



Presentation Descriptions

Natural Infrastructure Investments

Climate Ready Boston: An Opportunity to Transform the Boston Landscape

Bud Ris, Senior Advisor, Green Ribbon Commission and Barr Foundation

The Climate Ready Boston project has assessed the fresh and salt water flood risks and identified the most vulnerable parts of the city, who will be affected, and the real estate value. Bud will discuss the open space and climate-ready development solutions that will be needed to deal with sea level rise/flood vulnerability, as well as green infrastructure solutions to fresh water flooding in the interior parts of the city. These solutions create opportunities for new parks and open spaces and call for creative financing solutions.

Conservation's Share of \$90 Trillion in Infrastructure Investments

James Levitt, Director of the Program on Conservation Innovation, Harvard Forest, and Manager of Land Conservation Programs, Lincoln Institute of Land Policy

The Global Commission on the Economy and Climate estimates that \$90 trillion will be invested in global infrastructure -- including investments that shape our energy, water, land, and transportation use worldwide -- over the next several decades. The opportunity facing Massachusetts, the United States, and the world is to make choices that integrate into that massive investment -- nearly two times the value of the existing stock of infrastructure worldwide -- to efficient, economy, and equitable green infrastructure elements. Such green infrastructure investments will be designed to: protect against potential damages associated with rapid sea level rise, levels of drought, stormwater flows, and drinking water shortages unprecedented in the modern world; and that enhance the emergence of a safe and sustainable local, national, and global economy.

Would \$165 Million Help Advance Your Watershed Protection Goals?

Peter Stangel, Senior Vice President, US Endowment for Forestry and Communities

Since 2000, Ohio's Water Resource Restoration Sponsorship Program has funded about 120 habitat improvement projects valued at \$165 million to help meet water quality standards. That works out to 143 miles of stream corridor and 10,000 acres of wetlands protected and restored. If Ohio can do it, why can't we? The funds originate with Ohio's Water Pollution Control Loan Fund, generically known as a State Revolving Fund. Every state has one of these programs. These are federally capitalized programs that have funded approximately \$120 billion in wastewater treatment plant projects; less than 4% of this has gone to green infrastructure. The catch for most habitat improvement projects? Loans require repayment, and most habitat projects do not generate income. Ohio's clever way to incentivize use of the loan fund for habitat projects is to link traditional wastewater treatment facility loans with a habitat project, and in return, offer a reduced interest rate. The cost of the habitat project is offset by the reduced interest rate, and the habitat project is paid for by ratepayers. State Revolving Fund loan programs offer challenges but are a significant source of funding if we can be creative. Why not us?

Buy-outs for Nature - Aligning Investments in Coastal Resilience and Adaptation

Sacha Spector, Program Director for the Environment, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation

By the end of the century, accelerating sea level rise is forecast to double the size of the FEMA Floodplain, leaving up to \$880 billion of residential real estate permanently inundated. Expected public and private investments in coastal protection, adaptation, and retreat represent a significant opportunity for financing coastal conservation. In particular, payments for relocation, or “buy-outs,” have focused substantial flows of acquisition capital toward vulnerable coastal areas. Federal and state responses to Hurricane Sandy demonstrated that better planning to identify places where vulnerable communities and ecosystems overlap and more targeted use of specific buy-out programs have the potential to drive billions of dollars toward ensuring coastal habitats’ persistence.

New Public Finance Programs

Bridging the Partisan Divide: Passing New Federal Tax Incentives for Conservation

Rand Wentworth, Louis Bacon Senior Fellow in Environmental Leadership, Harvard Kennedy School

In a rare display of unity, Republicans and Democrats came together to pass a big increase in the tax incentives for donated conservation easements. The campaign to win these incentives can help us better understand how to expand public support for land conservation and how we can use this breakthrough to spark state and local funding and tax incentives in New England.

Why Has the Massachusetts Community Preservation Act Been So Successful? (And Could It Happen Again?)

Ernest Cook, Senior Vice President for Conservation Finance, The Trust for Public Land

The Massachusetts Community Preservation Act (CPA) has been adopted by 172 cities and towns. It has become by far the largest source of funding for land conservation in the state. Little appreciated is the fact that CPA was designed on a model pioneered in New Jersey. Could another state in New England copy the winning formula?

Bringing the Legacy Amendment to Massachusetts

Jen Ryan, Director of Policy, The Trustees

In 2008, Minnesota's voters passed the Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Amendment to the Minnesota Constitution, which, through a portion of the sales tax, provides funding to protect drinking water sources, support habitat restoration programs, protect wildlife habitat, and support the arts and preserve cultural heritage. To date, over a billion dollars have been raised and invested in these programs. This presentation will discuss the Legacy Amendment, work done to date to explore the concept for Massachusetts, and why it could be a great fit for the Commonwealth.

