



Network for Landscape  
CONSERVATION

*Advancing the Practice of Conservation at the Landscape Scale*

**Catalyst Fund**  
**2025 Grant Awards Descriptions**  
*September 2025*

The Network for Landscape Conservation is pleased to announce Catalyst Fund grant awards for 18 Landscape Partnerships. Each of these Partnerships will benefit from investments aimed at strengthening their collaborative efforts to build enduring, place-based progress in protecting the ecological, cultural, and community health of the landscapes they call home. In the face of large-scale and complex challenges like biodiversity loss, climate change, and environmental injustice, conservation efforts at the landscape scale are imperative—and investing in the collaborative capacity of Landscape Partnerships is essential for success at this scale. For more information on the Catalyst Fund:

<http://landscapeconservation.org/catalyst-fund>.

Generous support for the Catalyst Fund has been provided by the Doris Duke Foundation and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and a portion of the Fund is specifically dedicated to supporting Indigenous leadership in landscape conservation and stewardship.

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**Alaska South Coast Partnership, \$25,000 over two years**

Stretching across 76,000 square miles of coastal Southcentral Alaska, the Alutiiq/Suqpiq and Eyak homelands are commonly referred to as the Chugach and Kodiak regions of Alaska. This landscape is bounded by the Gulf of Alaska, Prince William Sound, and the Kodiak Archipelago, and includes seven Alaska Native Villages in the Chugach region and 10 communities on Kodiak Island—nearly all designated as disadvantaged by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. This landscape is rich in marine and terrestrial biodiversity, sustains centuries-old subsistence and cultural practices, and is profoundly impacted by legacies of colonization, industrial pollution, and accelerating climate change.

The Alaska South Coast Partnership has emerged in this landscape as a Native-led, regionally coordinated structure for co-creating climate resilience solutions. The Partnership works to build Tribal capacity for meaningful participation in planning and decision-making, increase the volume and impact of Indigenous voices in resilience work, support co-creation of local and regional climate action strategies, and address environmental and social injustices rooted in historic marginalization. Support from the Catalyst Fund will enable the Partnership to develop a “Community Catalyst” structure as a means of empowering communities to advance local priorities, prepare for climate impacts, and pursue long-term stewardship goals. Funding will also enable the Partnership to formalize a steering committee charter and Partnership values document. In a vast landscape marked by marginalization and resource and knowledge exploitation as much as its natural abundance, this investment will advance a Partnership that represents a model—for Alaska and beyond—of the power of Indigenous-led, regionally coordinated collaboration and landscape stewardship in addressing interconnected challenges.

*Note: Aligned to this Catalyst Fund grant award, the Alaska South Coast Partnership is also receiving an award from the Land Trust Alliance and Open Space Institute's Land and Climate Grant Program, which will allow the Partnership to ensure its Community Catalysts receive climate-informed planning training and are supported in co-developing village-level climate resilience work plans.*

### **Badger-Two Medicine Alliance, \$25,000 over one year**

The sacred Badger-Two Medicine landscape spans more than 165,000 acres of ecologically rich land in northwestern Montana. Located south of Glacier National Park and east of the current Blackfoot Indian Reservation, its alpine meadows, intact wildlife corridors, and pristine headwaters make it one of the most biologically significant landscapes in the region. Badger-Two Medicine sits at the heart of traditional Blackfoot territory, and is especially sacred to the Tribe: It is central to Blackfoot origin stories, ceremonial sites, and as a source of traditional foods and medicines. Although the landscape was designated a Traditional Cultural District under the National Historic Preservation Act in 2002, the Blackfoot still have limited access to stewardship decisions.

The Badger-Two Medicine Alliance has emerged in this context to bring together partners to support the Tribe's efforts to protect and advance proactive Tribal-led biocultural stewardship of this sacred landscape. The Alliance aims to reintroduce and strengthen Nitsitapi (Blackfoot) Knowledge in federal land management decision-making, implement restoration projects that revitalize both ecological and cultural systems, and advance co-stewardship activities. Support from the Catalyst Fund will secure dedicated coordination staff support for the Alliance. This investment will help boost the Alliance at a critical juncture, as it seeks to return the Nitsitapi to their rightful place as Aootakaiskii (shield keepers) of the sacred landscape that is the Badger-Two Medicine.

