



2021–2023  
Strategic Roadmap

## Genesis of this Strategic Roadmap

During the fall of 2020, the California Landscape Stewardship Network (CA Network) Steering Committee undertook a process to review Network successes, to assess current needs and opportunities, and to chart a course forward. The Steering Committee relied on several sources for candid feedback and new ideas, including:

- targeted interviews with Steering Committee members and key CA Network partners/advisers,
- a Network-wide participants survey, and
- in-depth discussions among the Steering Committee on key issues.

What we heard was agreement that there are specific areas where the CA Network has been successful as well as opportunities for evolution or growth. One of the key findings was that the CA Network does not act like a formal organization, but rather serves as a platform for people to work together in new ways. Because it works on emergent needs and opportunities, and remains highly adaptive and constantly in process, it needs a “strategic roadmap” rather than a traditional strategic plan. This document provides that roadmap though guidance on how to maintain Network strengths and ways to sustain its ongoing and successful journey.

We consider this strategic roadmap to be a living document, and welcome questions, feedback, and further insights from our community of practice and collaborators. Please direct these communications to Devin Landry, CA Network Coordinator, at [dlandry@parksconservancy.org](mailto:dlandry@parksconservancy.org).

## Acknowledgments

Many thanks to those who shared their time and thoughtful insights during interviews throughout this process, and to the current CA Network Steering Committee members who contributed to the vision laid out in this document.

Special thanks to Gary Knoblock for graciously volunteering his time to facilitate the strategic roadmap process, and for the creation of this document.

## Contents

Genesis of this Strategic Roadmap .....	2
Acknowledgments .....	2
Executive Summary of Focal Areas for 2021 – 2023 .....	4
Focal Areas: Peer Exchange & Capacity Building.....	4
Focal Area: Systems Solutions .....	4
Focal Area: Building the Landscape Stewardship Movement .....	5
Focal Area: Sustaining the CA Network .....	5
Part I: The CA Network’s Roles and Four Focal Areas .....	6
CA Network Roles .....	7
Four CA Network Focal Areas .....	7
Peer Exchange & Capacity Building .....	7
Systems Solutions .....	7
Building the Landscape Stewardship Movement .....	7
Sustaining the CA Network .....	8
Part II: Strategic Growth Opportunities.....	8
Engage More People & Unlock More Ideas.....	8
Build CA Network & Steering Committee Capacity .....	10
Advance the Movement Towards a Landscape Approach to Stewardship.....	11
Refine the CA Network’s Role in Systems Solutions and Policy Work .....	11

## Executive Summary of Focal Areas for 2021 – 2023

The following strategic areas will be where the CA Network focuses its efforts between 2021 and 2023. However, this priorities list is not exhaustive, and the Network will continue to be adaptive and responsive to the needs of its participants, as well as to emerging issues and opportunities.

It is also important to recognize that the CA Network has already built tremendous momentum around the specific objectives described below. In a short time, the Network has increased capacity for collaboration and systems-level thinking. It has also built credibility as a statewide convener of stewardship practitioners working towards pragmatic solutions at scale. In our surveys, this credibility was perceived as one of the Network's greatest assets and there was widespread agreement that we should prioritize our role as a convener over the next several years.

### Focal Areas: Peer Exchange & Capacity Building

#### Reinstitute in-person convenings, forums, and peer exchange post-pandemic

CA Network participant survey results suggest that convenings and peer exchange are widely viewed as the Network's heart and the foundation of its success. The next steps are to determine what form convenings take post-COVID and how to financially sustain this work.

#### Engage more people and unlock more ideas

The CA Network is actively exploring ways to engage a) more people and communities representing diverse stewardship voices and activities, including California's tribes and bands, private working lands, sustainable recreation, and more, b) a broader range of racially/culturally/ethnically diverse participants, and c) a wider suite of southern California and Central Valley partnerships.

#### Rollout collaborative leadership training

Developing the work of the [Collaborative Leadership Roundtable](#) into a multi-faceted training program, delivered by a cadre of instructors will help build capacity among practitioners to craft collaborative, durable solutions to 21<sup>st</sup> century conservation challenges.

### Focal Area: Systems Solutions

#### Implement *Cutting Green Tape*

The coming years will offer unique opportunities to provide leadership and engagement to help implement the initial recommendations in the [Cutting Green Tape](#) report, which is focused on improving regulatory processes for beneficial restoration actions. The CA Network will also provide thought leadership on the next phase, which will look at ways to improve how public funding systems can support landscape stewardship.

### Identify additional systems solutions

---

The Steering Committee will collaborate with CA Network participants to determine future needs for systems solutions (e.g., data sharing, etc.) to prioritize in addition to *Cutting Green Tape*.

