



VISION 2020

The Next Ten Years

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The Last *Green* Valley, Inc. works to
enhance the region's significant
natural resources in the
context of a vital *economy* and
regional *cultural* identity.

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Introduction

The Last Green Valley is two things: it is the popular name given to the Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor (designated by Congress in 1994) and it is the name of the non-profit organization (TLGV) that manages the National Heritage Corridor. The most recent planning document for the organization, *Vision 2010, Vision to Reality*, expires this year. It is both apropos and necessary to reexamine the planning tools for TLGV and embark on a new ten-year plan because the context for TLGV's operation is changing.

TLGV has received federal appropriations since 1996. For each of the first four years that appropriation was \$200,000; in the fifth year it was \$248,000. With the expansion of the Corridor in 2002, the authorization rose to \$1 million per year, with actual annual funding ranging from \$515,000 to \$840,000 since 2001. The federal funding has been used to initiate programming. The smaller federal investment in the early years did not allow significant programming to be in place until after 2001.

In 2007, the TLGV Board of Directors adopted *Trail to 2015: A Sustainability Plan*. Within that plan, it was recognized that in order to maintain credible programming that will attract the significant resources necessary for sustainability, the federal investment would need to be retained over the next eight years. Reauthorization for federal funding to 2015 would leverage significant multi-year commitments that were essential.

A Congressional reauthorization bill was introduced in 2007 but delays in passing the essential legislation until 2009 had a marked effect on the rapid deployment of a capital campaign. The federal support continues to maintain the credibility of our programs but TLGV will not be authorized to receive appropriations through the National Park Service's Heritage Partnership Program after September 30, 2015. The dramatic decline in the national economy has made 2015 a looming deadline as well as a mid-point in the next ten-year plan.



The purpose of *Vision 2020, The Next Ten Years* becomes two-fold. It will serve as guidance to and measurement of achievement in important programmatic visions and strategies. It will deliver a strategy for the first sustained National Heritage Area in the nation – how it changes and how it remains the same over time.

Background

Significance of the Region

The Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley of northeastern Connecticut and south-central Massachusetts has been called “The Last Green Valley” in the sprawling coastal metropolitan Boston-to-Washington corridor. The region appears distinctively dark in the urban and suburban glow when viewed at night from satellites or aircraft. In the daytime, the green fields and forests confirm the surprisingly rural character of the 1,085 square-mile area defined by the Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers systems and the rugged hills that surround them. The relatively undeveloped character of this green and rural island in the midst of the most urbanized region in the nation makes it a resource of local, regional, and national importance.

The Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor encompasses about 695,000 acres. The area stretches from Norwich, Connecticut north to Charlton, Massachusetts and from Coventry, Connecticut east to the Rhode Island border. More than half the size of Grand Canyon National Park and ten times the area of Acadia National Park, its 35 towns with numerous villages have a total population of about 300,000.

The Last Green Valley is notable for its quality of life and quality of place. Amid the enormous economic and population changes of the 20th and early 21st centuries, the region has retained its fundamental attributes of lush pastures and woodlands, clean streams, rivers, ponds, and lakes; small cities and smaller towns representing important developments in American history; and continuing opportunities for individuals and families to enjoy a rural small-town life-style. In 2010, The Last Green Valley remains 78% forest and farm land.

The Management Structure

The Last Green Valley, Inc. (TLGV) was formerly known as the Quinebaug-Shetucket Heritage Corridor, Inc. (QSHC). The original grassroots committee that worked for National Heritage Corridor designation incorporated in 1995 as a nonprofit organization. In March of 1996, Governor Rowland designated QSHC as the “suitable administering organization” to manage projects and funds from the federal legislation. With the passage of Public Law 106-149, QSHC and its successors were named by Congress as the management entity for the Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor. The organization has no regulatory authority; it is the administrative body for implementation of the original management plan and the producer of subsequent planning documents.

TLGV is a private, nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation. It is a membership organization that reflects the interests of a broad-based, grassroots constituency through a democratic process. Officers and the Board of Directors are elected by the membership at the annual meeting. Members can participate in all committees.

TLGV members, including the 35 towns in the region, meet annually, while the Board of Directors meets every other month. The standing committees and subcommittees meet at least quarterly and many on a monthly basis. All members are invited to participate in the committee structure of the Board of Directors as a means of perpetuating the original grassroots involvement.

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It is the role of TLGV:

- 🌿 To promote partnerships at the local, regional, state and federal levels to accomplish the mission of TLGV and maximize limited resources,
- 🌿 To act as an educator/facilitator to motivate independent actions that will accomplish the mission of TLGV and maximize limited resources,
- 🌿 To take action through specific projects or programs when TLGV is the only or the most appropriate entity to bring about initiation or successful completion of critical work.



