

L LINCOLN INSTITUTE
OF LAND POLICY



REPORT ON THE 2011 LINCOLN INSTITUTE
CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP DIALOGUE ON
**THE FUTURE OF LARGE LANDSCAPE
CONSERVATION IN AMERICA**

MAY 2011

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This report on the 2011 Conservation Leadership Dialogue on *The Future of Large Landscape Conservation in America* was produced based on a one-day meeting of invited guests at the Members of Congress Room in the Jefferson Building of the Library of Congress in Washington, DC. The event was a program of the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, based in Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA, and partner organizations, including the Center for Natural Resource and Environmental Policy at the University of Montana, based in Missoula, Montana; the Regional Plan Association, based in New York, New York, and the Sonoran Institute, based in Tucson, Arizona.

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Cover photo: iStockphoto/Denis Tangney, Jr.
Northern New Hampshire (near Berlin, NH, with the White Mountain National Forest in the background)

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TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGE
1. Executive Summary and Recommendations _____	1
2. Background _____	6
3. Conference Participants and Preparations _____	8
4. Tuesday, March 1, 2011 - Conference at the Library of Congress ____	9
Welcome and Introductions _____	9
Remarks by Senator Susan M. Collins _____	11
Outlook from the Obama Administration _____	13
Outlook from NGOs and Funders _____	16
Outlook from Private Landowners and Practitioners _____	19
Outlook from Academia and the Research Community _____	21
Remarks by U.S. Representative Peter Welch _____	22
Remarks by U.S. Representative Rush Holt _____	23
Plenary Discussion _____	24
Conclusion _____	26
 5. Acknowledgments _____	 27
 Appendix 1: 2011 Conservation Leadership Dialogue Agenda _____	 28
Appendix 2: Roster of Participants _____	29
Appendix 3: Profiles of Large Landscape Conservation Activities _____	37
Appendix 4: Remarks of Senator Susan M. Collins _____	72
Appendix 5: Remarks of Bob Bendick of The Nature Conservancy ____	75



Shaping the Future of the West





This report and the conference on which it is based are dedicated to the memory of **John Wingate Weeks**, who grew up in hills of northern New Hampshire and, as a Republican Member of the House of Representative from Massachusetts, advocated tirelessly in the halls of Congress for the federal authority to create National Forests in the Eastern United States. Congressman Weeks' efforts resulted in the signature by President Taft of what became known as the Weeks Act on March 1, 1911.

The 2011 Lincoln Institute Conservation Leadership Dialogue on **The Future of Large Landscape Conservation in America** was held in the Library of Congress exactly 100 years, to the day, after the Weeks Act became law and changed the nature of cooperative conservation involving citizens active in the public, private, non-profit and academic/research sectors in the United States.

Photo of John W. Weeks: Library of Congress (<http://loc.gov/pictures/resource/ggbain.31644/>)

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On March 1, 2011, the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy hosted its tenth annual Conservation Leadership Dialogue, focused this year on *The Future of Large Landscape Conservation in America*. With leadership at the Lincoln Institute from Armando Carbonell, Senior Fellow and Chair of the Department of Planning and Urban Form, the session was organized by Lincoln Institute Fellow Jim Levitt. Held in the august Members of Congress Room of the Library of Congress, just across the street from the US Capitol in Washington, DC, the meeting took place on the 100th anniversary, to the day, of President Taft's signing of the landmark legislation that allowed for creation of National Forests in the eastern half of the nation.

In the tradition of that precedent, a cross-sectoral, geographically diverse group of twenty-first century conservationists (see the conference roster, Appendix 1) convened to seek a path forward – in concert with the Obama Administration's recently released report on *America's Great Outdoors* (AGO) as well as myriad initiatives at the state and local level -- to advance inter-sectoral collaboration on a large-landscape scale among land owners, managers and citizens from the public, private, non-profit and academic/research sectors. They sought to understand and expand upon the example set by large-landscape initiatives that are achieving measurable, durable conservation outcomes that will provide benefits for generations to come.

Just as we can now appreciate the revival of the White Mountains of New Hampshire from barren, moonscape-like conditions around 1900 to their majestic, verdant stature today, twenty-second century Americans ought to be able to appreciate how our foresight in working across property, jurisdictional and even national boundaries has become a key element in the nation's multi-generational effort to preserve essential sources of clean water, sustainably-produced forest products and expansive recreational opportunities.

The notable array of speakers at the 2011 Conservation Leadership Dialogue (for the conference agenda, see Appendix 2 to this report) emphasized the importance of sustained cooperation across many organizations and sectors to achieve lasting results at the landscape scale. Proudly recounting how some two million acres of Maine forestland has been conserved over the past dozen years, Senator Susan Collins, Republican of Maine, reported that “we have

done this by building a partnership among government at all levels, the forest products industry, environmental, forestry and recreation groups, and landowners. Through this partnership, we have been able to maintain or increase productivity for wood and harvest levels, supporting a diverse and robust forest products industry that employs tens of thousands of workers who produce paper, other wood products, and renewable energy. At the same time, we have been able to protect biodiversity, old growth and late succession forest, public access to recreation, and increase opportunities for tourism” (for Senator Collins full remarks, see Appendix 4 to this report).

Representatives Rush Holt, Democrat of New Jersey, and Peter Welch, Democrat of Vermont, each stressed in their comments the importance of perseverance in such efforts. Welch focused his remarks on sustaining land conservation budgets during the current round of budget negotiations. He reminded the audience that in 1864 President Lincoln took his attention off a monumental crisis—the Civil War—in order to sign a bill deeding the area of Yosemite to the state of California for public use and recreation. If Lincoln could create Yosemite in the midst of the Civil War, Welch asserted, we can do our part in a time of tight budgets.

Representative Holt, the meeting’s host at the Library of Congress, focused his remarks on fulfilling a longstanding promise to fully fund the federal and stateside portions of the Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), as well as a number of other legislative initiatives such as the Wildlife Corridors Conservation Act. Holt was emphatic in urging the conservation community to respond for our own sake, and for the sake of future generations, to the “need for urgent action.” He reminded the audience of the admonition of Lyndon Johnson, signer of the original LWCF legislation and the Wilderness Act in 1964. “If future generations are to remember us more with gratitude than sorrow,” said Johnson, “we must achieve more than just the miracles of technology. We must also leave them a glimpse of the world as it was created, not just as it looked when we got through with it.”

It was evident from the eloquent discussion of public officials, non-profit leaders, private landowners and scholars that proceeded throughout the meeting that leaders from every sector stand ready to help implement the cooperative conservation aspirations of Collins, Holt and

Welch. As Bob Bendick, director of US government relations at The Nature Conservancy expressed it, our ambition “should be to create and sustain a national network of large areas of restored and conserved land, water and coastlines around which Americans can build productive and healthy lives.” Accordingly, Bendick shared with the assembled group his personal dream that someday his young granddaughters might, as adults, look outward from the arch at the gateway to Yellowstone National Park and note how, “all across America, 400 million people have been able to arrange themselves and their activities across this remarkable country in a way that reconciles their lives with the power, grace, beauty and productivity of the land and water that ultimately sustain us all” (for the full text of Bendick’s remarks, see Appendix 5 to this report).

Will Shafroth, Acting Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks of the US Department of Interior, and Harris Sherman, Undersecretary for Natural Resources and Environment at the US Department of Agriculture, shared their frank assessments of the current situation with the group. Shafroth described the hard work and extensive comments that helped shape the *America’s Great Outdoors* report. While this work serves as a good foundation for the effort ahead, Shafroth noted that it takes considerable creativity and proactive thinking to sustain conservation momentum in these times of sharp budgetary constraints. Harris Sherman noted that the whole idea of landscape-scale conservation implies that we need to move from performing “random acts of conservation” to more comprehensive and collaborative landscape scale initiatives that engage a multiplicity of agencies and ownership types. Of particular importance, he noted, will be the outcome of the debate on the 2012 Farm Bill. Farm Bill conservation provisions, he said, will be “critically important” to the success of large scale conservation efforts.

The enthusiasm for large landscape conservation on the part of speakers from large public and non-profit organizations was strongly reinforced by Jim Stone. A private landowner and ranch operator in Montana’s Blackfoot Valley, Stone helped to start the Blackfoot Challenge, a grassroots organization that has yielded impressive, measurable results over the last three decades using a landscape-scale approach. Indeed, as explained by Stone’s colleague Jamie Williams, who works for The Nature Conservancy, the Blackfoot Challenge has achieved

remarkable success over the years because it has taken the time to engage so many landowners and partners in consensus-based approaches to conservation. Initial small successes were key to building the foundation of trust that led to larger successes later. In the area of stream restoration alone, the Blackfoot Challenge has over the years helped to engage more than 200 landowners in some 680 projects involving 42 streams and 600 stream-miles that have contributed directly to an 800% increase in fish populations in the 1.5 million acre valley. Stone is emphatic in saying that, with the right people in the right places, what has been done in the Blackfoot could be done across the nation.

A final panel of researchers and academic officials, representing universities, colleges and research institutions that are helping to catalyze large landscape initiatives, complemented the earlier discussion. Matt McKinney moderated a dialogue among David Foster of Harvard, Perry Brown of the University of Montana, and Karl Flessa of the University of Arizona regarding the ways in which such institutions, within their own walls and beyond, can use their analytic and convening capacities to advance initiatives with expansive reach and extensive impact. Perry Brown pointed out that the universities that will play a role in real-world conservation initiatives will not be the ones that are insular, but rather those that cherish their relationships with non-academic partners such as Indian tribes, state and federal government agencies, and large national and small local non-profits. David Foster reinforced that idea by describing the outreach efforts that the Harvard Forest undertook to develop and disseminate its recent report on *Wildlands and Woodlands New England*.

Following the presentations, there was open discussion of advancing the large landscape conservation agenda. As described in the paragraphs regarding that discussion that appear later in this report, as well as in the brief summaries of the landscape-scale efforts of a wide variety of public, non-profit and private organizations that appear in Appendix 3 to this report, there are a great many examples of how landscape-scale conservation initiatives are taking root and showing great potential from coast to coast. These examples represent a broad diversity of organizations and geographies, from the Crown of the Continent (see the University of Montana profile) to Maine (see Lyme Timber's profile), Minnesota (see the Minnesota Land Trust profile), New Jersey (see the Pinelands Preservation Alliance profile), Northern Virginia

(see the Northern Virginia Land Trust profile) and southern Arizona (see the Sonoran Institute and University of Arizona profiles). It is heartening that such organizations and initiatives may well set the pace of land conservation in the United States for generations to come.

The meeting concluded with general agreement that there is a great deal of work to be done, as well as an historic opportunity before us, to expand on initial progress in the field of large landscape conservation. The discussion regarding next steps was organized to focus on four types of initiatives: Policy Dialogues, Networking, Research, and Demonstration and Field Implementation projects (these can be remembered by recalling the letters embossed on a car's gear shift panel --"P-N-R-D" -- through which a driver must shift to move forward). Several of the most significant of these ideas follow below.

Policy Dialogues: There is a need for ongoing policy dialogue, both among conservationists in the public, private, non-profit and academic sectors, and between the conservation community and local, state and federal decision-makers, regarding the timely opportunities to realize landscape-scale conservation initiatives across the nation. The dialogue should: celebrate existing success stories regarding both "cultural" and "nature-oriented" properties (both being highly valued by the public); consider the state of ongoing regional conservation efforts; and envision new ones.

Research: There is an immediate need to build on existing maps and inventories of large landscape conservation initiatives across the nation (for example, the Northeast Landscape Partnership database compiled by the Regional Plan Association) to offer a more comprehensive picture of public, private and non-profit initiatives across the nation. Additional research is needed to measure the impacts, performance over time and conservation outcomes of landscape-scale initiatives, and to identify the key factors of success for initiatives that are able to show significant measurable results. Of particular importance is research that is able to identify where, when and how certain efforts are able to yield measurably improved ecosystem services, such as improved water quality, increased wildlife populations, and enhanced sustainable forest product production.

Networking: There are a number of large landscape networks that have recently been created or are now emerging, including the Large Landscape Practitioners' Network and the Landscape Conservation Cooperatives within the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The networks will need to focus on sharing knowledge and building capacity at the local level or they may not yield lasting results. Notwithstanding the need to be grounded in local realities, the networks have an opportunity to reach out to international partners with lessons to share. Within their own territories, large landscape conservation-oriented networks will need to be linked to a number of diverse constituencies, including philanthropists interested in landscape-scale conservation, university faculty and students, a range of public agencies and, perhaps most importantly, landowners and managers.

Demonstration and Field Implementation: Given very tight budget constraints at all levels of government, considerable attention must and will be paid to existing budgets that can be used for landscape-scale conservation purposes, such as appropriate Department of Defense programs, as well as relevant programs in the Federal and state Departments of Transportation. In addition, considerable attention should be paid to: public-private partnerships that can bring new forms of capital into conservation initiatives; community forest programs that are now gaining momentum around the nation; and opportunities for foundation Program-Related Investments (PRIs) in the context of landscape-scale conservation initiatives. Particularly enthusiastic support came from several participants for public-private-non-profit partnerships have a proven track record for protecting and enhancing locally-valued natural and cultural resources to form the backbone for a regional green infrastructure in places as diverse as: Santa Fe, New Mexico; the Chattahoochee/Apalachicola basin in Georgia, Mississippi and Florida; the Crown of the Continent in Montana, Alberta and British Columbia; and the New Jersey Highlands.

2. BACKGROUND

The 2011 Conservation Leadership Dialogue (CLD) was the tenth in a series of annual dialogues designed to focus on issues of strategic concern to senior conservation organization executives and subject experts. Several of the dialogues have had a notable impact on the practice of conservation in North America – particularly on the topics of conservation finance and adaptation to climate change. The meetings, which began under the direction of Jim Levitt in 2002, have included such distinguished participants and speakers from the non-profit,

public, private and academic sectors as: E.O. Wilson of Harvard University, one of the world's pre-eminent biodiversity scholars; Rand Wentworth, president of the Land Trust Alliance (LTA), the organization that is leading the charge to improve the performance of land trusts in North America and beyond; Peter Stein, General Partner of the Lyme Timber Company, a pioneer in private sector conservation investment; Tim Kaine, who has recently served as Governor of Virginia and Chairman of the Democratic National Committee; and Paul Simons, the United States Ambassador to Chile.

In focusing on large landscape conservation, the 2011 Conservation Leadership Dialogue returned to a theme central to the 2003 Conservation Leadership Dialogue held at the Presidio in San Francisco. At that earlier meeting, focused on *Landscape-Scale Conservation: Grappling with the Green Matrix*, experts such as Douglas Wheeler, Bob Bendick, Nora Mitchell, Ted Smith and Gretchen Daily offered their insights on the still-emerging practice of cross-sectoral, cross-boundary, cooperative efforts to achieve measurable conservation outcomes.

One of the more prescient comments made at Presidio meeting was offered by Bob Bendick: "Landscape-scale conservation takes patience, persistence, energy and money. Landscapes took a long time to get the way they are today; they take a long time to change."¹ Based on comments by Bendick and others, the assembled senior conservation executives, noting the never-ending need for money to underwrite bold conservation strategies, strongly advised the Lincoln Institute to tackle the issue of conservation finance at the 2004 CLD. That advice was followed, eventually yielding several years of very productive dialogue and two edited books on the subject: first, *From Walden to Wall Street: Frontiers of Conservation Finance*,² published in 2005, and five years later, *Conservation Capital in the Americas: Exemplary Conservation Finance Initiatives*.³

Persistently pursuing the theme of conservation across complex land ownership patterns, the Lincoln Institute has also, in the first decade of the twenty-first century, had several programs focused on large landscape conservation spearheaded by Matt McKinney and Shawn Johnson at the Center for Natural Resource and Environmental Policy (CNREP) at the University of Montana. These include a series of workshops, trainings and clinics that resulted in the publication of *Working Across Boundaries: People, Places and Nature*.⁴ The book aims to explore "an array of practical and tested strategies and techniques that can be employed across the broad range of land use, natural resource, and environmental issues at scales ranging from

¹ 2003 Lincoln Institute Conservation Leadership Dialogue. "Participant Biographies and Response to Advance Questions," document included in conference resource book, June 2003.

² James N. Levitt, editor, 2005. *From Walden to Wall Street*. Washington, DC: Island Press and the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy.

³ James N. Levitt, editor, 2010. *Conservation Capital in the Americas*, Cambridge, MA: Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, in collaboration with Island Press, the Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation at the Harvard Kennedy School, and the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies at Harvard University.

⁴ Matthew J. McKinney and Shawn Johnson. 2009. *Working Across Boundaries: People, Nature, and Regions*. Cambridge, MA: Lincoln Institute of Land Policy.

the metropolitan to the mega-regional, including watersheds and ecosystems.”

Close on the heels of *Working Across Boundaries*, the Lincoln Institute published a Policy Focus Report written by McKinney, Lynn Scarlet and Daniel Kemmis that was featured, just after its release, at the first round of public listening sessions on Americas Great Outdoors held in Montana in June 2011. The report, *Large Landscape Conservation: A Strategic Framework for Policy and Action*,⁵ makes five key recommendations intended to advance the large landscape conservation agenda at the national scale:

- Gather and share information to improve the science and governance of large landscape conservation.
- Encourage a network of practitioners to build capacity
- Establish a national competitive grants program to catalyze, enable, coordinate, and sustain promising efforts
- Improve the policy toolkit to achieve large landscape conservation
- Facilitate innovative funding opportunities to support large landscape conservation.

