

Conservation Today, As Opposed To Yesteryear:
The Importance of Private Lands
By: Amos S. Eno

US Environmental initiatives have focused on federal lands protection since 1900. The latest iteration is the Biden's administration trumpeted a "30 by 30-policy" objective further expanding our already excessive federal holdings. National Parks, and National Forests protect many high mountains, deserts, grasslands, and our National Wildlife Refuges conserve some 90 million acres of wetlands. However, 82% of our Wetlands remain in private ownership and 80% of endangered species habitat rests in private land ownership. Species biodiversity is disproportionately dependent on the private sector, which represents a forgotten and ignored landscape in terms of national policy and funding.

Visitors can go to Yellowstone, Glacier, and the Grand Tetons in summer to commune with wildlife but for seven months of the year, their animals are at lower elevations on ranches grazing in riparian areas because mountains in winter are cold and lack any semblance of forage. Throughout our western states, the forage for animals in winter is on private ranch lands clustered around springs and riparian areas. That is why water rights are one of the cornerstones of western state real estate laws. These basic facts of geography and biodiversity are seldom acknowledged.

Today 71% of the USA is privately owned, and privately owned lands are the principal reservoir of both biodiversity and carbon sequestration. So the first thing people need to understand is national policy has been great for protecting vistas and the sublime landscapes, but it is completely ass backwards in terms of biodiversity and carbon. Call it the Hudson River School effect a century and half later, and still chugging along.

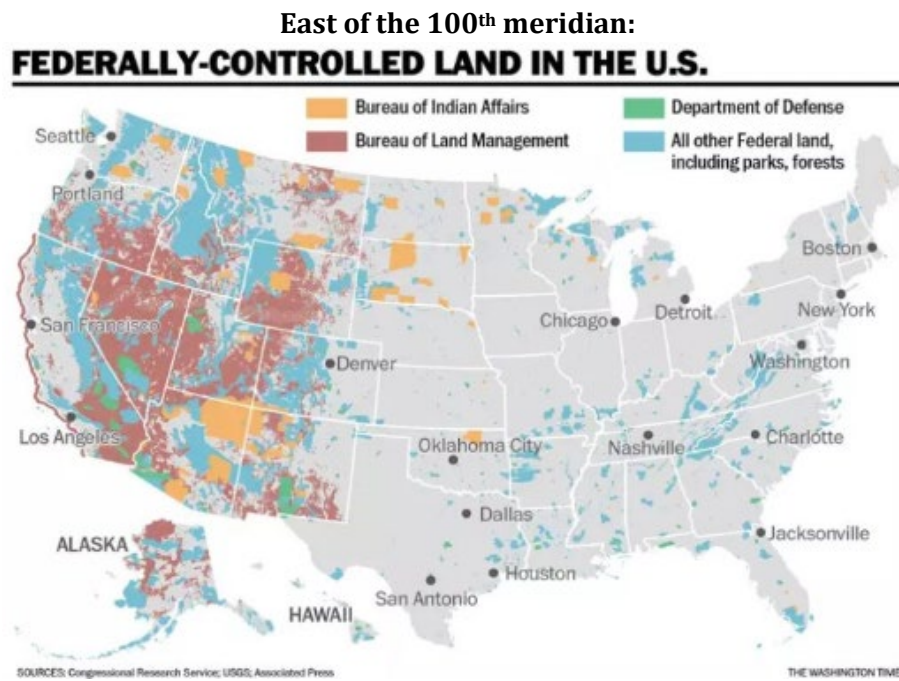
The second issue to recognize is that in the 21st century federal lands are in a crisis. Twelve of 15 million acres of our federal forests in California in the majestic Sierras have been burnt to a crisp and the culprit is not so much the media touted global warming, but the environmental movement and the Clinton Forest plan held steadfast by his successors. We confront 50 years of built up fuel loads in federal forests that our Native American predecessors burnt every year for 5 millennia, so instead of grassland forest floors, we now have kindling half the height of our Ponderosas.

