



Strategic Roadmap 2024 – 2026



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About the CLSN

The California Landscape Stewardship Network (CLSN, the Network) was established in 2016 by six regional, cross-boundary collaboratives from across the state. Its formation was spurred by the growing need for a “network of networks” that could coordinate efforts to increase the pace and scale of this work. The CLSN now engages with over 30 diverse regional collaboratives and dozens of organizations operating at the intersection of social, ecological, and economic challenges related to land and water stewardship.

CLSN participants work together to effect change through building broader awareness of the benefits of collaborative stewardship; mainstreaming the values, principles, and practices of partnership-based, landscape-scale approaches; exploring policy and funding opportunities; and seeking ways to better integrate the principles of justice and equity into this work. We pursue these goals through facilitating peer-to-peer learning, providing forums for exploring solutions to systemic barriers inhibiting boundary-spanning action, and fostering trusting relationships with partners to do more, together.

Executive Summary

From 2024 to 2026, the CLSN will focus its efforts on the three areas summarized here. These multi-faceted, interrelated, and emergent topics build upon our strengths while allowing us to continue to be nimble and adaptive to opportunities and needs that arise from our community of practice.

Focus: Connecting collaborative practitioners in ways that inform, equip, and empower

The CLSN will regularly organize virtual and in-person convenings to share best available practices, models, and insights into the unique challenges of working in partnerships. These will include annual statewide convenings, peer exchange among those coordinating regional collaboratives, and topic-based workshops. Rich discussions on a variety of topics will come from the collective experience of the members of the 30+ collaboratives that participate in the CLSN, including federal, state, and Tribal governments, as well as community-based organizations, nonprofits, and private landowners.

- **Engage more people who hold essential perspectives on stewardship.** We will continue to seek more sectors and communities of people— especially Tribes and those engaged in working lands—to ensure that our work is representative of a diversity of stewardship activities, needs, and opportunities.
- **Create in-person peer exchange opportunities within and across regions.** The CLSN will continue to meet the need expressed by regional collaboratives to connect and learn from each other about how to harness the power of partnerships to get this work done.
- **Maintain a strong virtual presence to connect our community of practice.** Over the last several years, the CLSN and the field at large have seen the benefit of connecting practitioners with well-facilitated, informative, and inspiring webinars, workshops, and other virtual programming. We will continue to offer virtual events that inform, equip, and empower practitioners.

Focus: Advancing solutions to systemic barriers that limit collaborative stewardship action

The CLSN will identify ways to shift paradigms in ways that soften barriers to and increase capacity for landscape-scale collaboration as well as provide research-based resources that support the evolution of collaborative stewardship policy and practice.

- **Continue to build the culture of Cutting Green Tape.** To manage for healthy, functioning ecosystems in the face of the climate crisis, the CLSN will continue facilitating statewide

efforts that advance restoration and increase regulatory efficiencies, amplifying the message that *inaction is the greatest risk* and that environmental protection measures should not prevent beneficial restoration work.

- **Expand understanding of systems-level workforce development challenges and offer solutions for a robust and well-supported stewardship workforce.** The immense challenge of the climate crisis is exacerbated by the systemic challenges that have created a labor shortage across the environmental sector. These include insufficient pathways for entry, challenges retaining qualified staff, difficulty offering mentorship and individual growth in the field, and a lack of funding streams that support ongoing stewardship. The CLSN is launching an effort to better understand how to help expand the stewardship workforce, using values-based practices that consider the well-being of workers alongside that of the environment.

Focus: Supporting the landscape stewardship movement in a way that leads with equity, justice, and inclusion

The CLSN will engage with our community of practice with a spirit of allyship as well as with resources to help promote equity, justice, and inclusion, and will foster a culture of joy in this work by acknowledging where we are healing severed connections.

- **Tell the story of collaborative, cross-boundary stewardship in all its diversity.** The Network will continue aggregating the experiences of practitioners across the state and beyond through its *Stories of Stewardship* StoryMap.
- **Transfer community organizing principles and frameworks to the context of building and sustaining regional multi-stakeholder collaboratives.** Practitioner feedback since the rollout of the JEDI Roundtable's *Mycelium Map* has emphasized the need for deeper skillsets for fostering trust, establishing authentic partner relationships, and supporting stewardship approaches that revitalize communities while pursuing ecologically beneficial outcomes. As a continuation of the *Mycelium Map*, the JEDI Roundtable will develop additional resources to support collaboratives' outreach and relationship-building efforts.

Part I: CLSN Value Proposition & Focal Areas

Why a Network: The CLSN's Value Proposition & Impact

The Network seeks to accelerate the pace, scale, and quality of collaborative, cross-boundary stewardship to increase ecological and community health. This is driven by the fundamental belief that collaborative approaches are essential to delivering better outcomes for California.

