

PRAIRIE LAND CONSERVANCY

2008-2011 STRATEGIC PLAN



MAYES | WILSON & ASSOCIATES, LLC

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Prairie Lands Conservancy Strategic Plan

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Executive Summary

For the first time in its history, the Prairie Lands Conservancy's leadership has formalized its mission and created concise direction for the organizations' future. Over the past nine (9) months, from November 2007 – August 2008, an in-depth and strategic planning process has been undertaken. This process included active participation by the Prairie Land Conservancy steering committee which includes Prairie Hills Resource Conservation and Development Council members and stakeholders in the land trusts service area: university professors, landowners, farmers, community activists, representatives of other local and state conservation organizations, conservation professionals, medical field personnel and citizens interested in land conservation. PLC steering committee Chairwoman, Alice Henry, and Prairie Hills Resource Conservation and Development (PHRC&D) Coordinator, Dave King, and MAYES | WILSON & ASSOCIATES principals Carol Mayes and Sara Wilson served as the core leadership of the planning committee to evaluate ideas, develop participant surveys, and determine the framework for the strategic plan. The full steering committee, representing the broader communities of the land trust service area participated in mission development, goal and strategy development and in endorsing the plan.

The planning process examined internal and external factors in the Prairie Land Conservancy environment that have the ability to influence the organization both positively and negatively. Steering committee members developed a mission statement by which to guide and evaluate all activities of the organization. Goals and objectives have been crafted and measurable outcomes developed to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the plan.

The product of the planning process is the Prairie Land Conservancy 2008-2011 Strategic Plan with 2008-2009 Annual Work Plan.

The steering committee believes that the successful implementation of this strategic plan will lead to the organization achieving its mission.

***The mission of Prairie
Land Conservancy is to
preserve wildlife
habitat, open space,
natural areas and
sustainable agricultural
land within
west-central Illinois.***

*Steering Committee
Strategic Planning 2008*

The Prairie Land Conservancy

Prairie Land Conservancy Steering Committee Members

*Alice Henry, Committee Chair, Macomb IL

Chris Delany-Barmann, Macomb IL

*Bob Champlin, Canton, IL

*Chuck Gilbert, Nauvoo, IL

Angella Moorehouse, Warsaw, IL

Dan Moorehouse, Warsaw, IL

Lisa Gruver, Macomb IL

Charles Bair, Carthage IL

Margaret Ovitt, Macomb IL

David King, Macomb IL

**Member, Executive Board of the Prairie Hills Resource Conservation & Development Council*

Background

Prairie Hills Resource Conservation and Development, Inc. an IRS 501(c)(3) organization, created the Prairie Land Conservancy (PLC) as a division of the organization to fill the void of a local land trust operating in west-central Illinois. At the July 2006 Prairie Hills Resource Conservation and Development Council meeting, discussion centered on the need for and creation of a land trust¹ in western Illinois. The Council directed David King, Coordinator, to proceed with developing the concept. Members from the LaMoine River Ecosystem Partnership namely Alice Henry and Dan Moorehouse were also thinking of the same concept. Alice and David connected and the concept became reality when Prairie Hills Resource Conservation and Development (PHRC&D) embraced and provided funding for the land trust. Prairie Hills amended their by-laws to incorporate the land trust into their corporate structure (Prairie Hills Revised Bylaws, page 38).

A steering committee comprised of citizens of the area and representatives from the PHRC&D Council serve as the organizations leadership. PLC desires to serve natural areas, farmlands, forests, and open spaces that contain natural resources at risk. The land trust's current stated goals are:

- Protect wildlife habitat and serve as a buffer between development and natural areas.
- Provide protection and enhancement of natural areas and landscape diversity.
- Reduce flooding, improve water quality, and protect groundwater recharge areas.
- Provide safe and affordable food for domestic and foreign consumption.

The service area of the land trust is a ten-county area, comprising Adams, Brown, Fulton, Hancock, Henderson, Knox, McDonough, Pike, Schuyler, and Warren counties.

Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation and Prairie Hills Resource Conservation and Development Inc. funded PLC's efforts to develop a strategic plan to enable the organization to plan for the future and to ensure it directed its resources to the most important activities to achieve its mission.

PLC contracted the consulting firm MAYES | WILSON & ASSOCIATES, LLC, experienced in working with non-profits, land trusts and state/federal conservation agencies to lead the strategic planning process. Carol Harris Mayes and Sara Wilson, the firms' principals were the project leads facilitating the planning retreats and developing the plan. The projects' core team of the PLC steering committee chairwoman, Alice Henry and PHRC&D Coordinator, Dave King along with Mayes and Wilson worked to ensure that the strategic planning process was inclusive in seeking input and would set a direction for the organizations development consistent with the performance standards for land trusts established by the national Land Trust Alliance.

MAYES | WILSON & ASSOCIATES, LLC surveyed steering committee members and stakeholders, reviewed PLC documents, current activities and information about the service area

¹ A nonprofit organization that protects land directly, usually by helping landowners establish a conservation easement, accepting donations of property and easements, or buying land. (Land Trust Alliance definition)

to inform the planning process. This document describes the planning process, timeline, survey responses and identifies steering committee members involved in strategic planning steps.

The Prairie Land Conservancy Environment

Natural Divisions of Illinois

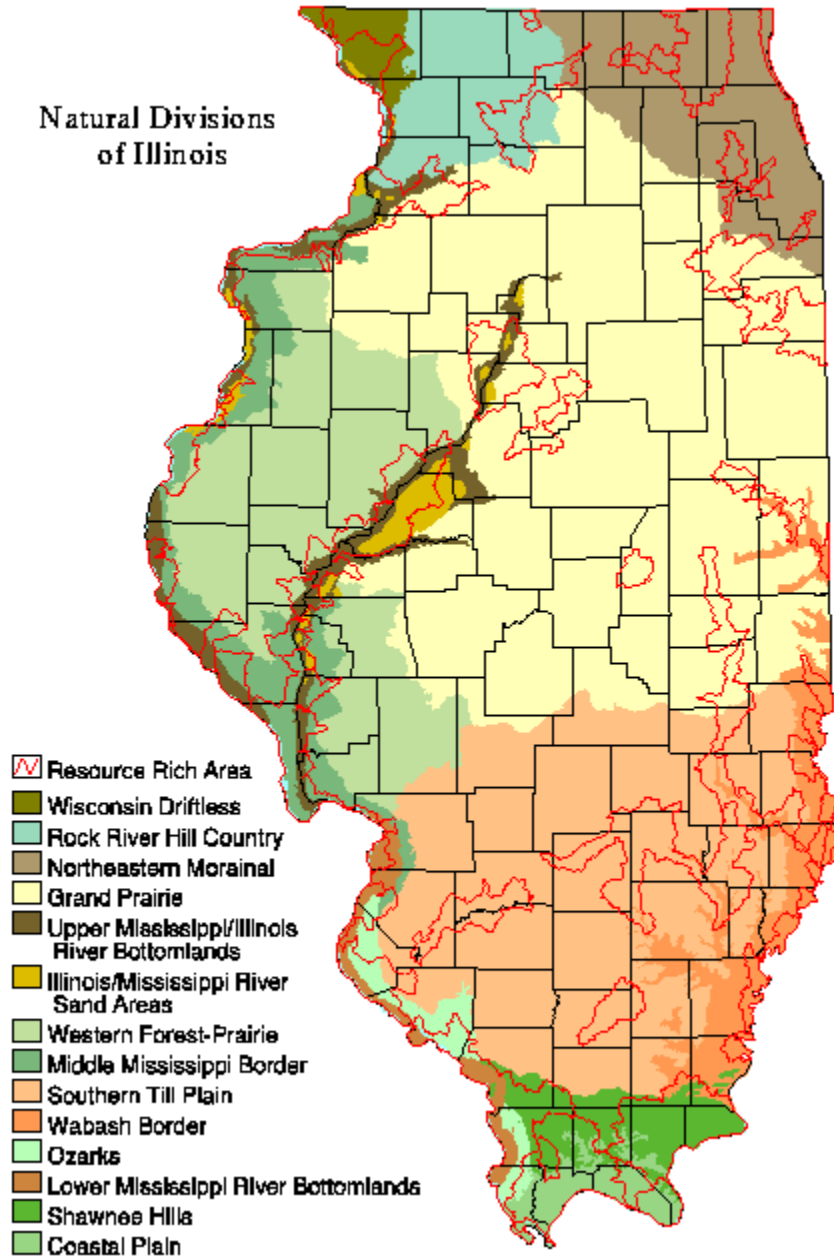


Figure 1. Natural Divisions of Illinois. Illinois Department of Natural Resources

Urgency for Conservation Action

The fragmentation of the landscape, the destruction of watersheds and ecosystems, and the pollution of land and water call for private action to prevent the damage caused by the effects of these current trends. A land trust can provide environmental safeguards by conserving land through many strategies including land donations and through the stewardship of conservation easements². These are important voluntary options for landowners other than selling to developers or changing current land use.

The rate of conversion of farmland, forests, and natural areas to urban lands has increased significantly in Illinois since 1982. According to the Natural Resource Inventory compiled by the Natural Resources Conservation Service, a division of the United States Department of Agriculture:

- Urban land increased in Illinois by an average of 49,300 acres per year since 1992.
- More than 492,300 acres were converted since 1982.
- More than 246,500 acres were converted in the five-year span from 2002 to 2007.

The Natural Resource Inventory also shows that conversion of land within the Prairie Land Conservancy ten-county area has increased by 20,400 acres from 1982 to 1997. Growth and prosperity in nonagricultural sectors of the economy are the main reasons for this conversion. Urbanization and development lead to the fragmentation of agricultural land, natural habitats, and forests. The information below about various ecosystem or natural communities is from summarized from the following information Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR).

Prairies once covered 61% of the Illinois landscape. Currently, only about 2,300 acres of high quality prairie remain—about 0.01% of the pre-settlement acreage. In the entire state of Illinois, 19.2% of land is categorized as “grassland” habitat.

Forests have been fragmented into very small parcels of land, and the abundance of species that require large forested tracts to survive, such as the pileated woodpecker and wood thrush, have declined.

Wetlands once comprised at least 23% of the land area in Illinois. In the last two hundred years, Illinois has lost approximately 90% of its wetlands as a result of draining, filling, clearing, and urban development. The remaining natural wetlands now occupy only 3.2% of Illinois, and habitat loss continues. Twelve of thirty-five state threatened or endangered bird species are wetland-dependent, yet only three were detected, each at only one site. Invasive introduced plant species such as reed canary grass, the common reed, and purple loosestrife sometimes dominate disturbed wetlands and exclude native plant species, resulting in a loss of biodiversity.

² Legal agreement between a landowner and a conservation organization or government agency that permanently limits a property’s uses in order to protect the property’s conservation values. Landowner continues to own the land. It may be called a “conservation restriction” in some states; also called an agricultural preservation easement, historical preservation easement, etc., depending on the resources it protects. (Land Trust Alliance definition)

The condition of waterways is constantly fluctuating. Agriculture and development have drastically reduced the health of streams and marshes. Swamps have disappeared, streams have become turbid, and their channels have been straightened or levied. Improvements in municipal sewage treatment and agricultural practices have dramatically improved the health of Illinois streams in the past three decades.

Most Illinois streams currently lack natural habitat features such as wooded riparian (streamside) corridors, winding stream channels (many are channelized), and stable in-stream habitats such as coarse rocks and wood debris (often removed to improve drainage). Streams in some areas have been modified to drain row crop fields rapidly. The most successful natural streams were larger and flood-prone, thus discouraging row crop agriculture close to the streams, and inviting human intervention for the sake of farming.

Historical data confirms the loss of several fish, mussel, and aquatic insect species from what was once a very diverse aquatic setting. Habitat quality scores readily confirm this degradation. Water chemistry “snapshots” demonstrate that centers of high human population density and agriculture have changed the chemical signature of streams through the release of effluents and the loss of riparian vegetation.

Assessment, Planning and Implementation

Strategic Planning Process



Strategic Planning Diagram

The diagram above illustrates the PLC planning process. The steering committee sought to answer the question “what should we do” and the operational question “how will we do it?”

These questions and subsequent decisions were informed through steering committee members completing a written survey and the consultants conducting phone interviews of stakeholders, the organizations’ “customers”—influential and knowledgeable parties in the community, individuals involved in other local, state and national conservation organizations, university professors, community activists, citizens interested in conservation—to identify internal organizational issues, trends in the PLC environment, factors that might positively or negatively impact the organization in achieving its mission.

Key issue areas were identified during the information gathering period:

- Finalizing the mission
- Developing the organization's infrastructure
- Developing conservation methods and goals
- Developing an outreach and communication program

Highlights from the information gathering are provided in this document; the compilation of survey responses is provided in the Appendix (page 47-70).

The mission was agreed on and major goals and objectives for these key issues were developed during a day-long retreat in April 2008. On April 10, 2008 during the first steering committee meeting after the strategic planning retreat the committee adopted the mission: *"to preserve wildlife habitat, open space, natural areas and sustainable agricultural land within west-central Illinois."*

To succeed, strategic plans have to be operationalized—integrated into annual plans—with parties responsible for actions clearly identified. In May steering committee members participated in a three-quarter day workshop to prioritize goals and identify tasks.

The final activity of the PLC Strategic and Annual planning process was to craft measurable outcomes. Each major focus area or goal has a measurable outcome which the steering committee will measure its progress toward on a bi-annual basis.