Parallel to the release of its landscape scale conservation publications, the Lincoln Institute has both run and participated in several public dialogues considering large landscape conservation policy. In January 2010, the Lincoln Institute hosted a pair of large landscape meetings in Washington, DC. The first, convened by McKinney, helped to hone the final recommendations that appeared in the above-mentioned Policy Focus Report. The second, organized by Levitt, brought together a broad-ranging group that considered the emergence of large landscape conservation ideas both domestically and internationally. It was also at that meeting that work began to organize the larger, more inclusive March 2011 meeting.

It is in this context that the 2011 Conservation Leadership Dialogue on *The Future of Landscape Conservation in America* was conceived of and organized.

3. CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS AND PREPARATIONS

The meeting was coordinated by Jim Levitt, Fellow in the Department of Planning and Urban Form at the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy and Director of the Program on Conservation Innovation at the Harvard Forest, Harvard University. Project leadership was provided by Armando Carbonell, Senior Fellow and Chair of the Department of Planning and Urban Form at the Lincoln Institute, with managerial oversight provided by Lisa Cloutier, Senior Manager in the same department. The day’s agenda, in addition to keynote talks by elected officials, included three panels on the outlook from the NGO and funder community, private landowners, and academia and the research community (see Appendix 1 for a listing of participants in each panel). The early afternoon included a conversation open to all participants (see Appendix 2 for a full conference roster).

⁵ Matthew McKinney, Lynn Scarlett and Daniel Kemmis, 2010. *Large Landscape Conservation: A Strategic Framework for Policy and Action*. Cambridge, MA: Lincoln Institute of Land Policy.

Conference planning benefited from the participation of several individuals representing organizations engaged in joint venture partnerships with the Lincoln Institute, including Matt McKinney and Shawn Johnson from the Center for Natural Resource Economics and Policy at the University of Montana, Rob Pirani of the Regional Plan Association, and Nina Chambers of the Sonoran Institute.

It was particularly helpful at the meeting itself to have among the participants Doug Wheeler (a Lincoln Institute board member and former California Secretary of Resources) and Lynn Scarlett (former Acting Secretary of the US Department of the Interior). Long-time Lincoln Institute Conservation Leadership Dialogue participants and project collaborators Peter Stein of Lyme Timber Company, Bob Bendick of the Nature Conservancy, Dan Perlman of Brandeis University, and Gary Tabor of the Center for Large Landscape Conservation were also notably active meeting participants.

Prior to the meeting, Levitt sent a “homework” assignment to each of the meeting participants asking them, in about 250 words, to highlight their organization’s activities relevant to large landscape conservation. The many thoughtful responses to that inquiry, with each organization’s activities organized into “policy dialogues, research, networking, and demonstration and field implementation projects,” appear in Appendix 3 to this report.

4. TUESDAY, MARCH 1, 2011 - CONFERENCE AT THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Welcome and Introductions

After a call-to-order by Jim Levitt, Armando Carbonell opened the meeting. Carbonell noted how pleased he was to be at Library of Congress with such a distinguished audience, and that it was at one of the Lincoln Institute’s earlier Conservation Leadership Dialogues that a number of the participants at today’s meeting had previously identified “landscape-scale conservation” as a critical land management issue for the twenty-first century.

Levitt followed with a few more introductory notes about the day’s agenda. He began by pointing out the significance of the conference’s picture of the Androscoggin River with White Mountains of New Hampshire in the background (see cover of this report). Levitt reported that the conference was being held, to the very day, on the 100th anniversary of President William Howard Taft’s signing of the Weeks Act, which enabled the creation of National Forests in the eastern half of the continent. Named for John Wingate Weeks, who grew up in the forests of New Hampshire and later came to Congress as a Republican Congressman (later Senator) from Massachusetts, the Act was intended not only to protect forestlands, but to restore former forestlands that had been rapaciously denuded of their forest cover. The effectiveness of that restoration can be visualized by comparing the Philip Ayres photograph of a clearcut in New Hampshire circa 1901 to the image of the White Mountains in the twenty-first century.

Somewhat ironically, the effectiveness of the Weeks Act has led to its own historical obscurity. Indeed, many residents of and visitors to the White Mountains now simply assume that the eastern National Forests have “always been there.” Rather, as Levitt emphasized, these conservation lands were created as the result of hard-fought advocacy for one of the most effective pieces of conservation legislation ever enacted in the U.S. Congress.

One hundred years after the passage of the Weeks Act, New Hampshire's White Mountains serve as a dramatic symbol of ecosystem restoration: on the left, circa 1901⁶; on the right, circa 2009.⁷



Levitt noted that many of the country's practitioners of "large landscape conservation" were present in the room, and that day's proceedings would cover many cross-border initiatives in North America. A case in point is the Blackfoot Challenge in west-central Montana, which Levitt described as:

- ***Expansive in scale***: the initiative spans a legendary 1.5 million-acre valley that is the scene for Norman McLean's classic Montana tale, *A River Runs Through It*
- ***Extensive in scope***: the initiative crosses property, sectoral and jurisdiction boundaries, encompassing National Forest lands, community forest lands, private ranches and timberland, and trout habitat protected by several conservation non-profits, including The Nature Conservancy and Trout Unlimited
- ***Enabling the achievement of measurable conservation outcomes***: the initiative has led to restoration of trout habitat and native fisheries, a revived tourism industry, and dramatic reductions in human-bear conflicts (such interactions were reduced in recent years by more than 95%), and
- ***Enduring***: the Blackfoot Challenge has been growing for more than a quarter century and continues to thrive today.

Through the initiative, a community spirit in the valley has been revived. Largely for this reason, the inaugural "listening session" of the Obama Administration's "America's Great Outdoors" (AGO) initiative was held in the heart of the Blackfoot Challenge, in the town of Ovando, Montana.

Levitt continued by reminding the audience that even as we aim for conservation at a large landscape scale, we must also keep in mind that the practice of conservation can be fairly characterized as "fractal" — that conservation work at most any particular spatial scale will be nested in initiatives at a larger scale. He also emphasized that such initiatives are slow to

⁶ iStockphoto image by Denis Tangney, Jr.

⁷ Courtesy of the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests Collection, Milne Archives and Special Collections, University of New Hampshire, available at <http://www.plymouth.edu/gallery/weeks-act/182/a-spokesman-for-the-trees%e2%80%a6/>.

emerge and can require a great deal of persistence. He recalled the perspective of Montana landowner Jim Stone, who points out that the Blackfoot Challenge really started with his parents' generation—and that the success of what's been put in place in the last two decades could not have happened without the groundwork of that generation. As Gary Tabor of the Center for Large Landscape Conservation has noted, “enduring landscape conservation requires enduring commitment.” Levitt made the case that it will require all our best thinking to get where we hope to go. As the implementation of the Weeks Act has demonstrated over the past 100 years, we will have to persistently strive over the next century to achieve the goals of conservation outcomes envisioned by the large landscape conservation community.

Remarks by Senator Susan M. Collins of Maine

Levitt proceeded to set the context for the morning's first speaker, Senator Susan M. Collins of Maine, by reviewing the distinguished history of land conservation in the state, ranging from the establishment of Acadia National Park, to the protection of Mount Katahdin as a state park by Governor Percival Baxter, and to the more recent completion of the Pingree Project which include the closing of the largest conservation easement transaction deal ever done in the United States. Collins was highly supportive of the Pingree initiative project, as she now is of protecting an area called the Downeast Forest that extends across much of Washington County, Maine. Levitt noted that the expanse of protected in that rea forests actually extends beyond Washington County into western New Brunswick, Canada, and that working forest protection in the region has generated strong local support. In the small town of Grand Lake Stream, for example, the local populace of about 150 people recently supported the allocation of approximately \$40,000 from town coffers to advance the protection of local forests.⁸

Following Levitt's comments, Lynn Lyford of the New England Forestry Foundation (NEFF) formally introduced Senator Susan Collins. Lyford pointed out that Collins is now the longest serving Senator not to have missed a Senate roll call vote. She described Collins as the rare Senator who strives to work across party lines to serve the American public. Lyford also described the involvement of Collins' family in Maine's forest products industry, a role stretching back to 1844. Today Collins is clearly focused on keeping the state's forest industry strong. The Senator has an impressive record of support for large landscape conservation, having strongly backed both the full funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund and the U.S. Forest Service's Forest Legacy Program.

Senator Collins began her remarks (reproduced in Appendix 4 to this report) by noting how fitting it is that this event is taking place on 100th anniversary of the Weeks Act. She also thanked Lyford for all of her work with NEFF, a leader in land conservation that has protected more working forestland in New England— 1.1 million acres—than any other organization.

⁸ Downeast Lakes Land Trust, “West Grand Lake Community Forest,” see: <https://www.downeastlakes.org/conservation/current-campaign/>.

Recalling five generations of her family's involvement in the retail lumber business, Collins emphasized the importance of forest stewardship. She argued that the key to effective land conservation is to maintain a sense of stewardship among current managers and, where it does not already exist, to inculcate a sense of stewardship among the members of generations that will someday be responsible for the land. She further



Dan Perlman photo

Senator Susan Collins

argued that we need to treasure the public values that working forests support, including employment, recreation, and simply the opportunity to experience nature. The challenge, she said, is to balance the multiple claims on working forests, and in this regard she believes that Maine's forests stand as an international model.

Collins emphasized how fortunate she was to have been born and raised in a state blessed with so many natural features, and that these must be cherished and protected. With 90% forest cover, Maine is the most forested state in nation—something very evident when you fly over the Maine woods. At the same time, she said, 95% of Maine's woods are privately owned, which comes as a surprise to her western colleagues in the Senate, who generally respond to that statistic with incredulity ("*Are you sure?*" is what she typically hears). Whereas for most U.S. citizens public access to forests is on public lands, Collins noted that in Maine public access to forests is provided by largely provided by private landowners. Private landowners have noted to Collins the difficulty of doing so—one landowner told her that the only reward his family has reaped from allowing public access has been cast off refrigerators in his woods. Nonetheless, Collins asserted that ultimately the best opportunity for conservation in her state is through partnerships with private landowners. In Maine, any effort to protect large landscapes must take all of this into consideration, and accordingly much of the rest of her talk focused on the need for community support for large landscape conservation.

Collins noted that conservation easements have worked very well as a conservation tool, which is a testament to private forest owners and people of Maine. These easements both reinforce traditional uses and protect a range of values associated with the land. Large, easement-based projects are accomplished by building partnerships between conservationists and the forest industry, partnerships that have been able to ease concerns of many private landowners. The Senator said that people are under the false impression that land conservation and traditional uses constitute an "either/or proposition." Rather, Maine has shown that working forests can at the same time support forest products industry, protect biodiversity, and support recreation.

Collins concluded her talk with a few remarks on the recent release of America's Great

Outdoors (AGO) report from the Obama Administration.⁹ She applauded the report's call for community-based approaches to protecting natural resources, arguing that partnerships will be essential in our budget-stressed situation. Two of the most important federal programs are the Land and Water Conservation Program (LWCF) and the Forest Legacy Program (FLP), both of which she has long supported. But whereas the Obama Administration's budget has proposed increasing both programs, the House budget eliminates FLP and slashes LWCF. This is very shortsighted, Collins noted, as we are too far down the road with multiple partners to be cutting in mid-stream.

As a new member of the Senate's Interior Appropriations Subcommittee, Collins warned the audience that it must prepare for significant budget cuts. At the same time, she asserted, it would be a terrible mistake to eliminate worthwhile, effective programs. Consequently, she called for the assembled participants not only to celebrate the centennial of the Weeks Act, but also to celebrate our current efforts to protect American lands. Despite budget pressures, we can work together to build on our history of public-private collaboration to protect land. She concluded by appealing to the audience to take on the task of educating members of Congress about these programs. "Your voices are heard if you speak up," she argued, concluding that the conservation community ought not let others drown its voice out.

Collins then took a few questions. The first was in regard to her support of the USFS's Community Forest Program.¹⁰ Collins responded by describing her shock upon reading an article that identified Portland as being in danger of becoming sprawl capital of the USA. It made her reflect on what had happened to Portland, Maine's open space—how too much of it had been turned into housing developments and strip malls, and how it had become too expensive for the owners of woodlots and dairy farms to preserve their lands. The Senator explained that just one dairy farm in Portland area survives, doing so only by generating income through public visitation. She said that it was important to focus on both large and small scale community-based conservation programs, including those protect community woodlots and dairy farms. Understanding the importance of large landscapes is important, she stated, but quality of life depends on smaller-scale protection of open space as well.

Another question concerned the opportunity for land conservation through the tax structure, including estate tax. She responded that she is a strong supporter of estate tax reform, specifically the Kyl/Lincoln plan that would allow for a \$3.5 million exemption per person. Whatever you think of the estate tax, she said, we are in an absurd situation right now; we need a long-term solution that will allow people to plan, a situation which would ultimately benefit the conservation community. The audience gave Senator Collins a long and appreciative round of applause as she headed off for her work in the Senate.

Outlook from the Obama Administration

Following Senator Collins, Douglas Wheeler introduced and moderated the morning's first panel, focusing on the "Outlook from the Obama Administration." Wheeler began by noting

⁹ See the America's Great Outdoors executive summary document and full report at <http://americasgreatoutdoors.gov>.

¹⁰ See <http://www.fs.fed.us/ucf>.

that the panel would comment on the America’s Great Outdoors (AGO) initiative, the purpose of which is to provide a blueprint for conservation—including large-scale conservation—in twenty-first century. Under the AGO process, fifty-one listening sessions were held around the country, engaging 105,000 participants. Wheeler described the resulting AGO report as emphasizing the collaborative nature of conservation. Explaining that approximately \$6 billion in conservation spending is spread across in 30 programs throughout the federal government, he argued that these funds could be much better allocated if they are coordinated in some fashion to focus, at least in part, on the protection of large landscapes. In introducing the two panelists, Wheeler acknowledged that we couldn’t have better representatives than Harris Sherman and Will Shafroth to talk about Administration’s aspirations as expressed in report on America’s Great Outdoors.

Harris Sherman of the US Department of Agriculture began by noting his appreciation to the Lincoln Institute for bringing the group together to talk about landscape-scale conservation. He said that in the prior three weeks had seen a tremendous amount of action over AGO and the 2012 budget, as well as the USFS’s release of a draft proposal on landscape scale conservation that speaks to the critical importance of connectivity.¹¹ The latter is an important document, he told the audience, emphasizing that the proposed policy is still in the comment period.



Will Shafroth, Douglas Wheeler and Harris Sherman in a panel discussion

Dan Perlmán photo

Sherman noted that the U.S. conservation community has a history of being good at “random acts” of conservation. This has worked pretty well, he said, but now we do more by bringing strategic attention to collaboration and partnerships. Where there is collaboration, he asserted, there is possibility. He added that a strategic approach will also include a better understand the benefits of ecosystem services derived from our lands.

He then went on to describe the AGO initiative as a bottom-up process, incorporating approximately 105,000 comments. Land management agencies have learned a great deal from the process—indeed, he was surprised by how much. On the private side of conservation, he noted that two-thirds of the land in the United States is in private ownership. One of his concerns is the rate of fragmentation on these lands in recent years: approximately one-third of currently developed lands in the U.S. were developed in the quarter century between 1982 and

¹¹ U.S. Forest Service. 2011. “National Forest System Land Management Planning; Proposed Rule.” In *U.S. Federal Register* 76:30, 8480-8528. U.S. Department of Agriculture.

2007. To stem this tide, the AGO report focuses on incentives, particularly on how to make conservation make economic sense to economic actors.

Sherman emphasized the need for proactive, creative ways of going forward at time of limited budgets. The Safe Harbors program is one example of how to accomplish this, and he pointed to specific innovative conservation initiatives for salmon and sage grouse. He also noted that the Farm Bill and its Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) often get lost in the discussion. Much larger than the LWCF, and incorporating very significant programs that protect wetlands, forests, grasslands, and farmlands, the Farm Bill is of vital importance to the country. Because of the urgent need to keep these programs intact and to expand them—and because a great deal of conservation opportunity will come with the 2012 Farm Bill—Sherman expressed the hope that all in the audience will keep the significance of that legislation in mind going forward. Overall, Sherman closed by reiterating that the Obama administration was genuinely enthusiastic about the opportunity to move from random acts of conservation to a more strategic approach on a broader scale.

Will Shafroth of the US Department of the Interior began by thanking a number of individuals in the audience for their work on AGO, including Peter Stein, Jamie Williams, Bob Bendick, and Chris Miller. Shafroth noted that AGO's listening sessions were set up to hear from a variety of voices, including urban voices, about their concerns. There was a very wide swath of topics that they heard about, and accordingly the report was intentionally drafted to cover a very broad set of issues. Yet among the most important concepts heard, Shafroth emphasized, there was a core message spoken and heard about the need to create a core vision for land conservation in the U.S., and about the necessity for moving forward with effective partnerships and collaborations. He reiterated the importance of several innovative programs Sherman had already discussed, as well as the need for federal agencies to create more efficient working relationships among themselves and their partners in the private and non-profit sectors. Along with the CRP program, Shafroth discussed the development of Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs)¹² within U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. He noted that while it is only 18 months old, the LCC program is making real headway.

Shafroth also discussed the current tight budgetary situation, a situation which impacts Interior's efforts to fund collaborative initiatives where funds are pooled and spent more strategically. He emphasized the critical need to do a better job investing grant money under a number of programs. In this regard, he noted that just last week Secretary Salazar announced a new draft plan for the U.S. wildlife refuge system,¹³ which attempts to move the system beyond "hard" land purchases and acquisition in order to allow for the establishment of wildlife conservation under conditions of "softer borders" and private lands conservation. It is, in short, an acknowledgement that the federal government cannot do it all.

A question to the panel from Chris Miller concerned the role of cultural and historical landscapes. Shafroth responded that there is very strong support for this in Congress, and that the Secretary of the Interior is very interested in pursuing work in this area. Sherman noted that the President's 2012 budget proposes increasing the budget that would go toward these type of efforts.

