

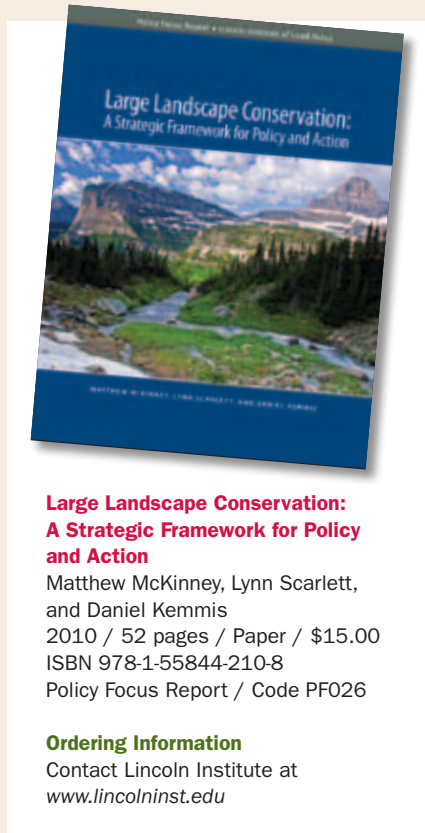
Large Landscape Conservation: A Strategic Framework for Policy and Action

The most important land and water issues facing North America—including land use patterns, water management, biodiversity protection, and climate adaptation—require new approaches. While most of these challenges need to be addressed at several scales simultaneously, ranging from the local to the global, it is increasingly imperative to address them at the scale of large landscapes. The territory of these issues often transcends the legal and geographic reach of existing jurisdictions and institutions.

Since no single entity has the power or authority to address these types of cross-boundary issues, there is a gap in governance and a corresponding need to create informal and formal ways to work more effectively across boundaries. Large landscape conservation also provides significant economic and fiscal benefits to rural and urban communities. Since taking office in January 2009, President Barack Obama and his administration have made the concept of large landscape conservation a component, and often a focus, of many natural resource initiatives.

In response to increasing activity at the large landscape scale, leaders from the public, private, and nongovernmental sectors participated in two national policy dialogues and many other informal discussions in 2009. Convened by the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy and the Center for Natural Resources and Environmental Policy at The University of Montana, the intent of the dialogues was to synthesize what we know about large landscape conservation and identify the most important needs as we move forward.

There is general agreement that the promise of large landscape conservation is its focus on land and water problems at an appropriate geographic scale, regardless of political and jurisdictional boundaries. While it is hard to define precisely what constitutes a large landscape conservation effort, there is a growing consensus that such efforts are multijurisdictional, multi-purpose, and multistakeholder, and they



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operate at various geographic scales using a variety of governance arrangements.

The common currency in large landscape conservation is regional collaboration—the ability to work across boundaries with people and organizations that have diverse interests yet share a common place. While there is no single model for large landscape conservation, ten key elements are evident in the most successful efforts. Practitioners apply these elements on a case-by-case basis to create homegrown processes and solutions for particular places.

With the increasing movement toward large landscape conservation, several barriers still must be addressed for this approach to land and water conservation to endure. In response, participants in the national policy dialogues, along with other many planners, practitioners, and policy officials, believe that large landscape conservation can be improved significantly by implementing the following recommendations:

- *Gather and share information.* Establish a common, coherent scientific database, and develop an annotated atlas of governance efforts to clarify who is doing what and what needs to be done.
- *Encourage a network of practitioners.* Catalyze collaboration through a network akin to the Land Trust Alliance to identify best practices and advocate for policy reforms.
- *Establish a national competitive grants program.* Facilitate homegrown partnerships, improve coordination among ongoing efforts, and recognize the most promising approaches to large landscape conservation.
- *Improve the policy toolkit.* Strengthen incentive-based tools for landowner conservation and improve coordination and participation by federal and other governmental agencies.
- *Facilitate innovative funding opportunities.* Maximize and focus the use of existing federal and state programs and authorities that can be implemented quickly and without significant new funding.

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