

University of Idaho Speech: 4 April 2011
Private Lands, the New Conservation Frontier, A Maverick's Thesis

Definition of Maverick: 1. An unbranded or orphaned range calf or colt. 2. One who refuses to abide by the dictates of his group, a dissenter. 3. One who resists adherence to or affiliation with any single organized group or faction, an independent. (After Samuel A. Maverick 1803-1870)

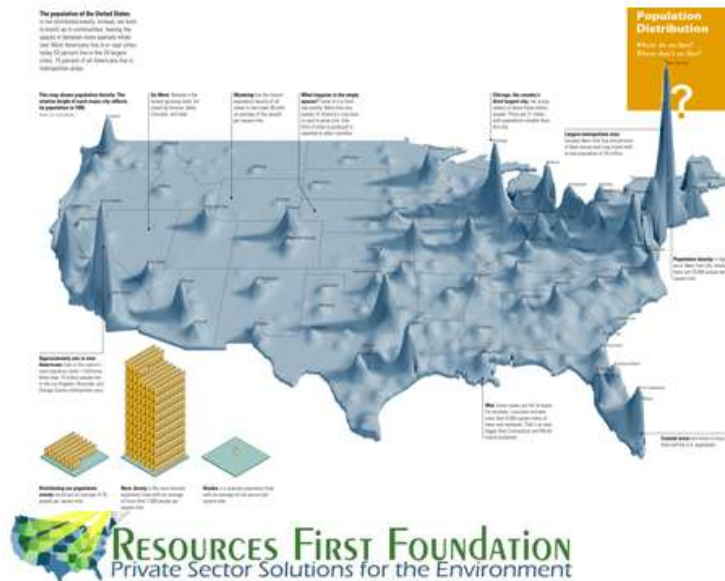
Part One: Philosophical Underpinnings of Conservation for 21st century: a Resurrection in Progress

On July 12th, 1893 at a meeting of the American Historical Association in Chicago, Frederick Jackson Turner presented one of the seminal papers in American history, entitled "The Significance of the Frontier in American History." The foundation of this paper stemmed from an article entitled: "Problems in American History". I'm going to quote from Turner's Frontier thesis, because I think it points to multifaceted problems with contemporary American conservation that are begging to be addressed. Turner saw the closing of the frontier at the end of the 19th century as an epochal event; I see the new conservation frontier of emboldening private land stewardship as the 21st century equivalent, looking forward, instead of backward.

The lead paragraph of Turner's paper states: "In a recent bulletin of the Census for 1890 appear these words: "up to and including 1880 the country had a frontier of settlement, but at present the unsettled area has been so broken into by isolated bodies of settlement that there can hardly be said to be a frontier line... it cannot, therefore, any longer have a place in census reports." Turner editorializes that "this brief official statement marks the closing of a great historic movement. Up to our own day American history has been in a large degree the history of the colonization of the Great West. The existence of an area of free land, its continuous recession, and the advance of American settlement westward, explain American development."

Turner goes on to relish "the peculiarity of American institutions is, the fact that they have been compelled to adapt themselves to changes of an expanding people-to the changes involved in crossing the continent, in winning a wilderness, and in developing at each area of this progress out of the primitive economic and political conditions of the frontier into the complexity of city life...the true point of view in the history of this nation is not the Atlantic coast, it is the Great West."

But what have we now? What has become of the Great West, the frontier of yesteryear? It is the most highly urbanized section of the country with two or three or more large metropolitan areas dominating each western state. Ironically "The modern American West, for the nation's most open and empty region is also the most heavily urbanized". (C. Abbott p. Xi)



(Slide 1)

By 1990, 80 percent of Westerners lived in metropolitan areas ranging in size from Boise, ID (with 205,314 people), Casper, WY (53, 816 people), and Billings MT (57,053 people), Phoenix (1.4 million people), to Los Angeles-Anaheim-Riverside complex with its 14,532,000 people. Roughly half the rest live in small towns, leaving only one Westerner in ten for the “real West” of farms and ranches...” (Abbott p.XII) “One out of every four Americans lives in a Western metropolitan area- based on 1990 census-it is higher still today. (Abbott, p. XIX)



Color image of the U.S.A. at night from 1996-97 showing Metro areas

(Slide 2)

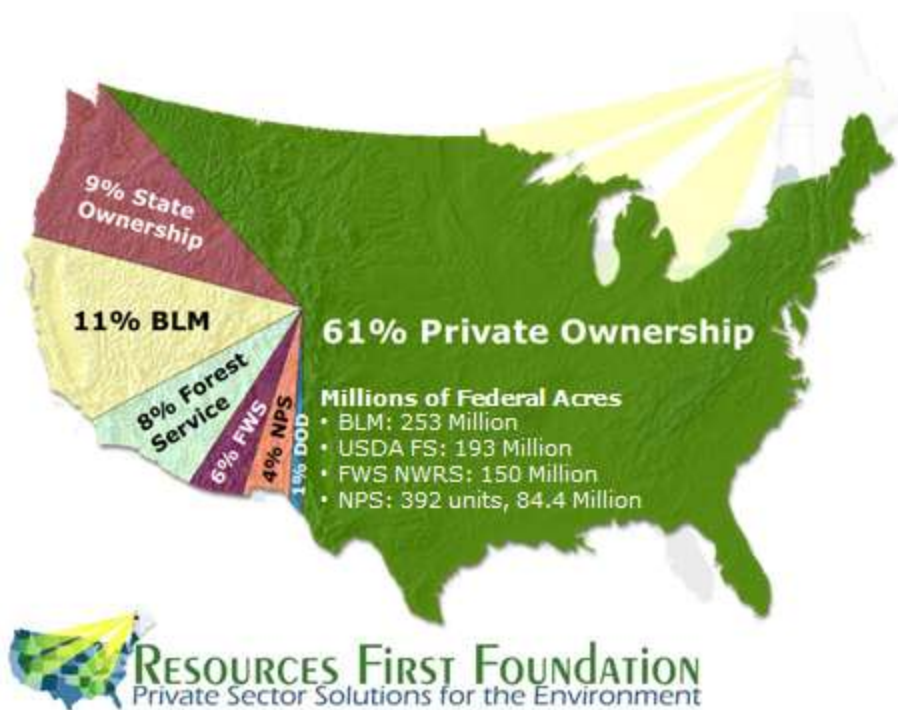
Almost 30- 60% or more of each state is now in public ownership as part of the four federal conservation agency portfolios. One of today's starkest, dysfunctional realities is the steep divide between the metropolitan West and the slightly populated rural areas of ranches, basins and prairies. The value chasm between these two parallel communities is deeper than the deepest recesses of the Grand Canyon.

