Dear Friends

For more than 50 years, the “land ethic” Aldo Leopold wrote about in *A Sand County Almanac* has guided our work to empower America’s farmers, ranchers and foresters to recognize and embrace conservation opportunities on their land.

Leopold’s idea of a land ethic is alive and well in the hearts and minds of a growing number of landowners. Given the headwinds facing agriculture in 2020, landowner commitment to conservation efforts that improve the environment and rural economies has never been more urgent.

If a picture really is worth 1,000 words, the following pages will shed light on what a land ethic can look like on today’s agricultural landscape.

Thanks to your support, we’re proud to report that our work with landowners toward better water quality, soil health and wildlife habitat is taking root and growing.

Your investment in our work has also allowed us to build a team that is prepared to confront this era’s greatest environmental challenges. 2019 marked the single greatest expansion of the Foundation’s talent pool in our 53-year history.

We are on the brink of big changes in agriculture and land ownership. Thanks to you, Sand County Foundation and hundreds of thousands of American land stewards are ready to meet those challenges head-on.

Sand County Foundation inspires and enables a growing number of private landowners to ethically manage the natural resources in their care, so future generations have clean and abundant water, healthy soil to support our growing food demands, plentiful habitat for wildlife and opportunities for outdoor recreation.

Lynne Sherrod
Chairman
Sand County Foundation

Kevin McAleese
President and CEO
Sand County Foundation
Sand County Foundation was built more than 50 years ago on an idea advanced by Aldo Leopold, America’s foremost conservation thinker and author of “A Sand County Almanac.”

Leopold inspired landowners to adopt what he called a “land ethic” - a moral responsibility to treat land, water and wildlife with respect.

Today, most of the land in the contiguous U.S. is owned and managed by farmers, ranchers and foresters. Sand County Foundation is inspiring and enabling a growing number of them to become conservation leaders who ethically care for soil, water and wildlife habitat while they work the land.

Here are some of the ways we help landowners express their land ethic.

**ROTATIONAL GRAZING**
Planning when and where livestock graze improves soil health, improves drought resiliency, and enhances feed production.

**RURAL / URBAN WATERSHED COLLABORATION**
Farmers and cities benefit from working together to reduce fertilizer and manure runoff to meet water quality goals.

**普RAIRIE & BUFFER STRIPS**
Native vegetation amid crop fields reduces erosion, and attracts pollinators and other wildlife.

**NO-TILL OR CONSERVATION TILLAGE**
Undisturbed soil minimizes erosion, reduces flooding, and captures carbon.

**COVER CROPS**
Keeping soil covered after harvest protects soil from erosion, reduces nitrate movement into groundwater, and feeds livestock while controlling weeds.

Where Sand County Foundation comes in...

**INFORM**
We research, demonstrate and share practical, scientifically-sound conservation methods that can improve water quality, soil health, habitat and a landowner’s bottom line.

**ENABLE**
We seek policy innovations to scale up conservation on agricultural land by creating incentives and breaking down barriers.

**INSPIRE**
We find and promote the stories of leading land stewards whose conservation successes inspire others.
Leopold Conservation Award

Sand County Foundation created the Leopold Conservation Award program in 2003 to recognize and celebrate landowners committed to a land ethic.

The class of 2019 Leopold Conservation Award recipients demonstrates the many ways farmers, ranchers and foresters are benefiting the environment and their bottom line by embracing conservation practices that conserve water, improve soil health and provide necessary wildlife habitat. This inspiring group includes landowners growing tomatoes in California, managing forests in New England, producing pork in Missouri, and grazing cattle from North Dakota to Texas.

This year, the award program expanded to Montana and the six states that make up New England. In 2020 we’ll welcome the first recipient from New York into an alumni network that is more than 130 strong.

Many Leopold Conservation Award recipients believe so strongly in the program that they have become supporters of it by giving of their time and resources. We talked to one such supporter, Dino Giacomazzi, of Hanford California.

