

PLANNING TO PROTECT THE
**FLORIDA WILDLIFE
CORRIDOR 3.0**

PAYMENT *for* ECOSYSTEM SERVICES:
A Conservation Tool for Florida's Future

Sept. 2, 2026 | Noon to 2 p.m. Eastern



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- Florida Bar Attorneys *(2.5 General CLEs, #2607406N)*
- Florida Environmental Health Professionals *(2 Contact Hours or 0.2 CEUs)*
- Certified Floodplain Managers *(1 CEC)*
- Florida Landscape Architects *(2 DBPR Credits #0015986)*

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Information on professional certification credits for past webinars are available at 1000fof.org/upcoming-webinars/credits

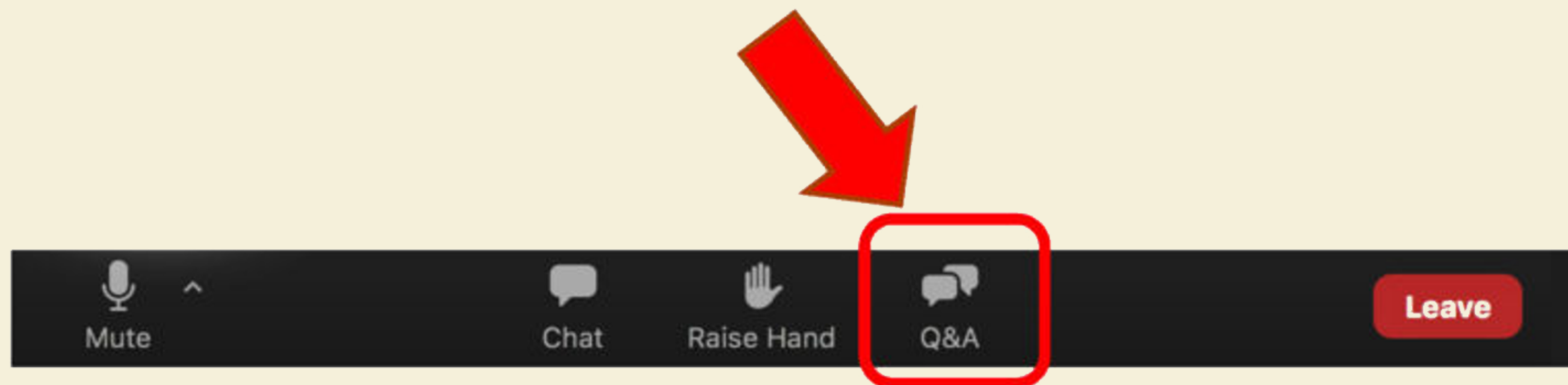
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Questions & Answers

Please submit questions for speakers using the Q&A button on your Zoom control panel.

Keep questions succinct and, if possible, indicate who your question should be directed to.



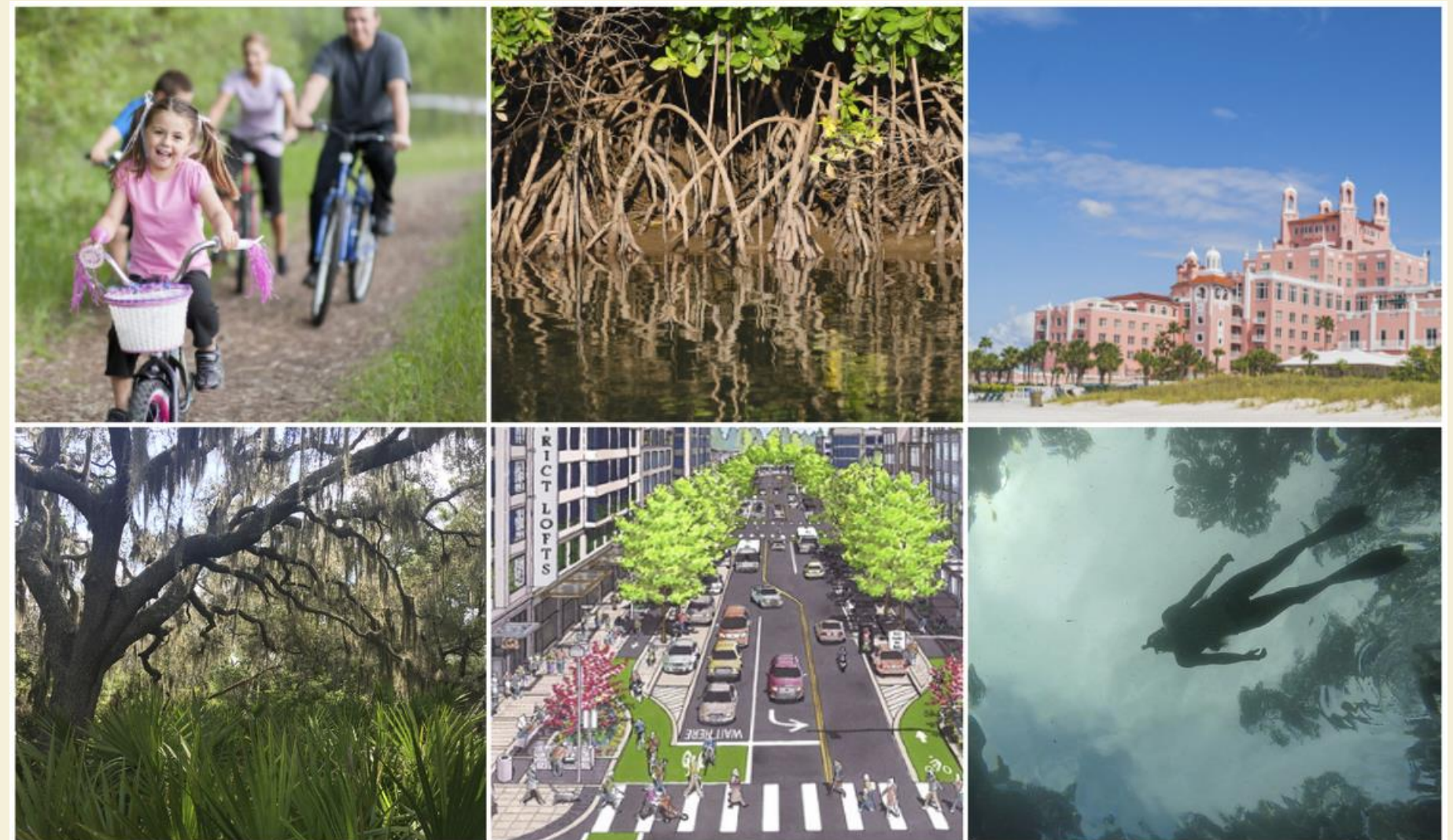


Building Better Communities, Saving Special Places

**We are Florida's leading nonprofit
advocate for sustainable communities**

**Work with citizens, community and
state leaders, conservation and
business groups**

**Educate, advocate and negotiate to
protect Florida's high quality of life**



PLANNING TO PROTECT THE FLORIDA WILDLIFE CORRIDOR 3.0



Payment for Ecosystem Services: *A Conservation Tool for Florida's Future* (12:00 – 2:00 P.M. ET)

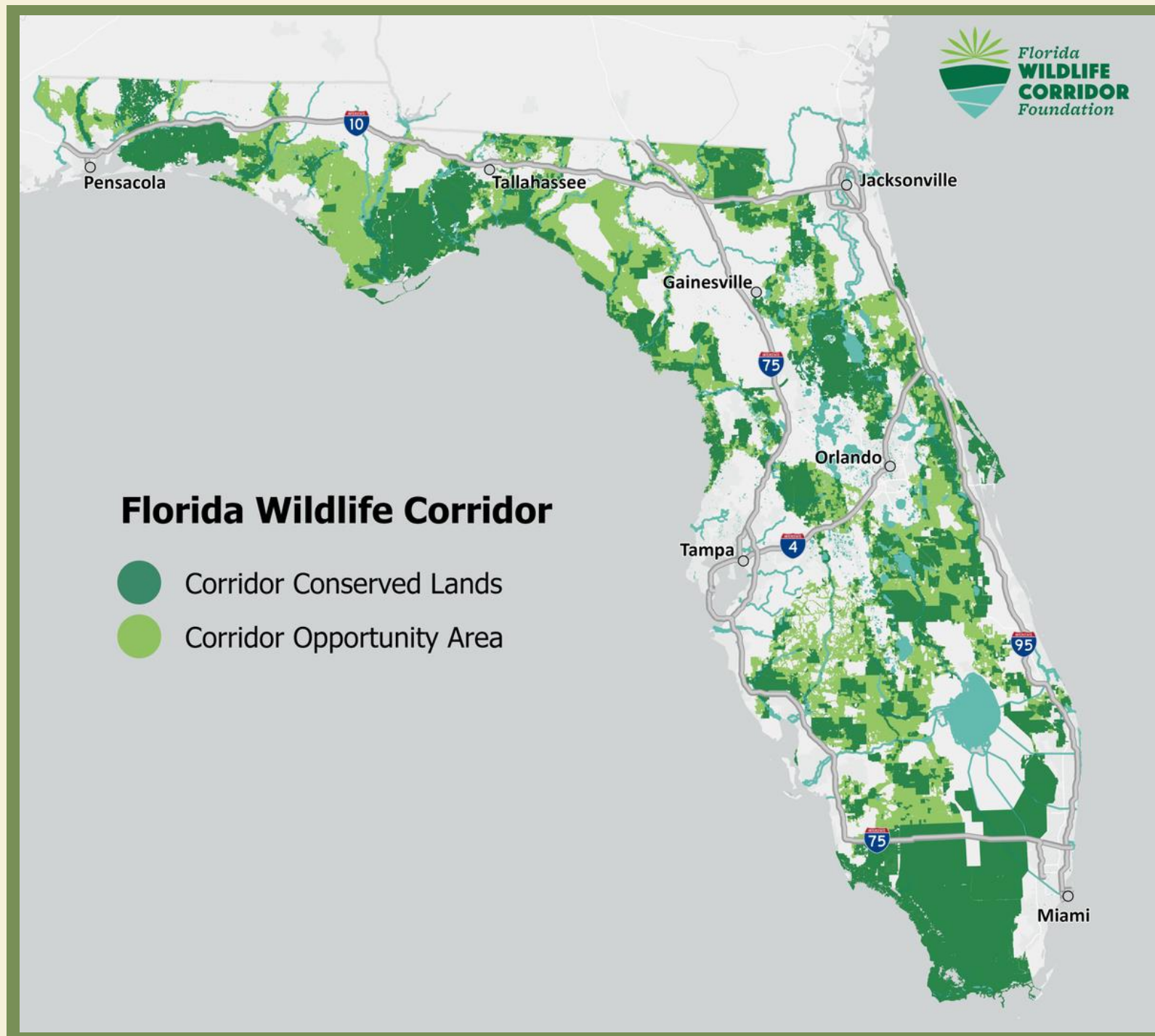


Beyond the Corridor: Transect Planning and Connectivity (12:00 – 2:00 P.M. ET)



Connectivity Across Scales: *Tools and Concepts for the Urban-to-Rural Transect* (12:00 – 2:00 P.M. ET)

The Florida Wildlife Corridor



**10 Million Acres Protected,
8 Million Acres of Opportunity**

**A vast network of forests, rivers, ranches,
and farms that connect the Everglades to
the Georgia and Alabama borders.**

**It's 18 million acres of life-sustaining land
and water where wildlife can still roam
freely and people can hike, paddle, and
thrive.**

UF | Center for Landscape Conservation Planning UNIVERSITY *of* FLORIDA

Established in 2010 to provide an official forum within the University of Florida's College of Design, Construction and Planning for conducting applied research on the relationship between conservation, green infrastructure, and land use.

Affiliated with the Department of Landscape Architecture, forming a bridge between the disciplines of design, planning and wildlife conservation, and providing applied learning opportunities for students.

Results of the Center's research are used to influence public policy through education and direct involvement in the application of relevant science, technology, sound planning principles, and state-of-the-art methods of conservation analysis, planning and management.





Florida
**WILDLIFE
CORRIDOR**
Foundation

The Florida Wildlife Corridor Foundation exists to champion the vision of a statewide network of nearly 18 million acres of connected lands and water supporting wildlife and people.





Live Wildly seeks to balance smart growth, a robust economy, and a connected, resilient landscape so that everyone can Live Wildly for generations to come.



Other Partners



The Florida Smart Agriculture initiative will accelerate and scale the implementation and delivery of climate smart agriculture solutions and ecosystem services that benefit the producers (farmers, ranchers and foresters), the public and the planet.



The Florida Conservation Group focuses on the conservation of Florida's natural and agricultural lands with the goal of advancing science-based land protection in the state of Florida.



Solutions from the Land explores integrated land management solutions to help meet food security, economic development, climate change and conservation of biodiversity goals.



Laila Racevskis, Ph.D.

The Balmoral Group

Laila Racevskis, Ph.D., is the Director of Economics and Policy for The Balmoral Group where she brings 20 years of experience working in environmental policy, natural resource economics, program evaluation, and stakeholder engagement.

Her career includes a decade of service conducting legislative research on state and local government policy issues.

Her current areas of focus include ecosystem service valuation, including cost-benefit analyses that account for natural resource values; payment for ecosystem services (PES) program design; and collaborative process development.



Parker Hall

Tiger Bay Ranch

Parker Hall was raised on his family ranch, Tiger Bay Ranch, in DeSoto County, Florida and is now responsible for its day-to-day operation. He is a 4th generation Rancher.

The Ranch received the Florida Fish and Wildlife Habitat Recognition Award in 2024 and the This Farm CARES Designation from the Florida Farm Bureau in 2019.

Parker currently serves as President of the DeSoto County Chamber of Commerce, Foundation Board President for the South Florida State College, and General Counsel for the Arcadia Rodeo Association.



Chad Ellis

Texas Agricultural Land Trust

Chad Ellis serves as the CEO of the Texas Agricultural Land Trust (TALT). He grew up on his family's ranch in Lohn in the heart of Texas. His rural upbringing engendered a love for the hunting, fishing, and ranching heritage he cherishes.

He worked with the USDA's NRCS in Florida, Texas, and nationally before joining the Noble Research Institute in Oklahoma.

At TALT, his leadership helps landowners find the right tools to keep working lands working and keep their family ranch so they can hand it down to the next generation.



Dr. Thomas Eason

Property & Envir. Research Center

Dr. Thomas Eason serves as Florida Strategic Initiatives Director for the Property and Environment Research Center (PERC), where he advances voluntary, market-based, property rights-grounded conservation across Florida.

A wildlife biologist by training, Dr. Eason brings more than three decades of experience in conservation science, natural resource management, and executive leadership.

Working with landowners, policymakers, and conservation organizations, he champions approaches that align economic incentives with lasting outcomes for the state's land, water, and wildlife.





Payment for Ecosystem Services: A Critical Conservation Tool

Laila Racevskis, Ph.D.
Director of Economics & Policy
The Balmoral Group

1000 Friends of Florida Webinar
September 2, 2026



TBG TEAM



Valerie Seidel

The Balmoral Group
Principal Economist
Resource Economics



Daniel Dourte

The Balmoral Group
Director, Data Science
Hydrologist, Agricultural &
Biological Engineer



Laila Racevskis

The Balmoral Group
Director, Economics & Policy
Lracevskis@balmoralgroup.us
Natural Resource Economist

What Are Payment for Ecosystem Service Programs (PES)?