For 100 years, the focus of both environmental organizations and the federal government has been on purchasing and encumbering federal lands for environmental protection. Many of these lands are not managed adequately, and in the case of our National Forests, where environmental litigants prevent any forest management, the result is an environmental travesty. Federal strategies have been demonstratively ineffective not only on forest fire management but also endangered species recovery. USFWS has only recovered (3%) of the thousands of listed endangered species. If you compare conservation strategies in USA with comparable strategies in Republic of South Africa, Botswana, and Namibia on species conservation success, you confront the difference between night (in USA), and day in southern African countries, which have recovered numerous species because of private landowner initiatives and market forces. African countries, dating back to the early 1970s have also been in the forefront of what is now recognized as community –based conservation strategies, see: David Western's *In THE DUST OF KILIMANJARO*, 1997, Shearwater books.

David writes, “Winning a lasting place for wildlife involves reversing a century of alienation-making those who suffer from the depredations of wildlife its primary guardians and principal custodians. In deed. The continued survival of wildlife in its abundant natural state is rooted in Africa’s traditional art of coexistence rather than prevailing western conservation policies based on segregation.” (p.XV)

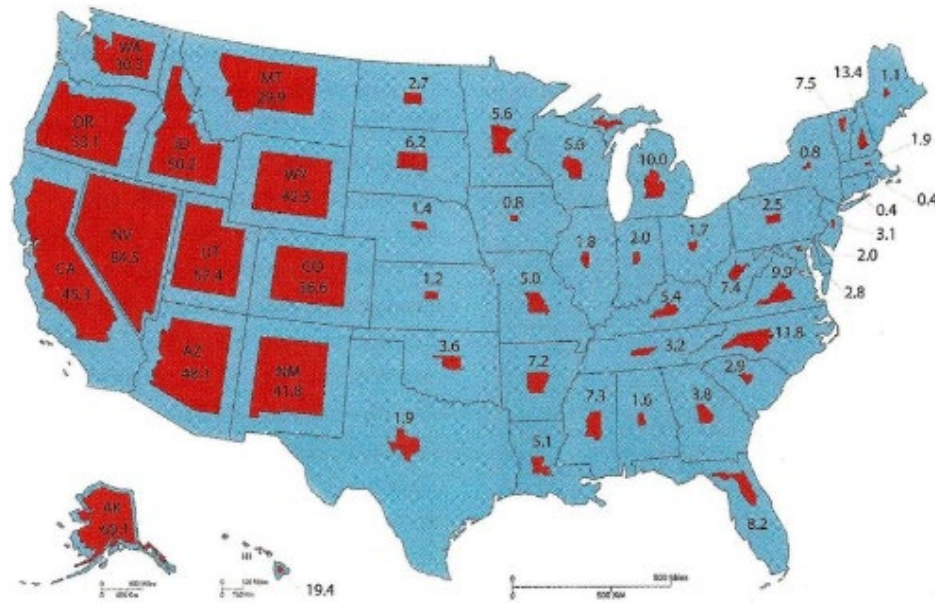
I spent several weeks with David western in 1973 and he opened my eyes to community-based conservation with his work with the Maasai at Amboseli NP. I made many returns to Africa, spending three years learning the importance of both private lands and community engagement to power successful conservation strategies for species recovery

So let us go on a tour of our national landscape to identify what is important in terms of geography. Public land, meaning lands owned by the federal government, are held by five principal federal agencies. The Bureau of Land Management, the United States Forest Service, the National Park Service, the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Department of Defense also known as BLM, USFS, NPS, USFWS, and the DOD. These agencies are heavily concentrated in western states west of the 100th meridian: (% is federal land) MT (29.9%), WA (30.3%), CO (36%), NM (41%), WY (42%), CA (45%), AZ (48%), ID (50.2%), UT (57.4%), and NV (84.5%).



East of the Mississippi, the states of NC and VA have the largest concentration of federal lands (11.8% and 9.9% respectively) because of the combination of National Forest lands, the Shenandoah and Great Smokies National Parks and barrier island park areas. My home state of Maine is overwhelmingly private with only 1.1% federal land followed by Texas with only 1.9 % being federal lands. The three states with the lowest federal ownership are RI, CT, and IA, followed by KS at 1.2%.

Federal Land as a Percentage of Total State Land Area



Data source: U.S. General Services Administration, *Federal Real Property Profile 2004*, excludes trust properties.

