

*UNDERSTANDING THE CURRENT STATE  
OF STEWARDSHIP IN ILLINOIS AND  
CREATING TOOLS TO IMPROVE  
STEWARDSHIP OPPORTUNITIES*

PSCC Annual Meeting  
March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019



# BACKGROUND

## Our Initial Hypothesis

The traditional “buy and flip” or “acquire, restore, transfer” models are struggling. We need additional models for long term management of high value ecosystems.



<http://bit.ly/dualapproach>

### A SCAN OF MECHANISMS

- Carbon Income Investments Program
- Carbon Offsets
- Collective Impact Model
- Conservation Easement
- Cost Share Payments
- Deposit Refund Scheme
- Direct Budget Allocations
- Ecosystem Service Fees/Payment for Ecosystem Services
- Endowed Funds
- Green Bond Financing
- Green Commodities Price Premiums from Working Lands
- Impact Investing
- Insurance Payments
- Natural Capital Levy
- Opt-In Donations
- Program Related Investments
- Real Estate Transfer Tax
- Sales Tax/Excise Tax
- Settlement Funding
- Mitigation Funding
- Clean Water State Revolving Fund
- Substitute Fund
- Tourism/User Fees
- Transfer of Development Rights

NATURAL LAND INSTITUTE



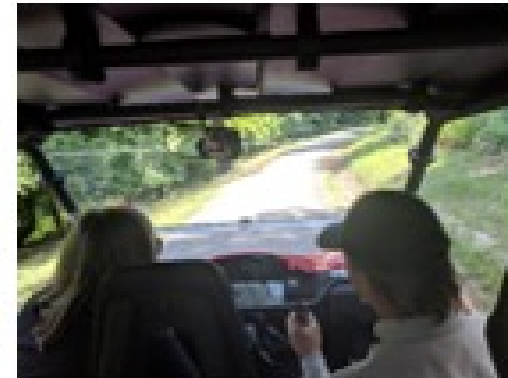
		Stewardship Scenario	
		Low Annual Cost per Acre	High Annual Cost per Acre
Farmland Scenario	100% Good Productivity	Acres Needed in Cooperative: 27,268	Acres Needed in Cooperative: 35,704
	Cost to Purchase Acres	\$212,688,320	\$278,488,769
Farmland Scenario	100% Fair Productivity	Acres Needed in Cooperative: 54,535	Acres Needed in Cooperative: 71,407
	Cost to Purchase Acres	\$261,770,240	\$342,755,408

## PHASE 2: ANSWERING THE QUESTIONS

1. Money and Staff but how much do we need? How much do we already have covered? What else would help?
2. Knowing we have a lot of opportunities, what can we do to take advantage of those?
3. If we were to use the working lands model, what does it look like? How do we get buy-in and support?

# PHASE 2: ANSWERING THE QUESTIONS

- The Stewardship Study
  - Survey with 24 responses
  - 31 ~2 Hour Interview throughout the state
- Toolkit Creation Focused on Study Findings
  - Overviews
  - Examples
  - Resources
- Pilot Projects
  - NLI Working Lands Initiative
  - Stewardship Cooperative Case Study



# THE STUDY STRUCTURE

Capacity	Partnerships	Funding and Financing	Policy	People and the Land
Tracking	Government	Budget	Internal	Public Perception
Roles	Peer Organizations	Grants	Local	Prioritization
Volunteers	Businesses	State	State	Changes
Activities	Past Partnerships	Federal	Federal	Vision
Equipment	Views	Donors	Taxes	Acquisition
Staffing	Contributions	Endowment	Structures	Internal Culture
Contractors	Models	Investments	Elected Officials	
LTA	Benefits	Funding Model		
Skills	Downsides	Local		
Board		Working lands		
Current status		Fee for service		
Burns		Mitigation		
		Private lands		
		Unrestricted		

# *CAPACITY DEEP DIVE*



**NATURAL LAND  
INSTITUTE**  
Conserving Land in Northern Illinois



# LANDSCAPE OVERVIEW

Land type



- Other Natural Habitat
- Forest
- Prairie
- Savanna
- Eurasian Grassland
- Wetlands
- Lake, Ponds, and Streams
- Other Agricultural Land
- Pasture
- Hayfield
- Other Recreational Land
- Buildings and Structures

Land Sub-Type	Area	Number of Organizations
Forest	14,449	22
Prairie	7,942	21
Savanna	3,265	17
Eurasian Grassland	575	5
Wetlands	8,904	21
Lake, Ponds, and Streams	5,201	15
Other Natural Habitat	807	8
Tillable	1,684	10
Pasture	248	4
Hayfield	110	5
Other Agricultural Land	608	5
Parkland (e.g. mowed areas, ba-	30	3
Trail Corridors	198	8
Other Recreational Land	8	2
Buildings and Structures	110	9