### **Bronx Climate Justice Task Force, \$25,000 over one year**

The Bronx River is New York City's only freshwater river, flowing 23 miles south through the Borough of the Bronx, from the Kensico Reservoir in southern Westchester to the East River, the saltwater tidal estuary that links the Upper New York Bay and the Long Island Sound. This landscape contains some of the most densely populated, environmentally burdened, and historically disinvested neighborhoods in the country—the Borough's 1.4 million residents are 90% people of color and face exceedingly high rates of poverty, asthma, and climate vulnerability. But this landscape also includes forests—including a 50-acre forest that represents one of the last surviving remnants of old-growth forest in the city—, wetlands, parks, rain gardens, and waterways and shorelines. Indeed, the River and its watershed link ecosystems and communities throughout the Bronx, providing vital ecological services in a borough where healthy open space is severely limited and climate threats are escalating.

The Bronx Climate Justice Task Force formed in 2023 to build on a deep legacy of community stewardship within the Bronx. As a frontline-led coalition, the Task Force reflects the layered ecological, social, and infrastructural systems that define this landscape and its communities, and convenes partners to transform a fragmented, top-down planning and implementation environment into a unified, community-authored vision for resilience and conservation. The Task Force is advancing landscape-scale resilience by restoring degraded habitats, protecting biodiversity, expanding access to open space, and reducing climate-related health risks. Support from the Catalyst Fund will enable the Task Force to weave together the plethora of existing plans and datasets for the Bronx into a unified, community-led strategic plan and project prioritization framework for accelerating climate resilience and landscape stewardship. The grant will support multiple Task Force convenings and community outreach events as well. By better

positioning the Task Force to align and achieve shared outcomes, this investment shows how the Bronx Climate Justice Task Force—operating in one of the nation’s most environmentally overburdened urban corridors—offers a powerful model for community-powered, landscape-scale stewardship.

#### **Chollas Creek Coalition, \$25,000 over one year**

The Chollas Creek Watershed stretches across approximately 30 square miles in southeastern San Diego, spanning disadvantaged communities including City Heights, Encanto, Southeastern San Diego, and Barrio Logan. This highly urbanized watershed is characterized by multiple creek stems, forks, and arroyos that form vital ecological corridors connecting neighborhoods otherwise divided by freeways and socioeconomic barriers. Indeed, the watershed provides rare natural spaces within San Diego’s most densely populated neighborhoods. Recent flooding in the watershed in January 2024 underscores the worsening climate impacts—flooding, extreme heat, and dangerous air quality—that threaten this landscape and the communities that reside here.

The Chollas Creek Coalition formed in 2022 to bring partner organizations and community members together to transform the Chollas Creek Watershed from a symbol of environmental injustice into a model of community-driven climate resilience. The Coalition works to advance equitable, nature-based solutions to climate impacts while creating green spaces that enhance biodiversity and community wellbeing. The Catalyst Fund grant will support the launch of a Resident Empowerment Training Program, allowing the Coalition to build a network of resident leaders with knowledge, skills, and pathways to engage in watershed-scale decision-making. As an investment in a bottom-up, community-centered approach for aligning nature-based solutions with community priorities, this grant suggests a model for ensuring that urban communities can advance equitable solutions in a watershed that has experienced decades of environmental neglect.

#### **Curry County Landscape Partnership, \$25,000 over two years**

The southern coast of Oregon is an array of coastal forests, upland meadows, rivers, wetlands, and estuaries that provide vital habitats for all life. With a backdrop of towering redwoods and expansive river systems, this land holds significant cultural value and deep ancestral ties for the Tututni and Chetco peoples. The landscape—and its communities—bear the scars of a legacy of resource extraction, and the region's rich biodiversity faces increasing pressure from wildfires, sea-level rise, development, and invasive species.

Although there are no federally recognized Tribes in the geography, a coalition of Native peoples have convened the Curry County Landscape Partnership to bring together local Tribes, conservation organizations, government agencies, and community members to foster long-term conservation and climate resilience for this landscape—while ensuring the involvement of local communities, especially Native peoples, in land management decisions. Support from the Catalyst Fund will enable the Partnership to develop a comprehensive, community-driven Land Stewardship and Climate Adaptation Plan. In a geography where Tribes have been displaced from their ancestral lands and excluded from land management decisions, this investment will position the Partnership to reach towards a resilient, thriving future where ecological health, cultural preservation, and community well-being are integrated.

