

Land Stewardship Project



LAND
STEWARDSHIP
PROJECT

Long Range Plan

2014-2019

Keeping the Land & People Together



**Long Range Plan
2014-2019**

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Contents

Introduction.....2

- Why & How this Long Range Plan was Developed

The LSP Way.....3

Seeking a Sustainable & Just Society.....4

- LSP’s Values
- LSP’s Vision for the Future

LSP’s Long Range Goals.....5

- Prosperous, Diversified & Resilient Family Farms Managing for High Levels of Stewardship
- Land Reform in the Upper Midwest
- Healthy Communities
- Shift the Dominant Narrative About Food & Farming

Organized to Achieve Change.....7

- Program Areas.....8
- Organization-Wide Strategies.....9
- Strategic Initiatives.....10
- Capacity Building.....14

LSP’s Financial Future.....15

The Impact of the Land Stewardship Project.....17

Glossary of Terms.....18

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Giving Voice to the People

“LSP gives the commons and common folk a voice—the organization lets those who care know that they are not alone in the fights against corporatism.”

— Tex Hawkins, LSP Board Member, ecologist & educator

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Introduction

Why & How this Long Range Plan was Developed

By Juliet Tomkins & George Boody

This Long Range Plan is the result of the Land Stewardship Project asking a simple, straightforward question: “How can LSP be most effective, powerful and resilient as an organization?” Asking that question on a regular basis is important to LSP, a grassroots, mission- and member-driven nonprofit organization founded in 1982. For over 30 years we have functioned as a powerful base for positive change. With LSP’s current membership of more than 3,400 farm, rural and urban households, our work has a broad and deep impact, from new farmer training and local organizing, to federal policy and community-based food systems development.

We are proud of the many accomplishments we have made over the years, some of which are summarized on pages 17-18. However, there are still major challenges that LSP must continue to address as we work toward our mission of land stewardship, a sustainable agriculture and healthy communities. This will require reforming the dysfunctional corporate-controlled food system that focuses on maximizing profits for shareholders and wealthy individuals with little regard for the impacts on our environmental or human community. Make no mistake: powerful forces profit greatly from the current food and farming system, and they will not give up their power without a fight.

But our past successes give us confidence that we and our allies can bring about transformative changes to the food and farm system. The other thing that gives us the courage to take on these major challenges is our members. Over the years, LSP member-leaders have helped us set goals while joining in the work needed to attain them.

That’s why when we began the process of developing this work plan for the next five years, we turned to that membership. First, LSP’s Board of Directors appointed a 10-person Long Range Plan Committee of member-leaders. This committee in turn set up a process which invited input from all of LSP’s membership to help create the Long Range Plan.

The committee launched the process by asking all of our members, via a survey, the following questions:

- 1) What should we be doing to best advance the changes towards stewardship and justice on the land and in our food and farming system that we seek?
- 2) What should our goals be for membership development and growth?
- 3) Five years from now, what will we want to have accomplished?

These same questions were discussed at two Leadership Assembly meetings — gatherings of member-leaders serving on program steering committees or the Board — held in the fall of 2013. In addition, staff in our three offices grappled with these questions during special meetings.

Throughout this process, our members made it clear they were overwhelmingly positive about the work LSP has already done. They also provided a number of good ideas and suggestions for improvement or change as we move forward.

We asked, “How can LSP be most effective, powerful and resilient as an organization?”

The result of all this is the *Land Stewardship Project Long Range Plan 2014-2019*. We are very excited to present this plan, and even more importantly, to begin executing it.

True to LSP’s reputation for combining forward thinking with practical, nuts-and-bolts problem solving, we have laid out here our long range goals, the resources we have for reaching them and how we will go about utilizing these resources to do the work that is so important to developing a more sustainable and just food and farming system.

We hope this Long Range Plan will make clear that of all the resources at LSP’s disposal, none are more critical than a committed membership base that is willing to ask, and answer, the hard questions.

George Boody is the Executive Director of the Land Stewardship Project. Juliet Tomkins is the Chair of LSP’s Board of Directors. They were both members of the Long Range Plan Committee, which also included Abby Liesch, Dennis Johnson, Mark Schultz, Alan Hoffman, Heidi Morlock, Chad Kingstrom, Rebecca White and Karen Stettler.

The LSP Way

By Mark Schultz

As the Land Stewardship Project's Long Range Plan Committee moved forward with our work this past fall and winter — reading our members' responses to the long-range plan survey, digging into discussions with LSP member/leaders in two half-day meetings, and working together to put our plan into words — an observation that surfaced time and again was that LSP has a way of working that people find effective, rewarding, balanced and unique. A few members called it “the LSP way.”

At the core of it, of course, are people and the land. “Keeping the land and people together” is one of LSP's oldest and most accurate descriptions. And in order to achieve stewardship, justice and prosperity in our communities, LSP understands that we must both educate and build power to make change, so that the land is well-cared for, that wealth generated is retained by those who create it by their labor and management,

and that we build a food and agriculture system that is just. In recent years, I've begun to understand our work as a handful of paired strategies, or approaches. The “tandem pairs” I describe in the box below have become clear as key elements in LSP's approach to societal change.

As you look through them, understand that few organizations actually approach their work this way, and instead often choose one of the approaches over the other. It is also true that there is a tension between each tandem pair — they are not the same thing. So the skills of listening, clarification, accountability and strategic sense need to be strong for the work to be effective over the long-term.

For these pairs, the hard part is doing both well, in relationship with the other. To some degree, we as an organization — all of us — have figured that out. That's “the LSP way.”

Mark Schultz is LSP's Associate Director, Director of Programs and Policy Program Director.

Tandem Pairs

→ Mission Driven & Member-Driven

LSP is both **mission-driven and member-driven**. Our mission gives us guidance every day — so does the lived experience, needs and aspirations of LSP's members.

→ Local or Personal & Structural or Systemic

We work hard in the sphere of local, specific and even personal action. Examples include helping a beginning farmer figure out a farm plan, organizing with local residents to stop a factory farm or frac sand mine, and talking through a conservation practice with a farmer. But equally important is our work to win systemic or structural change by, among other things, passing public policy that rewards conservation on working farmland, creating multi-state collaboratives to expand beginning farmer training and addressing structural racism in the food and agriculture system. For LSP, investing in both of these two “ends” of the work — the **local or personal, and the structural or systemic** — makes us practical, effective, cutting-edge and powerful.