The Operational Process

A. Assessment:

1. TLGV responds to grassroots initiatives that address important cares and/or concerns of the communities consistent with the visions and goals of current planning documents.
2. TLGV determines the existence of programs that will fulfill the visions and goals of current planning documents and identifies potential new programs that will fill gaps.

B. Feasibility:

1. The likelihood of success is determined for each project or program.
2. A method and process for delivering the service is determined for each project or program, including but not limited to research, identification of potential partners, costs, personnel and work plans.

C. Implementation:

1. Projects and programs are prioritized and recommended for funding through the work of TLGV committees and the annual budget process.
2. Projects and programs are implemented with partners whenever possible.

D. Evaluation:

1. Projects and programs are evaluated annually as part of the budget process.
2. Constituent-based evaluation processes, e.g. needs assessments and surveys are conducted periodically.

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Timeline

1988

Congressman Sam Gejdenson finds that Connecticut ranks last in federally protected park and open space lands, and also lags behind all northeast states in lands set aside for recreation.



1989

Quinebaug River Association forms a subcommittee to investigate ways of preserving the region's resources. Technical Assistance is provided by the National Park Service and the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection.



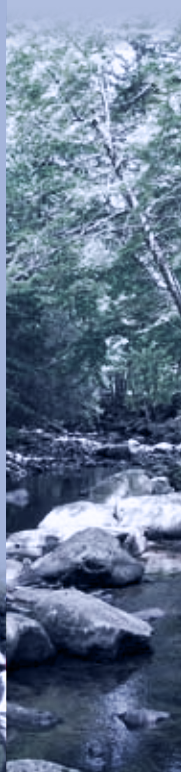
1991

The first Walking Weekend is held to acquaint residents and visitors alike with the enormous resources that exist in the region. Heritage Corridor Committee is formed as a subcommittee of the Northeast Connecticut Council of Governments, incorporating the former subcommittee of the Quinebaug River Association and other grassroots participants. The group prepares draft legislation to present to Congressman Gejdenson.



1993

The National Park Service conducts a study of the proposed National Heritage Corridor.



1994

Public Law 103-449 is passed by the 103rd Congress and signed by President Clinton, designating the Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor, the fourth in the country.



1995

Connecticut General Assembly passes **Public Act-95-170** to establish an Advisory Council to prepare a management plan for the Corridor. Grassroots committee incorporates as Quinebaug-Shetucket Heritage Corridor, Inc. (QSHC) and is designated by Governor Rowland as the "suitable administering organization" to manage projects and funds from the federal legislation.



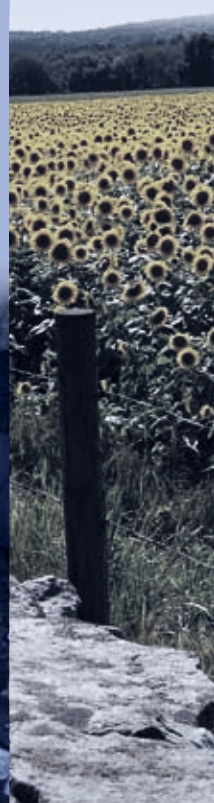
1997

Governor Rowland names and convenes the Advisory Council; *Vision to Reality: A Management Plan* is produced, accepted by Governor Rowland and transmitted to the Secretary of the Interior.



1998

The *QSHC Implementation Plan: A Work in Progress* and the *Action Plan* are produced.



Federal Funding History and Leverage FY95-09

YEAR	AUTHORIZATION	APPROPRIATION	MATCH	RATIO	STATE	LOCAL/REG.	PRIVATE
1995	200,000	0	0				
1996	250,000	200,000	331,000	1 to 1.5	n/a	n/a	n/a
1997	250,000	200,000	1,300,000	1 to 6.5	n/a	n/a	n/a
1998	250,000	200,000	2,400,000	1 to 12	n/a	n/a	n/a
1999	250,000	200,000	3,350,000	1 to 16	919,000	1,830,000	601,000
2000	250,000	248,000	8,984,000	1 to 36	3,700,000	4,560,000	724,000
2001	1,000,000	515,000	14,000,000	1 to 27	4,830,000	4,650,000	4,520,000
2002	1,000,000	750,000	7,000,000	1 to 9	1,800,000	2,700,000	2,500,000
2003	1,000,000	840,000	15,245,959	1 to 18	10,262,360	3,214,642	1,768,957
2004	1,000,000	790,000	23,164,645	1 to 30	6,203,996	5,642,900	11,317,749
2005	1,000,000	838,000	13,233,912	1 to 16	7,423,275	2,252,468	3,558,169
2006	1,000,000	788,230	13,460,070	1 to 17	5,071,328	6,434,888	1,953,854
2007	1,000,000	722,270	17,058,730	1 to 23	1,739,845	6,163,279	9,155,606
2008	1,000,000	711,721	31,401,197	1 to 44	19,205,149	2,486,711	9,709,337
2009	1,000,000	712,000	23,568,705	1 to 33	12,282,436	4,192,404	7,093,865
Totals	10,450,000	7,715,221	174,498,218	1 to 23	73,437,389	44,127,292	52,902,537

