is at the nexus of the provision of social goods and individual gains, as steps undertaken to better the community also benefit those who volunteer to take those steps. Similarly, land trusts are at the same nexus, as individual land stewardship results in the provision of social goods, such as maintaining ecosystem functioning. This argument regarding collective goods and individual gains also has important implications for governance, demonstrating that individual actions can result in a positive impact for the community.

There are some limitations to the study and application of social capital. For one, social capital is difficult, if not impossible to quantify. Social capital cannot be observed directly, because it is not something tangible (Krishna, 2004; 296). Krishna however puts forth the idea that social capital can be estimated based on the number of citizens within formal organizations in the region (294). Roseland (2000; 84) disagrees with Krishna's contention, arguing that the number of formal organizations is not an adequate indicator of social capital. Thus, it is unclear how to demonstrate whether or not social capital exists, empirically. It is easier to demonstrate the existence of social capital and rough strength through social science inquiries. Moreover, social capital necessarily requires openness from the community in order to develop (Landman, 2004; 44). This could be problematic for some communities, in which individuals prefer to keep to themselves. Social capital also needs to be routinely reaffirmed. Social capital within a community does not wear out, but it can decrease rapidly if not used. This is particularly true of unstable communities which have a flow of new individuals. Roseland (2000; 82) writes, "If newcomers are not introduced to an established pattern of interaction as they enter…social capital can dissipate through nonuse; no one is quite sure how they used to get a particular joint-activity done”. Therefore, it is essential for a community to enumerate its norms to any new community member, to ensure that this community member will be able to participate in the community building process. Finally, social capital can be problematic, because it might not relieve some of the injustices already apparent in the community building process. Oftentimes, marginalized people in the community are also marginalized in the social capital power hierarchy (Roseland, 2000; 85).

Social capital, therefore, can be seen as a community building tool, with recognized limitations. The building of social capital is significant in the context of land trusts because it can help to dissipate the abuse of the commons. Thus, one strategy for a land trust to employ in order to make land trusts more viable is to encourage the production of social capital. Additionally, social capital helps to solidify the role of a land trust within a community. Communities with strong social capital tend to have a vision for their future, and as such, wish to participate in governance issues. Moreover, social capital contributes to a desire to volunteer. Therefore, social capital is directly related to the capacity of land trusts to achieve their community goals.

Social capital is a mechanism through which capacity can be built. The two concepts have a dependent relationship and like social capital, capacity building is subject to numerous different interpretations. Capacity building has important impacts on resource management and land trusts in particular.

Capacity Building in the Literature

Capacity building is dependent upon the relationship between civil society and social capital. Capacity building is required when civil society and social capital are weak (Barker, 2005; 15, 16). In this context, social capital can be seen as relating more to the community in which a land trust is developed. Capacity building, on the other hand, is more relevant to the land trust organization itself. Capacity building in an environmental context has been defined as actions taken to enhance the ability of stakeholders to make sound planning and management decisions (Barker, 2005; 11). Capacity building is particularly relevant to community-based management. Community-based management is empowering people to manage their resources in a responsible manner (Barker, 2005; 13). Further, communities need capacity building to achieve sustainability because there are often gaps in local organizations which lead to a lack of mobilization; development is usually associated with economic elites and finally, relying on outside institutions can erode autonomy and the self-confidence of a community (Barker, 2005; 15).

Barker argues that capacity building works at a variety of levels: from local to international. However, the vast majority of benefits are accrued at the community level. Furthermore, he comments, “there is a moral dimension to capacity building as there is a direct link between resources and their users” (Barker, 2005; 11, 12). From his perspective, one has to give citizens opportunities for decision-making and allow them to take ownership over future development.

Lundqvist (2000; 25) takes an opposite approach to Barker in regards to capacity building. Rather than seeing capacity building as a bottom-up approach, he finds that certain communities are more likely to be successful in environmental capacity building if they already have a set of largely political characteristics. The characteristics are as follows: a strong economy; an existing political framework which provides opportunities for participations and long-term action; an increasing knowledge of ecological threats and options (especially technological) to address these threats; and a strong environmental proponent (Lundqvist, 2000; 25). Lundqvist's idea suggests that for capacity building in land trusts, solutions must come from the top down.

Carlsson and Berkes (2005) focus on capacity building from a co-management perspective. They define co-management as power-sharing between the state and community to manage resources. They see co-management as an approach to governance and power-sharing as a result of co-management. Co-management helps to increase capacity building and is an arrangement that continuously evolves (Carlsson and Berkes, 2005; 65, 66, 67, 70). They argue that resource problems are sufficiently complicated that a multi-scale approach is usually required. From Lundqvist's (2000) and Barker's (2005) work, it is apparent that in order for a community to effectively aid in managing resources, it must be educated and assisted in capacity building to do so. Carlsson and Berkes (2005; 75) argue that when it comes to resource management, partnerships are essential. They conclude, that "Since many resource management systems are cross-scale, different management problems must be solved simultaneously at different levels".

The literature produced on capacity building is often contradictory. While it seems as if most authors can agree that environmental organization capacity building is necessary in order to empower citizens to make choices about natural resource management, they disagree on the methods necessary to achieve this feat. Furthermore, the literature is often marred by an inability for the authors to define exactly what they mean by the term capacity building. Clearly enumerating what they mean by capacity building will help to create a better dialogue amongst researchers and help to further develop the academic appeal of the concept. Moreover, a starting definition could be helpful in resolving some of the issues of scale apparent in this literature review. Is capacity something that is facilitated by a government by providing frameworks with which the citizens can act (Carlsson and Berkes, 2005); formed by the "right" pre-existing political climate (Lundqvist, 2000); or created by people empowered to make their own environmental decisions (Barker, 2005)? These issues have yet to have been resolved amongst the academic literature, and are probably largely dependent upon the political lens that the authors use to analyze the circumstances.

Conclusion

Highlighting the main arguments emerging from the fields of land trusts, conservation biology, volunteerism, social capital and capacity building Chapter 3 introduced the reader to some of the subjects that local land trusts and their volunteers have to address everyday. It is clear from this literature review that the running of a land trust is a very interdisciplinary pursuit and that there are many contributing factors to the success or failure of a land trust. Local land trusts and their volunteers must have at least a rudimentary understanding of many of these factors in order to succeed. Chapter 4 will provide more specific arguments about some of the gaps in capacity that local land trusts face.

Chapter 3 began by giving a brief overview of land trusts, including their history and purpose. It argued that land trusts are relatively new in North America, in Canada particularly. There is a lack of academic inquiry into the field of land trusts and that most of the information being provided to land trusts is from umbrella agencies, or shared amongst land trust participants. The study of conservation biology provided a justification for the conservation imperative. It also demonstrated some of the challenges that land trusts face, both in terms of protecting land and understanding contradictory science, as there is debate between traditional versus complex systems theory analysis. Volunteerism is a subject plagued by myopic vision. Its findings were usually restricted to one field of academic inquiry. Volunteerism however is important for land trusts because the majority of them are actively managed by volunteers. Social capital contributed to a person's desire to volunteer. Communities with strong social capital were also more likely to support a land trust. When social capital is lacking in a community, capacity building is necessary to help citizens make resource allocation decisions. The literature on capacity building was also contradictory and as such, a focus on nonprofit literature is necessary for this thesis.

The main themes presented within Chapter 3 are necessary components for answering the primary research question and the six secondary questions. In contrast to Chapter 3, Chapter 4 will focus on the literature produced by/for the land trust community. Using this "grey" literature is helpful because it will be directly applicable to the operation of a local land trust and it will also be balanced against the information provided by academics in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 begins with a history, state and gaps of the literature, and then proceeds to answer the six secondary research questions.

CHAPTER 4: Key Concepts: Review of the Applied Literature

Introduction

Similarly to Chapter 3, Chapter 4 relies on a literature review to draw out the main themes and arguments about the state of local land trusts. Unlike Chapter 3, Chapter 4 employs the "grey" literature emerging directly from people working with local land trusts. This information is provided through books and manuals written for land trust participants. This literature therefore is much more programmatic, as opposed to the theoretical and thematic literature in Chapter 3.

The purpose of Chapter 4 is to answer the six secondary research questions. From the literature it is clear that land trusts play a role in protecting and promoting valued ecosystems which is different from other conservation organizations. For the most part local land trusts focus almost exclusively on protecting land, as opposed to participating in advocacy. Land trusts have largely formed as a reaction to gaps in governments' capacity to protect land. Local land trusts provide an outlet for a community to work towards the conservation of land through their volunteer efforts. Most local land trusts are run by volunteers. This is a wonderful mechanism through which to engage the community, but it does mean that local land trusts face several common obstacles as a result of their use of volunteers. For example, the people who volunteer with land trusts are often in need of training and management.

The Canadian Land Trust Alliance has developed a set of standards and practices aimed at substantiating the land trust movement in Canada. While these standards are a good starting point, they are fixated on legal issues, to the detriment of the big picture. It is clear that with all of the factors which affect land trusts, a set of comprehensive criteria are necessary for their success. These criteria should also aim to address some of the gaps in capacity that volunteers have in managing land in perpetuity and suggest mechanisms through which we can build capacity in volunteers and land trusts in order to ensure long-term land conservation.

This chapter begins by offering a history and state of the literature, in addition to its gaps. It transitions into answering the six secondary research questions, and concludes by highlighting the chapter's main themes. The culmination of this chapter is the creation of criteria with which to evaluate the governance of land trusts to determine any gaps in organizational capacity.

History of the Literature

In spite of the first land trust in North America, the Trustees of Reservations, being created in the United States in 1891, the literature on land trusts is still fairly new. The increased interest in land trust literature reflects the boom in land trusts. In the United

States the land trust phenomenon caught on after the publishing of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring,* but has really exploded in the last two decades. In Canada, the land trust movement is even newer. For example, conservation easements did not become legal in Ontario until 1995 and the Ontario Land Trust Alliance was not established until 2002 (Ford, 2005; 28, 31). The vast majority of land trusts have been formed within the last decade. The literature shares a similarly brief history, with few academic papers being published on the land trust subject until 2000.

State of the Literature

The academic literature has not caught up with the growth of land trusts. Most studies, for example, quote Land Trust Alliance information. There are few empirical studies. Moreover, Canadian academic information is lacking even more. No academic papers were found that quoted information from the Ontario Land Trust Alliance and the Canadian Land Trust Alliance has just been created, is mostly based on OLTA's model and is situated in OLTA's former office. These factors have all contributed to a lack of Canadian peer-reviewed work.

Most academic information focuses on Community Land Trusts which are different from local land trusts in the mandate and scope. The bulk of literature on land trusts can be found within books, often published by the Land Trust Alliance. The information provided in these books is written by land trust proponents, and as such, is overwhelmingly positive. Moreover, these works tend not to distinguish between large and small land trusts; established and new. This could reflect that members of established land trusts know as much, or more about land trusts than the authors of these works or, are the authors of these works.

Gaps in the Literature

Few independent academic studies with original research have been undertaken with respect to land trusts. Existing case studies are rarely critical; instead they provide a description of the trust and its history. Overall, there is a lack of examination of the purpose of the land trust. The rapid growth of land trusts is stated as proof that land trusts are achieving their goals, but few people question whether or not it is appropriate for land trusts to be growing at this pace. Little attention is given to the survival of small land trusts and why some land trusts have failed. The failure of land trusts could have an important impact on the land trust movement generally, because land trusts are so dependent upon the goodwill of the community. One poor example could sour an entire region to the use of land trusts. This possibility needs to be examined more in the literature.

The literature on land trusts has been insufficiently critical. Few studies have been undertaken that critique land trusts' successes and limitations, their vulnerability or potential and options for strengthening the movement. Because the land trust phenomenon is so new, there are multiple unanswered questions. The future of Conservation Easements, strictly volunteer organizations and chronically under-funded land trust organizations need to be considered. How can land trusts promise to conserve land in perpetuity if they have serious gaps in their capacity?

Role Land Trusts Play in Protecting/ Promoting Valued Ecosystems

Land trusts are different from other conservation organizations because their primary focus is on land acquisition and conservation easements. They generally do not participate in land advocacy and tend to be non-confrontational (Brewer, 2003; 5). Land trusts form a part of the "do-it-yourself conservation movement" that has been emerging in Canada as a result of urban sprawl and political neglect (Ford, 2005; 28, 30). The first property protected in Canada through a land trust was acquired by the Hamilton Naturalists Club in 1961. In 1962, Ontario Nature (then known as the Federation of Ontario Naturalists) protected its first land and helped to create the Nature Conservancy of Canada; Canada's largest land trust (Ford, 2005; 30). The local land trust movement in Ontario has been growing rapidly over the past five years. Ford (2005; 28) acknowledges that most Canadians do not know about land trusts, although they are becoming a force in the conservation agenda. In 2005, there were 16 000 hectares of property held in Easement in Ontario. This is an increase of 53% since 2004. Similarly, in 2005 there were 33 land trusts in Ontario, this is up from 15 in 2004 (Ford, 2005; 28, 31). Land trusts help to take land out of the speculative market, and allow the property owners to determine the future of the property. Land trusts have been growing in popularity so much that many land trusts have had to turn away Conservation Easement offers due to the sheer volume of requests. On the whole, land trusts are successful because they allow people to leave a legacy of conservation (Ford, 2005; 31).

Land trusts, as a whole, form a new wave of conservation by private citizens. This is particularly true in Canada where there is a history of land being held in common through the Crown. Many scholars have noted the unique position that land trusts find themselves in: in one way, they are associated with the more progressive and perhaps liberal, environmental movement, and in the other, they are seeking to justify and enshrine property rights and are environmentally conservative. Brewer (2003; 1) comments that land trusts "are the most successful and exciting force in … land conservation today and perhaps the most effective component of the whole environmental movement". At the same time however, he comments that "Land trusts as a whole form the most conservative element of the environmental movement: after all, much of what land trusts want is to maintain the status quo" (245-246).

Land trusts play an important role in protecting valued ecosystems because they hold land in perpetuity for conservation purposes. Land trusts as a whole have noted a decline in natural areas and ecosystem functions in their communities and globally. For this reason, many conservationists argue that any naturalization within a community is a benefit to that community (Newman, 1997; 2-3). Land trusts take it a step further, because they are flexible entities which can take land for its best conservation use

(Brewer, 2003; 251). Occasionally, the best conservation use of land will include selling that land to purchase more desirable conservation land. Land trusts can also help to keep working landscapes, such as farms operational if this is part of their mandate. Keeping working landscapes can help to decrease sprawl and could be the most ecologically feasible mechanisms for conservation (Rottle, 2006; 147).

Those individuals and groups that participate in land trusts find themselves in seemingly contradictory philosophical positions. As previously mentioned, land trusts can be seen as a conservative stream of environmentalism, in spite of the fact that most people (perhaps wrongly) associate environmentalism with a liberal position. The Canadian land trust movement is also somewhat problematic because it is based mostly upon the American system of land trusts. While this has been working so far, the American system might not be able to take into account Canada's hybrid land use system, influenced by both American planning and British Common Law. Land trusts experts have noted that there is the additional philosophical problem that in the U.S. land is supposed to be used for its highest economic purpose and conservation is currently undervalued (Brewer, 2003; 149). The land trust itself is also a hybrid between private and public ownership, because the land is held privately, but for the benefit (and sometimes the use) of the public (Abecassis, 1989; 6).

In addition to the contradictory philosophical positions that land trusts find themselves in, people also donate to land trusts for a variety of reasons. For example, high levels of taxation can influence the decision of prospective donors, due to the possibility of associated tax breaks (Abecassis, 1989; 1) or other economic reasons. Mostly however, people donate to a land trust due to a concern over the future of the land. They want to ensure that their land will be properly stewarded now and into the future (Brewer, 2003; 156). Donating to a land trust helps to insulate persons who are facing enormous development pressure by removing some or all of the development rights associated with the property. In this manner, a land trust can help to alleviate the stress of selling development rights, however, this can have an enormous impact on those people who are counting on their land to supply them with retirement income. In general however, people who donate to a land trust are looking towards the future, and maintaining a property that they feel is worthy of protection (Brewer, 2003; 156, 159, 160).

People can donate to land trusts in a number of ways. For example, donations can include cash, in kind, or actual property. Property can be donated through fee simple, conservation easements, partnerships, reduced market price sales and a variety of other different ways. Land trusts are lauded for their flexibility in achieving conservation. There are many advantages to owning land for a land trust. These advantages include the land trust being able to control the care of the land, the property could be made open for the public and fee simple ownership is easiest for the public, donors and members to understand. Fee simple ownership therefore helps to attract new members to the land trust and offers additional fundraising potential (Brewer, 2003; 116). Conservation Easements (or Covenants) were first described by William H. Whyte in 1968 (Rottle, 2006; 147). They have the benefit of being less expensive over the short term for a land trust. On the other hand however, the property owner is still responsible for the upkeep of the land and is under no obligation to open the land for public use. The public benefit from conservation however, is the legal justification for a conservation easement (Brewer, 2003; 116).

Land trusts also play an important role in promoting valued ecosystems. Land trusts are critical for preserving local land because they are able to reach out to private owners. In their conversations with prospective donors, land trusts are able to nurture a land ethic within ordinary citizens. Land trusts encourage landowners to think about the responsibilities which might go along with owning land and are able to reward land owners who do donate through helping them to receive tax breaks for their donation. As Aldo Leopold commented, "conservation will ultimately boil down to rewarding the private landowner who conserves the public interest" (Leopold, 1934 in Shafer, 2004; 147). Shafer (2004; 160) believes that landowners require economic rewards for conservation. He argues that, in general, we would not ask corporations to donate land without some sort of remuneration; therefore it is unfair of us to ask individuals to do that. In this case, land trusts are important because they help promote the plight of the individual who is interested in protecting their land in perpetuity and are facing enormous development pressures. Through collective action, and the leadership of non-local advocacy groups such as the Nature Conservancy of Canada and the Ontario Land Trust Alliance financial recognition for citizens who donate to land trusts has been achieved.

Land trusts are also important because they reflect the community within which they were created. Brewer (2003; 5) writes "land trusts are diverse, shaped by locals" and therefore might be more responsive to promoting the needs of their community. By maintaining conservation land, land trusts can help towns to maintain their identities (Rottle, 2006; 162). Land trusts promote the protection of valued ecosystems through pursuing public benefit based on priority conservation land. Public benefit is achieved through the land trusts embracement of communal values, which are held in perpetuity (Brenneman, 1982; 144, 143). Land trusts are also successful at promoting valued ecosystems because they acknowledge and react to the competing interests between protection and exploitation (Ball and Lister, 2005; 12). Land trusts work because they encourage stewardship of land. They are able to appeal to private property rights and the market (Roakes and Zwolski, 1995; 5) and yet achieve their mission of land protection.

Land trusts contribute to protecting valued ecosystems through their stewardship activities. For land trusts, one major challenge of stewardship is to identify their goals prior to undertaking any projects (Emory and Roush, 1982; 23). In the past, conservation organizations have focused on the loss of rare species (Sotherton, 1998; 259) perhaps to the detriment of larger ecosystems. Today, land trusts focus on maintaining ecosystems, through the acquisition and easements of land. Land trusts however are limited in their ability to preserve "representative" ecosystems, due to financial, time and land constraints. Land trusts therefore are not a panacea. Conservation needs to take place within a larger framework of improved land use planning and stewardship facilitation.

Land trusts undertake stewardship activities with the goal of maintaining regional biodiversity (Brewer, 2003; 119). Often naturalization can be publicly unpopular if education campaigns do not accompany naturalization activities (Newman, 1997; 4). This is because naturalization requires difficult decisions for example, about what type of plants to include; whether the land trust should let "nature take its course" and whether public access should be granted. Restoring land in Canada back to its pre-European state is also problematic, given that ecosystems are dynamic. It is difficult to say with certainty what a piece of land would look like today if the Europeans had not come. It is even more difficult to say what a piece of land would look like 999 years in the future. These are some of the challenges that land trusts face in their quest to steward the land.

Land trusts achieve their goals of protecting and promoting valued ecosystems through choosing a positive approach to land conservation. Land trusts can hold land in a variety of manners, making it a flexible mechanism for achieving conservation goals. Land trusts promote the need for land conservation and the need for recognition of individual citizens' contributions to the land trust. Finally, land trusts undertake stewardship activities such as ecological restoration, to help maintain the land that they acquire. Land trusts are part of a wider governing system.

The Governing System in Place and its Effectiveness in Ensuring Land Protection

Land use policies in Canada can be considered a hybrid between British Common Law and U.S. law. Canada has a strong tradition of land held in common through the use of Crown lands. In Ontario, for example, 87% or 937, 000 km^2 of land is Crown Land (Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, 1993). The use of the Crown Land system presents both benefits and drawbacks for conservation. Benefits include a large amount of land in Canada which is still in a relatively natural state. The drawbacks include the fact that Crown Land is not always the most ecologically valuable land (Andrews and Loukidelis, 1996; 1) and public ownership of land does not equate to permanent protection (Rottle, 2006; 147).

On a broader scale, governments have difficulty reacting to ecological issues based on the very nature of their policy approaches. Belsky (1995; 214) argues that nation states do not want to apply ecosystem approaches to laws and practices because of the difficulty of doing so. Therefore, management of ecosystems tends to be ad hoc and leads to fragmentation of the landscape. As is well-known, ecological problems do not reflect political boundaries. In Canada, the majority of conservation decisions are based on individual species. Decisions about resources are generally made in terms of commercial sectors, such as fisheries, agriculture and finance, and not the effects of those sectors. Most biodiversity is protected in situ and the level of protection varies widely in protected areas (Lister and Kay, 2000; 189, 191, 202). In general, a more creative approach is required to preserve biodiversity. Lister and Kay (2000; 202) comment, "Our political institutions are not, as a rule, designed to be flexible, adaptive, resilient, or accommodating of change through top-down structures based on a hierarchy of expertise".

A general consensus amongst land trust scholars is that land trusts were formed, in part, due to a reaction to government failure to protect land (Brewer, 2003; Hrchalla, 1982). Roakes and Zwolski, (1995; 2) write, “there are many who believe that traditional public sector land conservation techniques have failed to protect important parcels of land” or ecosystems and their functions. Moreover, this failure is also related to the government’s inability to correct failures in the market, in terms of ecological conservation. As a reaction to this failure and the development boom, private sector initiatives have been undertaken to strengthen conservation. Land trusts are especially important in land use reform, because they are usually local. This allows them to help the community achieve the goals that are not being achieved through government (LTA, 1990; 72). Land trusts are also more flexible than government agencies, and they can easily involve more organizations in the process (Rottle, 2006; 167).

Governments are also facing a time of fiscal restraint. They are attempting to conduct more programs with less money. For this reason, governments are seeking private/public partnerships to achieve their aims. They are also relying on volunteers more, particularly in the field of natural resource management (Curtis and Novhuys, 1999; 101). Government agencies might lack the specialization to conserve land. In the U.S. deed restrictions are also weaker than conservation easements (Brewer, 2003; 117, 2). There is also fundamental opposition in the U.S. (an opposition that Canadians might not share) to governments acquiring land for preservation and citizens having to pay for this land through taxes. Governments are also not as successful in making land use arrangements in perpetuity. They face increasing pressure for development (Brewer, 2003; 2, 239). Land preservation appears to be a decreased priority for government at this time. Additionally, they largely shape land use policy through regulatory practices, such as zoning and taxation, whereas land trusts focus on conservation exclusively (Roakes and Zwolski, 1995; 4, 2).

The governing system has evolved to include more opportunity for land trusts to undertake their work. Land trusts are regarded as organizations which can complete transactions in less time than it typically takes government (Brewer, 2003; 266). In the past, governments limited the use of conservation easements due to fears relating to English Common Law. Record keeping used to be very poor, and as such, it was difficult to know whether an easement had been put on a property or not. This led to an overall restriction on the use of easements (Tiedt, 1982; 65). Today, these restrictions have been gradually lifted. For example, in July of 1994, the British Columbia government passed Bill 28, the *Land Title Amendment Act, 1994* which led to conservation easements being allowed. In Ontario the *Heritage Act* and in Manitoba the *Heritage Resources Act* created similar legislation (Andrews and Loukidelis, 1996; 2). In Ontario, the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) has worked closely with the Ontario Land Trust Alliance to provide funding for land trust activities. The MNR provides money which is distributed through OLTA’s Ontario Land Trust Assistance Program to help finance land acquisition. In April 2006, the MNR also set aside money for the securement and management of conservation easements and capacity building in that area (OLTA, April 2006). Moreover, the Ontario government helped to substantiate conservation easements through the passing of Bill 16 *Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve Act* and Bill 51 *Planning and*

Conservation Land Statute Law Amendment Act. In the first Federal Government Budget tabled by the Harper government, all capital gains taxes were removed for Ecological Gifts.

The governing system in place was not designed for the purposes of conservation or in light of existing ecological degradation realities. Due to varying pressures on the government, it is difficult for governments to prioritize conservation over extraction. Canada has opportunities for conservation given its enormous amount of Crown Lands. These Crown Lands however are not always the most ecologically sensitive of lands, and they tend to be in the Northern areas of Canada, where conservation might not be as high of a priority. The governing system in Canada has evolved to include more citizen participation and increased reliance by government on non-governmental agencies. Provincial and the Federal governments have taken steps to encourage the success of land trusts. At the Provincial government level, legislation has been changed to make conservation easements easier to broker. The provinces have also provided limited funding to land trust programs for land acquisition and capacity building. At the Federal government level, changes to the *Income Tax Act* have been made to offer financial incentives to individuals who donate land to a registered charity, such as a land trust. While the governing system in Canada has improved in terms of encouraging conservation through organizations such as land trusts, overall however, it is failing in its goal of ensuring land protection. Increasingly governments have turned to voluntary action to ensure land conservation.