→ Fighting the Worst & Promoting the Best

LSP fights some of the worst ideas and developments that would damage the land, our communities and our democracy—like corporate-backed factory farms, strip-mining of

sand for hydraulic fracturing, and an excessive and unjust set of crop subsidies that consolidate land ownership while expanding industrial agriculture. At the same time, we know that we must work to create and build what we want and need — new family farms, new ways of farming, new local and regional food systems and new public policies. By **fighting the worst and promoting the best**, we are stronger, and accomplish more towards our mission and long-term goals.

→ Taking Action & Telling the Story

Through reflection, evaluation and writing, LSP strives to improve our work and to share what we learn with others. It is a constant and highly valued part of LSP's work, whether it is through the highly-regarded *Land Stewardship Letter*, commentaries and articles, social media or the evaluation at the end of a meeting. And we also know that we must act, do, create and build. **We take action, and we tell the story.**

→ A Rural & Urban Membership Base

LSP unites a **strong rural/small town base with urban and suburban members**. We emphasize the need for farmers and other rural people to be a central element of LSP's power base, and a source of knowledge and solutions. We know that urban and suburban communities bring important ideas and solutions as well. United by values and vision, LSP members are able to influence decision makers, steward the land and create the communities we want and need, together.

Seeking a Sustainable & Just Society

Land Stewardship Project's Mission

LSP's mission is to foster an ethic of stewardship for farmland, to promote sustainable agriculture and to develop healthy communities.

LSP's Values

Central to the Land Stewardship Project are the values of **stewardship, justice, democracy and health**:

✓ **Stewardship** means valuing soil health, water quality, air quality and biodiversity in crop and animal production systems and minimizing the contribution to global climate change made by the food and farming system. Stewardship is about a land ethic, a way of engagement and care within the whole biotic community. Core to stewardship of farmland are conservation-minded farmers who live on the land, farm it and care for it.

✓ **Justice** means economic justice for farmers, racial equity in the food and agriculture system, farmworker rights and fair labor, access to good food for all people, and affordable, high quality healthcare for everyone.

✓ **Democracy** means a society in which the people hold the power to govern, in which people directly impacted by issues are involved in naming solutions, setting priorities and winning change. It means people power is stronger than corporate power.

✓ **Health** means that we value the beauty, ecological functioning, and security of people, landscapes, ecosystems, plants, animals, soil and water. All are interdependent and parts of an indivisible whole. The health of the land is a gift that current generations are obligated to provide for generations to come.

LSP's Vision for the Future

The Land Stewardship Project's vision is based on our organizational values and what our members believe possible: a society based on ecological, social and economic health and resiliency. In such a society:

✓ We are trusted stewards of the land and seek to understand our interdependence with it while managing land in harmony with nature. A diversity of crops, farming systems and income is essential to the strength and resilience of land, family farms and community economies.

✓ Whether we live on farms, in rural towns or in urban centers, we are interdependent with each other as well as with clean water, clear air and healthy soil, plants and animals. Energy conservation and efficiency are necessary to achieve this vision, as are renewable energy resources produced in ways that can be sustained for future generations.

✓ The communities we live in seek racial equity and economic justice as strong foundations for vibrant local economies and civic life. Youth stay or return to rural areas and learn how to farm because they see farming as an opportunity for making a living and caring for the land. Opportunities for farming, food businesses, recreation, education, healthcare, cultural events, worship and civic engagement for all are available in rural and urban communities.

✓ Healthy food nourishes the land, animals, our bodies and our communities. We all have a right to healthful food and to control what food we eat. Community food systems, including growing, cooking and eating healthy food, connect us to the land, farmers, the seasons, our families, our neighbors, our culture and the culture of others. Farms in rural areas and permanently protected farms in urban and urban edge regions provide safe and nutritious food and fiber.

✓ Through our active participation we forge a democratic society based on ecological, social and economic sustainability. This means reining in excessive corporate power. Policy decisions at all levels advance individual action for the public good and help us build community, generate and circulate solar-based wealth through meaningful work and investment, fully utilize all talents and abilities within the community and protect and restore ecological functioning.

Making this vision real in our communities, states, nation and world will require a fundamental transformation of our food and agriculture systems, as well as changes throughout society.

LSP's Long Range Goals

The Land Stewardship Project's long range goals were initially set in 1992 through gatherings of leaders and incorporated into subsequent long range plans. A fourth goal was added after Leadership Assembly meetings LSP held in 2013.

1. Prosperous, Diversified & Resilient Family Farms Managing for High Levels of Stewardship

We will have inspired a broad public discussion about restoring soil health and long-term health of ecosystems. We also will have significantly increased the amount of farmland in watersheds in the Upper Mississippi River Basin protected by crop and livestock systems that maintain perennial plants, resource-conserving crop rotations and continuous living cover.

This will require:

- Assisting farmers in adopting systems that replace reliance on corporate-controlled inputs with management and on-farm biological resources.
- Changing public and corporate policies that currently encourage farms to grow extremely large and promote vertical integration and ecologically damaging production systems.
- Public policy in which conservation and stewardship priorities, market development, antitrust action, public education and research, and rural and urban food system development are enacted, implemented and used to build and support farming systems with excellent stewardship and economic viability, and social and racial equity.
- Well-functioning local, regional and distant markets for food and other products from perennial crops, grass-based livestock and diversified farming systems. This includes profitability for farmers and value chain businesses and will require the exertion of public power to restrain excessive corporate power.

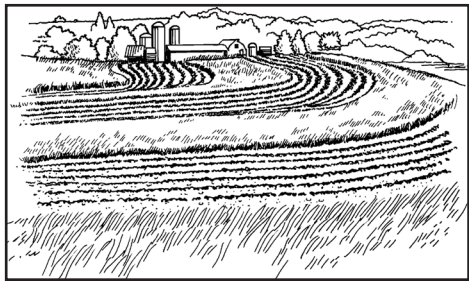


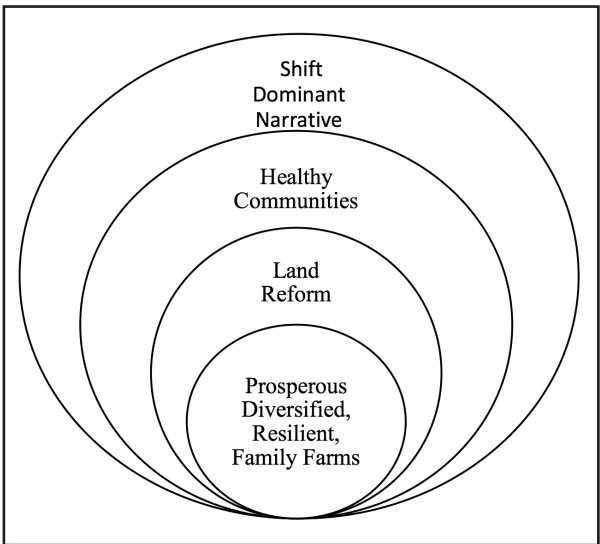
Illustration: University of Wisconsin Extension

2. Land Reform in the Upper Midwest

We will have more people farming on diverse, small- and mid-sized farms. There will be affordable access to farmland and secure tenure for purchase and rental by beginning farmers and small- to mid-sized farmers who want to expand. Through long-term vision, collective grassroots action and decision making, farmland is protected for farmers and farming indefinitely.