The results of survey responses, the two workshops and the entire teams work for the past nine months is the strategic plan which includes year one (2008-2009) tasks.

Strategic Planning Activities and Timeline

With assistance from MAYES | WILSON & ASSOCIATES, LLC (MWA) the steering committee developed a detailed work plan to guide the planning efforts.

The table below outlines major activities of developing the plan.

Steps in Strategic Planning	Participants	Dates
1. Steering Committee (SC) leadership selects an external consultant. Consultant develops steps and timeline for creating a 2008-2011 Strategic Plan & Annual Plan.	Alice Henry, Dave King	11.07
2. MWA develops survey to assess PLC opportunity, need for services, mission focus and other key factors.	MWA Alice Henry, Dave King	1. 08
3. Consultant distributes written survey (email and hard copy) and conducts phone interviews.	Steering Committee Stakeholders	2 08 to 3.08
4. Consultant utilizes survey findings to identify issues, inform mission refinement, goal setting. Survey results provided to Steering Committee	MWA	3.08
5. Based on results of the survey, these major discussion areas were identified for the strategic planning retreat: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reaching agreement on the PLC Mission ▪ Organizational: Focus Internal, Focus External ▪ Conservation Programs ▪ Outreach and Communication 	MWA	4.08
6. <i>Envisioning the Future Strategic Planning Retreat</i> , full day, to discuss issues related to key areas (above) and to develop major goals for the future.	9 Steering Committee Members, 1 PHRC&D Staff MWA principals	4.4.08
7. Draft of Major Goals and Objectives for 2008-2011 Strategic Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Reviewed by Steering Committee b. Edits and changes made. 	Steering Committee MWA principals	4.08
8. <i>Implementation Workshop</i> , three-quarter day, to prioritize goals and develop tasks for year 1. Draft Annual Plan of Work for 2008-2009 developed.	9 Steering Committee Members, 1 PHRC&D Staff MWA principals	5.15.08
9. 2008-2011 Strategic Plan with 2008-2009 Plan of Work. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Reviewed by entire Steering Committee for input. 		7.08 to 8.08
10. 2008-2011 Strategic Plan presented to PHRC&D for adoption.		8.08

Factors that May Impact Prairie Land Conservancy's Work

SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

Steering committee members and stakeholders were asked to identify factors that may impact PLC's work. Factors considered included current trends in the community; current trends in conservation; and opportunities and treats to PLC. The summary that follows highlights broad issues compiled from steering committee survey responses and stakeholder interviews.

TRENDS IN THE COMMUNITY

The ten-county service area is experiencing numerous changes.

- **Rapidly rising prices** for farmland, woodland, and open space.
- **An aging population** of landowners (farmers). As they near retirement, they are concerned about “second generation” owners. Also concerned about the impact of rising land values (prices), resulting in a general decrease in farms.
- **Declining population in rural areas** due to loss of manufacturing jobs.
- **Increasing conversion of land** into production for grain, corn (due to the increasing price of grain), and increased emphasis on ethanol use.
- **Rental of land by farmers** is increasing, and farmers are renting land of increasing acreage. Renting the land seems to encourage farmers to mow roadsides for the sake of their management reputation, destroying significant portions of habitat. Farming large acreages has encouraged farmers to fall-apply anhydrous ammonia (even when it is warm) because of time constraints in spring. These practices harm the watershed; the anoxia in the Mississippi Delta is largely due to practices like this. The high price of farm land rental, coupled with the high price for commodities, results in the conversion of more land and the use of pollutants to increase production.
- **The growing interest in alternative energy, local foods, and deer hunting—and the related conservation opportunities.** This translates to the conservation of open fields and prairie for wind farms; support of local food markets which help keep the farmer on the land by making farming economically viable; and the conservation of woodlands and wetlands as a mosaic of habitat for hunting leases.
- **Deer hunting** is increasingly popular. Land is being purchased and leased at an increased rate by in-state and out-of-state individuals for deer hunting and some turkey hunting. Many buyers and lessees are from the southeastern United States, and are frequently professionals who live in the city and/or suburbs of their home state. Most become absentee landowners and visit the property strictly for hunting. The expansion of hunting is driving up the price of hunting land.
- **Growth of the outfitters industry**—companies to serve hunters—has resulted from the popularity of hunting. Outfitters may lease land, may “aggregate” leases (lease from several people in order to create large tracts of land for hunting) or purchase lands for hunting. Outfitters organize hunts and provide transportation for hunters.
- **Confinement agriculture** has moved some of the production of animals for consumption (hogs, cattle, poultry) into confinement, i.e. buildings. A resulting impact is contamination of watershed.
- **Expansion of Interstate 336**
- **Interest and possible opportunity for multiple use areas** (walking, biking and so forth)

TRENDS AND OPPORTUNITIES IN CONSERVATION

Local and Regional

- **Local, county, and regional efforts** are underway to conserve greenways, stream ways, and open spaces for water conservation and passive recreation, including bike and walking trails. Examples mentioned include the Western Illinois University plan and the City of Macomb, Illinois plan.
- **Collaborative watershed plans** produced by many agencies are in place for the Spoon River and the La Moine River watersheds. These watershed plans are established to prioritize important and significant resources and work together toward their conservation and restoration.

Statewide

- **Illinois legislation** exists that supports and funds an effort to increase the capacity of local land trusts and others to hold conservation easements and/or purchase land.
- **“Food, Farms and Jobs Act”** established a task force to address the obstructions to local food systems and identify ways to promote organic and local food production/markets.
- **Conservation Stewardship legislation program** is in place. Landowners submit conservation plans for approval by Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Approved plans may result in lower property taxes.
- **Illinois Wildlife Action Plan** exists that includes several “Conservation Opportunity Areas” located in the ten-county area of coverage. This plan will dictate how state and federal money is spent and will help land trusts to leverage funds for protection/stewardship. The focus of this plan is to provide habitats for “wildlife species of greatest conservation concern.”
- **The Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation** interest in supporting conservation easements or land acquisition projects in west-central Illinois.

Federal

- **U.S. Geological Survey report** “Agricultural Practices in 9 States Contribute Majority of Excessive Nutrients to the Northern Gulf of Mexico.” Affirms that Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri, Ohio, and Tennessee contribute more than 75 percent of nitrogen and phosphorus to the Gulf. Study finds that large quantities of these nutrients can (and should) be trapped upstream. Possible future state and federal incentives. Land banks offer effective solutions through conservation easements designed for nutrient remediation.
- **Increasing interest in the reduction of greenhouse gases** and the citizen and corporate desire to participate in a greening economy.

Other

- **Lack of development pressure.** Stakeholders generally do not see development pressure in the area. The exception is in the outskirts of Macomb, Illinois.
- **Zoning** is perceived as telling owners what they cannot do. Stakeholders generally believe people do not understand the positive value of zoning because people do not see their landscape or way of life threatened by development.

- **Most PLC Steering Committee members are on boards** or involved of other local and state conservation groups. This may create opportunities for collaboration.

ORGANIZATIONS WORKING IN THE SERVICE AREA

Several national non-profits, state agencies and numerous government programs that function in the PLC service area. Currently, high quality natural areas and archaeological sites in western Illinois are protected through the Illinois Nature Preserves System. Farmlands are protected (as non-cropped lands) in agricultural land programs (CRP, WRP, CREP, EQUIP, Greenways, and so on).

Various nonprofit conservation organizations —The Nature Conservancy, Audubon, and Pheasants Forever, and watershed groups— work within the service area. The Sangamon Conservancy Trust (SCT) works in the adjacent counties. These groups may utilize similar land and water conservation strategies; however, their missions are different.

When committee members and stakeholders were asked if PLC would be perceived as competition or repetitive of these organizations, all respondents indicated “No-PLC would not be either; they are more local (than national organizations) and a good alternative to government programs; not everyone wants to work with government agencies”. Respondents suggested collaboration opportunities should be explored.

CONSERVATION PRIORITIES

The Prairie Land Conservancy service area is bound by the Mississippi River on the west and the Illinois River on the east. It contains the IDNR Ecosystem Division designation of Grand Prairie and Western Forest-Prairie. (See Figure 1.)

Based on the PLC statement, “*this land trust will protect natural areas, farmland, forests, and open areas,*” steering committee members and stakeholders were asked to prioritize the most important types of land for PLC to protect. 1 is the most important, 5 is the least important.

Steering Committee Rankings:

Natural Areas	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Farmland	4	1	1	2	4	6	5	2
Forests	2	1	1	2	3	4	3	3
Open Areas	3	1	1	2	2	5	4	4
Grassland						2		
Wetland						3	2	

Generally stakeholders did not understand PLC’s terms of natural areas versus forests, wetlands, etcetera and therefore had difficulty or did not rank the type of land to be protected. This confusion over terms used in the land protection sector demonstrates the need for PLC to define its terms or use terms the citizenry clearly understands.

Steering committee members ranked the importance of each of the following for PLC to accomplish during the next three to five years. A rating of 1 is most important, a rating of 14 is least important.

Protect wildlife habitat	2	1	1	5	4	2	8	4
Protect wildlife habitat that serves as a buffer around natural areas	3	1	1	2	3	6	3	5
Protect wildlife habitat that serves as a buffer between development and natural areas	4	1	1	1	2	5	2	6
Provide protection of natural areas	1	1	1	4	1	1	1	7
Provide protection of landscape diversity	6	1	1	8	5	8	5	9
Provide enhancement of natural areas	5	1	1	7	6	3	4	8
Provide enhancement of landscape diversity	7	1	1	X	7	7	6	10
Reduce flooding	10	14	1	3	10	13	14	2
Improve water quality	9	1	1	3	9	4	7	1
Protect groundwater recharge areas	8	1	1	3	8	9	9	3
Provide safe food for domestic consumption	11	14	14	6	11	14	10	These tasks in my opinion fall under the USDA and the FDA
Provide safe food for foreign consumption	12	14	14	13	12	14	12	
Provide affordable food for domestic consumption	13	14	14	9	13	14	11	
Provide affordable food for foreign consumption	14	14	14	14	14	14	13	

MAYES | WILSON & ASSOCIATES, LLC suggests that **Natural Areas** are considered areas of current and historic natural communities and habitat that include **prairie, savannah, river and stream bottomland forest, forest, and wetlands**. These lands will, to some degree, preserve and restore the fabric of the land and help to begin the restoration of ecosystem services. These areas are the rarest and the most threatened. See Figure 1.

Farmlands, pastures, woodlands, and riparian areas are important to maintain the fabric of the land. These are covered with vegetation, and they twine the area together to provide ecosystem services and to protect from poorly designed commercial and residential developments. These areas are a threatened resource in the area, make up the bulk of the area, and hold promise for restoration or for sustainable use, and perhaps are a good candidate for restoration.

CONSERVATION OPPORTUNITIES

Survey participants identified the following opportunities that are part of the environment in that PLC hopes to manage.

- **No local land trust exists.** A need for a land trust seems to be present in the area, as there is interest among local landowners inquiring about land protection. Cooperation is evident from other NGOs in the area, including the Environmentally Concerned Citizens, La Moine River Ecosystem Partnership, Illinois Audubon Society, and the Western Prairie Audubon Society.
- **The opportunity to work with a wide variety of other groups to meet shared goals.** Groups mentioned were Western Illinois Network of Trails and Greenways, Western Illinois Nature Group, Quincy Park District, Macomb Park District, Natural Land Institute, The Nature Conservancy, Ducks Unlimited, county Soil and Water Conservation District, and the Illinois Natural Areas Inventory.
- **The Illinois Natural Areas Inventory update will occur over the next two to five years.** This inventory update may identify sites in west-central Illinois that are of higher priority for protection.
- **The development of watershed plans.** These include plans for the La Moine River and Bear Creek, along with the state's Conservation Opportunity Areas and priority sites identified by Ducks Unlimited and TNC, will serve as opportunities for PLC to develop a plan/map of high priority areas for land protection.

ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY

To be successful PLC will need to engage various individuals and sectors of the communities of its 10-county service area. Survey participants recommend PLC engage the following:

- The public
- Bankers
- Philanthropically inclined individuals
- Landowners
- Government - as a partner to achieve shared goals
- Agricultural landowners
- Policymakers (zoning issues)
- Developers
- Businesses
- Farm Bureau & those they influence with fears re folks "controlling" private lands
- Realtors & Appraisers
- Lawyers
- Wealthy individuals
- Farmers (Producers)
- Children
- Municipalities

MEASURING SUCCESS ORGANIZATION

PLC must also determine how it will measure success. Stakeholders were often uncertain, steering committee members expressed a variety of possible measureable outcomes. Responses include the following:

- PLC has staff
- Staff capable of handling easements, etc.
- Growing funding base
- Cooperation, support of a least 20-30 other groups/agencies throughout the 10 county area.
- Legal defense fund
- Endowment (or dedicated) fund
- Representation from service area
- PLC steering committee -skills needed identified; recruited
- Acres of Land Protected Permanently.
- PLC seen as leaders in protection of private lands in west-central Illinois.
- PLC to be the first group people go to for information on land protection in the area.
- Positive experiences with PLC at activities or in the process of creating an easement.
- Favorable opinion of PLC based on relationships maintained with landowners
- Achieving goals set forth in grants, projects
- PLC has good, solid rules/guidelines
- Committed people to do work for PLC

MEASURING SUCCESS CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

- Critical habitats protected; PLC protecting sites in high priority areas
- A prioritization procedure determines which lands PLC protects
- Critical habitats protected; PLC protecting sites in high priority areas
- Cities have written plans of conservation of habitat in their surrounding areas
- Waterways will have buffered zones, prairies will be re-seeded, forests will be conserved
- Natural habitats, gardens integrated into grade school courtyards and curriculum
- PLC provides assistance to landowners with land that does not qualify for other
- PLC is partner with local, state and federal entities
- Fill in the gaps in protection for private lands not currently served by the state
- Amount of land protected; have 15 conservation easements
- Less sediment and pollutants entering the headwaters of the La Moine River
- Solid rules/guidelines for PLC
- Get base of committed people to do work for PLC (stewardship team)
- PLC is an alternate for landowners who do not want to work with government

Prairie Land Conservancy Strategic Plan

GOALS	OBJECTIVE	STRATEGIES	TASKS	YEAR / Q'RT ER	RESOURCES & OUTCOMES		
					Responsible	Funding	Measurable Outcomes
Key Area A: Organizational Focus: Internal							
1. The strategic plan serves as the guide for the operation and activities of Prairie Land Conservancy (PLC).	a. The strategic plan is reviewed at least annually by the PLC Steering Committee.	1. Evaluate accomplishments on the Strategic Plan Goals	1a. PLC Steering Committee reviews plan at 6 and 11 month intervals. 1b. An annual plan for July 1, 2009-June 30, 2010 is completed by June 1, 2009.	Annually Q2;Q4 2009 Q2;Q4	Chairperson	Meal for meeting	Strategic Plan is reviewed in Dec. 2008; May 2009. The July 2009-June 2010 Annual Plan of Work is adopted by June 15, 2009.
2. Prairie Land Conservancy (PLC) is an effective and efficiently run division of the Prairie Hills Resource Conservation and Development, Inc. (PHRC&D).	a. PLC has reviewed PHRC&D Inc. Articles of Incorporation, by-laws and state statutes regulating non-profit organizations and taken appropriate steps to formalize the steering committee into a board of directors	1. Review PHRC&D governance documents to determine the feasibility of organizing PLC's steering committee into a Board of Directors. 2. Take appropriate action from above findings. 3. Define role of the steering committee to effectively and efficiently accomplish PLC's mission.	1. Analyze; Recommend to PHRC&D council for board formation 2. Present draft statements of desired delegated powers to PHRC&D Council for action.	2008 Q3-4	Steering Committee		PLC's Board of Directors and its authority is sanctioned by resolution from PHRC&D. Board members and volunteers are active in committees to ensure key organizational needs are satisfied.

GOALS	OBJECTIVE	STRATEGIES	TASKS	YEAR / Q'RTE R	RESOURCES & OUTCOMES		
					Responsible	Funding	Measurable Outcomes
Key Area A: Organizational Focus: Internal Continued							
	b. PLC has active SC members from throughout the entire service area, reflecting the constituencies it serves and having the diverse skills and knowledge required to oversee the organizations operations and its land conservation activities.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recruit members so that committees have representation from throughout the service area. 2. In 2009 re-evaluate needed skills and representation. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1a. Prioritize service sector and skills from which to recruit steering committee members. 1b. Develop recruitment procedure and materials. 1c. Recruit Steering Committee Members 1d. Develop orientation process and materials. 1e. Discussion on Standards/Practices [Is agenda item for PLC meetings] <p>2a. Repeat process as appropriate.</p>	Ongoing Begin Q4-2008	VP		<p><u>2009</u> Steering Committee members are recruited based on identified PLC needs. New members are formally oriented to PLC and have written roles and responsibilities.</p> <p><u>2010</u> Steering Comm./Board has representatives from 75% of the service area.</p>
	c. PLC has established organizational structure and committees with clear roles and responsibilities in overseeing the division's operations and in achieving the mission.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop key committees and define roles and responsibilities in writing. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review by-laws/State Laws for requirements for number of board members on committees (as appropriate) 2. Identify potential work to be done by functions. 3. Determine need for committees (annual review as needed) 	Q4-during budget review	Steering Committee	NA	Standing or Ad-hoc committees are developed to carry out the work of PLC; committees have written commissions on their purpose and responsibilities.

	d. PLC's operations are included in PHRC&D's operations and goals.	1. Develop a standardized report to be provided to PHRC&D on a semi-annual basis.	1. PLC is responsive to PHRC&D Council by providing information needed for PHRC&D to achieve its goals related to PLC. 2. Report on major activities to Exec. PHRC&D council monthly. 3. PLC provides an annual report and annual plan of work including summary of previous year's achievements.	Ongoing Q4-2008 Q4 Annually	Steering Committee Council reps. Steering Committee Council reps. Steering Committee	NA	PLC's accomplishments are communicated in PHRC&D's publications and website.
	e. PLC has sufficient financial resources to run its operations and have an operations reserve of 10% of its annual budget.	1. Prepare annual budget. 2. Create fundraising plan (includes startup, annual giving from individuals, foundations and business. 3. FY1 Raise \$62,000 4. PLC steering committee members receive training in fundraising.	1. Develop annual budget with three year projection. 2. a) Create list of businesses, foundations, and individuals who might support PLC. b) SC members each bring list of 5 names for above categories. 3. a) 100% of SC financially supports PLC b) Develop relationships with potential donors identified above. c) Solicit for support. 4. a) Identify local training opportunities in community service, extension, coalition for WIU, foundations b) Create calendar of training events.	Q3-2008 Ongoing	Steering Committee Lisa	SC Budget approved by the PLC SC	PLC activities are guided by a fundraising plan with annual funding goals and an annual Income-Expense budget approved by the PLC Board (or PHRC&D).
	f. PLC has the capacity to maintain contact with its network of landowners, partners and donors.	1. Build a database of contacts and system for tracking communications with PLC network. 2. Recruit	1. Provide recommendation for type of information needed and functionality for donor database 2. Input names/information into database 3. Document database process; communications protocol.		Dan Volunteer, Intern Communications		PLC has the IT and personnel capacity to conduct timely communication with key constituents. (3-4 times/year).

		volunteer or intern to manage database. 3. Create schedule for communications with PLC network.			tion- Outreach Committee	
3. Prairie Land Conservancy, a division of PHRC&D, is an accredited Land Trust which operates in accordance with federal, state and local laws and to the national professional standards established by the Land Trust Alliance.	a. PLC has written policies and procedures that guide the division's operations including financial management, personnel management and land and easement transactions and stewardship.	1. Ensure PLC's procedures for receiving, tracking and acknowledging financial donations is efficiently integrated into PHRC&D procedures 2. Write financial policies and procedures for PLC. 3. Create mechanism for routine financial reporting of PLC fiscal status between PHRC&D and PLC. 4. Ensure the actions of the steering committee are legal and ethical. 5. Write policies and procedures to guide all fee-simple land	1. Understand current PHRC&D systems, methods, ability to track separate funds, . 2a. Research separating PLC's checking account from PHRC&D account. 2b. Identify needed procedures, consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receiving funds, • Tracking restricted funds; reporting use of same • Approval for expenditures • Donor/grant acknowledgement/reporting. • Authority for executing contracts/obligating PLC funds 2c. PLC SC adopts written financial policies, procedures. 3b. Create system to track restricted and unrestricted funds. 3c. Conduct financial review or audit per federal, state, funder requirements. 4. Write and adopt PLC ethics statement 5a. Review LTA S&Ps for policy recommendations. 5b. Create schedule to develop and	Q3-2008 Q3-2008 - Q1 2009 2009-Q1 2009 Q1-Q3	Task group Executive Committee Executive Committee Task group Task group/ Steering Committee	1. Written policies and procedures guide PLC's operations, donor relations and land transactions ensuring conformity to all laws and nationally accepted land trust performance standards. Board Directors, staff and volunteers perform to these standards.

		conservation easement projects and transactions.	adopt policies.				
4. The Prairie Land Conservancy has the capacity to steward its lands and conservation easements.	a. PLC has a dedicated fund for conservation easement stewardship and legal defense.	1. Write policies and procedures for creating and managing a dedicated fund for the stewardship and legal defense of conservation easements prior to the first gift or purchase. 2. Stewardship & legal funds needed for each project is identified and raised.	1a. Methods of raising funds are discussed by Steering Committee; PLC procedures agreed on. 1b. Stewardship/legal defense funding policy written and adopted. 1c. Stewardship calculation worksheet developed. 1d. Legal fund calculation worksheet developed. 2a. Project planning includes completing a Stewardship/legal defense calculation worksheet for each project. 2b Non-landowner funding sources identified 2c. Landowner letters include need for stewardship and legal funds.	Q4 2008 - 2009-Q1 2009-2010	Task Group or Executive Committee Steering committee		Policies and practices ensure the growth of a Stewardship /legal defense fund; planning ensures PLC also has the human capacity to fulfill its obligations.
	b. PLC has a dedicated fund for the stewardship of fee-simple lands it owns.	1. Write policies and procedures for creating and managing a dedicated fund for the stewardship and legal defense of fee lands prior to the first gift or purchase. 2. Stewardship and legal funds needed for each project is identified and raised.	1a. Methods of raising funds are discussed by Steering Committee; PLC procedures agreed on. 1b. Stewardship/legal defense funding policy written and adopted. 1c. Stewardship calculation worksheet developed. 1d. Legal fund calculation worksheet developed. 2a. 2a. Project planning includes completing a Stewardship/legal defense calculation worksheet for each project. 2b. Non-landowner potential funding sources are identified. 2b. Landowner letters include need for	Q4-2008 - Q1 2009 2009-2010	Task Group or Executive Committee		As above.

			stewardship and legal funds.				
	c. PLC has a trained group of volunteers who perform land stewardship and conservation easement monitoring.	1. With first land project, recruit and train a stewardship committee to perform stewardship tasks. 2. Increase number of stewardship volunteers to perform stewardship tasks for all projects.	1a. Identify local groups near land gift and ask for volunteers. 1b. Ask landowner for contacts to participate on committee 1c. Provide stewardship training for volunteers as needed. 2a Work and collaborate with TNC to develop a successful version of the stewardship network and/or become part of network.	When needed	Angella Steering Committee Member Margaret		Stewardship volunteers are trained and contribute to meeting the stewardship needs of PLC lands.
GOALS	OBJECTIVE	STRATEGIES	TASKS	YEAR / Q'RT ER	RESOURCES & OUTCOMES		
					Responsible	Funding	Measurable Outcomes
Key Area B: ORGANIZATIONAL							
1. PLC leverages its network of non-governmental organization, county and state partnerships to help conserve natural areas and farmlands.	a. Develop strategic partnerships to forward all major PLC goals.	1. Identify traditional (like-minded) and non-traditional partners for land conservation throughout the service area. 2. Identify and implement partnership involvement with first land project.	1a. Create a database of potential partners identifying their strengths, focus and/or services, areas of possible collaboration. 1b. Potential partners meet annually to discuss priorities and potential collaborations. 2a Letter to IAS.	Q3-4 2008; ongoing Q3-2008	Dan Alice/Dave		PLC evaluates opportunities for partnerships when planning each project and engages partners when appropriate. Written partnership agreements clarify partner roles and responsibilities. Partnerships enable each entity to achieve more

							together than they could individually.
2. The communities in which PLC operates have a network of professionals-lawyers, appraisers, accountants and estate planners-who are familiar with land conservation options and PLC.	a. PLC provides training workshops for professionals on land conservation options.	1 Develop a database of professionals, professional organizations. 2. Survey database to identify expertise and to determine their training needs. 3. Explore opportunities to partner with other organizations to train professional network and/or invite PLC network to existing trainings on conservation. 4. Develop materials and conduct at least one training for professional network. 5. Include educational articles on PLC website and/or other communication mechanisms.	1a. Send Dan contacts for database. 1b. Contact bar association real estate to find out training needs/expertise. 1c. Identify/recruit pro-bono legal services. 1d. Train attorney (if necessary) 2. Create prioritized list of training needs.	Q3-4 2008	Dan Tracy, Chuck or Alice Lisa		An established network of professionals knowledgeable in current laws, methods and approaches to conservation and non-profit operations are qualified and available to assist PLC or community members. The knowledge capacity of the network is increased by PLC and its partners promotion and delivery of training and access to resources.
			3a. Identify partners for training and workshops/conferences. 3b. Identify funding sources.	2009 - ongoing	Steering Comm.		
			4a. Secure funding for training or underwrite attendance of key volunteers to trainings to develop PLC capabilities.	2009 - ongoing	Steering Comm.		
			5a. Identify expert who will write articles (pro-bono). b. Explore options for conservation column in local papers, etc. b. Provide links on PLC website to reputable information sources (LTA, IRS, etc.)	2009; 2010 2009; 2010	Dave		
	b. Professional network is notified of regional and	1. Include training opportunities on PLC communication	1a All communication mechanisms have section on upcoming trainings. 2a. Send news releases to local media;	Q4-2008 ongoing	Steering		Standard mechanism for training notifications is

	national conservation training opportunities.	mechanisms (website, etc.) 2. Provide training notices to professional network database.	email notices to network. 2b. Notify network of regional & national trainings 3 months in advance.	Q4-2008 ongoing	Comm.		implemented; Training calendar maintained on PLC website.
	c. Professionals are informed of conservation related law and tax changes.	1. PLC uses its communication mechanisms and networks to inform constituents of changes. 2. Provide link to Land Trust Alliance, Internal Revenue Service, etc. on website.	1a. PLC communication mechanisms have area dedicated to law and tax changes. 1b. Press releases sent to media. 1c. Steering committee gets on LTA's distribution list. 1d. Changes are discussed at PLC meetings 2a. "For more information" section/page developed on website. 2b. Links reviewed annually; updated as needed.	Q4 2008 - ongoing 2009-ongoing	Webmaster/Communication- Outreach Committee Everyone PLC Chair Webmaster/Communication- Outreach Committee		
3. PLC has an active membership throughout the service area who are knowledgeable about PLC, conservation options and who inform key constituents of PLC's work.	a. A plan to recruit, train and manage volunteers is developed.	1. Identify needs for volunteer help with PLC stewardship, fundraising, administrative and outreach activities. 2. Identify & recruit an individual who will assist with the volunteer program & /or another organization with whom PLC can	1a Component of PLC Steering Committee meeting identifies volunteers needed. 2a .Distribute brochure with box to check for volunteering. 3a. Develop a form for volunteering; liability release.	Q3-2008 2009-Q4	Steering Committee Communication- Outreach & Steering Committee Dave		PLC has an active core of volunteers. Recruit and train 20 volunteers in Year 1 and increase number of volunteers by a minimum of 5 each year.