Before answering these questions and entering into a Socratic dialogue with you, I want to glean two more tidbits of historical antecedence from Turner's paper.

First, "as the frontier had leaped over the Alleghenies, so now it skipped the Great Plains and the Rocky Mountains; and in the same way that the advance of the frontiersman beyond the Alleghenies had caused the rise of important questions of transportation and internal improvement, so now the settlers beyond the Rocky Mountains **needed means of communication** with the East." Needed means of **communication**! Hold that thought.

Second," The most important effect of the frontier has been in the promotion of democracy here... the frontier is productive **of individualism**. Complex society is precipitated by the wilderness into a kind of primitive organization based on the family. The tendency is anti-social. It produces antipathy to control...the tax gatherer is viewed as a representative of oppression...the frontier individualism has from the beginning promoted democracy. The frontier states that came into the Union...came in with democratic suffrage provisions." Hold the thought of frontier lands providing the "**underpinning of democracy**", and you will be excused if your mind fast forwards to the mania of tea party cri de coeur of today's headlines. I want you to remember these key words: **Problem** as in "solve the problem," **communication**, **individualism**, and **democracy**, because I'm going to come back to them and stress them repeatedly.

What have we got now? The legacy of a century of public conservation initiated at the dawning of the 20th century with the Presidential spume of Teddy Roosevelt and his deputy Gifford Pinchot who inaugurated the designations of a public land conservation infrastructure across the length and breadth of the Great West. Embracing the portfolios of 4 federal conservation agencies: US Forest Service (NFS), National Park Service (NPS), US Fish and Wildlife Service National Wildlife Refuges (NWRS), and Bureau of Land Management (BLM), public lands now dominate the western landscapes.



(Slide 3)

However, over time much of the intellectual underpinning of Pinchot and Roosevelt has been lost in the wake of an agenda driven policy and cultural high jacking by the environmental movement post Viet Nam War. In his retrospective book, The Fight For Conservation, Pinchot set forth, with unmistakable clarity “his” principles of conservation: “the first great fact about conservation is that it stands for DEVELOPMENT- he did not say preservation - that was Muir and that is the preference of many western metro urbanites today. ” In the second place, conservation stands for the preservation of waste... the third principle is this: The natural resources must be developed and preserved for the benefit of many, and not merely the profit of a few. Conservation means the greatest good to the greatest number for the longest time.” (Pinchot, p. 42-48) Warming to the moral and political underpinnings, Pinchot wrote: “The Central thing for which Conservation stands is to make this country the best possible place to live in, both for us and for our descendants. It stands against the waste of natural resources which cannot be renewed; it stands for the perpetuation of the resources which **can** be renewed, such as the food-producing soils and the forests; and most of all it stands for an equal opportunity for every American citizen to get his fair share of benefit from these resources... Conservation is the most democratic movement this country has known for a generation.” (Pinchot, p.80-82) Clearly Pinchot’s vision embodied the rancher, farmer, and private forester stewarding and renewing the bounty of his or her land.

The Roosevelt²/Pinchot Legacy



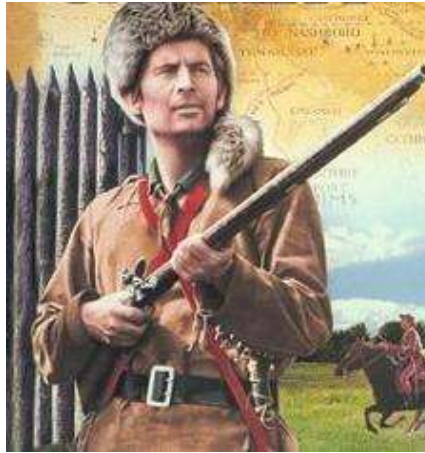
(Slide 4)- (David M. Kennedy, Stanford Magazine, May/June 2008)

Now one cannot give a talk in a natural resource center of academia without quoting Aldo Leopold, such an omission is unimaginable, so consider Leopold's statement: "There is little question that many of the attributes most distinctive of America and Americans are the impress of the wilderness and the life that accompanied it. If we have any such thing as an American culture, its distinguishing marks are a certain vigorous **individualism** combined with ability to organize, a certain intellectual curiosity bent to practical ends, a lack of subservience to stiff social forms, and an **intolerance of drones**, all of which are the distinctive characteristics of successful pioneers." (Leopold, *The Journal of Land & Public Utility Economics*, 1925)

Part 2: Human Ecology: Private Land Owners

Ah those pioneers, my favorite embodiment of Leopold's descriptive type, a former Congressman from west Tennessee who ran to support President Jackson: "I'm that same David Crockett, fresh from the back woods, half-horse, half-alligator, a little touched with the snapping turtle; can wade the Mississippi, leap the Ohio, ride upon a streak of lightening, and slip without a scratch down a honey locust; can whip my weight in wild cats--and if any gentleman pleases, for a ten dollar bill, he may throw in a panther --hug a bear too close for comfort, and eat any man opposed to Jackson (M. Derr, p. 19). Anybody here ever shimmied down a honey locust? A couple of terms later as he ran against Jackson, he declared: "I am no man's man; I bark at no man's bid. I will never come and go, and fetch and carry, at the whistle of the great man in the

white house no matter who he is..." and "he told his constituents that if they re-elected him" - he wasn't - "he would serve them to the best of his ability; but if they did not, they could go to hell, and he would go to Texas (M. Derr p.225). He did. Ever Westward. Manifest to a fate with destiny at the tequila coral.



