Dear Friends

Resilience is front and center in the world of agriculture and conservation. American farmers, ranchers and forestland owners showed us in 2020 that they represent the very definition of resilience. In the face of adversity, they not only continued to grow food and fiber; they found new ways to improve water quality, soil health and wildlife habitat for the benefit of all of us.

Resilience took on new meaning for Sand County Foundation in 2020. As a growing organization with an expanding body of work, we achieved great things while overcoming the challenges of COVID-19 and the loss of our beloved founder, Reed Coleman.

Thanks to you, our team discovered new ways to engage landowners in conservation-minded land management. Our on-the-ground research expanded while our outreach and network of partners grew. We also added impressive new talent to our staff.

2020 presented obstacles and unexpected opportunities to advance conservation on working land. We couldn’t have done it without your support.

Thank you!

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.”

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.

**PRAIRIE & 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.

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

**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.
Farmers and ranchers need reliable information about rotational grazing their livestock on cover crops. Sand County Foundation is researching the economic and environmental benefits of this conservation practice. This work with experienced graziers in an environmentally-sensitive region is made possible thanks to a North Central Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education grant. The case studies we produce will help reduce the trial and error of this conservation practice for farmers and ranchers across the country.

A pandemic couldn’t stop our pollinator habitat grant program. Despite virtual classrooms, we supplied agriculture and science teachers in three states with 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.

Our innovative work in the community of Grafton shows how municipalities and farmers within a shared watershed can use conservation practices to protect water quality while reducing infrastructure costs. Last year these efforts saved more than 1,000 pounds of phosphorus from entering the Milwaukee River. With renewed funding from Fund for Lake Michigan in 2020, we will scale-up this effort to expand the benefits into more watersheds.

Our on-the-ground work with landowners is part of growing movement that shows how planting native grasses and wildflowers next to crop fields can reduce soil erosion, improve water quality and provide wildlife habitat. These prairie filter strips were the topic of our first-ever virtual field day in 2020.

Our Leadership for Midwestern Watersheds forum is an annual event for conservation professionals that promotes collaboration to scale-up project success and accelerate measurable water quality improvements. Our pivot to a virtual event was a success, with a record number of attendees tuning in to learn about effective communication in challenging times. We also surveyed more than 100 watershed project leaders to explore their professional development needs.
Securing Urban/Rural Partnerships for Better Water Quality:

We all want and need clean water, so Sand County Foundation and the Environmental Policy Innovation Center are leading an effort to forge partnerships between municipalities in the Mississippi River Basin and the farmers in their watersheds to improve water quality and save taxpayer dollars. Through specially-drafted agreements, these municipal/agricultural partnerships provide an avenue for municipal water treatment plants to achieve their clean water discharge requirements by investing in conservation practices on nearby farms. Thanks to these creative agreements, cities may be able to avoid making costly upgrades to their water treatment plants, and usually can achieve compliance at less cost. The benefits are not just economic. Relationships form between urban and rural citizens; improved water quality helps many drinking water utilities; and farm conservation practices often improve wildlife habitat, reduce flooding and improve the farm’s bottom line. With funding from the Walton Family Foundation, we secured three such partnerships in Iowa in 2020, with many more on the horizon in other states in the region.

The Department of Defense (DoD) manages some of the most valuable land in the U.S. for conservation biodiversity and fresh water. In the coming decades, it will need more land, air, and ocean space to accommodate hypersonic weapons and other technological advances. These changes will likely result in the DoD needing to manage, access, or put use restrictions on millions of additional acres beyond the 27 million acres under its control today. Agriculture and conservation lands can make the best neighbors for Department of Defense activities, so there are many win-win outcomes possible in the future. The Environmental Policy Innovation Center (EPIC), a fiscally sponsored program of Sand County Foundation, issued recommendations for DoD that include making improvements to Endangered Species Act policies that incentivize the military to restore or enhance species in one area in exchange for flexibility in using other areas for more significant training. Another recommendation seeks expanded funding for a program DoD can use to protect farmland and rangeland from development. Visit sandcountyfoundation.org/publications for the full report.