Midwestern, Southeastern, Mid Atlantic and New England states are predominantly privately owned. They represent a landscape of Hope and Healing. They are the living embodiment of the superiority of private land management of natural resources compared to the federal and public land management.

Next let's examine demographics because these underpin any public policy decisions affecting private landowners. The latest USDA 2022 census, published winter of 2024, found just 1.9 million farms and ranches across the length and breadth of the USA. There are over 10 million forest owners, which means that 80% of the private land market lies in forest ownership. So less than 0.57% of our nation's population of 335 million people are private landowners comprising 71% of the conterminous 48 states. A secondary aspect of demographics involves recognizing the superannulated age class of landowners. Most farm and ranch owners are past 60 years old, and forest owners are past 70 years. This means that intergenerational transfer and tax planning are of paramount importance to private landowners today, a fact that is generally ignored by public policy makers and federal conservation agency leaders.

While referencing the inadequacy of federal conservation agencies and leadership, let's now examine the federal agencies that try to engage or intersect with private landowners. The big kahuna in our federal establishment is the USDA, which started promoting conservation for landowners during the Great Depression and Dust Bowl years of the 1930s. In the late 20th century, the 1970s and the 1980s, the Farmbill passed numerous new programs that were added to the USDA portfolio every five years with passage of successive Farmbills. Three sub agencies within the USDA try to engage private landowners with varying and modest degrees of success. The first is the US Forest Service (USFS), which has a state and private (SPF) program that promotes forest stewardship management. This program mostly funds state forestry departments, and has had very limited success engaging forest landowners on a scalable basis. It dates to the 1980 Farmbill and

has about 3% market penetration after more than 40 years. The second agency is the Farm Service Agency (FSA), which oversees USDA funding for conservation easements as shown below:

USDA FSA Programs

The [United States Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency \(FSA\)](#) oversees a number of voluntary conservation-related programs. These programs work to address a large number of farming and ranching related conservation issues including:

- Drinking water protection
- Reducing soil erosion
- Wildlife habitat preservation
- Preservation and restoration of forests and wetlands
- Aiding farmers whose farms are damaged by natural disasters

FSA accomplishes these goals through the conservation programs listed below.

Conservation Reserve Program

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) pays a yearly rental payment in exchange for farmers removing environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production and planting species that will improve environmental quality.

Farmable Wetlands Program

The Farmable Wetlands Program (FWP) is designed to restore wetlands and wetland buffer zones that are farmed. FWP gives farmers and ranchers annual rental payments in return for restoring wetlands and establishing plant cover.

Grassland Reserve Program

The Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) works to prevent grazing and pasture land from being converted into cropland or used for urban development. In return for voluntarily limiting the future development of their land, farmers receive a rental payment.

Then the third and most important agency for engaging landowners is the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) that oversees an alphabet soup suite of grant programs. Their major stand out programs are:

USDA / NRCS Programs

- Agricultural Conservation Easement Program

The Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) helps landowners, land trusts, and other entities protect, restore, and enhance wetlands or protect working farms and ranches through conservation easements.

- Agricultural Management Assistance

The Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) helps agricultural producers manage financial risk through diversification, marketing, or natural resource conservation practices.

- Conservation Innovation Grants

Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) is a competitive program that supports the development of new tools, approaches, practices, and technologies to further natural resource conservation on private lands.

- Conservation Reserve Program

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) provides a yearly rental payment to farmers who remove environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production and plant species that will improve environmental health and quality.

- Conservation Stewardship Program

The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) helps you build on your existing conservation efforts while strengthening your operation.

- Environmental Quality Incentives Program

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is NRCS' flagship conservation program that helps farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners integrate conservation into working lands.

- Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative

NRCS's Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI) was developed as a coordinated effort to identify priority issues, find solutions, and effect change on private grazing land, enhancing existing conservation programs.

- Healthy Forests Reserve Program

The Healthy Forests Reserve Program (HFRP) helps landowners restore, enhance, and protect forestland resources on private and tribal lands through easements and financial assistance.

- Lesser Prairie-Chicken Initiative

Best known for their dramatic courtship display, the lesser prairie chicken depends on prairie and grassland ecosystems that have evolved under the interaction of fire and large herbivore grazing over the years.