This will require:

- Successful beginning farmers.
- Decisions are made by farmers and landowners that have a positive impact on future generations.
- Equitable distribution of farmland.
- Transitioning land from retiring and absentee owners to viable family farm businesses.
- Preserving healthy, working farmland in rural and urban/suburban areas.



The Land Stewardship Project's long range goals put resilient family farms at the core of our work.

3. Healthy Communities

We will have more reliance on community-based economies where people are able to put their values into play and are able to make a good living from their work.

This will require:

- Bringing people together to develop visions, goals and action plans for change to increase the number of people and animals on the land.
- More people farming on diverse, small- to mid-sized farms in rural and urban areas.
- A strong land ethic so farms and the overall landscape are managed for ecological and community health.
- Organizing support for transformation of public policy to build the role of these diversified economies in our society.
- Reducing the extraction of resources from communities by transnational corporations, and strengthened corporate responsibility and accountability.
- Supporting the significant growth of meaningful, well-paying employment/economic opportunities in rural and urban areas, including opportunities based on farming.
- Encouraging understanding, interaction and respect for racial equity, gender, age, professions, heritage, sexual orientation and faiths.
- Public health insurance so all people are included and farmers are not pulled off the land to qualify for insurance through off-farm work.
- Food and energy security based on a higher percentage of locally available and sustainably-raised healthy food products and renewable energy and fiber products that people control.

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Making it Possible

“There are actually a lot of young women my age who really, really want to farm but everyone’s telling them there’s no way they can do it, there’s no way it’s possible. It’s obviously possible, or I wouldn’t be doing it.”

— LSP Farm Beginnings graduate Aimee Finley

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4. Shift the Dominant Narrative About Food & Farming

We will have exposed the adverse impact of the dominant corporate-controlled narrative and elevated a narrative based on the values of stewardship, justice, democracy and health. This will have enabled significant redirection of public and private resources to grow the infrastructure for sustainable food and agriculture systems. A dominant narrative is a public “story” that has the power to shape peoples’ perceptions about what needs to be done and what is possible to accomplish. It taps into deeply held values. A dominant narrative is promulgated by, for example, corporate agribusinesses that have significant control over the social, economic and political infrastructure and seek to reinforce that power. Such a corporate-controlled narrative can be shifted to a more grounded narrative through organizing and other means.

This will require:

- Values-based conversations with individuals and groups where people contrast the dominant narrative with a new narrative based on their values and what can be achieved.
- Campaigns that contrast the dominant narrative with a new narrative that holds up our values and engages people in taking action on their values towards real change.
- Deeper collaboration and partnerships, especially with organizations and communities of color and other organizations working for stewardship, justice, democracy and health.
- Lifting up achievements made, and asserting that more positive change is possible — generating hope and movement forward.
- Bringing more of society into this conversation so people are able to make choices.

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Creative Countryside

“We owe it to ourselves and to the next generation to conserve the environment so that we can bequeath our children a sustainable world that benefits all.”

— Wangari Maathai, 2004 Nobel Peace Prize recipient

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Organized to Achieve Change

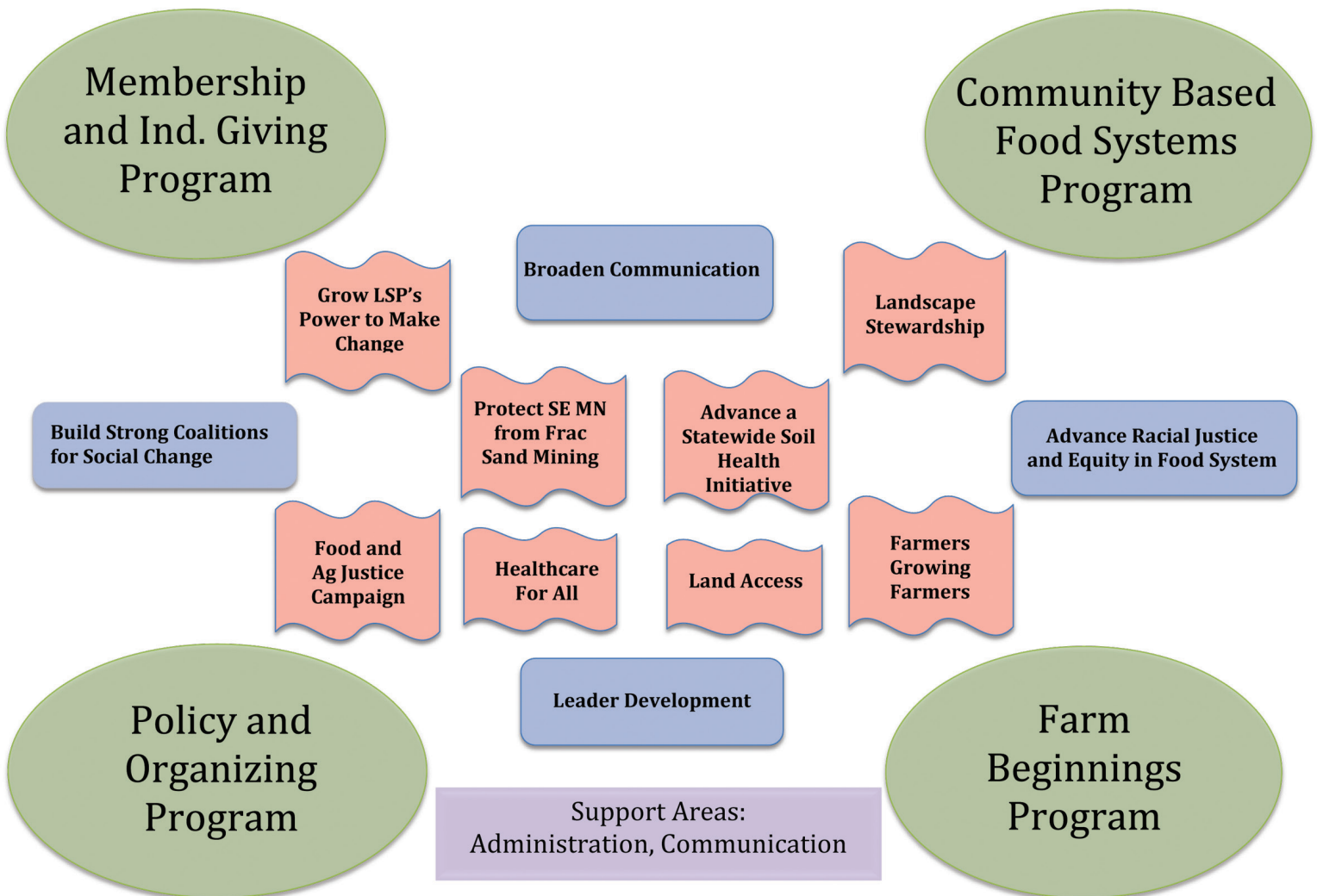
The Land Stewardship Project is organized to carry out our mission and advance our long-range goals. Core strategies of organizing, education-to-action, communication and member/leader development are put to use across LSP in order to achieve the changes we seek towards stewardship and justice on the land. LSP's programs, organization-wide strategies, strategic initiatives and capacity building are vehicles for change, as illustrated below.