1999

Congressman Gejdenson (CT) in partnership with Congressman Neal (MA) introduces legislation that becomes **Public Law 106-449**. It is passed by Congress and signed by President Clinton reauthorizing the Quinebaug and Shetucket NHC for another ten years, increasing its authorized funding to \$1 million per year, expanding the boundaries to include ten additional communities in the watershed, and naming QSHC as management entity.

2000

QSHC completes *2010 Vision: A Plan for the Next Ten Years*, and the *Interpretive Initiative for the Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor*.



2002

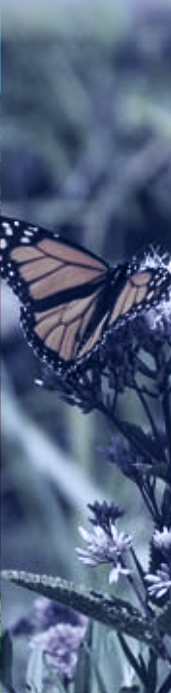
All 35 towns in the Corridor sign the **Community Compact**.

QSHC completes the *Development Assessment*.



2005

QSHC completes a regional survey to measure awareness and support of mission and programming.



2007

QSHC completes the first sustainability plan for any National Heritage Corridor: *The Trail to 2015, A Sustainability Plan*



2008

QSHC changes its name to The Last Green Valley, Inc. (TLGV).



2009

The Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor is **reauthorized** by Congress to September 30, 2015.

Connecticut General Assembly passes **PA09-221**, creating the Connecticut Heritage Areas Program and directing all state entities to take the resources of the National Heritage Areas in the state into consideration in their planning and projects.



2010

Massachusetts General Court passes Chapter 272 of the Acts of 2010, recognizing the National Heritage Areas in the Commonwealth, directing all state entities to take the resources of the NHAs into consideration in their planning and projects, and giving authorization for appropriations.





Assessment 2010

Grassroots

TLGV's greatest strength continues to and will always be its grassroots nature. Literally thousands of residents, businesses, non-profits, local governments, regional entities and state agencies have coalesced around the mission of The Last Green Valley, Inc. That has made TLGV reflective, responsive and valuable to its constituents.

The Last Green Valley, Inc. works to enhance the region's **significant** natural resources in the context of a vital economy and regional cultural identity.

Assessment of Position in 2010

Over the past ten years, The Last Green Valley, Inc., has evolved and responded to needs from its communities and residents. The library of annual reports attest to its plethora of programs and projects and the impacts and partners they have generated.

In 2007, TLGV irrefutably recognized that federal funding would be ending in upcoming years and made the most important decision to become self-sufficient by 2015. The first sustainability plan in the history of the national heritage corridor movement was written that year, *The Trail to 2015, A Sustainability Plan*, and used as justification for a request for reauthorization from 2010 to 2015.

Summary of Strengths:

- ☘ The grassroots nature of TLGV keeps the organization up-to-date with the latest cares and concerns of residents, nonprofits and communities.
- ☘ TLGV is flexible, allowing the organization to be responsive to expressed and documented issues and challenges.
- ☘ The partnerships that have evolved between TLGV and others amount to an impressive, long and perennial list.
- ☘ Federal funding has been essential to developing and maintaining credible programming in the past ten years; significant impacts have resulted from the match leveraged against those federal dollars.
- ☘ Matching contribution documentation (cash, third-party cash, in-kind contributions) illustrates an important buy-in to the mission of the organization.
- ☘ TLGV has established a reputation for responsive, professional programs and materials.
- ☘ Those who know TLGV and its programs are positive and enthusiastic about its programming and mission.
- ☘ TLGV has established a regional identity, a regional way of thinking and acting, at a scale where none existed before. The success of this regional focus is largely due to consensus and capacity building, as TLGV has not and would not desire any regulatory authority.

Need for Sustainability:

- ☘ TLGV has been the most successful regional entity working in its mission.
- ☘ Despite limited public awareness early on, TLGV is increasingly looked to for guidance and assistance, and as an advocate for resource conservation.
- ☘ TLGV has developed credibility at the local, regional, state and federal levels.
- ☘ The need to continue the work to fulfill TLGV's mission will be present for many decades.