### **Downeast Conservation Network, \$25,000 over two years**

Maine's Hancock and Washington Counties are the two easternmost counties on the American East Coast, bordering New Brunswick, Canada. This region includes some of the most intact and resilient forest blocks on the coast, stretching unbroken from salt water to core inland habitats and featuring several large watersheds that are home to federally endangered Atlantic salmon. Demographically, the counties are comprised of highly rural, relatively disadvantaged communities, and livelihoods are dominated by natural resource economies such as fishing, forestry, and agriculture. The rural, under-resourced reality of communities here means that municipal capacity for land use planning is limited, even as vast blocks of the landscape are unprotected and subject to fragmentation. Exacerbating this reality are the worsening climate impacts on forests, fisheries, waterfronts, and farmland—all of which threaten to fundamentally undermine the future of Downeast Maine.

The Downeast Conservation Network formed fourteen years ago to drive collaborative approaches across this landscape, bringing together disparate stakeholders—from marine harvesters and timber companies to land trusts and municipal officials—to find common ground and foster collaborative solutions that maintain the function and character of forests and rivers while sustaining local, resource-based economies. Support from the Catalyst Fund will enable the Network to expand its limited dedicated coordination staff role, as the Network formalizes its governance structure and accelerates action around strategic priorities. With expanded coordination capacity, the Network will also develop a Downeast Conservation Blueprint—a region-wide vision and plan for growth, conservation, and resiliency that integrates cultural and economic land uses into a comprehensive conservation strategy. By weaving together disparate interests and creating space for the sharing of power, the Network will be able to use these investments to bring closer its vision of a Downeast Maine whose people live in thriving, vibrant communities and share deep connections to healthy land and water.

*Note: Aligned to this Catalyst Fund grant award, the Downeast Conservation Network is also receiving an award from the Land Trust Alliance and Open Space Institute's Land and Climate Grant Program, which will ensure a robust integration of climate resilience within the Network's Downeast Conservation Blueprint.*

### **Greater Chaco Protection Partnership, \$25,000 over one year**

Nestled in the San Juan Basin of northwestern New Mexico, the broader region around Chaco Canyon is a sacred landscape. Between 850 CE and 1250 CE, ancestral Pueblo people flourished here, creating monumental structures and developing a sophisticated civilization marked by intricate networks of roads, trade routes, and advanced astronomical knowledge. These remarkable achievements continue to inspire awe among scholars and Indigenous communities alike, standing as a testament to the ingenuity and resilience of Pueblo ancestors—the Chaco Cultural National Historical Park is at the center of this landscape. Even as the Greater Chaco landscape continues to hold profound cultural importance for the Pueblos, Hopi Tribe, Navajo Nation, and other Tribal communities throughout the Southwest, it faces growing threats from oil, gas, and mineral extraction—indeed, approximately 90 percent of federal lands in the Greater Chaco region have already been leased for mineral development.

The Greater Chaco Protection Partnership came together in 2018, grounded in Pueblo leadership and bringing together partners to focus on safeguarding the region's cultural, spiritual, and ecological heritage. Catalyst Fund support will secure dedicated coordination staffing, with a focus on supporting the core leadership team and existing working groups of the Partnership. Additionally, support will enable the launching of a Community Education and Outreach Working Group. Such investments are aimed at solidifying a sustainable pathway for long-term preservation of this unique landscape, in a

fashion that honors Pueblo values, federal trust obligations, and principles of environmental justice—and that suggests a replicable and sustainable model for Tribal co-management of sacred landscapes.

### **Indigenous Conservation Council of Chesapeake Bay, \$25,000 over one year**

The Chesapeake Bay is renowned as the largest estuary in the United States, encompassing a 64,000-square-mile watershed that is a ‘national treasure’ because of its interwoven ecological, historical, cultural, and economic significance. Tribes within this watershed were among the earliest to experience First Contact with European colonists, and over the more than 400 years of colonization the landscape has experienced significant land use change that has undermined ecological health of the landscape and degraded water quality in ways that threaten the health of the estuary.