Program Areas

Organization-Wide Strategies

Strategic Initiatives

Capacity Building



Program Areas

The Land Stewardship Project's programs are a major tool for putting our values into action in order to accomplish positive change. Steering committees made up of LSP members (for example, the Federal Farm Policy Committee or the Advanced Beginning Farmer Training Committee) take responsibility for key components of programs. They set the organization's priorities in a specified arena, develop effective strategies and take on key elements of doing the work. Programs are also vehicles for collaboration with aligned groups and institutions, as well as for seeking project-based funding.

◆ **The Policy and Organizing Program** starts from values — like stewardship and justice — and then organizes growing numbers of people, resources and ideas to build the power to make a difference. This program does the organizing necessary to stop some of the worst threats to the land and people, such as corporate-backed factory farming, frac sand mining and damaging and excessive federal and state commodity programs. At the same time, LSP's Policy and Organizing Program provides local, state and national leadership in advancing public initiatives that support a sustainable food and agriculture system, such as the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) and the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP). We also work toward immigration reform at the national level, as well as local control, sustainable agriculture policy initiatives, frac sand regulation and healthcare reform. Over the next five years this program will invest in organizing locally to build the number of members, leaders and strong allies engaged in the work; and nationally to build and strengthen collaborative efforts with allies across the country.



◆ **The Farm Beginnings Program** works to put more farmers on the land raising crops and livestock with good stewardship practices so that we will have revitalized local food systems and a strong local democracy. To achieve this, LSP brings together people from current farming communities, new immigrants, people of color and people from urban centers to form a learning community focused on training and support for new farmers. With 17 years of experience in community building and beginning farmer training, LSP recognizes that training alone is not enough. We must organize for change to address issues such as excessive consolidation of land ownership and the need for long-term, secure and affordable access to land for people who want to farm. Over the next five years the Farm Beginnings Program will reach new audiences with our Farmers Growing Farmers initiative, work to find local solutions to the issue of affordable access to land and organize beginning farmers to help win reforms to unfair policies driving the consolidation of land.



◆ **The Membership and Individual Giving Program** communicates directly and regularly with the Land Stewardship Project's growing number of members and constituents through updates, surveys, special appeals, personal visits, renewal letters, e-mails, social media, phone banks and more. The program assists the other LSP programs in recruiting members, and raises organizational funds to help support our work across the board. It is also responsible for maintaining LSP's database of members, constituents and contacts. It coordinates the development and implementation of LSP's plans for growth in memberships and in individual giving.



◆ **The Community Based Food Systems Program** advances local and regional food systems in which food is grown with high levels of environmental stewardship, and in which inequities in the food system are addressed. Over the next five years, the program's work will build and support the ethic and practice of farmland stewardship. This will impact farming practices, strengthen communities, and improve water quality and wildlife habitat in watersheds in the western and southeastern regions of Minnesota. We will build on our partnership with Hope Community, Inc., in Minneapolis' Phillips neighborhood to help urban residents build power and community through growing, buying and cooking healthy food. This program will also support Community Supported Agriculture farms and determine what role the Land Stewardship Project can uniquely play in advancing sustainably raised local/regional food systems.



"What we can't do alone, we can do together."

Organization-Wide Strategies

These strategies will be advanced across the organization as well as in specific areas as appropriate. Organization-wide strategies evolve over time. Those that are underway or being considered are described on this page.

◆ Advancing Racial Justice & Equity in the Food System

Racial justice is a key element of a sustainable food and agriculture system. LSP's biggest strength is our base of members, especially our members and leaders in farm, small town and regional centers. For LSP to make a contribution towards racial justice means that we must engage our base and member-leaders in implementing racial justice strategies and actions. Being more explicit and active when it comes to issues of racial justice in our society is a critical link in LSP's overall historical work on social justice.

Our approach will consist of having key LSP strategies with specific racial justice objectives. We will forge practical alliances to win agreed-upon gains with allies of color, with which some LSP staff and members will be directly engaged in their program work. A current example of this is LSP's collaboration with Hope Community in South Minneapolis on urban agriculture, food and community organizing.

All staff, board and member-leaders will need to understand, support and be able to articulate why LSP works for racial justice and how we are doing it. That will help keep members and staff open to opportunities (and challenges) as they arise.

We will also continue internal LSP dialog and training opportunities for staff and leadership alike about our commitment to racial equity, progress made in this area, challenges that remain and tools/resources that are available. This will involve engaging partners of color to help us reflect. We will engage a growing proportion of members in these relationships so they are able to speak out on this issue.

◆ Building Strong Coalitions to Advance Positive Social Change

LSP has a wealth of relationships across the Upper Midwest and nationally with a wide variety of organizations concerned with sustainability, farming, food, climate, justice and social change. We are in a position and have the skills to help build, over the next five years, collaborations among organizations to advance stewardship and justice on the land and in our communities. We are in a time of change, of movement, and will seek and invest in more opportunities for collaboration for positive change. As part of this initiative, due to their importance in rural communities and our society as a whole, we will expand connections with faith-based institutions, congregations and communities.