¹²See: www.fws.gov/science/SHC/lcc.html

¹³ See: www.fws.gov/cno/press/release.cfm?rid=185

Gary Tabor asked the panelists a question about how much they see LCCs promoting landscape planning—is that one of their major mandates? Shafroth pointed out that the LCCs are presently focused on an effort to understand where agencies and NGOs are working. The opportunities for LCCs to focus on exchanges of best practices and regional planning efforts are likely to be further into the future.

Al Sample from the Pinchot Institute asked whether the USFS, in terms of its statutory framework, is prepared to change its practice to focus on working outside its own boundaries. Sherman responded that the proposed planning rule is relevant to all lands, and includes the recognition that managing and conserving water resources require working with adjacent lands. He also noted that the USFS has a new climate roadmap/scorecard that requires officials to look at broader landscape.¹⁴

Jim Levitt brought up the fact that representatives from Chicago Wilderness and other urban groups were conference participants. He asked for the panelists to explain the degree to which these types of initiatives weave into AGO. Shafroth responded that they will play a very important role and that the Department of the Interior is in the process of working to connect up our refuges and parks with urban communities. There will be opportunities, he pointed out, for these programs to bring forth “Great Urban Parks.” Sherman then noted that the USDA is working with a number of such urban groups, and that the current budget proposal contains greater resources for urban forestry. He emphasized that part of the AGO process highlighted the engagement of younger people in conservation and restoration programs.

Outlook from NGOs and Funders

Armando Carbonell introduced the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) panel, recalling the Lincoln Institute’s background in helping to create one of the nation’s most significant conservation NGOs, the Land Trust Alliance. The basic question facing the panelists and participants at this conference, he argued, is this: “In a time of constraint, what is the best way forward?” The first panelist, Bob Bendick, director of U.S. Government Relations at The Nature Conservancy, began by thanking Senator Collins for her timely and courageous remarks that morning. He then spoke of a personal experience earlier in the winter of 2010-2011, when eight of his family members were walking along the Gardiner River in Yellowstone National Park. He recalled thinking about how the idea of “areas away from human activity” has served us well. Nevertheless, he noted, the country that has expanded eight-fold since 1872, and such areas are increasingly affected by human influence. The natural systems and values they provide to people are in real trouble, threatened by a number of trends, including the scramble to produce energy in a non-carbon-intensive manner. In light of these threats, he argued, there is no choice but to work across large regions to balance human needs and ecological systems. He referenced a recent TNC paper on *whole systems* focusing on resilience, movement, and ecological processes, a perspective that reinforced TNC’s formal recommendation that the overall objective of AGO should be to create a network across large landscapes. To its credit, the final AGO report creates the framework for a new and very promising era of conservation—a practical, cost-effective, whole system approach to conservation in America.

¹⁴ See: www.fs.fed.us/climatechange/pdf/roadmap.pdf

However, Bendick warned that even as the assembled group discussed these ideas, Congress was setting out national priorities just across the street—and many members of Congress were making the case that our concerns are not a national priority. Bendick emphasized that this is an indication of the long road ahead of us.



Armando Carbonell introduces Rand Wentworth, Bob Bendick and Tom Curren

Dan Perlman photo

In closing, Bendick thought back to his family’s recent walk in Yellowstone. Passing through the Roosevelt Arch at Yellowstone’s North Entrance and thinking of the symbolism it holds for US National Parks, he imagined with hope that, for his grandchildren, the view outward from the arch towards Paradise Valley might someday become as meaningful a symbol to them as the view inward,

towards the Park, is today. The Nature Conservancy, he concluded, hopes to play small role in this accomplishment, and he trusts that as with discussions leading to the AGO report, the discussions at this conference will also bring us closer to that goal.

Rand Wentworth of the Land Trust Alliance began his comments by reviewing three historical types of landscape protection: (1) protection of the national forests by presidential order during Theodore Roosevelt’s administration in the early 1900s; (2) establishment of state-protected forest districts by legislative designation, such as the designation of New York’s Adirondack Park in the 1890s; and (3) creation of National Parks through the philanthropic use of great wealth, such as the Rockefeller’s acquisition of lands for National Parks at Acadia and the Grand Tetons in the first half of the twentieth century. The reality is that there will be 100 million more Americans over the next 50 years, which means that there will be increased demand for housing and yet another resurgence of real estate development. These circumstances will inevitably generate more pressures on the ecosystems we care to protect. “How, then,” he asked, “will we protect these ecosystems?” We will not, he assured the audience, going to be able to simply rely on the three aforementioned historical approaches. Paraphrasing Winston Churchill, Wentworth summarized the situation we face: “*Gentlemen and ladies, we have run out of money—now we must think!*”

Wentworth went on to argue that, for the next wave of conservation, we will have to be skilled at engaging private landowners. Consequently, federal land management agencies need to and are making a very deliberate effort to look past their boundaries. Whatever we do, it must involve the reality facing the 1,700 community-based organizations that are members of the Land Trust Alliance. The conservation community will be required to work with very non-traditional partners. Wentworth noted that he had met with Tea Party representatives in

Congress and asked them: “What do you think of community-based conservation?” They were, he reported, generally supportive of the idea.

Wentworth then reiterated the point that the substantial levels of federal spending on conservation do not add up to large landscape thinking. A focused, “visioned” partnership is a proven model, he said, but such initiatives are largely based on having a lot of government money. Overall, the way we’ve been approaching conservation acquisitions has been subsidizing “conservation sprawl” that does not lead to logical approach to focused conservation. Our aims are not going to be supported by Congress if we simply continue to ask for more along the same model. To get real results in a time of limited budgets, he said, we need one of three things:

(1) *Cash*. Pointing to the Farm Bill both as the largest public funding source for conservation and as an act which contains many more conservation opportunities, Wentworth argued that we have to turn Farm Bill “upside down.” He noted that most recipients of CRP (Conservation Reserve Program) dollars from the Farm Bill are not farmers. Moreover, he asked why we are spending money on land that will not be protected in perpetuity, and asserted that we need to amend the Farm Bill to create *permanent* easements.

(2) *Government regulation*. This is politically difficult in many places, Wentworth noted, but there are many examples of where it has worked quite well.

(3) *An understanding of the incentives that appeal to—and the mind of—a landowner*. We need to figure out how to get private landowners to want to say “yes” to conservation. In that regard, he said, we need to invent a new generation of conservation tools that will dramatically expand the capacity and extent of conservation easements. He brought up the example of Malpai Borderlands, where access to federal grazing rights gave local landowners an inducement to enter into permanent conservation easements. He also pointed to program that use property tax relief to protect working landscapes, a technique now used in states such as Maine on working forestland.

Overall, a major challenge for all of us is to invent new models for conservation. Wentworth reminded the audience that the first proposal for a Wilderness Act occurred around 1934, during perhaps the most challenging economic times this country has ever faced. The fact that we are in tough times now, he said, does not mean we should back off and put aside large landscape conservation as a pipedream. Rather, now is the time to push the idea so we can be prepared to implement it in years and decades ahead.

Tom Curren of the Pew Trusts began his remarks by noting that we’re all very busy people—in New England, “wicked busy.” These conferences are a real opportunity to build relationships and to stop and think about what we are doing. He reflected that as difficult as the challenges we face are, they are not new. What is different, however, is the fact that political cycles are moving much more rapidly on the basis of a less predictable set of variables. Since late 2008, we have been in Great Recession, and consequently some of our tried-and-true conservation programs are threatened. But also since the crash, in the state of Maine alone, the Appalachian Mountain Club has completed a \$15 million fundraising effort, and both The Nature

Conservancy and the Maine Coast Heritage Trust have raised substantial funding to protect an enormous amount of land. He listed a number of other initiatives underway in other states, including those of Scenic Hudson in New York and the Lancaster Farmland Trust in Pennsylvania, re-emphasizing that land trusts have over the last two years kept moving on and have survived through very trying times. He reiterated Wentworth's concern about future real estate markets, emphasizing that before next real estate jump, we have an extraordinary moment to address key conservation opportunities.

Curren argued that there is reason to hope—even where the situation seems hopeless. If you look at the “forensics of success,” he said, you will discover that American wealth is very adaptable. Even in these tough times, there has been significant wealth generation, and our allies are out there. He argued that philanthropies are one of the more effective ways of advancing concerns—a “supremely useful tool to have in your toolkit”—and that learning the craft of fund development is very important, something that all organizations should undertake. At the same time, a critically important lesson for the conservation community is the concept that conservation is a shared value—that the American landscape is important to a broad spectrum of people. At a time when polarity is on the ascendance, the American landscape speaks to a wide range of people. Consequently, he concluded, if you are looking at embracing diversity of landscape, you need to embrace diversity of people in America.

Outlook of Private Landowners

In introducing the panel, former Acting Secretary of the United States Department of the Interior (DOI) Lynn Scarlett recalled the privilege of seeing many exciting conservation innovations during her eight years at DOI. Yet she also described the darker side to that tableau, one of wetlands lost, mines not reclaimed, and habitat destroyed. She put forth conservation as a “bedrock value” in American culture, and looked back to the work of early conservationists—including Barry Commoner's focus on the interconnectedness of all things and Aldo Leopold's call for “citizen conservationists.” The imperatives for conservation persist, she said, but the challenges have only grown – particularly the central challenge of transcending jurisdictional boundaries. In meeting these challenges, she asserted, we must not only conduct a “forensics of success,” but also a “forensics of failure.” Understanding these will help us get to what has already been identified as a key question: *what are the catalysts for private lands conservation?*

Private landowner Jim Stone of Rolling Stone Ranch in Ovando, Montana, who has been extensively involved in the Blackfoot Challenge, began by asking: “*What brings us all together?*” Inherent in the answer, he said, is the need to talk about trust and community whenever we talk about land conservation. In the Blackfoot Valley, he said, those in the conservation of private land in the second half of the twentieth century had forgotten about community. What happened to “get things going” was the fact that landowners started to talk with each other again. There were a number of crises and responsive “small successes” that acted as catalysts, leading to larger successes in the Blackfoot Valley.” For example, he noted, early on the landowners focused on invasive weeds, “which we all hated.”

The three following panelists followed with similar themes. Jamie Williams, representing the The Nature Conservancy, argued that while large scale threats are what often catalyze

partnerships, what maintains them is trust. Peter Stein of the Lyme Timber Company described the reaction of many communities that have suddenly begun to see fragmentation, leapfrogging development, and diminished access, and how this led to the support for landscape scale conservation collaboratives. Finally, real estate developer Tom Gray talked about his work in setting up the Santa Lucia Preserve in Carmel Valley, California. The mantra of “location, location, location” certainly still rings true, he asserted, but for land conservation we need to add the mantra of “money, money, money.” What is important, he noted, is a conservation project sponsor’s ability to figure out how to generate money in innovative ways. This is partly because a big part of the challenge in any land conservation initiative lies in setting up maintenance funding. In finding ways to finance the ongoing maintenance of the land, you have to have some common enemies or denominators to galvanize people—for example, wildfires, endangered species, and invasive species. Ultimately, what will ultimately work for large landscape conservation is not the broad notion that we all ought to get together to manage the landscape, but actually getting down to very specific implementable tasks. Without the money and a measurable outcome, you can’t get people together.

Before opening the floor for questions, Scarlett put forth the propositions that “you cannot drop in your conservation agenda by helicopter,” and that you have to have a “social license for conservation.” She pointed to the aforementioned example of the Maine town of Grand Lakes Stream, which had: (1) community participation, (2) funding, and (3) tax credit financing. In this regard, Scarlett asked the panel about governance: “How do you achieve relevant transparency that fulfills legitimacy? How do you decide who sits at the table?”

Williams responded that one of the more positive developments he has seen at TNC is leadership from landowners. TNC’s goal has been to support these individuals, he said, but even when you have a collaborative group you cannot come up with a plan on your own—you have to seek out participation and transparency. Stone responded that the Blackfoot Challenge was lucky enough to have a framework for disseminating information. The only way tasks were undertaken and completed under the Blackfoot Challenge was getting to the people, knowing what they want, and believing in the strength of communities.

Scarlett also asked the panel about the relationship between science and practice. Gray pointed out that at the Santa Lucia Preserve they had made a commitment in 1990 to collect as much information as possible—and had ultimately come up with a great many layers in their GIS database. Stein responded that we have democratized information about ecosystems through a wealth of technologies and sponsored by a wide variety of organizations and organizational forms, including joint ventures, state wildlife action plans, and local collaborative initiatives. The good news, he said, is that we are beginning to hone and synthesize science so that we do not get caught in time-consuming planning process that take years rather than months.

Bob Bendick of the Nature Conservancy asked the panel: “What did *not* work in these landscapes?” Stein responded that he has seen a tendency of conservationists to forget about appropriate level of community engagement—a deterioration in the level of significance in engaging with local communities. Gray responded that a major problem is naiveté about who is going to be opposed to your efforts. A major task, he pointed out, is to communicate with those community leaders who are likely to be most opposed to your interests, and get them to get them either in alignment—or at the very least unopposed.

Tim Male of Defenders of Wildlife began his question by noting that even though information dissemination and scientific investigation has become faster, the ability to get communities together has not matched pace—and that when you start in on a new idea or project, the distrust is still there. Indeed, Male noted, sometimes the highest level of distrust comes from federal agencies. “What transitions,” he asked the panelists, “have you seen on the part of federal agencies to get them on board?” Stein responded that the USFS has level of engagement in the east quite different from that in the west, meaning that he has not encountered the difficulties that many face in working with the USFS. Gray responded that you have to distinguish between consensus and consent; although consensus is best, your practical objective is to obtain consent. You are *not* trying to convert people because that is not going to happen—in most cases, nobody’s life is long enough to reach consensus.

Outlook from Academia and the Research Community

Matt McKinney introduced the panel, describing its charge to focus on the unique contributions that universities can make to landscape conservation. In addition to training future leaders, he pointed out, university-based researchers have come to the common recognition that “knowledge” is important not only in terms of the physical sciences, but also in terms of understanding effective governance of such efforts.

Karl Flessa, Director of the School of Environmental and Earth Sciences at the University of Arizona, joked that until speaking with Levitt a couple months ago, he was not aware that he worked on “large landscapes.” He went on to describe his work on the environmental effects of water diversions, attempting to figure out what might be “nature’s fair share” of water from the Colorado River. He pointed out that universities in U.S. are known for providing access, mobility, and research, but that academic institutions can and should do a much better job of giving its students *breadth* of knowledge. He stated that universities are responding to needs by training people at a master’s level on understanding environmental issues. Finally, he noted that cooperation between universities and NGOs has become very important, that universities now help train people who lead conservation efforts, and that they also provide neutral territory as well as expertise to evaluate conservation efforts.

Perry Brown, the Provost of the University of Montana, began his remarks by noting that he could not remember a time where he was *not* involved in large landscape conservation. He recalled teaching land use planning in 1970s: “it was all large landscape thinking at that time.” He then listed a number of issues relating to the role of higher education in conservation. For example, he emphasized the need for get university leaders to become engaged. Universities that can play a role in conservation will be those that are not insular—that cherish their relationships with non-academic partners (for example, Indian tribes, state and federal government agencies, large national and small local non-profits, and the like). Brown also argued that universities must expose their students to *place*, and that an important issue is whether people at universities understand place. In this regard, he noted that he and his colleagues at the University of Montana work right in the midst of the Rocky Mountains, a place widely recognized as iconic. To nurture a sense of place among students, Brown argued, a critical task for universities is to offer a cross-cutting, interdisciplinary education that encourages students to look at looking at integrated human and natural systems.

David Foster, the Director of the Harvard Forest, described the role of academia in large landscape conservation through two case studies. First he reviewed the regional Wildlands & Woodlands initiative which came out of pioneering work done at the Harvard Forest.¹⁵ A 2010 Wildlands and Woodlands study proposes a 50 year vision for New England under which 70% of the region would remain forest protected from further development. The work will be done, he suggested, by the wide range of partners that have, so to speak “come out of the woodwork” to help organize and drive the initiative.

The second initiative that Foster mentioned is the “Future Scenarios of American Forests” project being evaluated by the National Science Foundation (NSF). The project as proposed would use computer modeling techniques to forecast, for several regions across the nation, the extent and condition of the subject forests under a range of scenarios that take into account potential climate change patterns, land development trends, and forest management practices, among other factors. Foster reported that potential project collaborators from universities and forest researchers all over the country had expressed strong interest in participating. He noted that in undertaking projects such as the Wildlands and Woodlands Initiative and Forest Scenarios, universities and research institutions could be catalytic in framing the ongoing national debate regarding the nation’s forests.

McKinney concluded the panel by reporting that the Lincoln Institute is convening a group of individuals to look at role of universities in large landscape conservation over the next year, and would be happy to get back to participants in the Library of Congress meeting to offer a progress report on that effort.

Remarks by United States Representative Peter Welch

Peter Stein introduced Representative Peter Welch, the member of the United States Congress from Vermont. Stein noted that Welch is now the Democratic Chief Deputy Whip in the House of Representatives, and is a member of the House Committee on Agriculture.

Welch began by thanking Stein and the audience for protecting land across the country. He then launched into a graphic description of the ongoing budget-cutting session in the House of Representatives, describing the scene as an “analytic-free zone.” He argued that significant budget problems require analysis of long-term goals, and that we must maintain our country’s capacity to take care of the task of protecting lands. Welch noted that people identify with particular places, and they need to understand that cuts will affect those places. He affirmed his belief that we have to maintain the country’s commitment to land conservation, and that this must entail the infusion of public funding. To protect the nation’s array of conservation programs, the conservation community must insist that our political leaders carefully analyze how and where they are cutting spending.