# WHO DOES STEWARDSHIP?

capacity summary





# WHAT ROLE DOES EVERYONE PLAY?

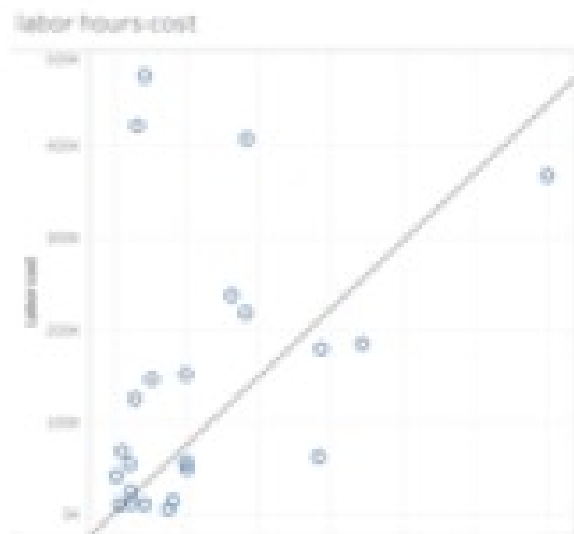


# BOARD ROLE

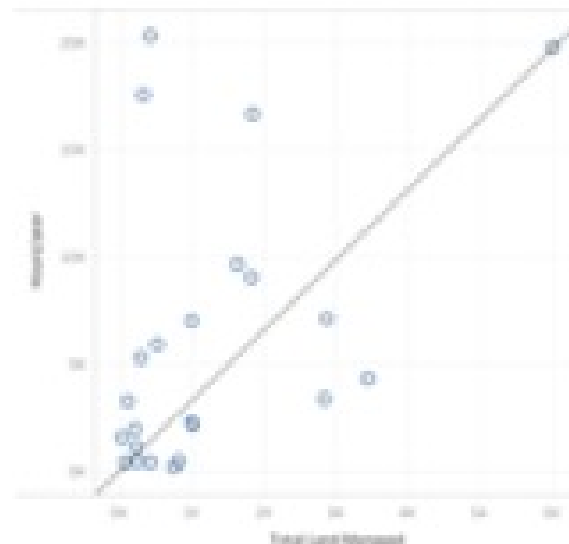


With finite board capacity is this the most efficient use of resources?

# IMPACT PER ACRE



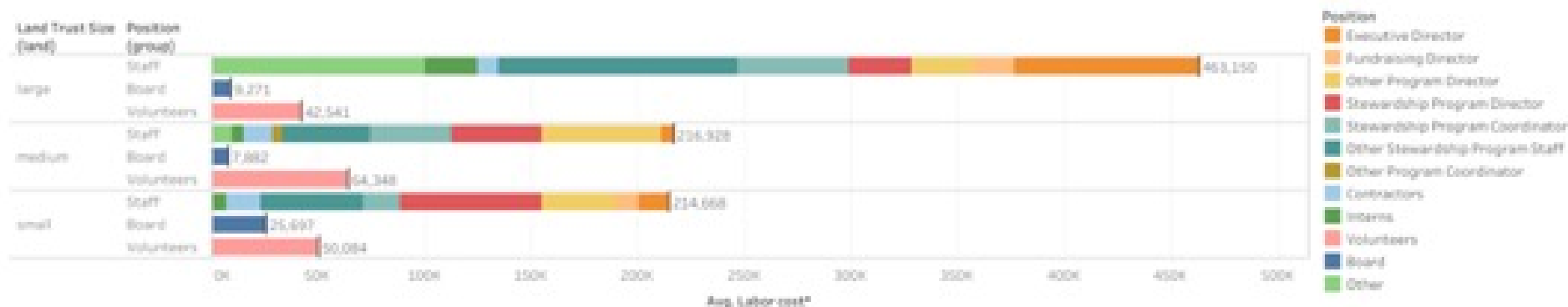
Labor cost  $\$57.3644 \times$  Total  
Land Managed



