

From Conservation to Resilience

Designing a Portfolio to
Secure a Resilient Future
for People and Nature

Café #2

Midwest Trustee Summit
Milwaukee, WI, October 8, 2026



Interrelated Challenges



Conservation 1.0



- Protecting and Stewarding Important Places
 - Over 125M acres of land and waters
 - Over 2.3B acres of ocean



Conservation 2.0

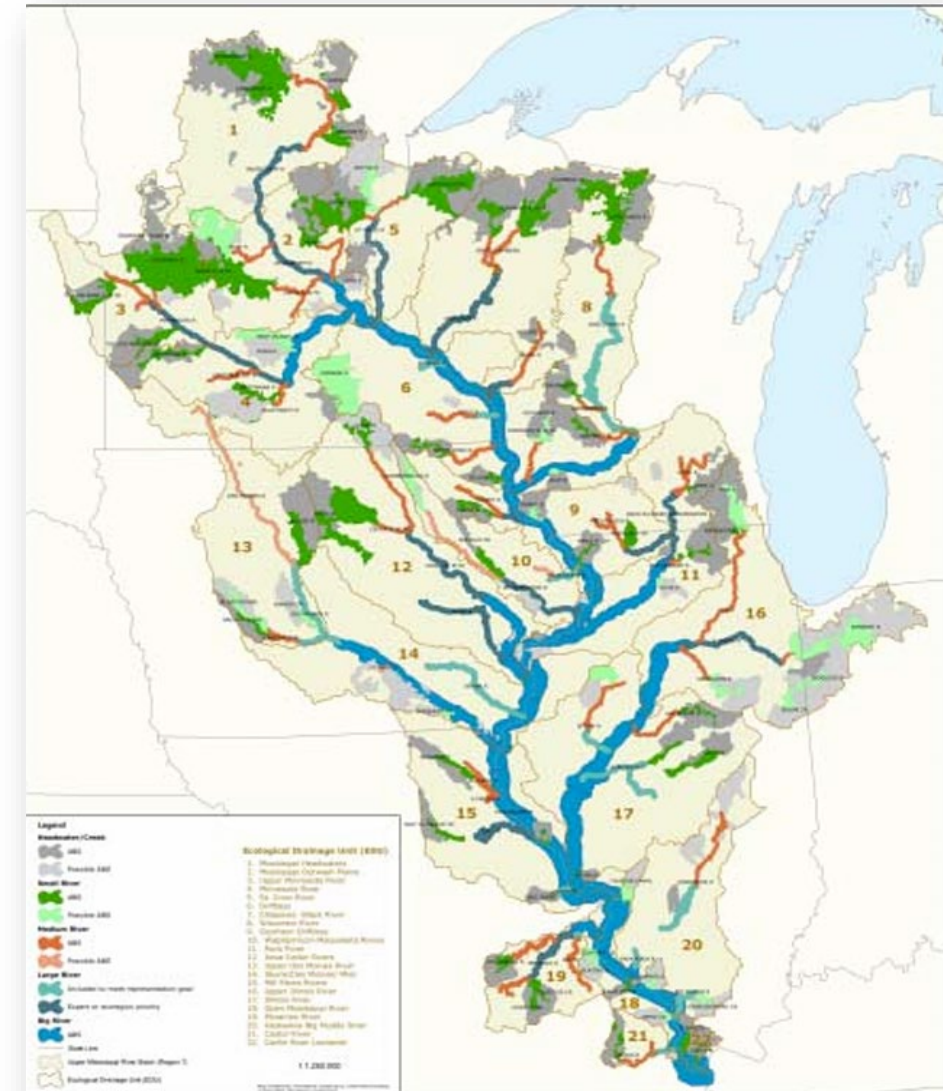
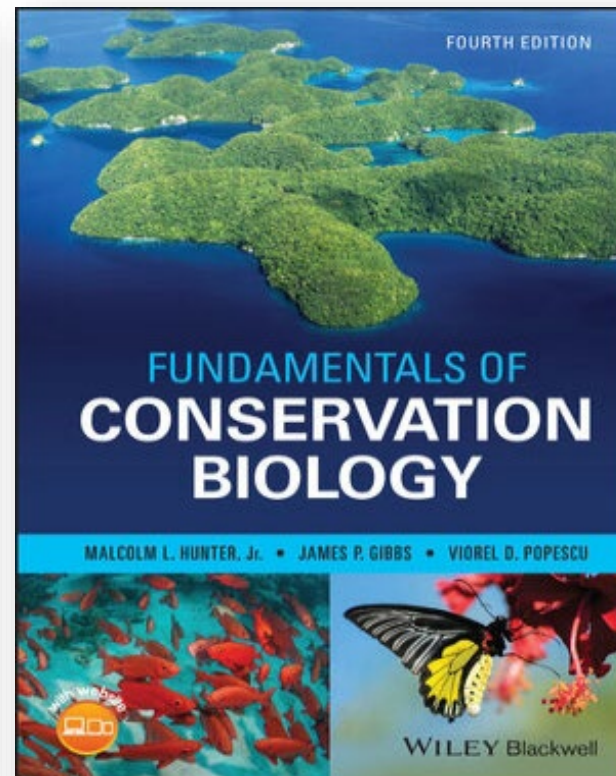
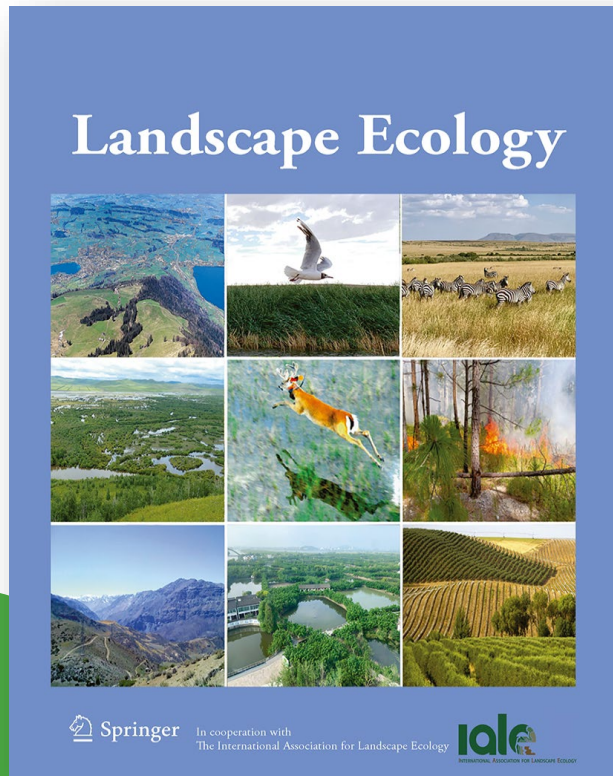
- Understanding Ecological Systems and Scale