Congressman Peter Welch
Wikimedia photo

Welch acknowledged what several speakers had emphasized during the meeting: collaboration

¹⁵ See <http://www.wildlandsandwoodlands.org>.

is the future of land conservation. He recounted the story of the highly effective coalition of housing and environmental interests working together in Vermont. He noted that this is the type of collaboration in which many conference participants were engaged, and he encouraged those individuals to continue to develop their collaborative practices.

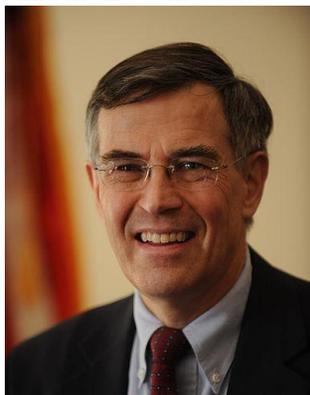
Welch closed his comments by describing how, in 1864, President Lincoln took his attention off the ongoing crisis for a moment in order to sign a bill deeding the area of Yosemite to California for public use and recreation. If Lincoln could create Yosemite in the midst of the Civil War, Welch concluded, we can do our part in a time of tough budgets.

Remarks by United States Representative Rush Holt

Gary Tabor of the Center for Large Landscape Conservation introduced Representative Rush Holt of New Jersey. In recounting Holt’s extensive pre-Congressional career in science and research—Holt is the only physicist serving in Congress—Tabor noted that Holt “really is a rocket scientist.”

Holt began his address by underscoring how the conservation community should use the AGO report. He underscored the importance of engaging participation in outdoor activities by youth—that this constitutes critical long-term cultivation of supporters for the outdoors. We clearly have to engage the next generation, he asserted, in what will be a continuing fight. He recalled the words of President Lyndon B. Johnson: “If future generations are to remember us more with gratitude than with sorrow, we must achieve more than just the miracles of technology. We must also leave them a glimpse of the world as it was created, not as it looked when we got through with it.” Holt said this had been driven home to him when, as environmental educator, he had his students dismantle six cubic inches of dirt. “When I told them to put it back together,” Holt recalled, “the students realized that this couldn’t be done.”

Emphasizing the fundamental importance of land conservation, Holt focused on the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) as one of the most important mechanisms for protecting land in the United States. Holt gave an overview of the LWCF’s history, describing its



Congressman Rush Holt
Wikimedia photo

creation in 1965 and its structure of grants and matching grants. The program has worked, he asserted, and should be fully funded to the maximum allowable level—\$900 million. Regrettably, we are nowhere close to that—and to make matters worse, he warned, the House is considering spending resolution that attempt to turn back the clock on federal efforts to be responsible environmental stewards. Specifically, by zeroing out stateside funding of LWCF, the House would cut LWCF to lowest levels ever.

Holt noted that one of his first legislative accomplishments was to work with Representative Jim McGovern (MA) to restore stateside program of LWCF, and he has maintained interest in this issue ever since. He asserted that we need a national network of wildlife corridors, an ecological network for species to preserve their genetic diversity. This is an idea that both hunters and wildlife enthusiasts can back, and there is a place for it in *every* state—not just for states like Wyoming where they are protecting major routes for pronghorn, but for migratory wildlife that can be found across the country. This is why he and Representative

Jared Polis have put forth H.R.5101, the Wildlife Corridors Conservation Act,¹⁶ which would require the Department of Interior, the Department of Transportation, and other agencies to consider the paths of migratory species in their management plans.

Holt reminded the audience of the “No Child Left Inside” initiative¹⁷ that attempted to repair some of the damage wrought to environmental education programs by the No Child Left Behind legislation. Although this initiative remains unfulfilled, one part of NCLI he continues to work on would bring students to the wonderful resources we have in the national parks and other public land agencies.

Finally, Holt gave the audience an update of where we stand legislatively. The budget resolution that passed the House two weeks ago—but which has not passed the Senate—proposed tremendous cuts in environmental programs. Although there is much we can do at the local level, Holt urged the audience to recognize what is going on here in DC now, and to mobilize to make sure that environmental programs are not effectively eliminated. Things are happening very fast, he said, and it is very troubling. Fortunately, there are great opportunities for enhancing environmental protection, he told the audience, but there’s also a great need for your engagement. Holt concluded by calling for a national network on land conservation, and he asserted that the network already gathered in this room is invaluable. He urged meeting participants to please use it.

Plenary Discussion: Advancing the Large Landscape Conservation Agenda

Jim Levitt moderated the afternoon’s discussion among the conference participants, focusing on generating ideas on how to advance the large landscape conservation agenda. He began by reminding the audience of where it had been over the past few hours: they had heard from a Republican Senator, two Democrats from the House of Representatives, a former Acting Secretary of Interior who served under President George W. Bush, two officials in the Obama Administration, and an array of eloquent speakers from the non-profit conservation community, the private sector, the philanthropic sector, and academia. In short, he said, conference participants had been soaking in information on landscape conservation from myriad angles for five hours. He urged the conference participants in the audience who had yet to speak to enunciate their own ideas about how to advance the large landscape conservation agenda at the local, state, national and international levels.

The responses from the floor, as expected, were thoughtful, diverse, and creative. Organized by the themes of Policy Dialogue, Research, Networking and Demonstration/Field Implementation, they can be summarized as follows.

Policy Dialogues

There is a need for ongoing policy dialogue, both among conservationists in the public, private, non-profit and academic sectors, and between the conservation community and local, state and federal decision-makers, regarding the very timely opportunities to realize landscape-scale conservation initiatives across the nation. The dialogue should celebrate existing success

¹⁶ See <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c111:H.R.5101.IH>:

¹⁷ See <http://www.nclicoalition.org>.

stories regarding both “cultural” and “nature-oriented” properties (both being highly valued by the public), consider ongoing regional conservation efforts, and envision new ones. In the political sphere, these dialogues should connect with conservation caucuses at multiple layers of government (local, county, state, federal and international). In non-profit and academic contexts, the dialogue should reach across disciplines and institutional boundaries. Such inter-sectoral, interdisciplinary discussions are most likely to come up with creative solutions and novel ideas. While the dialogues may well be able to take advantage of the socially neutral nature of universities as conveners, they nevertheless need to be responsive to the practical, on-the-ground issues of vital concern to field practitioners and land owners.

Research

There is an immediate need to build on existing maps and inventories (for example, the Regional Plan Association’s Northeast Landscape Partnership database) to offer a more comprehensive picture of public, private and non-profit initiatives across the nation. A more comprehensive overview of such efforts should be of particular use to various groups and networks working to advance the practice of large landscape conservation, including the Large Landscape Practitioners Network that is a program of the Lincoln Institute, as well as the US Fish and Wildlife Service’s Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs).

Such research efforts should more regionally relevant and cost-effective if they involve cooperation between a wide assemblage of public and private organizations. They might also serve to augment environmental education initiatives that are already spread thin.

Additional research is needed to measure the impacts, performance over time and conservation outcomes of landscape-scale initiatives, and to identify the key factors of success for initiatives that are able to show significant measurable results. Of particular importance is research that is able to identify where, when and how certain efforts are able to yield measurably improved ecosystem services, such as improved water quality, increased wildlife populations, and enhanced sustainable forest product production.

Networking

There are a number of large landscape networks that have recently been created or are now emerging, including the Large Landscape Practitioners’ Network and the LCCs mentioned above. As they emerge, the networks are likely to nest within one another, at larger and larger geographic scales (that is to say, they are likely to be “fractal” in nature). The networks will need to focus on sharing knowledge and building capacity at the local level (that is, as one participant put it, to be grounded in the “community space”) or they may not yield lasting results. Notwithstanding the need to be grounded in local realities, the networks have an opportunity to reach out to international partners with lessons to share. Within their own territories, large landscape conservation networks need to be linked to diverse constituencies, including philanthropists interested in landscape-scale conservation, university faculty and students, a range of public agencies and, most importantly, landowners and managers.

Demonstration and Field Implementation

Given what are expected to be very tight constraints on new conservation programs at the federal, state and local levels, participants focused much of their attention to the creative use of existing budgets that can be used for landscape-scale conservation purposes. One noted the significant role that is already being played by Department of Defense programs to conserve (and limit development) on lands adjacent to active military reservations. Such programs are now being effectively used to protect habitats and working lands from development, to limit landscape fragmentation, and may be used in the future to address water supply protection issues. Another participant likewise noted the potential significance of state and federal transportation budgets that could be used to mitigate the disruptive impact of new roads and highways. Particularly enthusiastic support came from several participants for public-private-non-profit partnerships have a proven track record for protecting and enhancing locally-valued natural and cultural resources to form the backbone for a regional green infrastructure in places as diverse as: Santa Fe, New Mexico; the Chattahoochee/Apalachicola basin in Georgia, Mississippi and Florida; the Crown of the Continent in Montana, Alberta and British Columbia; and the New Jersey Highlands.

Additional opportunities for funding large landscape conservation initiatives that were noted include: state incentives for private land protection that can be used to match selected federal programs (for example, the matching monies required by funds provided by the NAWCA, the North American Wetlands Conservation Act); community forest programs that are now gaining momentum around the nation; selected opportunities for foundation Program-Related Investments (PRIs), and emerging ecosystem service markets assisted by federal policy and public-private partnerships, including mitigation banking and state-wide markets for carbon credits, such as those in California.

Conclusion

The organizers adjourned the meeting with a few concluding remarks. Levitt reminded the participants that, notwithstanding evident federal budget constraints, myriad opportunities were available to pursue projects that are *expansive in scale, extensive in scope, enabling the achievement of measureable conservation outcomes, and enduring*. He congratulated the many meeting participants who were themselves offering unquestionable proof of the concept of large landscape conservation in initiatives spread across the continent.

Carbonell focused his concluding comments on a major theme played out through the day: for large landscapes to be place based, we have to know the geography. Although our maps have to be fuzzy, we have to get down to some sort of spatial understanding of what these landscapes are, and the fractal nature of landscapes that Levitt referred to at the opening of the conference. Carbonell also focused on the challenge of connecting urban areas with natural areas, and the need to discover the appropriate scale for effective action that allows us both to connect human values and to ensure those values make sense with scale of nature.

6. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As has been the case in prior years, Brooke Burgess, Melissa Abraham and their team at Resource Plus did an outstanding job in arranging everything in a careful and considerate manner, making each guest feel particularly welcome to the session. Our congratulations and thanks to them, and to the staff at the Library of Congress for their outstanding logistical support.



THE FUTURE OF LARGE LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION IN AMERICA
2011 Lincoln Institute of Land Policy Conservation Leadership Dialogue
Library of Congress, Members of Congress Meeting Room
March 1, 2011, Washington, DC

APPENDIX 1:
AGENDA

8:30 am *Doors Open, light breakfast*

8:50 am **Welcome.** *Jim Levitt, Armando Carbonell, Lincoln Institute*

9:05 am **Remarks by United States Senator Susan Collins,** *introduced by Lynn Lyford, New England Forestry Foundation*

9:30 am **Administration Outlook.** *Douglas Wheeler moderates: Harris Sherman (US Department of Agriculture) and Will Shafrath (US Department of the Interior)*

10:15 am *Coffee Break*

10:30 am **NGO/Funders Outlook.** *Armando Carbonell moderates: Rand Wentworth (Land Trust Alliance), Bob Bendick (The Nature Conservancy) and Tom Curren (Pew Trusts)*

11:10 am **Private Land Owner and Practitioner Outlook.** *Lynn Scarlett moderates: Jim Stone (Rolling Stone Ranch, Ovando, MT), Peter Stein (Lyme Timber Company, Hanover, NH), Tom Gray (Santa Lucia Preserve, Carmel Valley, CA) and Jamie Williams (The Nature Conservancy)*

11:50 am **Research/Academic Outlook.** *Matt McKinney moderates: David Foster (Director, Harvard Forest), Perry Brown (Provost, University of Montana) and Karl Flessa (Director of the School of Environmental and Earth Sciences, University of Arizona)*

12:30 pm **Remarks by United States Representative Peter Welch,** *introduced by Peter Stein, Lyme Timber Company*

12:45 pm *Lunch Break*

1:00 pm **Remarks by United States Representative Rush Holt,** *introduced by Gary Tabor, Center for Large Landscape Conservation*

1:45 pm **Plenary Discussion: Advancing the Large Landscape Conservation Agenda**

2:30 pm **Adjournment**



THE FUTURE OF LARGE LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION IN AMERICA
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APPENDIX 3: PROFILES OF LARGE LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

PROFILE OF LARGE LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

Organization: **Chicago Wilderness Alliance**

Information Provided by: Laurel Ross, lross@fieldmuseum.org

Chicago Wilderness Alliance is a regional alliance that connects people and nature. More than 250 diverse member organizations work together to restore local nature and improve the quality of life for all living things by protecting the lands and waters on which we all depend.

(1) Policy dialogues and initiatives.

- **Climate Change:** In 2010 Chicago Wilderness released the Climate Action Plan for Nature (CAPN). It identifies actions for mitigation, adaptation and increased public awareness as key strategies to address climate change, considering the significant role of, and threats to, natural areas in the face of regional climate impacts. The plan complements other regional plans that focus on human activities. Three main strategies are to advance climate research; promote conservation practices that help local nature adapt to anticipated impacts; and, marshal CW members to create local solutions with global impact.
- **Green Infrastructure:** The CW Green Infrastructure Vision (GIV) paints a bold picture of what the Chicago region can be with protection of natural areas, corridors, and open spaces. It is not a land acquisition plan, but a set of strategies to protect and restore 1.8 million acres of interconnected lands and waters in a sustainable way and to mutual benefit, by using tools such as conservation development, conservation easements, and land use planning. It is a guide to creating a metropolitan region where healthy ecosystems contribute to economic vitality and quality of life for all.
- **The Sustainable Watershed Action Team (SWAT):** SWAT is an example of GIV implementation at the community and neighborhood scale. Local officials identified a need for assistance in addressing sprawling development--hands-on technical assistance to improve planning infrastructure and incorporate sustainable development practices. Chicago Wilderness responded by forming SWAT, experts in conservation design, stormwater management, and use of native vegetation, to work on specific planning or development projects.

(2) **Research.** CW adopted a regional research agenda in 2004. Current collaborative projects include:

- **Urban Long Term Research Area Exploratory (ULTRA ex) Grant:** “Connecting the social and ecological sciences with planners, managers, and the public: Building a broad foundation for the Chicago Region, and
- **Coupled natural-human systems in Chicago Wilderness:** Evaluating the biodiversity and social outcomes of different models of restoration planning.”

(3) **Networking efforts.** At a national level, Chicago Wilderness was a founder of the Metro Greenspaces Alliance, a network of public-private conservation partnerships and an American knowledge base on green infrastructure practice in metro regions. At a regional level, Chicago Wilderness was a founder of the collaborative community-based Leave No Child Inside initiatives working specifically in underserved communities in the CW region.

(4) **Demonstration and field implementation projects.** CW was a founder of: the Northeast Illinois Invasive Plant Partnership (NIIPP), and the Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA). NIIPP was established in 2010 to preserve native plant biodiversity and its habitats through the prevention and control of new plant invasions, the control and management of existing invasions, and the support of informed management decisions. NIIPP interacts with CWMA's in NW Indiana, SE Wisconsin, and S Illinois.

PROFILE OF LARGE LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

Organization: **Ecosystem Investment Partners**, Towson, MD

Information Provided by: Katherine Birnie, Director of Markets
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Description of Activities:

(1) Policy Dialogues and Initiatives. EIP works to set and promote policies that further mitigation banking as a tool for large landscape conservation through the National Mitigation Banking Association and through our partnerships with conservation organizations and agencies. In addition, EIP Partner Adam Davis, in his role as a Senior Advisor to the Udall Foundation, has been very involved in policy discussions in Washington, DC regarding the use of environmental markets and ecosystem metrics to accomplish conservation and restoration goals.

(2) Networking Efforts. EIP frequently presents on mitigation banking at national conferences and training sessions to audiences including conservation partners, government agencies, regulators, and land developers.

(3) Research. Not applicable.

(4) Demonstration and Field Implementation Projects. Ecosystem Investment Partners (EIP) is a private equity firm established in 2006 to help augment existing conservation funding with private investment by capitalizing on the Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) markets surrounding wetland, stream, and endangered species habitat mitigation throughout the US. EIP generates market rate investment returns through the sale of mitigation credits (wetland, stream, endangered species) generated on properties we acquire, entitle, permanently protect, restore, manage, and divest across the US. EIP has protected and is restoring over 5,000 acres in the current project portfolio, and will be deploying new projects nationwide to further high priority conservation and restoration goals over the next several years. Current projects include partnerships with the US Fish and Wildlife Service and The Nature Conservancy to protect and restore the largest remaining private inholding in the Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge (1,000 acres); partnerships with The Conservation Fund and the State of Delaware to protect one of the largest blocks of intact open space in the state's Cypress Swamp Forest Legacy Area (1,200 acres); partnership with The Nature Conservancy to protect and restore 2,500 acres of highly threatened Louisiana longleaf pine savannah; and partnership with the Blackfoot Challenge and numerous agencies to protect and restore 300 acres of wetland and 11,000 linear feet of spring creek in the Blackfoot watershed of Montana.

PROFILE OF LARGE LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

Organization: **Harvard Forest, Harvard University**

Information Provided by: David Foster, Director, drfoster@fas.harvard.edu
and Kathy Fallon Lambert, Science & Policy Project Director, klambert01@fas.harvard.edu

Description of Activities:

(1) Policy Dialogues and Initiatives. The Harvard Forest, in conjunction with Highstead in Redding CT and other partners, has convened the Wildlands and Woodlands Initiative in New England. The W&WI brings together scientists, conservation groups, land trusts and agencies to help stem the loss of forests and accelerate the pace of conservation. The effort grew from a series of Wildlands and Woodlands publications developed by academic scholars from across the region (www.wildlandsandwoodlands.org). The Harvard Forest is also partnering with several academic institutions, the USFS and the NSF Long-Term Ecological Research (LTER) Network to host a series of national and regional scale dialogues on Future Scenarios of Forest Change.