Volunteers' Capacity to Manage Land Trusts

As previously discussed, increasingly governments and ordinary citizens are turning to land trusts to help fulfill their conservation aims. Land trusts are respected because they are able to achieve their goals without the associated cost of going through government avenues (Hurchalla, 1982; 224). One of the reasons why land trusts are able to be so cost-effective is that the majority of people who work for a land trust do so voluntarily. In the United States approximately one million people are members of a local land trust, and an additional one million people are members of the Nature Conservancy (Brewer, 2003; 1). Overall, land trust researchers in the U.S. have found that interest in land trusts (as well as the environmental movement in general) rose after the publishing of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring.* The interest in land trusts has continued to rise, in spite of the fall in interest in environmentalism. In fact, in the U.S. between 1986-95 there was approximately one new land trust per week. Most of these land trusts started as a result of concerned citizens getting together and working towards a solution for conservation. Brewer (2003; 9-10) comments, "Most land trusts start out as all-volunteer, with the board and a few friends negotiating land deals, keeping the books, applying for grants, sending out press releases, and the like".

The creation of volunteer organizations fits within the purpose and scope of land trusts. The voluntarily nature of their board members mimics the voluntary participation of property owners. In fact, the Land Trust Alliance writes, "Volunteers save the trust money and reinforce the land trust's ties in the community" (LTA, 1990; 53). This is because volunteers are drawn from the community, which helps create the feeling of local ownership of the trust. The volunteers of a land trust tend to be the life-blood of the organization: they create the entity and are largely responsible for its day-to-day operations and major decisions.

Volunteerism, however, is not universally benevolent. The people governing land trusts must remember that to effectively run an organization, volunteers must be dedicated and educated for the position that they work in. Curtis and Novhuys (1999; 98) have noted that people often make the mistake of assuming the use of volunteers means that the group will be self-managing and cost little money. In fact, they contend that the opposite is usually the experience. Volunteers require active management and financial investment. To this end, the Land Trust Alliance recommends that basic job descriptions and a professional coordinator should be employed when working with volunteers (LTA, 1990; 54, 53). Land trusts, however, still see the use of volunteers as a measure of success for integrating within the community. Augsburger (1982; 239) also cautions that the expectations on volunteers must be kept to a reasonable level. The duties of each position must also be clearly enumerated. These cautions point to a potential difficulty within the land trust movement. As land trusts are largely volunteer organizations, there is a tendency for the trusts to weigh too heavily on some volunteers, to be disorganized because no one is really in charge and for trusts to have work completed by unqualified people. There is also the danger that certain negative personalities can overrun a land trust, and it is very difficult to get rid of them, because they are volunteers.

Land trusts can also be overwhelmed by the responsibilities associated with trying to attract volunteers and institutionalize themselves within the community. Sometimes the cost (both financial and time) of recruiting volunteers can outweigh their contributions (LTA, 1990; 67). Most researchers agree that the composition of the Board is most essential when it comes to the proper functioning of land trusts. For some, the most important attribute of a board member is their leadership abilities (Augsburger, 1982; 238). Most agree that a good board member must have access to influential people and have large financial resources (Augsburger, 1982; Brewer, 2003; Rottle, 2006). This point suggests that there are limitations for land trusts to help poorer land owners, because of their decreased influence. Having a large Board can be a political advantage because it demonstrates that a lot of people support the organization and there are more likely influential ties, but it can make achieving quorum at meetings difficult (Rottle, 2006; 166).

While volunteers are responsible for setting up a land trust, there are limits to their capacity to effectively promote and manage the organization in perpetuity. As previously enumerated, there are many limitations associated with relying solely on volunteers to run an organization. Research has consistently demonstrated that land trusts with staff are much more productive in terms of securing land and running education programs. For this reason, land trusts usually start off as solely volunteer, and then they evolve into having a paid staff person. In the United States, for example, in 1985 65% of land trusts were entirely volunteer organizations. In 2000, 50% of land trusts had some paid staff.

Between 1998 and 2000, staff increased by 17%/ year full-time, and 65%/ year increase in part-time staff (Brewer, 2003; 10). Similarly, research by the Land Trust Alliance showed that in 1988, the 30% of land trusts which had full-time staff had protected 90% of the acreage (LTA, 1990, 55). Overall, having paid staff at a land trust is deemed to be important by most researchers. Staff backgrounds tend to be diverse (Augsburger, 1982; 238) but the majority of Executive Directors have a background in biology (Brewer, 2003; 10).

Thus, while volunteers are responsible for setting up a land trust, it appears that there are several drawbacks to depending entirely on volunteers to achieve the aims of the organization. Volunteers' capacity needs to be bolstered through the addition of paid staff to ensure that the details of running the organization are fulfilled. Also, volunteers require an expert on volunteers to create the job descriptions and give directions. Further discussion of the gaps in capacity of volunteers will be discussed in the following sections.

Assessing Volunteers' Capacity to Manage Land in Perpetuity

The capacity of land trusts to manage land in perpetuity is intimately linked to the success of the volunteers within the organization. As the previous section described, volunteers are largely responsible for the setting up and running a land trust. Thus, the success of the land trust is dependent upon the success of the volunteers in fulfilling their aims. Volunteers' capacity and thus, land trusts' capacity to manage land in perpetuity however must be assessed to help determine some of the barriers to longevity that exist within the land trust movement. Assessing volunteers' capacity to manage land in perpetuity helps to identify areas where improvement needs to be made to ensure long-term land conservation and where land trusts are already at the forefront of the conservation movement.

Long-term conservation requires a commitment to sustainability. Sustainability, while popularized by the 1987 Brundtland Commission remains a controversial topic. Advocates for sustainability disagree over what principles should be stressed and to what degree sustainability has actually been achieved (Gibson, 2001). Differing opinions of what sustainability should entail have also been put forth. The sustainability requirements outlined by Robert Gibson (2001) will be adopted for this work because they tend to be more comprehensive than other enumerated principles. Additionally, some of the principles overlap with the Canadian Land Trust Alliance's *Standards and Practices* (2005) "Guiding Principles". Using sustainability as a tool through which to assess volunteers' capacity allows land trusts to be seen in terms of a larger, more global commitment to conservation. However, land trust advocates recognize that land trusts are only a piecemeal approach to conservation, and cannot be used in lieu of widespread changes to planning policy (VanDenBelt, 2005). Therefore, analyzing land trusts in terms of the principles of sustainability provides an incomplete picture, because land trusts might not be pledging themselves to the pursuit of sustainability.

The Canadian Land Trust Alliance has developed a set of *Canadian Land Trust Standards and Practices* (2005) based largely on the U.S. Land Trust Alliance's version. These Standards and Practices are designed to help promote "the long-term viability and management" of land trust organizations (CLTA, 2005; 1). Contained within the document are twelve Standards with accompanying Practices designated to help with the implementation of the Standards. This document was created to ensure the long-term viability of land trusts, and as such, is a good place to start with the assessment of the capacity of volunteers and land trusts to manage land in perpetuity. As mentioned however, the *Canadian Land Trust Standards and Practices* (CLTA, 2005) are largely based upon the U.S. Standards. In many ways this is a benefit for the creation of the Standards. Another organization has already had consultations with land trusts and tested the Standards to ensure that they are realistic. This helps the Canadian Land Trust Alliance, a fledgling organization, save valuable time in terms of research and development. It also gives them a resource for implementation. On the other hand however, basing the *Canadian Land Trust Standards and Practices* on the U.S. version has resulted in an overly litigious version for the Standards. The U.S. system is much more vulnerable to legal action, and as such, this element is reflected within the Standards. While Canadian Land Trusts are also vulnerable to legal action, this vulnerability is reduced in the Canadian context. Therefore, the *Canadian Land Trust Standards and Practices* seems to be over-emphasizing legal components, perhaps to the detriment of other integral principles. For example, the only legal challenge to conservation easements within Ontario was definitively settled through the creation of the *Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve Act*. Significantly, this Act was supported by all parties in the legislature (Environmental Defense, 2005). This demonstrates that there is legal support for and defense of the work the land trusts do.

As a whole, neither the principles of sustainability as outlined by Gibson (2001) or the *Canadian Land Trust Standards and Practices* (CLTA, 2005) create a complete set of criteria through which land trusts capacity to protect land in perpetuity can be analyzed. Together, they provide a basis through which land trusts can begin to be analyzed. However, more information needs to be included to provide a complete picture. Through identifying some of the gaps in the capacity of volunteers to manage land in perpetuity, areas in which land trusts must improve can be highlighted. Identifying the gaps in capacity will also help to identify mechanisms through which capacity in volunteers and land trusts can be built to ensure long-term conservation. Through examining the gaps in capacity and the methods through which to build capacity, criteria with which we can assess the capacity of volunteers and land trusts to manage land in perpetuity can be created.

Gaps in Capacity of Volunteers to Manage Land in Perpetuity

Having an organization run by volunteers creates opportunities and problems for the efficiency and longevity of the organization. In voluntary organizations, it is difficult to attract the experts necessary to complete the specific tasks required of land trusts. Land trusts often take on more than they can handle, because they are so enthusiastic about their goals. Acquiring more land to conserve takes precedence over proper management, baseline documentation and administrative duties. Brewer (2003; 164) comments, “Misplaced priorities- the failure to recognize that protecting land really means protecting it, not just getting a document signed- is one reason why some land trusts do a poor job with monitoring and baseline surveys. Another explanation may be simple ignorance. They don’t realize the pit of vulnerability they’re digging by their lack of documentation on land they have pledged to protect”. One major problem with land trusts run by volunteers is that they tend to get behind on their paperwork, not realizing that this could have serious effects on the longevity and purpose of their organization. In the U.S., 25% of land trusts do not monitor their conservation easements. While 70% of public agencies do not monitor their conservation easements (Brewer, 2003; 163), land trusts are still making themselves legally vulnerable through ignoring this obligation.

Land trusts also have the problem of recruiting skilled volunteers for some of their projects. Land trusts sometimes lack the expertise to carry out proper management projects on their properties. In an effort to counteract this deficiency, they may turn to conservation easements to prevent having to do management (Brewer, 2003; 129, 115). This, however, might be a faulty solution, because the use of conservation easements requires a vast amount of legal knowledge and regular monitoring. The strain of having to recruit new volunteers also stresses a land trust organization. New volunteers always have to be educated (Ball and Lister, 2005; 6) and managing volunteers can be a big job (Curtis and Novhuys, 1999; 105). The recruitment and training of new volunteers can put a strain on existing volunteers, adding to their workload. Burnout amongst volunteers can be quite common, leading to decreased effectiveness (Curtis and Novhuys, 1999; 105).

Another gap in the capacity of volunteers to manage land in perpetuity is related to the type of volunteers that land trusts tend to attract. Land trusts recognize that they need a sustained source of funding in order to be successful, but Board members tend to be mostly biologists, who do not have the expertise in fundraising (Ball and Lister, 2005; 6). In general, most land trusts are running on shoestring budgets; particularly new ones. The majority of land acquisition projects are completed by older, more established land trusts. This phenomenon leads land trust experts to comment that “The survival of smaller trusts may be a concern for land trust advocates, due to the small budgets of these trusts and the potential expense of land acquisition” (Roakes and Zwolski, 1995; 1). There is also a tendency amongst conservationists to start a land trust without recognizing the enormous amount of time, energy and money it requires to run this organization (Brewer, 2003; 11). Perhaps without having the expertise of lawyers, accountants, and professional fundraisers, biologists and ecologists are making decisions based solely on conservation, rather than business.

Land trusts are threatened by both inside and outside influences, including changes in land trust leadership, a tighter economy, decreased government budgets and the political climate (Rottle, 2006; 165). Land trusts must become more independent financially in order to counteract some of these stressors. In general it is easier for a land trust to raise money to complete a project, such as a land acquisition, than to raise money for operating costs (LTA, 1990; 94). Foundations usually prefer to support new activities, and not sustain existing ones (Ball and Lister, 2005; 10). Land trusts also require long-term funding to ensure that projects can be completed, and space for convening meetings can be secured. Without long-term funding, the land trust cannot focus on outreach and negotiation, two pivotal tasks for securing additional land (Rottle, 2006; 166-167). Finally, land trusts require additional funding to protect the land that they have already secured. In the U.S. easement violations occur on approximately 25% of all easement properties, so in some cases, legal defense of that easement is required. Additionally, small land trusts could be financially weak in comparison to rich developers, potentially causing problems in the future (Brewer, 2003; 137, 173).

Conservation easements provide a flexible mechanism through which a land trust can acquire land, potentially at a reduced cost, but also provide some additional threats to the capacity of volunteers to manage land in perpetuity. Conservation easements became popular amongst environmental groups in the early 1980s (Brewer, 2003; 148). When an owner and a land trust enter into a conservation easement agreement, the "owner agrees to restrict future uses of a parcel of land" (LTA, 1990; 84). Conservation easements provide an opportunity for the owner to retain the land, while still making a contribution to conservation. The property owner continues to be responsible for managing the land, except in cases when a special arrangement is made between the property owner and land trust (Andrews and Loukidelis, 1996; 16). Conservation easements on a whole are politically popular because they do not change the use of the land (Roush, 1982). On the other hand, the public might not be as supportive of conservation easements for a variety of reasons. The public might not like conservation easements because there typically is a lack of public access to conservation easement land (Brewer, 2003; 155). Additionally, the public does not always understand the contributions that a conservation easement can make to conservation and therefore they do not support it. They do not think that it is fair that conservation easements can influence future owners of a property. Land trusts need to do more to educate the public about conservation easements (Emory, 1982; 196).

Conservation easements are a particular threat to the management capacity of land trusts because they could possibly be much more resource intensive than fee simple ownership. One reason why some land trusts prefer conservation easements is because there is a lower upfront cost. When a land trust enters into a conservation easement agreement, it is also obligated to produce a baseline report and to continue monitoring the property. As previously discussed, many land trusts have difficulty fulfilling their obligations in regards to monitoring. Monitoring can sometimes be more difficult than owning the property (Roush, 1982; 71) but if a land trust does not monitor the property the courts may think that the land trust is legally abandoning the conservation easement (Emory and Roush, 1982; 26), although in Ontario the longevity of conservation easements has been strengthened through the passage of Bill 16 the *Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve Act* and Bill 51 the *Planning and Conservation Land Statue Law Amendment Act.* .

Careful drafting of the conservation easement is pivotal to ensure that the provisions contained within it are enforceable (Emory and Roush, 1982; 24). As conservation easements are relatively new, there are few tried and tested models for conservation easements. Conservation easements are also particularly tested by second and third owners, and yet there is insufficient information on ownership changes due to the newness of conservation easement application. Valuing a property with a conservation easement is also particularly difficult because there is a poor history of resale in the United States (Roush, 1982; 72). Enforcement of conservation easements is a potential difficulty for land trusts in the future. In addition to all of the legal paperwork, Brewer (2003; 152) recommends taking a video of donors talking about the provisions of the conservation easement and their reasons for undertaking one. He suggests that this video could be used both as a promotional tool and for legal purposes. Land trusts have three options for enforcing conservation easement restrictions. Firstly, they can talk with the owner of the property about the conservation easement and the violations (Andrews and Loukidelis, 1996; 9). This could be difficult if this is the second or third owner of the property; someone who does not understand the purpose and legal ramification of the conservation easement. The second option is to use steps outlined within the conservation easement to enforce it. Provisions such as fines for contravening are sometimes included. The third option is to use the Canadian courts to defend the conservation easement (Andrews and Loukidelis, 1996; 9). If using the courts to defend the conservation easement, the land trust must be prepared with baseline documentation and subsequent monitoring reports. They must also make sure that their conservation easement is drafted in such a way as to make its provisions enforceable. Finally, the judge must understand the purpose and history of conservation easements.

Conservation easements also do not ensure that the land the easement is protecting will not be expropriated for public infrastructure (Andrews and Loukidelis, 1996; 48). If a donor has a mortgage on the property, the bank has to agree to observe the conservation easements (Brewer, 2003; 151). The conservation easement could be lost if the bank forecloses on the property (Andrews and Loukidelis, 1996; 12). Moreover, conservation easements are just granted by the grace of politicians. Brewer, (2003; 174) comments, “What the legislature gave, the legislature can take away. If easements become an obstacle to commerce, the language for terminating them can be loosened and the opportunity for new ones can be eliminated”.

On the whole, academics recommend that land trusts decrease their reliance on conservation easements for the aforementioned reasons and return to fee simple ownership (see Brewer, 2003; Emory and Roush, 1982). Conservation easements could serve to highlight the gaps in capacity of volunteers to manage land in perpetuity such as their poor organization, lack of expertise and lack of funds. The failure of one conservation easement is cause for concern for all land trusts because it demonstrates them to be fallible. If a land trust cannot successfully defend its conservation easements, then it sends a message that land trusts as a whole lack the capacity to conserve land in perpetuity. As noted in the next section, building capacity in volunteers and land trusts can help to counteract some of the potential downfalls highlighted within this section.

Building Capacity in Volunteers and Land Trusts to Ensure Long-Term Conservation

A primary method through which volunteers in land trusts can build capacity is to make sure that there are strong leadership and education programs for volunteers of the organization. Even though most land trusts are run by volunteers, they should be run like any other for profit organization, meaning that standards of bookkeeping, attendance and competency must be maintained. Rottle's (2006; 139) research found that the success factors for land trusts and other conservation organizations are related to human capacity and therefore, are not locale specific. Once a culture of aptitude is created in an organization, it is essential that all future volunteers are educated to that same level. Curtis and Novhuys (1999; 109) argue that "the most successful volunteer organizations are those with strong induction programmes and management styles that reinforce the worth of volunteer contributions".

To establish a culture of aptitude within a land trust, the composition of the Board of Directors is essential. The Land Trust Alliance claims that having a diversity amongst board members is the most critical element, providing the land trust starts with good people (1990; 16, 9). Having a strong board of directors has an important impact on the future of the land trust and can save the land trust money in the long-run. It is important to select potential board members not only on their leadership skills and commitment to the organization, but also on their professional skills and contacts. The Board of Directors of land trusts requires the professional skills of a lawyer, banker, realtor and accountant. Moreover, the board requires people who have valuable community contacts, who can donate money and/or land, people who have time and energy and a strong reputation (LTA, 1990; 16-17). Ensuring that the board has a good composition will go a long way to improving leadership within the organization. People who are used to managing employees professionally could also be good at managing volunteers within a land trust, providing they acknowledge the difference between employees and volunteers. Having the land trust professionally run will contribute to building capacity within the organization.

Land trusts should also seek out members who are experienced coalition builders in order to strengthen capacity. Engaging in private-public partnerships (Rottle, 2006; 136), working with neighbours for stewardship activities (Brewer, 2003; 127) and having outside experts speak at land trust functions (LTA, 1990; 3) can help land trusts to grow as organizations. Partnerships fulfill several key roles for land trusts. Firstly, partnerships with other stewardship organizations can help to build a constituency for the land trusts. Partnerships allow the land trust to showcase their problem-solving skills and their capacity for democratic decision making (Rottle, 2006; 146, 164). Secondly, partnerships can allow outside experts to answer questions that land trusts might have, perhaps through an in-kind donation of their time. Land trusts could, for example, sub-contract land monitoring out to other conservation organizations (Emory and Roush, 1982; 26). Thirdly, partnerships grant land trusts a sense of legitimacy, because several organizations support the work of that land trust. This makes the land trust appear more viable (LTA, 1990; 3).

Land trusts can also build capacity through strengthening their relationships with provincial and federal Land Trust Alliances. The Canadian Land Trust Alliance is currently being established through the work of the Ontario Land Trust Alliance and the Land Trust Alliance of B.C. Its primary objective is to provide a set of Standards and Practices to which Canadian land trusts can adhere. Having a professional code allows land trusts to have an ethical standard to uphold and provides potential donors some reassurance that the mandates of local land trusts will be fulfilled. Unfortunately however, the Land Trust Alliances, such as the Ontario one, also tend to be lacking in funding and professional staff. In a recent (2005; 9) assessment of OLTA's capacity, Ball and Lister related that OLTA is hoping the former board members of local land trusts will volunteer for them, because they are having trouble attracting new volunteers. Land trusts seek expertise and leadership from OLTA, but OLTA is limited in its capacity to fulfill that mandate (Ball and Lister, 2005; 7). OLTA also faces financial and volunteer-related difficulties. However, pooling resources amongst land trusts through a national or provincial Land Trust Alliance might be the most appropriate way to deal with some of these capacity issues. Avoiding duplication of effort is essential when the resources are limited (LTA, 1990; 13).

On the whole, building capacity in land trusts and volunteers to ensure long-term land conservation is essential for the longevity of the organizations. Completing internal audits to identify areas in need of improvement are critical for land trusts to undertake. This means setting aside the necessary time and resources to undertake these audits, and to not put them off because they are a "voluntary organization". On the whole, researchers offer similar recommendations on how to strengthen land trusts. Rottle (2006; 139) writes, "Skilled leadership, continued involvement of a broad-based coalition, effective structure, processes and culture and adequate funding resources are critical to sustaining the organization". Roakes and Zwolski (1995; 8) conclude, "The keys to continued success for land trusts must certainly include increased funding, the utilization of trained, professional staff, and improved communication between the trust and government agencies, as well as with the community". To conclude, capacity can be built in volunteers and land trusts through having comprehensive training for land trust volunteers, creating partnerships with other organizations to strengthen legitimacy and to economize, and to work under the leadership of provincial and national land trust agencies. Fulfilling these requirements can help to prevent the gaps in capacity that were highlighted in the earlier section.

In the proceeding sub-sections, the six secondary research questions were answered, based on land trust literature. The following sub-sections contain a commentary on the main themes from Chapter 4 and the development of criteria with which to evaluate land trusts. The criteria were developed based on the literature review and information provided from academics and the Canadian Land Trust Alliance.

Main Themes Emerging from Chapter 4

As highlighted in the literature, land trusts are unique organizations dedicated to the conservation of land in perpetuity. Land trusts have formed in response to the development boom and the decrease in government spending for conservation. Land trusts are conservative in their nature because they seek to maintain the land status quo versus development trends, while at the same time offering a flexible mechanism through which people can conserve land.

The political climate in Canada has shifting in a way that makes governments more receptive to land trusts. Even though land trusts offer a certain critique of government action, legislation has been changed to make donation to land trusts increasingly popular. Land trusts are largely created and run by volunteers. As land trusts establish themselves however, it appears to be in their best interest to hire paid staff. Land trusts with paid staff are more productive in terms of land securement. Volunteers lack capacity in an important number of ways. Issues which could directly affect the trust include a lack of professional expertise held by volunteers, poor record-keeping and monitoring and a lack of financial resources. Volunteers require a large investment of time and resources and need to be managed in a professional manner to ensure that high standards are maintained.

Land trusts and volunteers can build capacity in a variety of ways. Training volunteers helps to maintain continuity within the land trust organization. Using partnerships provides a valuable method for land trusts to bolster their legitimacy and to take advantage of the skills that these other organizations can provide. Working on strengthening provincial and federal leadership can contribute to public education and a more legitimate land trust movement.

Criteria for a Successful Land Trust

Criteria for examining land trusts' ability to protect valued ecosystems in this thesis were developed through the use of the information contained within the literature review and was influenced by the Gibson's (2001) principles of sustainability and the Canadian Land Trust Alliance's *Canadian Land Trust Standards and Practices* (2005). Information highlighted within the Main Themes section within the literature review was also crucial to the development of these principles.

The criteria are organized according to means and ends. The end goal is to have land trusts and volunteers governed in a manner that will allow them to effectively protect valued ecosystems. Some criteria contain both means and ends in their pursuit of the aforementioned goal. The joint focus is to respond to challenges to the capacity of land trusts and to pursue opportunities for land trusts to become stronger as organizations.

The criteria cover a variety of concerns for local land trusts. They range from community relations activities, such as “maintaining public integrity” to achieving goals, including “managing for perpetuity”. Equally, the criteria apply to the functional roles of a land trust, exemplified by the criteria of “adherence to laws and legal norms”, “proper recruitment, management and training of volunteers”, and “choosing the appropriate conservation tool”. The recommendations also relate directly to improving land trust governance. These criteria include “good governance” and a “commitment to capacity building”.

The criteria are discussed in further detail below.

Maintaining Public Integrity

- land trust volunteers must be honest and forthright in all of their undertakings
- land trusts should garner public support though honesty and approachability
- land trusts must realize that the actions of one organization reflects on the entire land trust community
- land trusts should be committed to equity and hold themselves to strong ethical principles

This principle is largely influenced by CLTA’s (2005; 2) Guiding Principle of integrity. Land trusts should strive to be seen as an honest and reputable addition to the land conservation movement. This is especially pivotal in Canada, where the land trust movement is relatively new. Being ethical is also reflected in Standard 3, Principle 7 of CLTA’s Standards and Practices in terms of Board Accountability when they write that the land trust must “carr[y] out the board’s legal, financial and other responsibilities in an ethical manner”.

The concept of equity is emphasized within Gibson’s principles (2001; 16). In his opinion, for something to be truly sustainable, it must be equitable. As land trusts fluctuate between the public and private realm in terms of public benefits, it is important that they seek to be beneficial for the community. They secure land in a private manner, through purchase, donation, sharing, etc., but their land provides public benefits through maintaining or enhancing ecosystem function and/or allowing direct public access to the land. Land trusts must be viewed as ethical enterprises in order to garner the public support that is necessary for their work to continue. In particular, the public must support the work that land trusts do otherwise the government could remove their support for the movement. The removal of government support would have dire consequences for land trusts because government laws provide the framework through which land trusts exist and also the tax incentives that land trusts can offer to those who donate.