Conservation 2.0



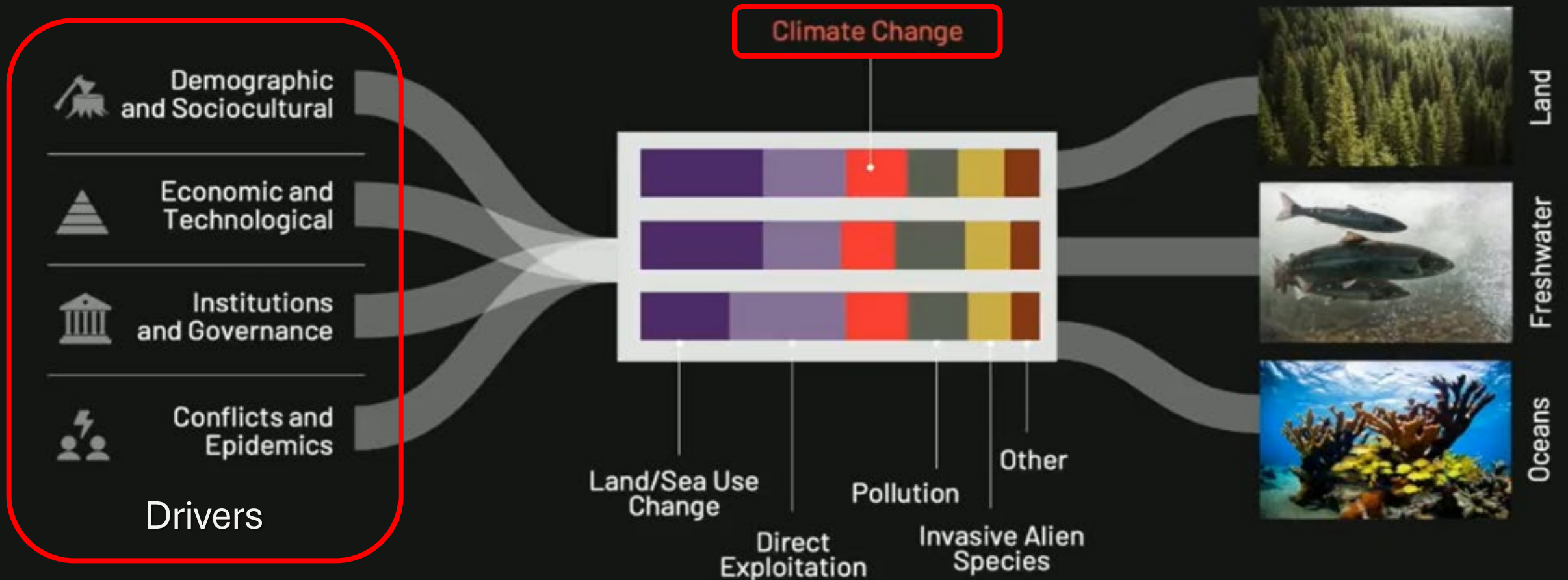
- Understanding Ecological Systems & Scale
 - Increased emphasis on freshwater and process
 - Ecoregional planning
 - Portfolios of places to represent biodiversity



Conservation 3.0



- Understanding Drivers and Climate Crisis
 - Increasing emphasis on influencing drivers
 - Increasing emphasis on climate mitigation & adaptation



Conservation 4.0

- Resilience for People and Nature



**Resilient ecosystems support people.
Resilient communities sustain ecosystems.**



Credit: Nathaniel Ondracek

Cuyahoga Valley National Park

Becoming the Organization We Need to Become



- Stay True to Our Work Being..
 - Grounded in Science
 - Committed to Our Values
 - Rooted in Place, People and Partnerships
- Grow and Evolve to..
 - Be outcome driven, bolder, more collaborative
 - Influence drivers
 - Create durable financing
 - Advancing equitable conservation



