

# FIVE YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN



**UNIQUE PLACES  
TO SAVE**



# PREPARING FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE

To help achieve our mission, Unique Places to Save will be guided by this focused five year strategic plan. This plan charts our course for creating sustainable growth, building organizational resilience, and maximizing conservation impact from 2026 to 2030.

## Our Mission

To restore and conserve natural and working lands and aquatic resources through conservation protections and sustainable natural resource restoration and management.

## Our Vision

We will establish Unique Places to Save as the premier non-profit partner for both mitigation banking and traditional land conservation while exploring other natural resource markets, serving as a trusted voice and leader in the permanent protection of restored, high-value ecosystems.



**Our work will achieve a lasting, significant downstream impact for communities and natural resources across the US.**

# INTRODUCTION FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Unique Places to Save is a mission-driven conservation organization founded to meet emerging needs in long-term land protection and stewardship. Inspired by the belief that “water is the source of all life,” the organization has grown from its beginnings in North Carolina into a trusted, national conservation partner known for safeguarding natural and working lands, with a strong emphasis on ensuring that functioning aquatic resources remain for generations to come.



Over the years, UP2S has applied creative, practical solutions to protect land with agricultural, ecological, cultural, and community values. We have established a strong record of performance, completing 109 conservation-related projects, protecting more than 7,000 acres, and supporting the permanent protection of over 125 miles of streams across nine states.

These accomplishments reflect UP2S’s ability to work alongside families, landowners, mitigation partners, investors, and grant agencies to structure conservation easements, steward protected lands, and ensure high-conservation value properties remain intact and well-managed for future generations.

Its new Five Year Strategic Plan envisions how the organization expands land protection, strengthens stewardship systems, increases organizational resilience, and applies its proven stewardship models to new environmental markets. Our strategy charts a balanced path that supports meaningful growth while investing in staff capacity, operational excellence, and long-term financial sustainability.

Through all of this, UP2S remains firmly anchored by its mission: to restore and conserve natural and working lands and aquatic resources through permanent protection and sustainable management. With a firm foundation, a collaborative spirit, and a forward-looking strategy, the organization is well-positioned to expand our impact and protect even more of the unique places that matter most for today and for the long term.

- Christine Pickens, Ph.D.

# EXPAND LAND & WATER CONSERVATION IMPACT

**We will increase our impact by focusing on our core strengths while exploring new opportunities.**

## *Scale Core Services for Mitigation Projects*

Solidify our position as the premier national non-profit partner for the mitigation banking industry.

## *Expand Traditional Land Conservation*

Continue to protect vital natural and working lands by partnering with private landowners on conservation strategies.

## *Explore New Markets*

Research and proactively identify opportunities similar to our work with mitigation banking in emerging natural resource markets, such as carbon and species banking.

## *Honor Our Legacy*

Complete our long-standing projects, ensuring their success and apply our expertise to future conservation markets and opportunities.

**20K**

### **Total Acres Conserved**

An additional 13,000 acres of protected natural and working lands

**300+**

### **Stream Miles Restored**

An additional 200 miles of healthy, functioning stream ecosystems

**6K+**

### **Wetland Acres Protected**

An additional 3,000 acres of vital wetland habitats

# ENSURE PERMANENT CONSERVATION THROUGH EXCELLENCE IN STEWARDSHIP

**We are committed to the perpetual stewardship of the lands and waters in our care.**

## *Enhance Easement Monitoring*

Invest in best-in-class technology and adopt innovative practices to steward our conservation properties with greater capacity. This modernization ensures we can efficiently and effectively safeguard these landscapes in perpetuity.

## *Strengthen Stewardship Operations*

Ensure our conservation easement stewardship program is robust, sound, and adaptable. We will proactively implement organizational safeguards to protect our mission against future uncertainties, ranging from potential legal challenges to shifts in the environment and regulatory landscape.

## *Support Our Landowners*

Deepen our collaborative relationships with landowners, moving beyond compliance to act as trusted partners and a vital resource to maintain and uphold the unique conservation values of their properties.

**0**

### **Major Violations**

Maintain exemplary compliance across all conservation projects

**\$8M+**

### **Stewardship Fund**

Double our Stewardship Fund dedicated to legal defense and monitoring

**10+**

### **Multi-State Capacity**

Expertise and capacity to monitor and legally defend easements in more states

# BUILD A RESILIENT & SUSTAINABLE FINANCIAL FOUNDATION

**We will secure our financial future to guarantee the permanence of our work for generations to come.**

## *Grow Operating Reserves*

Build our operating reserves to ensure long-term organizational stability and our ability to meet all responsibilities.

## *Operate Efficiently*

Operate efficiently and effectively while always working to minimize costs without sacrificing quality of work or service.

## *Diversify Revenue*

Expand and diversify our funding sources by growing support from foundations, corporate partners, and individual giving.

### **Establish New Revenue Streams**

Explore and expand new revenue opportunities based on our expertise in providing conservation services to emerging and existing industries

### **Grow Our Reserve Fund**

Have a Reserve Fund that is more than one full year of operations

### **Focus on Funding Programs**

Ensure a majority of our expenses are dedicated to mission-driven programs

### **Maintain Financial Discipline**

Keep our expense totals well below our annual gross revenue

# INVEST IN OUR TEAM & OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

**We will invest in our expert team and internal systems to create a resilient foundation required to support our ambitious growth.**

## *Grow Our Team*

Strategically add to our staff capacity based on current and predicted needs to better meet our mission through sustainable growth and hiring practices.

## *Optimize Systems*

Implement robust technology and processes to support an efficient and effective remote workforce focused on collaborative systems, security and up-to-date software and technology.

## *Foster Our Culture*

Invest in professional development and culture-building opportunities to build a knowledgeable and cohesive team with a culture of service, responsiveness, and care.

### **Expand Team Size**

Grow staff capacity focusing on increased project capacity, outreach, and administrative support

### **Keep Raising Standards**

Implement robust non-profit and other business policies and best-in-class technology and processes

### **Cultivate Our Team**

Invest in professional development and culture-building activities to foster a knowledgeable, cohesive team

# AMPLIFY OUR VOICE AS A TRUSTED CONSERVATION LEADER

**We will deliberately cultivate our brand to be recognized as an influential, trusted, and expert voice in the conservation sector.**

## *Solidify Our Position*

Advance our leadership role in traditional land conservation and cement our reputation as the premier non-profit partner for market-based conservation and mitigation projects. We strive to set the industry standard for reliability and excellence in delivering conservation outcomes.

## *Share Our Story*

Communicate the depth of our impact through compelling, human-focused storytelling that illustrates the vital link between nature and community. This narrative approach is designed to resonate deeply with our audiences.

## *Strengthen Networks*

Expand our strategic partnerships by collaborating closely with industry leaders, regulatory agencies, foundations, and landowners for robust, cross-sector alliances essential to amplifying our mission's long-term impact.

### **Public Perception**

Build our social media followers to over 30,000 followers across all accounts, a 20X increase

### **Thought Leadership**

Establish team members as thought leaders through asset creation, speaking, and hosting events

### **Build Partnerships**

Connect with other forward-looking organizations guiding the future of conservation



**CONTACT  
US TO LEARN MORE**



**UNIQUE PLACES  
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