



SENTINEL
LANDSCAPES



Sentinel Landscapes Workshop

Hosted by the SERPPAS Sentinel Landscapes Work Group
Summary and Recommendations

November 30 – December 2, 2016
Raleigh, North Carolina

Executive Summary

On November 30 to December 2, the SERPPAS Sentinel Landscapes Work Group hosted a workshop that brought together current and future partners and stakeholders of the Sentinel Landscapes Partnership. The workshop started with the following challenge statement: “The fundamental truth behind the Sentinel Landscapes Partnership is that landowners around military installations have long contributed—largely without recognition—to the protection of the military mission by devoting their lands to compatible land uses. We now wish to explicitly acknowledge and reward these landowners for their contributions to national defense, and develop incentives that will encourage them to continue to engage in land practices that are compatible with the military mission. To that end, our task is to identify the full range of benefits, services, and incentives for which a landowner may become eligible by virtue of being located within a designated Sentinel Landscape and willing to devote his or her lands to compatible land uses. In short, we seek to answer the question ‘*I own land within a designated Sentinel Landscape—so what?*’”

Participants represented Federal, state, local, and non-profit agencies/organizations as well as military services, landowner organizations and others. The workshop was organized around four main focus areas; **Expanding and Enhancing Federal Programs, Expanding and Enhancing State Programs, Landowner Recognition and Incentives, and Non-Government Financing**. Each session consisted of expert panel speakers followed by interaction with the attendees through engaging discussions and thought-provoking activities. The result of this three-day workshop was developing a set of opportunity areas and recommendations (listed in the [table on page 3](#)) for federal, state, private, and local community action. Participants provided recommendations that are cross-cutting among the four main focus areas and encompass legislative & administrative tools, markets & investment, messaging, marketing & storytelling, partnership engagement & capacity building, and recognition & incentives.

**Workshop Agenda: See Appendix A.1*

Focus Area Summaries

1. Expanding and Enhancing Federal Programs

The most pertinent concerns brought to light from this panel and session were 1) increasing capacity in terms of both technical assistance and greater engagement/understanding with landowners and 2) creating alternative contracts instead of heavily relying on permanent easements. Easements that have “in perpetuity” conditions are not easily agreeable for landowners due to the desire of maintaining cash flow and predictability for generational ownership. Thus, Sentinel Landscapes (SL) will need to strategize usage of temporary contracts and/or provide greater incentives to increase cooperation. Legislative frameworks for including SL language and projects in federal (i.e. the Farm Bill) and state legislation should be considered, such that the SL partnership is incorporated and standardized within easements and agreements, and expanding engagement. At the same time, the partnership must also provide technical assistance to landowners in order to provide additional benefits.

2. Expanding and Enhancing State Programs

In order for states to maintain current Sentinel Landscapes and create new ones, a best practices framework should be developed in order to continue proactive conservation, enhance cross-agency collaboration, and expand technical assistance and capacity. State agencies can then provide tools (similar to North Carolina’s WRC “Green Growth Toolbox”) that train and enable local planners and community leaders in landowner education and outreach, GIS mapping, and land management. The most important aspect of building a recognized SL is creating state legislation that recognizes landowners and provides options for enrollment. Lastly, in order to have streamlined communication at the state and local levels, SL should consider creating a community organizer/on-the-ground coordinator role for each Southeastern Sentinel Landscape (NC and Avon Park).

3. Landowner Recognition and Incentives

Based on panel and group discussion this session honed in on the need to be specific in marketing to landowners based on their current level of engagement, and stages of adoption. Utilizing marketing research will improve success in engaging the landowners, and allow them to tell their story in order to demonstrate the importance of a Sentinel Landscape. The key to visualizing landowner recognition is through “film, photography, and great maps,” which can go a long way in building the community and capturing the public’s attention. In order for SL to be truly effective, listening to the landowners and understanding how they see the legacy of their land, livelihood, and lifestyle is extremely important and can be done by holding town hall-style “listening sessions.” This will lead to trust between the landowners and the SL partners, and allow for a better understanding of how to provide financial incentives and regulatory certainty.

4. Non-Government Finance

There are many opportunities for private entities to engage in Sentinel Landscapes, where is space for both high returns on investment and positive environmental impact. These private entities range from private foundations to large institutional investors, such as Timber Investment Management Organizations (TIMO). To begin to explore the potential for public/private landscape partnerships, there needs to be a fundamental understanding/assessment of both the constraints and motivations of the entities to develop, test, encourage, and leverage private investments. Additionally, building on existing markets and creating new ones within SL would drive the partnership forward; these can range from purchasing locally grown products to establishing bio-energy markets. Ultimately, private entities look for large investments, low risk/operational predictability, strong underlying markets, and partners that can act in a timely manner.