(2) Research. In addition to decades of research on forest landscape change, ecosystem dynamics and conservation patterns in New England (<http://harvardforest.fas.harvard.edu/research.html>), the Harvard Forest is collaborating with the University of Wisconsin, Portland State University, University of Alaska Fairbanks, University of Georgia, the Smithsonian Institute, USF S and LTER program to launch a new research effort on Future Scenarios of Forest Change. This major 5-year effort will combine national and regional narrative scenarios with simulation models to analyze benefits and tradeoffs associated with landscape scale conservation, biomass energy development, climate mitigation, and shifting private ownership in contrasting forest regions across the U.S.

(3) Networking efforts. In conjunction with Highstead, the Harvard Forest helps organize the Wildlands and Woodlands Partnership which is a network of more than 60 organizations in New England working to accelerate conservation, support the retention of private managed forests, and promote the protection of designated wildland reserves consistent with the vision articulated in the Wildlands and Woodlands publications (<http://www.wildlandsandwoodlands.org/vision/vision-new-england>).

(4) Demonstration and Field Implementation Projects. The Harvard Forest is partnering with the Blue Hills Foundation and Highstead to develop a W&W stewardship science effort (<http://harvardforest.fas.harvard.edu/wwscience/>) that uses long-term research plots across forestlands with differing ownership objectives to document and quantify the effects of varied forest management practices. There are currently 8 pilot sites in New England, including collaborations between private citizens, towns, land trusts, conservation organizations, foundations, universities, and state governments. The landscapes represent a wide range of forest types in remote, rural, and suburban locations.

PROFILE OF LARGE LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

Organization: **The Heart of the Rockies Initiative (HOTR), Missoula, MT**
heart-of-rockies.org

Information Provided by: Michael B. Whitfield, Coordinator, hotrmike@silverstar.com

Description of Activities:

(1) Policy Dialogues and Initiatives. The mission of the HOTR is to increase the pace of voluntary private land conservation in the Rocky Mountain corridor from southwest Wyoming through Idaho and Montana into British Columbia and Alberta in Canada with a vision of an ecologically connected and resilient landscape. The HOTR collaborates on many policy and strategic fronts to sharpen conservation focus, enhance public and private conservation funding, and build member organization capacity, excellence, and impact in private land conservation and stewardship.

(2) Research. The HOTR has completed three large scale conservation plans (Greater Yellowstone, Crown, and High Divide) that identify private lands of high value for conservation through application of integrated Geographic Information System (GIS) data and facilitated expert opinion for the Rocky Mountains from southern Wyoming through Idaho and Montana into British Columbia and Alberta. The HOTR compiles annual data on protected lands and private and public funding applied to private land protection. The HOTR seeks to better integrate ecological connectivity and climate adaptation into earlier planning through development of a region wide decision support system for private land conservation actions.

(3) Networking efforts. The HOTR is a collaboration of land trusts from throughout its geographic area of focus, and also partners with many other NGOs and state and federal agencies in the region in planning and action. The HOTR participates in governance of the Great Northern Landscape Conservation Cooperative and in many sub-regional collaborations.

(4) Demonstration and Field Implementation Projects. The HOTR is refining a collaboratively derived portfolio of very high priority conservation projects with large landscape impact—the emphasis being upon ecological connectivity and response to climate change. The Initiative is also working with partners to develop conservation capacity in underserved portions of the Rocky Mountain landscape.

PROFILE OF LARGE LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

Organization: **Highstead**/ Wildlands and Woodlands: A Vision for the New England Landscape

Information Provided By: Bill Toomey, Director of Highstead, btoomey@highstead.net

Description of Activities:

(1) Policy Dialogues and Initiatives. Highstead is working in partnership with the Harvard Forest and many other conservation organizations to advance the Wildlands and Woodlands Vision for the New England Landscape and protect 70% of New England in forest. Highstead is providing organizational capacity to support initiatives and actions that will ultimately increase the pace of land conservation needed to achieve this bold vision. Highstead and Harvard Forest have been convening a group of conservation policy professionals from around the region to begin to develop a legislative agenda and policy initiative that could be used to help conserve New England's forest.

(2) Research. Highstead, in collaboration with faculty at University of Massachusetts is studying 20 partnerships across New England and Eastern New York with the goal of identifying the key characteristics of successful partnerships and collaborations. It is envisioned that the results of this research will help improve the effectiveness of these groups and will provide useful information and models for newly forming collaborations.

(3) Networking Efforts. Highstead supports the Wildlands and Woodlands Partnership which is an informal network for 26 regional partnerships and over 100 organizations that collaborate on many levels to advance conservation activities in order to achieve the Wildlands and Woodlands Vision for New England and beyond. Networking activities range from meetings, conferences, listserves, emails, and e-newsletters designed to connect partners to each other, provide learning and networking opportunities and provide updates on ongoing activities and initiatives.

(4) Demonstration and Field Implementation Projects. Highstead and scientists at the Harvard Forest have launched a Wildlands and Woodlands Stewardship Science monitoring network across New England with the goal of helping groups and individuals who own conserved forests to design forest monitoring projects with long-term research plots on their land. A simple, easy-to-use protocol has been developed to establish permanent, paired research plots in conserved woodlands and wildlands. Results from these studies can shed light on the long-term impacts and effectiveness of management practices that seek to promote certain forest characteristics, enhance ecosystem services, and yield desired forest products.

PROFILE OF LARGE LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

Organization: **The Knobloch Family Foundation**

Information Provided by: Ernest Cook, Executive Director, landwaterassoc@gmail.com

Description of Activities:

The Foundation primarily supports activities that will accelerate the conservation of natural ecosystems in the United States. The Foundation's primary strategies are to foster more government funding at all levels for conservation purposes and to create a stronger link between the economic value of ecosystem services and conservation programs that will protect those services. The Foundation has only recently initiated grant-making with this focus, and its strategies may shift.

(1) Policy Dialogues and Initiatives. n/a

(2) Research. The Foundation is making a large grant to a preselected academic institution to support research and education on the economic value of ecosystem services.

(3) Networking efforts. The Foundation is co-sponsoring a conference on Payment for Watershed Services.

(4) Demonstration and Field Implementation Projects. The Foundation has made significant grants to support:

- the Montana Legacy Project
- a national program to stimulate new state and local government funding for conservation
- development of a long-term strategy for the National Conservation Easement Database
- purchase of a database of all landownership in America to allow detailed plans for large-scale acquisitions to be developed.

PROFILE OF LARGE LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

Organization: **Land Trust Alliance**

Information Provided by: Rand Wentworth, President, rwentworth@lta.org

Description of Activities:

(1) Policy Dialogues and Initiatives. The Land Trust Alliance encouraged land trusts to generate robust public conversation through the America's Great Outdoors initiative. Participants promoted community-level efforts on working lands to conserve and strategically connect the nation's landscapes and watersheds. The Alliance also worked with four collaborative teams in the Great Lakes basin to obtain Great Lakes Regional Initiative funding from the EPA. An explicit longer-term goal of the teams' work was to build relationships and eventually pursue additional funding opportunities beyond the GLRI.

(2) Research. The Alliance is releasing its *Strategic Conservation Planning* book this year. It started as a learning circle of land conservation practitioners in 2005 to consider best practices for land trusts.

(3) Networking efforts. The Alliance Northeast Director is on the conference planning committee for the NE Regional Planning Association day-long conversation between national, regional and international leaders, scheduled for April 15th. The Alliance also facilitated forums for information exchange and initiation of a coalition of potentially more than 30 coastal area land trusts to advance cooperative actions for coastal natural habitat and ecosystem protection and restoration in the five states bordering the Gulf of Mexico.

(4) Demonstration and Field Implementation Projects. The Alliance is providing strategic conservation grants to land trusts working with river and watershed groups. We are working with land trusts in the southeast and in the Great Lakes Basin to build stronger land trusts and promote protection of freshwater resources through strategic conservation planning efforts. We published reports on these activities, "Strategic Conservation Planning by Land Trusts for Freshwater Ecosystems in the Southeast US" and "Strategic Conservation Planning by Land Trusts: Protecting Freshwater Resources in the Great Lakes Basin 2006-2009," respectively. We are also working in partnership with the state and regional land trust associations in MT, WY, and ID to deliver training and technical assistance to land trusts involved in the Heart of the Rockies initiative.

PROFILE OF LARGE LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

Organization: **Lincoln Institute of Land Policy**

Information Provided by: James N. Levitt, Fellow, jlevitt@lincolninst.edu

Description of Activities:

(1) Policy Dialogues and Initiatives. The Lincoln Institute, in conjunction with Joint Venture partners at the Center for Natural Resource and Environmental Policy at the University of Montana (CNREP), the Sonoran Institute, and the Regional Plan Association (RPA) has organized today's conservation leadership dialogue, and will continue to host policy discussions in the context of its ongoing Large Landscape Conservation initiatives.

(2) Research. The Lincoln Institute will have a fellowship program in 2011 that will focus on the design and proof of concept of a Geographic Information System (GIS) that integrates data that describes, on a large scale, such factors as: existing protected areas in the United States, high priority areas that have not yet been protected, areas where conservation finance resources may be found, and areas in which regional conservation organizations that are pursuing large landscape conservation initiatives have been identified.

(3) Networking efforts. In conjunction with CNREP, as well as Highstead in Redding, CT, the Lincoln Institute is supporting the formation of a Large Landscape Practitioner's Network that will meet in the near future to explore whether there is utility in exchanging experiences and best practices among a wide range of large landscape conservation initiatives across the nation.

(4) Demonstration and Field Implementation Projects. The Lincoln Institute, in conjunction with the CNREP in the Crown of the Continent region, and in conjunction with RPA in the Northeast megaregion, is supporting early efforts to foster collaboration of public, private, non-profit and academic/research sector organizations to advance landscape scale conservation projects that lead to durable, measurably effective conservation outcomes. Lincoln Institute will continue to evaluate these projects over time to adapt organization strategies to field conditions and results produced.

PROFILE OF LARGE LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

Organization: **The Lyme Timber Company**

Information Provided by: Peter R. Stein, Managing Director, peterstein@lymetimber.com
Mary McBryde, Director of Conservation Strategies and Research, mmcbryde@lymetimber.com

Description of Activities:

(1) Policy Dialogues and Initiatives. Through the National Alliance of Forest Owners (NAFO) and the Working Forest Climate Group, Lyme advocates for policies and public funding programs that support the conservation of working landscapes. Periodically, Lyme's principals are involved with new policy initiatives focused on public funding for purchase of conservation lands and easements as well as efforts associated with market/regulatory issues for ecosystem services.

(2) Research. Through its advisory business, Lyme monitors land conservation activities nationwide to evaluate where the best opportunities exist to maximize the financial leverage and ecological impacts of philanthropic investments.

(3) Networking efforts. Peter Stein will join the Large Landscape Practitioner's Network Advisory Committee organized by the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy and the University of Montana CNREP.

(4) On the Ground Projects. Through its investment activities, Lyme has helped protect over 600,000 acres of working forest lands using working forest conservation easements. The two investments described below demonstrate the significant accomplishments that result when private investors, NGOs and public agencies partner to conserve high priority lands.

- 1) Grand Lake Stream. Lyme acquired 22,148 acres in southeastern Maine in 2008. Working closely with the Downeast Lakes Land Trust, The Conservation Fund, Coastal Enterprises, Inc., The Northern Forest Center and the State of Maine, Lyme helped conserve a gap in a cross-national network of previously conserved land totaling over 1 million acres.
- 2) Tennessee Forestlands. Lyme's Tennessee properties consist of 125,000 acres of land and timber interests in the Cumberland Mountains in northeastern Tennessee. The lands were acquired in 2007 as part of a major conservation initiative sponsored by Tennessee Governor Phil Bredesen and the state legislature, with support from the Tennessee Chapter of The Nature Conservancy and the Tennessee Wildlife Federation. A portion of the property has been registered with the California Climate Action Reserve for future carbon credit sales.

PROFILE OF LARGE LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

Organization: **Minnesota Land Trust, St. Paul, Minnesota**

Information Provided by: Kris Larson, Executive Director, klarson@mmland.org

Description of Activities:

(1) Policy Dialogues and Initiatives. The Minnesota Land Trust (MLT) considers itself primarily an on-the-ground implementation organization. However, we do engage in policy initiatives as appropriate. One example at the landscape scale is our recent work with America's Great Outdoors Initiative to emphasize the great importance of the Upper Mississippi Blufflands landscape. This was done in conjunction with the Blufflands Alliance, a multi-state land trust partnership working to protect the natural and cultural attributes of Greenway of the Heartland (www.blufflandsalliance.org).

(2) Research. The Blufflands Alliance has sponsored several research projects, including one on the great importance of the Mississippi Blufflands for migratory birds. In addition, MLT has been involved in several state or regional conservation planning efforts that are looking at broad-scale issues such as climate-change adaptation.

(3) Networking efforts. MLT has participated in several landscape scale collaborations or networks in addition to the Blufflands Alliance, such as the Habitat Conservation Partnership (a 10-year, multi-agency protection project), the Lake Superior Land Trust Partnership (now largely defunct effort at regional coordination). In addition, there are several other landscape-scale initiatives in the state, including one regarding large scale northern forest protection and another in the prairie pothole region.

(4) Demonstration and Field Implementation Projects. Through its on-the-ground protection efforts, MLT has completed more than 420 projects and assisted in more than 50 assistance projects with local governments, state agencies or others. While these projects are often local in their impacts, they also are generally important for other large scale habitat benefits such as the Mississippi Flyway, Great Lakes raptor migration, and others. In addition, our work with regional partners helps protect the experience of two national scenic byways (Great River Road on the Mississippi and the Lake Superior Circle Tour) and several multi-state trails, including the North Country Trail, Mississippi River Trail and Lake Superior Water Trail.

PROFILE OF LARGE LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

Organization: **Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust (Mount Grace)**

Information Provided by: Leigh Youngblood, Executive Director, youngblood@mountgrace.org

Description of Activities:

(1) Policy. From 2010 to 2011 Mount Grace chaired a Massachusetts Legislative Commission on Financing Forest Conservation. The Commission issued recommendations for integrating policy in four strategic areas: aggregation, or multi-landowner, cross-boundary conservation projects; mitigation measures; compact development by right; and rural economic development.

(2) Research. In 2010 the Manomet Center for Conservation Science collaborated with Mount Grace and Wildlands Trust to design a program model to implement site-level management for climate change adaptation suitable for nationwide expansion through the Land Trust Alliance. The program, organized to support State Wildlife Action Plans, was not funded.

(3) Networking. (A) Since 1997, following publication of an article co-authored by Dr. David Foster of Harvard Forest in the journal *Conservation Biology* and a regional conservation and management plan by the state, Mount Grace has coordinated and staffed the multi-level North Quabbin Regional Landscape Partnership. Focused on conservation outcomes, the Partnership has led directly to increased state investments, a multi-state collaborative, and increased conservation capacity at the municipal level, including participation in landscape level USFS Forest Legacy projects. (B) In 2010, Mount Grace began administering a collaborative AmeriCorps program across 75% of the state. Through a network of fourteen regional and local land trusts and watershed associations, twenty AmeriCorps members are achieving measurable results in conservation, stewardship, and outreach

(4) Demonstration. (A) In Massachusetts Mount Grace is leading a systems improvement process to facilitate multi-landowner, landscape level, and multi-partner Forest Legacy projects. (B) In 2001-2002 as part of a state-funded partnership Mount Grace was the lead landowner negotiator in the Tully Initiative, which protected 20% of a 45,000-acre watershed through more than 100 projects. (C) Along with the New England Forestry Foundation, Mount Grace is one of seven land trusts implementing the Wildlands & Woodlands Vision of Harvard Forest through the WMass Aggregation Project.

PROFILE OF LARGE LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

Organization: **National Audubon Society, International Alliances Program (IAP)**,
Washington, DC

Information Provided by: Craig Lee, Director, International Relations, craiglee@audubon.org

Website: <http://web4.audubon.org/bird/IAP/>

Description of Activities:

PROGRAM PROFILE: Audubon, BirdLife International, and many other partnering organizations and entities is striving to conserve over 2,400 Important Bird Areas (IBAs) throughout the western hemisphere constituting 3,000,000 square kilometers in area. IAP is targeting several dozen of the highest priority IBAs in Latin America and the Caribbean to protect migratory and endemic bird habitat, biodiversity generally, and improve the livelihoods of humans who rely on the environmental services provided by the IBAs. IAP's principal strategy is to build the conservation effectiveness of its in-country partner organizations in Latin America by mentoring and financially resourcing the partners in science, policy, education/social marketing, and land protection and restoration.

(1) Policy Dialogues and Initiatives: IAP and partners are working on gaining governmental protected status for IBAs throughout the hemisphere, building a stronger civil society by engaging citizens in demonstrating their support for these designations, and lobbying for increased US federal financial support for conservation in the Americas.

(2) Research. Audubon in conjunction with its partners in BirdLife International have recently released *Important Bird Areas of the Americas* which lays the foundation for conservation of 2,400 IBAs in the Americas

(3) Networking efforts. IAP and its partners meet several times annually through training workshops to sharpen skills in science, social marketing, political campaigns, and climate change adaptation and meet annually to coordinate/prioritize actions to conserve IBAs through large landscape initiatives such as mangroves, migratory flyways, grasslands, and marine protected areas.