Challenges and Opportunities:

- ☘ TLGV, formerly known as Quinebaug-Shetucket Heritage Corridor, Inc., was slow to build awareness because of its awkward and hard-to-remember name.
- ☘ Limited resources have not allowed TLGV to do region-wide mailings to all residents about its programming and stewardship needs, as well as other marketing endeavors listed as goals in previous planning documents.
- ☘ There is great need for the kind of programming and projects that TLGV delivers. If the organization were to cease, there would be an incontrovertible void.
- ☘ TLGV has never received full funding as authorized at \$1 million per year as have some other NHAs. The additional funding would have put TLGV in a much different position in 2010.

- ☘ Delays in federal contracting processes have had adverse impacts on cash flow and staffing. The loss of two and a half staff in 2007 had a severe impact on program delivery and continues in 2010 with a need for one additional full-time staff person.
- ☘ It took three years to get reauthorization and that has greatly delayed capital fund raising and reduced the overall time available to become self-sustaining. It was essential to have federal funds in place to preserve the credibility of programs while other resources were identified and solicited.
- ☘ TLGV is more challenged than ever because of economic downturns. Also, its geographic region has historically been economically challenged compared to other areas of Connecticut and Massachusetts.
- ☘ Sustainability demands innovation and flexibility that will require TLGV to refine its mission over time.

An aerial photograph of a lush green valley. A large, winding lake is the central focus, surrounded by dense forest. The sky is hazy, and the overall scene is serene. A blue banner with white text is overlaid on the top left. The text is in a bold, italicized serif font.

The Next Ten Years

**“The Last Green Valley is both
the reality that sustains us
and the dream that inspired us.”**

Vision 2010, A Ten Year Plan



Visions and Strategies

The recommendations of *Vision 2020, The Next Ten Years*, come from a year-long period of reflection and analysis of TLGV and its work. The Board of Directors, its committees, subcommittees, members and partners evaluated the organization's programs, projects and impacts to date against previous planning documents. The resulting analysis of present position and desired future outcomes are stated clearly in the visions and strategies on subsequent pages. Specific action items were recommended to achieve those visions and strategies and all are listed at the end of this section.



Stewardship

STEWARDSHIP

Vision 2020: The Last Green Valley is a peaceful green oasis that inspires stewardship of its environment. Multiple generations care for resources in a conscientious and environmentally-sound manner. Those stewards also value and sustain the work of The Last Green Valley, Inc.

Strategies to Achieve the Vision:

- 🌱 Inspire residents to care about where they live.
- 🌱 Communicate to residents, visitors, businesses, nonprofits and government agencies that The Last Green Valley is a special place, that they are temporary stewards of its environment, and that they need to make sustainable choices to be good stewards.
- 🌱 Attract and educate the next generations to carry on the environmental work of TLGV through partnerships with schools and other youth programs.
- 🌱 Communicate that the appeal of “rural character” in our towns is a combination of sustainable natural resources and cultural identity.
- 🌱 Promote a minimization of waste by repurposing and recycling.
- 🌱 Support locally-grown, locally-produced products, and locally-provided services.
- 🌱 Communicate TLGV’s mission and work to a wide audience.
- 🌱 Increase the level of understanding and support for the mission of TLGV through optimized brand identification, use of social media and other methods.
- 🌱 Recruit new active and involved stewards to TLGV as members and donors.

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Community

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION

Vision 2020: The economy of The Last Green Valley is energetic, substantially driven by the resourcefulness and creativity of the stakeholders who live and work in the region. The region retains its traditional character and optimizes the quality of life for its residents. Tourism is vibrant and visitors are provided with appropriate services and amenities. TLGV maintains creative partnerships with federal, state, regional and local entities to maximize resources. New development emphasizes cooperative partnerships and is compatible with the historic and natural resources of the region.