What did receiving the Leopold Conservation Award mean to your family?

It was an honor to be recognized for our work. We’ve been farming this same land for 127 years. Most of the work we have done and decisions we make are about how to manage our land and resources. It’s about sustaining the family business and taking care of the land because it’s the right thing to do for our kids and our community. We didn’t do it thinking there was going to be an award for doing what we’re supposed to do. But what’s great about being recognized is it creates an example about what is possible when you think about the future and you apply the future to the land.

How does the award program inspire farmers and ranchers?

The Leopold Conservation Award encourages landowners to explore new conservation ideas and take risks. But what brings about these opportunities for growth and new ideas isn’t the award itself, it’s that there is a community around the award. Sand County Foundation holds events for award alumni that bring about conversations that wouldn’t happen ordinarily. The people at those meetings are like the one percenters of agriculture in my opinion. Not only are they brilliant but they are caring. They share Aldo Leopold’s view that we can continue to farm and improve the land and restore habitat and live harmoniously with the environment. I say it’s profitable environmentalism. They don’t have to be two different things. Conservation is a mindset. It’s an attitude. And I think the Leopold Conservation Award exemplifies that attitude.

We greatly appreciated the Leopold Conservation Award recognition. Since then, I’ve helped others with nominations and served on the selection committee. I believe if you get something, you have some obligation to give back whether that is in money or time or mentoring people or helping people improve their situation.”

- Dino Giacomazzi, 2012 California Leopold Conservation Award recipient.

Many Leopold Conservation Award recipients believe so strongly in the program that they have become supporters of it by giving of their time and resources. We talked to one such supporter, Dino Giacomazzi, of Hanford California.

What did receiving the Leopold Conservation Award mean to your family?

It was an honor to be recognized for our work. We’ve been farming this same land for 127 years. Most of the work we have done and decisions we make are about how to manage our land and resources. It’s about sustaining the family business and taking care of the land because it’s the right thing to do for our kids and our community. We didn’t do it thinking there was going to be an award for doing what we’re supposed to do. But what’s great about being recognized is it creates an example about what is possible when you think about the future and you apply the future to the land.

How does the award program inspire farmers and ranchers?

The Leopold Conservation Award encourages landowners to explore new conservation ideas and take risks. But what brings about these opportunities for growth and new ideas isn’t the award itself, it’s that there is a community around the award. Sand County Foundation holds events for award alumni that bring about conversations that wouldn’t happen ordinarily. The people at those meetings are like the one percenters of agriculture in my opinion. Not only are they brilliant but they are caring. They share Aldo Leopold’s view that we can continue to farm and improve the land and restore habitat and live harmoniously with the environment. I say it’s profitable environmentalism. They don’t have to be two different things. Conservation is a mindset. It’s an attitude. And I think the Leopold Conservation Award exemplifies that attitude.

“We greatly appreciated the Leopold Conservation Award recognition. Since then, I’ve helped others with nominations and served on the selection committee. I believe if you get something, you have some obligation to give back whether that is in money or time or mentoring people or helping people improve their situation.”

- Dino Giacomazzi, 2012 California Leopold Conservation Award recipient.

Many Leopold Conservation Award recipients believe so strongly in the program that they have become supporters of it by giving of their time and resources. We talked to one such supporter, Dino Giacomazzi, of Hanford California.

What did receiving the Leopold Conservation Award mean to your family?

It was an honor to be recognized for our work. We’ve been farming this same land for 127 years. Most of the work we have done and decisions we make are about how to manage our land and resources. It’s about sustaining the family business and taking care of the land because it’s the right thing to do for our kids and our community. We didn’t do it thinking there was going to be an award for doing what we’re supposed to do. But what’s great about being recognized is it creates an example about what is possible when you think about the future and you apply the future to the land.

How does the award program inspire farmers and ranchers?