Voluntary, non-permanent programs that can range from 1 to 30 year agreement terms



Typically designed for **private landowners**, particularly agricultural



Landowner receives a **monetary payment** to conduct (or agree *not* to conduct) specified activities on their land

Landowner is paid to improve or maintain provision of ecosystem services, such as:

Habitat Quality

Habitat Connectivity

Aquifer Recharge

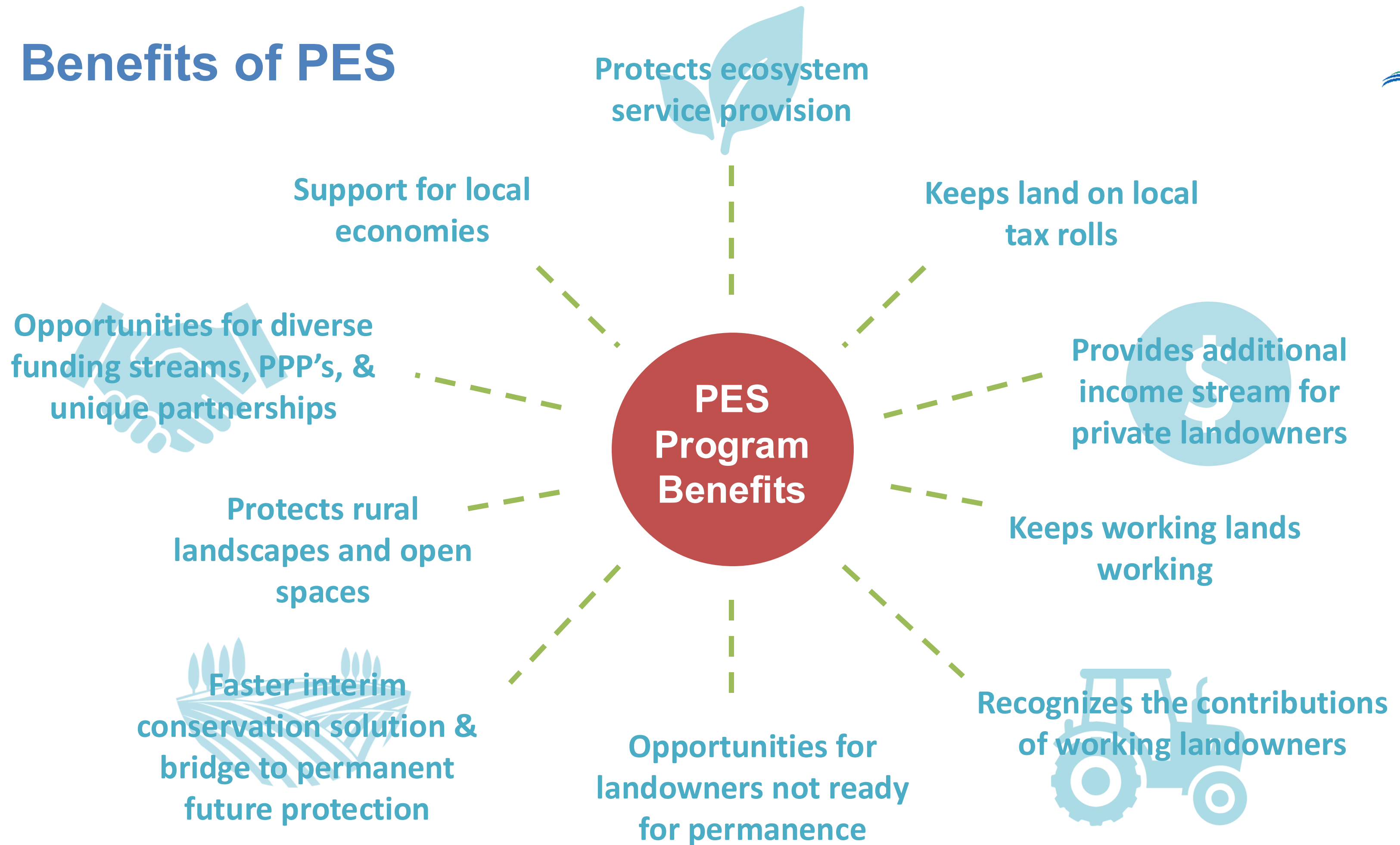
Water Quality

Fire Risk Reduction

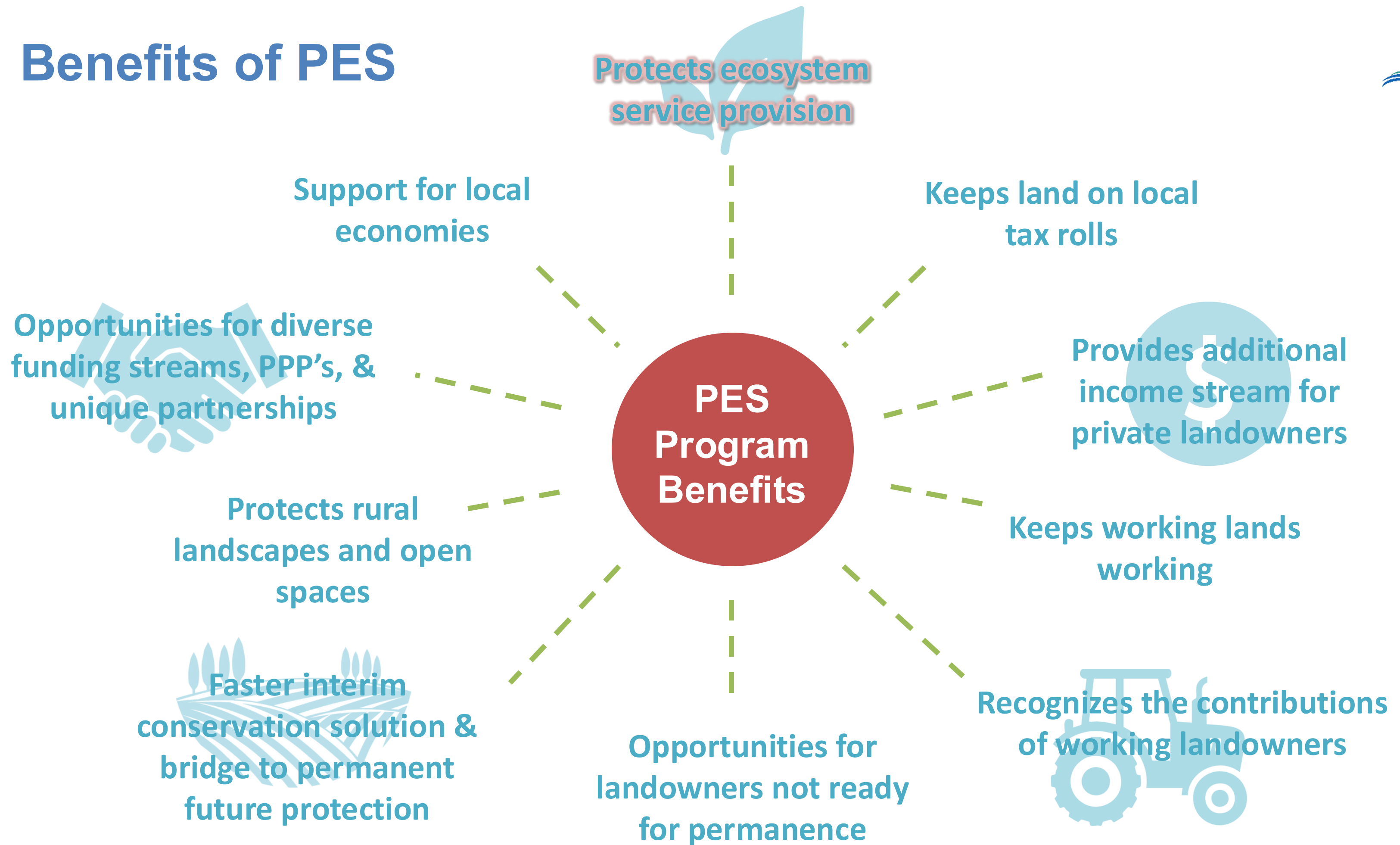
Flood Protection

Programs require **monitoring and third party verification** of ongoing activities, requiring site visits and/or desktop review of data such as **NASA Earth Observations**

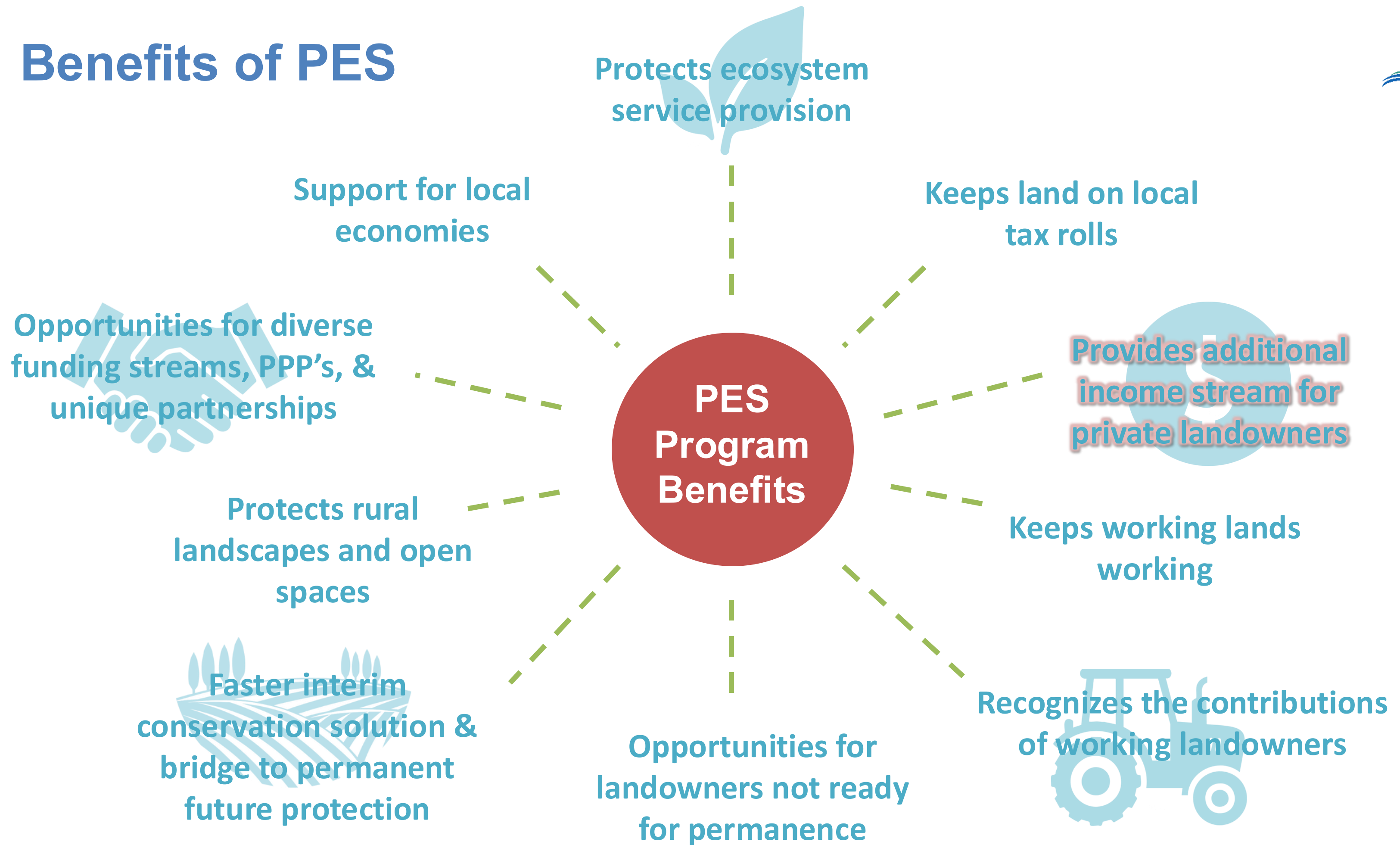
Benefits of PES



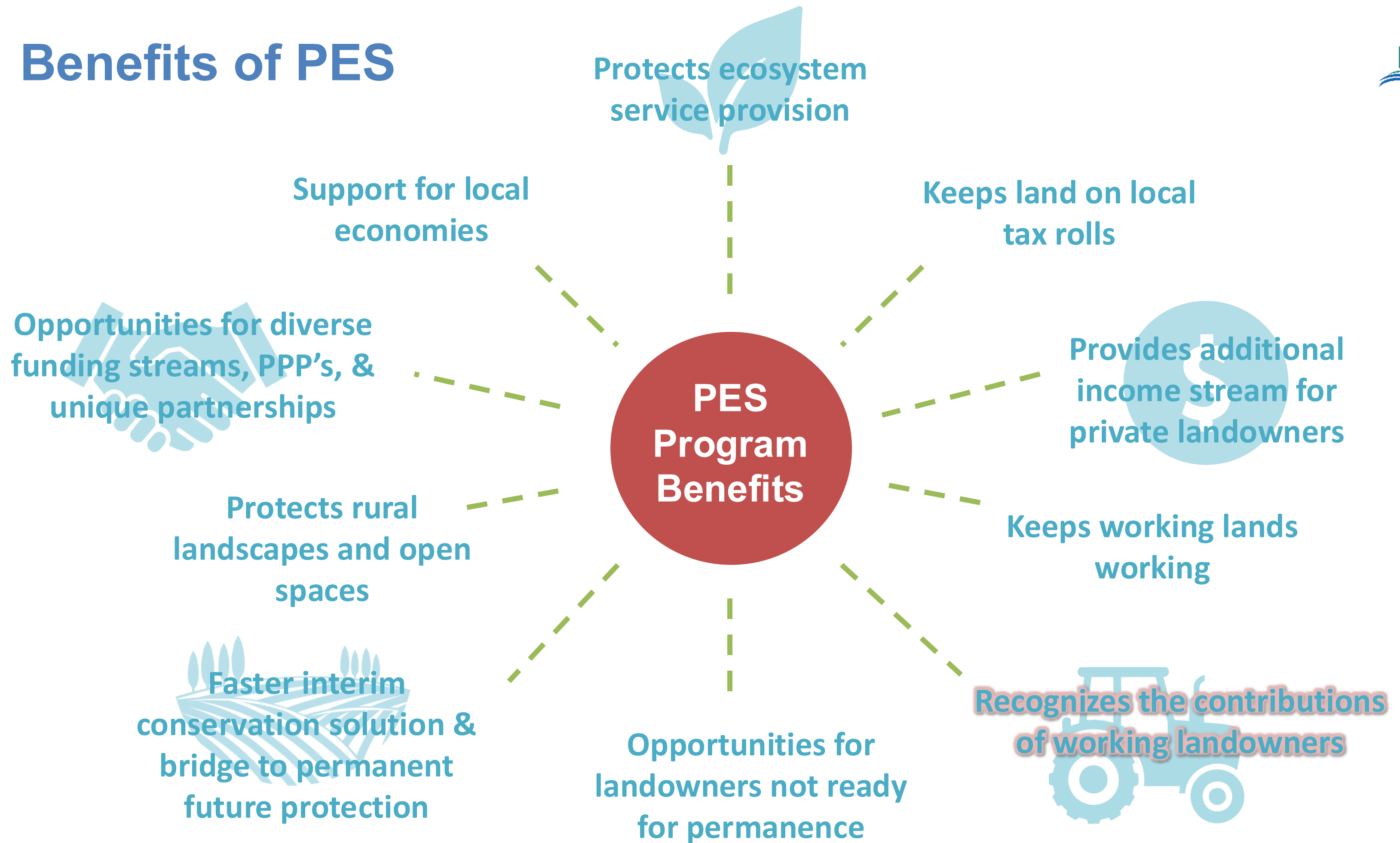
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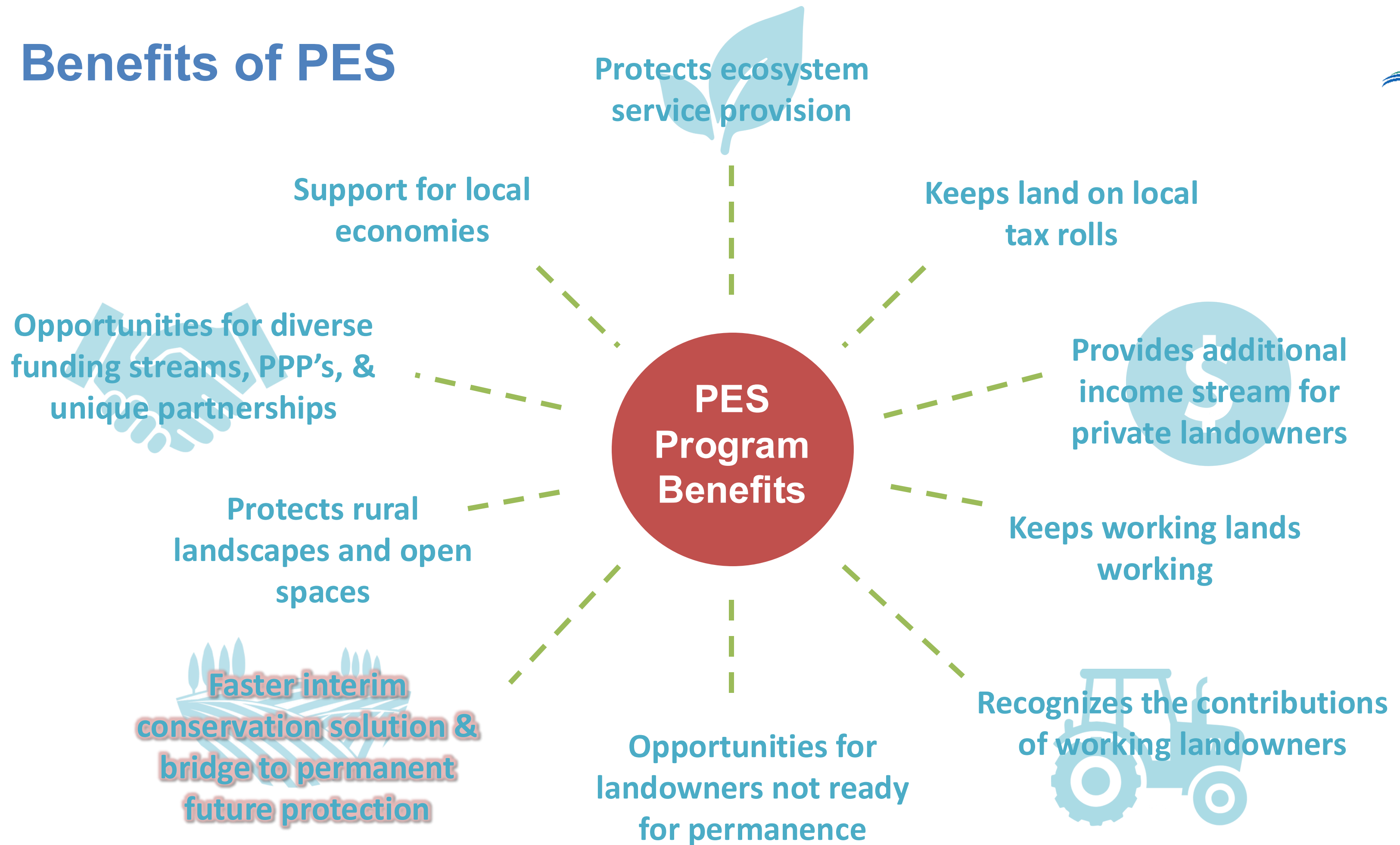
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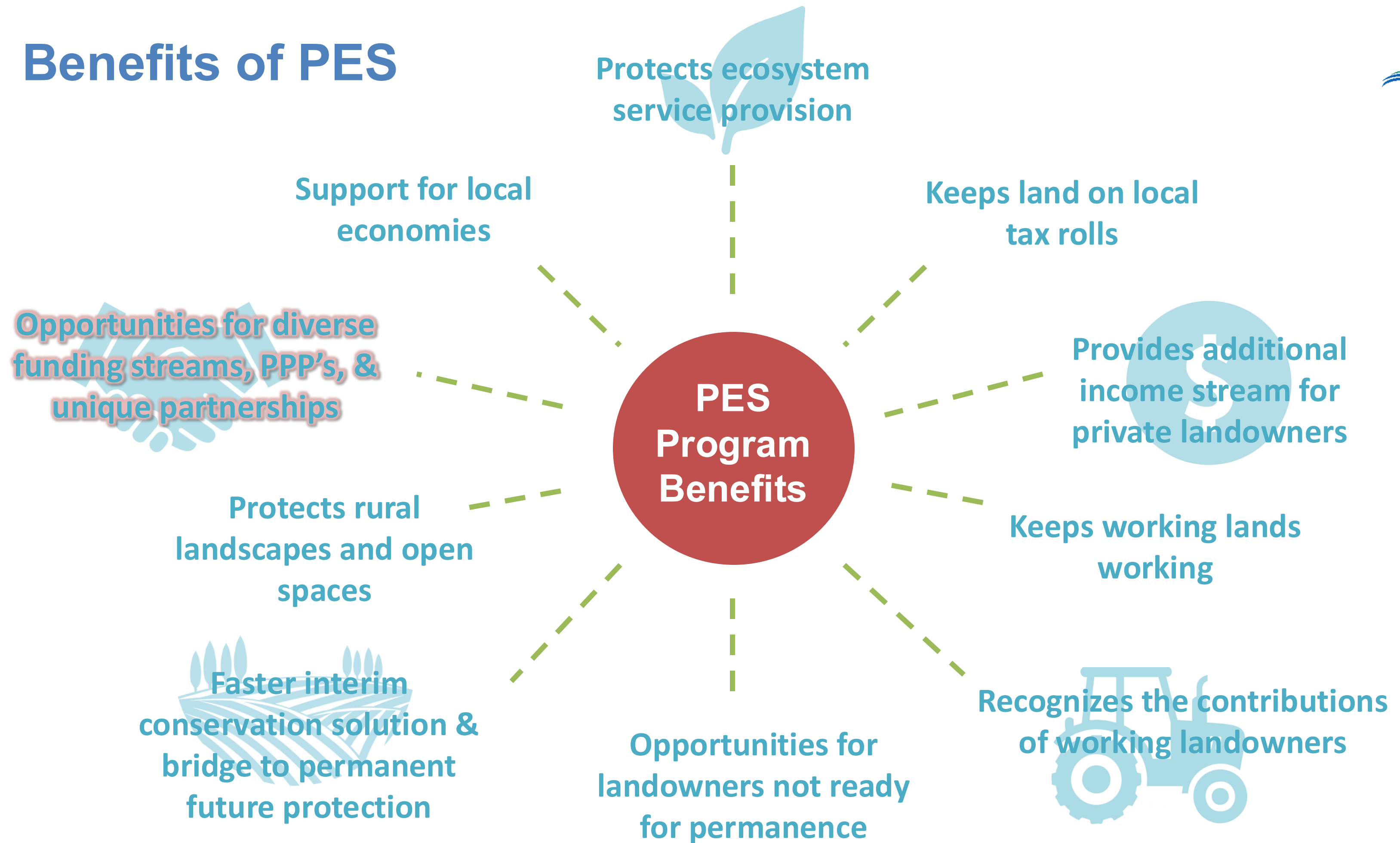
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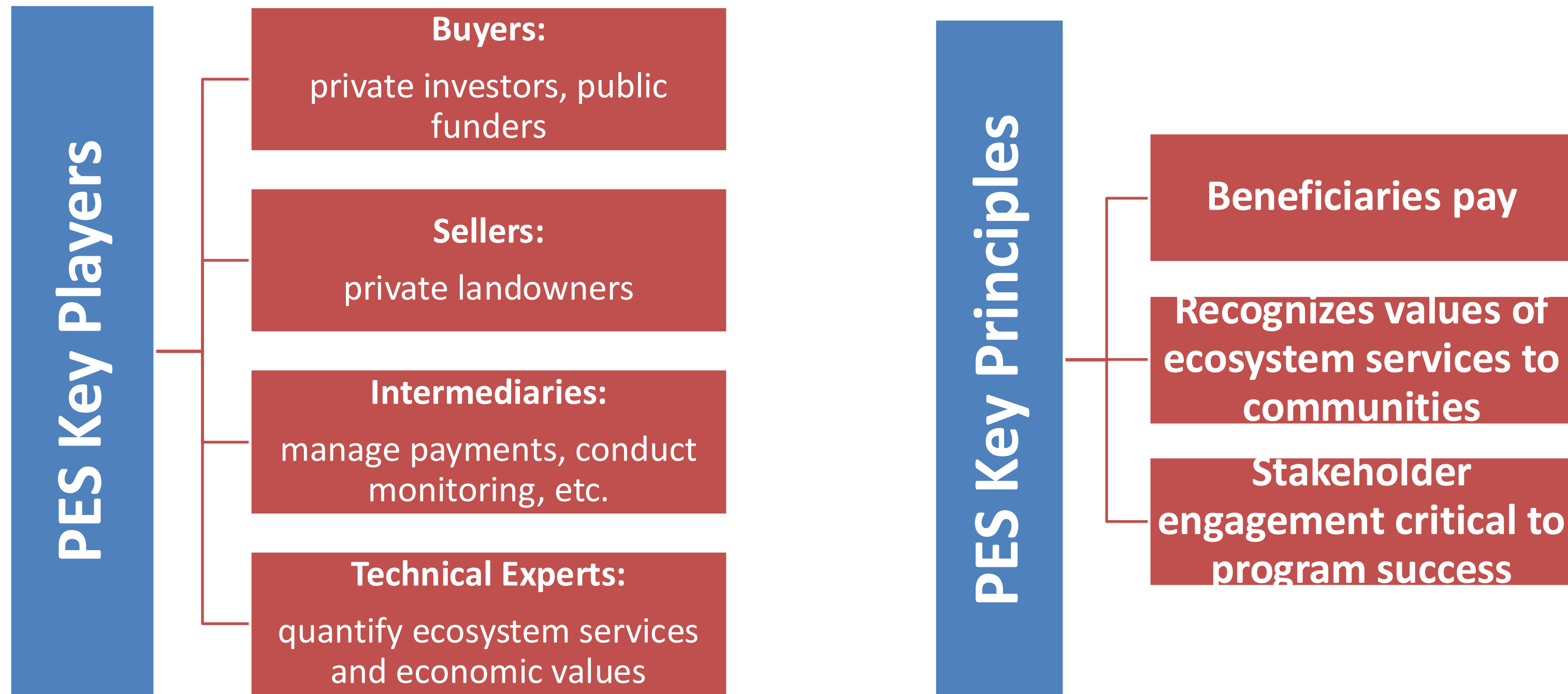
Benefits of PES