Strategies to Achieve the Vision:

- Encourage economic development that will provide jobs, income and financial incentives, focuses attention on local products and talents, and is compatible with The Last Green Valley's natural and cultural resources.
- Enhance The Last Green Valley's tourism potential, capitalizing on its proximity to population centers by marketing the region's strongest assets – nature-based recreation, agriculture and small town New England experiences.
- Develop cooperative partnerships with the educational assets in The Last Green Valley, particularly colleges and universities.
- Coordinate the implementation of the Connecticut and Massachusetts Heritage Areas Legislation, as defined by CT PA 09-221 and MA Chapter 272 of 2010, with all state agencies, boards, committees and commissions for planning and projects.
- Encourage Walkable Communities through the development of connected networks of walking routes (sidewalks, trails and greenways). Guide community plans to encourage mixed land uses where appropriate. Promote pedestrian-friendly development in downtown and Main Street areas.
- Advocate for a sustainable and expanding agricultural economy. (See also Agriculture, p. 14.)
- Encourage in-scale shops and cottage industries, industrial parks involving regional cooperation where appropriate, and enterprise corridor zones to foster compatible economic growth.
- Enhance the visual appearance of communities through Main Street and other programs.
- Revitalize riverfronts to invigorate downtowns and encourage economic development and recreational opportunities.
- Promote the repurposing, as feasible, of old industrial structures that retain a dominant visual and psychological impact within communities. Support municipalities and property owners cleaning up contaminants without compromising The Last Green Valley's natural and cultural resources.
- Develop and improve tourism attractions, events, itineraries, websites with interactive maps, blueways, greenways, accommodations and campgrounds consistent with the character of The Last Green Valley, and forge linkages between regional attractions.
- Enhance and expand tourism infrastructure, including visitor services, signage and staffed visitor centers at the gateways to The Last Green Valley.
- Develop self sufficiency in regional tourism promotion by encouraging investment and creative partnerships by the stakeholders living and working in The Last Green Valley.
- Advocate connectivity and expansion among regional transit systems for residents and visitors with well-marked stops and published schedules.



Cultural Resources

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Vision 2020: The cultural resources of The Last Green Valley are valued, preserved and made accessible to the public in innovative ways, thereby inspiring generations. They provide both the character of our communities and the foundation for future community planning.

Strategies to Achieve the Vision:

- Develop a regional database of cultural resources for use in research, tourism promotion and municipal/regional planning.
- Coordinate the implementation of the Connecticut and Massachusetts Heritage Areas Legislation, as defined by CT PA 09-221 and MA Chapter 272 of 2010, with all state agencies, boards, committees and commissions for planning and projects.
- Assist in the planning, documentation and restoration of cultural resources in The Last Green Valley.
- Assist in the preservation and access to cultural resource documents and oral traditions pertaining to The Last Green Valley.
- Assist museums and historic sites/areas to improve public awareness of their sites, to improve their role in telling the stories of The Last Green Valley, to increase public access to their sites, and to forge cooperative partnerships.
- Encourage the research and interpretation of the cultural resources in the region.
- Develop school curricula and student experiences at all grade levels that communicate the significance of the cultural resources of The Last Green Valley.
- Encourage the development of region-wide events to highlight cultural resources and traditional working lands in The Last Green Valley. (See also Agriculture, p. 14.)
- Assist in the development of informational signage for natural and cultural resources. (See also Recreation, p. 18.)

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Land Use

LAND USE

Vision 2020: Land use in The Last Green Valley conserves natural resources and the rural and cultural character of the region while encouraging traditional and compatible residential and economic development. Residents and visitors enjoy dark skies and the serenity of a quiet place with minimal interruption from excessive light and noise.

Strategies to Achieve the Vision:

- 🌿 Promote new development that is compatible with the traditions and character of the region, does not adversely impact natural and cultural resources, provides a variety of residential housing options, and minimizes sprawl.
- 🌿 Educate communities about land use planning, design, and controls such as zoning that promote sustainable development compatible with the region's natural and cultural resources.
- 🌿 Identify and protect important natural and cultural resources from adverse development impacts.
- 🌿 Promote and facilitate open space planning and protection to preserve important natural and cultural resources, working lands, and recreational opportunities.
- 🌿 Identify, reuse and revitalize historic districts, village centers and buildings including mills, civic buildings and residences.
- 🌿 Promote the designation and enhancement of scenic roads and views, greenways and blueways.
- 🌿 Encourage working farms and forestlands, offering economic opportunities, food, fiber, and forestry products to residents of The Last Green Valley and surrounding communities (See also Agriculture, p. 14.)
- 🌿 Promote conservation and development techniques and policies that protect water quality and supply.
- 🌿 Minimize noise and light pollution through site design and technology.
- 🌿 Educate landowners and the general public about the value of and the need for responsible stewardship.
- 🌿 Encourage regional planning to protect shared natural and cultural resources and promote intercommunity cooperation.
- 🌿 Coordinate the implementation of the Connecticut and Massachusetts Heritage Areas Legislation, as defined by CT PA 09-221 and MA Chapter 272 of 2010, with all state agencies, boards, committees and commissions for planning and projects.