For these reasons, it is essential that land trusts as a whole conduct themselves with integrity. Brewer (2003; 151) emphasized that the actions of one land trust do reflect upon the entire land trust community. The failure of one land trust could call into question the integrity of the whole system. The Ontario Land Trust Alliance seems also to recognize this predicament. In their spring 2006 seminar, they continually emphasized the need for honesty by all land trusts and their boards in conducting land deals and working with the public. Land trusts, they asserted, must be seen as an alternative to other mechanisms for land deals in Canada. They must always seem honest and forthright and to conduct their operations with integrity (OLTA, Spring 2006).

One mechanism through which land trusts gain integrity is to select well-respected members of the public to join their efforts. The use of volunteers in their organizations grant land trusts an element of respect and support within the community because they are using the expertise of the local public. The choice of volunteers however can have an important impact on the success of a land trust and will be examined in the next principle.

Proper Recruitment, Management and Training of Volunteers

- volunteers must be properly trained to ensure adherence to the mission of the organization and that they are capable of handling the rigours of their job
- volunteers must be managed in a professional manner
- land trust organizations should create job descriptions and ambitious recruiting programs to ensure that the professional expertise needed is brought to the land trust
- volunteer placements should be treated like a professional appointment, therefore volunteers should fulfill their job requirements and be periodically evaluated
- volunteers' contribution to land trusts should be acknowledged regularly

Once again, the framework for this Principle is provided by CLTA. CLTA's Standard 7 (2005; 13) is about the volunteers who work in a land trust. In the past, many people have dismissed the activities of volunteers, believing that any voluntary action undertaken was a benefit to the organization. While voluntary action is usually done from a philanthropic perspective (see Butts, 2003) if the job is not completed well, it reflects poorly on the organization. The strongest currency that a land trust has is its reputation. For that reason, it is important that their volunteers act in a professional manner.

The Land Trust Alliance suggested that all volunteers be furnished with job descriptions prior to beginning their volunteer activities (LTA, 1990; 53, 54). Providing job descriptions allows a volunteer to decipher whether or not they are capable of undertaking that position. It also tells the volunteer what the land trust expects of them and can act as an informal contract.

At the same time however, volunteers are *volunteers*. This means that they often join organizations so that they can have an opportunity to learn new skills (Peterson, 2004; 615). As responsible organizations wishing to foster community support, it is important that land trusts provide professional training for their volunteers (Brewer, 2003; 11). Providing training for volunteers ensures that their activities are conducted in a professional manner and provides them with a personal benefit.

The presentation on volunteers at the OLTA 2005 Conference (Walker, 2005) also emphasized the importance of treating volunteers in a professional manner. Walker argued that volunteers needed to be periodically reviewed and also continually recognized. In his opinion, volunteers required professional management and job descriptions.

Land trusts also require people with precise skill sets. In order to fulfill this need, land trusts should endeavour to create an ambitious recruiting program, highlighting the benefits that the land trust provides to the community and the benefits that volunteering for the land trust would provide to the volunteer. Volunteers (particularly Board members) should be well versed in the various tools that land trusts use to protect land. Volunteers with expertise in the subject of land protection will be an asset to the land trust, particularly when it comes to choosing the appropriate conservation tool with which to protect the land. In the next section, the importance of choosing the proper tool will be discussed.

Choosing the Appropriate Conservation Tool

- Conservation Easements could prove to be legal problems in the future, so use them with appropriate caution. Create one that is legally defensible and easily monitored.
  - -Create easements with perpetuity in mind, landscapes will change
  - -ensure land trust has endowment/ other resources to monitor and protect land in perpetuity
- Provide innovative mechanisms through which land can be conserved
- Be flexible in your mechanisms- make land trusts the most accommodating solution
- always make land deals with perpetuity in mind
- ensure the land trust has the appropriate resources (financial and human) to ensure long-term capacity
- look for partnership opportunities to protect more land

CLTA's Standard 8 talks about "Evaluating and Selecting Conservation Projects" (2005; 14). Within that Standard, practices talk about the importance of documenting conservation values and site inspection. Standard 8 "Evaluating and Selecting Conservation Projects" (2005; 14) enumerates the importance of working with the landowner to decide which conservation tool will protect the land adequately over the long-term. The Guiding Principle of Perpetual Responsibility (CLTA, 2005; 2) reminds the land trust that the land must be protected over the long-term.

One barrier to protecting land in perpetuity is the recognition that financial and human resources can become constrained. Standard 6: "Financial and Asset Management" and practice g: "Funds for Stewardship and Enforcement" (CLTA, 2005; 11) attempt to deal with these constraints. In essence, this standard and practice requires that land trusts make sure that they have the funding and workpower in place prior to accepting land. The choice of conservation tool will have a direct impact on how many and what sorts of resources are necessary to achieve the conservation aim.

The literature has pointed out many potential weaknesses to conservation easements. Andrews and Loukidelis (1996; 9) spoke specifically about their limitations and the possible legal problems that land trusts could face with conservation easements in the future. Brewer (2003) also wrote about the potential legal challenges that conservation easements could face, thus, if a land trust does decide to use them, they should take every opportunity to make them legally defensible. This includes making conservation easements with perpetuity in mind; landscapes will change and a land trust must be careful to ensure that the conservation easement will continue to protect the ecological qualities that it was designed to safeguard.

Standard 11: "Conservation Agreement Stewardship" and particularly Practice E: "Enforcement of Conservation Agreements" (CLTA, 2005; 20-21) aim to protect land trusts from legal challenges of their conservation agreements. Through selecting the appropriate conservation tool, many of these issues can be avoided. However, land trusts must always protect themselves and their land with perpetuity and every possible obstacle in mind. A system of good governance will ensure that land trusts are on top of all legal challenges to their organizations and their land. Being governed in a manner that is inclusive will allow the land trust to thrive and community support to flourish. Community support necessarily brings government support to the organizations in democratic countries. The following principle discusses what is entailed in good governance of land trusts.

Good Governance

- land trusts should provide a mechanism through which the community can work towards conservation
- land trust participants should recognize differing opinions, particularly dissenting ones
- land trusts should conduct their business in a transparent manner
- land trusts should work towards the public good

The principle of Good Governance is based largely upon Gibson's Principle of "Democracy and Civility" (2003; 19) and CLTA's Guiding Principle of "Good Governance" (CLTA, 2005; 2). CLTA argue that Good Governance requires working in a transparent manner in a fair way. Acknowledging differing opinions is a challenge however, it is necessary for the public good.

Gibson (2003; 19) argues that we need to build our capacity to make decisions through creating an improved package of opportunities to do so. Land trusts should provide a mechanism through which the community can work towards conservation, and in so doing, improve their own governance skills. A large part of the success of a land trust involves the inclusion of citizens in land decisions, a realm where people of limited economic means were often discluded. In talking about equity, Gibson states that we must "ensure that sufficiency and effective choices for all are pursued in ways that reduce dangerous gaps in sufficiency and opportunity" (2003; 16). Land trusts can and must work towards that public good. Land trusts gain their power and support through the community in which they reside, and as such, must be looking to give back to that community. Allowing ordinary citizens a voice in land use decisions is one mechanism through which land trusts can contribute to good governance.

Good governance is important to sustain the organization. CLTA Standard 1, Practice D talks about the importance of upholding high ethical standards and a system of good governance. In order to achieve high ethical standards, CLTA contends that the land trust must be inclusive and transparent (CLTA, 2005; 5). Land trusts must also strive to continually improve their organizations and the movement. To be successful in the coming years, land trusts must seek opportunities to build capacity within their organization and their volunteers. In the following section, the commitment to capacity building will be discussed as one of the principles for a successful land trust.

Commitment to Capacity Building

- land trusts must continue to exchange information and improve the exchange of information for the betterment of the movement
- relationships amongst land trusts, umbrella agencies, volunteers and donors must be continually improved
- Umbrella Agencies such as the Ontario Land Trust Alliance, the Canadian Land Trust Alliance and the Land Trust Alliance of British Columbia should provide information and support to land trusts and facilitate pooling resources
- Partnerships should be sought to ensure that land trusts are successful in achieving large aims with limited resources

Land trusts operate within a larger world of conservation. In order to achieve their aims in the most pragmatic and efficient manner, oftentimes dependence upon other similar organizations is necessary. Land trusts should commit themselves to improving their organization, and the organizations with whom they work. Berkes (2005; 75) and Shaw (2003; 111) emphasized the importance of partnership opportunities for land trusts. Using partnerships is a mechanism through which land trusts can achieve their conservation aims with limited resources.

Strengthening the umbrella agencies which help to govern land trusts is also helpful to building capacity within the movement. The umbrella agencies serve as an important tool for the success of individual land trusts through providing up-to-date information and training opportunities. Also, these umbrella agencies are the most public face of the land trust movement. Ball and Lister (2005) have demonstrated that the umbrella agencies are still in need of capacity building themselves and local land trusts can help, in order to strengthen the movement as a whole. These umbrella agencies provide an important mechanism through which local land trusts can communicate with each other (using newsletters, conferences and seminars) and they can also seek mechanism through which to improve the communication.

Gibson wrote, “[we must] build our capacity to apply sustainability principles” (2003; 18). Similarly, land trusts must build their capacity in order to achieve their conservation aims. Improving relationships with land owners can usually be achieved through improving communication. Standard 1, Practice C: “Outreach” (CLTA, 2005; 5) speaks to the importance of providing information to the landowners, members and general public. The most important aspect of capacity building is that the land trust must not be afraid to examine its own operations. Uncovering weaknesses in the organization is only detrimental if nothing is rectified. Land trusts must always seek to improve their organization and to fix problems before they begin.

One mechanism through which land trusts can stay ahead of potential issues is to always make sure that they are adhering to legal norms and practices. Moreover, land trusts should seek to stay ahead of rule changes (perhaps through the lobbying of the umbrella agencies) in order to keep their organization at or above pace with regulatory changes. The next criterion discusses the importance of adhering to legal norms.

Adherence to Laws and Legal Norms

- ensure land trust is in compliance with all appropriate laws
- ensure that the land trust stay ahead of legislation so that it can continue to be in compliance with laws
- land trusts should work towards adherence to the Canadian Land Trust Alliance's *Standards and Practices* to provide a standard by which all land trusts can be evaluated and to provide assurance to potential benefactors
- land trusts should have a policy on Conflicts of Interest and follow Provincial and Federal disclosure laws

CLTA's Standards and Practices have a fairly large focus on litigious matters. Standard 2: "Compliance with Laws" (6), Standard 4: "Conflicts of Interest" (9) and Standard 9: "Ensuring Sound Transactions" (16) all deal with the legal ramifications of land trusts (2005). In general, it is important that a land trust has a firm understanding of all of the laws which are applicable to their organizations. Umbrella Agencies can help inform land trusts of future legal issues which they might face. Working towards adherence to the standards and practices is also beneficial for land trusts because it shows that land trusts are willing to participate in a self-regulatory scheme. Being a party to the Standards and Practices does also provide limited assurance to potential benefactors that the land trust is run in an efficient and legally appropriate manner.

Andrews and Loukidelis (1996; 9) also point to the importance of land trusts following provincial and federal laws. Land trusts must take the necessary steps to ensure that they remain incorporated and that they have charitable status. Following the appropriate legal steps is pivotal to providing a charitable receipt for donations.

Besides protecting land, land trusts are capable of achieving multiple benefits for their work. By applying many of the criteria already discussed, land trusts are capable of making a contribution to sustainability, governance, education and social capital building. The next criterion stresses the importance of pursuing multiple benefits.

Pursuing Multiple Benefits

- "You must be the change you want to see in the world." Mahatma Gandhi
- land trusts should seek sustainability benefits through their work
- social capital building should be a product of land trust's work

- local land trusts should seek opportunities to educate the public

Land trusts have the ability to achieve multiple aims while at the same time protecting land. In his presentation at the evening seminar in Vineland, Ontario, VanDenBelt (2005) quoted Gandhi in speaking of the multiple benefits that land trusts are capable of achieving. Land trusts are capable of being the change that they want to see in the world. Therefore, if land trusts desire to protect land by allowing members of the community to make land use decisions, land trusts should make sure that they involve the community in land use decision making. If land trusts want to achieve public benefit from the land that they protect, perhaps they should protect the most representative ecosystem in that area or the most endangered or perhaps they should open one of their reserves up to the public.

Land trusts have the opportunity to educate the public about the importance of conserving land into/for the future. Land trusts can also help interested land owners learn about stewardship of their own land. Land trusts can serve as mechanisms through which local communities can discuss land use planning, hence helping to build social capital (Bloom and Kilgore, 2003; 432).

In their quest to protect land, land trusts can also pursue multiple benefits. Seeking mutually supportive benefits, Gibson (2003; 21) argues can occur when we attempt to apply all of the principles of sustainability simultaneously. Overall, land trusts can help communities become better stewards of land through seeking these benefits. Education, social capital building, and long-term sustainability can occur when we become good stewards of the land. The Stewardship Criteria discusses some of the steps necessary for achieving those aims.

Stewardship

- land trusts must create baseline documents for all properties
- regular monitoring (at minimum 1x/yr) is required, along with a written report
- conservation easements should be monitored to ensure that they are protected and enforced
- land should be managed to protect/ promote integrity and diversity
- landowner stewardship should be encouraged and promoted

A large part of stewardship for a land trust includes maintaining its legal obligations for that land. Standard 11: “Conservation Agreement Stewardship” (CLTA, 2005; 20) and Standard 12: “Land Stewardship” (23) speak to the obligations that land trusts face. An important aspect of land trust stewardship is the regular monitoring of land trust properties and this is covered in Standard 11, Practice C “Conservation Agreement Monitoring” (CLTA, 2005, 20). In this section, CLTA agrees that properties should be monitored at least one time per year. This timeline is the same as Brewer’s recommendation (2003).

Protecting and enforcing conservation easements is also a large part of the stewardship recommendations for land trusts. Land trusts must have proof of regular monitoring in order to report when or if a conservation easement has been contravened. Moreover, regular monitoring and stewardship of the land helps to prevent the contravention of agreements, because it demonstrates that the land trust is well aware of what goes on in that particular property.

Stewardship is not merely necessary to deal with litigious matters. Stewardship can take place to protect and promote the integrity and diversity of a property (Fazey, Fischer and Lindenmayer, 2005; 63). Stewardship can also be a helpful liaison for interacting with the public. Promoting landowner stewardship within the community can help limit the amount of property that a land trust needs to acquire. It also creates another mechanism through which land trusts can work with the public for the betterment of the local environment.

The final criterion is a caution about the commitment that a land trust is making when it creates its organization and takes on property. In many ways, the final criterion is a culmination of the previous criterion, although it focuses on organizational strength. Land trusts protect land in perpetuity. They must be designed to achieve that aim.

Managing for Perpetuity

- the land trust should not take on liabilities without adequate financial support
- the land trust should ensure that there is adequate human capacity to fulfill their aims and that volunteers are not being overtaxed
- Umbrella Agencies should provide support and education for land trusts on issues of bookkeeping and monitoring
- land trusts must protect themselves from future legal issues
- land trusts should dedicate themselves to strategic planning

Planning and managing for perpetuity is a difficult matter. It is impossible to say for certain what the future issues that land trusts will face. Certainly there are a set of issues that will remain a constant feature of land trusts, but other circumstances might evolve. One cannot say absolutely that land trusts will exist for perpetuity. Therefore, it is important for a land trust to make sure that they do no take on liabilities beyond their capacity. Working towards continual capacity building will help, but cannot be considered a panacea. With this in mind, CLTA recommends in Standard 11, Practice G that land trusts have "Contingency Plans/Backups" and Practice H: "Contingency Plans for Backup Holder" (2005; 21). Both of these Practices are aimed at continuing the mission of the land trust if that land trust should fail.

Land trusts should also make sure that they are not taking on obligations beyond their means. Standard 6 "Financial and Asset Management" (CLTA, 2005; 11) and Standard 7: "Volunteers, Staff and Consultants", Practice A: "Capacity" (2005, 13) address this point. Umbrella agencies can help local land trusts realize their limitations and build capacity within them. Land trusts as a whole might be stronger than land trusts individually. Umbrella Agencies should work to build relationships amongst the individual land trusts.

Finally, land trusts can manage for perpetuity through building human-ecological relationships. Building human-ecological relationships can help "to maintain the integrity of biophysical systems in order to maintain the irreplaceable life support functions upon which human well-being depends” (Gibson, 2003; 12). Thus, creating stronger ties to the local environment can help people recognize the importance of it in their lives and help them to be better stewards of the land.

The criteria were arranged in a means to ends manner, even though most were interconnected. What is clear from the discussion of criteria is that capacity building within land trust organizations is essential to maintaining the longevity of them. Moreover, land trusts will become increasingly interdependent once they begin facing legal challenges and massive growth. Unfortunately, land trusts, like most conservation organizations, are constantly short of resources. Maintaining good relationships with the local community would help land trusts to achieve the support that they require; including financial, volunteer and legal support. The most important currency that land trusts have is their reputation.

Land trusts are capable of achieving multiple goals while still focusing on protecting land. As their operations grow more sophisticated, increasingly these other benefits will be pursued. Demonstrating multiple benefits is important in terms of achieving sustainability and for garnering public support. These criteria will help organizations become well-supported by the community in which they operate.

Conclusion

Chapter 4 began by highlighting the role that land trusts play in protecting and promoting valued ecosystems. It argued that land trusts provide an exciting private contribution to land protection, but they are not a panacea. Land trusts have to work within the existing governing system (and work for improvements within it) to correct market and government failures. Land trusts provide a tool for citizens to protect valued conservation land. Volunteers are largely responsible for setting up and running a land trust. This is a benefit because it allows ordinary citizens to take positive action for conservation. Volunteer-run organizations, however, suffer from not having permanent staff. This includes issues with insufficient training, funding, and management. Land trusts with staff tend to be more successful. Land trusts and volunteers need to assess their capacity to manage land in perpetuity. It was proposed that land trusts and volunteers could be assessed using criteria developed by the literature review, the Canadian Land Trust Standards and Practices and Robert Gibson’s Principles of Sustainability. Gaps in capacity of volunteers and land trusts were identified and proposals were put forth to strengthen that capacity.

This chapter concludes with the identification of main themes found throughout the literature review. These main themes, along with the other identified works, provided the basis for the creation of criteria to help land trusts fulfill their aim of governing themselves in a manner that will effectively allow them to play an important role in protecting valued ecosystems. These criteria were arranged in a manner that reflected means and ends to achieving the goal. The criteria will be tested in the following chapters to assess its validity and be applied to the Niagara Land Trust case study to provide recommendations for its governing structure.

CHAPTER 5: The Niagara Land Trust Case

Introduction

Chapters 3 and 4 illustrated the main themes and arguments emerging from the literature of a variety of academic fields. Chapter 5 focuses directly on the Niagara Land Trust, providing an explanation and background to the case study. This chapter develops a context for the implementation of the criteria through discussing my role as a participant observer with the Niagara Land Trust (NLT) and a history of the organization. This chapter helps implement an essential portion of the methodology, which serves in a feedback loop to test this thesis' hypotheses about local land trust governance. Providing "on-the-ground" examples are essential to making an applied and academic contribution to the research; it is also a defining characteristic of a case study methodology.

The history of the Niagara Land Trust begins with its initial members of the Steering Committee and then transitions to the creation of the Founding Committee, its present state and the potential future of the Trust. The NLT is unique in terms of its Board set-up and its by-laws. On the other hand, the Niagara Land Trust was created through the help of other local land trusts and thus reflects their influence.

Currently, the Founding Committee is in charge of the day-to-day management of the Niagara Land Trust. Upon incorporation, receiving charitable status and officially launching the land trust, the members of the Founding Committee will step down and allow a new Membership to be created, with the exception of the six Founding Committee members who will sign the incorporation documents. They will form the Board of Directors until such time that a new Board of Directors can be created.

Chapter 5 concludes by discussing the role that the NLT plays in protecting ecosystems, its governance and capacity building, setting up a comparison between the literature, interviews and case study in the proceeding chapter. Political, economic and personal decision making processes provide insight into the Trust's governance. It is clear that the NLT is vulnerable to the whims of others, given its dependence upon donations for economic security and government laws to protect its stake in the conservation community. In terms of personal decision making processes, the NLT is dependent upon its volunteers for leadership. While the current members of the Founding Committee are all talented individuals, devoted to the creation of the NLT, it is clear that a wider diversity of members is required to ensure the longevity of the Trust.

Rationale for the Case Study

Case study research is a common tool of social science methodology. As a method, case study research is particularly good when the phenomenon to be researched is broad, contains multiple variables and has many different types of sources of information that relate to it. Due to the dynamic nature of case study research, and the experiences it studies, it is also appropriate for studying implementation processes (Yin, 2002; xi).

Case study research excels at explaining how and why a program worked or did not work. In this thesis case study research promises to make important contributions to understanding land trusts and the implementation of the Niagara Land Trust in particular. Using a case study approach is beneficial when researching contemporary events (Yin, 2003; 7). As land trusts are a relatively new experience in Canada, they can be considered to be a contemporary and on-going event. Case study research is also flexible and has the ability to cover multiple viewpoints. It combines the powers of "direct observation of the events being studied and interviews of the person involved in the events… the case study's unique strength is its ability to deal with a full variety of evidence" (Yin, 2003; 8).

As there is a lack of academic literature related to land trusts, the use of case studies is appropriate. It allows the researcher to consider a wider breadth of information when drawing conclusions about the Niagara Land Trust and giving some indications of the state of land trusts generally. Case studies are also beneficial because they are able to provide generalizations about a subject. Case studies can only be generalized to theoretical propositions, not populations (Yin, 2003; 10), but this is appropriate in the case of local land trusts, because they are so divergent in character and scope. Theoretically local land trusts operate using similar creeds, but individually, their characters are quite different; therefore, generalization is limited. Finally, case studies are well-suited to put contemporary phenomenon in its context (Yin, 2003; 13). This aspect of case studies is beneficial when describing the larger operating system that land trusts work within.

Participant Observation of the Niagara Land Trust

Participant observation is an adaptation of scientific inquiry to research strictly human studies. The challenge of participant observation is that the researcher has to adjust to the conditions presented by the research. Moreover, the research conducted using a participant observation methodology causes the researcher to be directly involved with their research subjects. Direct participation is beneficial because it allows the researcher to make unobtrusive observations; but might also limit the objectivity of the research (Jorgensen, 1989; 7,8,9,10). The aim of participant observation is to find the "practical and theoretical truths about human existence" (Jorgensen, 1989; 10).

In this case study, I employed participant observation to help to draw my conclusions. Being involved with the Niagara Land Trust from its inception has allowed me to have a unique perspective on not only that Trust, but also on the process of starting local land trusts. Moreover, having reciprocity between myself and the fellow participants has encouraged a comfortable dialogue amongst us. This has helped improve the flow of information for this case study.

In the following section, a description of the history of the Niagara Land Trust will be given, which will help to provide context for this case study.

History of the Niagara Land Trust

The Niagara Land Trust (NLT), started like most other land trusts do: a group of people interested in conservation began talking about the need for a land trust in the area. Contacts were made from business associates, parents at the hockey arena and long-time friends. The conversations deepened into something larger than a vague "need" for a conservation organization to take a lead role in protecting ecosystems in Niagara and soon the idea of starting a land trust for Niagara came into fruition.

In the spring of 2005, a steering committee for a future land trust in Niagara was starting to form. From the beginning, Paul Robertson was champion of the cause. He was the person who contacted Brock University's Centre for the Environment to get support from the faculty and to ask them if they had a student who wanted to partner with the organization. Attending my first meeting in May 2005, with my professor, John Middleton, I was asked to be a part of the organization, but to also research it at the same time.

The Steering Committee met at least once a month over the spring and summer. They identified the goal of starting a land trust in Niagara and some of the steps that would have to be taken to achieve that goal. One of their first priorities was identifying people who might be interested in the land trust. They compiled a list of over 200 names of local people interested in environmental issues. The Steering Committee also contacted potential guest speakers and arranged for three experts to speak at the meeting: Steve Hounsell of Ontario Nature, Peter Carson of the Long Point Basin Land Trust and Bernie VanDenBelt, Chair of the Ontario Land Trust Alliance. There were approximately 50 guests in attendance for the evening seminar on Tuesday July 12th, 2005 at the Vineland MNR office. Upon completion of the lectures and dinner, Paul Robertson and Barbara Wiens asked those who were interested in joining a Founding Committee for the Niagara Land Trust to put their names forth.

The Founding Committee began meeting in September 2005. Originally it was composed of 13 individuals who met monthly, usually at the Niagara Region building in Thorold. Five committees were formed (marketing, financial, criteria, constitution and long-term planning), which met more frequently between regular board meetings. The Founding Committee had a large task ahead of itself. Its role was to shape the mission of the land trust and to complete its incorporation and charitable status documents. To complete these documents, the Founding Committee would have to come up with a name for the land trust, determine its boundaries, create its Constitution and other by-laws and list its corporate objects.

To name the land trust, Paul Robertson created surveys for people on the Founding Committee and the Niagara Woodlot Association to answer. He asked everyone to rate a series of names and to identify key words that they would like to see in the name of the land trust. From this exercise, it was decided that the Niagara Land Trust would be the best name. A name search however turned up an incorporated Niagara Historical Land Trust, which meant that the Niagara Land Trust name would not be legally available. Upon further research however, it was discovered that the Niagara Historical Land Trust, while incorporated, never actually existed, other than on paper. Barbara Wiens, a former member of the Steering Committee agreed to contact the Niagara Historical Land Trust to ask for the use of their name. They graciously agreed to dissolve their corporation to allow the Niagara Land Trust to have that name legally.