In this context, the seven federally recognized tribes in Virginia—the Chickahominy Indian Tribe, Chickahominy Indian Tribe-Eastern Division, Monacan Indian Nation, Nansemond Indian Nation, Pamunkey Indian Tribe, Rappahannock Tribe, and Upper Mattaponi Tribe—created the Indigenous Conservation Council of the Chesapeake Bay in 2022, as an inter-Tribal council focused on supporting Tribal rematriation of ancestral lands in Virginia and across the Chesapeake Bay. Support from the Catalyst Fund is focused on advancing a Chesapeake Bay Indigenous Guardians Initiative, as a means of expanding cultural access and co-management of protected lands and of incorporating Indigenous Knowledge into conservation, restoration, and stewardship activities throughout the Chesapeake watershed. Specifically, funds will enable the hiring of a Tribal Outreach Coordinator to spearhead efforts to develop the Indigenous Guardians programs, including through the creation of a “Listening to Our Lands” program that brings Tribal Nations together with property rights holds on their ancestral lands. The funding will also support the development of data sovereignty policies. In a landscape marked by a long history of proactive conservation and restoration, these investments represent an opportunity to continue to build Tribal capacity and elevate Tribal sovereignty and co-management throughout the critical landscape that is the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

### **Lower San Pedro Collaborative, \$25,000 over one year**

The San Pedro River is one of the last major undammed rivers of the Southwest, flowing 140 miles north from northern Sonora, Mexico, to its confluence with the Gila River north of Tucson, Arizona. The surrounding watershed is nearly one million acres in size and sits at the confluence of the Sonoran Desert, Chihuahuan Desert, Rocky Mountain, and Sierra Madre ecosystems. This convergence of diverse ecosystems means that the watershed has one of the country’s greatest diversities of habitat types, and that it supports dynamic and diverse species assemblages. Given the abundance of this landscape, it too is culturally significant, as it has been the continuing home of Indigenous peoples—including the O’odham, Apache, Zuni, and Hopi—for at least 15,000 years. Today, it is one of the most intact cultural landscapes in the Southwest. In 2022 though the San Pedro was named one of America’s Most Endangered Rivers, as excessive groundwater pumping and accelerating mining and energy projects are impacting flow patterns and threatening to fragment the landscape.

The Lower San Pedro Collaborative formed in 2018 to bring together diverse partners to protect and enhance water resources, wildlife habitat, and the working landscapes of the Lower San Pedro and its surrounding watershed. Support from the Catalyst Fund will enable partners to complete a Values Assessment, through which participants and communities will be able to identify the values and priorities they hold related to the watershed. In allowing the Collaborative to understand the values that participants hold and to identify where consensus exists around shared values and priorities, this

assessment will serve as the critical first step in an effort to co-create a watershed-wide conservation plan to guide collaborative efforts moving forward. As partners pivot from building collective vision and into collective action, this investment will enable the Collaborative to better position itself to coordinate action on the complex issues facing this unique ecologically and culturally significant landscape.

#### **Norton Bay Watershed Council, \$25,000 over one year**

The Norton Sound on western Alaska's Seward Peninsula is one of the world's most intact, biologically rich marine ecosystems, with the estuary and associated watersheds supporting critical salmon runs. The abundance of this landscape has sustained Native peoples for thousands of years, with Native villages relying on traditional subsistence hunting, gathering, and fishing practices. However, increasing threats from climate change and industrial development endanger the lands, waters, and wildlife of this landscape—and threatening to undermine the Inupiat and Yup'ik Natives' way of life.

The Norton Bay Watershed Council emerged in 2012 to respond to these threats, bringing together ten federally recognized Tribal governments from Native villages throughout the landscape to focus on protecting and restoring the Norton Bay watershed and its freshwater resources. The Council serves as a unified voice against threats from climate change, mining development, and commercial fishing pressures that endanger traditional subsistence practices vital to Native communities. Support from the Catalyst Fund will enable the Council to develop a new strategic plan to guide its efforts moving forward. Native peoples in this landscape have a long history of resilience and vision in the face of exploitation, extraction, and erasure; as the threats from climate change and industrial development sharply accelerate, these investments will empower the Council to channel that resilience and vision into a strategic plan for stewarding the wild places and animals of this special landscape—and for sustaining and nourishing the Inupiat and Yup'ik culture that is interwoven therein.