Agriculture

AGRICULTURE

Vision 2020: Sustainable agriculture is thriving in The Last Green Valley and continues to expand. Farming is an economically viable business. Our farms are critical to supplying food to southern New England. Residents of The Last Green Valley and surrounding regions value and benefit from the fresh foods, fiber and horticulture products grown in the region. Forestry continues to be an important agricultural activity in The Last Green Valley. The wide variety of growers and farmers are in harmony with the environment and provide important ecological services. High quality agritourism experiences attract visitors and additional revenue to the region.

Strategies to Achieve the Vision:

- 🌱 Protect land that is currently farmed or identified as valuable for farming because of its soils or other characteristics and maximize its use for agricultural purposes.
- 🌱 Protect large blocks of unfragmented forest land and implement appropriate forest management.
- 🌱 Ensure that farmers have sufficient knowledge, tools, infrastructure and workforce to succeed.
- 🌱 Expand the markets, products and processing available to farmers and end-users.
- 🌱 Advocate the use of local foods by local restaurants, grocery stores and institutions, including schools and hospitals.
- 🌱 Educate residents of The Last Green Valley and the surrounding region about the significant value of local foods and their production. Facilitate easy access to those foods.
- 🌱 Encourage the adoption and enforcement of state and regional food safety policies.
- 🌱 Educate municipal officials about the value of working lands and encourage support of agricultural operations through their fiscal and land use policies.
- 🌱 Promote scientifically-based green and renewable energy sources and energy conservation as an integral part of agricultural operations.
- 🌱 Assist growers with the implementation of practices that are compatible with the environment.
- 🌱 Encourage the start of new agriculture operations and the continuation of existing farms by new generations.
- 🌱 Promote agritourism and agritainment (See Economic Development and Community Revitalization, p. 11.)
- 🌱 Coordinate the implementation of the Connecticut and Massachusetts Heritage Areas Legislation, as defined by CT PA 09-221 and MA Chapter 272 of 2010, with all state agencies, boards, committees and commissions for planning and projects.



Air

AIR

Vision 2020: Residents and visitors of The Last Green Valley and surrounding regions appreciate and depend on clean air for good health, a high quality of life, and as an essential component of an economy that thrives on nature-based, outdoor recreational experiences and tourism. Clean air also supports healthy fish and wildlife populations and their habitats.

Strategies to Achieve the Vision:

- Protect forest resources, which absorb and filter air pollutants, generate oxygen, store great quantities of carbon, and help maintain the necessary balance of air components.
- Encourage land use planning and design that will lower harmful emissions and prevent air quality degradation by reducing dependence on private automobiles and fostering alternative means of transportation, such as walking, bicycling, and use of public transportation.
- Promote scientifically-based green technologies and low-impact development techniques to reduce energy use and minimize harmful emissions from residential, agricultural, commercial and industrial operations.
- Protect fish and wildlife habitats from air pollutants.
- Coordinate the implementation of the Connecticut and Massachusetts Heritage Areas Legislation, as defined by CT PA 09-221 and MA Chapter 272 of 2010, with all state agencies, boards, committees and commissions for planning and projects.

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Water

WATER

Vision 2020: Clean water flows through and under the landscapes of The Last Green Valley for the sustainable use and enjoyment of all living things, to nourish present and future generations.

Strategies to Achieve the Vision:

- 🌿 Reduce and eliminate point and non-point source pollution to preserve and enhance the quality of the region’s surface and ground waters.
- 🌿 Facilitate informed decisions regarding alterations of the natural flow of water across the landscape to safeguard surface water flows and ground-water recharge.
- 🌿 Ensure adequate supplies of water that will balance the needs of human, wildlife and plant life populations.
- 🌿 Inspire all citizens, businesses and governments to strive for clean and plentiful water to enable a full range of recreational activities.
- 🌿 Encourage residents to understand the interrelationships of human activities and water quality and quantity through education and outreach.
- 🌿 Engage community volunteers in water quality monitoring and assessment activities in the region and work to ensure the information is accessible and usable by local officials and the general public.
- 🌿 Coordinate the implementation of the Connecticut and Massachusetts Heritage Areas Legislation, as defined by CT PA 09-221 and MA Chapter 272 of 2010, with all state agencies, boards, committees and commissions for planning and projects.



Wildlife

WILDLIFE

Vision 2020: The Last Green Valley includes a variety of protected habitats capable of supporting diverse populations for the benefit of healthy wildlife and human communities.