Benefits of PES



PES Key Players & Principles



PES Program Design Elements



Part of eligibility is determining types of ecosystem services provided and where (biodiversity, water quality, etc.)



Eligibility:
property size,
entity type,
ecosystem services
provided, location



Application:
format, form



Agreement:
responsibilities of
administering
entity and
applicant



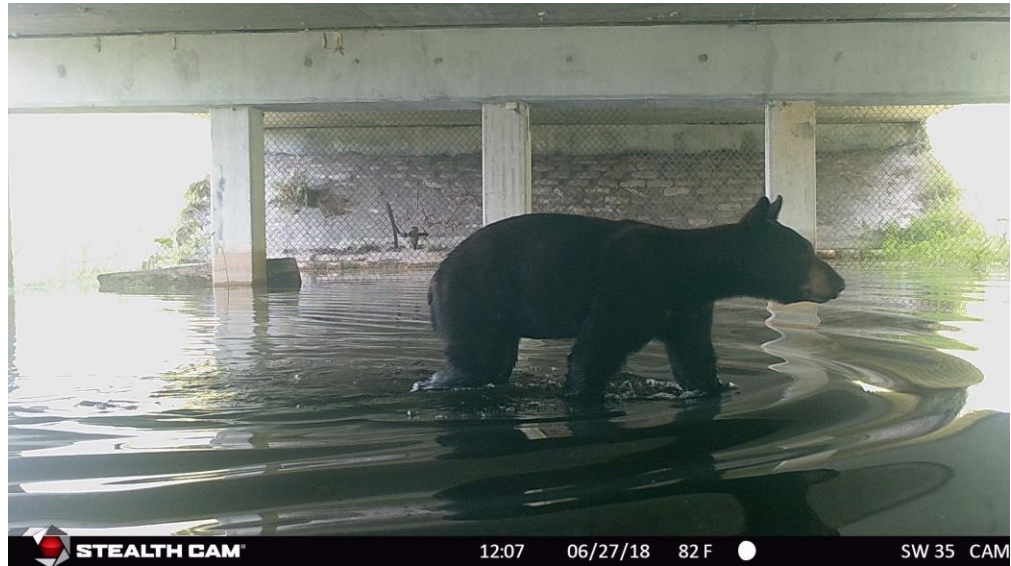
**Payment
Structure:**
monthly, annual



Monitoring: Initial
and annual



**Restrictions,
Termination**



Florida black bear trailcam photo from I-75/Alligator Alley Wildlife Crossing #26.

Source: [Florida Department of Transportation, Statewide Wildlife Crossings Dashboard](#)

Why Have Some PES Programs Not Worked?



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Why Have Some PES Programs Not Worked?



What Is Important to Landowners?

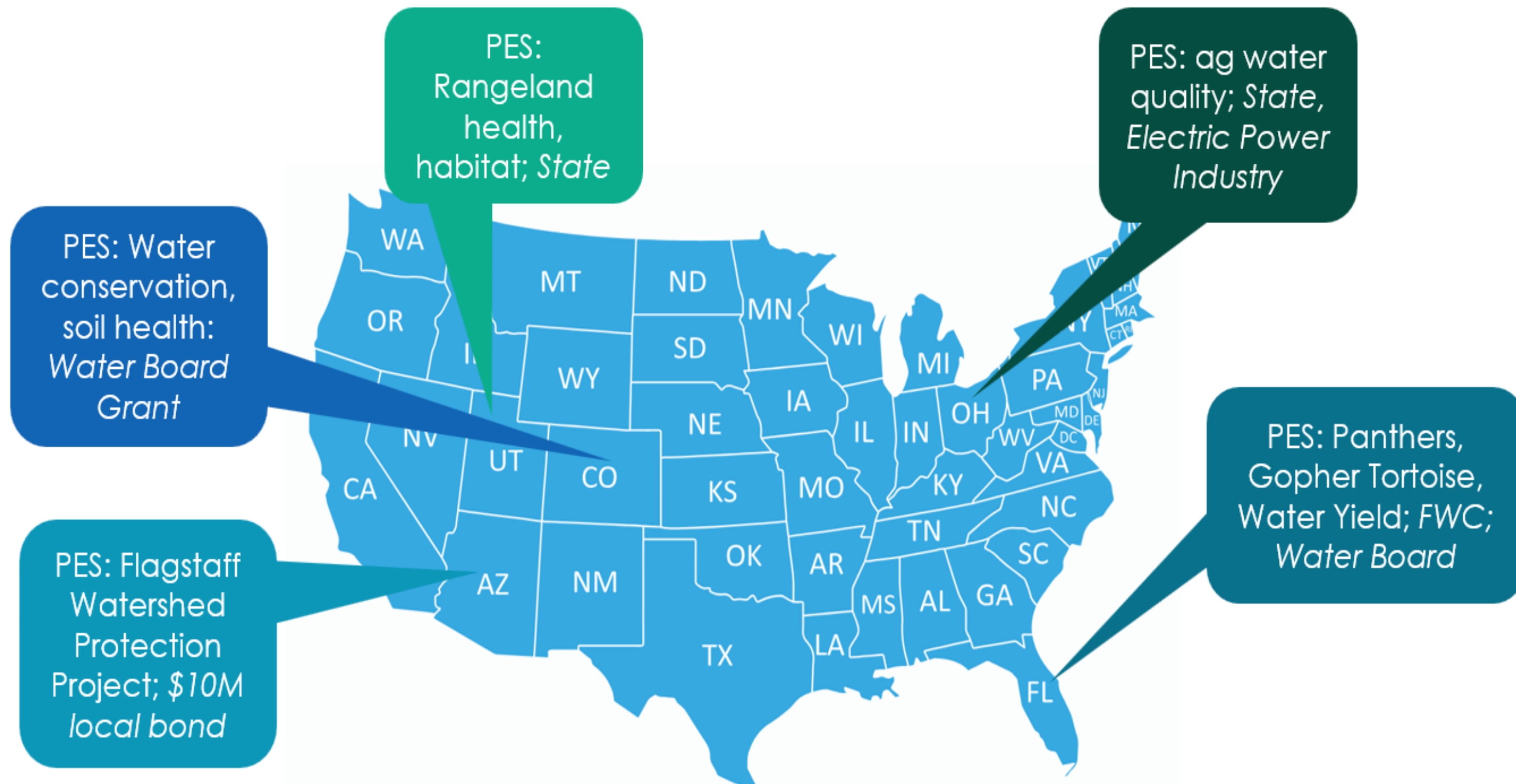


- Additional revenue streams to offset costs
- Recognition of stewardship
- Improving wildlife habitat
- Importance of simple process
- Keeping working lands working
- Confidence increases for programs with sustainable, reliable funding

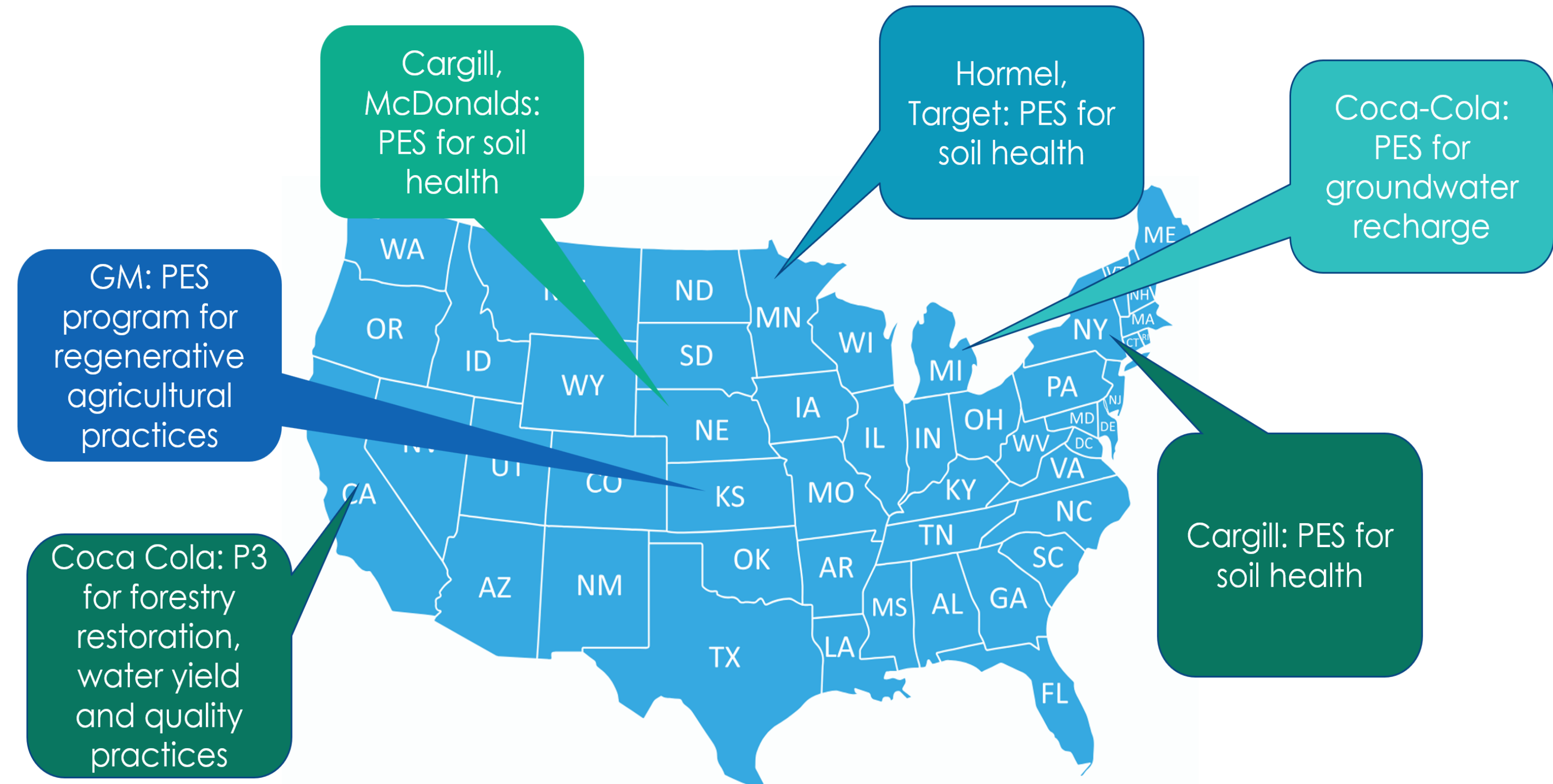


Image credit: Carlton Ward

PES: Public Sector Transactions



PES: Private Sector Transactions



PES in Florida



Florida Fish and
Wildlife Conservation
Commission (FWC)
Panther PES

South Florida
Dispersed Water PES



Florida Wildlife
Corridor PES

Suwannee River
Silviculture Pilot PES



FWC Panther PES



Program launched in 2024

Eligible applicants provide high suitability panther habitat

Geographic area includes 17-county area of south Florida

Properties must also be within 2 miles of Florida Wildlife Corridor

Payments range from \$7 to \$17 per acre/yr

15 landowners enrolled 40,635 acres across 6 counties for 3-year agreements

Landowners may opt in to voluntary trail cam bonus payment



Source: [Florida Department of Transportation, Statewide Wildlife Crossings Dashboard](#)