		share volunteers. 3. Develop recruitment materials, training & management procedures. 4. Identify best methods & venues to recruit volunteers. 5. Recruit & train 40 volunteers by Year 3	4a. Network with other organizations. 4b. Conferences and workshops. 5a Annually 10 partnering organizations or individuals volunteer for info distribution.	2009 Q4-2009	Steering Committee Steering Committee		
	b. A system to track volunteer (steering committee and non-steering committee) activities is developed.	1. Develop mechanism for volunteers to track & report activities, service hours. 2. Volunteer's service hours & accomplishments are compiled quarterly.	1a. Adapt Earth Team Form. 1b. Continue tracking steering committee time via meeting minutes. 1c. Track phone calls. 1d. Establish a record keeping system for volunteer coordinator. 2a. Report volunteer hours each meeting to be recorded in minutes. 2b. Include volunteer service/hours (totals not individuals) on website.	Q3-2008 Ongoing 2009-Q1 Ongoing Ongoing	Dave Dave All		Service contributions of volunteers are promoted in PLC materials. Volunteer hours are used as match in funding proposals.
	c. Volunteers are thanked annually for their service.	1. PLC holds an annual volunteer recognition event. 2. A personal letter of thanks is sent by the PLC Steering Committee chairperson. 3. Volunteer accomplishments are communicated in PLC outreach	1a. Consider a combined volunteer recognition and fundraising event. 2a. Draft Letter 3a. Website tab for volunteers-accumulated hours updated quarterly. 3b. Contact media for annual event.	2009-ongoing Q4-2008 Q4-2008 2009-ongoing	Steering Committee Alice Webmaster, Communication- Outreach & Steering Committee	\$\$	Annual event held.

		mechanisms.					
4. PLC is a financially sustainable division of PHRC&D.	a. Develop and implement a fundraising plan to ensure adequate and stable sources of funds so the division and PHRC&D may achieve its goals.	1. Create a fundraising plan to support all PLC activities.	1a Create committees related to fundraising categories to develop the strategy. 1b. Include fundraising item on each PLC Steering Committee agenda.	Q3-4 2008.	All Steering Board		<u>1 Year Goal:</u> Fundraising Plan developed. <u>3 Year Goal:</u> PLC 's operating reserve is equal to 10% of its annual operations budget and a conservation easement stewardship and defense fund has appropriate funding level (based on land/CE's held) PLC receives funding from a mix of individuals, business, foundations and grants.
	b. Develop relationships with a broad base of donors (individuals, foundations, and business).	1. Develop a list of funding prospects, materials and mechanisms to build relationships with each group.	1a Component of Steering Committee meeting to review materials and mechanisms for networking. 1b Acquire fundraising expertise from volunteer or consultant. (Refer to Association of Fundraising Professionals at http://www.afpnet.org)	Q3-2008 2009	All	\$\$	As above
	c. Develop relationships with local, county, state agencies,	1. Use contacts through the PHRC&D and steering	1a Use PHRC&D's grant live e-mail list (Grant Station). 1b Use newsletter list.	Q3-2008-ongoing	Dave and Tracy		As above

	and non-governmental organizations that provide funding for conservation and non-profit capacity building.	committee members to develop a list of public funding prospects, their requirements and determine eligible projects.					
	d. Establish an operating endowment and reserve.	1. Establish fiscal policies that provide for building an operating endowment and reserve. 2. Include need for an endowment in fundraising plan.	1a Writing policies for organizational integration with RCD and in accordance with LTA. 2a. Promote planned giving options when PLC has capacity (may be volunteer) to support this fundraising strategy.	2009-Q4	Chuck Gilbert & Alice 2009 or 2010		As above

GOALS	OBJECTIVE	STRATEGIES	TASKS	YEAR / Q'RT ER	RESOURCES & OUTCOMES		
					Responsible	Funding	Measurable Outcomes
Key Area C: CONSERVATION PROGRAM GOALS							
1. The Prairie Land Conservancy has protected priority wildlife habitat, open space, natural areas and sustainable agricultural land within its service area.	a. A Strategic Conservation Plan which identifies priority wildlife habitat, open space, natural areas and sustainable agricultural land, assesses threats, identifies potential partners (implementation, leverage, funding) is developed.	1. Develop mission based selection criteria that identifies priority projects, partners and funding. 2a Seek funding to develop plan. 2b. Steering Committee approves plan.	1. Create written project selection criteria. 1b. Selection criteria are applied to all potential projects. 2a. Funding sources identified; proposals submitted. 2b. Plan framework (methodology & timing) agreed on 2c. Plan developed including priority implementation steps	Q4-2008 - Q1-2009 2008-2009- *2009-Q4 or 2010 Q1 (*Allow 12-18 months for SCP; 6-8 for a rapid assessment process	Angella et al.	15,000+	Until SCP developed: PLC utilizes written selection criteria for all projects and includes this documentation in project files. <u>With SCP completed:</u> Guided by PLC's Strategic Conservation Plan program activities are strategies to conserve the most important lands in the service area.
	b. The Land Protection committee (LPC) has procedures to	1. Develop a project evaluation checklist that examines	1a Draft procedure/guidelines 1b. Steering Committee present to PHRC&D for adoption. 1c. Land protection file system is	Q4 2008-Q4 2009	Angella et al.		PLC follows adopted written criteria and procedures for

	evaluate potential land and easement projects.	potential hazards, identifies conservation values, provides legal due diligence on the tract and meets the public benefit test.	created to insure appropriate documentation and safekeeping of original documents for all projects.				land, conservation easement acquisition. Each project file clearly documents the planning process, evaluation, actions and decisions on the project.
	c. PLC steering committee has a process to receive approval from PHRC&D to proceed with a land or conservation easement project.	1. Develop land transaction policies, procedures, review process and a approval or denial process that authorizes PLC to conduct landowner visits, site visits, discuss and negotiate conservation options, to perform due diligence and to receive or purchase projects.	1. Write procedure. 2. Receive resolution from PHRC&D Council stating procedure for land transaction approval. 3. Develop required materials to document process; decisions by PHRC&D. 4. PHRC&D approvals/rejections are included in project files.	2009	Dave, Alice and Chuck	0	As above
	d.* PLC's steering committee and key volunteers are trained in land conservation methods and in landowner contact.	1. Use existing land owner option materials to develop PL conservation options materials and train LOC personnel in these options and in the	*See Key Area B: Organizational Goal 2 1. Utilize PLC properties for training (as appropriate). *Conduct training seminars (refer to training Goal B,2.) 2. Attend conferences/sessions on	Ongoing	PLC Steering Committee	1500-2000	Use goal for Key Area B: Organizational Goal 2

		use of these materials. 2. Become versant in the tax benefits, the legal responsibilities and obligations of land trusts in conservation transactions.	appropriate topics.				
	e. Landowners of PLC priority areas are informed of conservation options.	1. Contact top priority land owners but no more than you can manage. 2. Educate landowners of conservation options, PLC qualifications.	1a.ID landowners of priority properties (from SCP) 1b. Develop outreach strategies for priority landowners. 2a. Develop communication material 2b. Conduct trainings/seminars for landowners.	Correlate with completing SCP	Land Planning Committee	300	Owners of the top 50% of priority lands (identified in the SCP) are informed about conservation options and PLC.
	f. Opportunities for market-based options for landowners are examined. (example: carbon sequestration, hunting leases and so forth)	1. Study feasibility of market based conservation approaches as one conservation tool. 2. Partner with trusted landowner advisors (NRC&D) to promote strategy.	1a. Gather information on market-based options. 1b. Identify groups utilizing methods. 1c. Explore opportunities for partnership. 2a. Connect landowners with groups utilizing these strategies. 2b. Create partnerships as appropriate to secure conservation of lands.	Q4-Ongoing Ongoing	Dave & Chris		Use Outcome Key Area C: Conservation Program Goal Outcome
2. PLC's protected areas may provide recreational or educational opportunities and other evaluations.		1. Use the lands' attributes to determine opportunities for educational and community use.	1a.Develop public use policy/procedures. 1b. Address this issue with stewardship plans for each property.	With first land deal Ongoing	Steering Committee	As Needed	Stewardship plans provide guidance for the use of each property.
3. PLC promotes		1. Partner local,	1a.Stay informed on issues.	Q3	Steering	250	Adopted Public

local and regional policies to conserve wildlife habitat, open space, natural areas and sustainable agricultural land.		state and federal agencies to conserve land. 2. Seek ways to support state funding.	1b. Join list serves, other mechanisms to receive updates. 1c. Write policy to provide guidance for PLC involvement in public issues.	2008 – Ongoing	Committee		Issue Involvement Policy guides PLC's actions.
GOALS	OBJECTIVE	STRATEGIES	TASKS	YEAR / Q'RT ER	RESOURCES & OUTCOMES		
					Responsible	Funding	Measurable Outcomes
Key Area D: COMMUNICATION PROGRAM GOALS							
1. An effective communications plan is developed and implemented to market PLC to its constituents and to communicate the benefits of conservation of natural areas and agricultural lands to the community.	a. Identify target constituent groups.		1. Define target footprint and focus areas. 2. ID groups of allied interests i.e. conservation groups. 3. ID groups service. 4. Utilize RC&D board members.	Q3 2008 - Ongoing	Communication-Outreach Committee		Through its use of target appropriate communication pieces and strategies, PLC has informed key constituents throughout the service area about its mission, conservation, landowner conservation options and ways to support PLC.
	b. Create appropriate communications tools for each constituent group.		1. Present our vision to like-minded groups. 2. Develop educational materials for service groups. 3. Develop brochure/hire consultant.	Q4-2008	Steering Committee	Existing	As above

			4. Establish website.				
	c. Develop key media contacts.		1. Develop database of media contacts. 2. Distribute press release educational intro of our group. 3. Brochure published by pro printer.	Q4-2008	Dave		As above
	d. Identify entities for collaborative outreach efforts.		1. Identify like-minded groups. 2. Seek cross-promotion opportunities on websites, joint events, etc. 3. As appropriate develop Memorandum of Understanding for joint efforts.	Q4-2008 Q1-2009-ongoing When needed	Steering Committee		As above
	e. Identify and implement appropriate strategic outreach and activities for each constituent group.		1. Relate all outreach activities to fundraising, landowner, PLC awareness goals. 2. Recruit and train volunteers to lead/assist with outreach activities. 3. Build volunteer and membership numbers through outreach activities.	Q4-2008 - ongoing 2009-ongoing	Communication-Outreach Committee		As above
2. *Landowners throughout the service area are informed about their options for conservation and the benefits to the community.	Identify landowners by identifying priority target areas.	1. Use all forms and outlets to inform about options and benefits.	* See Conservation Program Goal 1, e. 1a. Collaborate with land protection committee on outreach materials and landowner contact strategy. 1b. Utilize RC&D board members; network through their contacts with other groups.	Ongoing	Land Planning Committee		Use Key Area C: Conservation Program Outcome.

Appendix

REVISED BYLAWS

PRAIRIE HILLS RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT, INCORPORATED

ARTICLE 1-NAME AND OFFICE LOCATION

Section 1. The name of this corporation is Prairie Hills Resource Conservation and Development, Inc.

Section 2. The principal office of this corporation shall be located in the city of Macomb, County of McDonough, State of Illinois.

ARTICLE II-PURPOSES AND POWERS

Section 1. The purpose for which this corporation is formed is as set forth in the Articles of Incorporation. These purposes are to educate the people living in the area; to accelerate the development, conservation and wise use of human, financial and natural resources in order to improve the standard of living and quality of life in Fulton, Hancock, Henderson, Knox, McDonough, and Warren counties of Illinois.

Section 2. The Corporation may purchase, receive and/or accept, hold title to or borrow against property, whether real, personal or mixed, by way of gift, devise or bequest, from any person, firm, trust or Corporation, to be held, administered, or disposed of, and to do any other business permissible by law in accordance with and pursuant to its purposes.

Section 3. The Corporation's Board of Directors may establish Action Teams, special committees and subcommittees, or may hire employees and/or agents to achieve its purposes.