### Engage on priority policy areas

---

The CA Network remains a non-advocacy group that recognizes how critical it is to have state policies that reflect the values, principles, and actions of cross-boundary collaboration. The Network will continue to explore policy areas that can improve regional designations to better facilitate meeting statewide goals on climate change and biodiversity, elevate and connect networks to help solve cross-boundary environmental challenges, and implement relevant statewide plans at a landscape scale.

## Focal Area: Building the Landscape Stewardship Movement

### Continue to actively support the paradigm shift toward large landscape stewardship within the conservation field

---

Advancing a shared understanding of the shift underway towards landscape-scale stewardship will require clearly articulating the core principles that demonstrate the value and relevance of stewardship to meet today's conservation challenges. The CA Network will continue to focus on building relationships with practitioners, funders, policymakers, and other conservation stakeholders to promote a landscape-stewardship approach.

### Continue to invite conversations to support movement building beyond our community of practice

---

The CA Network will continue pursuing connections with sectors and audiences outside of the historical milieu of conservation practitioners, policymakers, and advocates. The goal will be to solidify relationships with change actors in sectors such as public health, youth education and advocacy, transportation and infrastructure, etc. The CA Network will begin identifying synergies with these sectors as well as ways to foster a more holistic approach to shared stewardship of our communities and landscapes through this broader network.

### Implement "Stewardship.2021" roundtables and forums

---

Through a sequential series of gatherings held under the umbrella of *Stewardship.2021*, the CA Network aims to chart a path forward that catalyzes the practice of landscape stewardship at the necessary scale. We will use what we learn to articulate a roadmap for continuing to build this movement through 2022 and 2023.

## Focal Area: Sustaining the CA Network

### Enhance network capacity

---

The CA Network's ambitious scope of work has led us to the inevitable question of how to sustain its high level of activity. The Network will expand the Steering Committee by four members in 2021 to both

increase our capacity and diversify the group’s membership. In 2021 and 2022, we will also develop a business plan for financial sustainability.

### Maintain flexibility

Throughout its evolution over the next few years, the CA Network wants to continue to be nimble and adaptable and not become too formal or bureaucratic. This means creating the mechanisms for our diverse participants to be and stay engaged, while not creating too many formal processes that can hamper our ability to be responsive to opportunities and needs.

### Explore a “regional hub” model

In 2021 and 2022, the CA Network will look at models that allow for greater exchange with its growing body of participants, offer a mechanism for them to engage with the Steering Committee, and connect regions to relevant state-level interests and goals.

## Part I: The CA Network’s Roles and Four Focal Areas

The CA Network’s core purpose is to provide a platform for landscape stewardship practitioners to come together to share expertise, meet shared challenges, and identify opportunities. Network participants surveyed as a part of creating this strategic roadmap noted that the approach we take of convening people, facilitating conversations, and strategically working on the issues that emerge is the Network’s greatest asset. This operating model can be represented in the following way:



Surveys also revealed that there is broad support for the CA Network’s current approach to growing the practice of landscape stewardship by:

- identifying and understanding issues/opportunities that have collective benefit to land stewardship networks and organizational partners;
- facilitating convenings and roundtables to support peer exchange and solve specific issues;
- sharing information with other practitioners, policymakers, and funders;
- coordinating discussions with regional and state leadership as well as affiliate organizations; and
- providing strategic thinking and analysis on policy initiatives and legislative processes so that they may better reflect landscape-scale stewardship values and needs.

The following sections describe what the CA Network sees as its unique value proposition, its roles within the broader field of landscape stewardship, and the four focal areas that will drive future activities. Many of these are current Network priorities that were identified during the assessment

phase as those that have the greatest impact and so should be continued. Looking ahead through 2023, we will continue to filter our work through these guiding principles.

## CA Network Roles

The roles listed below serve as touchstones to guide where the CA Network will focus its energy.

1. Focus on **on-the-ground stewardship** of natural resources in a way that holistically includes human communities
2. **Work at scale** across landscapes, jurisdictions, and sectors
3. Convene and connect regional partnerships, **focused on relationships**, to build a statewide community of land stewardship practitioners and allies
4. Leverage a **culture of collaboration and convening power** to motivate and strengthen relationships
5. **Build capacity** for partners to create integrated strategies and forge agreements across boundaries
6. Support and advance **shared cross-boundary practices** that increase ecosystem resilience
7. Build **collaborative leadership skills**
8. Identify and **solve obstacles** to large landscape stewardship
9. **Tie together regional conversations and bridge regional and state plans** through new relationships among state policymakers, regions, and land managers
10. **Serve as a statewide bridge** between policymakers and stewardship practitioners

## Four CA Network Focal Areas

The CA Network will focus its work within four areas (described in more detail in the Executive Summary at the beginning of this document):