South Florida Dispersed Water PES

Well-established program

- started as Florida Ranchlands Environmental Services Project (FREFSP) in

Appropriate for large ranchlands

Dedicated funding through SFWMD & new REPI (defense) funds

Ecosystem services provided include flood protection & water quality



Source: [Florida Department of Agriculture \(FDACS\)](#)



Florida Wildlife Corridor PES



Program launched in 2026 in Avon Park Air Force Range Sentinel Landscape

Eligible applicants:

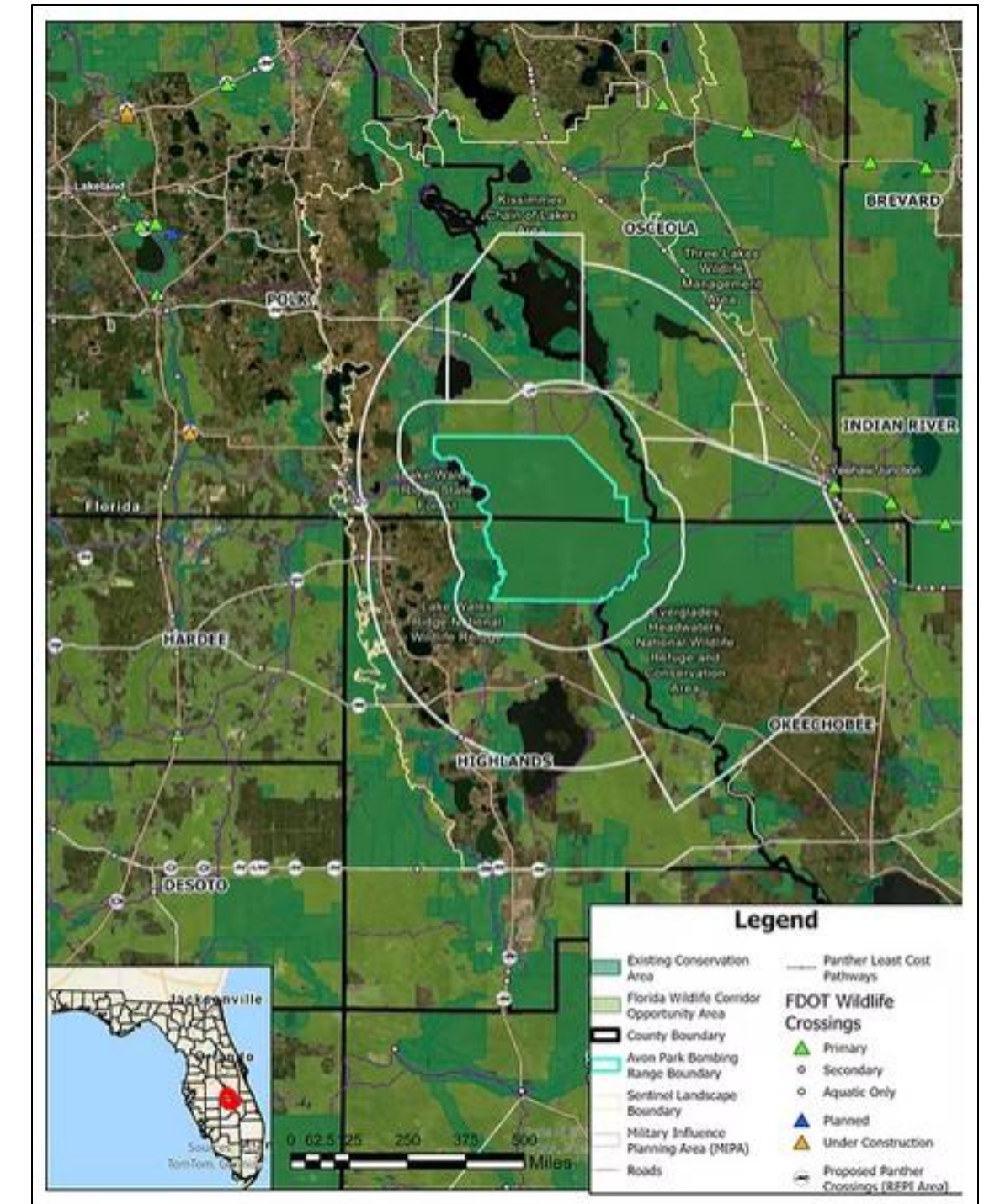
- provide **Florida Wildlife Corridor connectivity** in areas **of high risk of conversion**,
- may also be paid for **water quality and/or aquifer recharge**,
- are located within the **APAFR Military Influence Planning Area (MIPA)**, and
- are located in proximity to FDOT wildlife crossings

Includes areas of Highlands, Polk, Okeechobee, and Osceola counties

Payments range from \$33 to \$97 per acre/yr

Enrollment for first round of 5-year agreements currently underway

Technical Advisory Committee was critical for design of program framework

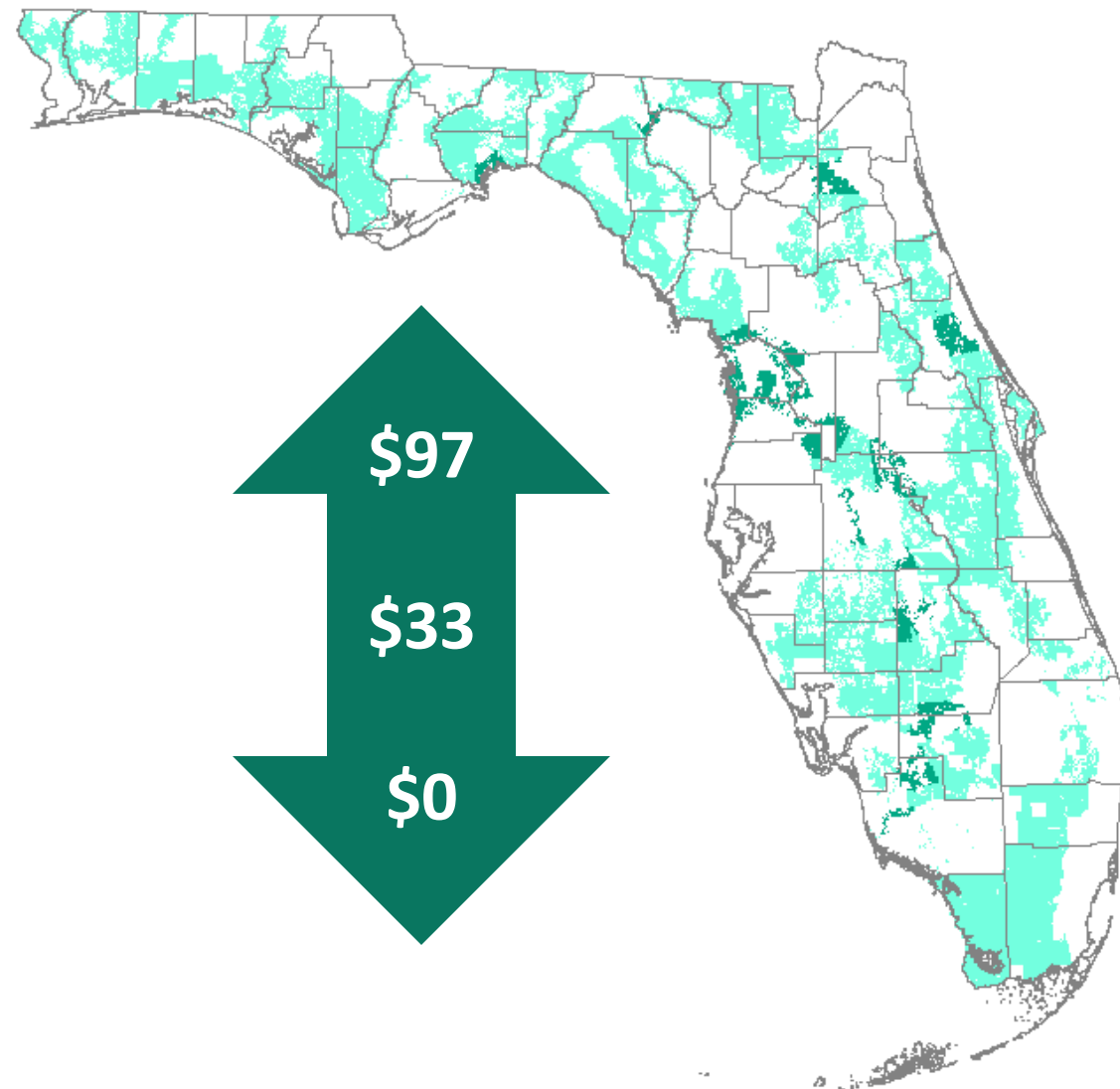


Florida Wildlife Corridor PES

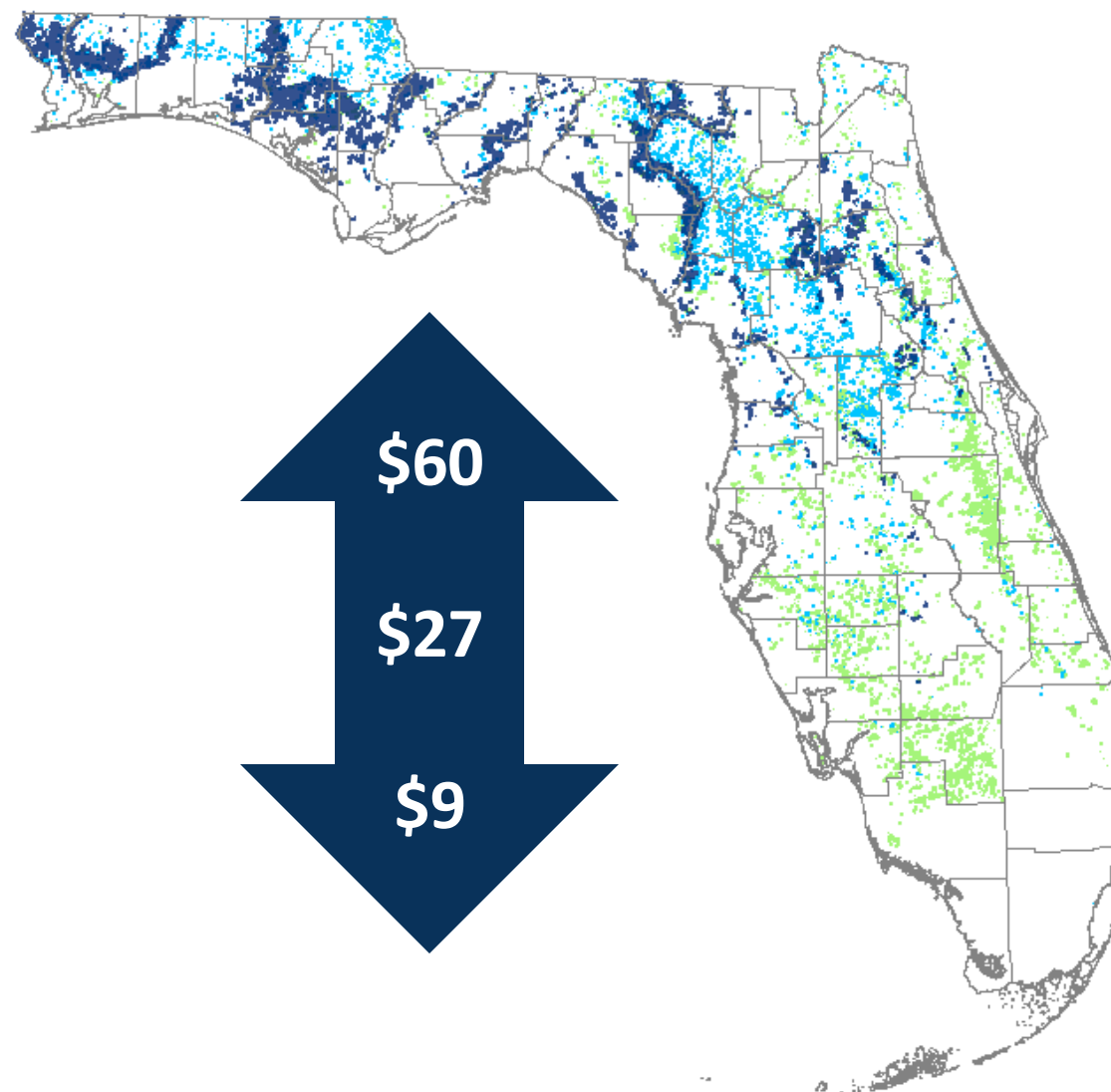


Annual payments (\$/acre/year); high, medium, low levels, based on location and land use

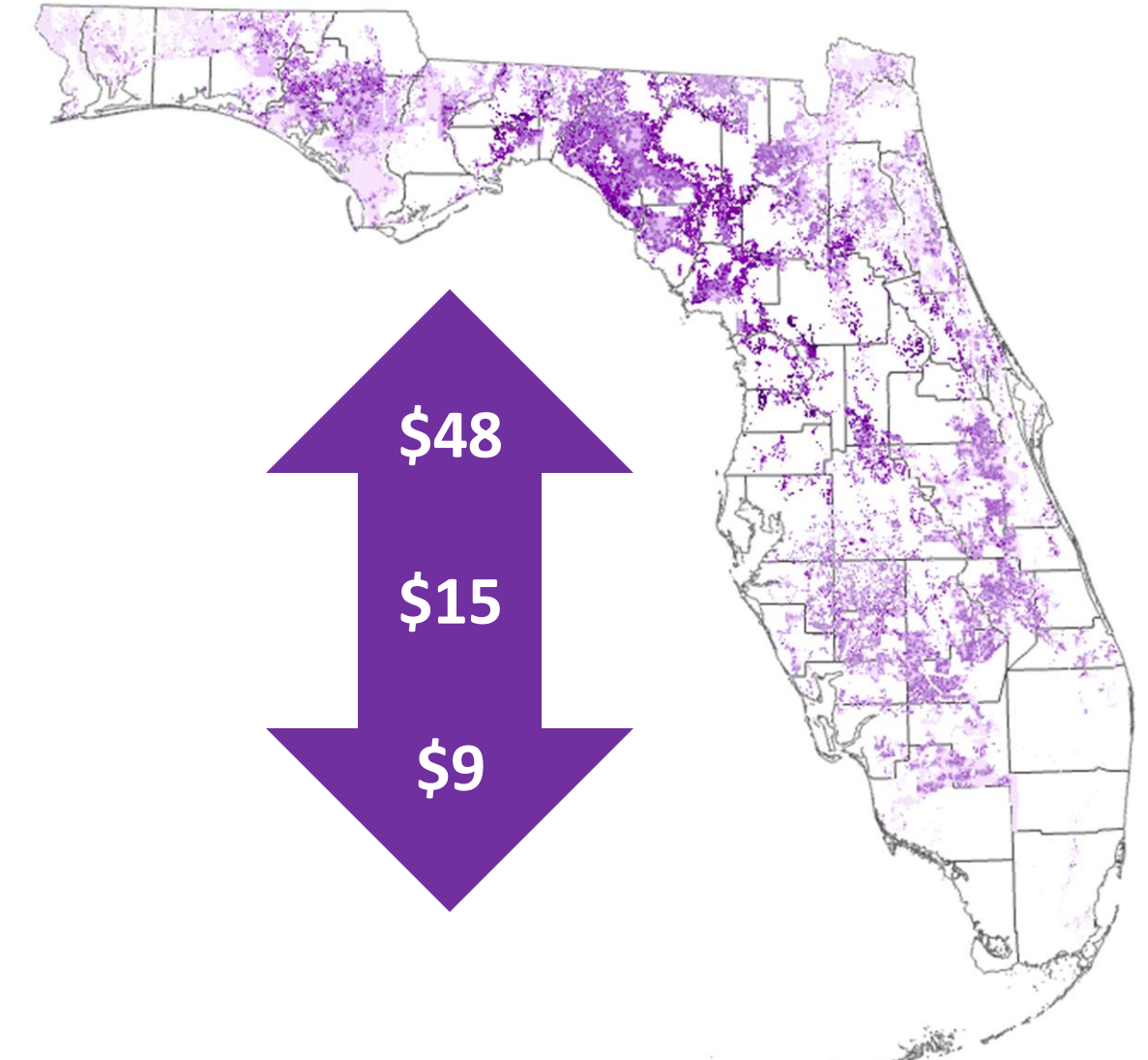
Wildlife Habitat



Water Quality



Aquifer Recharge



Spatial Data Sources: FEGN, FNAI, FSAID

Payment Data Sources: TBG work product; FNAI; FWCF; NRCS EQIP; FDACS

Approach based on established spatial data & economic values

Florida Wildlife Corridor PES



FWCF PES website

<https://floridawildlifecorridor.org/our-work/conservation/payment-for-ecosystem-services/#>

- Enrolling participants, applications closed
- Seeking additional funding to expand program to new areas

Eligible Locations Map Viewer

<https://datavisual.balmoralgroup.us/PESviewer-FL>



Suwannee River Silviculture Pilot PES



Eligible participants would be silvicultural landowners

Ecosystem service provided: aquifer recharge/water supply

Landowners could enroll in different management options, including

- Increased thinning (e.g., 40 to 60%)
- Shortened rotations (e.g., 15 or 18-year)
- Ecological restoration
- Periods of fallow/delayed planting (3-yr delay)

Payments based on landowner foregone profits from management changes

Extensive stakeholder input used to design program framework

Cost-benefit analysis of two case study sites identified parameters for cost-effectiveness

Inactive pilot program

The Alternative:

- For Wildlife Corridor lands, the alternative is the **loss of 3.5 million acres, or \$18 billion in ecosystem services**
- Landowners who are not ready for permanent acquisition, or who are low in state land acquisition rankings, must continue to wait and face market pressures

Alternative Concept: Ag Mitigation

- Used in other regions of the U.S. to protect valuable farmland
- Payment could be shared between state agency and developer

PES Best Practices & Takeaways

Align investor **value proposition** with the ecosystem service provision

Use **existing data/metrics** and keep as simple as possible

Utilize data to reduce **monitoring costs**, e.g., **NASA remotely sensed data**

Include PES within a suite of other **conservation finance options**

Create **support tools for landowners** to easily find financial incentive programs

Build **partnerships to expand funding** sources and leverage funds, e.g., corporate, crowd sourcing, utilities, local government conservation referenda, etc.