Strategies to Achieve the Vision:

- 🌿 Identify and protect a variety of representative habitats, including unfragmented forest, grasslands, successional habitats, freshwater wetlands, streams, ponds, lakes, rivers and estuarine habitats, capable of supporting native wildlife species.
- 🌿 Protect and promote corridors that link critical habitats and minimize habitat fragmentation.
- 🌿 Encourage municipal and regional planning for the protection of wildlife habitats.
- 🌿 Improve and restore degraded aquatic and terrestrial habitats.
- 🌿 Prioritize the protection of state and federally-listed wildlife species and habitats that have been identified as having the greatest conservation needs.
- 🌿 Encourage public education and outreach efforts focused on The Last Green Valley's wildlife and wildlife habitats.
- 🌿 Coordinate the implementation of the Connecticut and Massachusetts Heritage Areas Legislation, as defined by CT PA 09-221 and MA Chapter 272 of 2010, with all state agencies, boards, committees and commissions for planning and projects.

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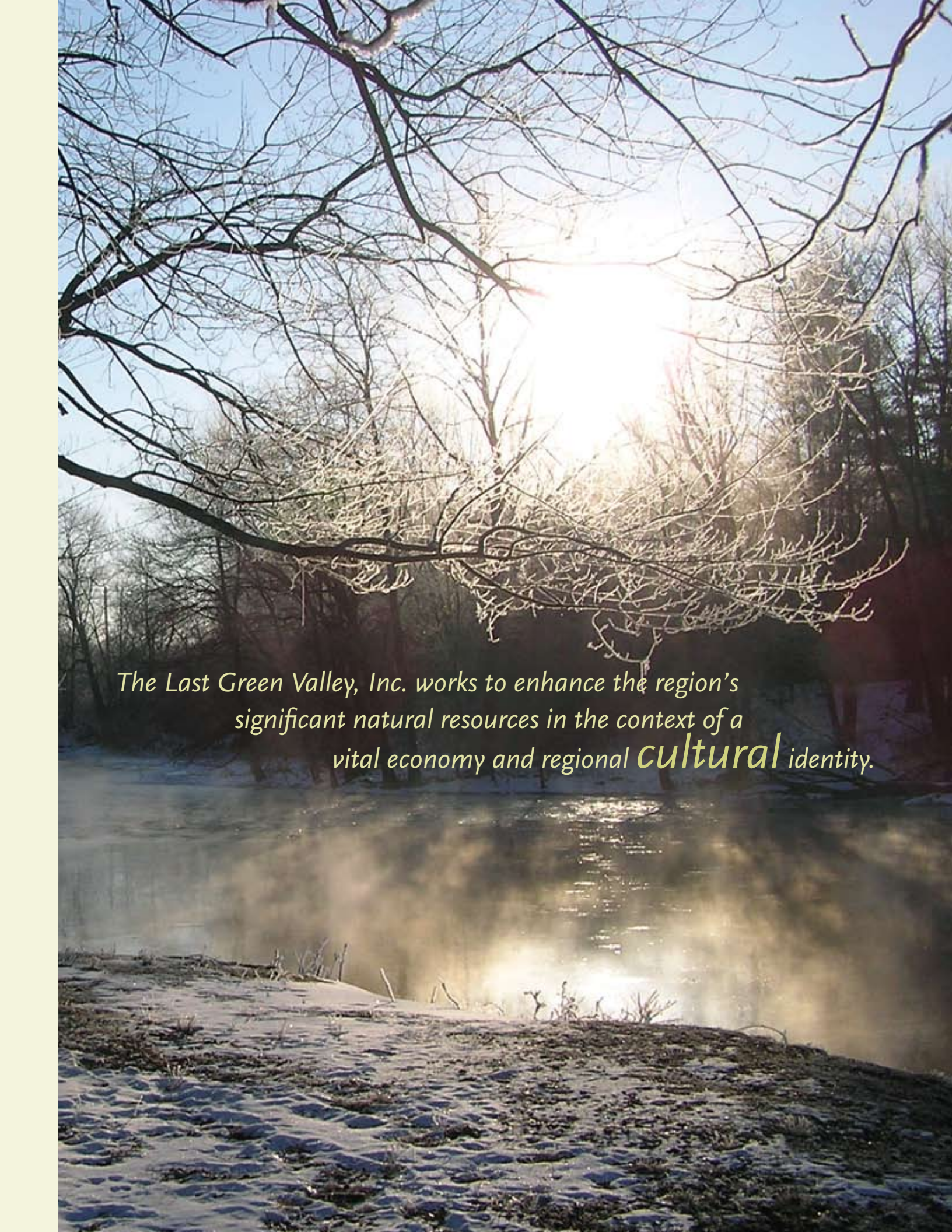
Recreation

RECREATION

Vision 2020: Recreation plays an important role in healthy communities. The Last Green Valley is a place where residents and visitors of all abilities can enjoy abundant and easily-accessible opportunities for outdoor, nature-based recreation.