- Longleaf Pine Initiative

Longleaf pine forests once encompassed more than 90 million acres across the Southeast, stretching from eastern Texas to southern Virginia.

- Regional Conservation Partnership Program

The Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) is a partner-driven approach to conservation that funds solutions to natural resource challenges on agricultural land.

- Sage Grouse Initiative

The sage grouse, a chicken-like bird uniquely adapted to this habitat, is the poster child of the sagebrush country.

- Wetland Mitigation Banking Program

The Wetland Mitigation Banking Program (WMBP) is a competitive grants program that supports the development and establishment of wetland mitigation banks to make credits available for agricultural producers.

- Wetland Reserve Enhancement Partnership

The Wetland Reserve Enhancement Partnership (WREP) is a voluntary program through which NRCS enters into agreements with eligible partners to leverage resources to carry out high-priority wetland protection, restoration, and enhancement and to improve wildlife habitat.

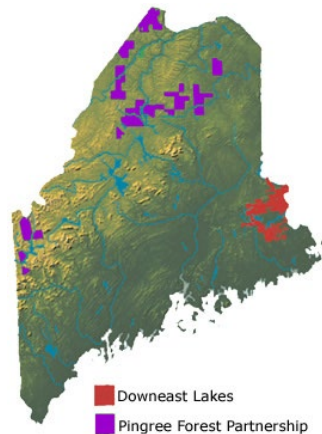
- Working Lands for Wildlife

Through Working Lands for Wildlife (WLFW), USDA uses a win-win approach to systematically target conservation efforts to improve agricultural and forest productivity, which enhances wildlife habitat on working landscapes.

In Washington, across from the mall from the USDA lies the Interior Department (which houses BLM, NPS, and the USFWS—three of the four land management agencies). At USFWS, there is only one small program, which I helped create in the early 1990s, called Partners for Wildlife. This program currently has a budget of \$55 million and was specifically created for outreach to engage private landowners for wildlife conservation efforts.

The nonprofit sector is a critical enabler for engaging private landowners, and the most important organizations are Conservation Districts, which exist and have offices in every county across USA, currently 2,919 in total. Conservation Districts are funded in part by USDA and their staff know all the USDA programs, the local geography, and the community. They are the first organization to call for conservation information. The second nonprofit pillar for conservation is Land Trusts that vary in size from the behemoth The Nature Conservancy, to small localized trusts like the Lemhi Regional Land Trust in eastern Idaho. There are currently 1,420 land trusts across the country. My state of Maine has 79 land trusts, which is probably more than a few too many for the market to bear. Since President George W. Bush signed the new federal conservation easement law in 2006, the importance of land trusts has grown significantly. President Obama made the conservation easement law permanent in 2016. In the last three years, there has been a significant expansion of land trusts from their original focus on strict preservation of landscapes to a new movement embracing working farm and forest landscapes. While I was CEO of NFWF (Nation Fish & Wildlife Foundation), I wrote grants to help launch the California Rangeland Trust, The Colorado Cattlemans Agricultural Land Trust, the Texas Agricultural Land Trust and the Malpai Borderlands Group in AZ and NM. Today, the first three rancher land trusts are the largest acreage conservators in each of their respective states. Land Trust abound in New England where land conservation got its start in Boston in late 1600s, and there are few, often one or two in deep southeastern states, and land trusts run the gamut in terms of financial health and sophistication. A key factor, generally not understood especially in the silo'ed halls of federal agencies, is that executing a conservation

easement is no simple task. To qualify for federal tax deductions the easement must be permanent, which is a cause for hesitancy for many landowners. Putting an easement in place requires multiple service providers: an appraiser, a tax attorney and often an environmental lawyer to draft the easement. If the land includes forests or wildlife habitat, a forest or wildlife consultant needs to provide input and verification of resources. For landowners a good introductory primer for easements and tax strategies is Stephen J. Small's books: PRESERVING FAMILY LANDS. The best practitioner in the business is Keith Ross who designed the two largest easements in the US on forested lands in Maine: the Pingree project of 732,000 acres and the Downeast Lakes project of 460,000 acres.