Labor Hours/year  
 $2.50362 \text{hrs} \times$  Total Land  
Managed

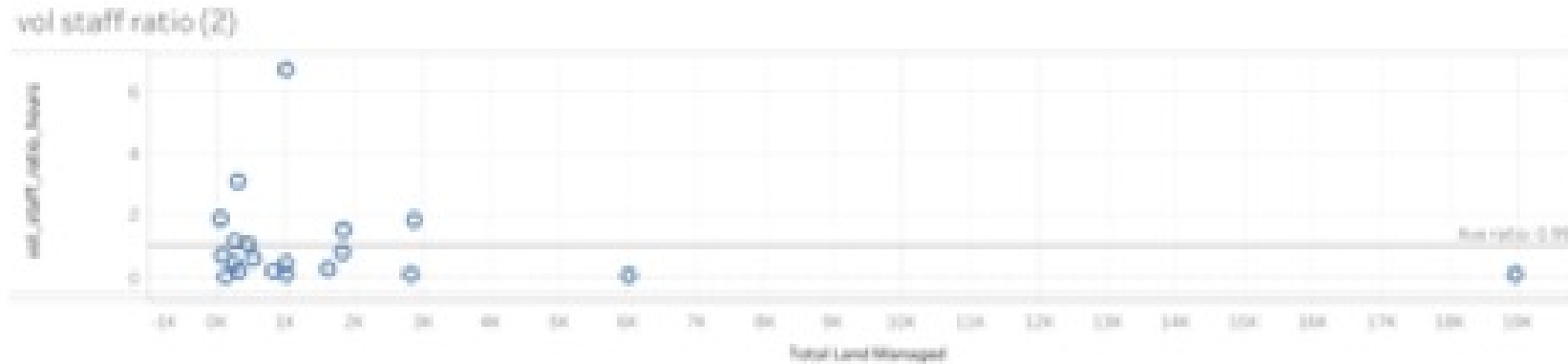
# THE ECONOMIC OUTPUT

labor cost ave



Why does the labor breakout not change from small to medium?

# VOLUNTEER TO STAFF RATIO



~ 1 volunteer hr per 1 hr of staff time  
50% of all stewardship work done by volunteers

## Strengths

Generating Support  
Unskilled Labor Pool  
Educational Opportunities

## Considerations

Volunteer Management  
Training and Oversight  
Equipment Needs

# SUPPORTING INCREASED STEWARDSHIP

- Capacity
  - Harnessing the power of volunteers effectively
    - Management
    - Setting up volunteer monitoring and local stewards programs
    - Leaders opportunities for volunteers
    - Creating a community of volunteers
  - Shared vs. Contracted Services
- Partnerships
  - Working with Investors, Developers, and Insurance Agents
  - Working with the public sector
  - Working with local community foundations
  - Stewardship Cooperatives

# SUPPORTING INCREASED STEWARDSHIP

- Funding and Finances
  - Matrix of options
  - NASA, Ag Lending Program, and other state funding
  - 319 Funding
  - Working with private foundations
  - Working Land Tools
  - Preparing for Mitigation Funding
  - Options for Funding Programs
- Policy
  - IEC Engagement Strategies
  - NRCS Opportunities
  - INPC Tools

# SUPPORTING INCREASED STEWARDSHIP

- People and the Land
  - Media, Marketing, and Promotion
  - Connecting our work to Health
  - Board Engagement around Stewardship
- Resource Lists
- Case Studies



*What might we be missing?*

# WORKING LANDS PILOT



## THE BIG EXPERIMENT

OR

*How a conservation land trust can manage working lands, support stewardship and still work within its mission?*



# WORKING LANDS PILOT



## IMPLICATIONS FOR:

**Regenerative Conservation  
Agriculture**

**Climate Change**

**Stewardship Funding**

**Funding a Cooperative**

**Diversifying Investment Portfolio**

**Restoration and Reducing  
Fragmentation**

**Working with New Partners, Public  
Perception**

**Capacity and Knowledge Base**

# WORKING LANDS PILOT

**Building the Case - Soil, Water, CO2 and a Leap of Faith**

## GOAL

**Increase Soil Quality, Yields and Profit Margins with Less Reliance on Petro-chemicals**

**STRATEGY: Increase Biomass and Nutrient Cycling via Enhanced Microbial Activity.**

## Practices include

Cover crops  
Microbial inputs  
Conservation tillage  
Reduced -icides and synthetic fertilizers  
Natural inputs include complex carbons, humics, fulvics, sugars, & in-solution minerals.



## *NLI Working Lands Sub-Committee:*

- Hosting Roundtables and Field Days for Learning
- Drafting a Set of Guiding Principles and a Policy
- Creating a Procedure for Conservation Leases and to Monitor Progress

# WORKING LANDS PILOT

Implementing the Ideas:

*Facing Uncertainty and Risk*



**Soils Consultant**

**Consultant to Create a Whole Farm  
Conservation Plan**

**Consultant to Assess Working Lands as an  
Investment Strategy**

# Next Steps

- Establishing Procedures
- Creating Conservation Leases with a Resource Management Systems Plan
- Our farmers are part of the team – creating a fair conservation lease to incentivize practices
- What to Measure and Gathering Baseline Data: soil OM, water quality, soil productivity, etc..
- Analyzing Capacity and Developing Long Term Budgets
- Working Lands as an investment strategy (PRI)



# EXPLORING QUESTIONS AND ISSUES

- Public perception (survey?)
- mission driven initiative to support programs: messaging, marketing and framing,
- setting up a separate private 501c3 and ag. investment policy
- resources for farm management
- where do we stand on supporting local food and small producers
- what about grazing regimes and nesting birds
- market opportunities for alternatives to commodity row crops
- defining regenerative practices and measuring our success



*All Artwork by Lynda Wallis*

# When thinking about this Working Lands Pilot:

What would you need to make this work for you?

Are you interested in participating in the next Phase of  
this project?



*NEXT STEPS  
GET INVOLVED!  
QUESTIONS?*

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