The Leopold Conservation Award encourages landowners to explore new conservation ideas and take risks. But what brings about these opportunities for growth and new ideas isn’t the award itself, it’s that there is a community around the award. Sand County Foundation holds events for award alumni that bring about conversations that wouldn’t happen ordinarily. The people at those meetings are like the one percenters of agriculture in my opinion. Not only are they brilliant but they are caring. They share Aldo Leopold’s view that we can continue to farm and improve the land and restore habitat and live harmoniously with the environment. I say it’s profitable environmentalism. They don’t have to be two different things. Conservation is a mindset. It’s an attitude. And I think the Leopold Conservation Award exemplifies that attitude.

“We greatly appreciated the Leopold Conservation Award recognition. Since then, I’ve helped others with nominations and served on the selection committee. I believe if you get something, you have some obligation to give back whether that is in money or time or mentoring people or helping people improve their situation.”

- Dino Giacomazzi, 2012 California Leopold Conservation Award recipient.
More farmers are partnering with us to demonstrate how planting native grasses and wildflowers next to crop fields can reduce soil erosion, improve water quality and provide wildlife habitat. Greater adoption of these prairie filter strips is expected thanks to their recent inclusion in the federal Conservation Reserve Program.

In 2019, we expanded the number of schools in our pollinator habitat grant program. Agriculture and science teachers in 22 high schools received native wildflower seedlings, a training webinar and $1,000 grants to engage students in establishing habitat on local farmland for insect pollinators and imperiled monarch butterflies.

Leaders representing 40 watersheds engaged at our 11th Leadership for Midwestern Watersheds forum. These annual convenings promote collaboration to scale-up project success and accelerate measurable water quality improvements.
Prioritizing Resources to Meet Water Quality Goals. The nation’s water quality is dependent on past, current and future land use and management decisions. To align priorities towards meeting national goals, Sand County Foundation conducted a comprehensive agricultural water quality assessment in partnership with more than 30 agriculture and water quality experts. The report identified primary focus areas critical to advancing conservation on agricultural land. These five areas of emphasis present opportunities where funding and support should be prioritized to address the nation’s agricultural water quality challenges.

Creating Urban/Rural Partnerships for Water Quality. When cities work in partnership with farmers to improve water quality, everyone wins. Our team spent part of 2019 negotiating a first of its kind agreement in Iowa that allows cities to meet water quality requirements by working with farmers to implement farm conservation practices that reduce fertilizer and manure runoff. By investing in farm conservation practices in the local watershed, cities could also avoid costly upgrades to water treatment plants. We are extending these opportunities to other cities and states in 2020.

Restoring Monarch Butterfly Habitat. Monarch butterflies are declining, especially on the west coast, and may be listed as an endangered or threatened species. Leaders of the Environmental Policy Innovation Center, a fiscally-sponsored program of Sand County Foundation, were part of the team that developed the largest-ever collaborative effort to help them. The agreement will open the way for highway agencies and power companies to improve and expand habitat for the butterfly across 48 states.

Making the Endangered Species Act Work Better. Finding better, faster, cheaper ways for the nation’s Endangered Species Act to recover rare or declining species is a focus of the Environmental Policy Innovation Center, or EPIC. Our colleague, Jake L, represented EPIC during a segment on CBS Sunday Morning to discuss how to improve the Endangered Species Act for the benefit of wildlife and landowners.
2019

**BY THE NUMBERS**

*OVER*

11,000 LANDOWNERS AND INFLUENCERS ATTENDED EVENTS AND OUTREACH PRESENTATIONS TO LEARN MORE ABOUT CONSERVATION-MINDED FARMING AND RANCHING.

MORE THAN 175 DIVERSE PARTNERS AND SPONSORS MADE THE LEOPOLD CONSERVATION AWARD PROGRAM POSSIBLE IN 20 STATES.