These two easements, completed between 2000 and 2005 conserve one third of all protected lands in Maine. I worked with Keith on both projects and they remain conservation gems today.

This brings us to the precipice of asking, how do we make the combination of federal and state agencies, nonprofits and for profits work better on the ground across the USA to enhance stewardship on private lands? Before entering this tabernacle of morass, I want to mention an historical experience that highlights the gaping intellectual chasm affecting American philosophy and policies in this country, the unbridgeable gap between urban/metropolitan America and rural America. In 1975, while working for the Secretary of Interior, I was sent to Oregon to meet with the refuge manager of Malheur National Wildlife Refuge who was under fire from Portland academics for allowing grazing on the refuge. A Portland professor, Denzel Ferguson, wrote a book entitled SACRED COWS AT THE PUBLIC TROUGH. He insisted on prohibiting grazing on refuges. His perspective was brought to ear of the Secretary and my assignment was to inspect the refuge and fire the manager Joe Mazzoni. I spent several days touring the refuge with Mazzoni who was reducing the grazing, but doing a superb job managing the refuge. I came back to the Interior department and during the morning staff meeting I recommended Mazzoni receive a medal, not a termination order. Years later grazing was terminated, and predator populations boomed and migratory birds suffered significant declines. As a rule, farmers and ranchers are better land managers and stewards than federal bureaucrats and urban academics. The patron saint of environmentalists, Aldo Leopold, recognized this and the hands on approach of ranchers and farmers. In his 1934 address to the Taylor -Hibbard Economics Club he wrote: "The geography of conservation is such that most of the best land will always be held privately for agricultural production. The bulk of responsibility for conservation thus necessarily devolves upon the PRIVATE custodian, especially the farmer." (River of Mother of God Essays, p.22).

One of my LandCAN board members, Alex Echols, who helped craft several Farmbills as a Senate staffer recently wrote me the following observations:

“I meet with farmers and people in the ag industry a lot. Daily. This includes farmers, retailers, service suppliers etc. While much of my contact is focused in the middle Atlantic region, I continue to do extensive work in the Midwest and Southeast.” He continues:

“In the past six months, I have come to experience greater antipathy to the NRCS in particular than I have ever seen. As the conservation arm of USDA, they are critical. In fact, I had a substantial hand in creating many of the programs of NRCS in being the principle staff author of the Conservation Title of the Farm Bill in 1985 and again in 1990. Since then I have stayed in close touch with the agency and spent much of my professional career focused on how to increase conservation on agricultural lands. I have been a staunch defender and promoter of the agency but there seems to be a significant disconnect occurring.

First, I am a huge admirer of NRCS, its mission and staff. They have one of the most important jobs in moving us into the next century to protect not only conservation outcomes, but also farm economic viability and the character of our rural lands.

However, I am deeply troubled by the increasingly low regard farmers, Ag retailers, service providers have for working with the agency.”

This mirrors my experience over the last 25 years. We have users of LandCAN reporting contacting USDA offices 10-12 times with no response. Government driven agendas, heartily propelled by environmental groups through their media town criers, are creating both a disconnect, and a tune out across rural America. Two years ago, I was at a conference in Bismarck, North Dakota and I had a side meeting with North Dakota’s Agriculture Commissioner Doug Goering, who stated flat out: “We tell all our producers to stay away from USDA.”

At USDA today, the overarching priorities are climate mitigation and ESG diversity. As Alex observes: “Perhaps it is driven by department priorities. For example, conservation does not even rank in the top priorities for NRCS today. This can be seen on the Agency’s website. Top on the list is “Advancing Equity, Justice, and Equal Opportunity.””

See <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/about/priorities>.” (personal comment)

Breaking these issues down into fixable bite size snacks is hard, and I will start with an artistic metaphor. Today political leadership at USDA and the environmental community paint the landscape with broad-brush strokes, think of preeminent Abstract Expressionists painters like Rothko. Farmers and ranchers, who have their ear to the ground and hands in the dirt to manage their lands, manage their lands like pointillist painters in the late 1800s, think of Seurat.