Working with partners and legislators, the EPIC team put together the first-ever Comprehensive Conservation Finance Legislation in Maryland that will serve as a model for other states. The bill, which has bi-partisan support, would make more than a dozen changes in state programs leading to private investment in efforts to improve water quality and address climate change and other issues. The legislation would make Maryland the first in the nation to define “blue infrastructure,” put environmental outcomes into state contracting, create a comprehensive approach to state procurement that pays for success, and build the value of natural assets into local government balance sheets.
Leopold Conservation Award
Sand County Foundation launched the Leopold Conservation Award Program nearly 20 years ago in Colorado to recognize and celebrate landowners for their achievements in conservation success.

American Farmland Trust became our national sponsor, joining dozens of state-level partners and sponsors who present the award with us in a growing number of states.

In 2020, a diverse and inspiring group of award recipients joined an alumni network that recently grew to 150 strong. They include landowners who manage cranberry bogs in New England, milk cows in Pennsylvania, graze cattle on the Great Plains, and care for almond groves in California.

The award expanded to New York in 2020, and we will welcome the first recipients from New Mexico and Maryland in 2021.

Read and Watch the stories of each 2020 Leopold Conservation Award recipient at sandcountyfoundation.org/LCA20

Land Ethic Mentorship
For Historically Underserved Farmers & Ranchers

Underserved farmers and ranchers in the U.S. stand to gain from Sand County Foundation’s Land Ethic Mentorship Program launched this year. It links our tremendous network of Leopold Conservation Award alumni with historically underserved farmers and ranchers including beginners, socially disadvantaged minorities, military veterans new to farming, and those with limited resources. Research shows these individuals often farm on environmentally-sensitive land. Being connected with mentors to offer advice on conservation practices and programs can build confidence that benefits their business and the landscape.
2020
BY THE NUMBERS

NEARLY 1,000 HOURS OF ONE-ON-ONE FARMER OUTREACH

OUR CONSERVATION MESSAGES WERE SEEN MORE THAN 55 MILLION TIMES THROUGH MEDIA COVERAGE ACROSS THE U.S.

MORE THAN 200 DIVERSE PARTNERS AND SPONSORS MADE THE LEOPOLD CONSERVATION AWARD PROGRAM POSSIBLE IN 20 STATES

2020 ENGAGED STUDENTS IN HANDS-ON POLLINATOR HABITAT PLANTING.

150 WATERSHED LEADERS FROM 8 STATES ENGAGED IN OUR 12TH ANNUAL (FIRST VIRTUAL) LEADERSHIP FOR MIDWESTERN WATERSHEDS * FORUM *

30 INVITED PRESENTATIONS TO LOCAL, STATE AND NATIONAL AUDIENCES.

MORE THAN 24 WEBINARS, VIRTUAL FIELD DAYS, AND VIRTUAL LANDOWNER RECOGNITION EVENTS.

LEOPOLD CONSERVATION AWARD RECIPIENTS NOW MANAGE OVER 3 MILLION ACRES
THANK YOU TO OUR 2020 DONORS AND PARTNERS!

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 2020 and those who have continually supported us over the years.

Agribusiness Association of Kentucky
Greg Alexander

Helen Alexander

Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay
Mary Alexander

Alliance for the Future of Agriculture in Nebraska
Cheryl & Donnors Alves
Amazon Smile Foundation

American AgCredit

American Farmland Trust

Hannah Anderson

APEX Ocean Energy

Steven Applebaum

Association of Missouri Electric Cooperatives

Audubon Dakota

Audubon Nebraska

Bad River Ranches

Bass Electric Power Cooperative

Ramona & Lee Bass

S.D. Bechtel Jr. Foundation

Mary Bates

Basket Electric Power Cooperative

Audubon Nebraska

Belle Fourche River Watershed Partnership

Mercy

Mike Blech

Anne Bolz

James C. Boyce, Jr.

Brenda & Donald Boydston

Bradley Impact Fund

Dorothy Bradley

Alby & Mike Brand

George Brown

Nancy & James Bruns

Dana & Homer Buell

Tina Bufton

BullerPrinces Inc.