The Midwest

2030 Goals

Climate Mitigation

100K tons CO₂e/year

Climate Adaptation

196K People

Healthy Land

71M hectares Lands

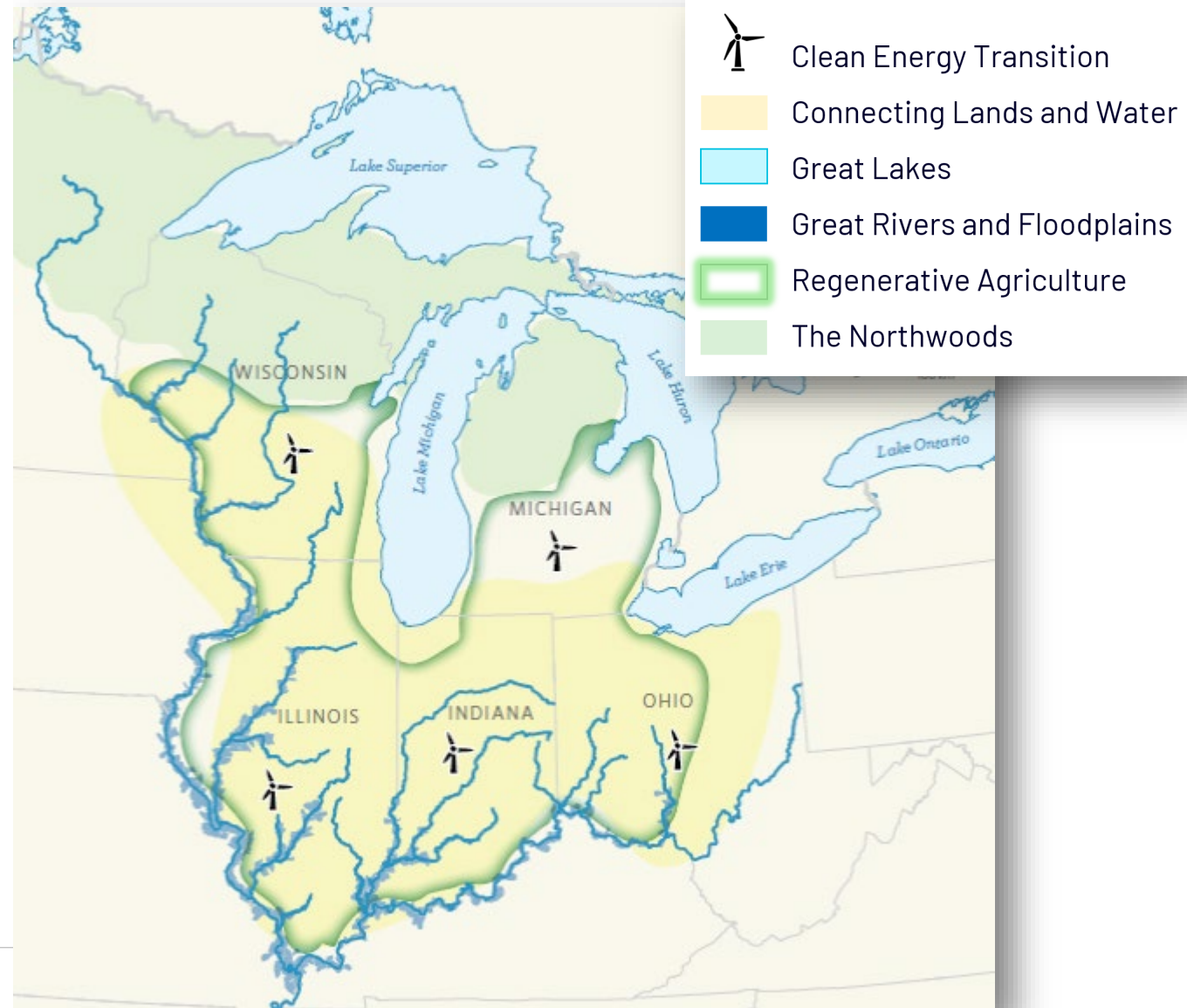
Healthy Freshwater

11M hectares Lakes & Wetlands
85k kilometers River Systems

People

45K People

includes targets from neighboring divisions



Combatting Climate Change

Through Science, Policy and Partnerships



Clean Energy Transition



Powering with Policy & Partnerships



**Over 1M acres of potential
in IL, IN and OH alone**

Mining the Sun

Increasing clean energy development on former mine lands and brownfields

Renewables for Good

Advancing best practices and standards to strengthen public support for renewable energy

Clean Energy Compass

Examples of how the Compass can improve 3C outcomes:

Climate

- County planners easily identify areas that can be zoned for future clean energy development, making it smoother for clean energy to be built.
- Developers and farmers recognize a farming community's long-term water constraints and partner to explore future solar development which would reduce water use.

Conservation

- A solar developer identifies big game migration routes crossing the project and adds movement corridors to the project design.
- A wind developer sees that bats roost, forage or migrate near a proposed project site and incorporates deterrent technologies and curtailment measures into the design.

Communities

- An economic development authority identifies where clean energy development would help revitalize the economy, and partners with the local government to attract investments.
- Communities work directly with clean energy developers to tailor project benefits to their needs, such as workforce training and local hiring benefits.