Effectively communicating and engaging private landowners in USA involves a number of subtleties including building trust, providing multi-sector information services, understanding human psychology, and the recognition that every private landowner is unique, idiosyncratic, and individualistic in motivation, traditions, and application of management strategies. The style of communication between federal agency leadership and private landowners is critically important

to achieve resonance and engagement. As TRUST IN FOOD's Drew Slattery (11 Oct 2021) wrote, "We must prioritize the humanity of farmers-in our communication and interactions with them- and recognize that before they put their dirty boots on in the morning, farmers and ranchers are humans first. If we want to empower our nation's agricultural system to be more regenerative, sustainable, equitable and inclusive-then we are talking about empowering them to do so. We are talking about changing humans...Farming is a business; it is an identity; it's a lifestyle; it's a hobby; it's a multigenerational family legacy and so much more. Every farm operation and every person making and implementing every decision on it is as unique as each person's finger prints." So true, and none of today's leadership in USDA recognizes any of these subtleties, and this is why farmers and ranchers do not trust federal bureaucrats, and generally despise environmental advocates.

Alex Echols concludes his memo on USDA conservation programs with the observation that "it commonly takes three years to actually implement conservation after a farmer reaches out to USDA. Many are discouraged by the bureaucracy and lag in response". He further notes the agency does not have the kind of close contact with farmers, ag retailers, service providers...simply pushing agency priorities to farmers is not resonating. He concludes USDA needs "dedicated leadership to change the agency culture to make it much more farmer focused."

How do you bring about change for an agency like USDA with a multitude of programs that have been misfiring for decades?

First, you start with low hanging fruit and basics. Technical service providers (TSPs) are the lynch pin between the bureaucrats and farmers. NRCS lead grant officer, Ron Harris (retired 2023) maintained that federal funds could not be used to list technical service providers on websites. This issue had been addressed in both the 2002 and 2018 Farmbills with provisions specifically providing for the increase in delivery of qualified non-federal technical assistance, but it did not matter to the grant supervisor Harris. He also decreed that federal funds could not be used to update contact listings on websites, so USDA offices and listings are chronically out of date. This is a government-wide problem. In 2022, when Interior's US Fish and Wildlife spent millions creating a new agency website, they left out all agency contacts and listings. My nonprofit, www.landcan.org spent two months providing all USFWS office listings. LandCAN hosts all NRCS certified technical service providers and thousands more competent service providers, but NRCS has denied all funding requests from LandCAN during both Obama and Biden administrations. Many of the top consultants listed on LandCAN are retired former NRCS officials. Their commentary on their former agency is overwhelmingly critical and negative.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

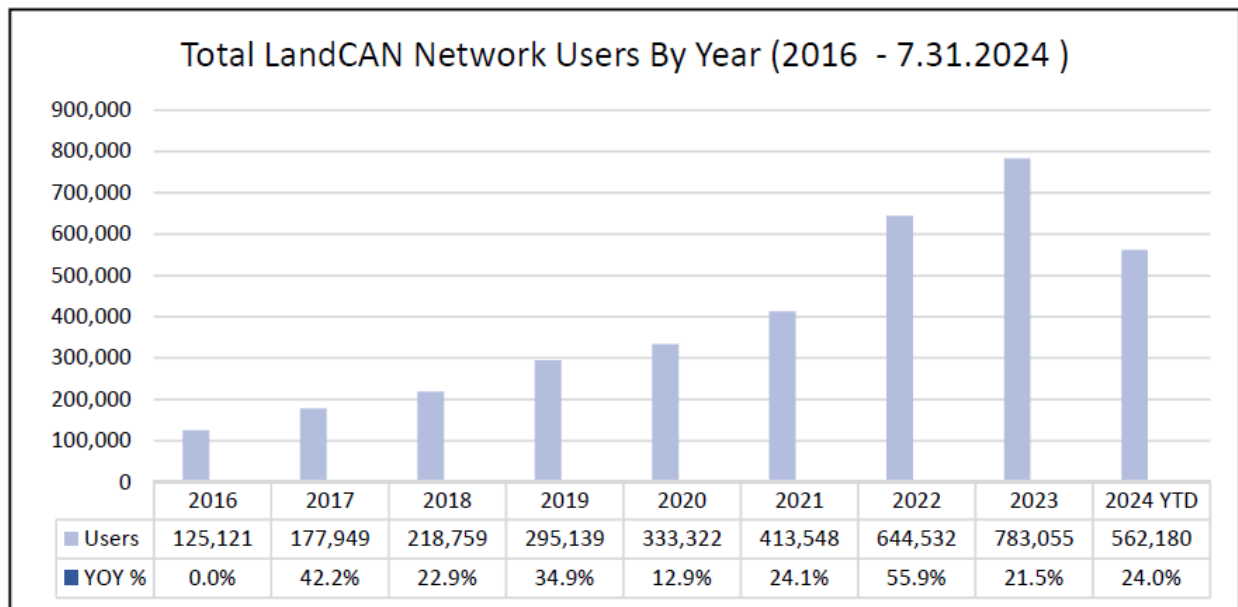
1. Require USDA to overhaul and simplify the overly burdensome TSP program by requiring NRCS to eliminate regulation, policy and procedures that impede the use of third-party providers.
2. Remove the barriers to federal funding for updating conservation website contact listings and listing TSPs.