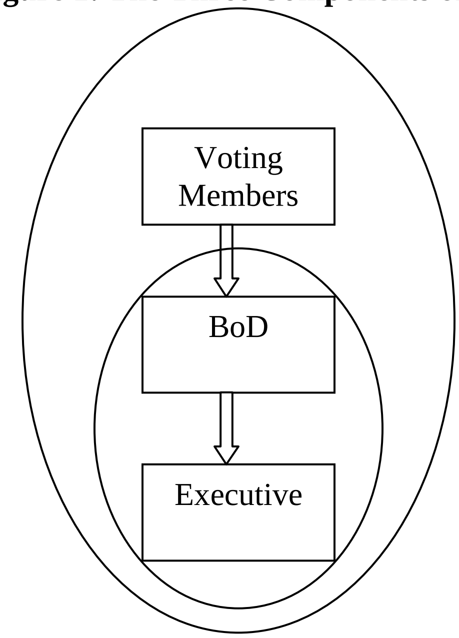
After much discussion and hard work, on June 22nd, 2006 the members of the Niagara Land Trust Founding Committee agreed to send the incorporation and charitable status applications to their lawyer, Ian Attridge, for submission. Since then, these applications have been debated and revised. The documents were not submitted until April, 2007.

Background to the Niagara Land Trust

The Niagara Land Trust is a new land trust, which has yet to be incorporated. The NLT however has not developed in isolation; it has immersed itself in the land trust community. The NLT is an associate member of the Ontario Land Trust Alliance and regularly attends its meetings and seminars. Moreover, the NLT has hired Ian Attridge, a lawyer who is the executive director of the Kawartha Heritage Conservancy and who has incorporated approximately 1/3 of all land trusts in Ontario (Attridge, 2006). The NLT has also developed its constitution and land securement policies based on the activities of other Ontario Land Trusts. Several land trusts have generously donated their constitution and land securement policies so that the NLT could create their own documents. The activity of sharing legal documents amongst land trusts and other non-profit organizations is quite common (Walker, 2005).

The Niagara Land Trust is a director-driven trust; the majority of the decision-making power is concentrated within the Board of Directors. The NLT Founding Committee decided to adopt that structure in order to ensure adherence to the organization’s mission and to prevent insider control, in the form of Directors using the Trust to their own benefit. The Board of Director members are members of the organization. At any given time there will be a minimum of 12 members and a maximum of 25. The role of the membership includes annual voting for a portion of the Board of Directors (BoD), voting for changes to the bylaws and attending the Annual General Meeting. The membership will not meet as often as the Board of Directors. There are 6-12 people on the Board of Directors. The responsibilities of the board include voting for new members, voting for the executive and making most organizational decisions. The final component of the NLT is the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee has 3-4 people acting as chair, vice-chair, secretary and treasurer. At times, the secretary and treasurer can be the same person. The Executive Committee is elected each year (NLT Meeting Minutes, March 16, 2006). Figure 1 demonstrates how the three components of the NLT interact.

Figure 1: The Three Components of the Niagara Land Trust



The category of “members” was created to allow more people to have direct involvement with decision-making in the NLT and for them to serve as an advisory council to the Board of Directors. Having the board being accountable to the membership is also designed to prevent entrenched interests from getting onto the board. A person can be a member of the NLT for 9 years and can renew that term after taking a break. In this manner the membership provides stability to the organization. The membership will also contain people who are an asset to the organization. For example, the NLT will be seeking members who are lawyers, accountants or fundraisers.

In the future, the NLT intends to create a non-voting membership where people can become financial supporters of the organization. The non-voting membership has two purposes. Firstly, it will allow community members to demonstrate their support for and interest in the NLT. Secondly, it will provide financial contributions to the organization.

The NLT has not yet launched this new structure. It intends to begin accepting nominations for the membership in January or February 2007 (NLT Meeting Minutes, June 22nd, 2006). A nomination committee has been formed from the existing Founding Committee. They will be working closely with the marketing committee to help attract the appropriate people to be a part of the membership.

The NLT attempted to create a structure which would encourage community involvement, yet retain an efficient board decision-making process. They sought to put restraints on the board however (in the form of the membership and yearly reviews) to ensure that the board could not be hijacked for personal gain. It was also decided upon a director-driven arrangement, because it is easier for a land trust to switch from a director-driven to a member-driven land trust than vice-versa (Attridge, 2005). This means that if after a period of time the original set-up is not functioning correctly then the land trust could transition into a member-driven one. This provides the land trust with some flexibility in the future. At present, the individual contribution of NLT founding committee members is pivotal to the success of the organization. Their backgrounds and expertise are of relevance because they have helped to shape the structure and goals of the NLT.

Members of the Niagara Land Trust

The Niagara Land Trust began with fourteen members of the Founding Committee and now has twelve who regularly attend. While the members have a diverse educational and work experience background, most of them share a common interest and employment in the environmental field. There are eight males and four females on the NLT. The Founding Committee has had one member leave, after he felt like he had contributed all he was capable of contributing. Another member has stopped attending meetings.

The majority of NLT Founding Committee members are employed in environmental fields. They range in employment from a restoration specialist, an environmental performance director for a large company, a consultant, a nature tour guide, a stewardship coordinator, forester, farmer and student. It is interesting to note that half of those who are on the Founding Committee for the NLT are self-employed. The remaining NLT Founding Committee members are employed in advertising, commercial property management and the Canadian government (NLT Founding Committee, August 31, 2005). There are several members who own large portions of land. The lack of diversity in employment and expertise might have hindered the NLT in the beginning of its formation. The NLT is now looking to include a wider variety of individuals, with specific professional skills in their next membership (NLT Meeting Minutes, June 22nd, 2006). This will help to reduce the need for paying for outside expertise, such as the lawyer that the NLT currently employs.

At present (April 2007) the NLT is still being run by its Founding Committee. The members of the NLT are limited to those on the Founding Committee. Upon the official launch of the NLT, both Members and the Board of Directors will be chosen. This will result in a larger number of people being involved in the NLT. Moreover, the NLT will begin seeking non-voting membership to support the organization. In the future, the NLT will seek more people to be a part of the organization. These people will have a wider variety of skill-sets, hopefully contributing to the organizational needs of the NLT. The NLT will also seek to have more community members involved in the NLT, in the form of non-voting members (with annual dues) or as volunteers for the organization.

Role of the Niagara Land Trust in Protecting and Promoting Valued Ecosystems

The Niagara Land Trust has kept a deliberately broad set of criteria for selecting land to protect (NLT Meeting Minutes, March 16, 2006). So far, the NLT has no official mandate to protect a certain type of ecosystem. The protection of land is at the discretion of the board, based on the wide-ranging criteria. This will allow future boards the utmost flexibility in their decisions.

The Criteria Committee of the Niagara Land Trust are in the process of developing a comprehensive set of site selection criteria. An interim set of criteria have been developed and their efficacy is currently being tested on a variety of properties throughout Niagara. The criteria will be improved upon once they have been tested in a variety of situations.

At present, the NLT has not protected any land. It is still awaiting its charitable status and official incorporation designation. The NLT has had several people contact it who are interested in donating land or engaging in a conservation easement with the NLT (Roach, 2006, personal observation) but cannot act upon these offers until the organization has achieved these pivotal milestones. The NLT aspires in the future to make a positive contribution to conservation in the Niagara Peninsula through protecting land directly and encouraging stewardship of private land.

The Niagara Land Trust aims to promote the valued ecosystems within the Niagara Peninsula. One of their first goals is to commence a media campaign drawing attention to the need for conservation in Niagara (NLT Meeting Minutes, September 14, 2006). Additionally, the NLT has future plans to help develop young conservationists. In its growth plan, the NLT has identified that it wants to develop a scholarship program for local students and eventually to have a cooperative student. The duration of the student’s employment is unclear. As the NLT grows as an organization, it also aspires to involve more of the community in the conservation of its natural spaces. Developing a comprehensive volunteer program is another goal identified in its growth plan.

As the NLT is a young organization, it is difficult to ascertain its exact role in protecting and promoting valued ecosystems in Niagara. The Criteria Committee has been careful to make the selection criteria as broad as possible to ensure that the NLT can exercise maximum discretion when it comes to possible land deals. The Growth Committee on the other hand has been a bit vague when it comes to identifying long-term goals. While part of this could be a desire to not “step on the toes” of future board members, it does leave the organization in danger of drift. Moreover, in the beginning stages it is pivotal that the land trust have a direction and achievable goals. Protecting property early and promoting the conservation cause in Niagara would go a long way to garner public support.

The Niagara Land Trust's Governance

Governance is related to the political, economic and personal decision making processes which are available to land trusts. Having good governance is a necessary step in moving towards sustainability (Gibson, 2001; 19). As described in the "Background to the Land Trust Section" the Niagara Land Trust follows a Director-driven model of governance. Thus, from an internal political perspective the majority of the power is concentrated in the Board of Directors. Peripheral governing systems also have an effect on the NLT. Regional planners create influence on private land owners through land use decision-making. This can have an effect on private landowners desire to donate to a land trust. The NLT is dependent upon the Canadian government to permit the organization to Incorporate and to achieve charitable status. Moreover, through the Federal government's Ecological Gifts ("EcoGifts") program, charitable land trusts are permitted to offer tax incentives to those who donate. Each province has specific criteria for what constitutes an EcoGift however it is the Federal government which permits the tax break (Environment Canada, 2005). After the 2006 Budget, donating land through the EcoGifts program became even more attractive: "the capital gains inclusion rate for such donations [was reduced] to zero" (Hammond, 2006). This demonstrates that there is a political level of support for land trusts at the Federal level. Similarly, provincial governments such as Ontario, Manitoba and British Columbia have altered their land use laws to make conservation easements easier to pursue (Andrews and Loukidelis, 1996; 2). Overall, there appears to be a trend towards provincial and federal governments enacting legislation which aids in the work of land trusts.

In terms of the economic aspects of governance, the NLT appears to be much more vulnerable to the whims of others. While the EcoGifts program provides a mechanism through which to attract potential donors, it does not provide money for the day-to-day operations of the NLT. The Niagara Land Trust is dependent upon its ability to fundraise to support its organization. As previously mentioned, the NLT lacks the professional resources of volunteers such as a fundraiser or accountant. Fundraising could prove to be an area in which the NLT requires much more capacity building. Currently, the NLT has seven corporate supporters, all of which are local businesses. Five of the businesses provided $2 500 in financial or in-kind support and two of the businesses provided $1 250 each (NLT Meeting Minutes, June 22, 2006). While this support has been pivotal to the success of the NLT thus far, most of the money has already been allocated to specific land trust activities. This will mean that the NLT will shortly be out of money, unless they are able to raise some in the meantime. At present because the NLT does not have charitable status, it cannot issue charitable receipts for individual donations or apply to granting agencies. Thus, small-scale fundraisers which make it explicit that we are not yet a charity are necessary. The present goal of the NLT is to combine small-scale fundraising with opportunities for public outreach and promotion (NLT Meeting Minutes, September 14, 2006). In the future, however, the economic aspects of governance will have an enormous impact on the longevity and independence of the Niagara Land Trust. Depending upon one source of funding too much could limit the NLT's ability to operate independently, whereas conversely, having a few large donors is much more efficient than soliciting thousands of smaller ones.

The final aspect of governance to be discussed is related to personal decision-making. The Niagara Land Trust is composed of a team of volunteers working to “Conserve the natural heritage of the Niagara Peninsula” (NLT Meeting Minutes, June 22, 2006). While all members of the Trust bring specific skills, it is clear that a wider variety of professional skills are needed. As the land trust is so new, currently personal decision-making has had an important impact on the direction and scope of the Trust. As the NLT becomes more established, with the constitution and operating policies more firmly entrenched, personal-decision making will not have as large of an impact; although it will still result in the bulk of the decision-making power. The interesting thing to note is that while the majority of the members of the Founding Committee come from an environmental background, important distinctions between the personal values of individual members are emerging. For example, the NLT struggles with questions of how much management is appropriate, whether it should be protecting urban forests and whether public education and access should be a priority. In the future, personal beliefs on these issues will come to shape the land trust’s actions. As these issues were never resolved in a formal manner through policy or legislation, it is suspected that these questions will remain unresolved and that there will be a flux from year to year, Board to Board on these issues. The NLT has taken steps though to limit the power of individual Directors. This is necessary to prevent the use of the NLT for personal gain or ego gratification.

In sum, Niagara Land Trust’s system of governance was well-supported, specifically in its political, economic and personal decision-making power. Politically, the NLT appears to be fairly well supported; government structures aid in the organization’s governance. Economically, the NLT is quite vulnerable. It is dependent upon the will of others to achieve financial comfort. In terms of personal decision-making, currently, the Founding Committee is having a profound impact on the direction of the NLT based on personal beliefs. In the future, when legislation and policy are adopted the Board will have much less impact based on personal beliefs. In the next section, the issue of capacity building will be discussed to discover how the NLT can improve its governance.

Capacity Building Within the Niagara Land Trust

Developing strong systems of governance are directly related to capacity building (CLTA, 2005; 3). As illustrated by the discussion of governance, the NLT has to take steps to build its capacity. While the NLT is a young organization, it has undertaken a number of relevant actions to build capacity.

The Niagara Land Trust is an associate member of the Ontario Land Trust Alliance. As a member, the NLT will regularly attend OLTA’s fall Conferences and spring workshops. Last year the fall Conference was attended by five NLT members, something that was noted by fellow land trust participants as being a large number (Roach, personal observation, November 2005). This year, three participants plan to attend the Conference, with more possibly being added to the list (NLT meeting minutes, September 14, 2006). These Conferences focus on educating and building capacity in local land trusts, something that the NLT benefited from greatly. Moreover, these conferences provide an opportunity for the NLT to network with other local land trusts in Ontario, something that can be more educational than the workshops themselves. The Fall Conferences typically have five sessions and are whole-weekend affairs. The Spring Workshops typically have two workshops and are just for the day.

The Niagara Land Trust has also opened itself up to peer evaluation and direction through hosting a week night seminar in July 2005. At this meeting, fifty plus residents of the Niagara Peninsula were asked to attend a meeting that featured land trust experts as guest speakers. After the guest speakers had had an opportunity to speak, the Founding Committee for the land trust was formed out of interested participants. The NLT also plans on having another opportunity for members of the community to comment on the direction and scope of the land trust. Additionally, the NLT has stayed in contact with its conservation partners, such as the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, to provide them with updates and get direction (Robertson, 2006). This feedback has strengthened the capacity of the NLT.

The Niagara Land Trust has taken introductory steps to build its capacity. These steps include being a member of the Ontario Land Trust Alliance and attending OLTA's Conferences and Workshops and also welcoming community support and input. There are many areas where the NLT needs to build capacity. One reason why so little organizational capacity has been built is because the NLT is a young organization. Resources, both financial and personal need to be built as part of a capacity building regime and are essential to building capacity in other areas.

Conclusion

This chapter offered a brief summary of the case study of the Niagara Land Trust. A history of the Niagara Land Trust was given to provide the reader context for the case study. A group of like-minded individuals got together to create the Steering Committee. They organized an Evening Seminar in order to capture the public's interest and to create a Founding Committee to incorporate a land trust in Niagara. The Founding Committee is composed of similarly like-minded individuals, with the bulk of them being employed in the broadly defined environmental sector.

Chapter 5 argued that there were three important characteristics of the Niagara Land Trust, namely its role in environmental protection, its governance and its capacity building. In terms of protection, policies and procedures for land acquisition were discussed, but it was determined that there is insufficient evidence to comment conclusively on the NLT's ability to conserve land. The second element discussed was that of governance. Using Gibson's (2001) broad definition of governance as a starting point, the political, economic and personal decision making processes of the NLT were discussed. The NLT is quite vulnerable to outside decision-making processes which could impact its day-to-day operations. The final element discussed was capacity building. NLT’s Associate Membership of OLTA and its willingness to open itself up to peer-review were viewed as positive indications that capacity building will be a goal of the organization. It is evident however that further issues need to be addressed.

The next chapter, Chapter 6, is designed to synthesize the information gleaned from the literature reviews, interviews, and case study. Its purpose is to highlight the main themes emerging from all three and to test the congruency of the data. The goal is to substantiate the findings of this thesis, with a particular emphasis on ensuring the relevancy of the criteria that have been developed.

CHAPTER 6: Synthesis of Literature Reviews, Expert Interviews and Case Study Research

Introduction

The purpose of Chapter 6 is to finalize the criteria developed through the literature review and to apply them to the case study of the Niagara Land Trust. A review of the main themes of the literature sets up a comparison between these themes and those of the expert interviews. Information that emerged from the expert interviews prompted alterations to the criteria developed in Chapter 4. Changes were made to the criteria of "maintaining public integrity", "proper recruitment, management and training of volunteers" and "pursuing multiple benefits" and are highlighted within this chapter.

Within this chapter, the final, established criteria are applied one-by-one to the case study of the Niagara Land Trust, demonstrating the strengths and weaknesses of the NLT. This section is divided into two, celebrating areas of success, such as cultivating relationships, and considering areas in need of capacity building, such as their strategic planning mechanisms.

This chapter will conclude by highlighting the area of capacity building. The importance of capacity building of local land trusts was highlighted in both the literature and the interviews. This chapter will compare the areas that the literature suggests that capacity needs to be built, with what the expert interviewees feel needs to be improved.

Main Themes of the Literature Reviews

The literature review presented in chapter 3 introduced the key academic research area related to land trusts: conservation biology, volunteerism, social capital and capacity building to set the stage for chapter 4, which drew specifically from land trust documents.

Land trusts are relatively new conservation organizations in Canada. Most land trusts in Canada have been formed within the last decade. The growth in academic literature lags behind that of the growth in land trusts. Most literature on land trusts is anecdotal, while the majority of academic work does not distinguish between small and large land trusts or new and older land trusts. Moreover, the academic literature is contradictory in the fields of conservation biology and volunteer management, hence adding to the difficulties that land trusts face.

Land trusts, for the most part, have been created in response to the development boom which is currently taking place in some parts of Canada. This, coupled with decreased government resources for conservation has increased the pressure on natural environments. Land trusts therefore are conservative organizations, in that they wish to preserve ecological conditions related to a way of life.

The political climate in Canada is warming to the idea of land trusts. Steps have been taken to make charitable giving to land trusts easier and more beneficial for the donor. Never-the-less, land trusts as a whole face several ongoing obstacles. Generally, most land trusts suffer from poor record keeping practices and a lack of consistent monitoring on their properties. Like most environmental organizations, land trusts are also lacking in financial resources. Ensuring adequate funding for stewardship, organizational maintenance and land acquisition is always a challenge. Ensuring that volunteers are adequately trained and engaging in partnerships is an excellent way for land trusts to increase capacity to address these issues.

Criteria for a Successful Land Trust Derived from Literature Review

The criteria presented at the conclusion of the literature review was derived from the main themes of the literature review, OLTA's Conference and Workshops, Gibson's *Principles for Sustainability* and the *Canadian Land Trust Alliance's Standards and Practices*. The criteria were arranged from means to ends, with the end goal being that land trusts and the volunteers involved with them be governed in a manner that will allow the organization to protect valued ecosystems effectively.

The criteria are intended to provide guidance to land trusts above what is provided from CLTA. They are less focused on legal matters and more on building capacity within local land trusts. The criteria also go beyond the general goal of protecting land to suggest other benefits that land trusts can be simultaneously pursuing.

Nine criteria for a successful land trust were presented. They address issues of maintaining public integrity; proper recruitment, management and training of volunteers; choosing the appropriate conservation tool; good governance; having a commitment to capacity building; adherence to laws and legal norms; pursuing multiple benefits; stewardship; and managing for perpetuity. Each criterion also had several sub-points related to its application. A detailed explanation of the criterion followed after its listing. The particular application of the criteria, however, should be tailored to the context of each individual local land trust.

In the next section, the main themes from the interviews will be discussed. These themes will help to identify needs for any additional criteria for evaluating land trusts. The next section will conclude with a comparison between the main themes from the interviews and the main themes from the literature review.

Main Themes of the Interviews

To add a further dimension to the analysis of the governance of land trusts, interviews of key informants and Niagara Land Trust Founding Committee members were undertaken. The purpose of the interviews was to provide additional information and to also test the conclusions from the literature reviews. The interviews will also help with the analysis of the Niagara Land Trust and to supplement the basis for recommendations to OLTA and CLTA.

Table 1: List of Interviewees

Key Informant Interviews	Niagara Land Trust Volunteers
Al Ernest	David Beamer
Stewart Hilts	Alison Braithwaite
Wally King	Lisa Campbell
Ron Reid	Paul Roberston
Dave Walker	Jim Smith
Melissa Watkins	Rod Wright

The main themes of the interviews were quite similar to the main themes emerging from the literature review. Most people saw land trusts as having the primary aim of securing land for conservation purposes. Frequently, participants would also mention the ability of land trusts to educate the general population and politicians about the need for conservation in a given area. It is interesting to note however that some participants were against the possibility of education, claiming that land trusts should concentrate their efforts and resources on the securement of land. Overall, most participants commented on the concept of perpetuity, when it came to land trusts. They felt good about contributing something local that would have indefinite positive effects. Wally King of the Georgian Bay Land Trust commented, "It's the finest form of public service. We are preserving for our children and grandchildren". Other possible contributions that land trusts could make included the ability for the public to contribute to land use planning. Land trusts offer the general public an opportunity to shape the future of their location. This idea is summarized by Stew Hilts, Chair of the Ontario Farmland Trust. He commented that land trusts "provide an outlet for interested, educated citizens to be involved in conservation. [Unlike] other groups which spend their time protesting, land trusts tend to be an outlet that is positive and practical and local…".

Most land trust participants found the existing governing system to be weak, in terms of land protection. Specifically, most commented that planning at the municipal level is too piecemeal and that land protection through planning is not done at a large enough scale. Several commented that governments had trouble recruiting volunteers. Many people do not want to volunteer for the government because they feel that they are not included in the decision-making process. Involving themselves in land trusts, by contrast, allows them to feel a part of the decisions (Walker, 2006). Overall, the consensus of the interviewees was that government should be doing more to protect land. Most recognized that governments were themselves facing fiscal restraint, but they felt that money could have been better allocated to enable efficient land protection. This could include investing more heavily in land trusts to improve the governance process and to fulfill governments' conservation aims (Walker, 2006; Ernest, 2006; Watkins, 2006). In this manner, governments could act as a facilitator for the successes of land trusts. They could do so by providing funding and the legislative structure through which land trusts can conduct their business (Reid, 2006).

Land trusts, in general, start out as strictly volunteer organizations. Volunteers can be successful at promoting and managing land trusts, if the organization is kept small and the scope of their activities is limited. There are a few exceptions to this rule however, such as Long Point Basin Land Trust, which has been successful on a larger scale without paid staff (Ernest, 2006). Overall however, the consensus is that paid staff allows a land trust to do more with its organization. Reid (2006) commented that having staff makes a large difference to the capacity of organizations because staff allows the regular promotion of land trusts, making them known within the community. Moreover, he feels that it should not be the role of volunteers to address difficult ownership issues, such as encroachment. Having staff allows volunteers to do more of the work that they enjoy, rather than dealing with potentially contentious situations. Additionally, Hilts (2006) cautions that volunteers may find land trust management overly bureaucratic. The sheer amount of paperwork can daunt some potential volunteers. Having a staff person allows for some of the detail work to be done behind the scenes. It also provides continuity to an organization which may suffer from volunteer fatigue and turnover (Watkins, 2006). This can allow volunteers to focus on promoting land trusts.

The interviewees approached the question of assessing the capacity of volunteers and land trusts to manage land in perpetuity from a variety of different perspectives. Some focused on the quality of volunteers involved in the organization and the sensitivity with which landownership should be approached (King, 2006; Reid, 2006). Others talked about a variety of organizational assessments which are available for nonprofits (Ernest, 2006; Hilts, 2006; Walker, 2006; Watkins, 2006). Many of the experts interviewed cited the Canadian Land Trust Alliance's *Standards and Practices* as a potential source for organizational assessment. Some, however, questioned the ability of land trusts to implement these recommendations (Hilts, 2006; Watkins, 2006). On the one hand, Hilts feels that accreditation is something that is worthwhile to be working towards. On the other hand, these standards and practices cover almost every situation, which is difficult for a land trust to commit to, if they have not experienced what the standards are addressing. Watkins, on the other hand, feels that some land trust groups may feel intimidated by the standards and practices because they are largely volunteer organizations. She feels that with direction land trusts can achieve the objectives set out in the standards and practices. The consensus was that while the standards and practices set out by CLTA are strong (Hilts, 2006; Walker, 2006), there remains some ambivalence about how to assess the capacity of land trusts (Watkins, 2006).

The gaps in capacity of volunteers and land trusts to manage land in perpetuity identified by the expert interviewees were quite similar to those identified in the literature. Overall, financial constraint was identified by all of them. King (2006) pointed out that some organizations do not even have money to purchase stamps. Also, land trusts have had trouble attracting people with experience in fund development (Walker, 2006). This further hinders their ability to raise funds, and speaks to a deficiency in the variety of types of volunteers that land trusts are attracting. These problems also extend to marketing (Ernest, 2006) but were identified by the interviewees to a lesser extent. A gap in the ability of land trusts to plan strategically was acknowledged by several interviewees (Ernest, 2006; Walker, 2006) and was addressed mostly in their discussion as to how to build capacity in volunteers and land trusts. Time issues were also commonly acknowledged in the interviews. This was particularly pertinent for land trusts that relied mostly on volunteers. Finding people who could commit to long-term stewardship of an area is a problem for some land trusts (Ernest, 2006; Hilts, 2006; Reid, 2006). Finally, another gap in capacity of volunteers and land trusts to manage land in perpetuity was the age of volunteers that land trusts seem to attract. Reid (2006) commented that there does not seem to be the same volunteer ethic in younger generations as there is in people who are forty-five and older. Moreover, there is no “middle-management” in land trusts. Therefore, it is difficult to train young conservation professionals because there are limited opportunities for them in land trusts. This generational transition could cause problems for land trusts over the long term. Walker (2006) notes a similar phenomenon.