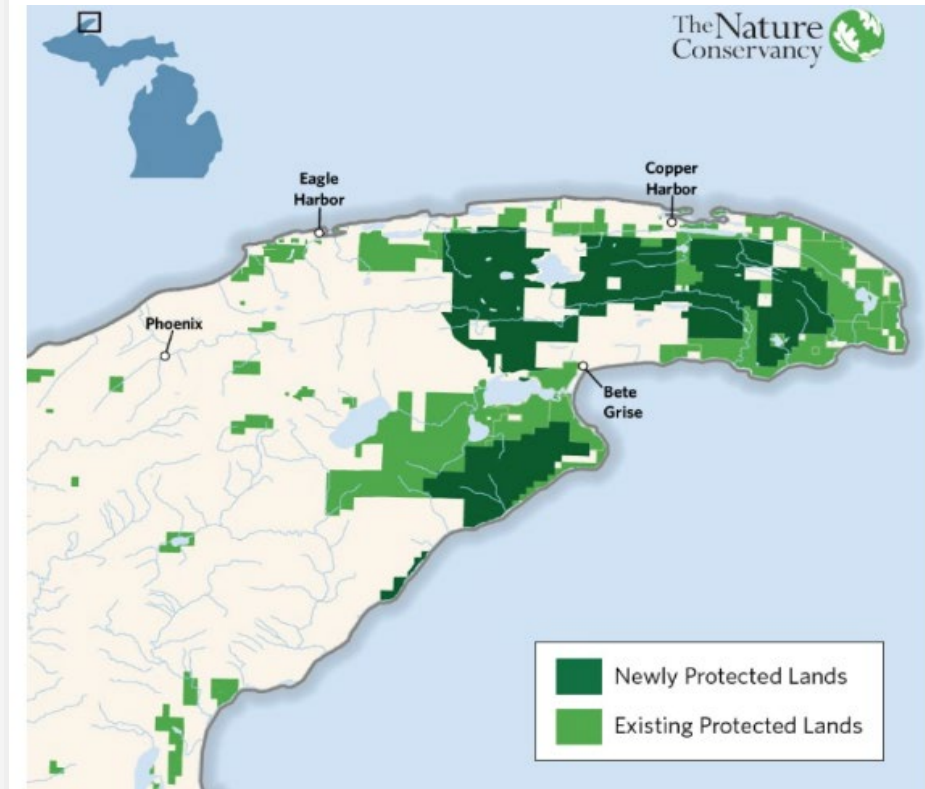
Enabling Socioecological Resilience



- Sustain ecological processes and climate resilience
- Support local forest economy, keep public access
- Advance co-stewardship and durable governance