ARTICLE III – BUSINESS

Section 1. Contracts-The board of Directors may authorize any officer, agent or agents of the corporation, in addition to the officers so authorized by these bylaws, to enter into any contract or execute and deliver any instrument in the name of and on behalf of the corporation; and such authority may be general or confined to a specific instance.

Section 2. Checks, Drafts, Etc. - All checks, drafts, or order for the payment of money, notes, or other evidences of indebtedness issued in the name of the corporation shall be signed by such officer or officers, agent or agents of the corporation and in such manner as shall from time to time be determined by resolution of the Board. In the absence of such determination by resolution by the Board, such instruments shall be signed by either Treasurer or President of the corporation.

Section 3. Deposits-All funds of the corporation shall be deposited from time to time to the credit of the corporation in such banks, trust companies, or other depositories as the Board may select.

Section 4. Insurance- The Corporation will maintain insurance on behalf of any person who is or was a council, director, officer, employee or agent of the corporation, against any liability asserted against him and incurred by him in connection with his status as such, whether or not the corporation would have the power to indemnify him against such liability.

Section 5. Audit- The corporation's financial affairs shall be audited annually by a qualified auditor or auditing committee designed by the Board of Directors and presented to the Board of Directors and Council.

Section 6. Budget- Annual budget(s) will be prepared and presented for adoption by the Board of Directors and Council at the annual meeting. Funds may come from sources such as, individuals, corporations, foundations, governmental entities, and/or dues assessed from sponsors.

ARTICLE IV – BOARD OF DIRECTORS, COUNCIL, SPONSORS, COMMITTEES

Section 1. The affairs of the corporation shall be managed by the Board of Directors. All powers of the corporation, including establishment of policy, determination of matters of business, adopting bylaws and amending or altering same, are vested in the Board of Directors.

Section 2. The Board of Directors shall consist of a total of seven (7) qualified individuals. In addition to the office of President each of the six counties served by the corporation shall have one (1) person on the Board of Directors.

Section 3. To qualify for the Board of Directors, a person must be a member of the Council.

Section 4. Any vacancy occurring on the Board of Directors must come from the Council and shall be filled through a joint effort between the remaining Directors and the individual leaving that position. Persons identified in this way, must receive simple majority approval of the remaining Board of Directors.

Section 5. The Council shall elect the President and the remaining six (6) Board of Directors at the annual meeting. Only Council members may be elected to the Board of Directors. Director's terms of office are four years, may succeed themselves, and will be staggered so that half will be elected every two years.

Section 6. A Director may be removed from office for cause, by the vote of not less than two-thirds (2/3) of the Directors at a meeting of the Board of Directors, provided notice of such proposed action shall have been duly given in the notice of the meeting and provided the director has been in-formed in writing of the changes preferred against him or her at least ten (10) days before such meeting.

Section 7. The Board of Directors shall elect the remaining officers following the annual meeting at the next scheduled meeting of the Directors. Only Directors may be elected to officer positions.

Section 8. The Council shall consist of thirty (30) appointed members, five from each of the six counties, be a citizen of the county they are representing, and fully subscribe to, and have a working interest in, the purposes and basic policies of the Corporation.

Section 9. Directors and Council shall not receive any compensation from the corporation for their service on the Board of Directors and Council, but may be reimbursed for accrued and necessary expenses.

Section 10. The Council will assist in determining issues, opportunities and resource conditions that the Corporation wishes to address through its purposes and help carry out projects in the furtherance of its mission.

Section 11. Council members shall serve a four year term, may succeed themselves, and will be staggered so that half will be appointed every two years.

Section 12. Any vacancy occurring on the Council shall be filled through a joint effort between the remaining Council members and the individual leaving that position. Persons identified in the way, must receive simple majority approval of the remaining Council.

Section 13. Initial sponsors are the County Boards and the Soil and Water Conservation Districts in Fulton, Hancock, Henderson, Knox, McDonough and Warren Counties. Other legal entities and organizations may become a sponsor upon payments of annual membership dues and fully subscribe to the purposes and basic policies of the Corporation.

Section 14. The Council shall have a loan committee: A Council member will act as chairperson for the loan committee.

- A) The loan committee shall consist of six members, an attorney-at-law and the Executive Vice President. They shall be responsible for the management of the revolving loan funds, distribute loan applications, receive, evaluate and approve loans.
 - i. A quorum shall consist of a simple majority of the Loan Committee.
 - ii. Vacancies on the Loan Committee shall be filled by the Board of Directors at a regular or special meeting.
 - iii. Minutes of the Loan Committee proceedings will be kept and reported to the Board of Directors and Council.

Section 15. The Council shall have a Land Conservancy for the purpose of protecting critical habitats in natural areas, farm lands, forests, and open spaces.

- A) The Land Conservancy shall act on behalf of the Council and its Board of Directors in matters pertaining to its operations and management and report on its activities on a regular bases to the Council and its Board of Directors.
- B) The Land Conservancy shall have a Board of Directors of which two are members of the Council and its Board of Directors.
- C) The Land Conservancy shall recommend to the Council and its Board of Directors conservation easements/land donations to acquire and hold on behalf of the Land Conservancy.

ARTICLE V- MEETINGS, QUOROM AND VOTING

Section 1. The Council, Prairie Hills Resource Conservation and Development, Inc., shall hold their annual meeting in January and another meeting in July of each year to conduct the business of the Council. Other meetings may be called as necessary by the President. All persons on the Council shall be advised at least five (5) days in advance of each meeting.

Section 2. The Board of Directors shall meet at least four times each year or as may be called by the President to conduct the business of the Corporation. The Board of Directors shall be advised at least five (5) days in advance of each meeting.

Section 3. A quorum shall consist of a simple majority of the Council or Directors at their respective meetings.

Section 4. Each person on the Council and Board of Directors shall have one vote only at their respective meetings. A majority vote of Council members and Directors present shall be required to reach all decisions made by the Council and Board at their respective meetings.

ARTICLE VI- OFFICERS

Section 1. The officers of the Corporation shall be a President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. The officer's shall perform the duties prescribed by these bylaws and any assigned by the corporation's Board of Directors. The offices of Secretary and Treasurer may be combined if the Directors so desire.

Section 2. The Council shall elect the President at the Annual Meeting.

Section 3. Officer's terms of office shall be one year. Officers may succeed themselves.

Section 4. Vacancies among the officers shall be filled by appointment of the President with simple majority approval of the remaining Board of Directors.

Section 5. Duties of the Officers:

- a. **President** - The President shall assure that the corporation adheres to its intended purposes and shall represent the Board of Directors and Council as speaker and leader at various functions with diverse federal, state and local agencies and organizations. The President will prepare the agenda for each meeting and conduct all regular and special meetings of the Corporation.

He/She is responsible for the execution of all resolutions and directives of the Board of Directors and Council. The President may sign, with attestation of the Treasurer, any deeds, mortgages, bonds. Contracts or other instruments which the Board authorizes to be executed; and perform all other duties associated with this position.

- b. **Vice President** - In the absence of the President or in the event of the Presidents inability or refusal to act, the vice President shall assume the duties of the President, and when acting so, shall have all the powers of an be subject to all the restrictions upon such other duties as may be assigned by the President or the Board of Directors.
- c. **Secretary** – The Secretary shall keep approved minutes of the meetings of the corporations Board of Directors and Council in a book to be kept for that purpose; shall see that all notices are duly given in accordance with the provisions of these bylaws or as required by law; shall be responsible for keeping and filing all books, reports, statements and other records as required by law and these bylaws; and shall perform all other duties as may be assigned by the President or Board of Directors.
- d. **Treasurer** – The treasurer shall have charge and custody of and be responsible for all funds and securities of the Corporation; shall render to the President, the Council, and the Board of Directors whenever required, a statement of the financial condition of the corporation and of all transactions of the Treasurer, and render a full financial report at the annual meeting of the Council; shall receive receipts for monies due and payable to the Corporation from any source; shall deposit all such monies in the name of the Corporation in such banks, trust companies, or other depositories as shall be selected by the Board of Directors; shall file all necessary tax papers for the Corporation; shall keep the Corporation charter up-to date; shall perform all other duties as may be assigned by the President or Board of Directors.

ARTICLE VII – RESOURCE PERSONNEL

Section 1. The Executive Vice President may be designated by the Board of Directors. The Executive Vice President shall exercise such authority and perform such duties as the Board of Directors may from time to time assign. The Executive Vice President shall not be an officer of the corporation.

Section 2. The Office Manager may be designated by the Board of Directors and is responsible for all clerical and administrative support provided by local citizens through the corporations office. This person is the Corporation’s receptionist, bookkeeper and typist. The Office Manager performs a full range of administrative duties for the Corporations Board, while serving under direct supervision of the Executive Vice President.

Section 3. Employees may be hired to conduct the business of the corporation as needed. They will be under the direct supervision of the Executive Vice President. The Board of Directors will oversee all personnel matters.

ARTICLE VIII – ANNUAL DUES

Section 1. Each sponsor shall pay annual dues in the amount set by the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE IX – INDEMNIFICATION AND EXECUTION OF INSTRUMENTS

Section 1. Indemnification – Officers, Directors, Council members and Resource Personnel of this Corporation, and their private property, shall not be liable in any manner for the Corporations debts, obligations, undertakings or liabilities and Officers, Directors, Council members and Resource Personnel shall be exempted and indemnified against personal expenses, losses or liabilities, which may accrue from time to time in any manner by reason of ownership, administration or distribution of the Corporate property of funds, or by reason of any acts of commission or omission on their part in the conduct of the Corporate affairs, so long as they act in good faith.

The Officers, Directors, Council Members and Resource Personnel shall not be liable or accountable in any manner for honest mistakes or errors of judgment, nor for errors or wrong doings of agents, brokers, attorneys or servants, nor for interest on funds temporarily idle. They shall have the right, at all times and in all matters, to act upon any information or evidence deemed by them reliable without incurring any personal liability or responsibility of any kind.

Section 2. Execution of Instruments – All Instruments of assignment transfer, conveyance, release and contract including checks, notes and drafts requiring execution of the Corporation shall be signed by either the President or Treasurer, or their designees, provided, however, that these Officers are authorized to designate others by vote of the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE X – PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

Section 1. All meetings of the Board of Directors of the Corporation and Council shall be conducted pursuant to Robert’s Rules of Order, Revised, except to the extent and degree that other procedural requirements are set forth by law, the Articles of Incorporation of these Bylaws.

ARTICLE XI – AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS

Section 1. These Bylaws may be repealed or amended by at least four affirmative votes of the Board of Directors at any regular meeting or special meeting of the Board called for such purpose, at which a quorum is present; provided however, no such action shall change the purpose of the Corporation so as to impair its rights and powers under the laws of the State of Illinois, or to waive any requirements of band or any provision for the safety and security or property and funds of the Corporation or its Directors and Council or to deprive any Director or Council members without his/her express consent of rights, privileges, or immunities then existing; and further provided that notice of any proposed amendments or repeals shall be sent to all Board of Director members at least thirty (30) days in advance of the meeting.

ARTICLE XII – MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

Section 1. Corporate Seal – There shall be a corporate seal.

Section 2. Fiscal Year – The Fiscal Year of the Corporation shall end at the close of business on the last day of December each year.

These Bylaws approved July 1975

1st Revision approved November 17, 1977

2nd Revision approved March 23, 1987

3rd Revision approved September 20, 1990

4th Revision approved September 26, 2000

Adopted this 12th day of July, 2007

President, Prairie Hills Resource Conservation and Development, Inc.

ATTEST:

Secretary, Prairie Hills Resource Conservation and Development, Inc.

Compilation of Steering Committee Questionnaire Responses

Background Information

MAYES | WILSON & ASSOCIATES, LLC developed and administered a written survey for the steering committee members to identify key issues that would be addressed in the strategic planning process. Mayes and Wilson compiled all responses, analyzing for themes and key issues and provided the full compilation to the steering committee prior to the planning meeting.

The following is a compilation of PLC steering committee member responses.

“We want to address natural areas, farmlands, forests and open space that contain natural resources

at risk to:

- Protect wildlife habitat and serve as a buffer between development and natural areas
- Provide protection and enhancement of natural areas and landscape diversity
- Reduce flooding, improve water quality, and protect groundwater recharge areas
- Provide safe and affordable food for domestic and foreign consumption”

Environmental Scan

1. In addition to the trends described in the background section regarding land changes, are there additional trends in the PLC service area that will impact the organization? Rate the trends you listed in the previous question as:
 - a. Immediate (happening now)
 - b. Soon (1-2 years in the future)
 - c. Anticipated (More than 2 years in the future)

Immediate:

- Very rapidly rising prices for farmland, woodland and open space in the region happening now.
- Illinois now has the Conservation Stewardship legislation. This is likely to benefit awareness of open space and woodland conservation, since it can lower taxes on those properties.
- Increased grain prices putting pressure for more land conversion into cropland.
- The increasing reduction in the number of farms in the region and the rapid increase in land values.
- There is a growing local foods movement. Quincy area has held an Annual Food Fest for three (?) years and Knox County Extension is leading a regional effort (as of October last year). Extension will host a meeting on Feb. 13 for “Building a Sustainable Food System” and two PLC members are very involved in a grassroots local food movement in Macomb Area. Food production is a natural way to connect people to the land, and this

movement is connected with an array of professionals in both University of Illinois Extension and at the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs.