(4) Demonstration and Field Implementation Projects. IAP is assisting partners in twelve countries with such initiatives as Panama Bay (Panama), Veracruz River of Raptors (Mexico), Grasslands of the northern Pampas, and Shorebirds of Chiloe Island, Chile.

PROFILE OF LARGE LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

Organization: **New England Forestry Foundation**

Information Provided by: Lynn W. Lyford, Executive Director, llyford@newenglandforestry.org

Description of Activities:

(1) Policy Dialogues and Initiatives. New England Forestry Executive Director, Lynn Lyford, is a member of the New England Governors' Conference Blue Ribbon Commission on Land Conservation. New England Forestry is an active supporter of and participant in the Harvard Forest's Wildlands and Woodlands Partnership and the Quabbin to Cardigan Collaboration

(2) Research. Not applicable.

(3) Networking Efforts. New England Forestry networks with other land trusts through its participation in the Wildlands and Woodlands Partnership, the Quabbin to Cardigan Collaboration and by serving as the conservation intermediary for its aggregation work in Western Massachusetts as well as pursuing other aggregation coalitions in New England.

(4) Demonstration and Field Implementation Projects. New England Forestry Foundation is the conservation intermediary for the Wildlands and Woodlands Conservation Project. This \$22 million project focused in Western Massachusetts brings together seven land trusts working to conserve 10,344 acres comprised of 72 parcels.

About NEFF and its activities in large landscape conservation

New England Forestry Foundation is focused on increasing the pace of conservation through its work on aggregation. Aggregation bundles multiple small conservation projects into a single, much larger package to: realize greater resource significance than individual projects by themselves; realize economies of scale; access new funding sources; and ensure sustainable forestry and long-term monitoring. New England Forestry Foundation is the conservation intermediary for a pilot aggregation which involves seven land trusts working to raise \$22 million in order to conserve 10,344 acres in Western Massachusetts comprised of 72 parcels. For more information contact: Lynn Lyford, Executive Director, New England Forestry Foundation, at llyford@newenglandforestry.org or (978) 952-6856 xt. 104.

PROFILE OF LARGE LANDSCAPE ACTIVITIES

Organization: **Northern Forest Center**, Concord, NH, and Bethel, ME

Information Provided by: Joe Short, Program & Policy Director, jshort@northernforest.org

Description of Activities

(1) Policy Dialogues and Initiatives. The Center collaborates with in-region organizations and national coalitions to advance strategic rural federal public policy and advance new approaches to rural development. Center staff are developing Farm Bill platforms with several national coalitions and are working closely with the Northern Forest congressional delegation and senior officials at the US Dept. of Agriculture to address the special needs of rural, forest-based communities.

(2) Research. The Center is focused on research that generates information for forestland owners and communities to help them access new markets for sustainably managed forest resources, which in turn enable landowners to keep forests undeveloped. [*Payments for Carbon: Opportunities and Challenges for Small Forest Owners*](#) explains how owners of small forests may be able to participate in carbon markets; a set of four [*Biomass Energy Visual Indices*](#) depicts the biomass energy projects in ME, NH, VT and NY, as well as related information about wood supply, funding, regulations and more.

(3) Networking efforts. The Center is convening the 2nd Summit for the Northern Forest in May 2011 to bring together practitioners from the public, private and non-profit sectors in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and New York to advance the [*Northern Forest Sustainable Economy Initiative*](#). The Center supports collaborative networks in community-scale biomass energy, wood products manufacturing, ecosystem services, tourism and regional strategy and policy development.

(4) Demonstration and Field Implementation Projects. The Center manages the Northern Forest Investment Zone initiative and works with 6 partner organizations to create income streams that support conservation and good forestland stewardship. Demonstration projects include seeking payment for ecosystem services in the Crooked River watershed in Maine and the Upper Connecticut River watershed in Vermont and New Hampshire; creating and supporting Community Forests in ME, NH and VT; community-scale biomass energy projects; and pursuing several forest-based income opportunities in the Androscoggin Valley-Mahoosuc region to demonstrate their viability as a land conservation strategy.

PROFILE OF LARGE LANDSCAPE ACTIVITIES

Organization: **Northern Virginia Conservation Trust (“NVCT”)**

Information Provided by: Patrick Coady, Founding Board Member, pat@coadydiemar.com

Description of Activities:

(1) Policy Dialogue and Initiatives. In 2010 NVCT adopted a new strategic plan, “Vision 2025” for Northern Virginia. The plan sets out certain principles that define a connected region of green infrastructure and a plan to commence work with the governments, stakeholders and other conservation organizations to build a consensus on policy and resulting implementation actions. The region is defined by the Potomac River, the Shenandoah National Park and forest and agriculture lands to the south. It is rich in cultural and Civil War historic sites. The population is projected to double over this period.

(2) Research. Working with the Northern Virginia Regional Commission, The Conservation Fund, relevant departments of the counties and the State of Virginia, NVCT will create a comprehensive map of priority conservation areas with connectivity with overlays of development elements.

(3) Networking Efforts. A first step will be to create a Leadership Group and identify champions in the various stakeholders groups. Then a period of intense outreach and discussion will be pursued. There are a number of key initiatives already in play such as various commitments related to cleaning up the Chesapeake Bay. Legislation was introduced in Congress last year to provide funding for the region. Americas Great Outdoors provides further energy to the process.

(4) Demonstration and Field Implementation. The “2025 Vision” has a time line of three five year phases. Existing conservation efforts will be assessed for coherence with the priorities of the vision, but the first phase will be to obtain consensus among the parties. The second phase will focus on launching key projects and organize the needed funding. By 2020 it hoped that implementation will be in full force with supporting changes to county comprehensive plans and planning ordinances.

PROFILE OF LARGE LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

Organization: **Patagonia Sur, LLC**

Information Provided by: Henry Tepper, Chief Conservation Officer; henry@patagoniasur.com

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES:

1) Policy Dialogues and Initiatives. Patagonia Sur is a private, for-profit conservation real estate company that is purchasing landscape-scale conservation properties in northern and central Patagonia in Chile. The company is placing legally binding conservation restrictions on its holdings and then managing the land for a variety of income-producing sustainable land uses, including eco-tourism, reforestation and the sale of carbon credits, and limited development. From a policy perspective, Patagonia Sur is part of a larger private lands conservation initiative in Chile, and is actively supporting legislation in the Chilean Congress to create a flexible conservation easement legal instrument, the *Derecho Real de Conservacion*, and revisions of the Chilean tax code to make contributions to the environment, including interests in conservation land, tax-deductable.

2) Research. Patagonia Sur is collaborating with the Gulf of Maine Research Institute (GMRI), based in Portland, Maine, on intensive, comprehensive scientific research on one of Patagonia Sur's land holdings, a temperate broad-leaf rain forest landscape called Melimoyu. Melimoyu includes primary forest tracts, a glacier, and two free-flowing rivers that empty into a bay that is adjacent to the Gulf of Corcovado, a major habitat for cetaceans, including Blue, Humpback and Orca Whales. Patagonia Sur and the Gulf of Maine Research Institute are considering the possibility of establishing a full-scale research center in Melimoyu, which would be a southern hemispheric complement to GMRI's work in the Atlantic.

3) Networking efforts. In addition to Patagonia Sur's participation in the larger Chilean Private Lands Conservation Initiative, the organization is establishing an independent land trust that will provide technical assistance to the growing network of conservation-minded landowners in the country. The new land trust will also establish strong collaborative ties with US-based land trusts.

4) Demonstration and Field Implementation Projects. Patagonia Sur currently owns about 70,000 acres of landscape-scale properties in Patagonia, and may end up owning as much as 100,000 acres. The company is committed to protecting all of its holdings first using the existing conservation easement legal instrument under Chilean law, the *servidumbre ecologica*, and then converting to a more flexible instrument the *Derecho Real de Conservacion*, if and when that instrument becomes law. In the coming months, Patagonia Sur will place legally binding conservation restrictions on its first 7,000-acre property, called Valle California, which will also include a limited development plan for about 5% of the property. Patagonia is designing its landscape-scale conservation and limited development plans as models that can be adapted and implemented by other private landowners in Chile and beyond.

PROFILE OF LARGE LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

Organization: **Pinelands Preservation Alliance**

Information Provided By: Carleton Montgomery, executive director,
carleton@pinelandsalliance.org.

Description of Activities

(1) Policy Dialogues and Initiatives. Pinelands Preservation Alliance (PPA) serves as a policy advocate for conservation policies and their implementation in the New Jersey Pinelands region and the state of New Jersey. PPA staff and volunteers are engaged in a range of policy initiatives, including efforts to reverse the decline of Barnegat Bay through watershed-based reforms in land use planning and design, a public education campaign to support the Pinelands and Highlands regional planning programs in New Jersey, and advocacy for reform of Pinelands policies on topics such as the regional transfer of development rights program and water resource protection.

(2) Research. PPA conducts research in support of specific policy priorities, such as threatened and endangered species habitat protection, stormwater management to reduce nutrient inputs to surface waters, and watershed-based conservation projects and around the Pinelands region.

(3) Networking efforts. PPA works closely with other New Jersey conservation groups involved in regional planning in the Pinelands, Highlands, Meadowlands and other regions of New Jersey. In addition, PPA's executive director, Carleton Montgomery, has networked over the past four years with many people around the country working on regional planning initiatives in connection with (a) a 2006 conference in celebration of the Pinelands Plan's 25th anniversary, (b) a book he has edited on regional planning in North America (due out in the fall of 2011 from Rutgers University Press), and (c) discussions aimed at promoting federal support for new regional initiatives.

(4) Demonstration and Field Implementation Projects. The New Jersey Pinelands represents one example of large-landscape conservation in a crowded, rapidly urbanizing region of the country. The Pinelands program, based on large-scale planning and stringent regulation of the location and intensity of development, provides 30 years of experience – and many object lessons both in its successes and its failings.

PROFILE OF LARGE LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

Organization: **Regional Plan Association**, New York/New Jersey/Connecticut

Information Provided by: Robert Pirani, Vice President for Environmental Programs, Regional Plan Association, rob@rpa.org

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES (300 words or less):

(1) Policy Dialogues and Initiatives. Regional Plan Association and its national planning program, America 2050, are undertaking a comprehensive assessment of landscape initiatives in the 13 state Northeast Mega Region with support from The Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and the USDA Forest Service Northeastern Area. A report to be released in Spring 2011 will assess current successes, challenges, and opportunities of landscape initiatives in the complex of metropolitan areas from Boston to Washington. Regional Plan Association is also participating with The Lincoln Institute Joint Venture partners in examining these issues at a national scale.

(2) Research. RPA/America 2050 has been inventorying landscape conservation initiatives and assessing how these diverse efforts relate to habitat protection, other natural resource goals, urban growth and infrastructure investments. Over 145 initiatives have been catalogued and posted to our interactive website. A series of conservation and development context maps will be available shortly. The Northeastern Landscapes Initiatives Atlas can be found at <http://www.rpa.org/northeastlandscapes/>.

(3) Networking efforts. RPA will be hosting a conference in September 2011 to bring together landscape practitioners in the northeastern United States. The conference will be co-hosted by the USDA Forest Service Northeastern Area, the Lincoln Institute, Highstead Center, Land Trust Alliance, and the Piedmont Environmental Council, and other partners.

(4) Demonstration and Field Implementation Projects. RPA will have a re-grant program to twin emerging and existing landscape initiatives in the northeast in 2011/2012, helping emerging initiatives address challenges posed by urban growth and infrastructure investments. RPA is also actively involved in research, planning, and advocacy efforts protect landscape resources in the New York Metropolitan Area including the New York - New Jersey Harbor, the Appalachian Highlands, and Long Island Sound.

PROFILE OF LARGE LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

Organization: **Sonoran Institute**, Interior Western North America

Information Provided by: Nina Chambers, Director of Westwide Programs,
nchambers@sonoraninstitute.org

Description of Activities:

(1) Policy Dialogues and Initiatives. The Sonoran Institute, in conjunction with many other partners, participates in policy discussions to further large landscape conservation efforts. We provide information to decision makers to influence policy in support of conservation.

(2) Research. The Sonoran Institute engages in research to support large landscape conservation and inform decisions at the local, state, and national level. Some of our research has looked at the impact of land use decisions, including siting of transmission lines, on wildlife habitat and movement corridors. We also conduct ecological research and monitoring to identify the impacts of restoration efforts in the delta of the Colorado River in Mexico and along the Santa Cruz River in Arizona.

(3) Networking efforts. In collaboration with the Bureau of Land Management, the Sonoran Institute has worked for the last 5 years in assisting landscape conservation partnerships, collecting and sharing best practices, and networking groups to learn from each other. We participate in the Crown Roundtable and intend to play an active role assisting local groups in that region network together for more effective participation in policy issues. We also play a key role in facilitating and building partnerships among federal agencies and nonfederal partners throughout the West.

(4) Demonstration and Field Implementation Projects. The Sonoran Institute's Legacy Programs are designed to implement large landscape conservation in the Northern Rockies, Western Colorado, in the Sun Corridor Megaregion, and in the Delta of the Colorado River. We work with partners to implement multifaceted conservation strategies across the West. Some of our field projects include restoration along the Colorado River in Mexico; regional planning for wildlife conservation in the Morongo Basin of California, and along the Idaho-Montana Divide in the Northern Rockies; and participation in water policy efforts in the Colorado River Basin.

PROFILE OF LARGE LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

Organization: **Tahoe Regional Planning Agency**, Lake Tahoe Basin, California and Nevada

Information provided by: John Singlaub, former Executive Director, Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, singlaub@charter.net

Description of Activities:

(1) Policy Dialogues and Initiatives. As a bi-state regional compact agency created by the states of California and Nevada, and established by act of Congress, TRPA is responsible for the protection of Lake Tahoe, and has been given full regulatory authority over development activities by both states in this 500 square mile watershed. This requires constant dialogue with the two states and six local jurisdictions within the Basin. The Agency has undertaken a variety of planning and implementation initiatives over the years including growth control, a ban on two-stroke marine engines, boat inspections for invasive species, forest restoration, limits on impervious coverage, and incentives to restore sensitive lands.

2) Research. Given the number and variety of ongoing scientific research projects being conducted at Lake Tahoe by several institutions, the Tahoe Science Consortium has been established to prioritize funding for research in the basin. This is coordinated by a team representing the different agencies with authority at Lake Tahoe, with funding coming from a variety of sources. Research is prioritized based on the nine environmental threshold carrying capacities established by TRPA to achieve environmental objectives within the Basin. Using the best available science and monitoring to inform decisions is the backbone of TRPA's programs.

3) Networking Efforts. TRPA employs a partnership approach with as many as 50 organizations and jurisdictions on a wide range of issues and initiatives. Keeping on track with the water quality and transportation agencies of both states in achieving Total Maximum Daily Load objectives for Lake Tahoe; coordinating private land acquisitions for public ownership to reduce future development with both states and the federal government; working together with seven fire districts to reduce forest fuels and the threat of wildland fires; and assisting private property owners with environmental improvements are few examples of the networking and partnerships needed to achieve environmental, social and economic goals at Lake Tahoe.

4) Demonstration and Field Implementation Projects. The multi-jurisdictional regulatory framework set by TRPA is a governance model for large landscape conservation that is unique in the United States. This applies to development on private lands in the Basin, as well as working with public agencies to regulate activities ranging from skiing to boating. TRPA also works with approximately 43,000 private parcel owners in the Basin to install required erosion control and stormwater infiltration measures. Currently, TRPA is moving toward Environmental Redevelopment, a strategy to encourage redevelopment of rundown, irrelevant commercial centers around the Lake while providing incentives to incorporate significant environmental improvements, particularly focused on water quality.

PROFILE OF LARGE LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

Organization: **The Conservation Fund**

Information Provided by: Ole M. Amundsen III, Strategic Conservation Planning Program Manager, Oamundsen@conservationfund.org

The Conservation Fund's Landscape Scale Initiatives

The Conservation Fund's strategic conservation services use a green infrastructure approach—simultaneously focusing on the best lands to conserve and the best lands to accommodate development and human infrastructure—to help communities, state and federal agencies, land trusts and businesses balance environmental and economic goals through strategies that lead to smarter, sustainable land use. Strategic conservation recognizes that limited resources are available to identify and protect the lands most suitable for conservation and that competing values, needs and opportunities must be evaluated to develop the most efficient and effective land conservation strategies. Every community is unique, and this diversity is reflected in the wide range of strategic conservation plans available for review on the strategic conservation planning program website as well as the green infrastructure community of practice website.

Strategic Conservation Planning Program Project: www.conservationfund.org/strategic_conservation/projects

Green Infrastructure Community of Practice: www.greeninfrastructure.net/.

1) Policy Dialogues and Initiatives. The Conservation Leadership Network within The Conservation Fund organizes leadership groups, and trainings in green infrastructure planning, mitigation planning and balancing nature and commerce at the National Conservation Training Center. For 2011, The Conservation Fund will produce the next generation of green infrastructure course material. These trainings are offered nationally, and upon request, as place-based offerings. Place-based offerings are used to prepare geographic locales for commencement of green infrastructure plans.

2) Research. As part of a National Academy of Science Foundation Expedition grant and in partnership with the Institute for Computational Sustainability at Cornell University, The Conservation Fund will bring academic corridor modeling, such as circuit theory, into the realm of professional practice. In partnership with Dr. Kent Messer at the University of Delaware, The Conservation Fund continues research on the use of financial optimization in prioritizing conservation opportunities. The Conservation Fund continues to bring the latest peer reviewed research on modeling, umbrella and keystone species, logic preference criteria and corridor design to bear upon green infrastructure projects ranging in scale from a county to multi-state scale projects and through the publication of *Journal of Conservation Planning*, the only practitioner based peer reviewed journal on conservation planning, linking academic research and professional practice.