3. Expand Technical Assistance (TA) which is the art and science of helping landowners effectively identify natural resource issues, develop remedial plans to address those issues, implement conservation practices to enhance and restore natural resources. Mandate the expansion of non-federal TA to deliver conservation programs with dedicated funding annually.
4. USDA's NRCS, not unlike General Motors in the 1990s, has too many brands/programs, even considering they fit on just one chassis. The profusion of NRCS programs is a potpourri, an excessive bureaucratic jambalaya of offerings that need to be winnowed down and simplified, so that the personnel administering said offerings can understand and market them effectively.
5. Within the Department of Interiors' USFWS, The Partners for Wildlife Program needs new leadership and reorganization to focus strictly on endangered species recovery, partnerships with private landowners and agriculture nonprofits.
6. Support new organizations outside sclerotic federal agencies, for example www.landcan.org. In early 2000, a startup nonprofit in Maine was created to address the challenge of engaging private landowners in conservation on a scalable basis. Today, the organization is named the Land Conservation Assistance Network, abbreviated to LandCAN. LandCAN is an online-based education and transaction platform, averaging over 80,000+ users a month, and is on a pathway to 1 million users by the end of 2024. LandCAN is the stepchild of Amos Eno and an emanation of his 50-year experiences in hands on conservation. His career began in Chitwan National Park in Nepal's Terai and several weeks under the tutelage of David Western in Amboseli NP in Kenya. This was followed by four years as Nat Reed's assistant at OSEC Interior, five years at National Audubon, and fifteen years as Director of Conservation and CEO of National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF). At NFWF he pioneered the implementation of North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA), the establishment of the Partners for Wildlife Program at USFWS, annual grants to the Malpais Borderlands Group (AZ, NM), establishment of California Rangeland Trust, Colorado Cattleman's Agricultural Land Trust and Texas Agricultural Land Trust, The Blackfoot project in MT among dozens of private lands engagement grants. From 2000-2005, simultaneous with establishing LandCAN, Eno was part of a team at New England Forestry Foundation that successfully put in place the two largest conservation easements in USA, the 732,000 Pingree project and 340,000 Downeast Lakes project (mentioned above), as well as the implementation of Department of Defense's REPI (Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration) program on DOD's 27 million managed acres. LandCAN today is an evolution of this suite of investments and a lifetime of learning, and the intricate designs of our web master and my partner Willard Dyche.

In his book HOT, FLAT, AND CROWDED, Tom Friedman quoted Clayton Christensen's maxim of "disruptive technologies, that new technologies replace existing ones because they are cheaper and more consumer-friendly." That is a fair characterization of LandCAN today. It is free, and no login is required. Friedman later mentions: "When it comes to implementing a green revolution, the more boring the work, the more revolutionary its impact. If it isn't boring, it isn't green." This also encapsulates LandCAN's online persona, which today includes over 250,000 pages. It features

listings for all federal programs and offices (8,000+) that intersect with private landowners, comparable state programs for all 50 states, the full compilation of non-advocacy nonprofits including every conservation district (3,300) and every land trust (1,420), and over 57,000 for-profit businesses serving rural America. This includes 5,700 consulting foresters, 3,568 tax and estate attorneys, 6,501 veterinarians, 1,665 appraisers, and tens of thousands of other service providers. There is no environmental advocacy on LandCAN, so it is inherently boring, but it works daily to solve landowner problems and to pave the way for the next generation of landowners.