- There is a growing interest in renewable energy. Both the RC&D and the IIRA are involved in efforts to evaluate the feasibility of wind power or cellulosic ethanol. This movement will have interesting implications for farmland preservation and the future of CRP (Conservation Reserve Program) land. Western Illinois University also has an alternative crops research program which includes investigations into biomass potential of various crops.
- Increasing rental of land by farmers and renting total land of increasing size. Evidently, renting the land has encouraged farmers to mow roadsides for the sake of their management reputation, destroying significant portions of habitat. Farming large acreages has also encouraged farmers to fall-apply anhydrous ammonia (even when it is warm) because of time constraints in spring. The anoxia in the Mississippi Delta is largely due to practices like this. Legislation in the future may prevent fall-applied N [nitrogen]. At the same time N [nitrogen] prices are rising and there is a greater interest in animal manure. I believe that farmers need to scale back down to a manageable and diversified scale which will promote more community, investment in higher value, direct-marketed products, and will encourage more environmental stewardship. There is a general lack of leadership in stewarding/educating farmers in this direction, however.
- Excessive mowing of roadsides, large lawns and open space.
- Changing land uses.
- Recreational Bulldozing (knocking over trees and scraping up soil for seemingly no reason other than to make it “look nice” in the eye of the land tenant or to add an extra few rows of corn or beans).
- Changes in the county tax rules giving tax incentives for landowners to harvest their forests over those that wish to keep the woods intact.
- State DNR and other NGOs interested in providing more assistance in land preservation in western Illinois since area has been overlooked in the past.
- Recent development of plans for recreational bike/canoe trails will offer opportunities for land preservation.
- Federal and state agricultural programs are in great flux right now. Changes will impact the need/role of our land trust.

Soon:

- My sense is that there is a general lack of appreciation or movement to educate and protect native prairie land. It seems to be only within small circles, rather than broad public campaigns.
- Changes in the county tax rules giving tax incentives for landowners to harvest their forests over those that wish to keep the woods intact.
- Federal and state agricultural programs are in great flux right now. Changes will impact the need/role of our land trust.

- Loss of manufacturing jobs in area continues to spiral – will lead to more population loss in rural areas.
- Push toward more biofuels for ethanol (i.e. more corn, switch grass, soybeans and less CRP, etc.)

Anticipated:

- Push toward more biofuels for ethanol (i.e. more corn, switch grass, soybeans and less CRP, etc.)
- Loss of manufacturing jobs in area continues to spiral – will lead to more population loss in rural areas.
- The increasing reduction in the number of farms in the region and the rapid increase in land values.
- My sense is that there is a general lack of appreciation or movement to educate and protect native prairie land. It seems to be only within small circles, rather than broad public campaigns.
- Increasing rental of land by farmers and renting total land of increasing size. Evidently, renting the land has encouraged farmers to mow roadsides for the sake of their management reputation, destroying significant portions of habitat. Farming large acreages has also encouraged farmers to fall-apply anhydrous ammonia (even when it is warm) because of time constraints in spring. The anoxia in the Mississippi Delta is largely due to practices like this. Legislation in the future may prevent fall-applied N [nitrogen]. At the same time N [nitrogen] prices are rising and there is a greater interest in animal manure. I believe that farmers need to scale back down to a manageable and diversified scale which will promote more community, investment in higher value, direct-marketed products, and will encourage more environmental stewardship. There is a general lack of leadership in stewarding/educating farmers in this direction, however.
- Federal and state agricultural programs are in great flux right now. Changes will impact the need/role of our land trust.

No timeframe specified:

- Alternative energy generation (wind power start-ups) should be considered. The wind farms occupy open fields that could/do support prairie flora and fauna. There is a large wind farm north of Peoria and local governments are beginning to discuss zoning issues.
- Commodity prices are high for farmers.
- Rent prices are high for farm ground.
- The price and value of farm ground is high.

2. Are there recent events that will impact the organization's work? *For example, the state has just set up a new fund specifically for land conservation; a foundation in your service area has changed their focus to the environment.*

- On Jan 29th, 2008 the USGS released its report “Agricultural Practices in 9 States Contribute Majority of Excessive Nutrients to the Northern Gulf of Mexico.” Briefly, Illinois, Iowa, Indiana, Missouri, Arkansas, Kentucky, Tennessee, Ohio and Mississippi contribute more than 75 percent of nitrogen and phosphorus to the Gulf. Corn and soybean cultivation is the largest contributor of nitrogen to the Gulf. Animal manure on pasture and rangelands and crop cultivation are the largest contributors of phosphorus. (see <http://www.usgs.gov/newsroom/article.asp?ID=1859>).

Their findings reaffirm that large quantities of the nutrients can (and should) be trapped upstream. Upstream capture and retention is going to involve long-term/permanent changes to the present landscape. The water is going to have to be slowed down and retained in strategic wetlands and reservoirs. It will be interesting to see what incentives state and federal government will institute, but land banks offer effective real time solutions through conservation easements designed for nutrient remediation. Advocacy will be a critical component.

- Not that I know of.
- Statewide effort for legislation to fund organizations to increase their capacity to hold CEs or purchase land.
- The state passed a “Food Farms and Jobs Act” which has established a task force to address the obstructions to local food systems and identify ways to promote both organic and local food production/markets. There should be a significant amount of money available.
- The decline in the price of hogs is resulting in hog integrators pulling out of their contracts with farmers. There could be a substantial interest by farmers in land easements to help them pay off debt by getting a tax break (for something they would like for their land anyway).
- The boom in corn prices for ethanol has caused many people to raze every inch of land for more corn production. Fragile habitats, including waterways have been abused.
- Not directly [affecting the PLC], the state has recently completed a Illinois Wildlife Action Plan which includes several “Conservation Opportunity Areas” which are located in our 10 county area of coverage. This plan will dictate how state/federal money is spent and will help land trusts to leverage funds for protection/stewardship. The focus of this Plan is to provide habitat for wildlife “species of greatest conservation concern”. We also have a couple watershed plans developed in our area. It will be important to use these plans to come up with big-picture strategies on land protection when it comes to linking habitats and providing corridors of natural habitats and undeveloped open space.
- There is a strong push to convert more farmland to produce more ethanol. An increasing world/national population needs more food/fuel putting more pressure on natural areas and open space.

3. Are there other conservation groups that may perceive PLC to be a competitor? If yes, explain.

- No. It appears to me that most large conservation efforts in the state involve collaboration among numerous NGOs and governmental agencies. Seldom does one group go it alone. We certainly intend to be a collaborator, not a competitor.
- Branch groups established under this organization could potentially split off and form their trusts if our charter is not carefully worded. Every county and community is different, and some will have more effective leaders in their locale. Our task is to build an organization that encourages local control while nurturing trust, dedication, and commitment to PLC for the greater good of the 10 county region.
- Not that I know of.
- TNC & Audubon may feel that their programs for land purchase/CE are threatened by competition.
- Not sure. Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs?
- No
- No, all of the NGOs that have previously attempted (poorly) to cover this portion of Illinois are extremely anxious to hand over the reigns and responsibility to a local land trust. These groups (TNC, Natural Land Institute) have offered to provide us with assistance (just technical, I'm sure) in getting started.

Vision of the Future

A vision paints the picture of the world as if your land trust succeeds in realizing its mission. It is expansive, descriptive, provocative and inspiring.

1. Describe what the PLC service area looks like if PLC is successful:
 - Service area is the 10 county area already identified by PLC. Could also include adjacent areas through collaborations. In the ideal world, protected areas would have a geographic or ecological connection.
 - A good place to start is farms with more trees and wetlands to benefit the entire ecosystem. This would reverse the trend that goes back to the 1940's and 50's. If PLC's work is successful, every county would have nature preserves scattered throughout. There would be an increase in bird counts throughout the entire area. A substantial influx of income for Western Illinois would be generated from ecotourism.
 - Critical habitats protected; staff capable of monitoring and performing resource management.
 - Populations (cities) will have a "land ethic" as part of their city plan or charter
 - They will have written plans of conservation of habitat in their surrounding areas and goals for incremental increases in local food production.
 - They will recognize annual "wild habitat" and "agricultural" stewards of the land each year, and this will involve a large public banquet for that locale, and it will bring in money for the local satellite PLC easement board.
 - Waterways will have buffered zones, prairies will be re-seeded, forests will be conserved, natural habitats and gardens will be integrated into grade school courtyards

and curriculum, and a growing local food system will create environmental accountability for the farmer and economic accountability for the consumer.

- Community “land” boards will help to track the growing awareness by community members of the link between their local economy and its natural resources. This will be done via public surveys and tracking dollars spent on local food, conservation programs, agri-tourism and other indicators of rural wealth.
- Area extends south of Quad Cities to just north of St. Louis and from Mississippi to Illinois rivers (west-central Illinois)
- Currently high quality natural areas and archaeological sites in western Illinois are protected through the Illinois Nature Preserves System. Farmlands are protected (as non-cropped lands) in ag programs (CRP, WRP, CREP, EQUIP, Greenways, etc.). There is no organization to send landowners wishing to provide protection from development for moderate to low quality natural areas, recreational areas, historic areas, and working farmlands. While the biggest need currently is for the moderate to low quality natural areas, PLC will be successful if it can provide assistance to owners with land that falls through the gap if the land meets PLC goals to provide habitat blocks/links/corridors in high/moderate priority areas. PLC would also be successful if it could provide easements for high quality natural area where the landowner is uncomfortable working with state government.

2. Describe PLC as an organization in five years, ten years and 20 years:

- Will have more public involvement. In particular those who have utilized the services.

In 5 years:

- We would have possibly 15 CEs, some donated land and a growing funding base.
- Growing in members obtaining 1-2 CEs per year.
- Major cities each have a “board” which focuses primarily on educational campaigns, membership building, and facilitation of implementing/holding conservation easements. Educational campaigns are “coalitions” of local resource organizations that integrate land, water, food, energy into a message about connection of people to the land.
- PLC will have two boards; one comprised of representatives from each major area, and one focused on organizational structure, sustainability, goals, etc. (the latter one being the current board). The PLC organizational board will serve as a resource for education and mentoring of “satellite” boards in how to conduct their own local educational campaigns and easement holdings.
- PLC should have high quality glossy brochures, informational pamphlets, DVD program to present to groups, etc. PLC should have a minimum of 3 conservation easements in our priority area(s). PLC should have the cooperation and support of a least 20-30 other groups/agencies distributed throughout the 10 county area. PLC should have the funding to hire at least one part time staff member to help move the organization forward.

- Able to accept land easements; able to fund raise to meet needs of land trust; establish a legal defense fund.

In 10 years:

- Possible 30 CEs, funding base healthy, public in service area comfortable with CE concept, and recognize PLC as the place that protects local lands. Possible paid staff.
- Maturing NRO with some additional members; PT staff; obtaining 3-4 CEs per year.
- Boards in each “city” have helped to facilitate a several year process of “mapping” a land ethic for their community with developers, policymakers, and other relevant individuals. Representatives from IIRA will lead this effort in conjunction with the local boards.
- PLC should have a minimum of 7-8 conservation easements in our priority area(s). PLC should have the funding to hire at least one full time staff. PLC should have funding to provide stewardship activities on at least half of the conservation easements. PLC should have established itself as the leader in land protection for west-central Illinois - the best resource for state/federal agencies seeking to know more/do more regarding natural area preservation.
- Able to hire staff; able to purchase high quality natural areas and high threat areas.

In 20 years:

- Fundraising has matured into receiving bequests, etc. and with a healthy and active membership. Also, in 20 years, PLC will be beginning in some cases to monitor the second generation of easements, with the challenges that ensue.
- Fully staffed 5+ CEs per year.
- City ‘boards’ will have their own \$ accounts within the larger PLC from which to manage its funds more independently and appropriately as defined by its members. These boards could spin off into their own organizations, and easements could be transferred from PLC to the smaller organization if there was interest.
- PLC should have a minimum of 15 conservation easements in our priority area(s) totaling several hundred acres in size. PLC should have a well developed program for stewardship and be able to provide funds to assist conservation easement landowners with exotic species control, brush clearing, prescribed fire, etc. PLC should have spun off a volunteer group specialized in stewardship activities for private lands.
- Same as 10 yrs but bigger.

3. What is the most important thing the Steering Committee can do to advance the PLC goal of land protection?

- Get all the fundamentals in place. Work toward compliance with LTA Standards & Practices. Do it right the first time and every time. Establish credibility and educate public about CEs.
- I think we need to be careful and thoughtful about how we start.
- Create a framework for sustaining land conservation (regardless of the legal ability to enforce an easement) by doing educational campaigns (to all ages) about the link between healthy communities and their land.
- Putting land into an easement and educating people about land easements is a must, but is an activity aimed at achieving the larger goal.
- Education, promotion, and networking.
- Get in operations.
- To put down good, solid rules/guidelines for PLC; Develop a 5-yr strategic plan; and most importantly, get base of committed people to do work for PLC.
- Create a comprehensive strategic plan that is forward-thinking that can provide guidance for the organization to go out and bring in cooperators/supports, funding sources, and create positive public awareness of our role in the communities of west-central Illinois.
- Education of possible land donors as to the way the land conservancy program will work.