The number one way that all the expert interviewees identified for building capacity in volunteers and land trusts in order to ensure long-term conservation was training. Walker (2006) commented that overall volunteers come to a land trust with a good skill-set. These skills however are usually concentrated in the natural sciences, which do not improve land trusts where their capacity needs to be built. Overall, Walker (2006) feels from his perspective as a employee of CLTA that there is a lack of training once volunteers join land trusts. Training should be undertaken in organization development, fund development, baseline documentation and conservation easements. We are also in a period of quick legislative requirement changes, in terms of the introduction of Bill 51 and 16 and the changes to charity law. Walker (2006) feels that it is unreasonable to expect that volunteers would be able to keep up with these legislative changes without aid. Ernest, Hilts, King and Watkins (2006) stressed the importance of experience in order to address capacity building issues. Sharing experiences at the OLTA or BCLT Conferences were also highlighted. Mentoring programs can also help to address the gap in knowledge between experienced volunteers and inexperienced volunteers and experienced land trusts and inexperienced land trusts (Reid, 2006; Walker, 2006). While OLTA and CLTA are not formally encouraging a mentoring program, a large part of the annual gatherings are the informal sharing of information. Watkins (2006) demonstrated the importance of this informal sharing amongst land trusts, by commenting about the culture which it develops. “There is a real culture of sharing within land trusts… That’s what kind of unique about land trusts… The land trusts are really willing to share that and there’s a real sense of community around those things, I think. Nobody is afraid to share what they’ve learned” (Watkins, 2006).

Another mechanism through which land trusts can build capacity is through organizational assessment and subsequent strategic planning. Ernest (2006) points out the importance of understanding your strengths and weaknesses in order to improve your organization. Walker (2006) undertook a similar process with the Rideau Waterway Land Trust. Building capacity, in their opinion required a clear understanding of the strengths, weaknesses and goals of their organization. Once these have been identified the use of a strategic plan could be used to achieve these goals and to also address the goals of the community.

There was some differences between the experts concerning whether land trusts were governed in a manner that would allow them to conserve land in perpetuity. One source of confusion revolved around what "in perpetuity" meant exactly (Hilts, 2006; Watkins, 2006). Others pointed to the fact that governments and government agencies were not always "in perpetuity" (King, 2006; Hilts, 2006). Overall, most interviewees pointed to the land trusts by-laws as a source of organizational strength. King (2006) argued that trust law is more enduring than corporate law and government. Also, many land trusts have planned for the event that they cease to exist (as required by Charitable Law). Usually this involves shifting the organization's assets to another similar organization. One area of concern noted by multiple interviewees was the transition from the original board to the next, Walker (2006) commented that most land trusts in Ontario are from 10-12 years old and have not planned for organizational succession. He has found that that is the case right across Canada and has been told that this is similar to the experience in the United States. Ernest (2006) talked about the transition that occurs within most land trusts as well. They go from organizations which focus primarily on acquiring land to organizations which focus on the stewardship of their properties. Land trusts cannot be successful without the support of their local community. Ensuring that land trusts are reputable organizations worthy of community support in terms of land, volunteers and financial donations are the key to ensuring the longevity of the organization (Reid, 2006). Some experts also acknowledge that some land trusts will fail (Walker, 2006; Hilts, 2006). In Hilts' mind, the failure of a couple of land trusts will not result in negative consequences for conservation. He is confident that the situation will evolve and that organizations will shift to ensure that conservation is still occurring.

As demonstrated, the main themes of the interviews were quite similar to the main themes contained within the literature review. For the most part, there was consensus amongst the expert interviewees about the main strengths and challenges for land trusts. The interviewees did sometimes differ in terms of what they wanted to focus on and emphasize. In the next section, the criteria derived from the interviews will be discussed.

Criteria for a Successful Land Trust Derived from Interviews

The criteria that were derived from the interviews were very similar to those derived from the literature review. While most criteria derived from the interviews fit into the existing categories identified from the literature review, at times there was a slightly different focus or a shift of emphasis on the subcategories. This section will highlight areas where the interviewees stressed components of the criteria that were not emphasized within the literature. The next section will present the final criteria based on the literature review and the key informant interviews.

The interviews highlighted some areas wherein the information from the literature had a different emphasis. The information gleaned from the interviews fit within the criteria of “maintaining public integrity”, “proper recruitment, management and training of volunteers” and “pursuing multiple benefits”. In terms of integrity the interviewees stressed the importance of having a strong and reputable Board of Directors (King, 2006; Robertson, 2006; Smith, 2006). Beamer (2006) commented “the thing about land trusts, more than other organizations, it has to do more with integrity than intent… that’s why the future will always be unknown…It only takes one person to mess up integrity”. Thus, there is an emphasis on the actions of individual board members, rather than just an emphasis on the land trust in its entirety, which the literature tends to focus on. This emphasis on both the individual and the land trust as a whole should be part of the criteria for land trusts governing in a manner that will allow them to protect land in perpetuity.

The emphasis on board members within the interviews should also be reflected within the “volunteers” criteria. The Board of Directors is the lifeblood of a land trust. They are the people charged with making the key decisions which affect the organization as a whole. Not surprisingly, the interviewees stressed the importance of having a strong board. Characteristics of a strong Board of Directors included leadership, integrity, a diversity of skills and good team work skills (King, 2006; Smith, 2006). A strong Board of Directors also plans for succession. This would entail planning both for the transitions that land trusts make in terms of amending their goals and during volunteer succession (Ernest, 2006; Walker, 2006). Boards also have to work diligently to attract youth to their organization to encourage diversity and to ensure the longevity of their work (Reid, 2006; Walker, 2006). As is evident, a greater emphasis on the quality and planning for the Board of Directors is needed within the “proper recruitment, management and training of volunteers” criteria section.

The final addition to the criteria would fall under the category of “pursuing multiple benefits”. The interviewees were apt to point out that a lot of the work required to manage a land trust is simply not fun (Hilts, 2006; Watkins, 2006). Watkins argued that many volunteers are attracted to land trusts in the first place because of their love of outdoors. While land trusts help them achieve their desire to conserve land in perpetuity, most of their work is completed out of the field. One strategy that land trusts can use to build capacity is to have fun! Try to allow volunteers to engage in the types of activities which they enjoy and are good at. Also, make sure that land trusts members take the time to enjoy themselves. This can help to build morale within the organization. The second element that was stressed within the interview process was the importance of having a central goal (Campbell, 2006; Watkins, 2006). Land trusts should make sure that their goal and/or message is simply communicated (Walker, 2006). Efforts should be made to create goals for land trusts and communicate them at a provincial and federal level (Watkins, 2006). Therefore, the two elements which should be added to the “pursuing multiple benefits” criterion are that land trusts should have fun doing their work and that a central goal should unify their cause.

Finalized Criteria for a Successful Land Trust

In the previous sections areas where the interviews emphasized different aspects from the literature review were highlighted. In this section, a new version of these three criteria will be presented, with a specific discussion as to why these new subcategories were included. These revised criteria will replace the previous criteria under the same name and will join the six criteria previously established in chapter 4.

Maintaining Public Integrity

- land trust volunteers must be honest and forthright in all of their undertakings
- land trusts should garner public support though honesty and approachability
- land trusts must realize that the actions of one organization reflects on the entire land trust community
- land trusts should be committed to equity and hold themselves to strong ethical principles
- *land trusts should seek strong and reputable board members*

The new subcategory "land trusts should seek strong and reputable board members" was included due to the interviewees' emphasis on the quality of the board members within individual land trusts. Beamer (2006) pointed out the importance of a single individual's actions which could create negative impacts for the land trust as a whole. Brewer (2003) argued that if that image of one land trust was tainted, the image of all land trusts are as well. Therefore, it is evident that choosing board members who always conduct themselves with integrity is of the utmost importance.

Proper Recruitment, Management and Training of Volunteers

- *Board Members are essential to the strength of the organization*
- *transition of board should be planned for and managed*
- *a diversity of board members should be sought*
- volunteers must be properly trained to ensure adherence to the mission of the organization and that they are capable of handling the rigours of their job
- volunteers must be managed in a professional manner
- land trust organizations should create job descriptions and ambitious recruiting programs to ensure that the professional expertise needed is brought to the land trust
- volunteer placements should be treated like a professional appointment, therefore volunteers should fulfill their job requirements and be periodically evaluated
- volunteers' contribution to land trusts should be acknowledged regularly

It was evident from the interviews that choosing a strong Board of Directors is "essential to the strength of the organization" through the importance it was given by the key informant interviewees. Braithwaite (2006), King (2006), Robertson (2006) and Watkins (2006) all spoke to the importance of choosing the appropriate people being on the board. Walker (2006), Ernest (2006) and to a lesser extent King (2006) stressed that "transition of board should be planned for and managed". This can be achieved both through strategic planning and through attracting “a diversity of board members”. Including youth within an organization encourages longevity and innovation (Walker, 2006; Reid, 2006). Diversity in the ages of volunteers has been missing in land trusts. Therefore the “volunteers” criterion was altered to better reflect what the interviewees emphasized within the interviews. Their focus was more on the board members within the land trusts than individuals volunteering in a different manner for the land trust.

Pursuing Multiple Benefits

- *land trusts should have a central goal which is widely communicated*
- “You must be the change you want to see in the world.” Mahatma Gandhi
- land trusts should seek sustainability benefits through their work
- social capital building should be a product of land trust’s work
- local land trusts should seek opportunities to educate the public

Additions were made to the “pursuing multiple benefits” criterion to demonstrate the importance of having a central goal. While at first the two may seem to be antithesis, they actually work in conjunction with each other. Campbell (2006) emphasized the importance of having a unifying goal which a land trust can rally behind. Watkins (2006) emphasized the potential importance of land trusts’ goals being broadcast through a provincial and/or federal organization. Having a unifying goal would serve to motivate land trusts, at the same time, it would produce multiple benefits. For example, having a central goal widely communicated would serve to educate the general public about the important activities that land trusts are engaged in. Moreover, it could motivate other organizations to pursue similar goals, hence creating sustainability benefits. Having a central goal makes land trusts individually and as a whole much more marketable (Walker, 2006). Thus, the criterion of “pursuing multiple benefits” was amended to include the importance of having “a central goal which is widely communicated”.

This section presented the final version of the criteria. The criteria were amended to reflect the differing emphasis that was discovered through the interview process. The criteria which were altered were presented in this section, as well as a justification for this decision. In the following section, the revised criteria will be applied to the case study of the Niagara Land Trust. Areas of success and areas in need of capacity building will be identified and recommendations will be made to the Niagara Land Trust and land trusts in general in Chapter 7.

Application of the Criteria to the Case Study

The previous section outlined the changes that were made to the criteria after conducting the interviews. Sub-categories were added to the “maintaining public integrity”, “proper recruitment, management and training of volunteers” and “pursuing multiple benefits” criteria in order to better represent the opinions of the interviewees. This research is using a case study approach (see Yin, 2003) to draw its conclusions. To evaluate whether the Niagara Land Trust is governed in such a manner that will allow them to effectively protect valued ecosystem, the criteria discussed in Chapter 4 and again in this Chapter, will be applied. The application of the criteria will use a social science methodology, described in Chapter 2.

The criteria will be applied to the Niagara Land Trust following the established order arranged loosely around means to ends of achieving the goal of conservation in perpetuity. This section will begin by analyzing the NLT using the criteria of "maintaining public integrity" and will end by analyzing the NLT against the criteria of "managing for perpetuity".

The "maintaining public integrity" category covers the role of volunteers within a land trust and the role of land trusts within the community. The NLT's volunteers have been honest and forthright in all of their undertakings thus far. There have been times when board members have had to declare a conflict of interest due to personal involvement in properties, for example. As the NLT is a young organization however, they have not had the opportunity to make many decisions where personal gain could be achieved. They must carry through with their commitment to develop a Conflict of Interest policy to ensure that all board members and volunteers clearly understand what a conflict entails. The NLT sought to garner public support through honesty and approachability in its inception. The Evening Seminar which took place in July 2005 sought to include the public in the decision-making processes and to allow participation of those who are interested. Paul Robertson, Chair of the NLT, also got an article published in *The Standard* a local Niagara paper, talking about the creation of a land trust in Niagara (Van Dongen, 2005). Since the Evening Seminar however there has been very little actions completed to garner public support. The goal of the marketing committee was to have a silent launch of the NLT beginning October 2006 (September 14, 2006, NLT Meeting Minutes). This launch has since been postponed. The meeting minutes have been circulated to the Steering Committee occasionally, but not with the regularity that should have taken place. In effect, the NLT has had a void of public input and participation since July 2005. This lack of public contact could have a negative effect on the organization when they attempt to launch the land trust. This is in part why the fundraising committee is currently seeking to conduct fundraising that raises money and awareness for the organization (September 14, 2006, NLT Meeting Minutes), with similar limited effect.

The NLT has conducted itself in a manner that will maintain the integrity of the land trust community. They have deliberated a great deal about how to ensure that the NLT conducts itself with integrity and to prevent it from becoming co-opted by self-interested members (Beamer, 2006). The NLT has created a constitution that its members feel will commit the organization to strong ethical principles (Wright, 2006). The NLT has not directly committed itself to pursuing equity. An argument has been made that the actions of land trusts in general pursue equity because they result in the maintenance of important ecological functions which aid everyone (see Brewer, 2003). While the NLT is certainly committed to protecting land in perpetuity, the principle of equity is not at the forefront of their decision-making. In terms of seeking strong and reputable board members, the NLT has so far succeeded. The Founding Committee was selected after the Steering Committee had made a list of approximately 200 people who they thought would be powerful allies for the land trust. Invitations were sent out to the 200 people, and approximately 50 people attended the Evening Seminar. From the Evening Seminar (and shortly afterwards), 14 people were selected to be board members. Now that that Founding Committee is getting ready to hand the NLT over to its first official Board of Directors, equal care should be given to ensure that the board members are strong and reputable. The nomination committee is charged with coming up with a process for attracting potential Board Members (October 5, 2006, NLT Meeting Minutes). The committee however is too small to make such a large decision. Input from the Founding Committee has taken place, however there has been a lot of inaction within the nomination committee. Having members from outside the current Founding Committee could be a good way to attract more community support, to reinvigorate the committee and to ensure the successful selection of committee members. In sum, the NLT is doing a fairly good job of ensuring integrity within their organization. They can improve the undertakings of their organization by seeking more community support.

The “proper recruitment, management and training of volunteers” criterion focuses both on board members and general volunteers within the organization. The criterion emphasizes the importance of regular recognition of volunteer efforts and that volunteers conduct themselves in a professional manner. The first sub-category identified is that board members are essential to the strength of a land trust. In the NLT the board members currently are the land trust. Since the NLT is not incorporated nor does it have charitable status, the land trust does not exist “on paper”. Hence, volunteers are responsible for every aspect of the NLT (Smith, 2006). In planning for the transition of the board, the NLT has had mixed success. For example, the Founding Committee has identified which people will be responsible for signing the incorporation documentation. This has resulted in the identification of the six original Board of Directors of the NLT (September 14, 2006, NLT Meeting Minutes). At the same time, the NLT has been doing a poor job of developing its Nomination Committee and identifying methods to attract future Members. The Founding Committee has spoken about the importance of attracting a diversity of Members. The possibility of approaching local service clubs, such as Rotary and Kiwanis was discussed at the November 2006 meeting (November 3, 2006, NLT Meeting Minutes). This might help ensure that a wider variety of people are aware of the NLT and the possibility of their members joining the NLT could be pursued.

In training the volunteers to ensure that they are capable of handling the rigours of their job and that they understand the mission of the organization the NLT has also had mixed results. As most of the Founding Committee played a large role in the development of the Mission Statement for the organization, it is fair to say that most would have a good understanding of what the NLT is trying to achieve. For the most part, the NLT has mostly learned “on the job” (Braithwaite, 2006). For example, many of the steps that the Founding Committee have taken could have been taken by the original Board of Directors. This would have increased the pace at which the Incorporation and Charitable Status could have been applied for, allowing for the NLT to launch its organization on its desired date. Currently, it looks like it will be difficult for the NLT to achieve its revised launch date of Earth Day 2007. Moreover, there appears to be a gap in the understanding of the legal requirements of a Board member. This is quite typical across most land trusts (Hilts, 2006). The NLT volunteers have more or less managed themselves in a professional manner. As all of the volunteers are on the Founding Committee, they are all more or less equal. At the same time however, the NLT does have a Founding Committee member who does not attend meetings. As the NLT has not yet incorporated its by-laws, it has chosen not to remove this member from the Founding Committee. Issues such as these test the resolve of the organization.

The NLT has indicated a desire to create job descriptions for its volunteers. It is the view of the Founding Committee that job descriptions and recruiting programs should be created by the original Board. The problem with this is that the original Board should be a reflection of an ambitious recruiting program, to ensure the longevity of the organization. People who join the original Board should also have a clear expectation of what their position entails. This becomes a complicated chicken and egg question. While the Founding Committee does not want to overstep the boundaries of its mission, they do want to ensure that the first Board of Directors is the best one possible. Treating volunteer placements like professional appointments, is difficult without the development of clear expectations around the role of the volunteers. The by-laws identify the role of a board of directors member. This will help to provide a baseline against which volunteers can be evaluated. At the same time, the NLT has chosen not to exercise its by-laws prior to them being incorporated. Hence, board members are not being held to fulfilling their job requirements. The NLT has done a good job of acknowledging the contribution of volunteers to its success. When the by-laws were first developed, the Chair brought in champagne for the group. The Chair also hosted the June 2006 meeting at his home where he treated the volunteers to a wonderful dinner. The December 2006 meeting was held at a local restaurant to ensure some holiday cheer. For the scope of the organization at this time, the NLT is doing a good job of acknowledging the contribution of volunteers.

The criterion “choosing the appropriate conservation tool” focuses on providing innovative solutions for land preservation. This criterion also has a special emphasis on conservation easements, as a tool which should be used with caution. The NLT currently does not have any land. There are a couple of landowners who have expressed limited interest in donating land to the organization, but these avenues have not been pursued. Bill 51 has done its part to ensure that conservation easements are legally defensible, but they still could face legal challenges. A Founding Committee member of the NLT has been attending OLTA training in conservation easements. This includes the spring 2006 workshop which focused on baseline documentation reports and the 2006 OLTA Gathering which had a session on “Calculating the Costs of Conservation Easement Stewardship”. Unfortunately, the attendance at this training has been limited to only one member of the NLT, although four other members expressed interest in attending the Regional Workshop (April 20, 2006, NLT Meeting Minutes). A binder regarding baseline documentation was circulated at the November 3, 2006 meeting and it was given to the chair for the NLT. More information and training around conservation easements will be required in the future.

The NLT is working to ensure that they are providing innovative mechanisms through which land can be conserved. There has been discussion, for example, about circulating pamphlets to estate planners to give people information about donating to the trust. At the same time, there seems to be a lack of knowledge surrounding the various options available for use by land trusts. This was reflected in the development of the selection criteria. More education and research around the various possibilities for land conservation are needed. The NLT sought to create by-laws which would ensure that land deals would be made with perpetuity in mind (Smith, 2006). The intent to maintain the organization over the long-term is there (Beamer, 2006). Although financial, administrative and human resources are a problem for the organization (Robertson, 2006). While some members of the NLT are optimistic that money and volunteers are available (Wright, 2006; Beamer, 2006), some have expressed concern about the long-term viability of the NLT in terms of resources (Braithwaite, 2006). Attracting volunteers who are comfortable with undertaking fundraising would help to strengthen the organization. The Niagara Land Trust is interested in looking for partnership opportunities to protect land. Specifically, the organization has identified partnership opportunities as one of its strategies for acquiring land in its Selection Criteria. The NLT plans on working with its local land trust partners to address regional concerns. A suggested meeting to discuss these issues has not yet taken place. Potential partners such as the Hamilton Naturalist Club would welcome these partnership opportunities (Ernest, 2006).

The NLT has done a fairly good job of partnering with government organizations. The NLT has an informal agreement with Land Care Niagara, a stewardship group funded by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, for the use of their office. Admittedly, the NLT has not done as good of a job working with local government agencies (Robertson, 2006). The NLT makes consistent use of the Region of Niagara building to hold meetings, but more could be done. Tensions between local government agencies and land trusts are quite common (Hilts, 2006).

The criterion of "good governance" concerns the role of land trusts within the community and internally. It emphasizes the need for transparent operations which reflect a desire to work towards the public good. The NLT's goal is to provide a mechanism through which the community can work towards conservation. The members of the Founding Committee have created the NLT with this goal in mind (Beamer, 2006). Some members of the NLT also hope that the organization can serve to unify local environmental groups (Campbell, 2006). The second sub-category is that land trust participants should recognize differing opinions, particularly dissenting ones. The NLT's success in this matter is less clear. For example, up to this point consensus has been sought for decision making within the board. While consensus is a good route to take, it means that all of the motions made by the Founding Committee have been supported unanimously, which may or may not reflect how the people actually feel. Secondly, this might indicate a desire to avoid potentially contentious issues. For example, the Founding Committee is divided on such important topics as what the role of the NLT should be. They agree that that NLT should conserve land, but some want to manage it, while others do not want to (Wright, 2006). Moreover, some believe that the NLT should only conserve land (Wright, 2006; Smith, 2006), whereas others see the NLT also playing an important educational role within the Region (Robertson, 2006). This could possibly cause problems for the NLT in the future, although some people see this as an opportunity (Wright, 2006).

The NLT keeps regular records of its decisions and wants to develop a conflict of interest policy, which would be consistent with conducting its business in a transparent manner. The NLT has also arranged for someone to audit the organization's finances (October 5, 2006, NLT Meeting Minutes). In order to conduct itself in a more transparent manner however, the NLT should seek more public input for its processes. It is understandable that at this juncture that the organization cannot facilitate a public input process, but having one should be identified as one of its future goals. Finally, the last sub-category was identified as land trusts should work towards the public good. In its work so far the NLT seems dedicated to pursuing the public good. The Mission Statement identifies the goal "to conserve the natural heritage of the Niagara Peninsula". This would appear to be a benevolent aspiration.

The next criterion on the means to ends spectrum is "commitment to capacity building". This criterion focuses on the exchange of information and the building of relationships. The NLT has participated in the exchange of information amongst land trusts. For example, the NLT developed its constitution after consulting various other land trusts' constitutions. Moreover, in the creation of the constitution, the NLT employed Ian Attridge who has experience with multiple land trusts. The NLT is seeking the help of other land trusts to develop an application for future board members (November 3, 2006, NLT Meeting Minutes). Representatives from the NLT have also attended the last two OLTA Gatherings. The Niagara Land Trust needs to improve its information sharing in a couple of key areas, however. First, the NLT has made a commitment to meet with local land trusts around Niagara. This meeting keeps on getting postponed although the other local land trusts have expressed an interest in getting together (Ernest, 2006). Secondly, the NLT needs to start exchanging information more with its constituents. Some information should be distributed to the general public if the launch date has to be postponed again. The NLT is currently working on the development of a website, which will help with this distribution (November 3, 2006, NLT Meeting Minutes). Thirdly, the NLT has to maintain its original commitment to interacting with the Ontario land trust community. There has been a steady decline in the number of people who have attended OLTA events, which could jeopardize opportunities for the NLT to network. Also, the NLT's membership with OLTA has expired, and there is no money allocated in the budget to pay for this year's dues (November 3, 2006, NLT Meeting Minutes). Money should be set aside to ensure that the NLT can remain in good standing with OLTA. The above points also link to the discussion of the second sub-category that "relationships amongst land trusts, umbrella agencies, volunteers and donors must be continually improved". The NLT has to do more in the future to reach out to the rest of the land trust community and to build reciprocity with its constituents. The launch of the organization will be a time that focuses on building relationships with the local community, although the NLT could do more to cultivate relationships prior to the official launch. Ideas that have been suggested include making presentations to the local service clubs to increase interest in and knowledge of the need for a land trust in Niagara.

Umbrella agencies such as OLTA, CLTA and BCLT can facilitate the pooling of resources, but more needs to be done to support local land trusts. The umbrella agencies are also going through a period of rapid transition with the creation of CLTA. The Ontario Land Trust Alliance just hired a new Executive Director allowing Dave Walker to focus more on supporting CLTA (Walker, 2006; Watkins, 2006). This could allow greater growth in the opportunities that these umbrella agencies create for local land trusts. At the same time however, it is recognized that OLTA needs to do more to facilitate the pooling and distribution of information, although to a large degree it is embedded within the culture of land trusts (Watkins, 2006).

From the perspective of seeking partnerships to ensure that land trusts are successful in achieving large aims with limited resources the NLT would get ambivalent reviews. The NLT has done a good job so far of working with government partners to get administrative aid. The examples previously provided include the NLT's use of Land Care Niagara's office and the board room of the Niagara Region. The NLT has also done a good job of soliciting local businesses for seed money for the organization. The money that was invested in the NLT without there being evidence that the organization would succeed is a testament to the need for a land trust in Niagara and the strength of the Chair, Paul Robertson. At the same time the NLT needs to strengthen its relationships with the local Conservation Authority, other local land trusts, OLTA and larger organizations, such as Ontario Nature and the Nature Conservancy of Canada. More emphasis in the future should be devoted towards cultivating these relationships in order to demonstrate a commitment to capacity building.