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Thank You!

Do you know anyone who would like to know more?

Contact us!

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Dan Dourte

DDourte@balmoralgroup.us

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Laila Racevskis

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TIGER BAY RANCH VIDEO



Private Land Stewardship + Public Benefit Carbon Markets & Beyond

Chad Ellis
cellis@txaglandtrust.org





**Private landowners are
the solution.....**

Livestock allow us to produce food on land unsuitable for cultivation, while enhancing ecosystems



Rangeland's store 20% of the globe's soil organic carbon

The answer is literally staring at us. More than two-thirds of the land area in the United States is privately owned, with 914 million acres in farms or ranches. Opportunity knocks...



Protector of Grasslands

Cattle on grazing lands can provide numerous ecosystem services, which are the benefits that people obtain from an ecosystem. These services include providing wildlife habitat, improving soil health and increasing carbon sequestration.

The value of ecosystem services on U.S. grazing lands is \$24.5 billion annually, or \$1,043 per beef cow.



Sources:

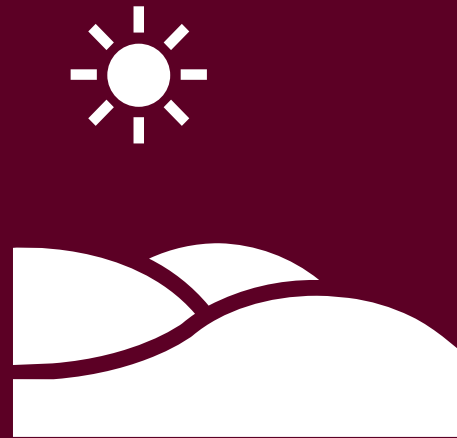
- (1) Maher et al. 2020. National and State Economic Values of Cattle Ranching and Farming-Based Ecosystem Services on Federal and Private Lands in the U.S. Sustainable Rangelands Roundtable Publication.
- (2) Teague et al. 2016. The role of ruminants in reducing agriculture's carbon footprint in North America. Journal of Soil and Water Conservation 71(2).
- (3) Shafer et al. 2016. Optimizing Managed Grazing for Soil Health and Sustainable Production Systems. The Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota. www.sfa-mn.org.

Soil Organic Carbon is important for nature-based solutions



50%

Grasslands account for
~50% of Earth's ice-
free terrestrial surface



30%

Contain 30% of Earth's
total soil organic carbon
(SOC)



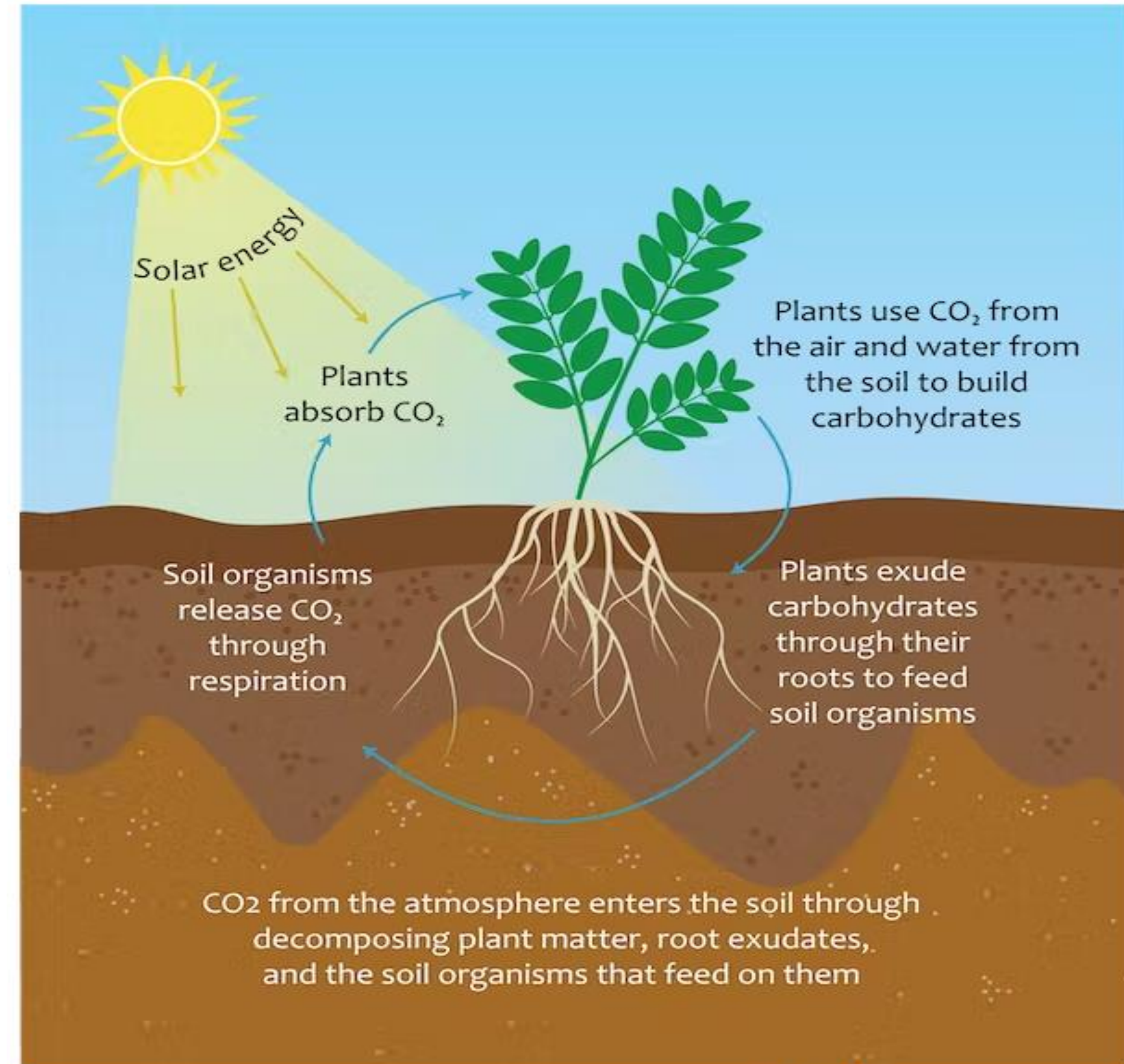
50%

And have lost much of
their SOC, creating a
SOC deficit

Focus on the Fundamentals

Soil Carbon Cycle

- Symbiotic Linkages
- Natural Capital Creation
- Foundational Ecosystem Process to Landscape Regeneration

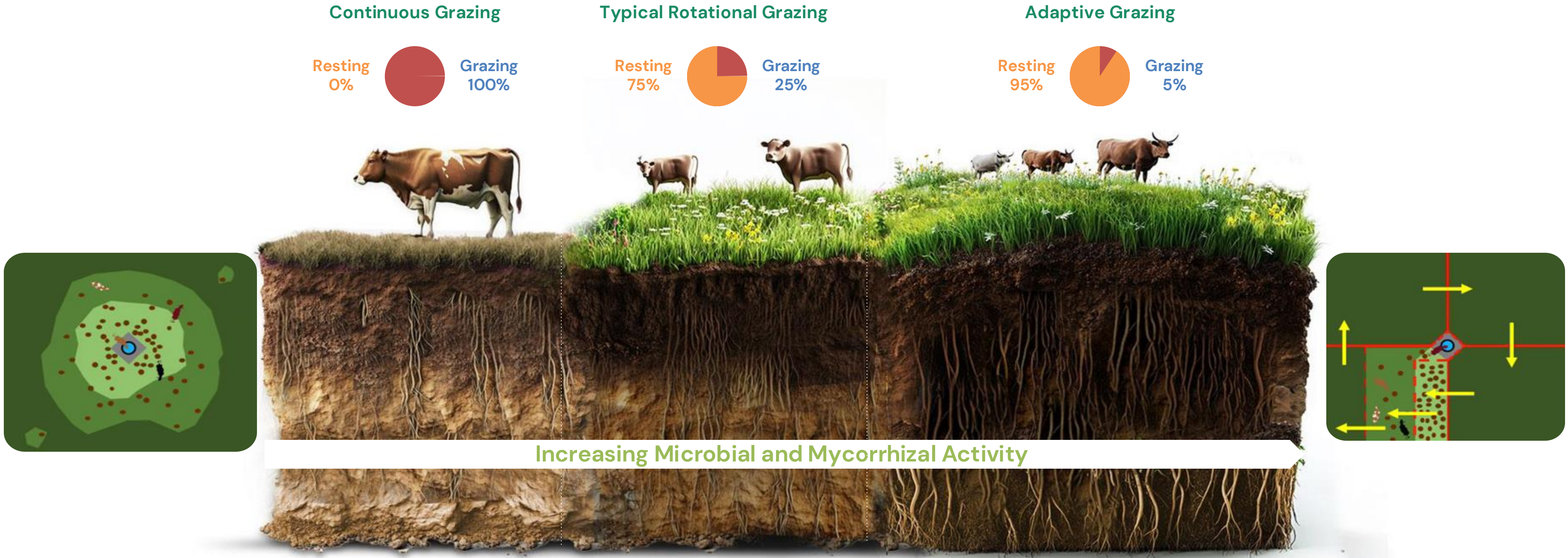


How carbon cycles into and out of soil. Jocelyn Lavalley, CC BY-ND

Ecological problems are resolved
with Principles not Practices...

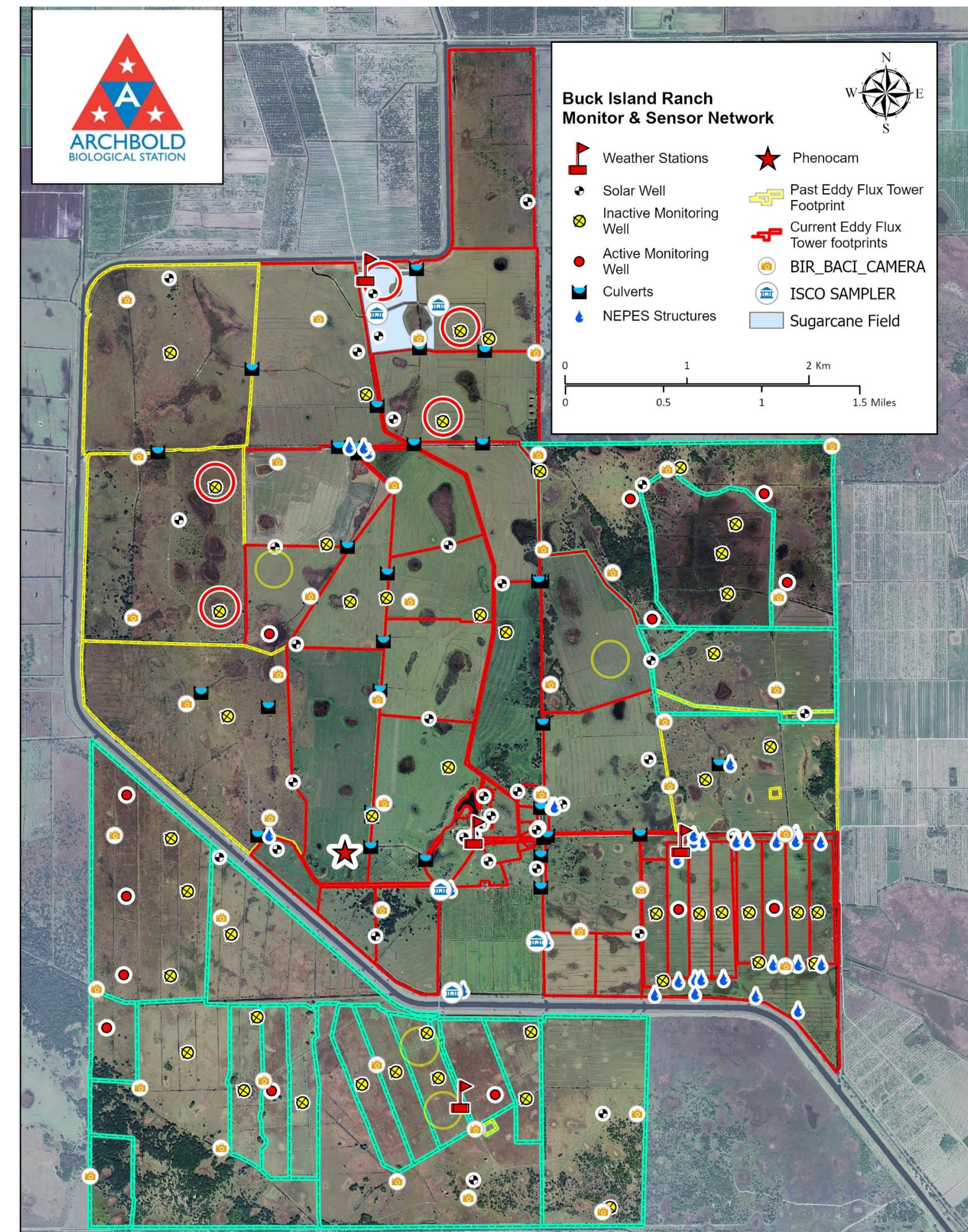
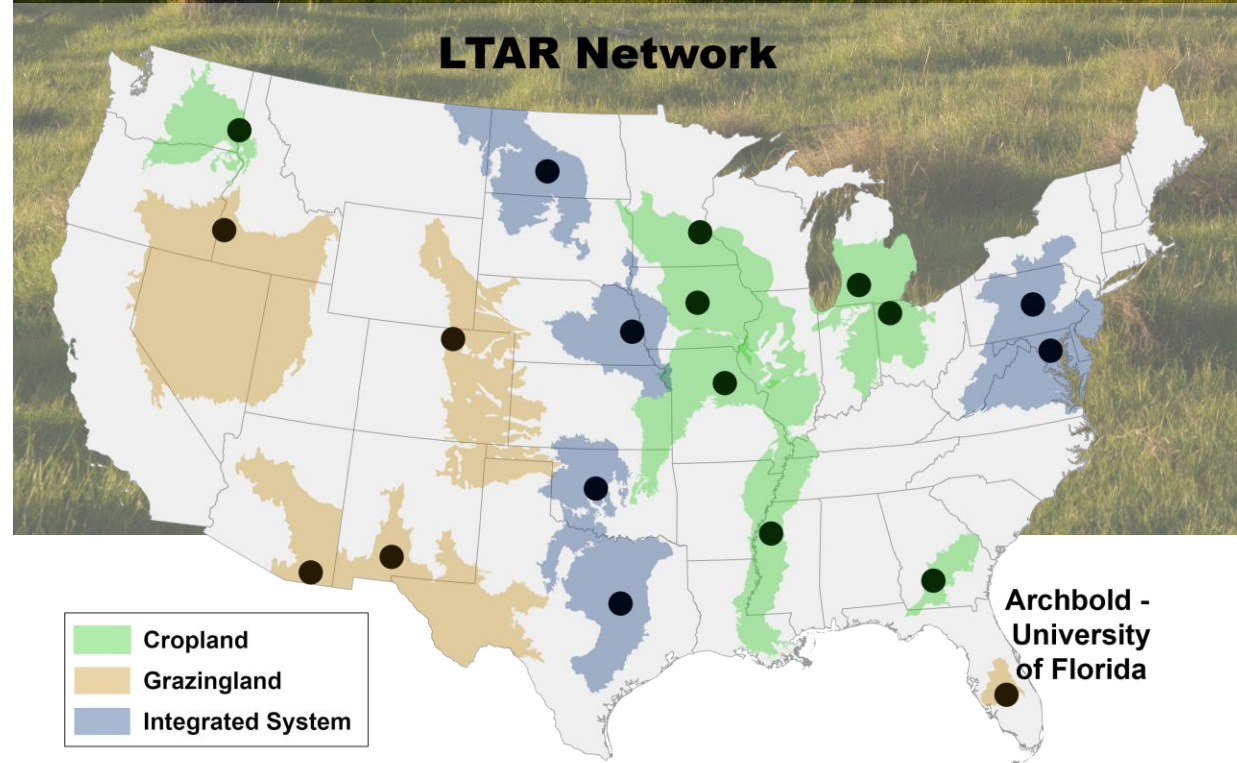
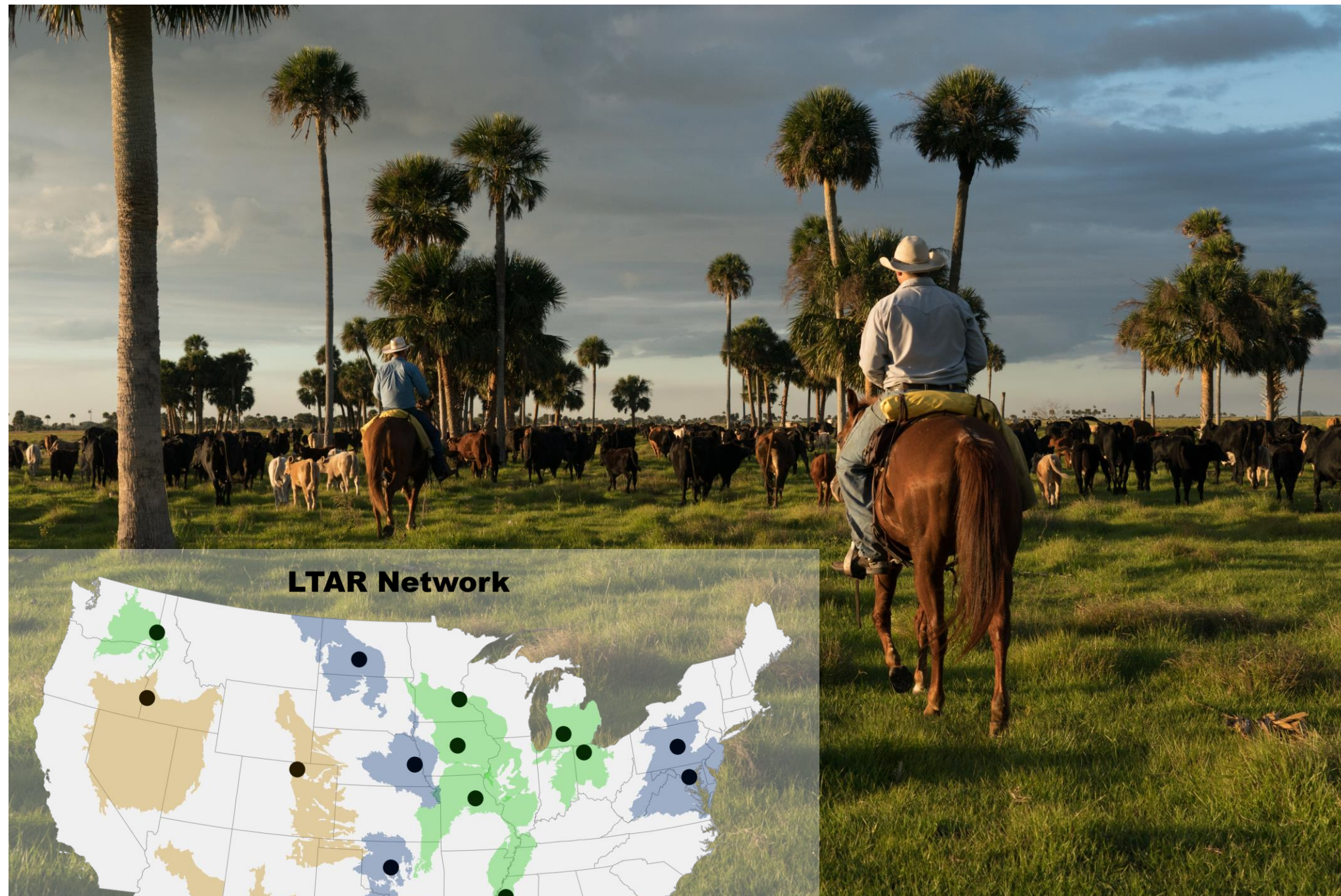