(Slide 5)

I don't think Crockett would have joined the Sierra Club. He was a small time farmer and forester and emblematic of the frontier spirit, and his revulsion of toeing the line of political parties and bureaucracy is alive and well today despite the closing of the frontier.

If we use Crockett's image - even toned down to blue jean coveralls and a chaw of tobacco and a Ford pickup-as our embodiment of private land owners across America today, who are we talking about? How many private land owners are there in our nation of 330 million people? Less than 13 million. 2.2 million farms and ranches encompassing 920 million acres (USDA 2011), and 10.7 million forest land owners who own nearly 3/5th of all US forest lands. Together this assemblage of ranches, farms and private forests represent 70% of the US lower 48 state's landscape. If you throw in Alaska and Hawaii it declines to 60%, but it still represents, unquestionably the largest conservation market of the 21st century.

Private Landowners Are the Future

71% of U.S. land is in private ownership today

- Over 10.4 million individuals, partnerships and corporations manage over 264 million acres of private forestland.
- Over 938 million acres are cropland, pastureland, and rangeland owned and managed by over 2.1 million farmers and ranchers.
- The care of 50% of our land is in the hands of **less than 2% of our citizens**, primarily ranchers, farmers, and forest owners. (Best, Wayburn, 2001)
- Individual landowners steward 70% of our wetlands and over 75% of our endangered species habitats. (Best, Wayburn, 2001)
- National forests are the largest Federal ownership, making up 19% of U.S. timberland but accounting for only 2% percent of timber harvest in 2001.

(Slide 6)



Private Landowners Are the Future

- 92% of private forest owners were classified as family forest owners that own 62% of the private forest land in the US
- **42% of all** the forest land in the coterminous US is **owned by families and individuals**
- An estimated 11 million forest owners collectively control 56% of the forest land
- 818,000 farms owning a total of 76 million acres of woodland in 2002 (NASS 2004)
- Most family forest owners, 92%, make the management decisions for their forestland themselves
- Two out of every 5 acres of family forest land are owned by absentee owners
- One in 5 acres of forest land is owned by someone who is at least 75 years of age
- **19% of family forest owners are between 65-74 and 15% are >75**



(Slide 7)

A distinctive characteristic: if one were emboldened to hazard a general characterization of private land owners across the country, one might suggest that they tend to be conservative politically and financially. If you overlay a map of where private land owners reside with the blue/red state correlation of political parties, you will see a close correlation.



(Slide 8)

2008 Election results by County – Red=Republican, Blue=Democrat

Land owners do not really like government bureaucrats nor environmentalists telling them what they can or cannot do with their land.

But even more worrying for our nation's welfare, if you look at the demographics of this constituency, old Davy is getting on. He is old. The average age of farmers across the U.S. is 60

and the average age of forest land owners is even more superannuated, pushing past 70. We face the greatest turnover of land in U.S. history in the next two decades.

Demographics of Landowners

Average age of farm owners in 2007 was 57.3, and the age trend is increasing
(2007 Census of Agriculture)

In 2006 an estimated 34% of forest landowners are **over the age of 65**, **62% are over 54**. *(National Woodland Owner Survey 2006)*



As a result more than half of the ranches in the West will be transferred to a younger generation, who will have to pay estate taxes on vast holdings, or more likely sold to buyers, who will want a better return on their investments than farming or ranching can provide.

(Rockwood Research, an agricultural research firm.)



45% of America's family forests are owned by individuals over 65 years of age. During the next two decades, the U.S. will **witness the largest intergenerational transfer of private forest lands in its history.**

(Pinchot Institute for Conservation)



RESOURCES FIRST FOUNDATION
Private Sector Solutions for the Environment

(Slide 9)

Part 3: Landscape Ecology, Western Frontier morphs to Public Lands portfolio

Federal Land holdings

The traditional approach to conservation



(Slide 10)

Why is pushing the envelope for more federal land acquisition a questionable strategy, quite possibly an exploding grenade in our hands, for the 21st century? You know we lived through the emergence of the Sagebrush rebellion and the wise-use movement in the 1980's and early 1990's for a reason. To answer this paragraph's leading question, I'll give you at least **6**

Reasons:

First, as the next slide states, we already have a \$25 billion backlog of Operations and Maintenance funding needs for federal agencies and these figures are two years out of date. Should we keep adding to the federal estate when we can't properly manage what we have on hand?

Federal Government Is Not Growing the Conservation Business

Managing larger areas requires more cooperation, or partnerships.

- The Federal Operation & Maintenance backlog for Interior and Agriculture (Forest Service) **exceeds \$25 Billion.**
- Increased costs related to national security, wildfires (**\$7.98 billion in the last 5 years**) and natural disaster cleanup are contributing to budget troubles for the National Park Service and all federal land management agencies. (*msnbc.com* 4/27/04)
- Today for every dollar of federal funding allocated **fifty cents is borrowed**

(Slide 11)



Second, as the following slide suggests, for a decade, through an enduring drought cycle, we have suffered from forest fires across the west. The Fire budget for multiple years has dwarfed the entire management and research budget of the US Forest Service. This is likely to continue for decades as we are also contending with a century of fire mismanagement across our forest ecosystems westwide.

Federal Government Is Not Growing the Conservation Business

Increased costs related to national security, wildfires (\$2 billion annually) and natural disaster cleanup are contributing to budget troubles for the National Park Service and all federal land management agencies. (msnbc.com 4/27/04)



Total Suppression Obligations	
	Adjusted Obligations
2000	\$1,784,382,000
2001	\$1,177,894,000
2002	\$2,037,261,000
2003	\$1,281,611,000
2004	\$1,170,276,000
2005	\$1,106,831,000
2006	\$2,096,086,000
2007	\$1,967,706,000
2008	\$1,830,674,000
2009	\$1,236,747,000
Total	\$15,989,568,000



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Cost of Forest Fire Suppression Exceeds Entire Forest Service Budget



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Third, the legal concatenations of public land management today are insane. No forest supervisor, BLM district manager or Park Superintendent can make a management decision without being sued by some western Metro interest group with environmental proclivities. The leading contender is the Center for Biological Diversity quoted below.