#### **Ocmulgee Partnership, \$25,000 over one year**

The Ocmulgee River flows through Middle Georgia, stretching from the Macon Plateau southward along the fall line where the Piedmont meets the Atlantic Coastal Plain. Spanning a five-county region, the watershed is geologically distinct and biologically rich, including over 85,000 acres of contiguous bottomland hardwood swamp—the largest remaining block of such habitat on the upper coastal plain. The Ocmulgee River Corridor is also an incredibly significant cultural landscape, as it holds the story of more than 17,000 years of continuous human habitation. Prior to their forced removal to Oklahoma along the Trail of Tears, this landscape was the ancestral homelands of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. Indeed, at the heart of the Corridor lies the Ocmulgee National Historical Park, which protects one of the most prominent Mississippian ceremonial centers in North America.

The Ocmulgee Partnership works to unite Middle Georgia communities and the Muscogee (Creek) Nation in efforts to protect and steward this culturally and ecologically landscape. Partners focus on accelerating land protection efforts within the corridor, and advancing education and outreach efforts to restore Tribal voices, stories, language, art, and culture to the landscape—a primary goal is the expansion and evolution of the Ocmulgee National Historical Park into a National Park and Preserve, to be co-managed by the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. As Georgia's first national park, this also would be the first to be co-managed by a removed Tribe returning to its ancestral homelands. Funding from the Catalyst Fund will support staff time to manage coordination and communications amongst partners to advance the development of a comprehensive regional strategic plan for the landscape. As momentum builds around efforts to restore and protect the landscape, this investment will strengthen the

foundation of relationship-building and coordination to position partners to realize a climate-resilient future that centers Tribal leadership and protects the cultural and ecological integrity of this unique landscape.

#### **‘Ootchamin ‘Ooyakma Landscape Partnership, \$25,000 over one year**

The ancestral lands of the Muwekma Ohlone are located in what is now known as California’s San Francisco Bay area. Stretching across the modern counties of San Francisco, San Mateo, most of Santa Clara, Alameda, Contra Costa, and portions of Napa, Santa Cruz, Solano, and San Joaquin, this is a dynamic landscape, marked by coastal ecosystems, estuaries, and low-lying wetlands as well as steep hillsides and highlands. Indeed, the remarkable geologic and topographic diversity of this landscape has given rise to an incredibly rich biodiversity as well—and made it an abundant homeland for the Muwekma Ohlone. Since 1927, when it was removed from the Federal Register, the Tribe has been working to regain federally recognized status and to exercise Tribal sovereignty.

In this context, the Muwekma Ohlone have convened the ‘Ootchamin ‘Ooyakma Landscape Partnership to address the systematic exclusion of Tribal peoples from their own lands and the erasure of traditional fire practices that have shaped the landscape since time immemorial. Bringing together a constellations of land trusts, researchers, Tribal leaders, educators, and conservation partners, the Partnership seeks to revitalize cultural burning as both a climate solution and a cultural necessity within the Muwekma Ohlone ancestral homelands—with an initial focus in the eastern foothills of the Santa Cruz Mountains and the Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve ‘Ootchamin ‘Ooyakma near Stanford University’s campus. Support from the Catalyst Fund will ensure dedicated leadership and coordination support from Tribal leaders. Additionally, support will allow the Partnership to develop a monitoring framework and site assessment protocol. In positioning the Partnership to advance Tribally-led fire stewardship across Muwekma Ohlone ancestral lands, these investments suggest a blueprint for how California can meet climate challenges with justice, traditional, and ecological renewal at its core.

#### **Park County Water Initiative, \$25,000 over two years**

The Upper Yellowstone Watershed, located almost entirely within Montana’s Park County, is the headwaters of the Yellowstone River, the longest free-flowing river in the contiguous United States. This is a landscape that carries significant environmental, socioeconomic, and cultural significance. The River is a critical feature that supports the rich aquatic and terrestrial biodiversity of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. Historically, the watershed was an important location for subsistence, trade, and cultural practices for numerous Tribes, and it continues to provide immense socioeconomic and cultural value to surrounding communities. However, the watershed is under increasing strain from a variety of stressors, including developmental pressure, recreational use, overallocation of water, climate change, and more.