◆ Communications: Broadening LSP's Reach

LSP communicates with our members and the general public via publications such as the *Land Stewardship Letter*, the Internet, relationships with the media, letters, e-mails and social media. Increasing our impact through more strategic communications will be required to support transformational change. Enhancing communication within and between programs will also be required. During the next five years, this will require additional LSP staff time within programs devoted to communications and narrative development.

◆ Membership & Leadership Development — the Next Generation

The Land Stewardship Project is 32-years-old in 2014. We have accomplished much, and have built a capable organization that continues to authentically and effectively seek transformational change in our food and agriculture system. However, in order for the mission of LSP to continue to be pursued and our long-range goals achieved, we must intentionally and consistently engage large numbers of younger people, with an emphasis on farm and rural residents, in active membership and leadership roles over the next five years. That work has already started, but requires priority attention so that we effectively transition from our current staff and member leadership base to the next generation over the next 10 years. In particular, membership recruitment, leadership development and staff recruitment and development must hold this goal in focus.

Strategic Initiatives

LSP works for far-reaching change on the cutting edge — from greatly improving the health of the land to ending unjust systems that keep people feeling powerless and separated from the land. One key approach we have taken is to focus on strategic initiatives to achieve major changes in a five- to 10-year period, changes that position us for even larger transformation of our food and agriculture system towards stewardship and justice on the land. These significant initiatives will be advanced through LSP's programs and will lead to quantifiable impacts. These efforts will have ripple effects as we partner with allied organizations, building enough pressure to change public opinion and institutions. They will evolve over time as new emerging issues are brought forward. Those that are underway or being considered are on the following four pages.

◆ Landscape Stewardship in the Chippewa River & Root River Watersheds

This initiative ties stewardship in farm fields to the health of a larger landscape, as well as the health of the food produced and opportunities for beginning farmers. This is a collaborative effort with the Chippewa River Watershed Project and several local, state, federal, nonprofit, university and farm partners. It is powerful when farmers' stewardship and community values can be leveraged to implement landscape change through farmer networks, markets, conservation incentives and science. The current corn-soybean system will be transformed through networks of farmers and landowners that are utilizing innovations such as cover crops, grazing, nutrient management practices and conservation leases. Farmers and landowners will build healthy soil, the linchpin between stewardship, farm profit and a healthy agroecological system.

The results we seek are:

- Make substantial progress toward the goal of converting 10 percent of row crops to perennials or diversified farming systems in the Chippewa River watershed.
- Make substantial progress toward meeting water quality standards and wildlife habitat goals in the Root and Chippewa River watersheds.
- Engage 300 farmers and landowners in demonstrating profitable stewardship practices to 3,500 neighboring farmers, community members and landowners.
- Two hundred leaders will advocate for stewardship through on-farm events, commentaries and speaking engagements, or by working through LSP's other programs to mentor young farmers and advocate for policy changes.

◆ Food & Ag Justice Campaign

LSP is building a close collaboration with rural membership organizations in 10 states across the Midwest and West — Missouri, Iowa, Minnesota, South Dakota, North Dakota, Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, Idaho and Oregon — to build a larger power base for significant change in the U.S. food and farming system. Using innovative organizing and communications strategies, the Food and Ag Justice Campaign's goal is to change the context in which nearly all the decisions about our food and agriculture system are being made. This means greatly expanding the base of people engaged in our organizing and policy work, shifting the dominant narrative to support major reform to our food and agriculture system and the policies that undergird it, and waging strategic campaigns that win real change. It also means replacing excessive corporate power with increased people power and advancing sound farm and food policy that can help ensure that land stewardship, prosperous family farms and ranches, vital rural communities, local and regional food systems, and economic and racial equity become the norm, not the exception, in our country.

The results we seek are:

- Greatly expand the base (supporters, members, leaders) of LSP and each of the member organizations of the Food and Ag Justice Campaign. Roughly, a doubling of the base across the 10 states in five years.
- Run effective campaigns aligned across 10 states that win positive change.
- Elevate a new public narrative that speaks to the reality that better care of the land, a healthier food system for all, improved land access and tenure for people who want to farm, rural economic prosperity, and less corporate control over our food and land is possible and something to work for.

◆ **Long-term, Secure, Affordable Access to Land for Farming**

A major barrier for beginning and sustainable farmers is secure and affordable land ownership and rental options. Meanwhile, the consolidation of land ownership and control is driven in part by public and corporate policies that provide subsidies and incentives for farmland concentration — resulting in increased commodity crop production, agricultural chemical usage, soil erosion and runoff into our lakes, rivers and streams. LSP will engage beginning farmers, established family farmers and other people across the Upper Midwest in campaigns to advance secure land tenure for farmers, including community-based farm transition strategies and public policy to enable stewardship-minded beginning and established farmers to achieve secure and affordable land ownership.

The results we seek are:

- End or greatly diminish excessive federal farm crop subsidies that drive inequitable and damaging land access/land tenure trends.
- Build LSP's base of beginning farmer-leaders who are a part of a winning campaign to reform farm policies.
- Work with leaders to tell their story and raise up a new narrative about land that challenges the current dominant narrative.
- Develop more resources and support to assist established farmers looking to transition land to beginning farmers.

◆ **Growing LSP's Power to Make Change**

LSP's power to advance positive change comes from our members. As we grow our membership and continue education and organizing, our work will be further advanced. In addition, growing the amount of financial support that comes from individuals increases LSP's ability to seize opportunities and weather challenges that emerge periodically, including launching new efforts when needed and reacting quickly to strategic issues as they arise in the course of the work.

The results we seek are:

- Grow LSP's annual dues-paying membership to 5,000 households.
- Raise \$750,000 annually from individual giving (memberships, extra donations, major donors and grassroots fundraising).
- Develop an active and effective ongoing planned giving component to LSP's Individual Giving Program.

◆ **Farmers Growing Farmers**

It is clear that we are going to need more beginning farmers who want to grow food using high levels of stewardship. We need to significantly grow the Farmers Growing Farmers Initiative, using it to develop leaders among farmers who are at various levels of their farm start-up. Farmer-leaders are currently heading up this initiative, which is supported by communities in three geographic areas in Minnesota and Wisconsin. This is part of the 13-program Farm Beginnings Collaborative, which covers seven states.