PLC's Role in the Community

1. What role should PLC fill in its service area?

- Since we are essentially the only land trust in the area, we obviously will fill that role. Also, the Steering Committee has discussed our role in Environmental Advocacy. At the time of the discussion, it was agreed that Advocacy is a desirable goal, but it should flow from our reputation as a successful land trust. We should not get too distracted from the big goal of land protection.
- Also discussed was the role PLC should play in hands-on, on the ground stewardship of lands. There is a lack of agreement on this I think. I am all in favor of helping CE donors develop management plans for their properties, but feel that an active stewardship program would drain human capital from the big goal—land protection.
- PLC should provide land owners with conservation options for their property; for public education, advocacy of preservation and its worth. The trust can be a useful partner with local, state and federal entities.
- Provide the support for conservation and to monitor the easements.
- Bringing people to the table; bringing the grassroots up to the institutions and policymakers.
- Providing information and innovative educational materials to local communities.
- NGO for obtaining CEs, education and promotion of habitat protection from conversion, protection of family farms from development.

- Fill in the gaps in protection for private lands not currently served by the state (Illinois Nature Preserves Commission/IL Dept. of Natural Resources) or the Dept. of Agriculture.
 - Provide a land trust for people in west-central Illinois to offer them options for land protection.
2. What would be the most important role that PLC can fulfill for the community in the future?
- Education and Advocacy as well as land preservation. A place donors/funders can be confident that their money will be used for the stated goal of land protection.
 - Staying a viable organization that is able to continue to offer land preservation options.
 - To promote conservation easements and serve as a resource for those interested in this option.
 - Monitoring and evaluating the progress of land protection, “land ethic” awareness, land use, and providing this information for more educational campaigns.
 - NGO for obtaining CEs, education and promotion of habitat protection from conversion, protection of family farms from development.
 - To protect high quality natural areas so future generations can experience what western Illinois was once like and to protect areas against urban sprawl.
 - Provide large blocks of habitat and/or habitat links/corridors to support a wide variety of native wildlife and plants that could be enjoyed by the public as well as private landowners and offer recreational opportunities in support of public owned conservation lands. Secondly, (perhaps more importantly) to be the leaders in land conservation in west-central Illinois.
3. What are the three most important segments of the community PLC must engage to protect lands?
- Agricultural, Real Estate/Banking, Philanthropically Inclined Individuals.
 - The public - as a source of funds and philosophic support; Land owners--to earn their trust; and Government - as a partner to achieve shared goals.
 - Traditional agricultural landowners.
 - Policymakers (zoning issues), developers, public (farmers, children).
 - Landowners, units of government, businesses.
 - Farm Bureau folks and those they influence with fears over folks “controlling” private lands.
 - Real Estate – we need to get more local realtors trained in appraisal of conservation lands and increase their support of conservation easements.
 - Lawyers – we need to get more local lawyers trained in conservation easements and increase their support of conservation easements.
 - High Rollers – folks with funds to donate to support our efforts.
 - Landowners/Producers.
 - Stakeholders.
 - Municipalities.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

The following questions focus on PLC's Strengths, Weaknesses and Opportunities and Threats for PLC.

1. **Strengths** are *positive* aspects *internal* to PLC and its Steering Committee.

What are the Steering Committee's most significant strengths? Please list below.

- Motivation.
- Varied backgrounds and talents.
- Many have (or have had) agricultural ties and can understand the hurdles that need to be overcome to gain the agricultural sector's trust. Several have served in county government and understand how things are accomplished locally. Good mix of ages. The group has diverse backgrounds.
- Diverse board with background in conservation and land use.
- Individuals that are either highly skilled/knowledgeable in natural resource management or very well connected to institutions or individuals that can bring something to the table.
- Housed by the local RC&D which provides credibility, money and staff time.
- One individual on the County Board.
- Good dialogue and congeniality in the group.
- Motivation.
- Doers.
- Diverse Backgrounds.
- We are a diverse group of people with different attitudes and opinions on where we should go and what we should do as an organization.
- We have some start-up funds, the backing of RC&D of help, and cooperation of other organizations (good word of mouth).
- Superb professional knowledge of biological communities (plants, animals and their needs)
- Experience with land protection programs in the state of Illinois.
- Diverse contact with various agencies, NGOs, etc, in west-central Illinois and throughout Illinois and Midwest that will provide guidance, assistance, answer questions that come up in the future.
- Knowledge of what's involved in legal conservation easements.
- Ability to negotiate with private landowners interested in land protection.
- Intimate knowledge of the role of state government (natural resources and Ag) in land protection/conservation easements as well as state priorities and landscape level habitat preservation goals, etc.
- Leads on potential high rollers or folks linked to high rollers throughout the 10-county area that could potentially provide financial support to PLC. (This is also a weakness but I have leads and although fundraising is absolutely not my thing, getting to these folks

throughout the 10-county area will not be as hard as others on the steering committee think.)

- I am not sure we know yet what our strengths and weaknesses are. I don't.

2. **Weaknesses** are *negative* aspects *internal* to the Steering Committee.

What are the Steering Committee's most significant weaknesses? Please list below.

- Lack Public Relations and Fundraising Expertise.
- We are starting from scratch and have a lot to learn. We are part-time, trying to achieve what we can, when we can.
- None of them have done this before.
- Currently most individuals are located in Macomb (this could be a strength in terms of the ability to actually have good attendance at a meeting).
- I think there could be more strengthening of persons with knowledge in agricultural preservation/management.
- Time management, not enough communication.
- Need additional funds.
- We lack a paid staff and have to rely primarily on volunteers.
- We have a large area to fill considering the small size of our organization.
- Money – we lack expertise in fund raising.
- Legal Issues – we lack the services of a cheap lawyer from the area who is familiar with conservation easements. We are not aware of any lawyers in the 10-county area that are familiar with conservation easements. And we're not aware of any with the expertise that will do pro-bono work for us.
- Realty – We are not aware of any realtors in our 10-county area that have the certification and experience in appraising conservation easements.

3. **Opportunities** are *positive* aspects *external* to PLC.

What are the major **opportunities** PLC will have in the next 2-5 years? Please list below.

- State of Illinois has created Conservation Stewardship program-interested landowners have to submit conservation plans for approval by IDNR. This will stimulate many landowners to take the first step of defining their land and the conservation plans for it. It should stimulate some to take further steps to protect their land.
- We also have the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan in place.
- Illinois Clean Energy is still looking to support CE or land acquisition projects in west-central IL.
- Most PLC Steering Committee members are on boards of other local and state conservation groups, and the opportunities for collaboration are wide open.
- Hopefully, as more and more people, and especially landowners, realize the effects of CO2 buildup in the world, they will move to use a portion of their land as a carbon sink.

If the government develops incentives to capture nutrients leaching from the ag sector, then this could provide additional stimulus as well.

- Generally speaking, as the communities learn of PLC's existence, the growing membership base will come forward to participate. There is an advantage to being the new kid on the block, and PLC is one concrete effort for people who want to contribute (either with funds, time, resources, etc.) towards building a better community to participate in and involve themselves.
- To demonstrate that is a viable option to preserve a way of life.
- I don't know.
- New organization with vision and programs.
- Need for land trust in area; there is local interest from private landowners inquiring about land protection.
- We have cooperation from other NGOs in the area (Environmentally Concerned Citizens, La Moine River Ecosystem Partnership, Illinois Audubon Society, Western Prairie Audubon Society).
- We have the opportunity to work with a wide variety of other groups to meet shared goals (i.e. Western Illinois Network of Trails and Greenways, Western Illinois Nature Group, Quincy Park District, Macomb Park District, Illinois Audubon Society, Natural Land Institute, The Nature Conservancy, county Soil and Water Conservation District, La Moine River Ecosystem Partnership).
- The Illinois Natural Areas Inventory update will occur over the next 2-5 years. This inventory update may identify sites in west-central Illinois that are of higher priority for protection.
- The development of watershed plans for the La Moine River and Bear Creek along with the state's Conservation Opportunity Areas and priority sites identified by Ducks Unlimited and TNC will serve as opportunities for PLC to develop plan/map of high priority areas for land protection.

4. **Threats** are *negative* aspects *external* to PLC.

What are the greatest **threats** PLC will face in the next 2-5 years? Please list below.

- Local attorneys, realtors, and farmers are unfamiliar with CEs, and some view them negatively especially as they affect property values. Without a guarantee of income, farmers will seldom enter into conservation agreements.
- The local economy is mirroring the rest of the state and the country and is definitely not improving.
- For some in the ag [agriculture] sector, land banks and environmental projects are not viewed favorably. Some in county governments are fearful of tracts of land being removed from the tax base. Land is money and people pay attention to that.
- The general economic situation in which local land ownership declines. The major increase in land values.
- I don't know
- Inactivity, lack of funding, lack of staff to carry out strategic plan.

- Lack of populous in area to put together a coalition to get things done.
- Lack of money.
- Use of land for profit.
- Landowner attitudes.
- The withdrawal of lands in CRP/WRP/CREP programs to return to cropping in order for farmers to cash in on higher prices.
- Lack of public support/knowledge to positive impact landowner attitudes – Why do I need to enroll my land in a conservation easement?
- Lack of legal services and qualified/certified realtors able to assist our efforts.

Areas of Work

From the background information, *“This land trust will protect natural areas, farmland, forests and open areas through acceptance of conservation easements and/or land donations.”*

1. Do you agree with the types of land the statement indicates PLC will protect?

Yes	No
XXXXXXXX	

- It’s ok but there has been some discussion about leaving the door open to historic sites. It’s more work. I’m not sure how I feel about adding historic sites. I tend to lean on allowing such things, and if it’s not a priority PLC can always reject it.
- Add wetlands and grasslands.

2. How do you define open areas?

- Not paved. Not heavily wooded.
- Farmlands, pastures, woodlands, etc. protected from poorly designed commercial and residential development. Greenbelts provide excellent visual transitions and relief while providing the needed space and ecology which encourages nutrient uptake from runoff.
- Minimal human habitation.
- Scenic areas created by topography (either flat or rolling) that portray wide swaths of land managed with regard for the environment and culture (includes historic buildings).
- Cropland and non-production agricultural and forest land, bodies of water, savannahs, prairies.
- Lands which are free of development (structures, parking lots). I often tend to think of the term “open areas” as being either without trees, or if there are trees, the area is mowed underneath allowing open access. Example of what I think is an open area: mowed park with open grown oak trees, soccer field or other undeveloped sports areas, grazed pasture, short grass field (mowed at least once a year to keep out the trees), and perhaps a prairie restoration - though that’s a reconstructed natural area.
- Undeveloped open space which can be used for recreation or other outdoor activities, i.e. low quality grass field.

- Open farmland. No fences, no dwellings or buildings, no livestock.
3. Should PLC pursue protection of each type of land (listed above) equally or would you prefer PLC develop a method to prioritize which land type the organization will protect?
- In accordance with LTA Standards & Practices, we must develop a prioritization procedure to determine which lands we will protect.
 - I think all land is valuable. Larger conservation organizations might have the luxury of picking and choosing showcase properties, but I think we need to put the message forward that we are equally interested in the scrubby patches along the railroad sidings and adjacent to industrial areas as well.
 - These small areas might be posing some potential financial burdens, but with community and local government support and continuing education, they can be fantastic assets providing critical habitat.
 - We should try and support existing conservation initiatives. In addition the preservation of traditional farm land is important.
 - I think PLC should create a general list of lands to prioritize during a “conservation movement” but that each locale should identify their priority areas. I would suggest that the PLC board act as a ‘board’ for the Macomb area and serve as a model for surrounding areas by identifying prime targeted land in a 40 mile radius of Macomb.
 - Protect all equally at this time, but redefine/focus after a few years.
 - I think farmland is going to be a lower priority as I think the interest will not be there since farmers don’t see the need to protect farmlands for urban development (which is almost non-existent in our area). I favor developing maps for high priority areas (probably watersheds and perhaps habitat blocks around existing large protected sites) and working to fill in gaps with priority given to those most critical to completing links for habitats. Initially priority will be given to those landowners that contact PLC. PLC needs to determine which of these are in our priority areas as well as other factors.
 - Prioritize.
 - Develop a method to prioritize land type.

4. In your opinion, which type of land is the most important for PLC to protect? 1 is the most important, 5 is the least important.

Natural Areas	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Farmland	4	1	1	2	4	6	5	2
Forests	2	1	1	2	3	4	3	3
Open Areas	3	1	1	2	2	5	4	4
Grassland						2		
Wetland						3	2	

- Open areas are more difficult because they require identification, but tourism agencies could help with this. For example, the Knox County Scenic Drive is a great example of people benefiting the local economy by connecting to their land and culture. Folks involved in that rural tourism event would be strong partners for PLC. PLC should serve as a leader to make linkages between evidences of a “land ethic” that already exist and areas where a land ethic is drastically needed (i.e. fragile habitats, farmlands in critical watershed zones, etc.).
- I assume that forests (above) refer to lesser forests which are not considered “natural areas”.