(Slide 14)

CALIFORNIA

Environmentalists Sue U.S. To Block Logging

Environmentalists are suing the U.S. Forest Service to try to block logging at Lake Tahoe that the agency says is needed to help guard against another wildfire like the one that destroyed 250 homes three years ago.

In addition to removing downed logs that hamper firefighting efforts, the Forest Service says the Angora project will help speed regeneration of the forest and restore wildlife habitat across about half of the 3,000 acres that burned on the southwest edge of South Lake Tahoe, Calif., in June 2007.

But the Earth Island Institute and Center for Biological Diversity say the logging would do more harm than good.

They say the project would do little to reduce fire threats but would disrupt the natural regeneration of the forest and eliminate about 70% of the last suitable habitat for the rare black-backed woodpecker across the entire 230 square miles of the national forest surrounding Lake Tahoe.

Forest Service spokeswoman Cheva Heck said she couldn't comment on ongoing litigation but noted that in October the agency rejected the same arguments raised in administrative appeals filed by the groups.

—Associated Press 14 Feb 2011

Fourth, questionable application of science and bogus research which is becoming pandemic. I'll cite one vignette involving Pt. Reyes National Seashore where the NPS has been engaged in a systematic campaign to throw the Lunny family, oystering harvestors and farmers, out of Point Reyes and terminate their livelihood.



(Slide 15)

To do this the NPS has engaged in a 5-year systematic campaign of harassment, bogus research, lying-including to the National Academy of Science, deliberate misrepresentation, falsifying scientific data and records. This heinous campaign involves the entire leadership of the Park Service from Director to Regional Director to Superintendent and research staff .

“NPS officials and scientists knew of the cameras, photos, and logs, [which disproved NPS claims against the farmer] and yet failed to disclose their existence to a series of investigations, inquiries, and reviews. While suppressing the key data, these same NPS officials and scientists knowingly continued to make public presentations, give testimony, and publish a variety of booklets and scientific publications making false claims...” - Dr. Goodman, November 2010 letter to Interior Secretary Salazar

(Slide 16)



The abuse of science to push a preconceived environmental agenda, which we see unraveling daily in the global warming debates, is becoming a pandemic problem that threatens federal management and policy credibility nationwide.

Fifth, public land by and large does not protect biodiversity. In work pioneered here at University of Idaho, Michael Scott and his colleagues have developed GIS/GAP technology that allows us to correlate between land conservation strategies and the hotspots and targeted predominance of species richness. What do we find?



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Most federal land is over 3000 feet. We are protecting rocks, ice, alpine trees, high altitude deserts in abundance. Meanwhile, the biodiversity is concentrated in our creeks and drainages and river bottoms throughout the west, which is predominantly in PRIVATE LAND OWNERSHIP.

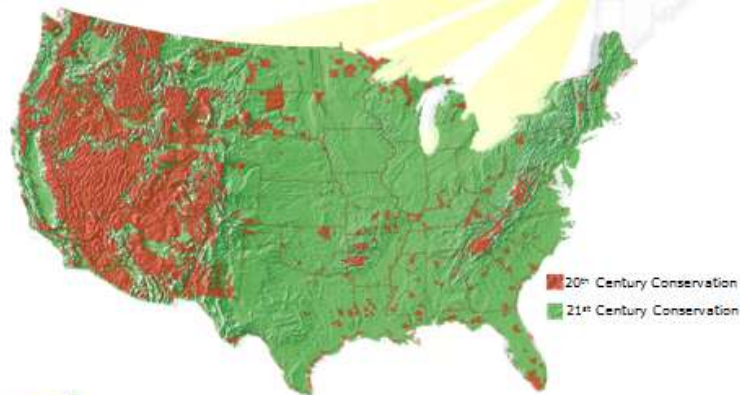
Sixth and Finally: we can not afford more public acquisitions.



Despite the predominance of public lands in the west, private lands therein are 5 times more important than anywhere else in the nation for one simple reason: They control the **water**. Thus they are our harbors of biodiversity, supplying water for our metro areas, our agriculture, and they are the key to energy infrastructure buildout.

Federal Land holdings

Public land accounts for 29% of the land base in the lower 48 consuming a disproportionate amount of the conservation tax dollars (90%)



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In terms of Federal Land Holdings: It is high time to transition from a 20th century conservation agenda to a 21st century agenda. Why, you ask?????

Part 4: For that, let's look at the Ecology of our Nation's Finances.

Today we have an expected fiscal 2011 national budget deficit of \$1.65 **trillion**, or nearly 11% of gross domestic product, the highest since World War II. Publicly held federal debt has swelled to 61% of GDP, the highest since 1952. (WSJ, 02/22/2011)

In case you are a cavernicole and have not been paying attention to media headlines for the past two years, our nation, the good old US of A, home of the almighty Dollar, is flat-ass broke.

"29 months in a row of adding to U.S. debt levels." – Sen. Barasso (R-Wyoming, 03/07/2011)

(Slide 20)

The Federal Bank is Busted

The Outstanding Public Debt as of 23 Feb 2011 is:

\$14,145,153,392,528

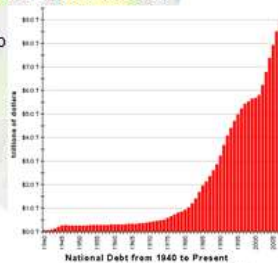
The estimated population of the United States is

310,086,333, so each citizen's share of this debt is

\$45,616.82.

The National Debt has continued to increase an average of

\$4.13 billion per day since September 28, 2007!