OUR CONSERVATION MESSAGES WERE SEEN MORE THAN 350 MILLION TIMES THROUGH MEDIA COVERAGE!

70 LEADERS REPRESENTING LEOPOLD CONSERVATION AWARD RECIPIENTS MANAGE OVER 2.8 MILLION ACRES.

22 HIGH SCHOOLS RECEIVED GRANTS TO GIVE MORE THAN 600 STUDENTS HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE PLANTING 14,000 POLLINATOR-FRIENDLY PLANTS ON LOCAL FARMLAND.

40 WATERSHEDS ENGAGED AT OUR 11TH ANNUAL LEADERSHIP FOR MIDWESTERN WATERSHEDS FORUM.

70 LEADERS REPRESENTING LEOPOLD CONSERVATION AWARD RECIPIENTS MANAGE OVER 2.8 MILLION ACRES.

22 HIGH SCHOOLS RECEIVED GRANTS TO GIVE MORE THAN 600 STUDENTS HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE PLANTING 14,000 POLLINATOR-FRIENDLY PLANTS ON LOCAL FARMLAND.

6 EXPERIENCED PROFESSIONALS JOINED OUR TEAM.
Thank you to our 2019 donors! Donors support Sand County Foundation’s work to advance voluntary conservation on private land and find solutions to some of the most pressing environmental issues we face. We gratefully acknowledge those who generously donated in 2019 and those who have continually supported us over the years.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOUNDATIONS</th>
<th>ORGANIZATIONS</th>
<th>INDIVIDUAL/FAMILY</th>
<th>GOVERNMENT</th>
<th>BUSINESS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2019 REVENUE SOURCES</td>
<td>2019 REVENUE SOURCES</td>
<td>2019 REVENUE SOURCES</td>
<td>2019 REVENUE SOURCES</td>
<td>2019 REVENUE SOURCES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>9.92%</td>
<td>15.54%</td>
<td>15.82%</td>
<td>49.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Financial Responsibility

#### Assets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSETS</th>
<th>VALUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cash</td>
<td>$16,128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promissory Note Receivable</td>
<td>$405,978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounts Receivable</td>
<td>$1,269,913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepaid Expenses</td>
<td>$19,613</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-term Investments</td>
<td>$9,425,825</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property &amp; Equipment - Net</td>
<td>$6,573</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL ASSETS</strong></td>
<td><strong>$10,254,986</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Liabilities and Net Assets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIABILITIES</th>
<th>VALUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accounts Payable</td>
<td>$38,416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants Payable</td>
<td>$40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Liabilities</td>
<td>$76,317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL LIABILITIES</strong></td>
<td><strong>$154,733</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NET ASSETS</th>
<th>VALUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unrestricted Net Assets</td>
<td>$6,399,588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporarily Restricted Net Assets</td>
<td>$3,700,665</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL NET ASSETS</strong></td>
<td><strong>$10,100,253</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</th>
<th>VALUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</strong></td>
<td><strong>$10,254,986</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sand County Foundation has always been committed to full financial transparency. The Foundation is classified as a 501(c)(3) Public Charity under IRS code. The report of an independent public accounting firm that audits financial statements and our 2019 tax return are available at sandcountyfoundation.org.

In addition, Sand County Foundation conducts organizational and programmatic reviews of its work every three to four years. This interdisciplinary review process, conducted by prominent independent experts and helps guide our priorities and strategies.
Sand County Foundation’s work to inspire more farmers, ranchers and foresters to embrace conservation practices is more important than ever as an estimated two-thirds of American farmland will change hands in the coming decades. Your support, including special gifts to our Campaign for Conservation, helps us build our capacity to address critical environmental issues. Thanks to your contributions in 2019, we expanded our talented team with conservation professionals from Big Sky Country to our nation’s capital. Click here to read more about them.
“Conservation can accomplish its objectives only when it springs from an impelling conviction on the part of private landowners.”

- ALDO LEOPOLD