

CENTER FOR NATURAL LANDS MANAGEMENT
CONSERVATION VALUES STEWARDSHIP POLICY

Adopted on July 23, 2009 via Resolution 155-09
Revised March 30, 2014 via Resolution 218-14
Revised June 5, 2015 via Resolution 238-15

Preamble

The Center for Natural Lands Management (CNLM), a public benefit organization, manages lands with their attendant native species and ecosystem functions as its primary mission. CNLM's conservation-directed management begins with acquisition of real estate interests in conservation properties. Once the legal framework is established, CNLM maintains and enhances the physical and biological resources with collective and acquired stewardship experience, development of tools to support stewardship objectives, and support from and contributions to the conservation (biology) community through interpretation and calibration of scientific principles. Collectively, the natural resources in their initial and enhanced condition, together with the tools and information used in their conservation, are the conservation values. The Conservation Values Stewardship Policy ("Stewardship Policy"), formerly the Preserve Stewardship Policy (2009), has a strong nexus with other CNLM practices. Real estate interests are acquired with appropriate attention to the inherent or potential biological and physical resources and concurrent acquisition of the financial resources required to protect in perpetuity those values. Once acquired, CNLM's stewardship of these real estate interests is supported through wise management of not only the natural resources but of the financial resources upon which their management depends.

For the purposes of this policy, stewardship is defined as the conservation-directed management, discovery, and protection of the physical and biological resources associated with conservation lands.

Stewardship activities include the suite of active management practices undertaken to achieve management goals, including, but not limited to: boundary protection; public engagement, use, and education; ecosystem management; biological monitoring; exotic invasives management; hydrological and fire management; habitat restoration; selective research; collection, propagation, and storage of plant materials; species enhancement and reintroduction; planning; documentation; reporting; and conservation easement compliance activities. Because the stewardship activities associated with holding conservation easements may be a subset of those associated with fee-held properties, this stewardship policy may not necessarily hold in its entirety for CNLM-held conservation easements.

In support, and as a natural result, of its stewardship activities and leadership in applied conservation, CNLM will develop tools and expertise that are valuable to its continued conservation goals and, in some cases, to the broader conservation community. CNLM will ensure these tools and expertise are appropriately documented, protected, stored, and maintained. Where and when appropriate, these tools and expertise will be shared with the conservation community through such media as conference presentations, journal publications, website representations, and, occasionally, through sales.

The diversity of habitats for which CNLM is the steward and the conditions that surround the determination of CNLM's role have two defining implications for CNLM's Stewardship Policy: (1) each property interest or preserve is managed individually in a manner that reflects that preserve's specific conservation values, context, and regulatory requirements; and (2) legal documents for each preserve typically define certain regulatory permit monitoring, management, and public access (e.g., public access prohibited or level of access allowed) requirements. Because of the particular needs and conditions of each preserve and because of the authority of those legal documents, CNLM's Stewardship Policy does not address specific monitoring, public access, prohibited activities, funding, or site visit requirements. A brief description of each preserve, including its conservation values, management approach, and public access provisions (if any) is provided on CNLM's website. Files are maintained for each preserve, including management plans and various reports.

Policy

For all resources over which CNLM has long-term stewardship responsibilities, whether by ownership or contract, CNLM will provide stewardship consistent with its contractual obligations that:

- (a) Supports and enhances the long-term sustainability of the resource;
- (b) Focuses on conservation of native species and ecosystem function;
- (c) Uses scientific literature and principles to inform practices;
- (d) Adjusts practices appropriately in response to new information and experience gained over time ("adaptive management"); and
- (e) Recognizes the influence of the larger spatial contexts (for example, watershed, ecoregion or species range) and temporal contexts (including rapid climate/sea level change).

Stewardship Procedures

Consistent with this policy, the Executive Director, in consultation with the Director of Conservation Science and Stewardship and other senior staff as appropriate, shall maintain and improve procedures implementing this policy consistent with the following:

1. Stewardship Plans. CNLM shall develop stewardship plans for each preserve and update these as needed, typically every five to ten years. These periodic revisions will be the main steps by which adaptive management is recognized and incorporated into preserve management actions.

2. Stewardship Staff. CNLM shall recruit, select, and retain stewardship staff who have a strong background in biological sciences and natural resource management; are competent in searching scientific literature and conducting scientifically rigorous field studies; can effectively and courteously interact with the public, resource agencies, and other stewards; and have the ability to interact appropriately with the research community for stewardship support.

3. Recordkeeping. Sound stewardship, including adaptive management, relies on a strong institutional memory that transcends individual managers. CNLM will invest appropriately in quality assurance and quality control (QA/QC) and document management.

4. Stewardship Principles and Rationale. CNLM will provide in its stewardship plans the principles and rationale for the chosen practices. This will help to ensure connectivity among the guiding principles from conservation biology, stewardship objectives, and practices. This transparency and connectivity also assists in identifying the elements that will change only slowly (conservation biology principles) and those that may change more rapidly (appropriate practices).

5. Relationship with Research Community. Where valuable, CNLM may conduct applied research on its preserves or in appropriate *ex situ* contexts, ensuring that the research is (a) non-trivial; (b) well supported by scientific principles; (c) directed to providing information or tools towards more effective conservation and/or recovery of conservation values; (d) non-threatening to current conservation values; and (e) sufficiently funded such that the research objectives can be met and results can be appropriately documented for CNLM's institutional records and distributed to the greater research and conservation communities.

CNLM will accommodate requests from researchers to use the preserves for onsite research projects, following CNLM review for appropriate methods and value of the research, and barring any significant risks to native species and the environment. CNLM will also invest in relationships with the research community as an ongoing source of support for decision-making. The expertise needed to guide effective stewardship is multi-disciplinary often benefits from a team approach.

6. Relationship with Regulatory Agencies. CNLM's relationship with the regulatory agencies in the conduct of its stewardship and conservation science activities is multi-faceted. Our principal nexus is that CNLM protects, manages, monitors, and acquires habitat for listed species; provides comments during rulemaking on state and federal listing decisions; conducts research itself on listed species and their habitats;

and reviews and often, but not always, approves research by others on CNLM preserves. CNLM works cooperatively with regulatory agencies, but exercises its own independent judgment on scientific matters.

Exceptions

CNLM commits to applying its stewardship policy on all lands it manages. However, occasionally CNLM accepts short-term contracts for management of lands or circumstances otherwise are such that, given a lesser degree of control and responsibility and/or shorter duration, CNLM may be able to apply its Stewardship Policy only in some respects.

Guidelines

The Executive Director, with support from the Director of Conservation Science and Stewardship, shall ensure that any necessary implementing guidelines or procedures are prepared, distributed, and implemented as appropriate.