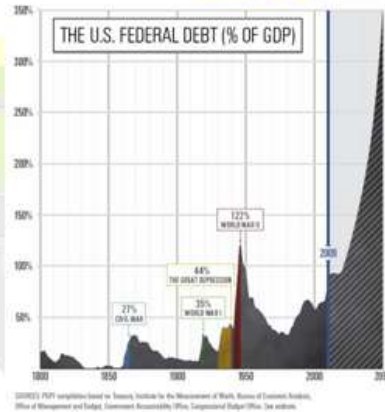
Source: U.S. National Debt Clock
http://www.bring.com/debt_clock/



The Federal Bank is Busted

Government Unfunded Liabilities Up from \$56.4 to \$62.3 Trillion;

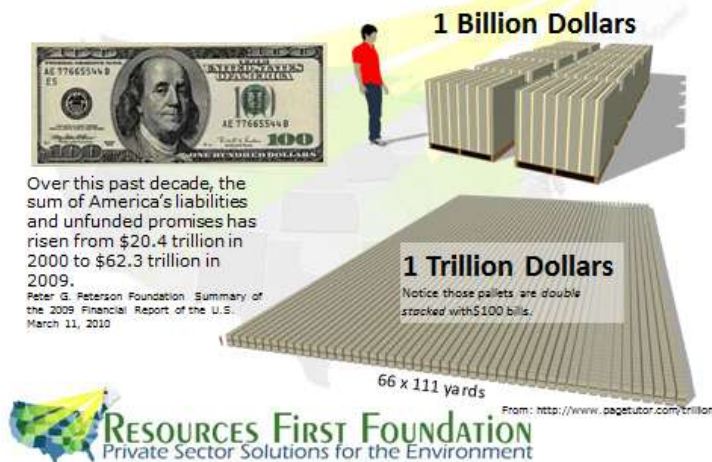
Record Federal Deficit of \$1.65 Trillion



(Slide 21)

There are 3 unassailable Reasons why we cannot continue the 20th century conservation agenda of public land investment as the foundation of our national conservation policy and priority. The **First Reason** is the federal government is broke, and this is not a short term phenomenon; it is a decadal burden which will hunch over every single taxpayer. As David Brooks wrote in a column, “The current debt problem is of an entirely different scale. It requires a rewrite of the social contract... getting state and federal budgets under control will take decades.” (NYT, 02/22/2011)

Reason: *We are flat broke*



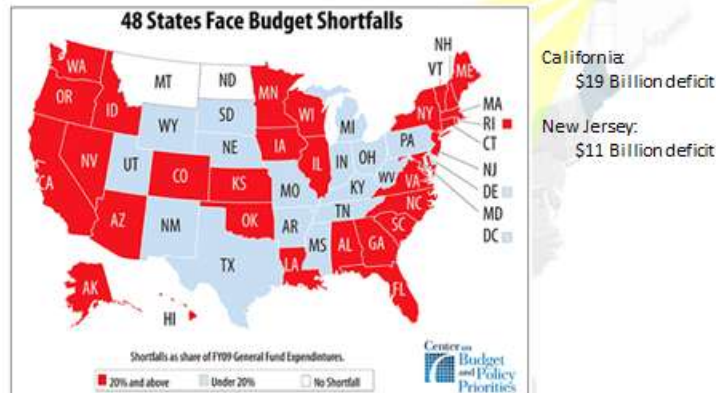
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David Malpas wrote, “Washington has already borrowed \$45,000 for every American. Under current trends, the country will owe \$31 trillion, about \$100,000 from each of us, by the time my daughter (age 12) goes to college.” (Forbes, 02/28/2011)

Do you know what a **Trillion \$** looks like? Double stacked pallets of \$100 bills, 8 feet high and 66 by 111 yards, that is bigger than a Texas football field. Play it and weep!

The **Second Reason** is most states are equally if **not more** broke than the federal government,

Reason 2: State Budgets - broke

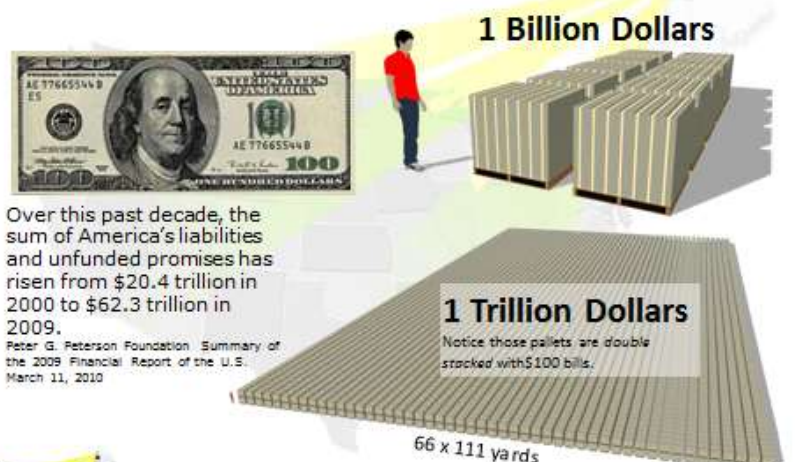


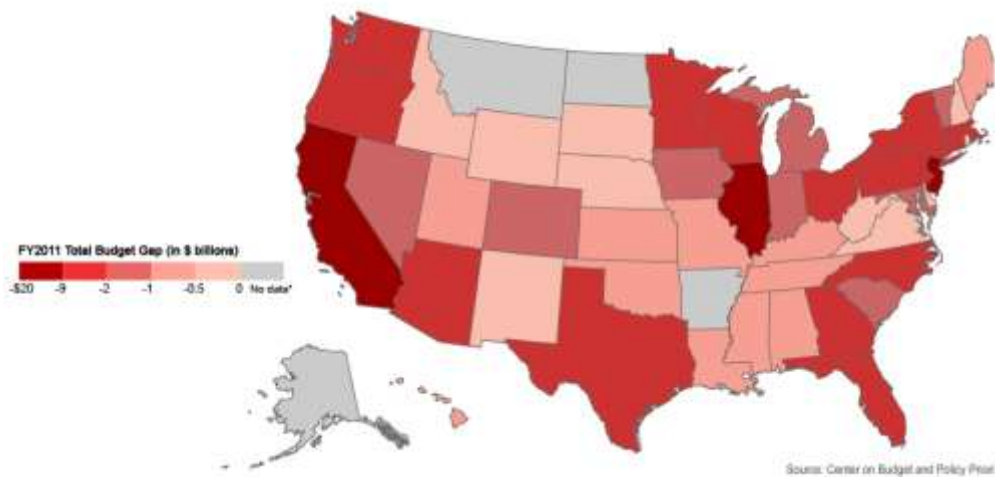
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and again, we are not dealing with a crisis de Jour, this is a decadal work out as the headlines from New jersey to Wisconsin to Illinois to California and down to Texas and Arizona make evident. Time to remind you what a **Trillion \$** looks like. Today, in 2011, 9% of New Jersey's annual budget is allocated to **debt service**.