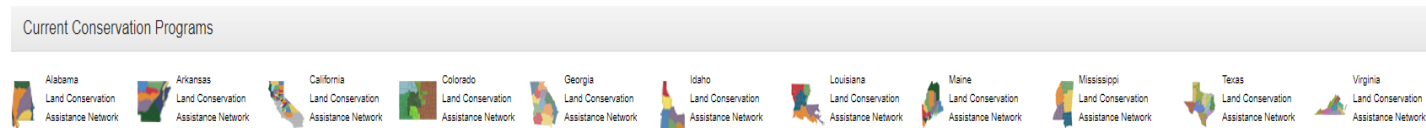
Since 2016, user traffic to LandCAN sites has increased by 20-55% annually as the graph shows below. Despite an unblemished track record of success for two decades, LandCAN has received no financial support from the Obama administration (8 years), and the Biden administration (4 years) with comparable funding cancellations by USFWS' Partners program during both Obama and Biden administrations. Yet despite the paucity of federal funding support, LandCAN gets more use and popularity month to month and expands in popularity and use year to year. Part of the reason is LandCAN has become a TRUSTED information platform in an environment where public trust in federal agencies is at decadal low points. In environmental forums, it is popular to talk about ecology and the many interrelated parts of our natural environment. LandCAN is unique in that the site is populated with the ecological equivalent of a full spectrum of human agencies: federal, state, nonprofit, and for-profit service providers. Our philosophy is emblemized by Nobelist Leon Hurwicz who wrote: "A decentralized capitalist resource system is the ONLY system capable of satisfying the five philosophical ideals of: Equity, Efficiency, Stability, Freedom, and Privacy. And this is exactly what people want. True capitalism is the LEAST rotten apple in the barrel of alternative resource allocation systems." (Woody Brock). LandCAN is purposely designed according to Hurwicz' five ideals.



User traffic numbers as of 31 July 2024.

In rural America, farmers and ranchers tend to socialize very locally in fence post and local café conversations with their peers. LandCAN sites today are designed with listing aggregations organized within county jurisdictions in most states. This facilitates uptake of information transfer in local markets and supports private sector businesses within local communities. LandCAN lists a myriad of for profit businesses. Foremost in importance are tax and estate lawyers because of the demographics of landowners; farmers and ranchers are 60+ and forest owners even more elderly, averaging 70+ years. In forested states dominating southeastern states from Texas to Virginia and in New England (Maine is 89% forested), we list consulting foresters who are the handmaidens of conservation for rural landowners. The most important nonprofits for landowners are the nations' 2,900 conservation districts and some 1,400 land trusts nationwide.

To date in addition to our national platform, LandCAN has built 11 state sites (ME, CA, MS, AR, LA, CO, ID, TX, VA, GA, and AL) and a site for endangered species recovery called www.habitatcan.org, which features sites for sage grouse, lesser prairie chicken, and monarch butterfly. Our most two recent sites: Georgia was built at the request of Georgia Chamber of Commerce as part of an initiative to reinvigorate Georgia's rural economy, and Alabama was built at the request of USFWS Atlanta Regional office. Why? Because Alabama is 93% private land. The state has the third highest level of endangered species after Hawaii and California, and 80% are aquatic and many landowners do not allow USFWS access to their lands.



LandCAN has also been an early adapter of nascent carbon sequestration programs for forests and tree planting, as well as for grasslands and ranching. We added Green Trees/ Acre-investment.com back in 2005, and today list 105 carbon companies including NCX and EarthOptics. We also list LandTrust from Bozeman, MT. that functions like an Airbnb providing hunt/fish birdwatching access to private lands and a determinant revenue stream to participating landowners.

Today, with no federal funding for 14 of the last 16 years, LandCAN is averaging between 80,000 and 90,000 users a month. As of mid-August 2024, we have had over 600,000 users in 2024. Obviously, we are doing something right in providing a service to the private landowner community.