### Peer Exchange & Capacity Building

- Reinstitute in-person convenings, forums, and peer exchange post-pandemic
- Engage more people and unlock more ideas
- Rollout collaborative leadership training

### Systems Solutions

- Implement *Cutting Green Tape*
- Identify additional systems solutions (in addition to *Cutting Green Tape*)
- Engage on priority policy areas (while remaining a non-advocacy group)

### Building the Landscape Stewardship Movement

- Continue to actively support the paradigm shift toward large landscape stewardship within the conservation field

- Continue to invite conversations to support movement building beyond our community of practice
- Implement “Stewardship.2021” roundtables and forums

### Sustaining the CA Network

- Enhance network capacity
- Maintain flexibility
- Explore a “regional hub” model

## Part II: Strategic Growth Opportunities

Participant surveys described how the CA Network has initially succeeded through the processes and roles identified in Part I. They also identified the four goals described below for how the Network should continue to develop over the next few years. These goals are directly related to the four focal areas in Part I, and spotlight opportunities for growth within each one. The goals are to:

- I. Engage more people & unlock more ideas
- II. Build CA Network & Steering Committee capacity
- III. Advance the movement towards a landscape approach to stewardship
- IV. Refine the CA Network’s Role in Systems Solutions and Policy Work

Each of these are discussed in more detail below, including specific objectives to meet these goals.

### Engage More People & Unlock More Ideas

Inclusivity is a core value of the CA Network; we believe everyone is a steward. By including diverse perspectives, we open up the possibility for richer and more equitable solutions to common challenges and a help nurture a shared investment in this work.

In the next three years, the CA Network seeks to engage:

- more people and communities representing diverse stewardship voices and activities, including California’s tribes and bands, private working lands, sustainable recreation, and more;
- a broader range of racially/culturally/ethnically diverse participants; and
- a wider suite of southern California and Central Valley partnerships.

To do this authentically, the Network will explore shared needs, challenges, and opportunities to find where it makes sense to work together. The formation of the Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Roundtable is a first step in formalizing this process and will help identify where and how to engage and empower broader perspectives. In addition, the following strategic objectives emerged to engage more people and unlock more ideas.



### **Objective: Engage the diversity of the current people and partnerships within the CA Network more fully**

---

The CA Network can improve its current structures to better engage participants though:

- A. Continual learning about intersectional environmentalism and related issues that inform the broader context of how conservation and stewardship can promote healthier, more equitable, and more just societies
- B. Bringing a DEI lens to all Network efforts
- C. Demonstrating a commitment to broadening participation and peer exchange by:
  - Actively engaging diverse participants and diverse land stewardship representatives in Working Groups
  - Creating forums specific to DEI and diverse landowner issues
  - Integrating broad perspectives and priorities to represent the diversity of collaborative action across the state into Network convenings

### **Objective: Reach out to regional and statewide collaboratives to explore shared interests**

---

While continuing to strengthen connectivity with current CA Network participants, the Steering Committee will explore engaging individuals and groups by:

- A. Reaching out to regional collaboratives and networks across the state to explore shared interests
- B. Identifying potential stewardship partners, such as
  - California Tribes and Indigenous-led collaboratives and networks
  - Private landowners and working-lands associations
  - Sustainable recreation groups
  - Collaboratives and networks promoting equitable access to public lands

### **Objective: Explore changing the current Steering Committee structure and creating other committees to include more cultural diversity and additional kinds of landowners/land uses**

---

The Steering Committee will explore establishing new structures to engage a broader range of voices by:

- A. Exploring the idea of an "advisory committee" of diverse stewardship types to better include their perspectives and create more regular connection points.
- B. Increasing Steering Committee membership by strategically adding new representatives from other sectors and/or individuals who can bring broader cultural representation and diversity

## Build CA Network & Steering Committee Capacity

Currently, CA Network goals are accomplished by its Steering Committee, Working Groups, and Roundtables and through the backbone organization/Coordinator role as follows.

- The Steering Committee oversees the Network’s strategic direction and provides leadership and guidance.
- The Working Group and Roundtables take on specific topics or challenges (e.g., funding/legislation, environmental permitting and compliance, collaborative leadership training) and may form, evolve, and/or disband over time as needed.
- Currently there is a backbone organization (Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy), Coordinator (Devin Landry – funded through 2022/23), and overall facilitation/leadership from Sharon Farrell.

CA Network decisions are not centralized at the Steering Committee, as Working Groups also make decisions and seek feedback as needed. During this strategic roadmap process, the Steering Committee affirmed this model is working well. The role of the backbone organization and Coordinator were also identified as critical. Despite the fact that the current structure spreads the work across a broad set of participants, we are taking on more work as we build credibility and broaden and deepen statewide connectivity. There is an ongoing need to find the capacity to sustain this high level of activity, especially when most participants are taking this work on in addition to their regular jobs.