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Reason: We are flat broke





(Slide 25) (Wall Street Journal, 02/25/2011)

Many states are teetering on the verge of bankruptcy and defaulting on their bonds,



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State Budget Woes

The New York Times
March 20, 2010
Op-Ed Columnist

A Ruinous Meltdown

By BOB HERBERT

A story that is not getting nearly enough attention is the ruinous fiscal meltdown occurring in state after state.

"We've talked in the past about revenue declines in a recession," said Jon Shure of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, "but I think you have to call this one a revenue collapse. In proportional terms, there has never been a drop in state revenues like we're seeing now since people started to keep track of state revenues. We're in unchartered territory when it comes to the magnitude of the impact."

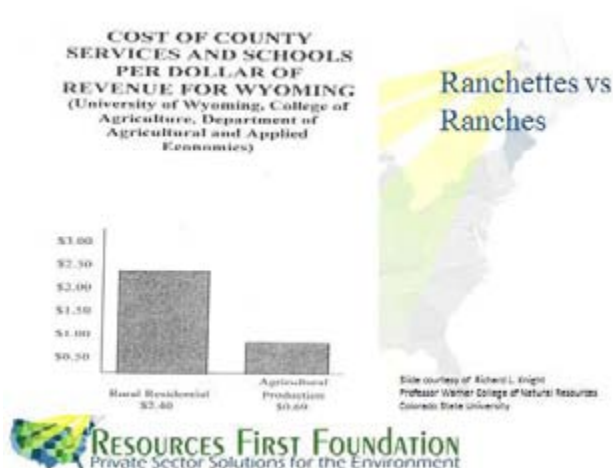
To use a Maine metaphor: there will be a tidal interchange as the federal debt and state debts intermix and collide.



(Slide 27)

and their fiscal precariousness will likely trigger the next market pull back. But one thing is certain, conservation funding is going to be significantly reduced. Last month, I spoke with Carter Smith of Texas Parks and Wildlife who is staring at a 25% across the board budget reduction after the Texas legislature concludes its 2012 budgeting. This will play out across many states.

Finally at the local, municipal level, the kind of development we are facing in the west today, ranchettes chopping up former agricultural and ranch lands, impose far greater cost burdens on state and municipal taxpayers than keeping our agricultural lands productive.



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The **Third Reason** is the trickiest, but clearly there is an avenue to get better return on our limited \$ investment at less cost to the public treasuries state and federal.

But before detailing Reason #3, which is the heart of my thesis, let us resurrect Aldo Leopold again. I'll read you a couple of quotes from Sand County Almanac that I bet you did not know were there. He wrote proscriptively anticipating this very point in time: "at what point will governmental conservation, like the mastodon, become handicapped by its own dimensions? The answer, if there is any, seems to be in a land ethic... which **assigns more obligation** to the **private landowner**." (Leopold, Ballantine 1966, p. 250)

Reason3: Better Return on Investment



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After 50 years of relentless environmental advocacy, I think we are at that point where cultural change has brought us to where we can trust the vast majority of land owners to do the right thing by their land and be good stewards. Looking backward Leopold also averred that "American conservation, is, I fear, still concerned for the most part with show pieces. We have not yet learned to think in terms of **small cogs and wheels**." (Leopold, p. 193) There is no question today that the environmental movement and state and federal officials are still mired in "show pieces for conservation- just look to President Obama's American's Great Outdoors report. (released 02/16/2011) And there is also no question that the key to unlocking the value proposition of stewardship for private land owners across the American landscape is **to create an enabling mechanism that stimulates 10,000s of small" cogs and wheels"** of stewardship across thousands of individually owned properties simultaneously.

PART 5: Private Lands offer a better return on investment and less cost for Conservation



(Slide 30)

Greater focus, attention and public support are needed to foster private stewardship on working landscapes. Today the level of stewardship among landowners is growing, but we face an unprecedented intergenerational transfer in the next two decades. Families own 251 million acres of forest in the U.S. But “financial pressures on these families in recent years have resulted in the loss of forest and open space to development at an average of 6,000 acres a day-4 acres a minute” (Pinchot Institute , 2010) Farmland loss is even more dire: U.S. farmland is disappearing at a rate of more than an acre of farmland per minute. States with the biggest losses include Texas (1.5 million acres) and California (616,000 acres lost). Between 2002 and 2007, 7,491,300 acres of rural land were converted to developed uses- an area the size of Maryland. (American Farmland Trust, 2011) An estimated 70% of farmland will change hands in the next 20 years (Family Farm Forum, 2008). Similar development conversion is underway with western ranches. A study of changes in ranch ownership (greater than 400 acres) in three Rocky Mountain counties from 1990 to 2001 found turnover rates from 14% to 45%. A majority of the acreage, 54%, went to amenity buyers and 62% to out-of-state buyers. This 12 –year slice of ranch sales suggests that, a significant transition is underway from family-based ranching as a livelihood toward an ownership with considerably less experience and knowledge for caring for the land.

Cultures Matter

"As important a reason as any to support ranching, farming, irrigating, and logging is that our society will need them as teachers, mentors, and critics in the years to come."