3) Networking Efforts. In February of 2011, The Conservation Fund, hosted the first national green infrastructure conference, attended by representatives from over 30 states and three countries to reflect on the past ten years in green infrastructure planning and set a vision for the future of landscape scale planning. The Green Infrastructure Community of Practice will continue to host events on landscape scale green infrastructure planning.

4) Demonstration and Field Implementation Projects. The Conservation Fund will continue to work with US Fish and Wildlife Service and the NiSource on the implementation of a 13 state green infrastructure network, the largest Habitat Conservation Plan completed in the history of the Endangered Species Act. The use of the green infrastructure network by state agencies, land trusts and US FWS in mitigation planning and conservation will greatly improve the quality and pace of land conservation.

PROFILE OF LARGE LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

Organization: **The Nature Conservancy**

Information Provided by: Jamie Williams, jwilliams@tnc.org

Description of Activities:

(1) Policy. The Nature Conservancy is engaged in several national policy initiatives to enhance landscape conservation, including a 2010 campaign to fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund, defending all land conservation grant programs from disproportionate cuts in the new Congress, extending and making permanent enhanced deductions for conservation easements, and supporting reauthorization of the Farm Bill with robust land conservation programs. In addition, the Conservancy has been actively engaged in supporting the Obama Administration's America's Great Outdoors Initiative given the enormous opportunity it represents for supporting and catalyzing large landscape partnerships.

(2) Research. While the Conservancy has many research projects related to specific conservation programs, one of the most significant research efforts we have undertaken relevant to large landscape conservation is Mark Anderson's work in the northeast on landscape resiliency in the face of climate change. This research is now being expanded nationally to gain a better understanding of large systems that have the best attributes for ecosystem resiliency over the long term. In addition, the Conservancy's scientists (led by Joni Ward) are collaborating on a paper addressing whole system conservation.

(3) Networking. The Conservancy has created a new landscape conservation team to support collaborative landscape-scale conservation projects. One of the goals of this team will be to help network large landscape projects for shared learning about innovative approaches and joint priorities for enhancing our collective efforts.

(4) Demonstration and Field Projects. The Conservancy is a place-based organization with active programs in all 50 states where, among other activities, it is engaged in the conservation of major landscapes of high biological significance with private and public partners. The Conservancy is now reviewing more than 40 of its major landscape projects to determine which ones can serve as the best examples for large landscape conservation – projects that are focused on conserving entire natural systems, have diverse partners, strong local leadership, sound science, and leveraging of private and public funds.

PROFILE OF LARGE LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

Organization: **Transboundary Policy, Planning and Management Initiative jointly led by the Environmental Studies Program at the University of Montana and the Faculty of Environmental Design at the University of Calgary**

Information Provided by: Len Broberg, University of Montana, len.broberg@mso.umt.edu

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES (300 words or less):

Since 1999 the Environmental Studies Program at the University of Montana has led the Transboundary Policy, Planning and Management Initiative jointly with the Faculty of Environmental Design at the University of Calgary. This program is designed to train environmental professionals in the complexities of conservation work spanning the international boundary of the United States and Canada in the region known as the Crown of the Continent. This landscape represents the spine of the Rocky Mountains from the Highwood River in southwest Alberta and Elk River in British Columbia south to Rogers Pass in Montana and includes lands east and west of the Continental Divide encompassing Flathead Lake, the Rocky Mountain/East Front and the Kootenay Region of BC, including the human communities found within it.

Our efforts include: 1) an annual field course joining Canadian and American graduate students in travel throughout the Crown of the Continent meeting with stakeholders and managers throughout the region to hear their stories; 2) research by Dr. Len Broberg and Dr. Michael Quinn and their graduate students on management approaches, ecological systems, connectivity and landscape conservation topics; 3) outreach and networking with the Crown Managers Partnership, the Crown of the Continent Conservation Initiative, the Crown Roundtable, the Crown of the Continent Ecosystem Education Consortium and numerous other conservation oriented organizations and 4) organizing and conducting symposia and conferences including the Peace, Parks and Partnerships Conference, an international celebration of the 75th Anniversary of Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park and a meeting of international peace park activists and scholars including the IUCN. We have been intimately involved in the process of large landscape conservation in the Crown of the Continent through this work, offering university resources to support this process.

PROFILE OF LARGE LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

Organization: **Trust for Public Land (TPL)**

Information Provided by: Jad Daley, jad.daley@tpl.org

Description of Activities:

(1) Policy Dialogues and Initiatives. TPL has helped to lead Outdoors America and the Eastern Forest Partnership, two coalitions of non-profits promoting landscape conservation. TPL has also been a leading voice to promote landscape conservation within the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. At the agency level, TPL has helped to develop the DOI Landscape Conservation Cooperatives, both at the national level and within individual LCCs. TPL has partnered with USDA to reshape site-specific initiatives around individual national forests into a landscape approach, including the Northwoods Climate Change Response Framework.

(2) Research. TPL conducts extensive research in the area of conservation finance throughout the United States. Its www.landvote.org and www.conservationmanac.org websites provide extensive information on conservation-related ballot initiatives and the use of various conservation finance mechanisms across the nation. In addition, TPL's mapping and GIS team provides detailed research on the array of protected areas and conservation priorities at the local, regional and national scales.

(3) Networking. TPL is leading networking at two levels—within landscapes and among landscape efforts. TPL has designed its landscape efforts around multi-partner coalitions, such as the Northern Sierra Partnership and Friends of Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge. Through coalitions like Outdoors America and the Eastern Forest Partnership, TPL is helping to transfer best practices among these individual landscapes.

(4) Demonstration and Field Projects. TPL is playing a leading role in landscape conservation initiatives across America that can create replicable models for others. TPL's landscape model is built on the "4 P's": integrated efforts in Partnership, Planning, and Policy to lay the groundwork for focused landscape conservation through Projects. TPL is using this integrated model in large landscapes as diverse as the Northern Sierra, North Cascades, Crown of the Continent, Northwoods, Chattahoochee River, Barnegat Bay, Connecticut River, and Northern Forest.

PROFILE OF LARGE LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

Organization: **University of Arizona, Research Coordination Network – Colorado River Delta**, Tucson, AZ

Information Provided by: Karl W. Flessa kflessa@email.arizona.edu

Description of Activities:

(1) Policy Dialogues and Initiatives. The Research Coordination Network – Colorado River Delta (RCN-CRD) is an NSF-supported network of natural scientists, social scientists and legal scholars that facilitates interdisciplinary, inter-institutional, and international research on the Colorado River Delta of the U.S. and Mexico. We don't "do" policy: we seek to provide, among other things, policy-relevant scientific data. Members of the network focus on how natural and human-caused variation in water supply affects the biotas and landscapes of the Colorado River Delta. We seek to stimulate research in academic institutions and strengthen the scientific capacity of agencies and NGOs. Participants are from academic institutions, government agencies and NGOs in both countries.

(2) Research. Current efforts supported or stimulated by the network include environmental monitoring of a Mexican wetland that could be affected by a US desalination plant, determining the water needs of riparian, wetland and estuarine habitats of the delta, providing the environmental baselines needed to assess the impact of upstream water diversions, and an inventory of the delta's ecosystem services.

(3) Networking efforts. In collaboration with NGOs, the RCN-CRD hosts meetings and workshops for scientists and students, provides support and facilities for pilot projects, disseminates research results, supports professional travel, and informs participants of opportunities for research funding.

(4) Demonstration and Field Implementation Projects. One example - The RCN-CRD established the Ciénega de Santa Clara Monitoring Program to evaluate the effects of the pilot operation of the Yuma (U.S.) Desalting Plant on a Mexican wetland. Funding comes from the three major southwestern water agencies: Central Arizona Project, the Southern Nevada Water Authority and the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California. The monitoring team includes scientists from the University of Arizona, the Sonoran Institute, Universidad Autónoma de Baja California, Centro de Investigación en Alimentación y Desarrollo and ProNatura. This bi-national team is generating data on water flow, water quality, vegetation distribution, vegetation quality and bird populations. This common database can be used by all stakeholders to assess the effects of the desalting plant's operation.

PROFILE OF LARGE LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

Organization: **University of Delaware, Department of Food & Resource Economics**
Newark, Delaware

Information Provided by: Dr. Kent D. Messer, messer@udel.edu

Description of Activities:

(1) Policy Dialogues and Initiatives. Large landscape conservation requires both sound ecology and economics. My research, teaching, and outreach activities relate to the development and application of science-based, cost-effective selection approaches, frequently called “optimization.” Optimization is being used to select habitat conservation projects for the largest multiple-endangered species, multiple-state project in the history of the Endangered Species Act. In conjunction with The Conservation Fund, user-friendly, GIS-compatible, optimization tools have been developed for web-based and Excel-based platforms. These tools are being applied to select mitigation projects for the Maryland State Highways Association and to preserve agricultural lands in Baltimore County.

(2) Research. My research interests include design and evaluation of conservation finance tools and ecosystem service markets that protect landscapes that offer high levels of benefits at a relatively low cost—thereby expanding the effectiveness of conservation finances. This research has been published in peer-reviewed academic journals and in my new textbook, “Mathematical Programming for Agricultural, Environmental, and Resource Economics” with Dr. Harry Kaiser of Cornell (2011, Wiley & Sons).

(3) Networking efforts. To help educate conservation professionals about how optimization can be tailored to enhance their conservation efforts, I regularly give public presentations at the LTA Rally meeting and at Green Infrastructure Trainings at NCTC. My graduate course at the University of Delaware partners with conservation groups to conduct an initial analysis of using optimization in specific conservation contexts. To date, eight case studies have been completed, done on eight efforts, including for the Department of Defense’s REPI program and USDA’s Forest Legacy program.

(4) Demonstration and Field Implementation Projects. Baltimore County, Maryland, has used optimization techniques to select agricultural preservation projects since 1997. After its first three years of use, the County had protected an additional 680 acres of high quality agricultural lands worth an estimated \$5.4 million: a return on investment of greater than 60 to 1.

PROFILE OF LARGE LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

Organization: **University of Maine at Orono**, Orono, ME

Information Provided by: Robert J. Lilieholm, E.L. Giddings Associate Professor of Forest Policy, School of Forest Resources robert.lilieholm@maine.edu

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES (300 words or less):

(1) Policy Dialogues and Initiatives. UMaine's Sustainability Solutions Initiative (SSI) (NSF-funded EPSCoR) and the Center for Research on Sustainable Forests (CRSF) are closely working with state, local and federal partners to protect working forests and forest-dependent communities across the State. By working with a host of stakeholders, our landscape-level focus is helping to better anticipate and respond to pressing issues like forest-based bioenergy, insect and disease threats, climate change, and landscape conservation.

(2) Research. SSI is exploring how human and natural systems respond under alternative landscape change scenarios of urbanization, forest management, and climate change. SSI and CRSF support research covering several multi-million-acre regions in central and northern Maine. In these study areas, we model past landscape dynamics and project them forward under multiple scenarios to anticipate, rather than respond to, changes in land use and other factors. The tools we are pioneering in Maine are also being applied around the world, with partner study areas in three of Kenya's National Parks (Nairobi, Amboseli and the Mara).

(3) Networking Efforts. SSI is partnering with over a dozen of Maine's colleges and universities and numerous NGOs to explore how landscape-scale solutions can be designed based on interdisciplinary research, stakeholder engagement, and linking scientific knowledge to on-the-ground action. SSI has over 32 research projects with more than 100 faculty and over 200 graduate and undergraduate students working to pioneer and implement sustainability-related projects here in Maine.

(4) Demonstration and Field Implementation Projects. CRSF has focus areas on conservation lands, family forests, and commercial forests. CRSF's Cooperative Forestry Research Unit has a long-standing partnership with 30 of Maine's largest landowners, representing over eight million acres -- roughly half the State's forest area. SSI is supporting projects scattered across Maine, ranging from stream quality in urban centers to understanding the effects of various conservation mechanisms on Maine's working forests.

PROFILE OF LARGE LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

Organization: **The University of Montana**, Missoula, MT

Information Provided by: Perry Brown, Provost, perry.brown@umontana.edu

Description of Activities:

The University of Montana is engaged in several activities that relate to large landscape conservation. A sample of activities is noted below.

(1) Policy Dialogues and Initiatives. The Center for Natural Resource and Environmental Policy manages the Crown of the Continent Roundtable, a consortium of management entities in the area of the Crown. A US-Canada cross boundary project has investigated many issues across the boundary in the vicinity of the Crown of the Continent and beyond.

(2) Research. The Numerical Terradynamics Simulation Group measures and maps plant productivity worldwide every eight days and also develops water and drought maps at multiple scales. The National Center for Landscape Fire Analysis develops technologies and information for wildland fire, especially over large areas. Large scale research on sage grouse habitat and energy development is undertaken by members of the Wildlife Biology Program. Members of the faculty in the department of Society and Conservation are leaders in protected area management, especially focusing on North America and Southern Africa. Members of the Flathead Lake Biological Station conduct research on river and lake systems throughout the region encompassing the Flathead Lake and the Pacific Rim.

(3) Networking Efforts. The Crown of the Continent Initiative deals with education and research networked across multiple entities and it is related to extensive research and outreach efforts within the Greater Yellowstone Region.

(4) Demonstration and Field Projects. The Southern Crown of the Continent LLC is engaged in extensive activities across multiple agencies (USFS, Blackfoot Challenge, UM, et al.) in the southern portion of the Crown. UM has the lead for developing monitoring activities for this project.

PROFILE OF LARGE LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

Organization: **USDA Office of Environmental Markets**, Washington, DC

Information Provided by: Albert H. Todd, Chesapeake Bay Team Leader;
albert.todd@osec.usda.gov

Description of Activities:

(1) Policy Dialogues and Initiatives. OEM chairs a federal interagency Environmental Markets Team (EMT) for the Chesapeake Bay watershed and hosts dialogues with states and NGO's . The Chesapeake Bay EMT is exploring the potential of market-based approaches for water, wetland, stream, habitat, and marine resource conservation. OEM has also established a USDA Environmental Markets Council and technical group to coordinate activity across USDA agencies. OEM's mission is to facilitate private-sector market-based approaches to agriculture and forest conservation and help America's private landowners participate in markets for ecosystem services.

(2) Research and Assessment. OEM is working to develop USDA technical guidelines for metrics that help measure environmental benefits (water quality, carbon, and biodiversity) and performance of conservation actions and tools for calculation in the Chesapeake Bay region. In addition, OEM has collected information on payment for ecosystem services and recently completed a national GIS-based assessment of drinking water supply protection priorities in cooperation with the Forest Service.

(3) Networking efforts. OEM fosters collaboration around environmental markets and ecosystem service-based decision-making for large landscapes. In coordination with Oregon State University, Duke University, USFS, USGS, EPA, and others, an online resource center and collaboration portal is being developed to support peer to peer networking, information sharing, and development of tools and infrastructure that support market-based conservation and facilitate landowner participation

(4) Demonstration and Field Implementation Projects. The Chesapeake Bay watershed represents a proof of concept test for water quality credit trading due to the establishment of a TMDL for the Bay in 2010. OEM is working with the EPA on development of trading and offset programs and with the states and NGO's to encourage place-based market innovations, test technical guidelines, and build market potential in the watershed.

PROFILE OF LARGE LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

Organization: **USFS – United States Forest Service**, Washington, D.C.

Information Provided By: Jeffrey Vail, Assistant Director, Lands & Realty Management, jvail@fs.fed.us, and Nancy Parachini, LWCF Program Manager, nparachini@fs.fed.us.

Description of Activities:

1) Policy Dialogues and Initiatives. The U.S. Forest Service (FS) collaborates with other federal land management agencies, states, tribes, and other stakeholders to enhance an all-lands approach to conservation of forests and grasslands across jurisdictions, through dialogues such as today's program, the Land Trust Alliance, the LWCF Coalition, and similar initiatives. The FS will be conferring with these and other partners in 2011 in multiple venues on the 100th anniversary of the **Weeks Act to identify future policy and land conservation opportunities.**

2) Research. FS Research, State & Private Forestry, and National Forest System have undertaken recent studies assessing conversion of private forests to non-forest uses, developed an open space conservation strategy informed by the latest research from government and non-government data, and incorporated climate change mitigation and adaptation considerations into land management planning and large landscape conservation initiatives.

3) Networking Efforts. The FS works closely with leading conservation organizations, other federal agencies, states, tribes, TIMOs/REITs, and other stakeholders to identify opportunities to collaborate on large landscape conservation initiatives. This coordination furthers FS efforts to align management with adjacent landowners and identifies opportunities to enhance land management through land acquisitions, exchanges, and sales.

4) Demonstration and Field Implementation Projects. The FS engages in a range of land adjustment and land management planning approaches to improve land management and land conservation across landscapes through innovative approaches, consistent with law and policy. These undertakings have included closer coordination on shared land management issues across jurisdictions and land exchanges to support the public interest in forest conservation and economic development. Further projects may be pursued to advance the Secretary's All-Lands Approach to forest conservation and to support the Administration's America's Great Outdoors Initiative.

PROFILE OF LARGE LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

Organization: **US FWS – US Fish & Wildlife Service: Landscape Conservation Cooperatives**

Information provided by: Doug Austen, National Coordinator, Landscape Conservation Cooperatives, doug_austen@fws.gov

Description of Activities:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is involved in a variety of programs that are appropriately described as acting at the large landscape scale. However, this profile only focuses on one, the Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCC)

(1) Policy Dialogues and Initiatives. The 21 LCCs are landscape-scale applied conservation science partnerships that will support and enhance on-the-ground conservation efforts by facilitating the production and dissemination of applied science for resource management decision makers. LCCs may consist of Federal, State, Tribal, international, local, and private stakeholders. LCCs will identify and seek to coordinate among existing relevant conservation partnerships, plans, agreements, and programs with the specific goals of identifying common needs for information and sharing information and science. Accordingly, LCCs will help the larger conservation community achieve better implementation of their programs by fostering improved communication and coordination among partners. Through participation in LCCs, conservation agencies and organizations can more strategically target and implement actions that satisfy their missions as well as landscape conservation priorities shared by the LCC partners. DOI and the USFWS is using Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs) as a unique geographical framework for “scalable” large landscape conservation as defined and facilitated by the science-based partnerships within the national geographic framework.