Ingrid C. Burke

Burleigh County Soil Conservation District

Six & Tom Bush

Thomas Caldwell

California Farm Bureau Federation

California LCA Recipient Alumni

Amy & Gary Cammack

Laurel Campbell & Scott Dahlberg

Card

Clare & Matthew Carbon

Susan & Stephen Carpenter

Kim & Dick Calos

Jim & William Cato Center for Growth and Opportunity

Chesapeake Conservancy

Chicago Capital LLC

Phyllis Lucas & Cind Christian

Constance R Coleman

Ann & Reed Coleman

Colorado Cattlemen’s Agricultural Land Trust

Colorado Cattlemen’s Association

Colorado State University Extension

Compeer Financial

Conserve

Jennifer & Kevin Conrad

Conservation Technology Information Center

Cornell Cooperative Extension

Cortex

Coral

Cora Crouch Ranch

CropLife America

Heil & Lewis Crouch

Culver’s

Amy & Jay Czarapata

Davis Partners of Wisconsin

Dartford Power Cooperative

Daybreak Ranch

Jasmin & Dustin DeDierich

Nancy & Marc DeLong

Delta Waterfowl

Doug Christian & Glenn Chambless

Jean & Harvey Dropple

Doug Droessler

Ducks Unlimited, Inc.

Andrew M. Dolig

John P. Donahue

Ecosystem Services Market

Satellite Operations

Sigs & Gerald Emeny

Emmons County Soil Conservation District

EMQ Grinn

David Engstrom & Barbara Coffin

Environmental Consulting & Technology

Environmental Incentives (EPH)

Energy

Farm Credit

Farm Credit Associations of Kansas

Farm Credit East

Farm Credit Mid-America

Teresa & Ryan Fieldgrove

First Dakota National Bank

Paul Francis

Fund for Lake Michigan

Dorothy Gardner

Bob Gainorini

Deborah & John Gore

Green Cover Seed

Great Lake Sanitary District

Joeet & John Green

Janice Grutzner

Dale Kendal & Brett Kendal

Kurt Kunigri

Sarah Hamer

Alex Haney

Bryan Hanson

Jonathan Hepler, Ph.D.

Orange Humble

Sarah & Tom Hefty

Hinton’s Foundation

Hollis Management International

Hall Forestlands LP

Ann & David Hogue

Iowa Soybean Association

Iowa State University

IPL

ITC Great Plains

Robbi &a &e Jackson

Bruce Jacobs

Susan & Thomas Jarons

John J. Foulich Family Foundation

Doralea J. Johnson

Jean & Scott Johnson

Tom Johnson

Elizabeth Jones

Kansas Association of Conservation Districts

Kansas Department of Agriculture, Division of Conservation

Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism

Kansas Forest Service

Kansas LCA Recipient Alumni

Kendra Keard

Mike L. Kasson

Lori & Bill K餮l

KEM Electric

Kentucky Agricultural Council

Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts

Kentucky Cattlemen’s Association

Kentucky Corn Growers Association

Kentucky Department of Agriculture

Kentucky Department of Fish & Wildlife Resources

Kentucky Farm Bureau Federation

Kentucky Pork Producers

Kentucky Soybean Promotion Board

Kentucky State University

Kentucky Tree Farm Committee

Kentucky Woodland Owners Foundation

Pamela & Jeffrey Kochel

Kellah & Associates

Kestra Angela LLC of Raymond, South Dakota

Gregory Lang

Amelia & Denis Langton

Myrna & &a Langford

Mary Chris && John Laub

Stephanie Lauder

David Lee

Jim Lemoyne

B. Marisse Lloyd

Madison County Corporation

Norm & John Magnuson

Tom & Dave Mathis

Maurice Vendenbos

Tricia Wheeler & Kevin McKeon

Otto & Timothy McCoy

McDonald’s USA

McKinnon Foundation

Craig McHale

Mike McNemey

MFA, Inc.

Kathleen Mielk

Millburn Seeds

Matt Miller

Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewage District

Mississippi Association of Soil & Water Districts

Mazantique-Ventric

Tricia Wheeler & Kevin McKeon

Otto & Timothy McCoy

McDonald’s USA

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Craig McHale

Mike McNemey

MFA, Inc.

Kathleen Mielk

Millburn Seeds

Matt Miller

Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewage District

Mississippi Association of Soil & Water Districts
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Lance Irving
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Program Assistant

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Katie Tiemeyer
Soil Conservationist

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Thane Zale
Vice President - Real Estate - Northwestern Mutual, Wisconsin

Director Emeritus
Indy Burke, Ph.D.
Dean - Yale School of the Environment, Connecticut

Sand County Foundation’s longtime President, Brent Haglund, who serves on our board of directors and chairs the science advisory committee, has always had an uncanny ability to inspire landowners to become better land stewards. His dedication to science-based approaches to environmental improvement grew Sand County Foundation’s impact nationally and abroad.