The next criterion is "adherence to laws and legal norms". This criterion is centred on ensuring that the land trust stays apprised of appropriate laws, works towards standardization with CLTA and having a policy on conflicts of interest. The NLT has done a fairly good job in this regard, having researched other land trusts' constitutions to provide a basis for their own and also having sought the advice of a reputable solicitor. There is a basic understanding of the process of incorporation and attaining charitable status on the basis of a presentation to the board from Ian Attridge. There was also a presentation made to the board about the Ontario Provincial Policy Statement and Greenbelt Legislation (NLT Meeting Minutes, January 5, 2006). At the same time, there has not been a discussion about the new provincial laws pertaining to land trusts at a board meeting. This could mean that some of the board members are not aware of the changes that have been made to provincial legislation. Overall, the NLT is not achieving the second sub-category of "stay[ing] ahead of legislation to ensure that it can continue to be in compliance with laws". At this point, the NLT is taking a reactionary approach to changes to legislation. It is not keeping informed about upcoming changes and it is not working in concert with other local land trusts to comment on potential legislation. There could be some legal norms that the NLT have missed. They require outside direction to ensure that they are adhering to legal standards.

The NLT has formally committed itself to working towards adherence to the Canadian Land Trust Alliance's *Standards and Practices* as a result of becoming an associate member of OLTA. At the same time however, NLT's membership with OLTA has expired (November 3, 2006, NLT Meeting Minutes) and the board is still discussing whether or not to join again, for financial reasons. Moreover, the NLT's Founding Committee has not taken the standards and practices and verified that the constitution or other decisions are in compliance with them. Largely, there has been no movement towards the actual adoption of the standards and practices other than making that commitment to OLTA. The NLT also has not adopted a Conflict of Interest policy, in spite of saying that they are interested in creating one. Informally, founding committee members have announced when they have a conflict of interest. So far, this has been successful because the NLT is not currently dealing with financially or otherwise sensitive issues. It would be appropriate however to establish a formal Conflict of Interest policy prior to the creation of the first Board of Directors. This would help prevent a future conflict and allow the board to get to work right away. In adhering to laws and legal norms the NLT has some changes and advances that it needs to make. Moreover, its board members need to be better educated with respect to the legal norms that are involved with land trusts and other charities. This is one area where capacity needs to be built.

"Pursuing multiple benefits" is the next criterion against which the NLT will be evaluated. This criterion is focused on the range of benefits that can come as a result of a land trust, such as the creation of a central goal, positive change, sustainability benefits and education. In terms of having a central goal which is widely communicated the NLT has the beginnings of a strategy. The NLT has a Mission Statement which it plans on including in its marketing. Moreover, it plans on using images of the community to emphasize the need for conservation (October 5, 2006, NLT Meeting Minutes). This simple message will be beneficial for garnering public support and it also runs counter to the often complicated messages that other local land trusts present (Walker, 2006). Some members of the NLT have emphasized the importance of having a central goal to keep energy levels high (Campbell, 2006). At the same time however, the NLT has not created a strategic plan which will help them to achieve their goal. Moreover, they have not decided what the key steps would be for achieving success. Strategic planning would be appropriate in order to create a unified vision for the future. The NLT wants to be a part of the positive change that it wants to see in the world. Members have noted their desire to improve air and water quality, do a better job at preserving than government and to allow for community engagement in land conservation (Braithwaite, 2006; Campbell, 2006; Wright, 2006). So far the NLT has been working towards the betterment of the Niagara community.

From the perspective of achieving sustainability benefits the NLT has goals which address some of those benefits, but have achieved little success so far. These goals include enhancing the governance process through allowing citizens to participate in land stewardship and protection. Achieving sustainability benefits is also related to the goal of social capital building and education. For example, the desire is to protect ecosystems into the future for the benefit of everyone (Robertson, 2006). In order to do so, this could require the collaboration of multiple groups across Niagara (Campbell, 2006). This in turn would contribute to the building of social capital across the peninsula. Some people also feel that the NLT could be an opportunity to educate others (Robertson, 2006; Smith,

2006) whereas other members caution against focusing on goals other than land conservation (Wright, 2006). There appears to be a desire to pursue multiple benefits within the land trust. There is a good deal of positive energy exuded from the Founding Committee and an overall commitment to improving the environment and lives and livelihoods of others. As Lisa Campbell (2006), the vice-chair of the NLT sums up, “I always believe that everything’s possible. You can accomplish anything. You just have to work your way through it”.

The eighth criterion highlighted was “stewardship”. This criterion emphasized the importance of creating adequate baseline documentation, regularly monitoring properties and management of the land. The NLT has not had the opportunity to create a baseline document. A member of the organization has attended an OLTA Workshop on creating a baseline document and has shared the material with the group. The NLT has also created fairly comprehensive property selection criteria based loosely on the experiences of other organizations. On the whole, however, it is unclear that the NLT has adequate capacity to fulfill the requirements of a baseline documentation report in a timely manner. Balancing working full-time and volunteering is often difficult (Braithwaite, 2006; Campbell, 2006). Regular monitoring of properties and adequate enforcement of conservation easements presently does not occur because the NLT does not own property. The aim of the organization is to have stewardship teams for each property, similar to many other successful land trusts (Robertson, 2006). One requirement to make this possible is to continue to engage the community, particularly the nature clubs and local academic institutions, such as Niagara College and Brock University. So far the NLT has done a fairly good job of engaging the clubs, although they were better represented on the Steering Committee than the Founding Committee. Engaging the various nature clubs within the Peninsula will be beneficial in order to attract the naturalist skills needed to regularly monitor properties.

One of the strengths of the current NLT Steering Committee is its members’ backgrounds in environmental sciences. The professional experience of the members will provide the skills necessary to protect and promote integrity and diversity through management. For example, the current members have backgrounds in forestry, agriculture, environmental consulting and stewardship. Having several people who are actively involved in stewardship and engaging the public in stewardship activities is another asset that the current membership of the Niagara Land Trust contains. This will allow the NLT to encourage and promote land stewardship in the future. There are two issues associated with this goal however. The first issue is having the resources to devote to the promotion of landowner stewardship. This would involve a concerted effort on the part of the NLT to place landownership stewardship in the forefront. Most land trusts so far have not been successful in this aim. Stew Hilts (2006), Chair of the Ontario Farmland Trust commented “I always hoped that land trusts would be a vehicle for working with private land owners, and I don’t think that that has really happened that much. But, the properties they get, or have easements on, there is clearly an important stewardship role of either managing a property or monitoring a property”. Making landowner stewardship a priority is difficult because it requires the development of programs related to lands that the land trust does not own. It also involves a significant amount of money. The second issue with encouraging and promoting landowner stewardship is whether or not the NLT can entice the people with stewardship goals to stay or someone else with similar goals to join. Volunteer burnout is always possible (Campbell, 2006) and most people who say that they will come back to an organization usually will not (Beamer, 2006). Overall, at this time there is insufficient information to evaluate what kind of stewards the NLT will be with properties. In some respects, policies have been put in place to ensure that the properties selected by the land trust will be within their ability to manage. The NLT volunteers certainly do have the skills necessary to be good stewards of a property. In this case however, time and experience will tell.

The final criterion against which the NLT is to be evaluated is “managing for perpetuity”. This criterion is about managing liabilities and ensuring adequate resources for success. The first sub-category has to do with land trusts not taking liabilities without adequate financial support. So far the NLT has been fairly diligent about attracting financial support from local small businesses. There was adequate seed money to get the organization started, to pay costs of the lawyer and to pay various other expenses. There are always inadequate funds for a land trust to conduct their business (Watkins, 2006). Land trusts also cannot achieve great things without taking a bit of a leap. At the same time however, land trusts typically go through a transition where they seek to acquire as much property as possible, and then recognize that the costs of stewarding that land can be prohibitive (Ernest, 2006). So far the NLT has been cautiously optimistic, but they should work on a generic stewardship cost policy in order to complement their property Selection Criteria. This will allow them to make more informed decisions about future land acquisition. The second sub-category is that land trusts should ensure that there is adequate human capacity to fulfill their aims and that volunteers are not overtaxed. At present, it would appear that there is too much emphasis on the work of board members to the detriment of bringing people onto committees from the public at large. While the by-laws were passed at the June 2006 meeting, application for Incorporation and Charitable Status still has not taken place as of December 2006. This is in part due to volunteer fatigue. The proposed structure for the Incorporate NLT will be beneficial because it will include a larger number of people in the decision-making process (up to 25). Moreover, it will also seek to include a wider variety of people on its committees, which will be to the benefit of the organization. Pursuing people with skills in bookkeeping, advertising, business and fundraising would be beneficial.

Umbrella agencies such as the Ontario Land Trust Alliance have been working to provide support and education for land trust on issues such as bookkeeping and monitoring. At the OLTA Gathering 2005 for example, the presentation on “Baseline Inventories: Moving Towards Standardization” went through best practices for monitoring of properties. The Canadian Land Trust Alliance’s *Standards and Practices* include provisions about record keeping. Overall however, the umbrella agencies could be doing more to improve their support and education to their members (Watkins, 2006).

Adherence to legal norms and recordkeeping can help to protect land trusts against future legal issues. Granted, it is difficult to anticipate the nature of future legal challenges (Watkins, 2006), taking a proactive approach to risk mitigation is the best strategy to employ. Overall, the NLT at present is not opening itself to legal challenges. Once the organization incorporates and has charitable status much will be required to ensure that the land trust is protecting itself from future legal issues. Working at present to resolve some of these issues would be helpful however so that there will not be a lag time between when the land trust launches and when it can start conducting business. For example, the NLT needs to develop a Conflict of Interest policy. It also needs to refamiliarize itself with the laws related to land trusts, specifically, the recent passing of provincial Bill16 the *Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve Act* and Bill 51 the *Planning and Conservation Land Stature Law Amendment Act* which affects land trusts. It also needs to improve its recordkeeping policies and to centralize its resources in one location, while maintaining duplicates in another. In other words, the NLT needs consistency with its recordkeeping. Finally, the NLT has failed to produce an adequate strategic plan for the future. Strategic planning could be important for the organization because it would provide an opportunity for community input, it would provide a clear mandate that is easily shared with interested parties, and provides a blueprint upon which all decisions could be based. The strategic plan which was developed identifies some goals for the organization that were not discussed and that some members of the NLT disagree with. It was never formally adopted by the Founding Committee and has been set on the backburner while other priorities have emerged. Creating a strategic plan around which the NLT can govern itself would be beneficial for identifying its priorities within the community and for setting a clear mission for its members.

In the preceding section, the Niagara Land Trust was evaluated against the nine criteria that were identified as a result of the literature review and key informant interviews. Some of the criteria did not apply to the NLT directly either because the organization had yet to experience the situation or because they were intended for the umbrella agencies which help to govern the local land trust community. In the following sections, the areas of success from the NLT will be identified and discussed and the areas in need of improvement will also be highlighted. The NLT has served as a case study for the implementation of these criteria. In Chapter 6 recommendations to the land trust community as a whole will be made.

Niagara Land Trust's Areas of Success

The Niagara Land Trust have had important successes, which should be acknowledged and celebrated. For example, to get to the point where they can apply for incorporation and charitable status is quite an accomplishment in itself. In order to get to this point the group has had two Committees at its helm: the Steering Committee and the Founding Committee. Both Committees have worked diligently to fulfill their ultimate aims. For the Steering Committee the goal was to identify whether or not there was a need for a land trust in Niagara and who would support its creation. Under the Steering Committee the Evening Seminar was organized and the Founding Committee was identified. This required an enormous amount of organization and dedication. Under the Founding Committee the Constitution for the NLT has been developed. Creating the Constitution required a great deal of effort (Wright, 2006). The fact that the NLT has been working towards its goal since the spring of 2005 also shows that there is dedication to the cause. Although the organization has seen some adversity, it has continued to work towards its goal, which is a good accomplishment. The NLT is the third Peninsula-wide environmental conservation land trust attempted in the Niagara Peninsula and so far it has been more successful than its predecessors. Some feel that the NLT is the Peninsula's last chance to form a land trust (Beamer, 2006).

This section will speak more specifically about the efforts of the Founding Committee however, as this Committee has done the bulk of the work in support of the land trust. The Founding Committee so far has done a good job of cultivating relationships, in a number of ways. For example, the Founding Committee has had success at cultivating relationships within the organization, with other land trusts and conservation groups and with government agencies. In creating the Founding Committee, the Steering Committee did a good job of gaining public support through its Evening Seminar. Writing 200 invitations with information pertaining to the creation of the land trust was a useful exercise in gaining support for the organization. The strength of word-of-mouth endorsement for a land trust is very important, because it shows community support. Getting approximately a 25% response rate was not atypical for a previously unknown organization (Hager, et al., 2003; 257), particularly during the summer. The evening seminar was also useful because it attracted a diversity of participants, brought together by their interest in environmental matters. While some additional expertise had to be sought out, particularly for support from the farming committee and urban planners, the Evening Seminar did allow most of the future members to be selected.

The Niagara Land Trust is relatively unique in the Ontario Land Trust community due to its diversity in age of Board Members. Other land trusts have found it difficult to attract youth to their board, for example (Walker, 2006). Having a diversity of ages on the Board creates the potential for a wider range of opinions and experiences, which could be beneficial to the land trust organization. Having reputable Board members who have experiences in a variety of sectors is also beneficial in terms of creating reciprocity with potential donors (Brewer, 2003). In terms of decision making, the Niagara Land Trust has also done a good job of maintaining a cohesive group in spite of differing opinions. In general, this speaks to the relationships amongst the board members. Although many of the board members did not know each other prior to joining the land trust (Braithwaite, 2006) they have done a good job of respecting each other's opinions and creating an amicable relationship. This is in spite of the organization having acknowledged differences in opinions which impact its core values (Wright, 2006). These differences include whether the organization should be preserving or conserving; or pursuing multiple benefits or focusing exclusively on securing land. These differences could have large effects on the success of the organization and its mandate. The Niagara Land Trust has also done a good job of maintaining a relationship with the Steering Committee. It is common that when people leave an organization they do not come back (Beamer, 2006), but the Steering Committee has appeared to have enjoyed receiving the meeting minutes. This is evidenced by the Secretary and Chair receiving emails from the Steering Committee members to this effect (Roach, personal communication, 2005 and 2006).

The Niagara Land Trust has also designed itself in such a way as to foster close relationships with a variety of people. The structure of the land trust will encourage the input of up to 25 Members, something which is unique in terms of membership design in Ontario (Beamer, 2006). The NLT will have to work diligently to maintain interest among its Members if they are not on the Board of Directors. They could be drawn into the organization further by chairing or sitting on a committee or helping to manage some of the volunteers. Having a large number of Members will encourage the creation of community relationships. Knowing someone directly involved with an organization helps to encourage others to become involved (Lougheed and Walker, 2006)

The Niagara Land Trust has achieved a fair amount of success in terms of cultivating relationships with local conservation organizations. For example, the NLT has tried to include the local naturalist clubs by asking them to lead guided nature hikes. The naturalist clubs have also thought about donating seed money to support the creation of the NLT (NLT Meeting Minutes, November 3, 2006). This support may be in part because the local naturalist clubs know how difficult it can be to create a land trust. For example, the Bert Miller club looked into creating a land trust to save a property in Niagara (Roach, personal communication, 2006). This strong relationship with the local naturalist clubs is beneficial for the NLT in a number of ways. Firstly, having the expertise of the naturalist clubs allows the NLT to have a greater understanding of what the conservation priorities for the peninsula should be. Secondly, maintaining a strong relationship with the clubs keeps open the possibility of future collaboration amongst the organization. Thirdly, the clubs are well-respected within the Peninsula, and having their support helps to bolster the community support of the NLT. Fourthly, the local naturalist clubs could be a great source for stewardship teams for future properties. They already have strong naturalist skills, a good volunteer ethic and a commitment to maintaining the natural heritage of the Peninsula.

The Niagara Land Trust has also strengthened relationships within the Ontario Land Trust community. They have consulted with the Hamilton Naturalist Club when establishing their boundaries for the organization. They have also sought the expertise of guest speakers from other organizations at their Evening Seminar, such as Bernie VanDenBelt, Steve Hounsell, and Peter Carson. They have asked for and received many of the documents used to govern local Ontario land trusts; in the process gaining support and building relationships with other local land trusts. While informal mentoring amongst organizations has occurred, setting up an official mentoring relationship or sister organization might be beneficial to building capacity within the NLT.

The NLT has been successful in building relationships with some governmental organizations. The NLT has the informal support of the Region through using its building as a Board Meeting site. So far, this relationship has worked out very well for the organization. The NLT has also been successful at building relationships with the provincial government. This has occurred through the support of the local stewardship office for the Ministry of Natural Resources. Land Care Niagara has been helpful in terms of donating money, offering staff resources and allowing the NLT to use physical space. This relationship could be developed further through the use of a desk in the Land Care Niagara office.

Overall, the NLT has done a good job of developing relationships thus far. The NLT has a Founding Committee which works well together, in spite of not having previous relationships to bond them. They respect a diversity of opinions and have sought a diversity of people to be involved in the organization. The Niagara Land Trust has also continued to cultivate relationships with local conservation organizations. These relationships could be important to the NLT in terms of garnering community support, securing funding and employing naturalist skills. The NLT has also sought out the expertise and support of other local land trusts in Ontario. By being proactive in terms of developing relationships with other land trusts, this could help shorten learning curves by having groups that they trust to talk to. Finally, the NLT has prospered through the support of the Regional and Provincial government. This support has helped the NLT in terms of financial means and providing meeting space.

Another area of success for the Niagara Land Trust has been the particular skills that the Board Members have brought to the organization. The Founding Committee was purposefully selected in order to attract people with strong stewardship skills. This is reflected in the environmental expertise that most Founding Committee members share. There is a tremendous amount of professional experience in the environmental field represented on the Board of Directors, ranging from environmental stewardship coordinators to foresters to farmers. Moreover, many members of the NLT have direct experience with owning and managing ecologically significant land. For example, two members have large vacation properties which require land management. Two members act as stewardship coordinators for local agencies. Three other members own farms and manage the land. While there is the recognition that owning and managing land requires a lot of skill and work (Robertson, 2006), overall, there are many members of the current Board who have that necessary experience.

While a previous discussion of the composition of the Founding Committee Board of Directors (see section Chapter 5) discussed the magnitude of their environmental knowledge, it is worthwhile to return to this point in celebrating some of the NLT's successes to date. Overall, this is a board which has a strong knowledge of environmental science and stewardship practices, while at the same time remaining balanced enough to include those with other professional backgrounds. The current level of expertise contained within the Board is helpful in terms of creating property selection criteria, evaluating properties and also for forming industry contacts. Many of the people who are currently contemplating donating land to the NLT were introduced to the land trust while working with Board members in a professional capacity (Robertson, 2006). Having many members with environmental backgrounds is an asset in many respects for the NLT.

A final area that the Niagara Land Trust has been particularly successful in is in terms of fundraising and expenses. Overall, the NLT has been more successful than most local land trusts in terms of raising seed money for its operations. The NLT has secured funding from five local businesses in the amount of $2 500 and two local businesses in the amount of $1 250 for a total of $15 000. Fundraising $15 000 prior to an organization incorporating demonstrates fundraising skills and the key industry contacts that the NLT has already developed. Overall, having this amount of funding is atypical of new local land trusts, particularly in an economically depressed area like Niagara.

The Niagara Land Trust is also very shrewd when it comes to managing its money. Their treasurer has done a good job of presenting quarterly financial reports (NLT Meeting Minutes, December 14, 2006) and overall, the Board has been economically conservative. In spite of the money being fundraised for the purpose of starting the organization, up to this point the NLT have only used 18% of their monies over an approximately two year period (NLT Meeting Minutes, December 14, 2006).

The NLT is also pragmatic when it comes to their relationship with the Ontario Land Trust Alliance at this time. Having discovered that their membership with OLTA had expired the Board members of the NLT have carefully weighed their decision to rejoin the organization. The cost of being an Associate Member of OLTA has risen dramatically this year, from $300 to $500. Since renewing the membership at this time would only provide a half-year membership, the NLT Board members have instructed their Chair to only rejoin OLTA if it makes financial sense for the organization this year (NLT Meeting Minutes, December 14, 2006). Being an Associate Member of OLTA for example, allows people belonging to the organization to attend the workshops and conference at a reduced price. Currently, OLTA is considering conducting one of their workshops in Niagara in the spring. This could provide the necessary incentive for the NLT to rejoin OLTA this Membership year.

The Niagara Land Trust has had many successes which are worthy of celebration thus far. The successes were grouped generally in three categories: relationships, stewardship and fundraising/expenses. It was pointed out that the NLT have built strong relationships within the local community, that the Founding Committee Board members have personal stewardship skills and that the NLT has been more successful than most local land trusts in terms of fundraising. In the following section areas in need of improvement within the operation of the Niagara Land Trust will be highlighted. As previously stated, some of the areas in need of improvement are directly related to areas of success. The next section will demonstrate fields within which the NLT needs to build capacity.

Areas in Which Capacity Needs to be Built in the Niagara Land Trust

While the previous section highlighted many of the areas of success of the Niagara Land Trust the NLT is still in need of capacity building in order to achieve its aims. This section will be divided into themes to communicate the areas that the NLT needs to improve upon. These areas centre on relationships, the Board of Directors, strategic planning and research. The first theme of relationships is directly related to an area of success formerly discussed.

While the Niagara Land Trust has had many successes in terms of cultivating relationships, it is also an area in which the organization must continue to improve. Specifically, the land trust needs to open itself to the community more so that their various successes can be celebrated. For example, in spite of the previous intention for the NLT to conduct its electronic launch by October 2006, this date has now been postponed indefinitely (NLT Meeting Minutes, January 4, 2007). This means while the Steering Committee has been keeping apprised of the NLT business, these people are the only people outside of the Founding Committee who receive regular news about the organization. This lack of communication could hinder the success of the NLT when it comes to launching the organization. This could have serious ramifications because the NLT is already at a technical disadvantage when it comes to achieving community support due to the structure of its Board. Therefore, the NLT will have to be diligent in seeking opportunities to engage the public because it is not a membership driven land trust.

The Niagara Land Trust will also have to work to improve its relationship with local conservation organizations. While amicable communication has taken place with nearby local land trusts, there has been a void of recent communication. This is in spite of local land trusts indicating a desire to talk to the NLT about working cooperatively with them (Ernest, 2006 and Roach, 2006, personal observation). Moreover, the NLT has yet to have created any serious relationships with larger land trusts, such as Ontario Nature or the Nature Conservancy of Canada. Not cultivating these relationships could lead to the NLT missing out on exciting partnership opportunities. Finally, the NLT could also be doing more to nurture a relationship between themselves and the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority. Although members of the NPCA have aided the NLT in getting access to properties on which to test its criteria, engaging them more in terms of decision-making and keeping them apprised of the developments within the land trust would be beneficial. Limited efforts have been made to address this point so far (Robertson, 2006).

Another area in which the Niagara Land Trust needs to improve its operations is within its Board of Directors. Overall, the NLT seemed to go through a bit of a lull period during the fall of 2006. The majority of documents needed to apply for incorporation and charitable status were created in the spring (NLT Meeting Minutes, June 22, 2006) and yet, the NLT still had not submitted its applications by the beginning of April 2007. This, in part, can be attributed to volunteer fatigue (Roach, 2007- personal observation). At the end of 2006, another board member left the Niagara Land Trust as a result of competing work interests (NLT Meeting Minutes, December 14, 2006). Moreover, one board member continues to shirk his responsibilities to the organization and has only attended one Founding Committee meeting since September 2005. The Niagara Land Trust should apply the rules regarding Board member attendance found within its constitution. There appears to be some interest however in refreshing the current Board and preparing for the Inaugural Board of Directors. Specifically, two candidates have indicated an interest in joining the NLT. These candidates come with strong professional skills (one is an accountant and the other a lawyer), and offer an opportunity to ease the transition into the new board (NLT Meeting Minutes, January 4, 2007). A decision about whether or not these two individuals will be joining the NLT will be made at the February 2007 meeting.

While the NLT has attracted two possible new members, more attention must be paid to strengthening the Nomination Committee and attracting potential candidates for the Inaugural Membership. At present, it does not appear that the Nomination Committee will be able to achieve this goal of identifying new members and getting them to apply in a timely manner. The NLT should also be developing board manuals for new board members. These Manuals would include important information about the structure and purpose of the organization. Equally important, it would highlight the form and function of land trusts in general. Overall, some current members of the Founding Committee feel that they do not know enough about land trusts in general (Braithwaite, 2006). Limited circulation of information has occurred amongst board members, indicating the difficulty in finding a balance between educating board members and overwhelming them. However, a general lack of knowledge regarding legal norms and obligations does continue to be a problem in local land trusts (Hilts, 2006).

The NLT could improve its operations through working more on strategic planning. There are areas of possible contention in regards to the scope and goals of the land trust that should, at the very least, be openly acknowledged. This will allow the organization as a whole to start thinking about these larger issues of whether the land trust should aim for conservation or preservation, education or just protection. Completing exercises which allow organizations to vision their goals is an important step in achieving success (Garthson, 2006). Granted, the scope of the Founding Committee was only meant to allow the organization to get incorporated and to receive charitable status. If the NLT had taken the time to put together a strategic plan, it would have allowed them to prioritize their activities in order to achieve this goal. For example, the current Founding Committee have spent a great deal of time finalizing a set of selection criteria that they do not intend to register officially as By-Law #2 in their incorporation package. In other words, they have done more work than is necessary to complete these two applications. The creation and testing of the selection criteria could have been completed while awaiting the response of Revenue Canada and Industries Canada. Moreover, the fact that the scope of the mandate for the Founding Committee is not quite clear could lead to some problems whilst transitioning into the first Board of Directors. While some Board members have expressed reluctance to “step on the toes” of this new Board of Directors, it is unclear where the boundaries are for the current organization. At the very least, the new Board of Directors should benefit from having several documents created for them at the time of their tenure.