(2) Research. The science development can be accomplished through the LCCs’ relationships with CSCs as well as through LCC-specific funded science and LCC-supported science developed by partners. LCCs will also actively share the results of new research and development with local partners and with the LCC network nationwide.

(3) Networking efforts. The LCC’s are organized through a national LCC network of LCC coordinators, an annual national conference/workshop, and emerging national LCC council of conservation partners. Various administrative committees within the Department of Interior coordinate DOI activities and well as in working with partner agencies.

(4) Demonstration and Field Implementation Projects. Each of the LCC’s has funds allocated for development of science and related activities that will support the attainment of the conservation goals established by the LCC steering committee. Examples of projects can be found at the various LCC web sites.

PROFILE OF LARGE LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

Organization: **US FWS – United States Fish and Wildlife Service**

Information Provided by: Greg Neudecker, Montana Partners for Fish & Wildlife Program
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Ovando, Montana, greg_neudecker@fws.gov

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES (300 words or less):

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has spearheaded a new approach to landscape scale conservation called Strategic Habitat Conservation. This approach (with a few tweaks) combined with community based conservation as applied by groups such as the Blackfoot Challenge is in my opinion the recipe for success in Large Landscape Conservation.

This approach goes away from the traditional approach of habitat prioritization and habitat outcomes to species specific biological planning and biological outcomes. Choosing and using focal species to fulfill landscape level conservation outcomes is the first and perhaps one of the most important steps. Understanding species specific populations, stresses, and vital rates is key in biological planning and conservation design.

Relentlessly focusing our efforts in the best of the best landscapes based on the biological needs of the focal species selected is crucial. A twist to the traditional approach of chasing threats we focus our efforts in the high biological areas that have low threats first. In doing so you are not fighting threats such as oil and gas but rather working out in front of them and building trust and credibility.

At this point we turn to community based conservation and away from the biological speak that often alienates us with traditional landowners. Finding projects with key well respected landowners that help preserve the rural way of life is critical. From this point on the biologists need to step back and help from behind verses lead from out front. All recognition needs to go to our partners and in particular landowners who hold the key for success in most large landscape projects.

Supporting Information:

Energy Development and Wildlife Conservation in Western North America – Chapter 12
Edited by David E. Naugle,

Sage Grouse Initiative, Natural Resource Conservation Service

Strategic Habitat Conservation, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service

PROFILE OF LARGE LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

Organization: **US Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution**

Information Provided by: Larry Fisher, Coordinator, fisher@ecr.gov

Description of Activities:

As coordinator of the Public Lands and Resources Program for the US Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution, I have the opportunity to work with a wide range of federal environmental management programs and public policy initiatives. These include land use planning, ecosystem management, conservation, and recreation efforts involving the USDA Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Bureau of Reclamation. Three recent program areas worth noting in terms of landscape scale planning, management, and governance are:

- 1) The USDA Forest Service's Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program supports large-scale restoration of priority forest landscapes, with an emphasis on reestablishing natural fire regimes and reducing the risk of uncharacteristic wildfire, improving forest and watershed health, and supporting the utilization of forest restoration by-products. The Institute helps convene and facilitate several individual projects, including the Dinkey Restoration Initiative (CA), Four Forests Restoration Initiative (AZ), SW Jemez Mountains Restoration Initiative (NM), and Cherokee National Forest Restoration Initiative (TN).
- 2) Department of Interior's Landscape Conservation Cooperative is a national network of public-private partnerships that provides shared science at the ecosystem scale for resource-management actions addressing climate change and other stressors. We are currently providing facilitation and support services for the Great Basin, Desert, and Southern Rockies LCCs, and are exploring the opportunity to link these and other LCC efforts through a national coordination council and learning network.
- 3) Bureau of Land Management's Rapid Ecoregional Assessments is a national effort, currently covering seven ecoregions, to determine ecological values, conditions, and trends within large ecoregions to provide land managers with information and tools to use in resource planning and decision-making. We provide facilitation and support for interagency coordination and stakeholder engagement in the development of these assessments.

PROFILE OF LARGE LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

Organization: **US NPS – United States National Park Service**

Information Provided By: Gary E. Machlis, Science Advisor to the Director, National Park Service, gmachlis@uidaho.edu

Description of Activities.

(1) Policy Dialogues and Initiatives. The National Park Service (NPS) is engaged in several large landscape conservation activities, including: 1) standing up with other Department of the Interior bureaus Landscape Cooperatives to coordinate research and management, 2) collaborating with universities and other federal agencies at regional levels via the Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units (CESU) Network, and 3) setting policy and management for NPS units that are themselves large-scale landscapes (from Yellowstone NP to Denali NP, for example).

(2) Research. The NPS is engaging in biophysical and sociocultural research on large landscape issues, including impacts of climate change, challenges and opportunities in creating increased connectivity between conservation lands, and marine conservation across large-scale marine reserves.

(3) Networking. The NPS is networking both at the local park level, and regionally via the CESU Network. New networks are being developed via the Landscape Cooperatives.

(4) Demonstration and Field Implementation Projects. The NPS has a significant number of demonstration and field implementation projects underway. Most are at the park level, and some are at the regional scale. Pilot efforts to study large landscape conservation at the national scale are being started up, not all by the NPS but by NPS partners and others.

PROFILE OF LARGE LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

Organization: **Wildlands and Woodlands Aggregation Projects in New England**

Information Provided by: Keith Ross, Senior Advisor, LandVest, kross@landvest.com

Description of Activities:

(1) Policy Dialogues and Initiatives. Building on the vision outlined in *Wildlands and Woodlands, a Vision for the Forests of New England*, LandVest is working with New England Forestry Foundation (NEFF) and Harvard Forest (HF) to develop a method of landscape scale conservation by working in partnership with land trusts to group forest conservation easement (CE) purchases to reduce the costs of individual transactions, support local and regional organizations who are best connected to foresters and land owners, to access funding not generally available for each small fundraising effort, and to partner with other groups across the country to develop a new form of public funding focused on forest conservation for private lands.

(2) Research. LandVest hosted a funders' lunch in December in an effort to provide regional foundations and family offices with an update on the progress of Wildlands and Woodlands activities, the Aggregation projects in western Mass and across New England, and to explore how private philanthropy can work together or aggregate their funding activities.

(3) Networking efforts. LandVest and NEFF are working to advance the Aggregation concept in 12 areas of New England working with more than 50 land trusts to group together forest CE purchases as a method of increasing the pace of conservation and finding new methods for land trusts to work cooperatively rather than competitively.

(4) Demonstration and Field Implementation Projects. LandVest is working in partnership with NEFF and 6 land trusts in a pilot project in Western Mass to purchase CEs at 75% of the appraised value on 72 properties comprising 10,340 acres of forest. Projects are selected by each land trust based on their conservation priorities and knowledge of local landowners. Each land trust will hold the CE, but fundraising will be a group effort with a Conservation Intermediary (NEFF) as applicant for funds. The project has a \$20.5 mil fundraising goal by 6/30/12 with \$8.5 mil raised to date.

APPENDIX 4

**Remarks of Senator Susan M. Collins
at the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy 2011 Conservation Leadership Dialogue on
The Future of Large Landscape Conservation in America
March 1, 2011**

It is very fitting that this dialogue on the Future of Large Landscape Conservation in America takes place on the 100th anniversary, to the day, of the signing by President Taft of the Weeks Act, enabling the creation of National Forests in the eastern United States.

I would like to begin by recognizing Lynn Lyford and the New England Forestry Foundation for conserving more forestland in New England than any organization. With 136 demonstration forests and 125 conservation easements totalling more than a million acres, an area that is larger than the state of Rhode Island, the Foundation is a leader in conserving working forests, educating the public about forestry, and assisting landowners in the sustainable management of their properties.

I am fortunate to have been born and raised in the state of Maine, which is blessed with natural gifts, from the spectacular scenery of Acadia and the wilderness of the Allagash, to our pure spring waters and majestic forests. The people of Maine know that these gifts are not to be taken for granted, but must be cherished, nurtured, and protected. The environment in which I grew up is the foundation of my work on environmental issues in the Senate.

As someone who comes from a forest-products family, I know that in Maine we treasure all the public resources found in the woods—the rivers, lakes and streams, and the fish and wildlife that thrive there. We also treasure the public values that the working forest has provided throughout our history -- employment, recreation, and the opportunity to experience nature.

We attempt to balance these goals while keeping our forest-products industry strong and maintaining the land base for the future. Maine's working forest is an international model of successful, responsible ownership, where public and private interests are respected and shared by all.

Maine is the most forested state in the country, with 18 million acres of diverse forest covering some 90 percent of its land area. The Maine woods are a legendary destination for fishing, hiking, hunting, paddling, snowmobiling, and other outdoor activities. They are also home to Tribal Nations who depend on them for their livelihood.

In most parts of the United States, it is on public land that we find vast expanses of forest that have retained ecological integrity, natural features, and public access. Yet, the Maine woods largely remains in private hands.

Ninety-five percent of the Maine woods are privately owned. These landowners are the stewards of our forests and the caretakers of the natural resources that are vital to our forest-products industry. In addition, they are the hosts for our increasingly important recreation economy. They uphold the Maine tradition of public access to private lands and make that access meaningful through an expanded and

upgraded network of private woods roads. As federal and state resources to purchase land are dwindling, the real opportunity for conserving and maintaining lands for outdoor recreation is with private landowners.

Cooperative endeavors over the past dozen years have led to the conservation of 2 million acres of forest land in Maine – nearly 10 percent of the state's land area— mostly through working forest conservation easements along with some fee acquisitions.

That a resource of such extraordinary value and national significance remains intact today is a testament to private forest owners and the people of Maine who truly value landscape conservation that reinforces traditional uses, helping ensure that they will carry forward in the future.

We have done this by building a partnership among government at all levels, the forest products industry, environmental, forestry and recreation groups, and landowners. Through this partnership, we have been able to maintain or increase productivity for wood and harvest levels, supporting a diverse and robust forest products industry that employs tens of thousands of workers who produce paper, other wood products, and renewable energy. At the same time, we have been able to protect biodiversity, old growth and late succession forest, public access to recreation, and increase opportunities for tourism.

Maine provides an outstanding example of how important it is to engage and support the efforts of private landowners to sustain working farms, ranches and forests. Their involvement is critical for the success of any new, larger, more landscape-based efforts to conserving our land, water, and wildlife habitat.

The recent release of the new *America's Great Outdoors* report by the Obama Administration speaks to the need for community-based approaches to protect our lands and water and connect Americans with the outdoors. It provides us with the opportunity to think about how the government can be a partner of locally initiated and supported efforts to protect our outdoor treasures.

The report emphasizes the need for balance in conservation efforts by describing the outdoors this way: “They are the places where families go to unwind, to camp, fish and hunt, and to pass on outdoor traditions. They are also the farms, ranches, and forests that have fed and sustained the country for generations.”

Partnerships form the foundation for striking the right balance in meeting conservation goals on a large scale. On that foundation our open spaces, recreation, and working lands can all continue to exist for the benefit of future generations.

In this challenging economy where budgets are stressed and we are identifying ways to cut spending, prioritization and partnerships will prove even more important for the success of broad-based projects and for leveraging needed funding.

One of the most important federal programs to assist in the preservation of recreation and environmental resources is the Land and Water Conservation Fund, including the Forest Legacy program, both of which I have long supported. The President has proposed a significant increase for the Conservation Fund in his fiscal year 2012 budget, but this is a program that has faced funding challenges in the past and will face an uphill battle again this year.

I have also been pleased to support Maine's Forest Legacy projects. This includes, most recently, the West Grand Lake Community Forest to ensure sustainable forest management and public recreational access and to preserve and enhance the Maine timber economy and Grand Lake Stream's 180-year outdoor recreation heritage. This was the number-one Forest Legacy project in the country for 2011. While federal funding to complete it is still pending, I am hopeful it will be completed as scheduled. Led by the local community and accomplished in partnership with community, state, federal, and non-profit partners, this project is a shining example of sustaining both timber and outdoor recreation economies.

The centennial of the Weeks Act is more than an occasion to celebrate the establishment of National Forests in the eastern United States. Just as important, it is a time to celebrate the great partnership of businesses, non-profit organizations, concerned citizens, and public officials that made it possible. It is a time to celebrate the great leader of that partnership, Congressman John Weeks, whose upbringing in the White Mountains of New Hampshire and success as a banker in Massachusetts illustrate the balance large landscape conservation requires. The restored forests, free-flowing streams, enhanced fire protection, and advancements in land management that we enjoy today are his legacy.

Together we can build on the United States' remarkable history of public, private, and non-profit land conservation efforts into the twenty-first century and protect these valued resources for future generations.

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APPENDIX 5

Remarks of Bob Bendick, Director of U.S. Government Relations, The Nature Conservancy at the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy 2011 Conservation Leadership Dialogue on The Future of Large Landscape Conservation in America March 1, 2011

Earlier this winter, eight of us, three generations of my family, were making our way along a trail near the Gardiner River in Yellowstone National Park. The two small girls, both born in Montana where their parents live and work, were in packs carried by their mothers. I stayed back to take a photograph. A cloud passed across the low winter sun casting a shadow on the mountains in the distance, and I could imagine us as a band of the Shoshone tribe returning to their camp in the valley below hundreds of years ago.

Yellowstone seems so unchanged today because in 1872 it became the first National Park on Earth. The idea of places set aside from most human activity has served this country well in the last 140 years. And, of course, TNC's preserves are based on this same model. But we all know that in a country whose population has increased nearly eight fold since 1872, and in a world profoundly altered by technology and human demands for resources, Yellowstone, its wildlife, and every other natural area are increasingly affected by human activity.

Outside park boundaries, despite the advances in environmental protection and resource management in the U.S. over the last 40 years, natural systems and the values they provide to people are in real trouble. Added to longstanding problems are the many impacts of human-induced climate change and the belated scramble to find and produce energy in ways that will lower carbon emissions and replace foreign supplies of oil. In dealing effectively with all these threats there is simply no choice but to work across larger areas to strike what might be called ecological bargains that balance human needs for land, food, fiber and water with the survival of the functional natural systems upon which all else depends.

A recent paper by a group of Nature Conservancy scientists suggests that such an approach to conservation should be based on the idea of "whole systems". Whole systems are defined as places with a recognizable unifying ecological feature (like a bay, watershed, or mountain range) that include parks, human communities, and working lands and waters all within an area large enough to maintain resilience over time, sustain key ecological processes and services, and allow for movement of organisms within and through the landscape. Whole systems are identified by human perception as well as biology.

While this is still a work in progress, it reinforces the Nature Conservancy's vision, expressed in our statement to the America's Great Outdoors listening sessions, that the overall objective of AGO should be to create and sustain a national network of large areas of restored and conserved land, water and coastlines around which Americans can build productive and healthy lives. The AGO report released on February 16 recognizes this approach and says "that to protect ecosystems, watersheds and wildlife, conservation must take place across large landscapes. This requires collaboration among landowners, public land agencies, and local communities".

In my view this statement and the AGO document as a whole create the framework for a new and extremely promising era of conservation in America. While TNC supports virtually all of AGO's

recommendations, we are most interested in those that contribute directly to a practical whole-system approach to conservation such as:

- Strengthening the Land and Water Conservation Fund as the basic fuel to drive AGO
- Supporting collaborative landscape conservation through competitive processes
- Supporting landscape partnerships by targeting existing federal dollars, policies and other resources toward conservation of private and tribal working lands and coordinating expenditures across federal agencies
- Developing and expanding new markets, including those for the environmental services, provided by working lands, for local agricultural or sustainable forest products and sustainable energy
- Managing federal lands and waters within a larger landscape context to conserve and restore ecosystems and watershed health.

But as we discuss these and other ideas, just across the street, Congress is debating the budget as an expression of the priorities of our society. There are those who would suggest that our conversations here are at the very margins of that debate, that we are ignoring the realities and difficult choices facing America. That view is not a testament to their wisdom but rather a reminder of the length of the journey before us. It would be a tragic mistake for America if, just when we have embarked on a new, constructive and cooperative approach to conservation, based solidly on the successes of the past, conservation progress was pushed into a ditch by a departure from this country's longstanding bipartisan commitment to conservation funding. In fact, the kinds of cooperative conservation outlined in the AGO report, can, in the long run, be a highly cost-effective approach to saving and managing the country's natural resources.

Having become an older person (eligible for a Senior National Parks Pass) I now apply a new test to judgments about what is important in this country and the world—that is, what does it mean to those two little Montana girls and to my other grandchildren? In the gathering darkness on that day earlier this winter we drove the empty road to Mammoth Hot Springs and, then, past the stone arch that marks the entrance to Yellowstone. The arch was put there appropriately to mark the accomplishment of the creation of the Park. It is one of my hopes for my grandchildren that someday the arch will be just as meaningful looking outward from the Yellowstone Plateau—commemorating how in the Paradise Valley below and, all across America, 400 million people have been able to arrange themselves and their activities across this remarkable country in a way that reconciles their lives with the power, grace, beauty and productivity of the land and water that ultimately sustain us all. I trust that, like the America's Great Outdoor's process, today's discussions will be a step forward toward achieving that goal.

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