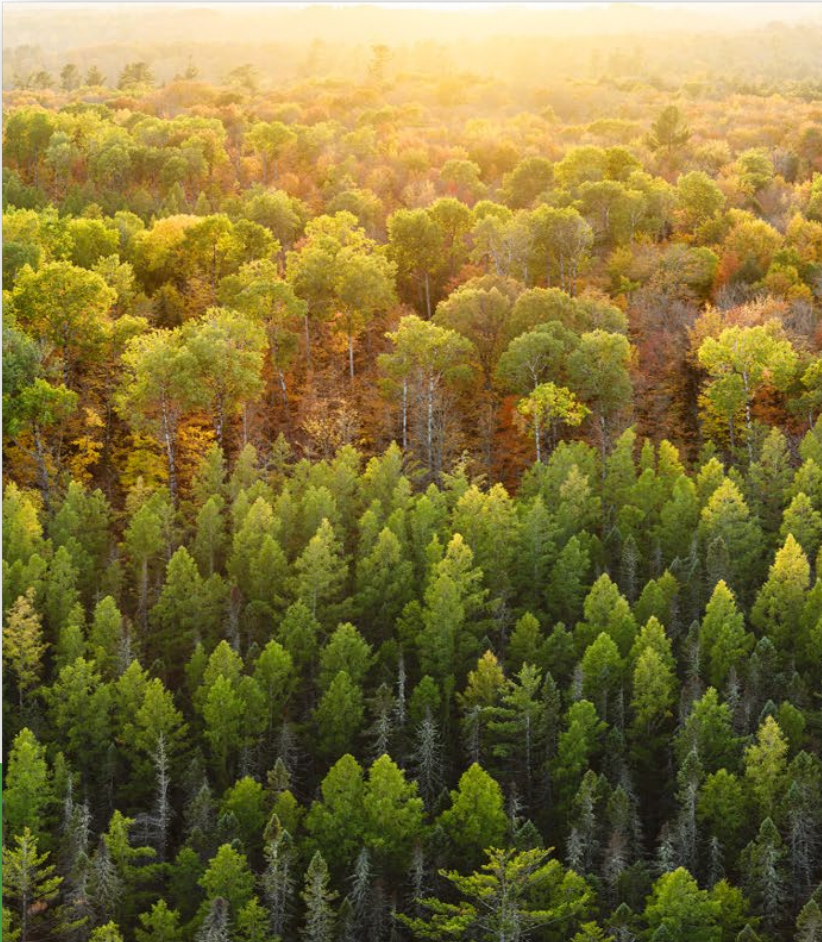


Keweenaw Heartlands 32,000 Acres



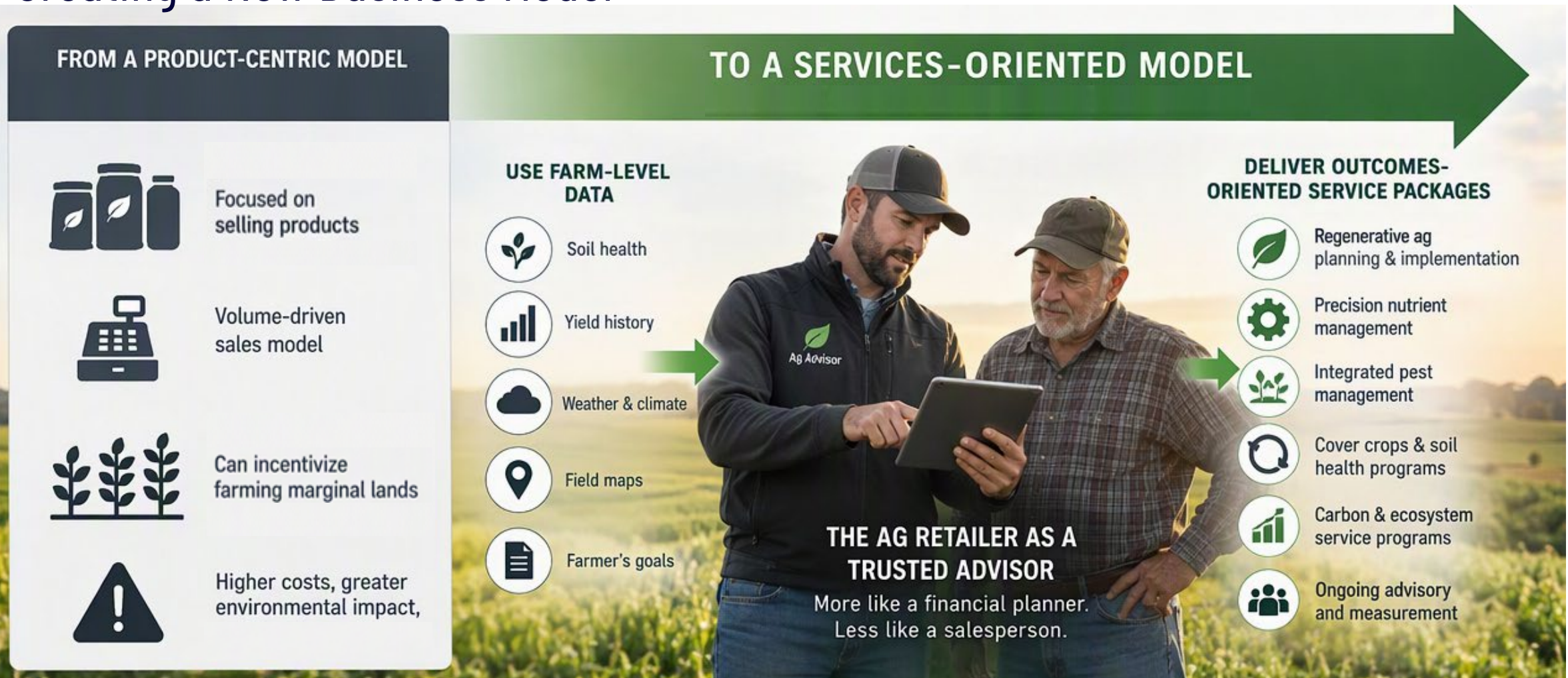
Fostering Sustainable Forest Management

By Creating New Forest Product Markets for Low Value Timber



Increasing Adoption of Regenerative Agriculture

By Creating a New Business Model



Increasing and Diversifying Durable Conservation Funding



By Making the Connections between People and Nature Clearer

How Hoosiers View Indiana's Water Protection

Based on a 2024 poll commissioned by The Nature Conservancy



95%

agree that water in Indiana is a resource that should be protected.



82%

agree that Indiana should have a comprehensive state policy to manage its water resources.



81%

agree that protecting Indiana's water and other natural resources is important to their voting decisions in state elections.