Strategic planning must be undertaken to ensure that their formal commitment to the Canadian Land Trust Alliance’s *Standards and Practices* is achieved. When joining OLTA as an Associate Member a land trust is required to agree to working towards the implementation of these standards and practices. Even though the NLT has allowed its membership to OLTA to lapse, if it rejoins the organization, then it must renew its commitment. There has been no effort to go through the standards and practices as a Board to ensure that the Niagara Land Trust is moving in the direction of compliance. Moreover, critical documents are being created which may be in violation of these standards. Having a strategic plan which acknowledges the NLT’s commitment to implementing the standards and practices would remind the members of the board to ensure that their decision-making reflects this commitment. Some experts argue that no important Board decision should be made without having the organization's strategic plan in front of them, at the time (Garthson, 2006).

Finally, another goal which should be identified within the Niagara Land Trust's strategic plan is enabling Board of Directors transition with ease. While the NLT does have a Nomination Committee, there have been no plans made on how to acclimatize new board members. For example, a strategy has not been set to give these new Members a copy of the constitution of the organization. Without having a good transition policy in place, the NLT is setting itself up for possible problems in the future. Having Board Members make decisions without the knowledge of past decisions could result in the Board spinning its wheels or worse, presenting conflicting messages to the public.

The Niagara Land Trust also needs to improve its operations in terms of research and staying apprised of current events. There appears to be an uneven knowledge of land trusts and the legislation governing those organizations across the Founding Committee (Roach, personal observation, 2007). There was no discussion of Bill 16 and 51at any Founding Committee general meeting. While it may not be necessary to discuss every new piece of legislation, at the very least, efforts should have been undertaken to ensure that everyone was aware of these legislative changes. One opportunity that could be pursued to rectify this is to seek Board members to give presentations on the different laws to the rest of the Board, like the presentation that Mike Benner made to the Founding Committee on the Provincial Policy Statement (NLT Meeting Minutes, January 5, 2006).

Keeping up to date with new laws affecting land trusts could also be facilitated through OLTA's new electronic newsletter. The Ontario Land Trust Alliance is undergoing major changes at this time, due to the hiring of a new Executive Director and the movement of OLTA's office to Toronto. The NLT could request that OLTA communicate new legislative changes via that newsletter.

Table 2: Summary of Areas of Success and in Need of Improvement provides an overview of the previous two sections. This table summarizes the information which has been previously presented.

Table 2: Summary of Areas of Success and in Need of Improvement for the Niagara Land Trust

Maintaining Public Integrity	
Successes: ▪ Honest and forthright volunteers ▪ Constitution limits ability of Board Members to seek personal gain ▪ Have strong and reputable Board Members	Areas of Improvement: ▪ Action needed to garner public support ▪ Nominations Committee needs to be strengthened

Proper Recruitment, Management and Training of Volunteers	
Successes: ▪ Regular recognition of volunteer efforts ▪ Board Members are essential to the strength of the organization ▪ Volunteers understand mission of the organization	Areas of Improvement: ▪ Planning for Board transition ▪ Mostly “learning on the job” ▪ Gap in understanding of the legal requirements of a Board member ▪ Lack of job descriptions ▪ Being on the Board not always treated as a professional appointment
Choosing the Appropriate Conservation Tool	
Successes: ▪ Some Board members have attended OLTA training sessions ▪ NLT is working to provide innovative conservation mechanisms ▪ Has done fairly good job of partnering with government organizations	Areas of Improvement: ▪ Attendance at training sessions has been limited ▪ More education/research about the various possibilities for land conservation are needed ▪ Need to attract volunteers adept at fundraising ▪ Have not met with local land trust partners
Good Governance	
Successes: ▪ Keeps regular records of its decisions ▪ Will have someone audit its finances	Area of Improvement: ▪ Seek more public input
Commitment to Capacity Building	
Successes: ▪ Has participated in the exchange of information amongst land trusts ▪ Representatives from the NLT have attended last two OLTA Gatherings ▪ Has worked well with government partners to get administrative aid ▪ Has been successful at soliciting seed money	Areas of Improvement: ▪ Exchange more information with its constituents ▪ Has to continue to interact with land trust community ▪ Could work on cultivating community relationships prior to launch
Adherence to Laws and Legal Norms	
Successes: ▪ Has researched other land trusts’ constitutions to develop their own ▪ Has had a presentation on the Greenbelt Legislation and the Ontario Provincial Policy Statement	Areas of Improvement: ▪ Have not discussed recent changes in provincial law, pertaining to land trusts ▪ The Constitution has not been evaluated to ensure adherence to

	CLTA's *Standards and Practices* ▪ Have not developed a conflict of interest policy
Pursuing Multiple Benefits	
Successes: ▪ Uses mission statement as central goal	Areas of Improvement: ▪ Have not created a strategic plan to realize their goals
Stewardship	
Successes: ▪ Fairly comprehensive selection criteria ▪ Board members have strong background in stewardship	▪ Insufficient information to evaluate
Managing For Perpetuity	
Successes: ▪ Attracted financial support	Areas of Improvement: ▪ Need to attract more volunteers to the Trust ▪ Members need to increase familiarity with laws related to land trusts ▪ Record keeping policies

This section discussed areas in need of improvement in terms of the operation of the Niagara Land Trust. The areas were grouped into general themes to facilitate their discussion. These themes included relationships, the Board of Directors, strategic planning and research. Some areas were found to be complementary, in terms of being both an area of success and an area in need of improvement, such as relationships. In the next section, capacity building will be discussed.

Capacity Building

In both the literature review and the interviews, capacity building has been a major theme of the research. It appears that capacity building is often a recommendation of experts as a means to strengthen volunteer organizations. In this next section, capacity building will be discussed, drawing information from both the literature review and the interviews. At the end of the section, a comparison between the information coming from the literature review and the interviews will be presented.

<u>Overview of Capacity Building from the Literature</u>

Capacity building was an important subject in both sections of the literature review. Increasingly researchers are highlighting the need for land trusts and other conservation organizations to engage in capacity building in order to fulfill their conservation aims. In Chapter 3 of the literature, the main arguments in several relevant fields were discussed. A subsection which dealt directly with the field of capacity building research found contradictory findings, particularly when it came to providing an accepted definition of the concept, and deciding on an appropriate scale in which it should operate. Generally, capacity building is more relevant for organizations within a community, than to the community itself. However, Barker (2005) found that while capacity building can work at a variety of levels, it was most positive at the level of the community. Lundqvist (2000) disagrees with Barker and finds that local capacity building is only successful if certain political criteria are already established at a higher level of government or governance. The researchers did agree that in order for capacity building to take place, support must be offered to the organization or the community. Barker (2005) and Lundqvist (2000) found that education and other leadership support were necessary for capacity building, whereas Carlsson and Berkes (2005) argue that partnerships are essential. Overall, the tendency of the literature review in Chapter 3 was to argue that capacity building requires support in the form of education and partnerships. The researchers, however, disagreed about the level at which this support must come from.

In Chapter 4 the research focused more specifically on land trusts. Most land trust researchers agreed that capacity building within the organizations is essential. The capacity of land trusts to fulfill their mandate is intimately linked to the capacity of their volunteers to fulfill their roles. The areas where the capacity of land trusts needed to be improved included volunteer recruitment and management, record keeping and baseline documentation, and funding. The researchers found that there was a tendency for people to believe that volunteers cost the organizations less and were less labour intensive than traditional, paid employees. This, however, was often proved wrong and researchers comment that new volunteers always have to be trained and educated (Ball and Lister, 2005) and that the management of volunteers is often a large job (Curtis and Novhuys, 1999). Land trusts often have difficulty recruiting the “right” type of people to be a part of their organization. While there is a need for people who have environmental training, the execution of a land trust requires many professional activities, including lawyers, fundraisers and accountants (Ball and Lister, 2005). Rottle’s (2006; 139) research found that the success factors for land trusts and other conservation organizations are related to more human capacity than locale.

The literature review found that record keeping and baseline documentation must be improved within local land trusts. Brewer (2003) noted a common deficiency in the baseline documentation being undertaken. Some properties do not have adequate documentation and others are not regularly monitored. Monitoring can also be a problem associated with conservation easements. Many land trusts entered into conservation easements believing them to be easier than fee simple ownership, but monitoring conservation easements can sometimes be more difficult than owning the property (Roush, 1982).

Finally, the success of land trusts is threatened by both inside and outside influences, including changes in land trust leadership, a tighter economy, decreased government budgets and the political climate (Rottle, 2006). One mechanism to assert independence is to have a stable income source. Unfortunately, for many local land trusts, finding funding is a constant battle. Land trusts can build capacity by continuing to employ innovative methods to secure and conserve land. Engaging in private-public partnerships (Rottle, 2006) and working with neighbours for stewardship activities (Brewer, 2003) can help land trusts to grow as organizations. Land trusts can also build capacity through strengthening their relationships with provincial and federal Land Trust Alliances. In summary, capacity can be built in volunteers and land trusts through having comprehensive training for land trust volunteers, creating partnerships with other organizations to strengthen legitimacy and to economize, and to work under the leadership of provincial and national land trust agencies

Overview of Capacity Building from the Interviews

The interviewees shared many of the same concerns voiced within the literature review, although they focused on individual experience. They shared similar concerns about volunteer training and retention and fundraising. Few mentioned record keeping as an area in need of capacity building. Many of the interviewees also focused on the individual experience of volunteers and their observations tended to be more personal than what was found within the literature. Generally, the main concerns expressed by the interviewees can be lumped into the categories of personnel, fundraising and community legitimacy.

All of the interviewees recognized the vital contribution that volunteers make to a land trust. While most agreed that a land trust could not be sustained without its volunteers, many pointed out that once a land trust achieves a certain degree of success, it is necessary for it to hire staff. Staff are needed to provide administrative support, to provide continuity to the organization and just to manage the day-to-day tasks (Ernest, 2006; Braithwaite, 2006; King, 2006; Reid, 2006; Watkins, 2006). Having staff is a delicate balance because many land trusts wish to perpetuate the inclusiveness associated with a volunteer organization with the professional nature of having staff as resources (Ernest, 2006). Overall it was recognized that land trusts as organizations should be doing more for their volunteers. Walker (2006) proposes that volunteers should receive training at the local level, while Reid (2006) emphasizes the importance of both training and recognition for the volunteers. Volunteer recruitment is a major issue facing land trusts, particularly when it comes to succession planning (Walker, 2006). This is in part due to the need to attract skilled professionals to land trusts. For example, Campbell (2006) highlighted the need for a diversity of skills to be represented on the Board of Directors and Braithwaite (2006) lamented the tendency of environmental groups to attract people who are interested, but who lack professional skills. She argued that without training it becomes “passion without practicality. For something to survive, it needs practicality”. Many interviewees also commented on the amount of time that is required for people to volunteer with land trusts (Braithwaite, 2006; Campbell, 2006; Reid, 2006; and Hilts, 2006). Relying on volunteers to complete so much work can result in volunteer burnout (Beamer, 2006). The personal sacrifices that volunteers and other personnel make for land trusts can be daunting. In order to continue to improve their operations, land trusts must ensure that they are recruiting the best possible people for the roles within the land trusts and that these people receive regular training and recognition. It is apparent that capacity building must be undertaken in the field of land trust personnel.

Another area in which capacity building must be undertaken is in the field of fundraising. Most of the interviewees pointed to insufficient funding as a potential problem for land trusts. Many commented on the limited ability that volunteers seem to have in fundraising, or that many volunteers are uncomfortable with asking people for money (Braithwaite, 2006; Ernest, 2006). The overwhelming consensus was that there is insufficient funding for land trusts to accomplish all that they wish (Beamer, 2006; Watkins, 2006; Robertson, 2006; Wright, 2006; Reid, 2006; Hilts, 2006; King, 2006). While some land trusts have resorted to hiring professional fundraisers to help them with their goals, many smaller land trusts do not have the funds to hire them. This further compounds the problem and could lead to a divide between the "haves" and the "have nots" of local land trusts.

Finally, the interviewees expressed concern about capacity building in the field of community relations, which the literature review largely did not acknowledge. Many of the interviewees expressed trepidation that if the proper people were not selected to be a part of the land trust, that the image of the organization could be tarnished. Interviewees expressed the importance of being transparent (Beamer, 2006), credible (Robertson) and gaining community support (Reid, 2006). The success of a land trust is largely dependent upon public perception of the organization (Smith, 2006). Communities support organizations that are well-run; this point is punctuated by the fact that the organizations must be well-run if they want to exist in perpetuity (Hilts, 2006). Generally, the interviewees put a much larger emphasis on community relations than what was contained within the reviewed literature.

In this section the areas in which capacity building were necessary, as described by the interviewees, was discussed. The areas in need of capacity building were largely similar to what was contained in the literature review. In the next section, a more detailed analysis will be undertaken describing the similarities and differences between capacity building, as expressed within the literature review and by the interviewees.

Comparison of Capacity Building from the Literature and From the Interviews

A summary of what was presented in the literature review and through the interviews regarding capacity building was previously discussed. The applied literature is more appropriate for this analysis because it directly relates to the topic of local land trusts and will provide more insight into their operations. Within the summary of the literature review and interviews, the areas in which capacity building needed to be undertaken were lumped into general categories. From the literature review these categories included: volunteers, baseline documentation and reporting and funding and from the interviews: volunteers/personnel, funding and community relations.

For the most part, the literature review and the interviewees were in agreement about some of the larger challenges to capacity that land trusts face. Specifically, the literature and the interviews both cited the need for increased funding for land trusts and to attract and retain highly skilled volunteers. Where the literature and the interviews differed were in the fields of baseline documentation and reporting and community relations. The literature review pointed to a number of instances where the record keeping efforts of land trusts were largely insufficient. While many of the interviewees talked generally about the Canadian Land Trust Alliance's *Standards and Practices*, which contain provisions regarding record keeping, none mentioned record keeping directly (Hilts, 2006; Watkins, 2006; Walker, 2006). This could be in part a result of the types of questions that the interviewees were asked. Not prompting them regarding the issues of record keeping could have led the interviewees to believe that these issues were not the interest of the research. The Ontario Land Trust Alliance is certainly interested in the issues of baseline documentation and record keeping, with workshops being presented at both their spring workshop 2006 and annual gathering 2006. This interest was not reflected by those who were interviewed.

The second area where there was a discrepancy between the literature review and the interviewees was in the field of community relations. While some authors did caution that a land trust's reputation is their most important currency (Brewer, 2003), this was not a general concern within the literature. In contrast, many of the interviewees spoke about the importance of community perception to the success of a land trust. This could be a reflection of the more personal accounts given within the interviews, as opposed to the literature. It could also be a result of the experience that the people interviewed have in the field of land trusts. It is unclear if every academic writing about land trusts actually volunteered or had been employed with a land trust, which could result in different priorities being emphasized. Additionally, this discrepancy could also be a reflection of the lack of Canadian literature in the land trust field. Most of the publications reviewed for this thesis were from American sources, whereas all of the interviewees were Canadian. This also could have contributed to a difference in opinion, because Canadian land trusts are more reliant on public (financial) support than their American counterparts.

Generally, the literature review and the interviews were fairly consistent in their findings. There were two major discrepancies between the interviews and the literature review, which were the emphasis on baseline documentation and reporting within the literature and community relations within the interviews. Some possible explanations for this discrepancy were presented, although alternatives could be more appropriate.

Conclusion

The objective of Chapter 6 was to review the main themes of the literature review and interviews in order to adjust the criteria for a successful land trust to better reflect their main messages. Once the main themes of both the literature review and the criteria were presented, sub-categories were added to the criteria of “maintaining public integrity”, “proper recruitment, management and training of volunteers” and “pursuing multiple benefits”. Most of the sub-categories that were added were done so to further stress the importance of the Board of Directors for the overall success of the local land trust movement. For integrity, land trusts were instructed to “seek strong and reputable board members”. For the volunteer criterion, emphasis was placed on planning for board transition, in order to maintain a diverse and strong Board of Directors. Finally, in the criterion of “pursuing multiple benefits”, the sub-category of having “a central goal which is widely communicated” was added. This addition was based on the main themes of the interviews.

Once the adjusted criteria were established, the criteria were applied to the case study of the Niagara Land Trust. It was determined that the Niagara Land Trust has both strengths that should be celebrated and weaknesses that should be addressed in order for the organization to be governed in a manner that will allow it to protect valued ecosystems. The Niagara Land Trust has had a great deal of success in cultivating relationships with other land trusts and the local conservation community. Moreover, the NLT has been shrewd in its financial dealings and has built a strong Founding Committee with a good background in stewardship skills. There are areas, however, in which the NLT needs to improve its operations. For example, the NLT has not been effective in the area of strategic planning. This oversight could hurt them in missed opportunities or putting too much emphasis in areas that do not require attention at that time. The NLT has also been weak in terms of board succession planning. The Nomination Committee has struggled to establish itself and have yet to identify potential people for the inaugural board of directors. Finally, the NLT needs to improve its research into laws governing land trusts. They should come up with a mechanism to ensure that all board members are up to date with the legalities surrounding conservation land trusts.

The primary conclusion from the comparison of literature and the key informant interviews is for the most part the literature and the interviews were consistent, except for the interviewees’ emphasis on the personal experience within a land trust. The interviewees concluded that it was of the utmost importance for land trusts to be seen as reputable organizations within the community, and that great attention should be paid to strengthening a land trust’s reputation. These conclusions were not contrary to what was stated in the literature review, but the emphasis differed between the two sources of information. This could reflect the greater level of experience that people participating in the interviews have in comparison to the researchers. It also could reflect a more pragmatic and detached approach undertaken by the academics. Synthesizing the two overall approaches undertaken in the literature and the interviews is an important research contribution of this thesis, which could lead to a greater understanding of the local land trust movement and its governance.

CHAPTER 7: Conclusions: Are land trusts governed in a manner that will allow them to effectively protect valued ecosystems?

Introduction

Land trusts are growing in popularity in Canada. The majority of land trusts in Ontario have been created within the last fifteen years. These organizations undertake the tremendous responsibility of stewarding land to maintain its ecological value in perpetuity. Although these organizations are typically created with the greatest of intentions, many local land trusts fail to meet their objective. Land trusts do not succeed for a variety of reasons, including gaps in capacity, insufficient volunteer stamina and financial restraints. While trust law does protect the assets of these organizations and Canada Revenue's Charitable Status requirements include provisions if the organizations do fail, land trusts have far from proven their longevity within Canada. The oldest land trust in Canada was created in 1961. This organization has grown and indeed prospered over the years; however, it is also supported by one of the largest local field naturalist clubs in Ontario. Many land trusts are created through the support of field naturalist clubs, while others are not. Some use the sheer increase in numbers of local land trusts in Ontario as evidence that land trusts are governed in an effective manner. The question of perpetuity is not resolved through additional land trusts being created; perpetuity is over the long-term. It is evident that one cannot answer the question of whether land trusts are governed in a manner that will allow them to protect valued ecosystems in perpetuity. One can never-the-less comment on the potential capacity of land trusts to fulfill this role.

This final chapter presents the principal findings of this research. It highlights the research conclusions followed by a discussion of this thesis' contributions in both an academic and applied sense. Based on the application of the criteria to the case study, recommendations to the Niagara Land Trust will be made in order to improve the organization's governance. The evidence from the case study, literature review and expert interviews will also be applied to the larger land trust community. As a result, specific recommendations will be made to the Ontario Land Trust Alliance and the Canadian Land Trust Alliance.

Land trusts as a whole need to improve their operations in order to remain successful. This chapter will endeavour to provide specific examples of where the land trust movement as a whole can improve. These lessons may also be applicable to the rest of the conservation community. Therefore general lessons which may help to improve the governance of conservation organizations will also be shared. This thesis will conclude by presenting some further areas of research.

Summary of Thesis

The first land trust in North America was established in Massachusetts in 1891. In Canada, land trusts starting growing in popularity and numbers in the 1980s (Carson, 2005), with the majority of land trusts being created in the last fifteen years (Walker, 2006). Land trusts are part of an emergent volunteer-dominated conservation movement taking place within Canada. Often, these trusts reflect the nature of the community that created them (Carson, 2005).

There are several reasons why land trusts are so popular in Canada today. Many scholars point to increasing public skepticism of the role that government can play in protecting land, particularly in southern Ontario and other growing communities. This, coupled with a lack of financial resources for land protection (Campbell and Salus, 2003) and rapid development (Gustanski, et al, 1999) has led citizens to take direct action. They argue that the covenants that they make are more permanent than environmental regulations and land-use plans, which can change depending upon the government in power. At the same time, land trusts are not solely the creation of conservationists worried that government cannot protect land adequately. Land trusts work at the interface of public and private interests, providing a renewed opportunity for active citizen participation in land management. Land trusts in essence restore some democracy to land use decision-making, although their ability to represent the local population adequately can also be challenged. For example, land trusts have often been criticized for being elitist, as they are usually found only in wealthy areas (Roakes and Zwolski, 1995; 8).

The land trust movement is understudied in academic literature. While there is strong doubt that governments can adequately protect land, there is a similar level of skepticism regarding the ability of land trusts to do so. Merenlender, et al (2004) found that the large variability in land trust organizations and their projects makes it difficult to comment on the movement generally. Due to the relatively new emergence of these organizations in Canada, there is insufficient direct evidence to support the notion that land trusts can protect land in perpetuity. Conversely, land trusts have existed in Britain since the 1500s (Carson, 2005). Canada does share a somewhat similar land tenure system with Britain, which could provide indirect evidence for the cause. On the whole, land trusts are created because there is a need for them (Mackenzie, 2004). This need could be produced through both ecological and social imperatives.

This study examines the extent to which local land trusts in Ontario are governed in a manner that will allow them to protect valued ecosystems effectively, in perpetuity. The purpose of this research is to identify specific areas in which capacity needs to be built within the movement. The primary theoretical contribution of this research is the identification of several criteria which identify core needs for land trust governance in order for them to meet their conservation aims. Using two literature reviews, expert interviews, case study and participant observation this thesis tackled the research problem. The literature reviews provided intellectual context for and answers to the six secondary research questions. The literature reviews, coupled with information gleaned from the Canadian Land Trust Alliance's *Standards and Practices* and Gibson's (2001) principles of sustainability created the basis for the criteria for a successful land trust. The criteria were established by combining literatures that had not been previously combined; this resulted in an innovative contribution to the land trust literatures. The expert interviews contributed solutions to the primary and six secondary research questions, as well as enhancing the criteria. Using my relationship as a Founding Committee board member of the Niagara Land Trust, participant observation over a two year period allowed me to obtain a unique insight into how local land trusts are created and governed. Investing this amount of time and persistence in observations means that the participants in the research felt enough confidence in the researcher to allow me to adequately study the cultural context of land trusts. This strategy provides checks against misinformation (Brown, 2005; 32) and thus, there is a reasonable amount of confidence that this research is built on solid premises. The Niagara Land Trust was selected for a case study of the research, and the criteria established through the literature reviews and key informant interview processes were applied. Areas of success for the NLT and areas in need of improvement were identified.

The literature reviews and the key informant interviews found land trusts to be an exciting and positive contribution to the conservation movement in Ontario. While most researchers and participants were optimistic about the successes that local land trusts could achieve, multiple areas in which capacity needed to be built were identified. These areas included training and recruitment of volunteers, financial stability and marketing.

The criteria for the “ideal situation” for land trusts were applied to the case study of the Niagara Land Trust. The NLT was an appropriate choice for this exercise because it is represented both a critical case, in that the organization is currently being developed and because it is a representative or typical case (see Yin, 2003). The NLT is developing with the assistance of several other local land trusts, the Ontario Land Trust Alliance and respected land trust lawyer, Ian Attridge. Evaluating the NLT against the criteria provided insight into strengths and weaknesses of the organization. It was determined that the NLT has had a great deal of success in terms of fundraising, attracting a diversity of board members, and has strong expertise in land stewardship. The NLT needs to build capacity in the following areas: building relationships within the community, attracting a new Board of Directors, strategic planning and research. The NLT has not formally presented itself to the community since its Evening Seminar in July 2005. This has resulted in a void of contact with people who could be supporting the creation of the land trust. Moreover, the NLT’s Nomination Committee is struggling to create an application process and a strategy to attract new Members for the original April 2007 deadline. Finally, the strategic planning committee has not met for over a year. The first attempt at a strategic plan was created without consultation with the rest of the Founding Committee and is not used in decision-making. Finally, the NLT is not up-to-date with the newest regulations surrounding the land trust movement. Future effort should be directed towards increasing the Board’s knowledge of these legal issues.

The Academic Contribution of this Thesis

This research employed qualitative triangulation in the form of literature reviews, participant observation, key informant interviews and a case study to evaluate its central research problem and to substantiate its conclusions. The need for further academic research in the field of land trusts was well established. This research endeavoured to make a positive contribution to filling some of the existing academic gaps. The use of a case study for this research was appropriate because the existing knowledge base was poor. This allowed for an exploratory case study, which met the necessary conditions to test the ideal criteria. The Niagara Land Trust was informative about the average local land trust experience, or, at the very least, the creation process.