Soil Carbon Storage Requires Regenerative Land Management



Archbold's Buck Island Ranch

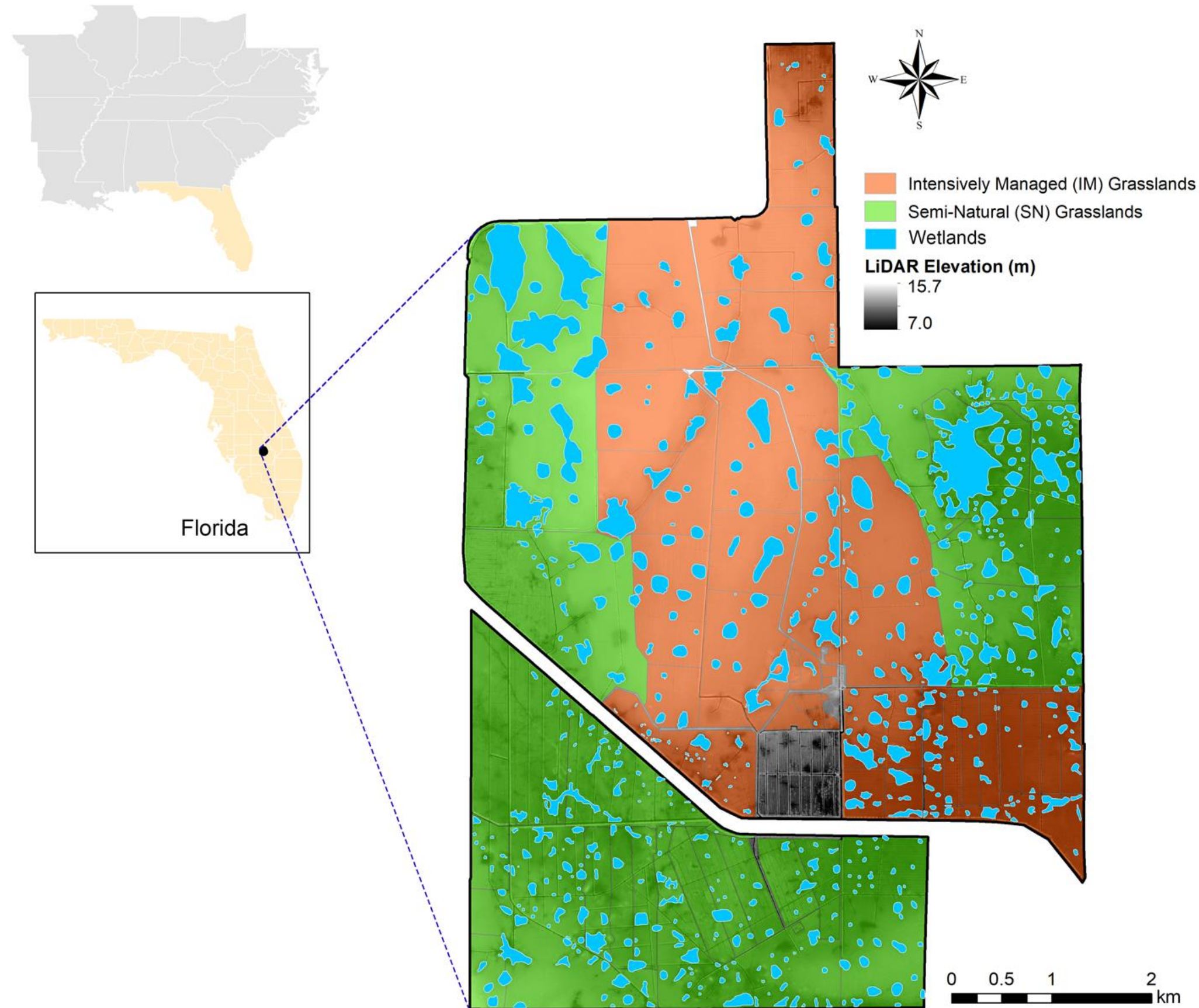
A commercial scale ranch to conduct science and inform sustainability



4249 ha cow-calf operation

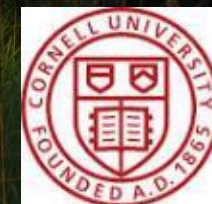
3000 cows

Landscape:
improved pastures,
semi-native pasture,
woodlands, and
wetlands



**Buck Island Ranch a natural laboratory to study
sustainability of subtropical grazing lands**

Is Buck Island Ranch a sink or source for carbon?



Cornell University



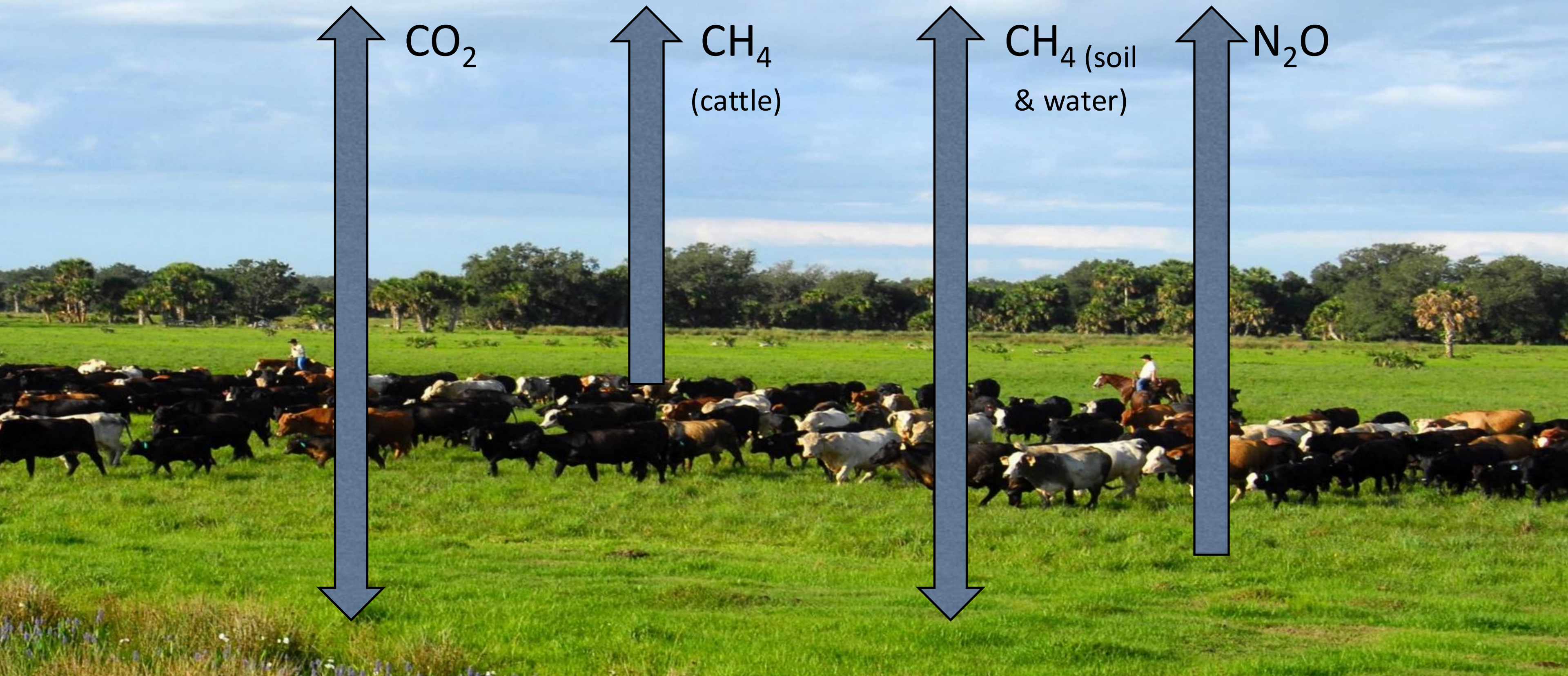
MacArthur Foundation



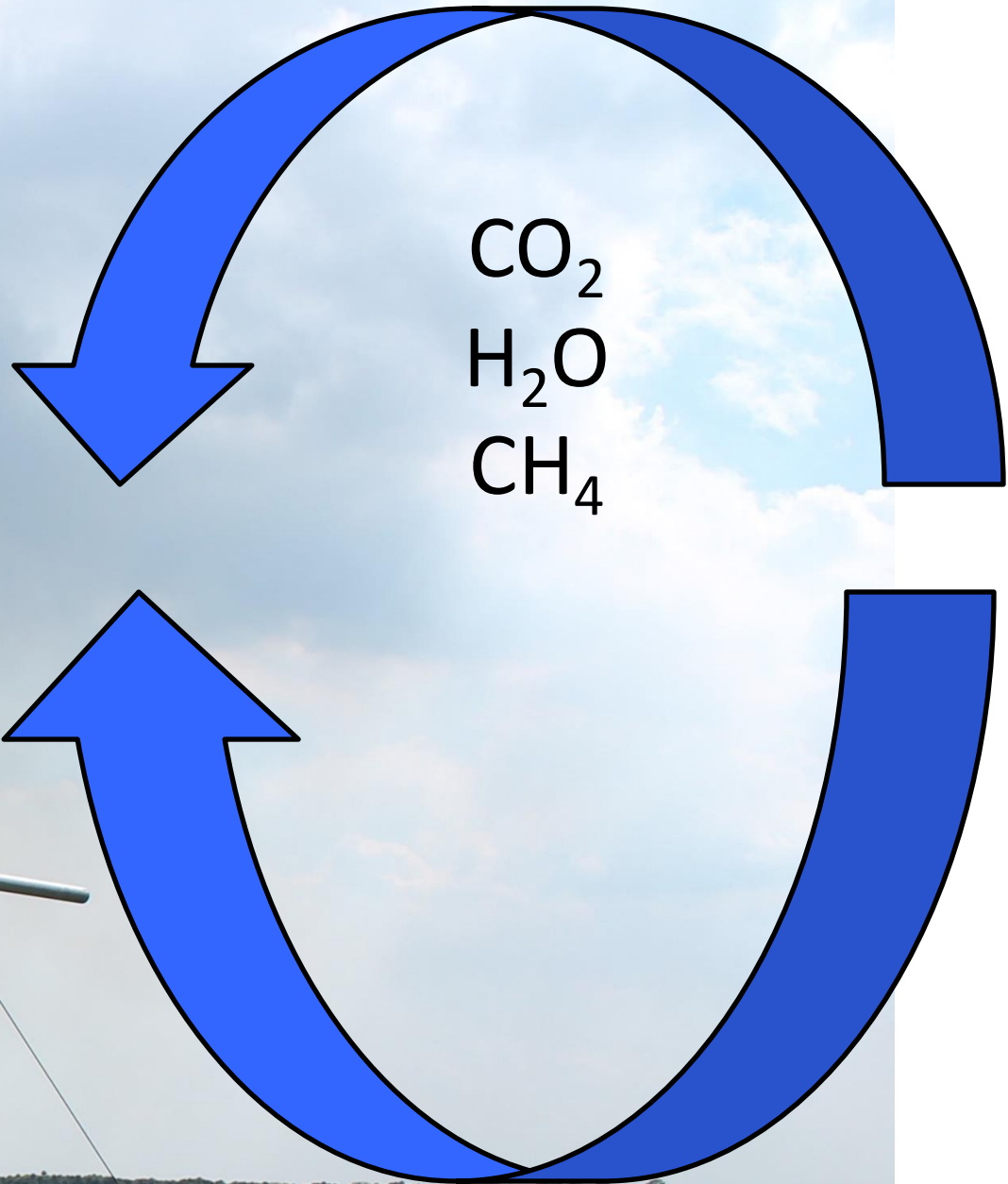
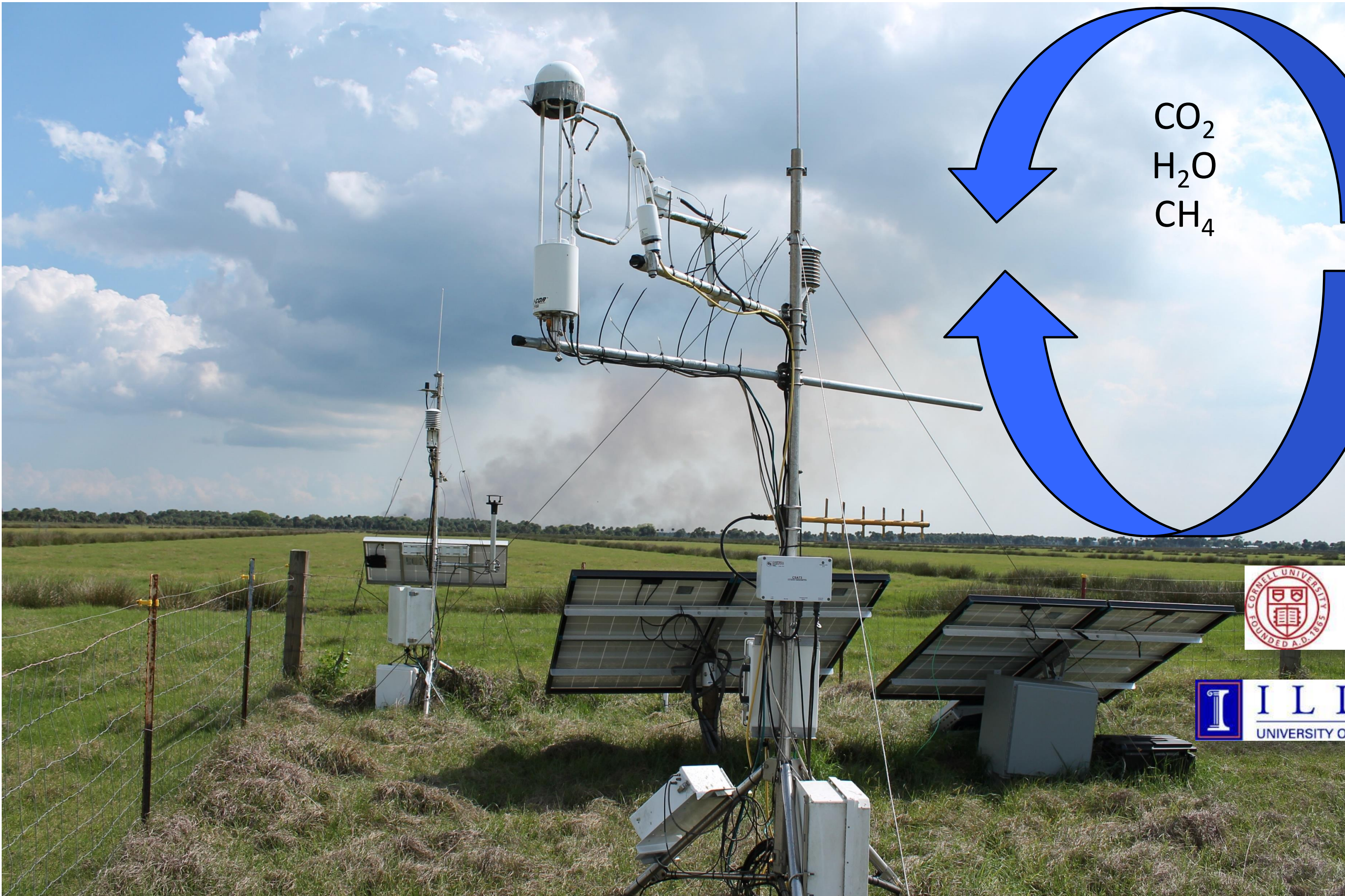
ILLINOIS
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN



Ranchland Carbon



Soil Carbon Stock



Cornell University

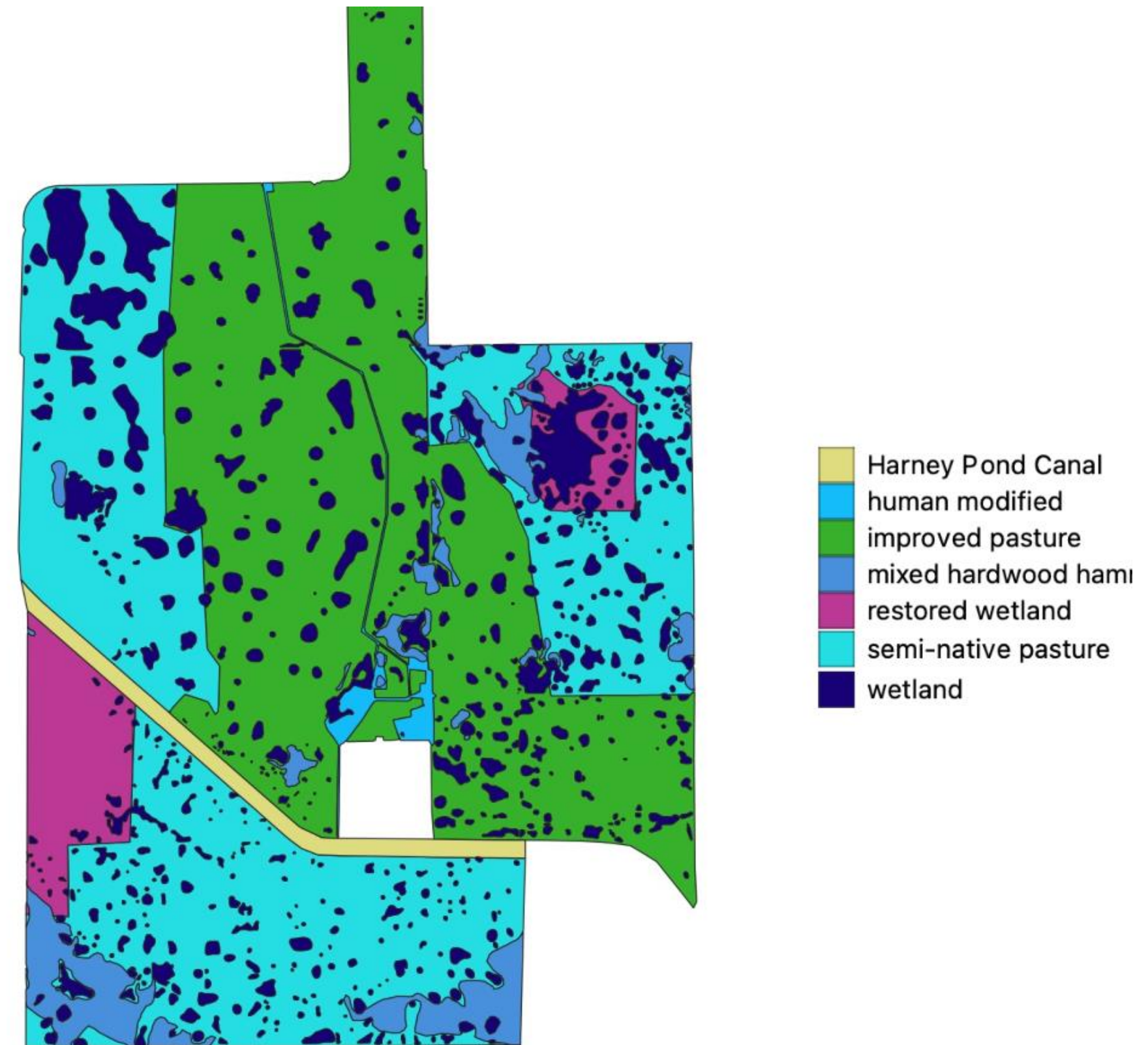


ILLINOIS
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN



A whole ranch model

- Combines data from
 - Remote sensing
 - Soil databases
 - Sensors on the ground
 - Groundwater level
 - Eddy covariance gas flux
 - Models for plant growth, water, nutrients
 - Management practices

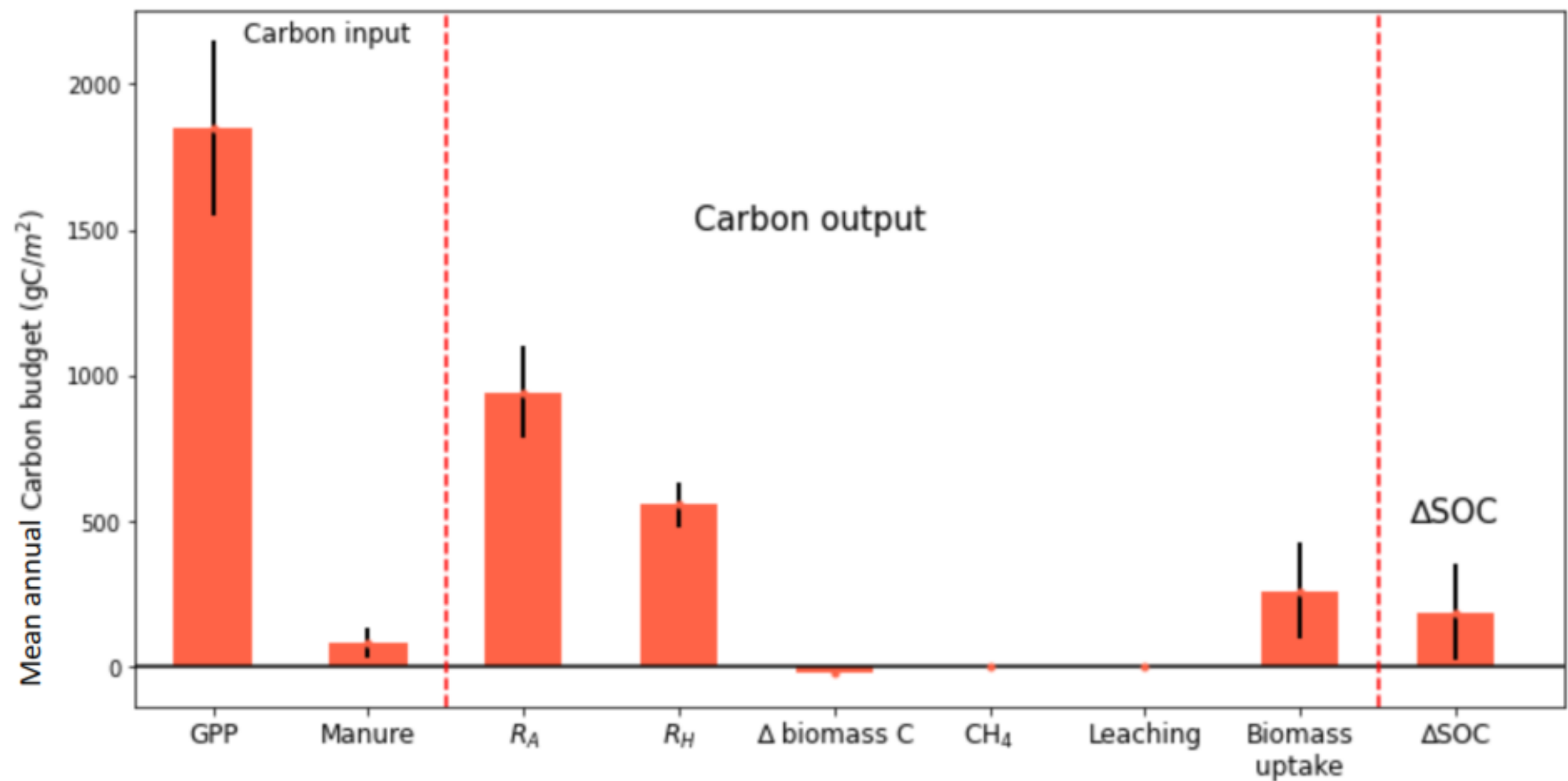


Ecosys modeling results

Carbon inputs > carbon outputs = C sequestration

2015 – 2020 six year averaged
Error bar represents site variations

$$\text{GPP} + \text{Manure} - R_A - R_H - \Delta \text{biomass C} - \text{CH}_4 - \text{Leaching} - \text{Biomass_uptake} = \Delta \text{SOC}$$



At Ranch Scale
12,391 Mt CO2eq
Sequestration

~ 184 gC/m2/yr
1.84 Mg C/ha/yr



Net Carbon Balance, Buck Island Ranch is a net sink

With Ecosystem Methane	Metric tons CO2 e (ave 2015-2020)
Total emissions, including ecosystem methane	11,294
Habiterre SOC sequestration	12,391
Difference	-1,097
Emissions intensity including sequestration kg CO2e/kg LW	-3.65

Boughton et al. 2025, IRC Proceedings

The key is developing to drive

LAND STEWARDSHIP

outcomes while enhancing

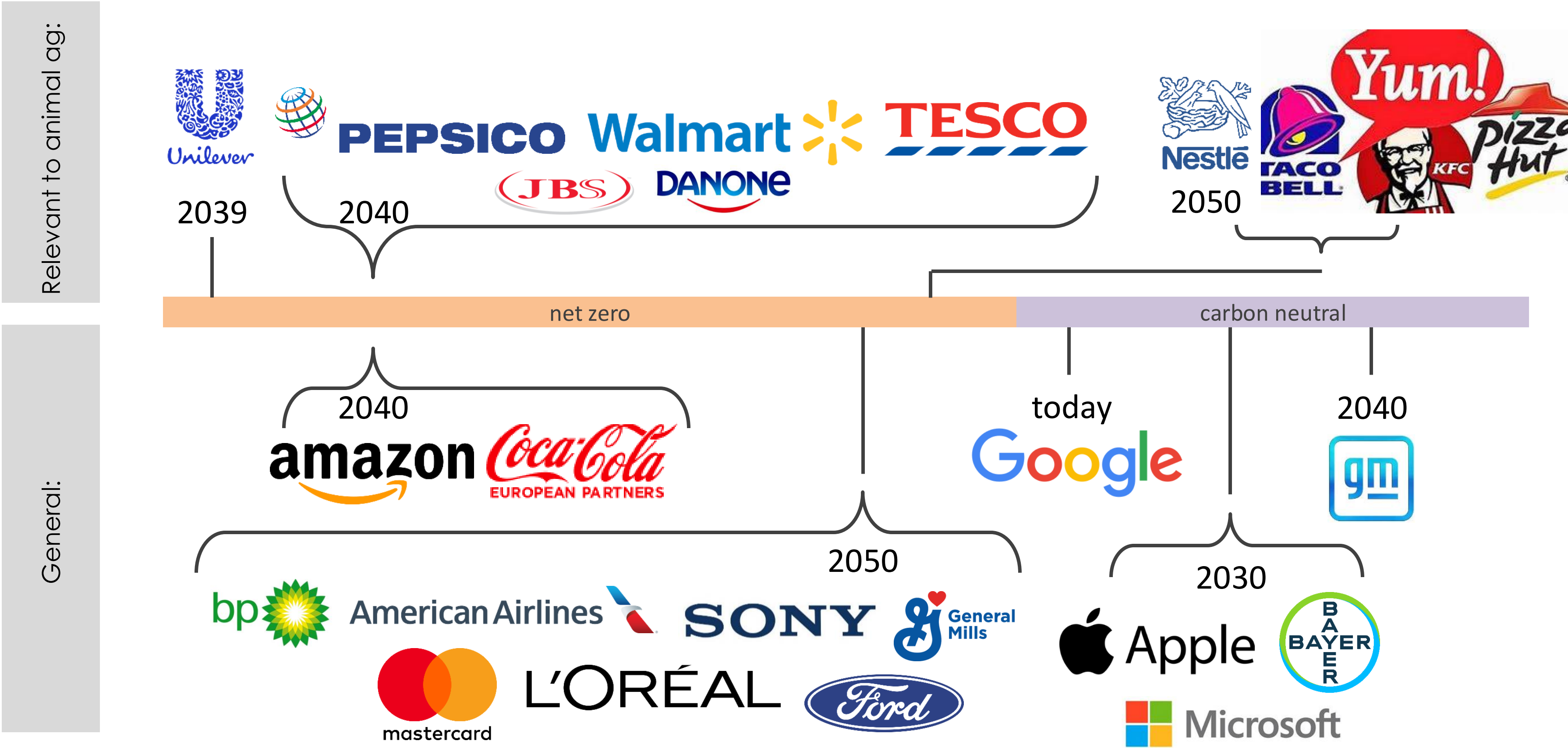
PRODUCERS LIVELIHOODS

and

PUBLIC BENEFITS



Current Company Commitments



75%

Of millennials believe their investments can influence climate change

84%

Of millennials believe their investments can help lift people out of poverty



Change the paradigm of ecosystem services

They don't just occur...It takes
Land Stewards to provide
them....



“Conservation will ultimately boil down to rewarding the private landowner who conserves the public interest.”

Aldo Leopold, Conservation Economics- 1934



Conservation
Without
Compensation
Is Only a
Conversation





CARBON MARKETS

Grassroots Carbon is the Leading Platform for Verified Environmental Outcomes on U.S. Grazing Lands

Grassroots Carbon partners with ranchers across the U.S. to turn improved grazing management into measured carbon removals, emissions reductions, and supply-shed impact.

BY THE NUMBERS

01 RANCHER FOOTPRINT

2.8M

Acres enrolled
across 22 states

03 RANCHER PIPELINE

10M+

Acres in pipeline

05 TRUSTED & AUDITED



Audited financials support
long-term program health

02 RANCHER IMPACT

\$40M+

Paid to ranchers
for carbon outcomes
On track to distribute \$65M+ directly
to ranchers by year-end 2026

04 LARGEST IN U.S.

2.47M

Tonnes CO₂e delivered

06 SCIENCE-BACKED

31K

1-meter soil core samples
Largest private soil database
in the United States.

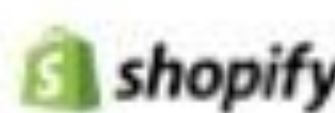
SUPPORTED BY LEADING CORPORATES



Nestlé



Microsoft



Note: Logos shown represent a subset of Grassroots Carbon's corporate partners. Grassroots Carbon works with additional corporate partners whose logos are not included in public-facing materials at this request.

RANCHER-FIRST

330 families · 22 states · 99% rancher
retention ·

SOIL CARBON 101
DETERMINING IF SOIL CARBON STORAGE
MARKETS ARE RIGHT FOR YOU

PUBLISHED MARCH 2022 IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:

NOBLE RESEARCH INSTITUTE TXGLC TEXAS AGRI LIFE EXTENSION NRI

WHY CARBON?

The United States is losing agricultural lands at an unsustainable rate. Our greatest hope for protecting these landscapes is responsible land stewardship by farmers and ranchers.

land management strategies that may improve soil health, strengthen

 **KING RANCH INSTITUTE**
FOR RANCH MANAGEMENT
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY-KINGSVILLE

SHOULD I SELL CARBON CREDITS?
A Decision Guide for Ranchers

Jason E. Sawyer¹, PhD
David S. DeLaney², M.S.
David P. Anderson³, PhD
Tiffany E. Dowell-Lashmet⁴, J.D.
Clay P. Mathis⁵, PhD

You Don't Know What You Don't Know

Beyond the Fence Line & Beyond Carbon



VWBA & WQBA Framework Alignment

•VWBA (Volumetric Water Benefit Accounting)

•**Activity Category:** Land Conservation

•**Outcomes:**

- Sustainable water balance
- Improved water quality
- Ecosystem protection

•**Indicator:** Avoided runoff (acre-feet/year)

•**Method:** Curve Number (CN) Method

WQBA (Water Quality Benefit Accounting):

•**Contribution:** Water quality improvement

•**Indicator:** Avoided pollutant load (e.g., sediment, phosphorus)

•**Method:** Universal Soil Loss Equation (USLE)

A shift in strategy is needed from defensive to proactive where we come together to address the greatest challenge of our time.



To keep our Working Lands Working and providing a Legacy to the Next Generation.

Stretching the Thinking on PES

1000 Friends of Florida Webinar

Thomas H. Eason
FL Strategic Initiatives Director

Who is PERC?

