

2025-2027

Strategic Plan

FINALIZED JANUARY 2025

Flanders
NATURE CENTER & LAND TRUST

Mission Statement

Flanders' mission is to provide opportunities to appreciate nature's wonders and preserve land, inspiring lifelong learning about our natural world.

Vision Statement

To be a leading resource and destination of choice for environmental and outdoor education, research, land preservation and stewardship, farm experiences, and arts activities, reflecting the needs of our changing and inclusive communities and evolving partnerships.

Letter from the President of the Board

Flanders' Bright Future Ahead!



Building upon our positive momentum, I am excited to present the 2025–2027 Strategic Plan, a roadmap for the next three years of growth and impact. Our Board of Directors, staff, and volunteers have come together to set ambitious goals that will guide our efforts moving forward, detailed in the following pages. We are deeply proud of our mission and vision for the future. By continuing to collaborate with our communities, we are confident that we can achieve these objectives and continue to propel Flanders toward greater success.

The coming years will bring numerous initiatives designed to advance Flanders' vision. These plans build upon over 60 years of service to Central and Northwestern Connecticut, setting the stage for an exciting next chapter. We invite you to get involved and take full advantage of everything Flanders has to offer during this dynamic time in our journey!

Join us!

Jodi Wasserstein
PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD



Be a Regional Leader in Environmental Education

Expand area middle and high school programming and partnerships

- Assess Flanders engagement at the middle and high school levels to identify Flanders' most effective roles and strengths.
- Promote Flanders' expertise and capabilities to science department heads to identify programs of interest.
- Design and implement at least two new programs for middle and high school students.

Broaden public awareness of Flanders hiking preserves

- Research the cultural, historic, natural and conservation attributes of each of Flanders' seven hiking preserves to educate the community.
- Enhance the hiking experience with existing and emerging technologies and interpretive signage.
- Maintain kiosks at every hiking preserve, and add new kiosks, as needed.












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Be a Model for Agricultural Experiences

Expand farm programs and public engagement

- Explore best practices for public visitation.
- Highlight the elements of a working farm and Flanders' unique history by adding interpretative signage.
- Expand collaboration with area vocational agricultural schools and farming organizations.
- Improve the display of Flanders' collection of refurbished and preserved farm tools, equipment, and machinery for safety, educational purposes and aesthetic appeal.

Improve farm site operations and facilities

- Review and update the farm management plans.
- Implement the five phases of the Colonial Flanders Project, balancing safety and environmental impact:
  - PHASE 1: Create a bus loop for safer school trips, increase parking, and construct an accessible farm loop trail
  - PHASE 2: Build a state-of-the-art agricultural education pavilion.
  - PHASE 3: Replace the utility barn and workshop.
  - PHASE 4: Renovate the North Farm House to expand early education program space.
  - PHASE 5: Improve farmland grounds.
- Enhance farm productivity, infrastructure, and distribution of farm products.
- Develop a farm leadership succession plan.

Expand and Elevate the Role of Art

Preserve and promote the legacy and reputation of Natalie Van Vleck as a 20th century American artist

- Establish a permanent exhibition of Natalie Van Vleck's art in the new Van Vleck Gallery.
- Initiate a professional archiving project to preserve Natalie's legacy.

Expand the concept and community of art at Flanders by embracing additional art forms and audiences

- Diversify art programs to include painting, drawing, music, woodcraft and poetry.
- Continue to hold periodic art exhibitions, showcasing community artists with revolving exhibits in the Van Vleck Gallery.


NATALIE VAN VLECK
TRUE TO HER ART, LIFE & LAND
©Michael G Audette










Flanders
Hardware

Update and Refresh Flanders Marketing and Communications Activities

Review current logistical, organizational and communication processes for continuous improvement

- Increase collaboration and communication across Flanders through liaisons and meetings of committee chairs.
- Expand professional training and development for board and staff.
- Evaluate database systems to streamline internal and external communication.
- Refine social media, email campaigns, and printed materials.

Redesign the Flanders website

- Create a visually engaging and user-friendly platform with a nature-centric design
- Improve navigation to better promote events and programs
- Highlight Natalie Van Vleck's legacy as a farmer, artist and conservationist.







Broaden Development Practices and Activities

Strengthen fundraising efforts

- Identify new corporate and foundation prospects for outreach.
- Bring fee-based environmental education programming to community groups.
- Complete fundraising for the Colonial Flanders campaign.
- Establish a campership fund to cover tuition for at least 25 campers annually by identifying and connecting with interested individuals and corporations.
- Launch a Legacy Society for planned giving with exclusive benefits.

Strengthen Flanders Connection to Land and Natural Resources through Land Stewardship, Community Engagement, Advocacy and Acquisition

Facilitate land preservation and conservation

- Maintain Land Trust Alliance (LTA) Accreditation standards and practices.
- Continually prioritize high-conservation value properties in the Flanders region for acquisition and protection.
- Acquire by purchase or donation, properties or easements that meet Flanders' conversation criteria.
- Collaborate with conservation organizations and governmental entities on preservation and conservation initiatives, including controlling invasive species and diversifying flora and fauna.
- Strengthen partnerships with neighboring property owners and easement grantors.
- Continue to offer orientation, training and resources for volunteer land trust stewards and monitors.

Improve accessibility on selected Flanders hiking trails

- Enhance select Flanders trails to accommodate individuals with disabilities.
- Promote accessible trails and health benefits of the natural environment.

Promote applied research on Flanders properties to solve emerging environmental challenges

- Formalize and maintain relationships with academic institutions and citizen scientists for applied research projects.
- Establish a fund for student internships.
- Publicize and exhibit Flanders-based research projects.
- Develop a research plan that begins to capture the impact of climate change and invasive species on Flanders habitats and farm operations.
- Coordinate the functional research responsibilities through staff and/or volunteers.

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