The results we seek are:

- Sixty beginning farmers will be proficient in financial planning and will be invested in wealth generating assets that help them scale-up their farm.
- Two hundred and sixty Farm Beginnings course graduates will be actively engaged in farming.
- Six hundred prospective farmers will build skills according to their three-year plan for on-going training and support.

◆ Healthcare for All

In order to support healthy systems and economic justice in all communities, and particularly to address the serious obstacles family farmers, beginning farmers and others in rural communities face when it comes to obtaining good, affordable healthcare, the Land Stewardship Project supports a publicly-run health insurance system in Minnesota. Minnesota can and should help lead our nation in resolving the healthcare crisis in a way that puts the needs of people first, and that addresses economic and racial disparities in the system. We support a system that provides universal access to high quality, affordable care for all residents of Minnesota. We believe healthcare is a human right and belongs in the public sphere, not in the profit-making sector of the insurance corporations that now control the system. Whether called a “single payer” system, “national health insurance” or by other names, we look to the examples of nearly every other industrialized nation in the world, whose systems provide superior access, lower costs and higher quality care than we have in the United States under the corporate system.

The results we seek are:

- Full, fair and effective implementation and usage of MNsure and MinnesotaCare in Minnesota (short-term).
- Establishing a single-payer healthcare system in Minnesota that works for farmers, rural communities, communities of color and all Minnesotans.

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Farmland, Not Fracland

“It is my belief that to own land only gives us a lifetime lease on it. It is our moral responsibility to pass it on to the next generation in as good or better condition as we received it in. It is the way not only agriculture but all life can be sustainable. I don’t believe anything I have witnessed in the frac sand industry makes that an achievable goal.”

— LSP farmer-member Bob Christie

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Illustration: University of Wisconsin Extension

◆ Protecting Southeastern Minnesota’s Hills & Bluffs from Frac Sand Mining

Silica sand mining is another example of development that threatens farmland, water, ecosystem health, recreation and human health for short-term gain and excessive corporate profits. LSP is leading organizing in southeastern Minnesota to stop harmful frac sand mining developments and advance sensible policies on the local and state level. Strip-mining for frac sand is directly connected to another harmful practice being driven by the oil and gas industry — hydraulic fracturing or “fracking.” Overall, standing up for the right of people to work through their local units of government — commonly called “local control” — to stop harmful developments like factory farms and frac sand mines will remain a bedrock policy position for LSP.

The results we seek are:

- No new frac sand mines in southeastern Minnesota.
- A strengthened ethic and practice of stewardship and democracy utilized by LSP members and other constituents who are standing up to protect the land and the community.
- Stronger regulations statewide on frac sand mining and increased investment in community-controlled renewable energy systems.

◆ Advance a Statewide Soil Health Initiative

There is growing interest in farming systems that enhance soil health and lead to increased resilience and profitability on agricultural lands. This will be a critical avenue for engaging more mid-sized farmers in Land Stewardship Project's work towards the mutual goals of better soil stewardship and family farm prosperity. This initiative would build on what is being done in the Chippewa River and Root River watersheds and engage farmers in other parts of our region.

The results we seek are:

- Work with an increasing number of farmers, natural resource professionals and scientists who are focusing on treating soil as a long-term investment.
- Act as a bridge between emerging soil health information and farmers' actual implementation of practices, and thus develop a broad and deep network of individual farms committed to building healthy soil.
- Develop a narrative within the environmental community that improved soil health is imperative to overall ecological health and that it must include the close integration of annual crops, perennial plant systems and livestock on the land.
- Help the general public make a direct connection between the health of our soil and the resiliency and sustainability of our landscape and food supply.

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We All Play a Part

“Soil erosion is not just the problem of farmers. As long as we eat, we are part of the American agricultural system. When we buy extra consumer goods because we pay such a low percentage of our incomes for food, we benefit by the oppression of farmers. As long as our economic system makes it impossible for farmers to pay the rent or the interest on the mortgage unless the land is row-cropped every year, we all participate in the degradation of the soil. As long as the net income from farming is so impossibly low that a farmer cannot make a living rotating to a cover crop for two years to five, we all participate in mining the land of topsoil.”

— Mary Turck, *Land Stewardship Letter*

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Our Place on the Planet

“You are not Atlas carrying the world on your shoulder. It is good to remember that the planet is carrying you.”

— Vandana Shiva

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Land as Community

“We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.”

— Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*

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Capacity Building

To achieve the changes we want will require enhanced capacity to do the work, including an active membership base, staff and board, improved information technology and growth of communications.

◆ **Highly Active Membership Base Expanded by:**

- Increasing LSP's dues-paying membership base by 60 percent through a variety of strategies, including direct mail, e-mails and online strategies, as well as person-to-person recruitment and development.
- Intentionally and consistently engaging large numbers of farmers and rural people, as well as people in their 20s and 30s, in active membership and leadership roles over the next five years.
- Activating and engaging LSP's members and constituents in organizing campaigns, training and education, program activities and organizational development.
- Continuing to invest in high-functioning steering committees with skilled leaders to guide LSP's work. This will include participating in "big picture" discussions and feedback.
- Engaging people around their most deeply held values and self-interests.

◆ **Staff & Board:**

- Recruit and maintain a board of 12-14 active members that provides for succession.
- Plan for and implement transitions in leadership at all levels of the organization.
- Consistently use an effective personnel review process that includes employee professional development, helps assure focus and takes advantage of opportunities without being stretched too thin.
- Provide adequate wages, high quality benefits and opportunities for growth and leadership.
- Improve administrative processes across the organization and strengthen internal communications among staff, programs and initiatives.
- Provide training for Board and staff to help them work more effectively in specific roles.
- Evaluate location and infrastructure around staffing, decide which approaches are successful and whether other approaches and offices are needed, e.g., in northeastern Minnesota or Wisconsin.
- Evaluate LSP's carbon footprint and identify workable ways to reduce it.

◆ **Information Technology:**

- Assure competent and integrated IT across offices, remote locations and platforms.
- Achieve and maintain consistent data storage, back-ups and upgrades of hardware and software.

◆ **Communications Growth:**

- Regularly communicate with and seek feedback from 50,000 constituents, primarily in rural areas, about LSP's narrative and values.
- Expand number of staff that have time built in for communications work across programs and increase access to professional print and broadcast media staff, as well as social media.
- Develop programs related to our work that can be presented to various audiences in forums where follow-up discussions about organizational values and practical ways of supporting those values take place.