5. Rank the importance of each of the following for PLC to accomplish during the next 3-5 years. A rating of 1 is most important, a rating of 14 is least important:

Protect wildlife habitat	2	1	1	5	4	2	8	4
Protect wildlife habitat that serves as a buffer around natural areas	3	1	1	2	3	6	3	5
Protect wildlife habitat that serves as a buffer between development and natural areas	4	1	1	1	2	5	2	6
Provide protection of natural areas	1	1	1	4	1	1	1	7
Provide protection of landscape diversity	6	1	1	8	5	8	5	9
Provide enhancement of natural areas	5	1	1	7	6	3	4	8
Provide enhancement of landscape diversity	7	1	1	X	7	7	6	10
Reduce flooding	10	14	1	3	10	13	14	2
Improve water quality	9	1	1	3	9	4	7	1
Protect groundwater recharge areas	8	1	1	3	8	9	9	3
Provide safe food for domestic	11	14	14	6	11	14	10	These tasks in my

consumption								opinion fall under the USDA and the FDA
Provide safe food for foreign consumption	12	14	14	13	12	14	12	
Provide affordable food for domestic consumption	13	14	14	9	13	14	11	
Provide affordable food for foreign consumption	14	14	14	14	14	14	13	

- We can respect and live with natural flooding.
- Note, I'm not sure I agree with the focus on food. It sounds good but it's not a real practical priority from my perspective. These are poor goals to be rating.

Questions about Measuring Success

1. Is it important for the Steering Committee to set measurable goals to evaluate the success of PLC?

Yes	No
XXXXXX	

If yes, what is the most important measure of success to you?

- Acres of Land Protected Permanently.
- Are we operational.
- Membership (indication of public investment in the mission and long-term sustainability of PLC).
- Progress towards securing CEs.
- This is hard to measure but as a representative of the state who deals with protection of natural areas I'd like to see PLC as the leaders in protection of private lands in west-central Illinois. I'd like PLC to be the first group we go to for information on land protection in the area.
- As for something more measurable that's hard to determine until we have a map and list of priority areas. I like to see habitat gaps filled in. I'd like to see less sediment and pollutants entering the headwaters of the La Moine River - improved water quality. I'd like to see a certain number and acreage of sites protected by PLC in high priority areas.
- To have the organization up and running and able to accept conservation easements.

2. How do you think PLC's constituencies will measure the success of PLC?

Acres of Land permanently protected.

a. Public

- I think public education is a critical component.
- Amount of land protected.
- Number of public relation events.
- Favorable/not-favorable opinion based on our relationships with landowners we serve.
- If they know what we do and who we are.

b. Landowners

- When their desires with respect to their land are achieved or are in the process of being achieved.
- Positive experiences with PLC staff either at educational events or in the process of creating an easement.
- CEs.
- Favorable/not-favorable opinion of PLC based on personal relationships maintained with landowners as well as amount of stewardship assistance PLC can provide.
- They have an understanding of what we do and our significance in the area.

c. Funders

- PLC.
- Achievement of the goals we set for a given project to be funded.
- Obtaining outcomes listed in grants.
- Amount of aesthetically pleasing areas we can protect and show off to the public; amount of kids we can educate (more public awareness opportunities), favorable opinion amongst public.
- Can see positive results in PLC having an impact on natural areas and land protection; that PLC is financially solvent and able to hire employees.

d. Government or agency representatives in the PLC service area

- PLC is seen as a participant/partner in public service and education and not a drain on its income.
- Number of easements held by PLC.
- Protection of habitats.
- Favorable if PLC is able to reach goals of protecting conservation lands in high priority areas identified by these agencies. As a state government employee I will consider the group successful if their work adds to/compliments what I'm doing on the landscape.
- PLC is able to get up and running and accomplish the mission; they have confidence in PLC to recommend us to landowners.

Questions about Strategic Planning

1. What are the three biggest issues that PLC needs to address in the upcoming strategic planning?
 - How to get the word out about what a land trust does.
 - Funding
 - Be sure that we have all the legal and ethical ducks lined up.
 - I think we need your help on properly identifying that. I trust your judgment.
 - Need to spread the word about the need for land conservation and the options available.
 - Whether our real goal is to hold easements or to promote development of a society that wants to take responsibility for natural resource protection/management.
 - How PLC will look and function as an organization in the immediate future.
 - How PLC-Macomb will balance development as an organization of broad geography with development of skills/knowledge in actually facilitating and holding easements.
 - Where do we want to go?
 - How are we going to get there?
 - Know when we do.
 - Outline/Guidelines of how we work and what we do including how we accept easements.
 - Define board responsibilities, etc.
 - Determine how to get PLC off ground and to raise funds and accept easements.
 - Fundraising.
 - Promotion/PR.
 - Setting/Mapping priority area(s).

2. What one piece of information would be most useful and important as input into strategic planning from each of these groups?
 - a. Funders
 - What their goals are (% focused on education vs. % focused on actual land in protection)
 - Organizational capacity.
 - What do potential funders feel would be the most important role for PLC in our area and how would they measure success?
 - Their opinion of PLC and how we can improve.

 - b. Businesses located in PLC's service area
 - Which businesses are the largest measured by worth, and which ones are locally or regionally owned.
 - How to help them.
 - How can PLC help to promote tourism and economic growth through land preservation?
 - What does it take of them to provide funding (grant opportunities available).

c. Other stakeholders

- What skills/strategies are already in use by IIRA, RC&D, U of I Extension relative to “communities of land”.
- What is in it for them.
- From state government, NGOs, etc. we need to gather information on land protection strategies/plans for our area in order to incorporate this into the development of priority areas.
- What would it take for the public at large to see PLC as a successful organization that would make people want to provide volunteer help/funds.

3. Imagine the Strategic Plan is completed. Steering committee members are saying that strategic planning was highly effective and successful. What would have to happen for this to be true?

- Many voices were heard and ideas were grouped into different arenas so that simultaneous “areas that need development” can be identified rather than seeing things as a single line of priorities.
- Also categorization of ideas into different “phases” of development.
- Paralleling “ideas/goals” with organizational infrastructure necessary to implement the ideas/goals.
- A persistent effort by the facilitator to put our discussions in context—i.e. all the questions at the beginning about trends and other local organizations, opportunities, etc. i.e. a focus on collaboration with others rather than a “go it alone” organization with our own little vision. (Perhaps key individuals from other institutions should be brought in to help us articulate, envision, and define our role as others see it).
- A persistent effort by the facilitator to help us focus on the impact we want to make rather than the “modes” by which we want to do it. i.e. impact vs. activity.
- Total participation and commitment from them.
- Committee members would agree that all the basics have been addressed and there is a clear consensus on what to do next.
- PLC is able and ready to accept conservation easements.
- Community knows what PLC does and what conservation easements are.
- Most importantly we will have developed a public relations and fund raising plan with goals that are achievable, easy to follow and motivate people to want to support and promote PLC.
- Enlist parcels of land – be it small areas or complete farms into the PLC program.

Your Role as a Steering Committee Member

1. How would you rate your overall satisfaction with your participation as a member of the Steering Committee?

1	2	3	4
		XX	XXXXX

- I am highly satisfied. Western Illinois is a beautiful part of the Midwest and is critical habitat for many migrating animal species. It's an honor to be part of this group.
- Some of us have wanted this for more than 10 years now.

2. What do you enjoy most in your involvement with PLC?

- Giving local landowners an option for protecting their land. Landowner contact.
- It's a fantastic opportunity to learn. I also enjoy the personalities; most are people who live and work in different circle than mine.
- Commitment of those involved.
- They haven't kicked me off despite relatively few tangible contributions from me. They are open and accepting of my participation, despite few credentials. I am very passionate about the link between people and the land, but have been slightly too tied up to put too much effort into the group. I am glad to have the opportunity to participate in any way I can and expect to be able to be more helpful soon. I also really enjoy the level of professionalism at the meetings. They are efficient, and the organization makes progress because of the efforts of several individuals, with some minor contributions from others.
- Working with people.
- Camaraderie, the hope we can achieve the goal of creating a land trust for west-central Illinois for the protection of natural areas, wildlife habitat and open space.
- The feeling that we are going to make this happen and PLC is moving forward towards the goal of having a functional land trust in west-central Illinois.
- This is a new venture for me. I am not sure what I expect to happen.

3. What is the least satisfying aspect of your involvement with PLC?

- Having to face the reality of fundraising.
- I enjoy my participation thoroughly.
- None.
- That I haven't been able to invest more time in contributing to the group. Either by being more educated on the easement process or land trusts in general. However, I'm beginning to feel like the actual easement process/facilitation is not where I will best serve but rather in membership development and education and networking.
- Not spending enough time to do the best I can.
- Driving 2 hours round-trip to meeting and juggling work time and time with our 1.5 year old son.
- Filling out forms like this.

4. When asked about your affiliation with the PLC what specifically do you share?

- We are starting a land trust and are a division of Prairie Hills RC&D.

- We are a start up and have received some seed money to help us get going. We need a land trust to provide landowners with a preservation options.
- My interest in providing this option for our region.
- I serve on the board.
- Everything.
- What PLC is, purpose, hopes, dreams aspirations for the organization.
- So far I'm not asked yet but I do share anyway. Right now I let potential stakeholders know that we are in the process of forming a land trust for west-central Illinois that we will be able to provide a service for landowners who want to protect their land but whose land doesn't currently qualify for any of the state programs and is of little or no interest to NGOs outside the region.

5. Complete the following thought: "To best utilize my expertise, PLC should....

- Allow me to use my negotiation skills with landowner contact.
- Give me tangible assignments to bring to the meetings.
- Ask for help.
- Feel free to continue to call on me for my expertise in conservation easements, state programs, landowner contacts, knowledge of biological communities, land stewardship, etc.
- Pay me - ha!
- I can provide a link between different environmental organizations. I have excellent computer and photography skills. I'm good at seeing the big picture.

6. To be a more effective Steering Committee member for PLC, I need....

- I would like to take advantage of some of the conferences to attend a variety of workshops and informational sessions. I can always use more time in my life!
- More training in the legal and financial aspects of CEs. Also, fundraising.
- More information on financial and legal obligations.
- More training in the use of conservation easements.
- More information on the vision of the steering board and how I fit in that vision.
- More training in holding public meetings, running educational campaigns, and agricultural land assessment.
- More information on fund raising.
- More training in land trust operations.
- More training in land trusts, legal aspects, fun raising, public relations.
- More time in my life.

Summary of Stakeholder Conversations

Background Information

Prairie Land Conservancy steering committee provided names of several “stakeholders” residing and/or working throughout the organization’s ten county service area that they thought would be important to contact as part of the strategic planning process. Interview times were scheduled and MAYES | WILSON & ASSOCIATES, LLC principals conducted interviews via phone. Depending on each stakeholder’s preference or availability of email communication, questionnaires were provided prior to the interview. The following is a compilation of stakeholder responses.

Environmental Scan

In discussions about immediate and future trends that will impact Prairie Land Conservancy’s work, individuals focused on current trends. The following trends were identified.

Deer hunting. The increase of this popular activity is having several impacts:

- Increased hunting leasing by individuals from out of state or other parts of Illinois
- Selling of land for hunting purposes, by individuals from out of state or other parts of Illinois
- Land is being purchased by in state and out of state individuals; many are from the southeast United States. Buyers are frequently professionals who live in the city and/or suburbs of their home state. Most are absentee landowners and come to the property strictly for hunting.
- Hunting is driving up price of land (hunting land).

Growth of “outfitters” industry. An outgrowth of the popularity of hunting is outfitters—companies to “service” hunters. Outfitters may lease land, may “aggregate” leases (lease from several people in order to create a large tract of land for hunting) or purchase lands for hunting. They organize the hunt and provide transportation and so forth for the hunter.

Confinement agriculture. Production of animals for consumption in confinement, i.e. buildings. Primarily hogs, also cattle, some poultry. A resulting impact will be contamination of watershed.

Interstate 336

Lack of development pressure. Stakeholders generally do not see development pressure in the area. The exception is in the area outside the city limits of Macomb, IL.

Zoning. Zoning is generally perceived as telling someone what they can not do. Stakeholders generally believe people do not understand the positive value of zoning because people do not see their landscape or way of life threatened by development (because of little development pressure).

Respondents were asked if there recent events that will impact the organization's work?

No specific events that would impact the organizations work were mentioned by any stakeholder. Generalize comments included: PLC should refer to recently completed plans; the area is very conservative and rural and residents don't want anyone to tell them what to do—many people can't see beyond present time (therefore its difficult for them to anticipate that the landscape will change.

In reply to, "Are there other conservation groups that may perceive PLC to be a competitor?"

Respondents indicated that PLC would be different from other conservation groups in the area - more local (than, for example The Nature Conservancy) and different from the government agencies. *Respondents suggested PLC should seek collaboration with other groups when possible. Specific groups mentioned were Audubon, the University and historical, bike/walk/outdoor recreation enthusiasts.*

Vision of the Future

Interviews also provided the opportunity for stakeholders to describe what the PLC service area looks like if PLC is successful and the most important thing the steering committee can do to advance their goals of land protections.

It was difficult for participants to articulate what the service area would look like if PLC is successful. Comments included no logging; pastureland and that "something just needs to be done". In general conversation however, people were articulate about liking the landscape of the area, the farming, the river areas and rural feel.

Respondents simply said PLC should conserve land; have conservation easements to advance their goals.

PLC's Role in the Community

Stakeholders provided the following comments about PLC's role in its service area:

Hold conservation easements and protect land, natural areas; being a private non-profit conservation group in this area; filling the gaps of what the state isn't doing; provide an alternative to development/loss of farmland. Stakeholders said landowners, county boards (influence zoning and plans for the future) and other local groups were the three most important segments of the community, the PLC must engage to protect lands. The perceived county loss of revenue (from conserved lands) and threat of hunting/hunt leasing, people being uninformed about conservation options, farm family future generational change and perceived lack of threat from development/land use change, lack of zoning were mentioned as threats to land conservation.