Wendell Berry



Slide courtesy of Richard L. Knight
Professor Warner College of Natural Resources
Colorado State University



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Going back to the first section of my talk: How do you solve **these PROBLEMS**? We need to shift the focus of our policies from public land aggrandizement to supporting private land stewardship and entrepreneurship. Individuals, families living on the land are the keys to this equation.

Homeland Security: or Home, Land, and Security?

A secure homeland is:

- Where urban people realize that sustainable farming and ranching are possible,
- who realize that cultures matter,
- who are ready to compensate them for a healthy food product, and
- for the open space, water, and ecosystem services they protect.



Slide courtesy of Richard L. Knight
Professor Warner College of Natural Resources
Colorado State University

(Slide 32)

They are Leopold's cogs and wheels. They are the underpinnings of our democracy, not the bureaucrats of land management agencies. Pinchot came up with a critical insight: "the success of the conservation movement in the U.S. depends in the end on the understanding women have of it... of all the movements which have been inaugurated to give power to the

conservation idea, there is none more helpful than that women are taking hold of the problem.” (Pinchot, p.101, 104) As with small businesses everywhere, on most farms and ranches women handle financial details, and I have a hunch that women will become one of the keys to conservation solutions in the West. Farmers and ranchers are the heart and soul of small business across America and they will thrive in a fair market economy. They prefer a market economy. In 2010, farm values have increased over 10% across the Midwest. (WSJ, 12/17/2010)



(Slide 33)

The Greek word **demokratia** asserted a fact and an aspiration: the people (**demos**) have the capacity (**kratos**) to make history. (J. Ober, WSJ, 2011) That is the history of our frontier experience, and we need to reinstall it as a core value of our 21st century conservation equation. Maintaining our human cultural heritage is as important, if not more so, than the application of science and technology to conservation. As many westerners now realize, the political center may be the most radical positioning of all. As Dan Kemmis has written, “A steadily expanding number of westerners on both sides of the political fence are coming to believe that they can do better by their communities, their economies, and their ecosystems by working together outside the established, centralized governing framework.” (D. Kemmis, *This Sovereign Land*, Island Press, 2001, p. 118)

“The Radical Center”

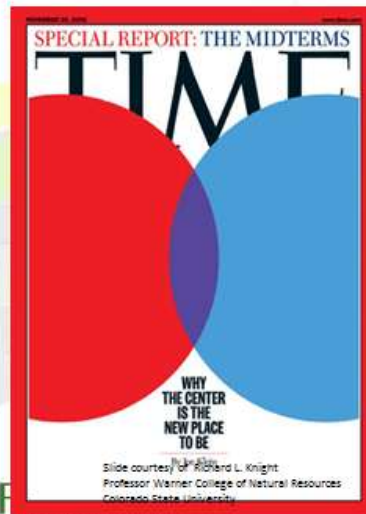
Progressive Ranchers Provide Leadership

- * Blackfoot Challenge
- * Diablo Trust
- * Quivira Coalition
- * Malpai Borderlands Group

“I’ve been convinced for a long time that what is miscalled the middle of the road is actually the most radical and most difficult position—much more difficult and radical than either reaction or rebellion.” W. Stegner



RESOURCES FIRST FUND
Private Sector Solutions for the Environment



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Part 6. How do we git there? Short answer: use the internet. Remember, I said that **COMMUNICATION** was going to be key to solving our problems? Given the acknowledged inability of state and federal agencies to reach everyone they would like to, and given that the next generation of landowners will surely expect to find virtually all their information online, and given the dire picture of contracting agency budgets in the coming decade, what are the alternatives for outreach and extension services to private landowners?

Private land stewardship cannot be coerced. **It must be encouraged, incentivized, recognized, rewarded, highlighted through profiling innovative leaders, and above all, made clear and relatively straight forward.** The RFF solution is to focus on actionable information in a neutral setting with a user friendly interface and a long reach into rural communities through networks of service providers listed in our yellow pages. RFF focuses on empowering landowners to engage in conservation activities with an innovative approach that involves a home computer, the internet, networks of local experts, and a searchable directory of information, resources, and local points of contact.

The traditional approach to complex conservation problems involved environmental activists, lawyers, policy makers, regulations, litigation, and legislation - the top-down approach. This approach often demonized farm, ranch and forest owners and placed the highest value on the environmental objective - often a designated place to conserve plants or wildlife. A private landowner’s needs, including their livelihood, intergenerational transfer of land, and the sustainability of their operations were discounted or ignored.



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This approach filled landowners with fear and worry of facing fines and losing their income or facing restrictions on their land to conservation. RFF's intention is to provide a system that effectively cultivates an ethos of stewardship and cooperation, where landowners are motivated to engage in conservation.

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Resources First Foundation's
Web-Based Resources for Conservation Action

Conservation Resources
A nationwide directory of over 10,000 conservation resources, articles, and professionals providing a simple means for landowners to navigate the complexities and costs of land conservation.

Conservation Action Center
Providing articles, federal and state law resources, lawyers and estate planners, to help landowners and professionals gain for the future of their property.

Conservation Case Studies
The compilation of national cooperative conservation case studies built for the White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation, held in 2005.

State Conservation Centers
The Maine State Conservation Center provides a clearinghouse for Maine's conservation and energy services, information and resources.

State Conservation Centers
The Northern California Conservation Center provides conservation resources for the 16 counties of Northern California including information on wildlife, invasive species, water, and agriculture.

State Conservation Centers
The Mississippi State Conservation Center delivers a rich menu of conservation resources and information to Mississippi landowners and outdoor enthusiasts from natural heritage tourism to sustainable hardwoods and forest resources.

State Conservation Centers
Conservation, transportation, and energy resources for the Houston metropolitan area, organized by county.

State Conservation Centers
The Arkansas State Conservation Center (currently in development) will deliver a rich menu of conservation resources and information to Arkansas landowners and outdoor enthusiasts.

Conservation Resources
The new RFF weekly blog by Anna Dier and guest bloggers: short, newsworthy, and inspirational. Featuring links to innovative programs, organizations, and some of our best articles. For those who'd like to keep working lands working.