Key Recommendations and Action Items

Legislative & Administration Tools	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Codify Sentinel Landscapes (SL) into Federal legislation with state recognition <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Following the Minnesota example, States could use the power of legislation to formally acknowledge SL, facilitate greater opportunities for collaboration, and provide tiered options to enroll 2. Include SL language into the upcoming Farm Bill 3. Expand use of contractual vehicles to allow for compensated, term-limited, acquisition and protection of interests valued by DoD and its SL agency partners 4. Promote and expand landowner flexibility in implementation and preserve future options, while maintaining landowner cash flow, DoD planning, and operational certainty 5. Waive AGI cap on large landowners within designated Sentinel Landscapes 6. Creating common SL easement language and SL Land Management Plans (streamlining requirements, corresponding benefits/rewards, and recognition into one plan to be accepted by participating agents) 7. Enroll SL for Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)/Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) alignment 8. Create Habitat Conservation Plan/Safe Harbor Agreement for SL
Markets & Investment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct a private capital opportunity assessment and a pilot program <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Hold an SL Workshop for designated sites (as pilot) that identifies best practices/lessons learned, prioritization mapping, and collaboration mapping 2. Create local markets <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Local/landscape sourced biomass/biofuels for co-generational heat & power production facilities within SL b. Food & fuel for the forces programs – local forestry and agricultural markets 3. Explore how to further develop, encourage, and leverage private equity investments 4. Create finance tools such as tax-exempt bonds and bond issuance for SL <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Municipal bonds with government-backed guarantee
Messaging, Marketing & Storytelling	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a branding/communications plan that incorporates landowner storytelling by creating: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Logo ■ Vision, Mission, and Capability Statements ■ YouTube videos ■ Podcasts 2. Strategize navigating bureaucratic obstacles in advancing SL Communications/PR strategy, e.g. having NGO or other “outside” sponsors, encouraging local SLs to take initiative 3. Use postcards and short handouts in the mail as an outreach strategy 4. Utilize photography, film, and clear maps to get landowners involved in SL conservation efforts

Key Recommendations and Action Items, continued

Partnership Engagement & Capacity Building	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enable capacity funding in order to get more “boots on the ground” 2. Tap into returning veterans for technical assistance in SL by training in conservation 3. Initiate “listening sessions” with landowners with the involvement of SL Federal Coordinating Committee (FCC), along with state, local, and NGO entities 4. Hold meetings between the SL FCC and Forest Resource Coordinating Committee to explore overlap in interests and opportunities 5. Create a “Landowner Advisory Group” for involved or interested landowners to provide their thoughts, ideas, challenges, and advice to local SL Partnerships 6. Create a “Sentinel Landscapes Coordinator” at each SL site with a funding Strategy <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. This person would be the “one stop shop” for anything related to SL engagement and coordination 7. Create a glossary of agencies and programs for outreach that can be shared between agencies
Recognition & Incentives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lower cost share requirement of federal or state programs for landowners within designated Sentinel Landscapes 2. Provide landowners access to on base commissaries and shooting ranges, priority status in hunting permit lotteries, and free or discounted access to state parks 3. Use special labeling/branding to promote food and fuel for the forces by supporting locally grown and produced products 4. Distribute signs that indicate/recognize participation to be placed on land 5. Establish field days/site visits, workshops, and landowner-to-landowner lunches, annual gatherings for SL landowners

Appendix A.1: Agenda

Time	Activity	Participants
November 30		
1:00 pm	Welcome Process Review and Introductions	Ryan Orndorff, Department of Defense, REPI Nancy Walters, Facilitator
1:30 pm	The Sentinel Landscapes Partnership	Ryan Orndorff, Moderator Barry Frantz, USDA NRCS Aaron Valenta, US Fish and Wildlife Service Ryan Orndorff, Department of Defense
2:45 pm	Refreshment Break	
3:00 pm	Expanding and Enhancing Federal Programs	Bruce Beard, Moderator Craig Cox, Environmental Working Group Jim McElfish, Environmental Law Institute Dick Fowler, Former NC Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts
6:00 pm	The Great Southeastern Sentinel Landscapes Biodiversity Throw-Down	Mallory Lykes Dimmit, The Florida Wildlife Corridor Tom Earnhardt, UNC-TV
December 1		
8:00 am	Welcome	Nancy Walters, Facilitator
8:10 am	[Continued] Expanding and Enhancing Federal Programs	Nancy Walters, Facilitator
9:15 am	Refreshment Break	
9:30 am	Expanding and Enhancing State Programs	Bill Ross, Moderator Bettina Ring, Virginia Department of Forestry Chester Lowder, NC Farm Bureau Gordon Myers, NC Wildlife Resources Commission
12:15 pm	Lunch	
1:30 pm	Landowner Recognition and Incentives	Bob Bardon, Moderator Heather Hahn, Audubon North Carolina Chris Erwin, American Forest Foundation Mallory Lykes Dimmitt, Lykes Bros. and FL Wildlife Corridor Dick Ludington, Fay Ranches
5:00 pm	Adjourn	
December 2		
8:00 am	Welcome	
8:10 am	Exploring Non-Government Finance	Ryan Orndorff, Moderator Kent Gilges, Conservation Forestry Tony Doster, Resource Management Services Carl Palmer, Legacy Works Group
11:15 am	Summary and Wrap-Up	Nancy Walters, Facilitator
12:00 pm	Adjourn	