LSP's Financial Future

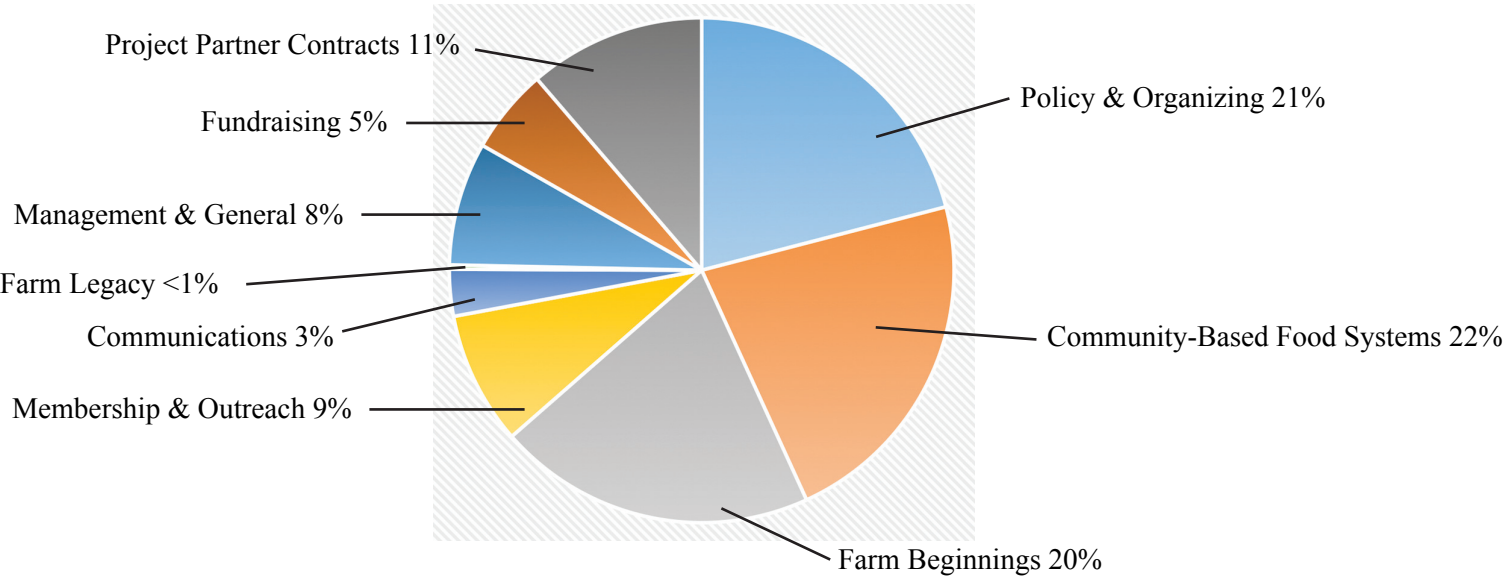
The Land Stewardship Project has been successful in securing grants for projects that match LSP and funder priorities. This will continue to be important as we look to the future. Most grant funding sources are focused on highly specific objectives. Supporting transformational social change over a longer period of time also requires more flexible funding. The Land Stewardship Project has a solid financial position from which to grow the amount of funds available for long-term organizing for social change.

Our long term objectives are:

- Increase the amount of funding from unrestricted funds.
- Develop planned giving, including farm donations through the *Land & Stewardship Legacies Initiative*.
- Develop and implement a capital campaign to grow an endowment to secure LSP's long-term future.
- Engage member-leaders to help guide this work.
- Achieve sustainable and appropriate staff growth and retention.
- Align our investments with our values.

Operating Revenue	FY 12-13 Budgeted \$2,693,037	FY 18-19 Projected \$3,130,000
Religious Grants	1.8%	2.2%
Foundations & Corporations	35.5%	42.6%
Government Grants	27.5%	14.2%
Individual Giving & Memberships	13.7% (\$369,700)	24% (\$750,000)
Contracts, Fees, etc.	2.0%	4.4%
Other	0.3%	0.6%
Funds for Project Partners (see notes on page 16)	19.2%	12%

Expenses by Operational Area FY 12-13



Unrestricted Operating Revenue (as of June 30, 2013)

Religious Grants	2%	\$52,500
Foundations & Corporations, Including Released from Restriction	37%	\$936,416
Government Grants	27%	\$689,447
Membership & Contributions	23%	\$580,881
Contract revenue	6%	\$162,053
Fees, Rents & Sales	3%	\$78,891
Other	1%	\$26,277
Unrealized Investment Gains (Losses)	<1%	\$9,859
Total	100%	\$2,536,324

Statement of Financial Position (as of June 30, 2013)

Assets

Cash & Investments.....	\$700,180
Board Restricted Long-Term Reserve.....	\$451,734
Property & Equipment.....	\$916,786
Grants, Contracts & Pledges Receivable.....	\$1,022,248
Other.....	\$57,310
Total Assets.....	\$3,148,258

Liabilities & Net Assets

Total Liabilities.....	\$781,226
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Net Assets:

Board-Controlled Long-Term & Short-Term Reserves.....	\$1,190,124
Temporarily Restricted Grants for Future Fiscal Years.....	\$1,176,908

Total Liabilities & Net Assets.....	\$3,148,258
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Notes

- From audited statements based on generally accepted accounting principles for nonprofits, which book temporarily restricted net assets raised for future use in the year granted.
- Expenses include contracts with collaborating nonprofit, university or government partners for jointly conducted work paid for with grant funds.
- Reserve funds under “Assets” and “Net Assets” include previous gifts of farms donated to LSP for long-term support and sold to family farmers in a way that protected the land for farming and open space.
- Mahoney, Ulbrich, Christiansen and Russ, P. A., expressed an unmodified opinion on the financial statements of the Land Stewardship Project.

The Impact of the Land Stewardship Project

Selected highlights from three decades of LSP history are included here.
See LSP's website for specific landmarks and accomplishments.