Conservation Resources
The informative interactive and agriculture resource evaluation tools. Landowners can click their way through a series of evaluations for their resources, and a series of worksheets that will help develop new revenue streams for their land.

Conservation Resources
Conservation Programs Division Support System
A tool to help landowners match their setting and conservation goals with USDA NRCS and FSA conservation programs.

Resources First Foundation 1001 Main St. (Portland) OR 97206 207/221-2788
www.ResourcesFirstFoundation.org

The structure of RFF websites and tools will result in a win-win-win for landowners, service providers, and the public:

Our Recipe for Conservation

- **1 Part Land Remaining in Private Ownership:**
on the tax rolls as a working landscape
- **1 Part Local Community Involvement:**
inspired, designed, incubated and supported locally
- **1 Part Economic Support:**
providing incentives and support for local rural businesses
- **Stir in equal parts of:**
Open Space, Fish & Wildlife Habitat preservation, ecotourism, community supported agriculture, and new sustainable energy products
- **Add Predominantly Private Funding / stewardship / entrepreneurship**
- **Use the internet to go direct to our source market**



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- Firstly, it will connect landowners to the professionals and services they need to effectively steward their land and resources, expanding the audience that can be reached by existing outreach programs. From a recent national radio show, "More young people today are becoming farmers. Experts say a skyrocketing number of 20 and 30-somethings are quitting their jobs and taking up farming full time. They're learning farm life may not be the simple life. The biggest challenge? Young farmers don't know how to farm. Most of them are from the suburbs and have never even laid eyes on a pitchfork. So, they're learning the way they do most things: by going **ONLINE**, and studying YouTube videos." (Twenty-Somethings Are Quitting Their Jobs to Take Up Farming, John Tesh Radio Show, 03/16/2011)



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- *Secondly, it will connect the public with an interest in the outdoors to the landowners with operations that cater to this clientele.*

Resources First Foundation
Web-Based Resources for Conservation Action



Building the onramp for the 21st century conservation highway.

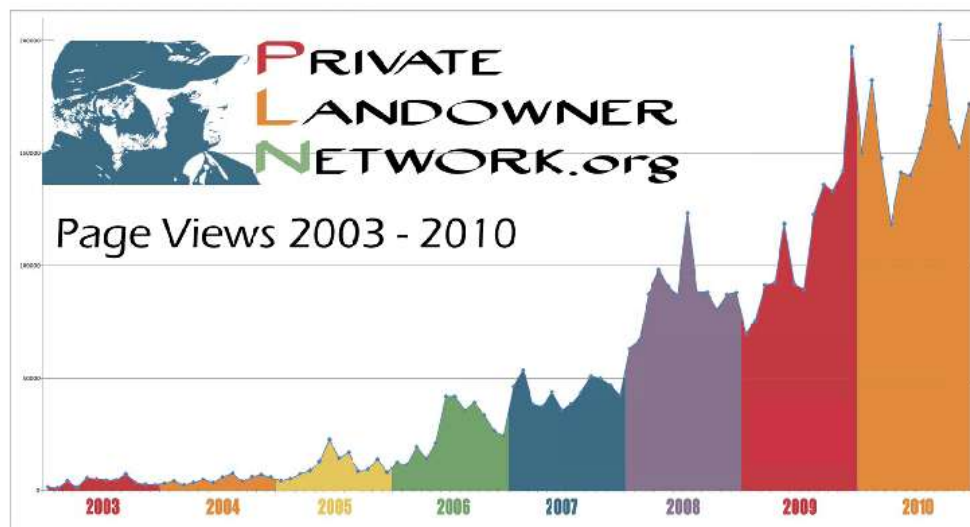
60% of the United States is in private ownership.

65 is the average age of landowners in America.



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- *Thirdly, it will promote the businesses and organizations that serve rural America's land management and conservation marketplace through a free platform.*



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The great irony facing the Great West is that it now lies under a procrustean mantle of overlapping bureaucracies weightier than any glacier known. What would the pioneers of yesteryear, Joseph Walker, General Stephen Kearney, Kit Carson, Jim Bridger, Livereatin' Johnson, Captain Bonneville, John Wesley Powell say of today's western mélange? An even greater irony is that individuals who embody the same pioneering spirit and the Jeffersonian

vision of yeoman farming of our western forefathers are alive and if not well, at least contending with the impositions of our 21st century world. See my blog (Keep Working Lands Working: <http://.privatelandownernetwork.org/plnBlog/>)

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for profiles of Carol Hamilton, Bill Miller, Bill Macdonald and Warner Glenn of Malpais Group, Sharon and Pat O'Toole of Ladder ranch. These folk are true voices in the wilderness and today instead of trying to outwit Indians and the brutalities of a 19th century western landscape, they must contend with countless meetings with bureaucrats, over water rights, endangered species, grazing rights; negotiate around mineral companies that own subsurface rights beneath their land; face litigious onslaughts from the Center of Biological Diversity, all the cumulative armageddons of Metro West .

Rural America is the key to our future



"We have to influence the patterns of growth to protect both wildlife and our way of life."

- Bill Miller, Jr.

Malpai Borderlands Group (AZ, NM)

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I'll conclude with a final layer of irony. Ever wonder why so many fiscal conservatives in Congress come from the South? Walker Percy, one of the great American novelists of the 20th century, suggested that Americans have too long believed in their exceptional role in history, have thought too long that they were the chosen people occupying the "city on the hill"... Percy believed that America was now facing the rebuttal of its core ideology. The center was not holding. Liberalism promised all but required nothing in return... failing to acknowledge the perversity of human beings, the liberal faith was beginning to break down. Yet Americans are still having trouble facing failure or even limits, and that, Percy believed is why Americans had something to learn from the South. For the South... having experienced defeat, southerners understood limits." (J. Tolson, p. 356)



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Folks, we have been wandering in circles, lost in the woods for 30 some years, with no coherent policy nor strategic direction other than repeated priming of the public land acquisition pump. It is time to adjust to the market, reallocate policy and limited financial resources to the most pressing land conservation investment portfolio in the U.S.: private lands.

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