Looking ahead, there are three key objectives to build and sustain Network capacity.

### Objective: Expand the size of the Steering Committee

---

The CA Network will expand the Steering Committee by four members in 2021 to both increase our capacity and diversify the group’s membership.

### Objective: Develop a business plan

---

In 2021 and 2022, the CA Network Steering Committee will delve into sustainable business models to support its four focal areas. This effort will assess the infrastructure and capacity (human and financial) needed to sustain the Network, the resources and bandwidth required to take on new things, and how to build financial sustainability. An assessment of other networks’ business models may help inform this work and could also benefit other networks.

### Objective: Explore a “regional hub” model

---

In 2021 and 2022, the CA Network will look at models that allow for greater exchange with its growing body of participants, offer a mechanism for them to engage with the Steering Committee, and connect regions to relevant state-level interests and goals. A key objective for 2021 is to develop a database that allows Steering Committee members to identify and engage collaboratives by geography, sector, and areas of focus.

## Advance the Movement Towards a Landscape Approach to Stewardship

The CA Network will continue to support the movement towards landscape stewardship within our field by articulating its value to funders, policymakers, and other key stakeholders; sharing our successes and lessons learned; fostering stronger connections with other sectors and interests; and through Network-wide communications.

### **Objective: Continue to actively support the paradigm shift toward large landscape stewardship within the conservation field**

Advancing a shared understanding of the shift underway towards landscape-scale stewardship will require clearly articulating the core principles that demonstrate the value and relevance of stewardship to meet today's conservation challenges. The CA Network will continue to focus on building relationships with practitioners, funders, policymakers, and other conservation stakeholders to promote a landscape-stewardship approach.

### **Objective: Continue to engage and invite conversations to support movement building beyond our community of practice**

The CA Network will continue pursuing connections with sectors and audiences outside of the historical milieu of conservation practitioners, policymakers, and advocates. The goal will be to solidify relationships with change actors in sectors such as public health, youth education and advocacy, transportation and infrastructure, etc. The CA Network will begin identifying synergies with these sectors as well as ways to foster a more holistic approach to shared stewardship of our communities and landscapes through this broader network.

### **Objective: Implement learnings from “Stewardship.2021” Roundtables and Forums**

Through a sequential series of gatherings held under the umbrella of Stewardship.2021, the CA Network aims to chart a path forward that catalyzes the practice of landscape stewardship at the necessary scale. We will use what we learn to articulate a roadmap for continuing to build this movement through 2022 and 2023.

## Refine the CA Network's Role in Systems Solutions and Policy Work

Statewide and regional policies and systems that guide planning, delivery, and support for stewardship are what make this work possible. The CA Network remains a non-advocacy group, while seeing a need for the state's policies to better reflect landscape stewardship values and activities. The Network has also built credibility as a statewide convener of stewardship practitioners working towards pragmatic solutions at scale. We will continue to build upon these areas within two parallel tracks.

1. **Major initiatives** – The CA Network has dedicated significant time and resources to the emerging systems change priorities below.

The CA Network achieved a major policy success on November 30, 2020 with the release of [Cutting Green Tape: Regulatory Efficiencies for a Resilient Environment](#), which provides a set of recommendations to improve regulatory processes for projects that benefit the environment. The Network is working closely with the California Natural Resources Agency (which has *made Cutting Green Tape* a signature initiative) to increase the pace and scale of ecological restoration and stewardship. The Steering Committee also sees this initiative as an entryway to further explore process and systems change opportunities across California.

#### **Objective: Implement *Cutting Green Tape***

---

The coming years will offer unique opportunities to provide leadership and ongoing engagement to help implement the initial recommendations in the *Cutting Green Tape* report. The CA Network will also provide thought leadership on the next phase, which will look at ways to improve how public funding systems can support landscape stewardship.

#### **Objective: Identify additional systems solutions**

---

The Steering Committee will collaborate with CA Network participants to determine future needs for systems solutions (e.g., data sharing, etc.) to prioritize in addition to *Cutting Green Tape*.

2. **Ongoing engagement state policy engagement**– The [Policy and Funding Working Group](#) tracks issues and identifies legislative measures and/or policies that support cross-boundary stewardship. They share this information with other organizations and regional networks to use in line with their specific values, missions, and priorities.

#### **Objective: Engage on priority policy areas**

---

The CA Network remains a non-advocacy group that recognizes how critical it is to have state policies that reflect the values, principles, and actions of cross-boundary collaboration. The Network will continue to explore policy areas that can improve regional designations to better facilitate meeting statewide goals on climate change and biodiversity, elevate and connect networks to help solve cross-boundary environmental challenges, and implement relevant statewide plans at a landscape scale.