Broadening an Ethic & Practice of Land Stewardship

- Organizing of farmers during the 1980s led to the development of the Stewardship Farming Network, spurring farmers' innovation, creativity and on-farm experimentation as well as ground-breaking publications on nitrogen management, cover crops, rotational grazing, composting and mechanical weed control.
- Managed rotational grazing workshops and Holistic Management seminars during the 1990s helped farmers adopt revolutionary new systems.
- LSP farmer-leaders worked with LSP to launch what has become LSP's Farm Beginnings Program, one of the nation's leading community-based farmer training initiatives and a model for the USDA's Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program. Since 1996 over 700 beginning farmers have completed the Farm Beginnings Course and 80 percent are actively engaged in farming 18 months after taking the class, according to annual surveys.
- LSP brought together farmers, scientists and agency staff to create the "Monitoring Team," which went on to document environmental, social and financial benefits of sustainable agriculture practices. The Monitoring Team's work also produced several peer-reviewed articles as well as the landmark resource, *The Monitoring Tool Box*. This work influenced agricultural and environmental policy, prompting, for example, the Environmental Protection Agency to approve rotational grazing for fecal coliform reduction under a total maximum daily load plan.
- The Multiple Benefits of Agriculture Initiative, which was coordinated by LSP in the early 2000s, showed low-cost multifunctional benefits from the adoption of perennials and rotational grazing in watersheds. The results were published in the journal *BioScience* in 2005 and influenced agroecological research, as well as USDA programs and policy.
- LSP and partners convened the Chippewa 10% Project in 2010 to engage farmers and landowners in adopting profitable perennials, cover crops and rotational grazing in ways that protect water (four networks so far covering more than 4,000 acres).

- Starting in 2007, LSP led in the creation of the Farm Beginnings Collaborative, which includes 13 programs in seven states that share education and organizing strategies for farmer-led training.

Advancing Justice, Democracy & Care for the Land

- LSP's organizing and direct action campaign in the 1980s resulted in improved conservation and management policies on the part of life insurance companies that owned farmland.
- In the late 1990s, through the Campaign for Family Farms, LSP challenged the unjust mandatory pork checkoff. In a national referendum, hog farmers voted to eliminate the checkoff, but in a highly controversial, last-minute move, the USDA allowed the program to remain in place.
- LSP successfully advocated for start-up and continuing funds for alternative swine and grass-based organic dairy research at the University of Minnesota's West Central Research and Outreach Center.
- LSP assembled farmer-leaders who conceived the Conservation Security Program (later called the Conservation Stewardship Program, or CSP). Working with the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, LSP's Policy and Organizing Program advocated for CSP in the 2002, 2008 and 2014 Farm Bills. LSP also worked with allies on its implementation. Minnesota is the nation's largest user of this ground-breaking working lands conservation program.
- LSP's Policy and Organizing Program and allied organizations successfully won funding and implementation of the national Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) in 2008 and 2014. BFRDP is modeled after LSP's Farm Beginnings course.
- Starting in the mid-1990s, LSP organizing helped local citizens stop 35 proposed corporate-backed factory farms from being built. Starting in 2012, citizens working with LSP have been using the same strategies to fight frac sand mines in their communities.

- LSP has effectively and repeatedly defeated corporate efforts to weaken or eliminate township planning and zoning in Minnesota, a linchpin of local democracy.
- Starting in 2008, LSP and allied organizations successfully advocated for MNsure and renewal of MinnesotaCare and are working toward a public health insurance system. Lack of affordable, quality health insurance is a major problem for farmers and other rural residents.

Food, Culture and Health

- Since the 1990s, LSP has advanced local food systems through the promotion of the Community Supported Agriculture movement, as well as through work to advance community-based food distribution systems in rural areas.
- In 2009 LSP joined forces with Hope Community in Minneapolis to address racial equity and health problems by promoting gardening, healthy food systems and leadership development.
- Several LSP staffers and members played key roles in the 2002 publication of *The Farm as Natural Habitat: Reconnecting Food Systems With Ecosystems*, a ground-breaking book that describes how farmers, eaters and environmentalists can work together to

- create a more resilient food and agriculture system.
- During the 1980s and 1990s, LSP held over 500 performances of *Planting In the Dust*, its play on the Dust Bowl, the modern farm crisis and land stewardship.
- Starting in 2011, LSP put on over 20 performances/discussion sessions featuring *Look Who's Knockin'*, a play on farmland transition written by LSP staffer Doug Nopar.
- The nationally recognized *Land Stewardship Letter* has chronicled key issues related to sustainable agriculture, family farming and food systems.
- LSP has garnered local, state and national media coverage for its work on issues related to beginning farmers, factory farms, commodity program reform and soil health.

LSP is Growing

- From a budget of \$750,000 in 1995 to \$2,500,000 today.
- Since becoming a membership organization in 1995, LSP has grown to more than 3,400 households.
- As of 2014, there are 76 member-leaders on LSP's Board and its various program steering committees.

Glossary of Terms

Family Farms: The Land Stewardship Project's definition of "family farm" is a small- or mid-sized operation owned and operated by family members who, as Wendell Berry has written, value their neighbors over their neighbor's land and who strive to be stewards.

Corporate Power: Power over public discourse, politics and economic systems as well as money for spending on the public good has shifted from governments and public institutions to the corporate sector through changes in tax policy and regulation. That is one aspect of the continuing growth of the power of major corporations over the decisions — public and private — that affect the lives of people and the health of the land. As a result, financial resources have been shifted toward extremely wealthy individuals and away from the rest of American society. This means there are fewer resources to serve the public good and it is more difficult to control corporate injustice and environmental degradation. Power needs to shift back to public institutions.

Resilient: This is the ability of a farm family to successfully respond to changes in weather, markets, disease outbreaks, etc. This long-term sustainability for people, finances and the farm ecosystem is linked to the diversity of plants and animals helping create healthy soil and reduced financial exposure by minimizing the reliance on expensive off-farm inputs. It is also linked to strong networks of people providing ideas and support to deal with changes through observation, learning and innovative management. Stable markets and community-based financial support tied to long-term success is critical for resilient farms, as well as community-based food systems.

Land Reform: In the U.S., land is being concentrated into the hands of too few farmers and landowners. The 2007 U.S. Census of Agriculture tells us that "very large farms" (over \$1 million in gross sales) accounted for 59 percent of total production. This growing concentration is propelled by public policies such as federally subsidized crop insurance. This inflates land values, making it difficult for beginning farmers to find affordable, long-term and secure access to farmland. The Land Stewardship Project sees affordable access to farmland for beginning farmers as a critical aspect of land reform. Small- and mid-sized farmers also need viable avenues for land access in order to expand and diversify their operations. This requires new policies as well as individual landowners making decisions that enable these opportunities.

Land Stewardship Project Offices



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Illustration by Anna King