Strategies to Achieve the Vision:

- 🌿 Maintain, improve, and expand outdoor recreational activities through public and private partnerships.
- 🌿 Educate all generations on the value of outdoor, nature-based recreation and encourage a conservation ethic that leads to promotion and protection of these resources.
- 🌿 Develop trail linkages to form an easily-accessible, inter-regional and intra-state network that can be used for many activities, including biking, hiking, cross-country skiing, walking, bird-watching, photography, horse-back riding, fishing, and hunting.
- 🌿 Maximize access to recreational opportunities for all residents of The Last Green Valley through thoughtful land use planning and design.
- 🌿 Promote safe and convenient water access and water trails for boating, paddling, fishing, swimming, skating, and simply enjoying the natural beauty of the region's lakes, streams, and rivers.
- 🌿 Advocate for invasive species control measures such as water craft washing stations.
- 🌿 Foster economic development activities that promote outdoor, nature-based recreation.
- 🌿 Ensure that information about recreational opportunities is easy to find, up to date and comprehensive, including restrooms and accessibility criteria (Universal Trails Assessment Data).
- 🌿 Coordinate the implementation of the Connecticut and Massachusetts Heritage Areas Legislation, as defined by CT PA 09-221 and MA Chapter 272 of 2010, with all state agencies, boards, committees and commissions for planning and projects.

A winter landscape featuring a river in the foreground, snow-covered banks, and bare trees. The sun is shining brightly through the branches, creating a warm, golden glow. The sky is a clear, pale blue.

*The Last Green Valley, Inc. works to enhance the region's significant natural resources in the context of a vital economy and regional **cultural** identity.*

Actions Items to Achieve Visions and Strategies

- 1** **Revise the present mission statement and how it is communicated.** Anticipate the need to refine the mission statement if resources decrease dramatically over time.

Former mission statement: *It is the mission of The Last Green Valley, Inc. to conserve, celebrate and enhance the significant historical, cultural, natural and scenic resources of The Last Green Valley while promoting quality of life based on a strong, healthy economy compatible with the region's character.*

- **New mission statement:** *The Last Green Valley, Inc., works to enhance the region's significant natural resources in the context of a vital economy and regional cultural identity.*
- **Engage professional expertise** to maximize recognition and acceptance of TLGV's mission.

- 2** **Increase flexibility in forging partnerships.**

TLGV's Board of Directors has a policy to expand the geographic region served to include tourism entities that have traditionally marketed themselves as part of the region but exist on its periphery. The Source to Sea Expedition in 2009 highlighted the need for a watershed organization to provide outreach and advocacy on a regular basis. Present programs include water trail development and water quality monitoring, work that affects the entire watershed.

- **Extend the service area** for The Last Green Valley over time to include the entire Thames River Watershed Basin, of which the majority is in the Quinebaug and Shetucket Watershed.

- 3** **Expand the relevance of the mission to a larger audience.**

While the residents, businesses, nonprofits, government entities and visitors in The Last Green Valley have been the primary focus of outreach, present projects like the TLGV Foodshed Plan are of importance to a greater audience beyond, e.g. 11 million food consumers in southern New England. The greater the audience that is engaged, the greater the probability that the resources needed to achieve the mission will be acquired.

- 4** **Become self-sustaining by expeditiously taking the following steps:**

- **Minimize overhead costs;**
- **Research, develop and implement for-profit activities** to generate income for the nonprofit;
- **Develop sufficient staff** to deliver high quality programming and projects to attract necessary resources;
- **Generate an endowment capable of providing** sufficient funds for operating costs and support for the TLGV Grant Program;
- **Design and implement an innovative, multi-year capital campaign** beginning in 2010.

- 5** **Be flexible and allow for reconfiguration** of TLGV's corporate structure if necessary to accommodate for-profit activities. A sub-corporate structure of for-profits and additional nonprofits may become necessary to align with resources and refinements in mission over time.

In order to efficiently use scarce resources, Board committee and subcommittees should concentrate on specific projects rather than focus on general mission areas.

The Last **Green** Valley, Inc. works to **enhance** the
region's significant **natural resources** in the context
of a vital **economy** and regional **cultural** identity.



List of Planning Documents

Vision to Reality: A Management Plan, 1997

QSHC Implementation Plan: A Work in Progress, 1998

QSHC Action Plan, 1998

Vision 2010: A Plan for the Next Ten Years, 2000

*Interpretive Initiative for the Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley
National Heritage Corridor, 2000*

QSHC Development Assessment, 2002

Regional Awareness Survey, 2005

The Trail to 2015, A Sustainability Plan, 2007

Vision 2020, The Next Ten Years, 2010



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