Catastrophic 500-year flooding of the Upper Yellowstone in 2022 brought the context of this landscape into focus, and the Park County Water Initiative coalesced in 2023 as more than twenty partners came together to catalyze and coordinate restoration, outreach and education, and landscape-scale planning and implementation efforts to bolster the community and aquatic ecosystem resilience of the Upper Yellowstone Watershed. Catalyst Fund support will enable the Initiative to secure contracted coordination support for the Initiative, and to contract a Tribal Liaison role to advance outreach to 27 Tribes with connections to the landscape. The grant will also support the development of a website to share stories of success and build community engagement, and the development of a mapping tool as an internal interactive platform to share project advancement opportunities amongst partners. In an iconic

landscape that is facing increasing pressures that are emblematic of many watersheds throughout the Intermountain West, these investments will demonstrate the potential for collaborative, inclusive approaches for advancing resilient futures for people and nature.

#### **Protect Kw'tsán Campaign, \$25,000 over one year**

The Kw'tsán cultural landscape lies at the modern-day intersection of California, Arizona, and Mexico, encompassing more than 390,000 acres immediately north of the Fort Yuma Reservation of the Quechan Tribe. As the ancestral homelands of this federally recognized Tribe, this landscape lies in a broader cultural landscape that stretches north to the Chuckwalla National Monument in California and the Avi Kwa Ame National Monument in Nevada. The rugged terrain of this landscape has given rise to dynamic ecological communities, and the Colorado River—flowing along its eastern edge—creates a critical corridor for bird migration. This sacred and ecologically rich landscape is increasingly threatened by mining exploration, natural resources extraction, human development and intensive recreation use, and climate change.

The Protect Kw'tsán Campaign was launched in 2022 by the Fort Yuma Quechan Indian Tribe, and convenes partners behind an effort to secure a national monument designation and to establish Tribal co-stewardship across the proposed monument area. The Catalyst Fund grant will enable the Campaign to launch a formalized Tribal Ambassador Program to put in place the frontline messengers and bridge-builders that will be able to connect the Quechan community to external audiences. With a grassroots foundation and emerging coalition in place, this investment is aimed at strengthening Tribal leadership and Tribal capacity to successfully steward this coalition in supporting the permanent protection—and Tribal co-stewardship—of this critical landscape.

#### **Snake River Plains Coalition, \$25,000 over one year**

The Snake River Plain is a geologic feature that cuts across southern Idaho, carrying the Snake River on its journey west. This six-million-acre landscape is a complex patchwork of ownership, with a mix of private lands, state lands, and federal lands. This landscape was shaped by the Yellowstone Hotspot, and the volcanic soils and access to water contribute to a productive ranching economy. Indeed, while a significant portion of the landscape is managed by the Bureau of Land Management, critically some 180,000 acres are privately owned as working farms and ranches. These private lands, which are so valuable to the wide-ranging and migratory fauna of this unique landscape, are increasingly at risk of transferring hands, with skyrocketing land valuations and increasing development pressures threatening the landscape's ecological and agricultural significance.

In this context, the Snake River Plains Coalition has emerged to bring together cross-industry collaborators—including ranchers, conservationists, researchers, and public agencies—to envision a future for the Snake River Plain landscape where working lands and wildlife habitat coexist harmoniously. Support from the Catalyst Fund will enable the Coalition to secure dedicated coordination staffing, and will support efforts to formalize a strategic plan and governance structure to guide the Coalition to the next level. With significant ownership transitions of private lands looming in the near future, the Coalition is navigating dynamics that face many western landscapes—and these investments are aimed at accelerating the development of the Coalition so that it can advance inclusive approaches to realizing a shared vision of working lands, wildlife habitat, and vibrant communities coexisting and thriving together.