The information gleaned from the literature reviews and interviews demonstrated land trusts to be positive, proactive organizations which work to conserve land. Unlike other environmental organizations, land trusts, for the most part, concentrate their efforts on protecting land, rather than lobbying for change in policy. Land trusts are a part of a larger governing system which works to protect land. Many critics point to governments' inability to protect land over the long-term. Changing priorities, budget cutbacks and pressures for development are just some of the competing interests that land preservation faces. At the same time, land trust efforts to protect land are insufficient to provide ecosystem resiliency. Land trusts tend to be piecemeal in their approach. They cannot usurp the role that strong planning could play in protecting valuable ecosystems.

Land trust organizations are largely led by volunteers. Necessarily, the board of directors is entirely volunteers, but many of the day-to-day tasks are also completed through the use of volunteers. Due to land trusts' reliance on volunteers, these organizations face particular challenges in governing their organizations. It is impossible to assess the capacity of a land trust without also examining the capacity of its volunteers. Land trusts can build organizational capacity through helping to develop the skills of their volunteers. These gaps in capacity however lead to important questions about the governance of local land trusts.

The conclusion to the central research problem, namely that land trusts are governed in a manner that will allow them to effectively protect valued ecosystems had to be tempered. The answer is that while some aspects of land trust governance are handled in a manner that will allow them to effectively protect valued ecosystems in perpetuity, others are not. In the Niagara Peninsula alone, the Niagara Land Trust represents the third attempt at starting a local land trust (Beamer, 2006). Noted proponents of local land trusts in Ontario, such as Dave Walker (2006) and Stew Hilts (2006) agree that some land trusts will indeed fail or that the institutions themselves will change. One of the central issues is the prospect of perpetuity. While evidence does support that land trusts can exist over 500+ years, it is impossible for anyone to say that land trusts will exist *forever*. More than likely, the people involved with local land trusts want to ensure that land is conserved as long as possible. The existing land registration process does not even acknowledge perpetuity as a length of time of which a property can be registered to an owner. When registering a conservation easement, local land trusts are required to write down 999 years as the tenure of the agreement (Albanese, 2006). As institutions, land trusts may evolve with the needs of the community. Therefore, the local land trusts which we are familiar with today could very well have changed over the next hundred years. Intuitively, the survival of the organization is hinged upon its ability to adapt.

There are several common challenges in the governance of land trusts and indeed, in most voluntary organizations. The finding that long-term funding is necessary to improve land trust governance is consistent with the findings from other studies on citizen-based ecological monitoring groups (see Hunsberger, et al, 2005; 622), social service agencies (see Brown and Trout, 2004) and nonprofits who partner with local governments (see Altman-Sauer, et al, 2005). Moreover, the idea that land trusts can improve their capacity through hiring staff is also consistent with the work of Hunsberger, et al (2005; 619), Brown and Trout (2004; 6) and Altman-Sauer, et al (2005; 30). Many local land trust volunteers recognize that to provide a higher level of service to their constituents, land trusts must hire paid staff (for example: Ernest (2006), Beamer (2006), Braithwaite (2006)). At the same time, these trusts must find a way to balance reliance on paid staff members and the volunteers who largely run the organization. Land trusts also risk a loss of credibility within the community. For a local land trust, credibility is their most important currency. The need to retain credibility in the public eye is consistent in many other nonprofit fields. The methods suggested by Hunsberger, et al (2005; 618) and Altman-Sauer, et al (2005; 30) of employing volunteer training and quality assurance are similar to the methods that the Ontario Land Trust Alliance and the Canadian Land Trust Alliance are employing through their Standards and Practices. Huntsberger et al (2005; 621) recommend a similar course of standardization. These points demonstrate that there is consistency between the findings of research pertaining to other nonprofits and research pertaining to local land trusts. Hence, there could be some commonalities for other conservation-oriented volunteer groups.

The primary academic contribution of this research was the creation of criteria with which to describe an "ideal situation" for land trusts. These criteria are summarized in the box below. This research has revealed that there is no such thing as an "ideal situation" in practice. Volunteer efforts of local land trusts often face constraints in terms of time, money and expertise. While efforts have been made to standardize local land trusts and to train their volunteers, the governance of local land trusts is rarely tidy. Ordinary citizens join local land trusts due to a love of the environment and many learn "on the job" (Braithwaite, 2006). Land trusts who utilize this criteria for a successful land trusts will see their chances of protecting land in perpetuity enhanced.

The criteria are helpful for improving land trust governance because it focuses on improving the adaptive capacity of these organizations. The *Standards and Practices* created by the Canadian Land Trust Alliance focus mostly on the legal issues related to land trust governance. Increasingly there is recognition that a complex systems approach to governance matters is essential for improving the resiliency of human-run organizations. The criteria developed through this work help to fill in some of the gaps associated with the Canadian Land Trust Alliance's *Standards and Practices*, particularly in relation to bolstering volunteer efforts in perpetuity.

Maintaining Public Integrity

- land trust volunteers must be honest and forthright in all of their undertakings
- land trusts should garner public support though honesty and approachability
- land trusts must realize that the actions of one organization reflects on the entire land trust community
- land trusts should be committed to equity and hold themselves to strong ethical principles

Proper Recruitment, Management and Training of Volunteers

- volunteers must be properly trained to ensure adherence to the mission of the organization and that they are capable of handling the rigours of their job
- volunteers must be managed in a professional manner
- land trust organizations should create job descriptions and ambitious recruiting programs to ensure that the professional expertise needed is brought to the land trust
- volunteer placements should be treated like a professional appointment, therefore volunteers should fulfill their job requirements and be periodically evaluated
- volunteers' contribution to land trusts should be acknowledged regularly

Choosing the Appropriate Conservation Tool

- Conservation Easements could prove to be legal problems in the future, so use them with appropriate caution. Create one that is legally defensible and easily monitored.
  - -Create easements with perpetuity in mind, landscapes will change
  - -ensure land trust has endowment/ other resources to monitor and protect land in perpetuity
- Provide innovative mechanisms through which land can be conserved
- Be flexible in your mechanisms- make land trusts the most accommodating solution
- always make land deals with perpetuity in mind
- ensure the land trust has the appropriate resources (financial and human) to ensure long-term capacity
  - -look for partnership opportunities to protect more land

Good Governance

- land trusts should provide a mechanism through which the community can work towards conservation
- land trust participants should recognize differing opinions, particularly dissenting ones
- land trusts should conduct their business in a transparent manner
- land trusts should work towards the public good

Commitment to Capacity Building

- land trusts must continue to exchange information and improve the exchange of information for the betterment of the movement
- relationships amongst land trusts, umbrella agencies, volunteers and donors must be continually improved
- Umbrella Agencies such as the Ontario Land Trust Alliance, the Canadian Land Trust Alliance and the Land Trust Alliance of British Columbia should provide information and support to land trusts and facilitate pooling resources

Continued on the next page.

Adherence to Laws and Legal Norms

- ensure land trust is in compliance with all appropriate laws
- ensure that land trust stay ahead of legislation so that it can continue to be in compliance with laws
- land trusts should work towards adherence to the Canadian Land Trust Alliance's *Standards and Practices* to provide a standard by which all land trusts can be evaluated and to provide assurance to potential benefactors
- land trusts should have a policy on Conflicts of Interest and follow Provincial and Federal disclosure laws

Pursuing Multiple Benefits

- *land trusts should have a central goal which is widely communicated*
- "You must be the change you want to see in the world." Mahatma Gandhi
- land trusts should seek sustainability benefits through their work
- social capital building should be a product of land trust's work local land trusts should seek opportunities to educate the public

A novel methodological approach was utilized to produce the criteria, resulting in a significant theoretical contribution to the research. The criteria were created through synthesizing literature from both the land trust and sustainability fields. Moreover, the criteria were substantiated and improved upon through the use of key informant interviews. The result being that new information was brought to light. Testing the criteria through the use of a case study demonstrated their utility. This approach can act as a model to be emulated by other researchers when creating their own criteria for success in different academic fields.

The structure and contents of the literature reviews represent a unique academic contribution. Dividing the literature review into two chapters demonstrated the breadth of literature consulted. Chapter three highlighted the key concepts which were employed to inform this thesis, whereas chapter four concentrated on the field of land trusts and stewardship to answer the secondary research questions. The literature review followed a utilitarian format. The content of the literature review also produced a significant theoretical contribution to the research. It argued that there was insufficient academic literature in the field of land trusts to adequately address the research questions. Therefore, the literature review examined other key concepts, such as volunteerism, capacity building, conservation biology and social capital in order to provide additional information regarding land trust governance. The synthesis of previously unlinked literatures helped to inform the conclusions drawn from this study.

Limitations of this study include its particular focus on local land trusts in Ontario. As the local land trust movement in Ontario is a fairly fledging enterprise, critical evidence regarding the longevity of local land trusts might have been lost as a result. The selection of the Niagara Land Trust as the case study also has important ramifications for this study. As the Niagara Land Trust is a board-driven organization, the results may differ from an organization which is membership driven, although in practice, membership driven land trusts tend to follow the lead of the board.

On the whole however, this study provides a critical piece with which evaluation of local land trusts can begin. The creation of the criteria provides an academic standpoint that other researchers can build upon and critique. The use of the case study provides a practical application of the criteria and an example of how case study research can be employed to further local land trust research. The implications of the case study research will be discussed in the sub-section on the applied contribution of this research.

The Applied Contribution of this Thesis

This research was designed to achieve the dual purpose of making both an academic and applied contribution to the field of local land trusts. Three components of the methods helped to provide reliable information to make applied contributions through this research: participant observation, case study research and the key informant interviews.

The use of participant observation allowed for an applied contribution throughout the research period. While undertaking my studies, I would make recommendations to the Niagara Land Trust as more information was gleaned about the governance of local land trusts. This allowed for changes to be made to the Niagara Land Trust in “real time”, strengthening its governance throughout its formation. The Niagara Land Trust also asked me to research specific areas to help improve the land trust, so there was a reciprocal relationship occurring.

The use of the Niagara Land Trust as a case study also resulted in an applied contribution. Many members of the Founding Committee have requested either a copy of this thesis or a summary of its conclusions (Roach, personal observation, 2007). There has also been a discussion of creating a presentation for the Founding Committee to highlight my research findings. The presentation of the identified criteria, as well as my application of said criteria to the NLT would be the bulk of that presentation. Specific recommendations will be made to the NLT to help improve its governance.

Finally, key informant interviews got the participants thinking about and discussing some of the key issues which local land trusts are facing. In some cases, the interviews led to the possibility of future academic collaboration or the sharing of some of the interviewee’s personal contributions to the academic literature. At the very least, a fruitful discussion of the merits of local land trusts is beneficial to the organizations because it provides a forum through which volunteers can share some of their thoughts and questions about the process.

The criteria which were developed through this research can also make an applied contribution to the local land trust movement. When completing organizational assessments, for example, these criteria could be utilized as a yard-stick for success. Furthermore, these criteria can be altered to cater to the needs of individual local land trusts. The utilization of the criteria can provide a positive applied contribution of this research.

In the following section, recommendations will be made to the Niagara Land Trust. This will be followed by recommendations to the larger land trust community.

Recommendations to the Niagara Land Trust

The Niagara Land Trust is a fledgling organization, at the brink of incorporation and launch. Getting to this point has required a tremendous amount of dedication to the cause from a large number of volunteers. It is clear that the organization's success so far should be celebrated and that the NLT should continue to work towards its goal.

Within Chapter 6 specific recommendations were made to the NLT regarding areas of success and areas in need of improvement. Like most local land trusts, there are some areas in which their governance needs to be improved. Research has demonstrated that many of the challenges that the NLT face are similar to those of other local land trusts and other conservation organizations in general. Therefore, the NLT can be considered a representative case for local land trusts.

If the NLT is interested in maintaining its relationship with umbrella agencies, such as the Ontario Land Trust Alliance and the Canadian Land Trust Alliance, it should begin to work towards incorporating the Alliance's standards and practices within their organization. As the NLT is still being created, now would be the best time to set the framework for the adoption of those recommendations. Being a part of an umbrella agency will help the NLT to achieve the credibility that it needs to succeed. Moreover, having a strong constitution and policies laid out will prevent the co-option of the NLT by future board members.

Creating a strong institution at this time through following the prescribed criteria is one of the most important steps that the NLT can take to achieve success. It is clear that the Founding Committee has the talent and the connections to achieve success within the peninsula, but the challenge is to focus on both the short-term goal of incorporation and conserving property and the long-term goals of being effective stewards and maintaining the quality of the organization. The following section presents specific recommendations on how the larger land trust community can help local land trusts achieve these goals is discussed.

Recommendations to the Larger Land Trust Community

Ontario Land Trust Alliance, Canadian Land Trust Alliance

Land trusts are enjoying the current resurgence in interest in conservation and the environment in general. As the umbrella agencies for numerous local, provincial and national land trusts, the Ontario Land Trust Alliance and the Canadian Land Trust

Alliance face the difficulty of their own success as a movement. New land trusts are being created at a quickening pace, whereas established land trusts are managing increasing numbers of properties. One challenge that the umbrella organizations face is the difference in size and capacity of each organization that they represent. This makes governance of local land trust organizations a more difficult process.

The Canadian Land Trust Alliance is still within its beginning stages. Its major contribution to the movement so far has been the creation of its standards and practices. There are plans in place to begin organizational assessments of land trusts (Hilts, personal communication, 2007) and to have trained facilitators help land trusts to adopt these standards and practices. I feel that this is an important step for the organization to take. In the interim, the Ontario Land Trust Alliance can help local land trusts by creating specific workshops to address the capacity building needs of the organizations. Having trained facilitators visit the local land trusts could help improve governance. This is particularly the case for implementing the CLTA's *Standards and Practices*. The Ontario Land Trust Alliance has also taken a positive first step by hiring a full-time Executive Director. There have been changes to the organization since the hiring of the Executive Director, such as electronic newsletters being distributed, which are helpful for OLTA members.

If the land trust movement continues to grow at a rapid rate, the policy of OLTA may have to change in terms of encouraging new land trusts to join with existing organizations. This practice is already common within the United States where the movement is more established. New and smaller land trusts joining with existing land trusts could help to prevent the failure of some local land trusts, hence, not creating negative publicity for the movement as a whole. Amalgamating existing land trusts with new land trusts will also help to reduce land trust redundancy and competition for limited resources. Some researchers comment that umbrella agencies can also look more towards hybrid approaches in the future. For example, local groups can be paired with national groups to enhance the longevity of the organizations (Andrews and Loukidelis, 1996; 13).

The annual meetings that OLTA hosts are an effective networking opportunity for local land trusts (Ball and Lister, 2005; 6). OLTA or CLTA could help to facilitate networking through creating an online poster board or discussion forum or creating a formal mentoring process. This mentoring process could involve pairing new and small local land trusts with larger, more established land trusts in order to help these land trusts to become established. The established land trusts could make specific recommendations to the smaller land trusts regarding board structure and function, their constitution and specific management schemes.

OLTA and CLTA can increase their governance capacity in order to do more to help local land trusts to succeed. Recommendations as to how local land trusts need to improve their operations are contained within the following section.

Where Land Trusts Need to Improve

Local land trusts are viewed by most researchers as a successful and relatively new addition to the conservation field. But it is also recognized that land trusts must continuously improve their operations in order to achieve their goals and remain choice organizations for donations. Ball and Lister (2005) wrote a report with specific recommendations to increase capacity in the Ontario land trust movement. They included many suggestions to improve operations, some of which are highlighted here. They believe that adhering to the standards and practices set out by the Canadian Land Trust Alliance are in the best interests of land trusts (Ball and Lister, 2005; 5). This could be because having a level of standardization across Ontario leads to increased donor confidence and decreased likelihood of government regulation. Standardization is important for these reasons, but so is the "big picture". Local land trust participants should not become bogged down attempting to adhere to the standards and practices set out by the Canadian Land Trust Alliance to the detriment of the resiliency of their organizations.

The activities of local land trusts are also under-recognized by the public. This finding is consistent with the information from the Ball and Lister report (2005; 14). Many people actively engaged in conservation are unfamiliar with the activities of a land trust. Popular organizations, such as Ontario Nature and Nature Conservancy of Canada have not lifted the profile of land trusts sufficiently. Lay people may know of the activities that these organizations carry out, but not recognize that these activities are as a result of their mandate as land trusts. This may prevent potential donors from stepping forward.

Ball and Lister (2005; 8) also argue that land trusts are needed throughout the province, in order to ensure "coverage". This is debatable. Land trusts are effective organizations in helping to conserve privately held land. They are particularly valuable in developed or rapidly developing areas of southern Ontario. Having land trusts in north western Ontario, for example, is not really necessary in my opinion, because sufficient land is under Crown ownership. Therefore, land trusts may not be the best solution for protecting these areas. It may be advisable for local land trusts and their umbrella agencies to concentrate their efforts where they are needed most.

Local land trusts need to improve their efforts to engage the community. Many of the more successful local land trusts enjoy strong community support. Fundraising activities of the Rideau Waterway Land Trust, for example, can attract 500 people (Walker, 2006). This demonstrates that the community is actively engaged by the land trust. On the whole however, local land trusts should be doing more to engage their community. Often, the conservation movement does not reflect the diversity of people in Canada (Ball and Lister, 2005). The activities of a land trust can also indirectly harm rural landowners. For example, conservation easements sometimes increase the value of surrounding land, pushing up tax assessment values. Moreover, conservation easements are not economically beneficial for those who are land rich, but cash poor (Tiedt, 1982; 69). Therefore, land trusts must work with their communities to explain the benefits and drawbacks of their activities. Additionally, land trusts should be working with their umbrella agencies and provincial and federal governments to come up with a mechanism to compensate people who donate working lands to trusts.

Finally, local land trusts must continue to innovate. Land trusts are attractive conservation organizations because they flexible. Local land trusts should continue to innovate in order to attract more donors to their organizations.

Land trusts, like most volunteer conservation organizations, have many areas in which they need to build capacity. A number of areas wherein capacity needs to be built has been previously highlighted in Chapter 6. The overlapping areas of interest for other conservation organizations will be highlighted in the next section.

Recommendations for Conservation Organizations as a Whole

Land trusts are not alone in the challenges to their governance that they face. The research of Hunsberger, Gibson and Wismer (2005), for example, pointed to many similar gaps in capacity of volunteers involved in environmental monitoring. This example serves to illustrate the point that conservation organizations as a whole require more support in order to fulfill their aims. If governments are choosing to download more of their responsibilities to a local level, then it might make sense for them to start supporting local conservation organizations more.

Land trusts and other conservation organizations could join forces to counteract some of the gaps in capacity identified through this research. One commonly mentioned mechanism to build capacity, particularly for cash-strapped organizations, was to share some of the burden with other, similar organizations. Many of the criteria developed through this research would also be applicable to conservation organizations generally. Using the criteria contained within this thesis, or other organizational assessments could help to improve the governance within the organizations.

Areas for Future Research

Merenlender, et al (2004; 65) identified several areas in the field of land trusts in need of further research. They commented that there was a lack of information regarding the pattern of protected lands and resources, the landowners who choose to work with land trusts, and the distribution of costs and benefits to the public. These concerns were evident in the literature consulted and the case study. Andrews and Loukidelis (1996; 23, 27) identified two areas which could affect the fortunes of land trusts in the future, namely, the size of the income tax breaks and the potential liability that a conservation easement could cause to a landowner. This is because a land trust member could be injured while monitoring a property or a member of the public could be injured while using the property for recreational purposes. Overall, conservation easements have not been used in Canada for a sufficient amount of time to wholly test their legal stability.

Many questions surrounding the maintenance of conservation easements have yet to be answered, even though the Ontario government has made movements towards supporting their perpetuation through enacting legislation.

While this research has identified several gaps in capacity of local land trusts, it has not provided sufficient recommendations on how to build this capacity. Future research could focus on identifying additional gaps and creating a comprehensive program to help land trusts reduce them. With the unveiling of the new Canadian Land Trust Alliance's Standards and Practices, more research could be conducted as to the success of this measure. Are local land trusts really following these recommendations? Which standards do they find most valuable and most onerous? Moreover, what will be the role of this new Canadian Land Trust Alliance beyond standards setting?

It is currently an exciting time for the land trust movement in Canada. Local land trusts are rapidly being created. The Canadian Land Trust Alliance has incorporated and has put together a listing of Standards and Practices for land trusts. The Ontario Land Trust Alliance has recently hired an Executive Director and she is proposing changes to the workshops that OLTA hosts and what membership provides. Overall, due to this rapid change, there are many opportunities for research in this field. Little academic research has been completed so far, but there is a wealth of anecdotal information being shared.

Conclusions

Chapter 7 is the culmination of two years of research in the field of local land trusts. It began by running briefly through the history of local land trusts in Canada, highlighting the explosive growth that this movement has achieved within the last fifteen years. At the same time however, it offered a cautionary note about land trusts. Overall, they have not been tested in Canada and it is difficult to state how effectively they will run in the future.

The conclusion of this research is that some land trusts undoubtedly are governed in a manner that will allow them to effectively protect valued ecosystems. While land trusts do not have a long history in Canada, in Britain they have protected land since the 1500s. On the flip side, some land trusts are not governed in a manner that will allow them to function effectively over the long term. The key difficulties include volunteer fatigue, lack of financial resources and inability to connect with the community. This realization will have an impact on the movement as a whole as the actions of one land trust could reflect badly on all of them. This situation is currently occurring in the United States. Local land trusts therefore should take steps to ensure that their public credibility is maintained. Failed trusts add additional stress to existing trusts, because charitable rules require that all of the assets of a failed trust be distributed to another charitable organization with similar objects. Embracing the standards and practices set out by CLTA, completing organizational assessments and building capacity within the organization are all steps that local land trusts can take to enhance their image. Moreover, umbrella agencies such as CLTA and OLTA can take steps to support the movement and to build capacity. This includes providing more education and support around the implementation of the standards and practices, holding workshops specifically directed towards building capacity in local land trusts and encouraging a peer-mentoring program.

This research contributed both in an academic and applied sense. In terms of academics, this thesis presented a set of criteria against which local land trusts can evaluate themselves. This criteria can also serve as a starting point for other academics to create their own criteria or to enhance the existing criteria. This research also made specific recommendations to the NLT, OLTA and CLTA, which will help them to achieve their conservation aims. Finally, this study identified that there are several overlapping gaps in capacity between local land trusts and other conservation organizations. Working together to ameliorate these gaps provides opportunities for partnerships and organizational growth.

The local land trust movement is vibrant, providing opportunities for ordinary citizens to take an active role in land conservation. Local land trusts can work privately to secure public goods, such as improvements to the local ecosystem. These trusts are often a reflection of the desires of the community and as such, offer a mechanism through which direct democracy can be achieved. As conservation organizations, these trusts hold an enormous responsibility to care for the land and for the citizens who support them. Therefore, local land trusts should always be striving to improve their governance.

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Glossary

Canadian Land Trust Alliance
The aim of the Canadian Land Trust Alliance "is to strengthen the land trust movement in Canada through education and training and to promote the voluntary conservation of private lands" (CLTA, 2007).

Capacity Building
Nurturing the ability of those responsible for managing resources to make sound decisions (Barker, 2005; 11).

Community-Based Management
Occurs when local people are empowered to responsibly manage their resources (Barker, 2005; 13).

Conservation Biology
"Conservation biologists seek to maintain three important aspects of life on Earth: the natural diversity found in living systems (biological diversity); the composition, structure, and function of those systems (ecological integrity); and their resiliency and ability to endure over time (ecological health)" (Trombulak, et al, 2004; 1181).

Conservation Easement/ Covenant
"a non possessory interest in real property granted by a landowner to another party" (Tiedt, 1982; 65).

Incorporation
"The act of incorporation gives life to a legal entity known as the corporation… A corporation has the same rights and obligations under Canadian law as a natural person. A corporation can acquire assets, go into debt, enter into contracts, sue or be sued, and even in some situations be found guilty of committing a crime" (Corporations Canada, 2006).

Incorporated Nonprofit Organizations
"organizations that are non-governmental (i.e., are institutionally separate from governments); non-profit-distributing (i.e., do not return any profits generated to their owners or directors); self-governing (i.e., are independent and able to regulate their own activities); voluntary (i.e., benefit to some degree from voluntary contributions of time or money); and formally incorporated or registered under specific legislation with provincial, territorial or federal governments" (Ministry of Industry, 2005).

Land Trust
Land Trusts are "non-profit, charitable organizations which have as one of their core activities the acquisition of land or interests in land (like conservation easements) for the purpose of conservation" (OLTA, 2005). Ecological land trusts are different from community land trusts in that their primary aim is to secure land for conservation purposes. Ecological land trusts are commonly referred to as "Land Trusts".

Niagara Land Trust (NLT)
A land trust currently in development in the Niagara Peninsula area. The Niagara Land Trust is an Associate Member of the Ontario Land Trust Alliance. It is currently comprised of a Founding Committee (Board of Directors), an Executive of 4 individuals and multiple committees.

Ontario Land Trust Alliance (OLTA)
"The Ontario Land Trust Alliance is a non-profit organization with a mandate to encourage the land trust movement throughout Ontario" (OLTA, 2005).

Philanthropy
Is "a voluntary action for the public good. Philanthropy is directed to improving the quality of life and fostering preservation of values through giving of time, money, or associations". Philanthropy includes gifts of volunteering, service and money (Butts, 2003; 60).

Social Capital
Is "the presence of effective human networks and social cohesion, which are manifested in effective institutions and processes where people can co-operate for mutual advantage" (Landman, 2004; 38).

Volunteerism
Is planned, long-term helping behaviour which requires both time and effort (Nelson and Norton, 2005; 424). "Volunteering is recognized globally not only as a valuable source of labor [sic], but as a means to facilitate individual participation in civic life, foster community, and support democracy" (Bloom and Kilgore, 2003; 431).