Property and Environment Research Center

- The national leader in market solutions for conservation
- Based in Bozeman, Montana
- Integrated "think and do tank"



(Founders: John Baden, Terry Anderson, PJ Hill, Richard Stroup)

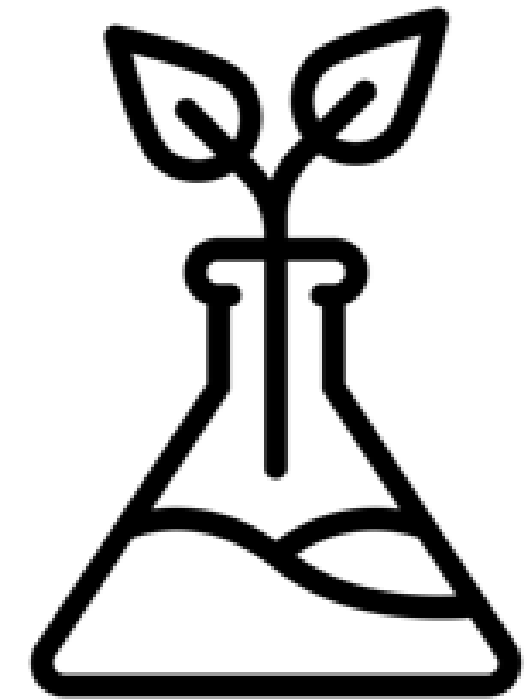
What Does PERC Do?



RESEARCH



LAW & POLICY



INNOVATION

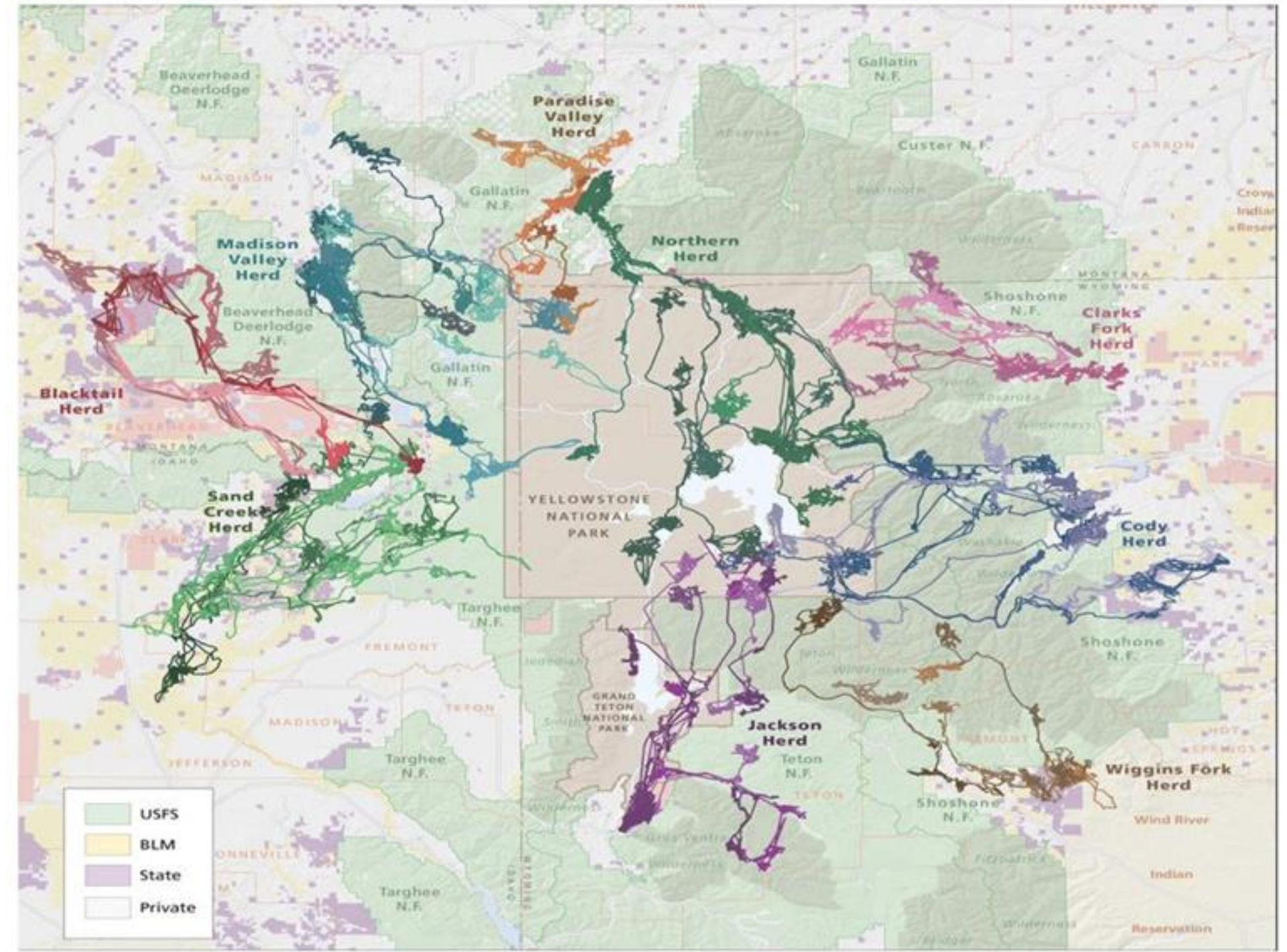
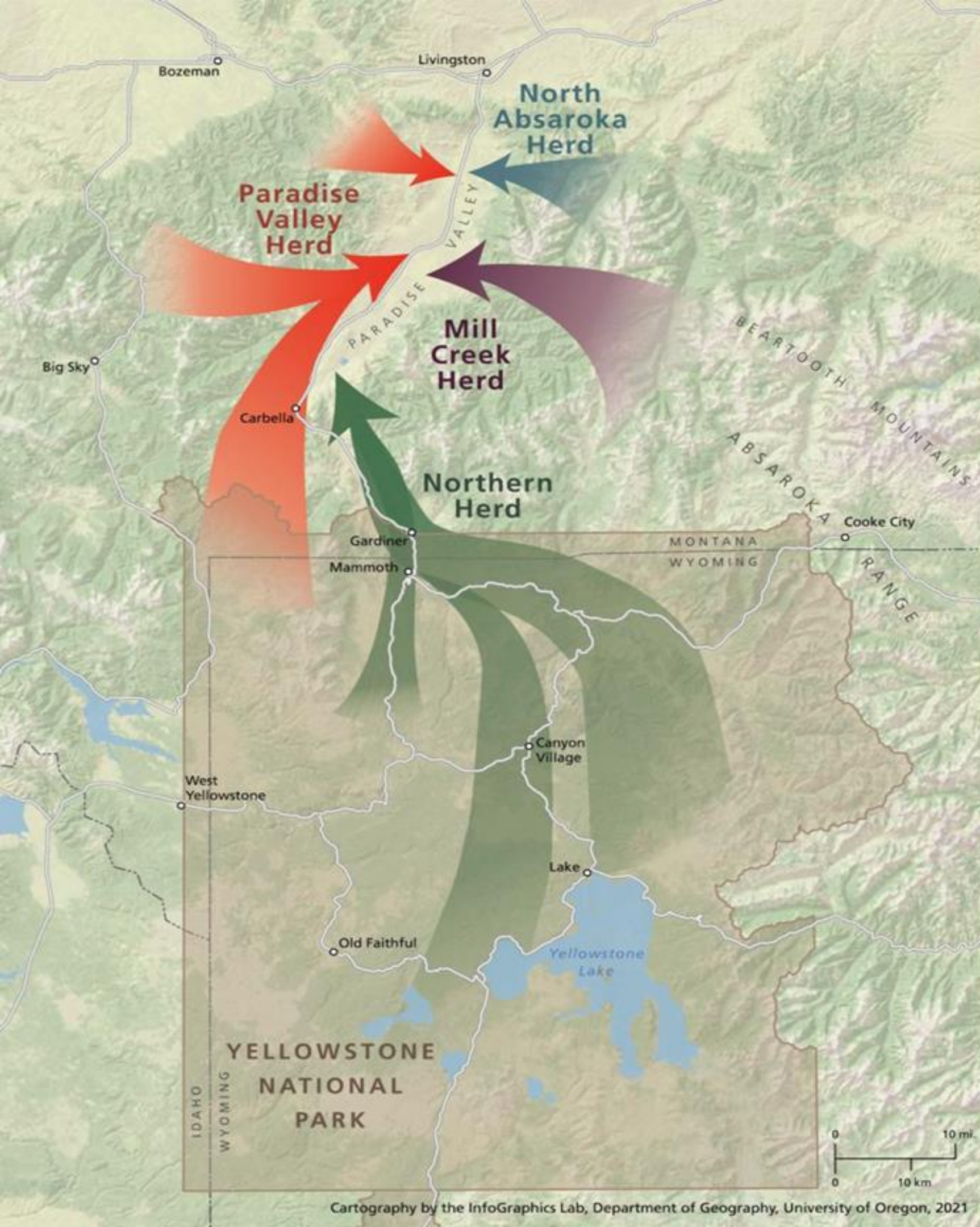
Why PERC in Florida?

- Because incentives matter.
- We call this moment in conservation “The Incentives Era” and **PERC** is helping define it.
- Florida is fertile ground to grow the Next Era.

A wide-angle landscape photograph showing a herd of elk grazing in a dry, open valley. In the background, there are large, rugged mountains with patches of snow under a clear blue sky. The foreground is a mix of brown grass and small shrubs. The text is overlaid in the center in a large, white, sans-serif font.

Elk in Paradise: Conserving Migratory Wildlife & Working Lands in Montana's Paradise Valley

Elk Migrations of Paradise Valley



Brucellosis

- Limited to Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem
- Elk are vectors
- Bison are reservoir





Paradise Valley Working Lands Group



JULY 2020

ELK IN PARADISE

Conserving Migratory Wildlife and Working
Lands in Montana's Paradise Valley

BY WHITNEY TILT



Survey Summary

- Landowners reported high use by elk
- 81% suffered economic impact from elk
- Additional stress from disease transmission risk

Living with Elk

"Elk are constantly knocking down fences... They come down at night and are decimating the pastures... We have to buy more hay every year... The elk herd on the ranch has increased considerably in the past 30 years."





“““

If we improve habitat [for elk]
we're basically shooting
ourselves in the foot because
of the increased brucellosis
risk.

– Paradise Valley Rancher



Brucellosis Compensation Fund

- **Fund Size:** \$100,000–\$150,000 to cover 50 to 75% of the cost of quarantine event
- **Partners:** Greater Yellowstone Coalition, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Spruance, Credova
- **Payouts:** Per head/Per month: 75% of estimated hay costs
- **Maximum Payout:** 50% of initial fund size for any one quarantine event
- **Operational Period:** 3 years, beginning Jan. 2023



Elk Occupancy Agreement

- **A first for Montana:** Conserves and improves 500 acres of winter range for migrating elk
- **Process:** PERC and partners paid for the construction of a fence to separate wildlife and livestock
- **Partners:** Greater Yellowstone Coalition, PERC, and local ranching family
- **Payout:** Demonstrates how we can privately conserve vital habitat and recognize the importance of working lands



Payment for Presence

- **Approach:** Use game cameras to determine elk days
- **Agreement:** PERC and partners compensate landowner based on elk days
- **Process:** Minimum of 20 elk captured on camera = “elk day” and triggers payout to rancher
- **Bonus:** Bonus payment when 200 or more elk captured in single day
- **Partners:** PERC, and ranching family



Fence Fund

- **Approach:** Offset costs of fence damage caused by elk
- **Agreement:** PERC and partners compensate landowner based on impacts
- **Level 1:** Basic repairs up to \$750 in supporting funds
- **Level 2:** Fence replacement up to \$1,500 in supporting funds
- **Level 3:** Fence conversion to wildlife friendly design up to \$4,000 in supporting funds

Funding Conundrum

How do we create long-term, dedicated funding sources to compensate private interests that provide public goods?



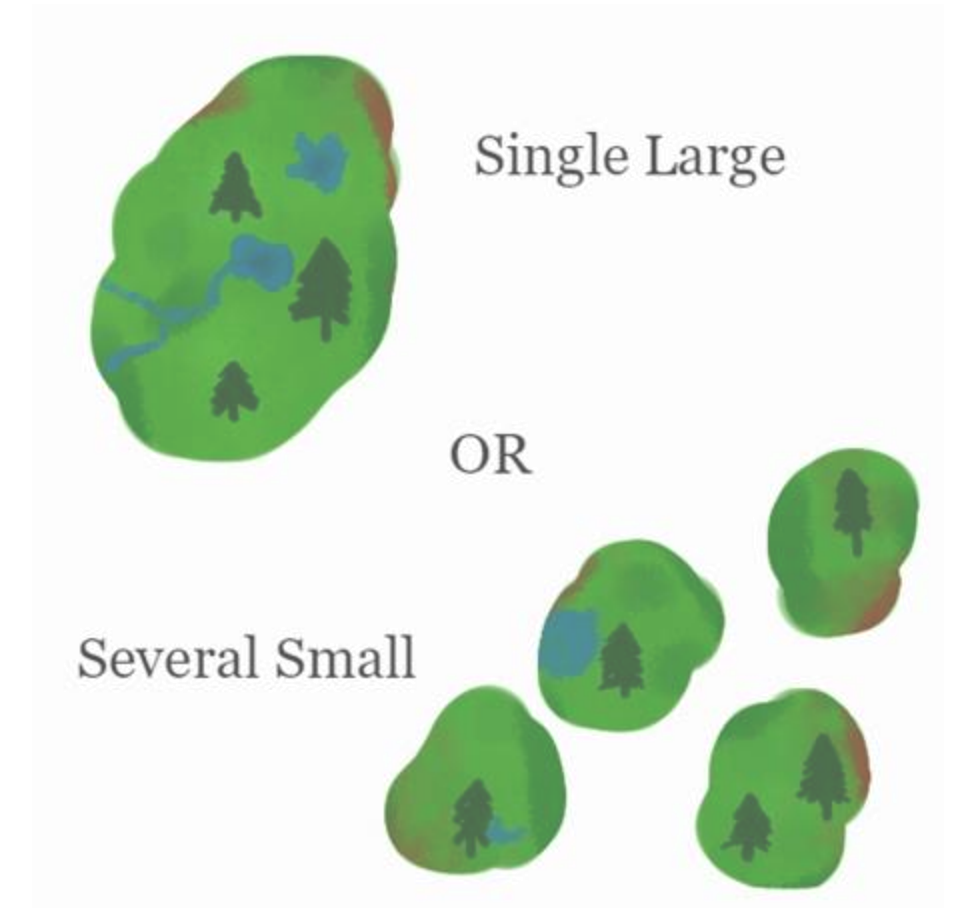
Funding Sources



- Current Sources are short-term or uncertain
 - Government programs and grants
 - Philanthropy
- Dedicated, long-term markets are an underutilized opportunity
 - Direct commodity (like wetlands banking)
 - Corporate/ economic
 - Personal/ stock market-like

Funding Size - SLOSS

- Single Large?
 - Affect acreage at scale
 - Lower complexity of programs
 - Challenging to secure, even for short time frames
- Several Small?
 - Tailored to specific landowner needs
 - Easier to secure funding
 - Potential for confusion over many projects



PES Lessons Learned

- Incentivize private interests that provide public goods
 - Current policy and practice often does the opposite
- Begin with the end in mind– landowners
 - Build programs around their needs and interests
- Consistent, long-term funding is imperative
 - Markets offer opportunities for expansion
 - Provide a suite of large and small approaches
- Flip the script– stacking is not only OK, it is needed!

**“Conservation will ultimately
boil down to rewarding the
private landowner who
conserves the public
interest.”**

— Aldo Leopold, 1934



Thank You!

teason@perc.org

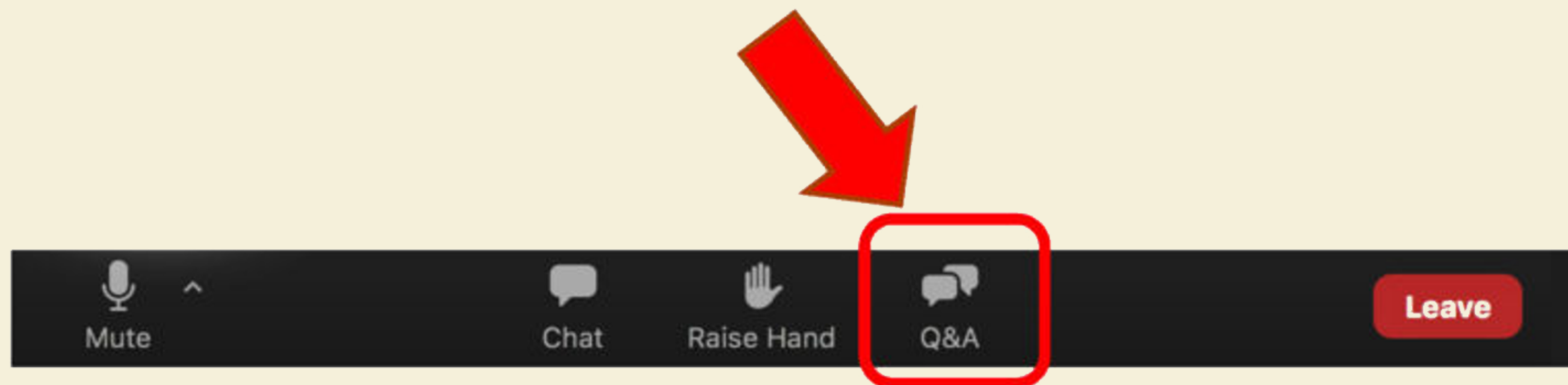
850-544-0526



Questions & Answers

Please submit questions for speakers using the Q&A button on your Zoom control panel.

Keep questions succinct and, if possible, indicate who your question should be directed to.



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40 Years In: The Story of Florida Growth Management, and Its Next Chapter
(12:00 – 2:00 P.M. ET)



Beyond the Corridor: Transect Planning and Connectivity
(12:00 – 2:00 P.M. ET)



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