To know Brent is to know that his interest in the natural world and his dedication to a land ethic began at a very young age. He believes conservation and environmental improvement don’t need to be complicated or expensive, and that such work should be within every citizen’s reach, especially young people.

The Haglund Ecology Fund, established in 2020 by Brent’s siblings, will provide grants to motivate and empower land stewards, environmental educators and young people across the U.S.

Visit sandcountyfoundation.org/donate to make a special gift in recognition of Brent’s ongoing dedication to advancing science-based conservation approaches.

“Our family created the Haglund Ecology Fund to honor the life’s work of Brent Haglund, and engage teachers, students and other young leaders in environmental stewardship.”

– BRENDA (HAGLUND) CHRISTENSEN
Sand County Foundation’s work to inspire more farmers, ranchers and forestland owners 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. sandcountyfoundation.org/donate

Financial Responsibility

**Assets**

<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td>Cash</td>
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<td>Property &amp; Equipment - Net</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL ASSETS</strong></td>
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**Liabilities and Net Assets**

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<table>
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<th>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</strong></td>
<td><strong>$12,263,056</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 auditor, 2020 audited financial statements and our 2020 tax return are available at sandcountyfoundation.org

Sand County Foundation has an operating budget of approximately $3 million. Our board-designated investments are valued at approximately $11 million. Within our net assets are various funds we use to fund operations, invest in high-impact conservation partnerships, and expand outreach.
Reed Coleman, Sand County Foundation’s Founder and Chairman Emeritus, was born in 1933 in Madison, Wisconsin, where he lived most of his life. On many weekends during elementary and high school, Reed joined his parents for the short trip north of Madison to their rural property near the banks of the Wisconsin River.

Reed’s father, Tom Coleman, a Madison industrialist, was a dear friend of conservation visionary Aldo Leopold. In fact, he asked Leopold’s wife, Estella, to be Reed’s Godmother. Shortly after Aldo Leopold purchased his now famous Shack property, the Colemans became neighbors and partners in a land restoration effort. Tom Coleman had the practical insight to link parcels of land to enhance wildlife habitat. He and Leopold were hunting and fishing buddies who passed down to their children their love of the outdoors and interest in the natural world.

In his later years, Reed fondly recalled time spent at the Shack with some of the Leopold children. After helping to plant trees as part of the restoration of the once farmed but badly depleted properties, they played a game in the woods that they called swinging birches. Reed explained it, “You pick a birch tree of a certain size and suppleness, and you shimmy up it. Then you grab it with both hands and you swing out. If you’ve made a good decision it’ll gently drop you down to the ground, and then you can let go and it’ll go back up. I hate to say it, but those wonderful Leopold children used to stick me on a stiff birch and leave me about 20 feet off the ground.”

A lifelong outdoorsman dedicated to Leopold’s idea of a land ethic, Reed earned a degree in ecology at Northwestern University. He graduated in 1955, and went on to serve in the United State Air Force as an intelligence officer.

In 1964, when Reed’s father passed away, Reed replaced him at the helm of the family-owned business, Madison-Kipp Corporation. At 31-years-old, with a growing family of his own, he became the third generation of the Coleman family to lead the enterprise, and remained chairman of the board until 2016.

In the mid 1960s, about 15 years after the death of Aldo Leopold, floodplain lands close to the Leopold Shack were being subdivided. Reed secured voluntary agreements among neighboring landowners to protect the Shack area from development. There was no roadmap to follow to execute such an agreement, no existing land trusts with comparable voluntary agreements to emulate. But in the end, all of the neighboring landowners signed on to create what they called the Leopold Memorial Reserve – a pioneering venture in cooperative land conservation that ultimately brought Sand County Foundation to life.

Reed’s skilled executive leadership ability, shrewd intellect, unyielding commitment to sound principles, and sense of humor not only led Sand County Foundation through 50 years of improving private land conservation across the U.S. and abroad, but it made him a sought-after board member and volunteer leader of many organizations.

He also volunteered his ingenious and creative spirit to benefit numerous nonprofit and civic organizations. His commitment to measurable philanthropy in general, and to his beloved Sand County Foundation in particular, was unwavering but understated.

Honor Reed and the Coleman Family’s conservation legacy by making a gift to the Coleman Family Fund. This special fund supports high-impact, entrepreneurial approaches to conservation on working land.
“It is the individual farmer who must weave the greater part of the rug on which America stands.”

-ALDO LEOPOLD