### **Southeast Wisconsin Conservation Collaborative, \$25,000 over two years**

Within the Mississippi River watershed, the Glacial Plains region of southeast Wisconsin stretches from east of Madison to west of Milwaukee, extending south to the Illinois border and north to Lake Winnebago. This oak-dominated landscape is home to globally rare natural communities including oak savanna and unique bog relicts, and is a complex mosaic of public and private lands: The Kettle Moraine State Forest and its network of public lands serves as an anchor but 65% of the landscape is in private ownership. Located between the state's two major metropolitan areas, this landscape is facing accelerating habitat loss and fragmentation as suburban communities around Madison and Milwaukee grow.

In this geography, the Southeast Wisconsin Conservation Collaborative brings together state agencies, land trusts, local watershed and community organizations, and national conservation groups to co-create a resilient future for the landscape. The Catalyst Fund grant will support the creation of a dedicated coordination position for the Collaborative. This coordination capacity will enable the Collaborative to develop a strategic conservation plan to guide shared efforts moving forward, and to expand outreach to additional partners in the region. As the Collaborative increasingly formalizes its efforts, these investments will ensure that partners and communities can unite in working together towards common goals that will ensure a thriving, connected future for this unique landscape.

### **Vision for an Ecologically Sound Platte River, \$25,000 over two years**

The Platte River, one of the major tributaries in the Missouri River watershed, flows 310 miles across Nebraska. This landscape is a continentally significant ecosystem, with its braided rivers, lowland tallgrass prairies, wet meadows, shallow marshes, and riparian woodlands offering one of the most reliable sources of fresh water across the central Great Plains and providing unique habitat that functions as a major stopover for migratory birds in the Central Flyway. Many of the same features that make this landscape valuable to migrating wildlife also make it an agriculturally valuable landscape. The growing impacts of climate change now increasingly intersect with the intensive agricultural systems of the watershed, leading to changes in the hydrology of the Platte River that threaten this iconic landscape and suggest an uncertain future.

In this context, the Vision for an Ecologically Sound Platte River emerged in 2019 as an effort to build an interdisciplinary approach to pursuing shared outcomes around ecosystem conservation, restoration, and resiliency for the Platte River Basin. Together, partners have articulated a 50-year vision that offers an ecosystem-based approach to water management and ecological function while meeting human water needs across the Basin. Support from the Catalyst Fund will enable the Vision to build upon a recently completed Landscape Conservation Design by undertaking a scenario planning exercise to understand possible future hydrologies of the Platte River, so that partners can refine conservation prioritization efforts in the context of possible climate futures. This is a highly managed Great Plains landscape with significant socio-ecological complexity, and these investments will allow partners to better position their work amongst the uncertainty of a changing climate as they collectively strive to build social and ecological resilience throughout the Platte River Basin.

### **Western New York Wildway Partner Network, \$25,000 over two years**

Far western New York represents a critical landscape and linkage point, serving to connect the vast forests of the Allegheny Mountains in northern Pennsylvania to the Great Lakes and the Finger Lakes, through to the Adirondacks and beyond. Across the eight-county region, rolling hills, meandering

streams, internationally significant wetlands systems, and millions of acres of forest support incredible wildlife migrations. However, habitat fragmentation is accelerating with shifting development patterns and intensifying climate change impacts.

In this landscape, the Western New York Wildway Partner Network emerged in 2020, inspired by Eastern Wildway vision of a system of potential wildlife habitat core areas and linkages throughout the eastern United States. The Partner Network has come together to consider what that vision looks like at the local landscape scale in western New York, and partners collaborate on accelerating efforts to permanently protect climate-resilient lands, strengthen forest protection for carbon sequestration, promote functional landscape connectivity between core areas, and protect vital waterway corridors that connect land and water ecosystems. Catalyst Fund support will enable the Partner Network to develop a comprehensive Strategic Action Plan to serve as a roadmap for partners to contribute to conserving and stewarding a connected, resilient landscape. In building capacity to bring a continental-wide mapping exercise down into the relationships of a local landscapes, this investment demonstrates a pathway for empowering local ownership of action in a way that rolls up and contributes to broader efforts to advance climate-resilient futures.

*Note: Aligned to this Catalyst Fund grant award, the Western New York Wildway Partner Network is also receiving an award from the Land Trust Alliance and Open Space Institute's Land and Climate Grant Program, which will allow the Partner Network to incorporate climate-informed planning elements into its Strategic Action Plan.*