Integrating Private Capital into USDA’s Regional Conservation Partnership Program

Kari Cohen, Director of the Conservation Innovation Team, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

This presentation will showcase recent examples of innovative conservation projects through the NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). RCPP brings new flexibility to NRCS conservation funding programs and can be used in conjunction with private conservation finance, ecosystem markets, and supply chain approaches. The program has awarded funding to a broad array of partners, including private firms, municipalities, and water utilities. The next round of RCPP proposals are due in mid-April.

Healthy Communities, Healthy People

Can Medicaid Pay for Trees? Thinking of Conservation as a Healthcare Provider

Bobby Cochran, Executive Director, Willamette Partnership

The presentation will discuss what is necessary to better link healthcare investment into greenspace and access to greenspace, and using health benefits to direct other sources of investment in conservation. Even under possible changes to the Affordable Care Act, there is a health business case to make for investing in the environment.

Compensatory Mitigation to Protect the Pollution Prevention Power of Forests

Kathy Fallon Lambert, Science and Policy Program Director, Harvard Forest

This pitch will describe how existing regulations under the Clean Air Act provide an opportunity to generate forest protection funds as compensation for air quality and public health damages associated with emissions violations, such as those by Volkswagen and Fiat Chrysler. The presentation will include results from a recent study that documents the quantity and cost of forestland protection required to offset excess nitrogen oxide emissions and associated air quality deterioration.

A Family's Investment in Land Conservation as a Bridge to Rural Prosperity

Lucas St. Clair, President, Elliotsville Plantation, Inc.

Lucas will discuss the motivation of his family to acquire land in Northern Maine for conservation. The presentation will focus on the family's vision for public open space as a catalyst for rural economic development. Their philanthropic investment is intended to provide short-term economic improvements, as well as create a bridge to a new economic future for the region. Lucas will share some early signs of their vision's success.

Working Lands Investments

Corporate Supply Chain Sustainability and Forest Conservation

Tom Duffus, Vice President, The Conservation Fund

The Conservation Fund (TCF) partnered recently with Apple to assist the company with its commitment to protect as much sustainable working forest as is needed to produce the paper in its product packaging. The result is more than 36,000 acres of permanently conserved working forests in the eastern U.S. As important, the lands in Maine (32,000 acres owned by TCF) are now subject to innovative sustainable forestry easement provisions, monitored by the Forest Society of Maine.

De-Risking Investment in Sustainable Farms: Partner with Good Farmers!

Jacob Israelow, Managing Director, Dirt Capital Partners

Dirt Capital Partners invests in farmland in long-term, lease-purchase arrangements with individual farmers. Jacob Israelow, Founder and Managing Director, will present a recent case-study on this unique farm transfer approach. He will also discuss how the firm evaluates farmers and farmland, natural resource management requirements in their leases, and the key role that land trusts play to support and facilitate this work.

Cracking the Code: Forest Carbon Aggregation in Vermont

Nick Richardson, Vice President for Enterprise and Finance, Vermont Land Trust

Vermont Land Trust (VLT) has launched a partnership with UVM's Carbon Dynamics Lab, Spatial Informatics Group, and other key stakeholders to lower the minimum efficient scale for forest carbon project participation through landowner aggregation. We believe we can make carbon market participation possible for many more forestland owners in Vermont, using VLT's existing staff and information infrastructure as tools for identifying and organizing viable projects and attracting credit buyers with an interest in the multiple ecological benefits that Vermont derives from a healthy, intact forested landscape. Our presentation will focus on the key unresolved questions that the project will seek to address, along with our overall strategy for landowner engagement and "conversation building" across the Vermont working landscape.

Other People's Money: Capturing Natural Resource Damage Payments and Other Environmental Fines

Peter Stein, Managing Director, Lyme Timber

Fines that are levied as part of environmental penalties for violations of local, state, and federal environmental laws can be a significant source of money for land conservation and restoration. At the national level, the major awards in the form of multi-billion dollar payments are the Exxon Valdez payments in Alaska 20 years ago, as well as the three major conservation/restoration funding buckets created through the settlement negotiations with BP and the other parties responsible for the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. At the federal level, natural resource damage assessment (NRDA) is the legal process that federal agencies like NOAA, together with the states and Indian tribes, use to evaluate the impacts of oil spills, hazardous waste sites, and ship groundings on natural resources, both along the nation's coast and throughout its interior. At the state and local levels, with significant experience in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Connecticut, land trusts have received monetary support for land conservation projects when there is credible ecological alignment between the land and/or waters harmed by a party subject to the environmental fine and the ecological attributes of the projects being undertaken by a land trust and public natural resource agencies. The ability to access these funding sources is complex and varies greatly between jurisdictions. It also requires an intimate understanding of the fine setting and environmental violations adjudication process, which may be beyond the scope and competency of many land trust organizations, especially because these are relatively unpredictable and episodic sources of support. However, entities like Conservation Law Foundation, Natural Resources Defense Council, and Connecticut Fund for the Environment have solid knowledge and experience in these complex matters and may be willing to partner with a specific land trust to ensure that the fines are properly utilized and potentially leveraged with other more conventional funding sources.