Pickeral Creek Coastal Wetland Restoration

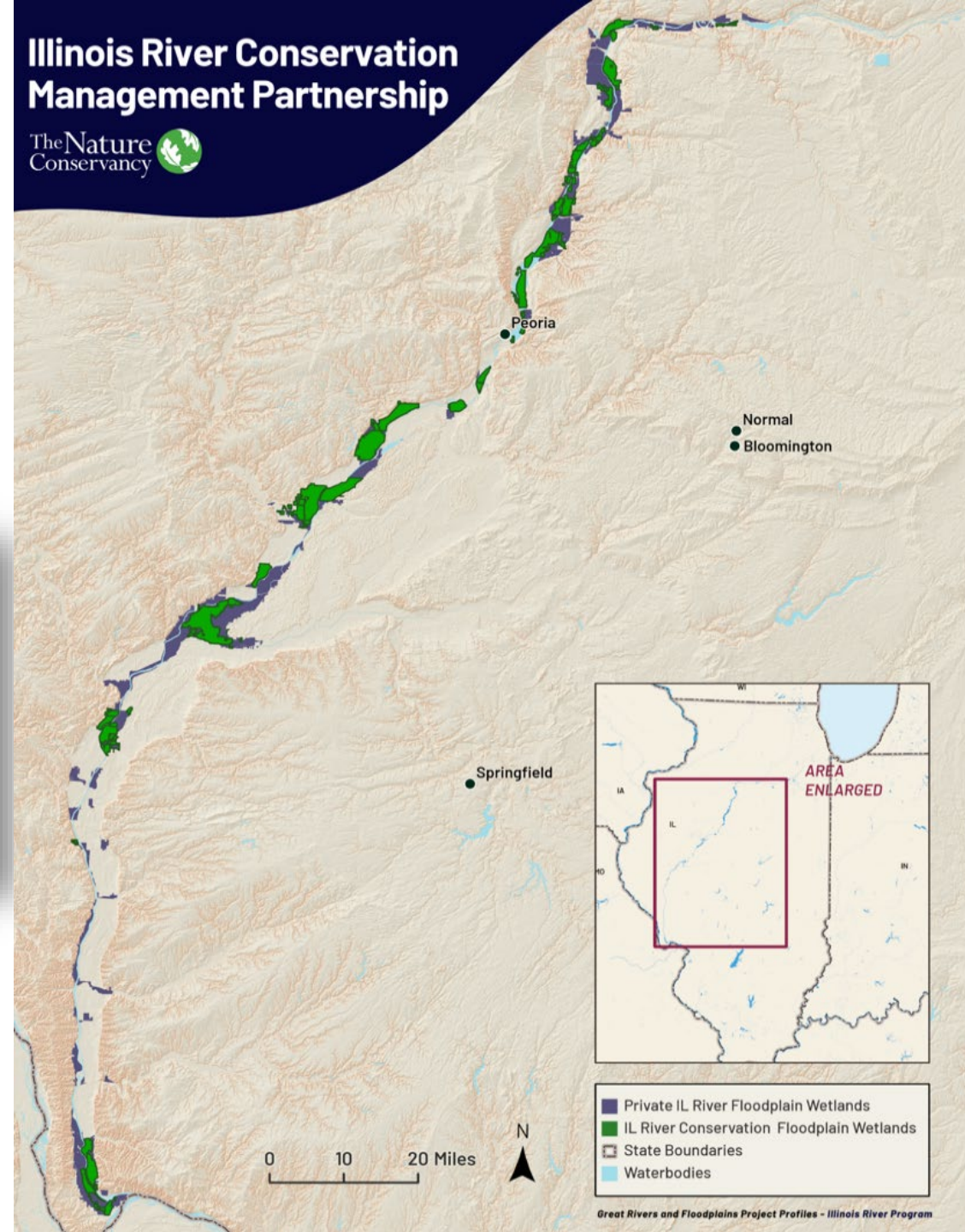


Facilitating Collective Action and Impact at Scale

Through Broad Partnerships and Shared Visions



~ 100K acres of potential floodplain restoration

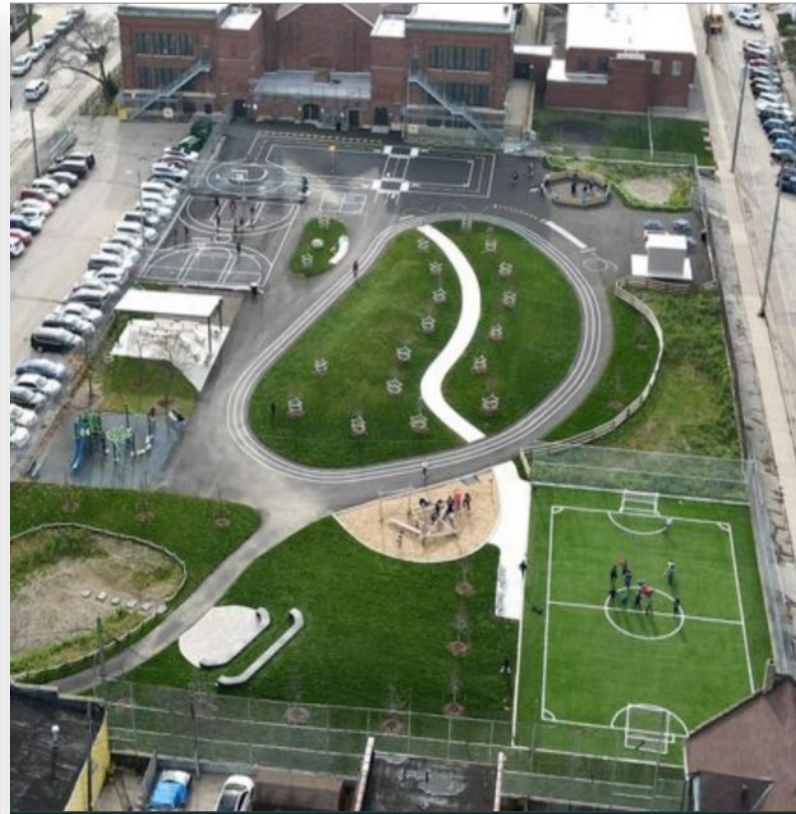


Creating a More Equitable and Resilient Future

Through Deep Community Partnerships



Chicago, IL



Milwaukee, WI



East Chicago, IN

Creating a More Equitable and Resilient Future



Through a Deeper Commitment to Indigenous Rights Relations



© Green Bay Press-Gazette

Buffalo Restoration
Program



© Inspired Planet Productions

Reestablishing
Tributary Whitefish



© Alex Goetz/Running Wild Media

Prescribed Fire
Shared Learning

Driving Toward a More Resilient Future