We achieve this through:

- addressing systemic social and ecological challenges,
- increasing collaborative capacity and funding,
- building trust and relationships among a broad range of practitioners,
- and fostering inclusive peer learning and exchange.

The Network's core functions include creating opportunities for connection and peer exchange and developing solutions to landscape stewardship barriers (e.g., policy and funding, permitting and compliance, capacity building, etc.).

As a statewide network, we can focus broadly on systems-level solutions and a collaborative, landscape-scale approach rather than on a specific place, stewardship practice, or project. **We are therefore defined by human connectivity, shared values, and common purposes.**

This unique perspective allows us to bring practitioners, cross-sector collaboratives, and state agencies and leaders together to **share expertise, meet common challenges, identify collective opportunities, and reduce systemic barriers.** We also **create and share a variety of publications, policy guidance, and technical guidance.**

We provide the resources, process design, and skilled facilitation that enables collaborative solutions and movement-building opportunities to emerge. By strategically bringing people together, we catalyze creative thinking, co-create new solutions, and facilitate collective action. From this, we can also develop and implement specific ideas that directly benefit those doing landscape-scale stewardship.

Our unique niche allows us to **inform and shape state-level discourse and systems.** We also work in partnership with national and international stewardship networks. These connections help **accelerate scalable solutions to critical landscape stewardship challenges** that not only benefit California, but the entire field of practice and the ecosystems and communities that we serve.

The Network's **three focal areas**—

- **Connecting collaborative practitioners in ways that inform, equip, and empower;**

- Advancing solutions to systemic barriers that limit collaborative stewardship action;
- Supporting the landscape stewardship movement in a way that leads with equity, justice, and inclusion—

will help us realize our value proposition over the next three years. Specific objectives and activities under each focal area are detailed in the following section.

The CLSN provides the venue to share challenges and successes of getting landscape stewardship projects done, listens, and then moves forward to figure out ways to solve the challenges.

– Network Participant –

Part II: Detailed Strategic Objectives

The following strategic objectives and lines of inquiry are organized by focal area.

These objectives emerged through interviews with collaborative coordinators and network surveys and will guide the CLSN's strategic efforts deliver on its value proposition within each focal area. As with previous roadmaps, both solutions to these challenges as well as questions to explore further are also described here.

It is important to note that the work of the JEDI and Workforce Empowerment roundtables touch upon many activities beyond those where they are specifically named. Close coordination with the Steering Committee will help determine how to effectively connect across focal areas and implement the activities described here.

Connecting Collaborative Practitioners

1. Expand our ability to connect, inform, equip, and empower practitioners working in support of cross-boundary collaboration.

- a. Facilitate intra- and inter-regional site visits to share different partnership structures and on-the-ground stewardship outcomes driven by collaborative approaches.
- b. Host a “Coordinators’ Day” immediately before the CLSN annual statewide convening to strengthen relationships among those playing partnership backbone support roles, share updates on interesting opportunities, and prioritize actions that can deepen collaboration within and among regions.
- c. Continue identifying regional, cross-boundary partnerships in California and invite their participation. These include:
 - i. Multi-stakeholder collaboratives serving a geographic area (e.g., watershed, forest unit, coastal region, etc.).
 - ii. Conservation organizations that enact partnership-based approaches and often entail networked structures to work at scale (e.g., the California Association of Resource Conservation Districts, California Council of Land Trusts, Migratory Bird Joint Ventures, Biosphere Regions, etc.).
 - iii. Indigenous-led networks that pursue stewardship outcomes in concert with broader goals related to expressing and sustaining culture, tradition, and sovereignty.

2. Evolve the CLSN statewide convening model to mirror the growing community of practice in California, while retaining the intimacy and impact of previous gatherings.

- a. Explore ways that the CLSN Steering Committee can evolve its convening model such as:
 - i. Securing support for convening essentials (e.g., travel, lodging, and food), including public agency funding to bolster CLSN activities that help meet statewide priorities.
 - ii. Issuing adequate honoraria to participants who would otherwise face barriers to participating in Network events.
 - iii. Increase regional and state agency participation to help connect local priorities to larger-scale efforts.
 - iv. Maximize our ability to deliver in-person connections and relationship-building, something that the majority of CLSN participants identify as the Network's key value-add.

3. Leverage relationships and connectivity at scale to deliver meaningful virtual programming.

- a. In partnership with others, deliver informative virtual programming related to the CLSN's JEDI efforts; regulatory efficiencies to advance restoration and other policy priority areas; better practices for meeting biodiversity, climate resilience, and landscape connectivity goals; and the latest research on the practice and performance of cross-boundary collaboration.

Advancing Solutions to Systemic Barriers

1. Advance restoration and mainstream Cutting Green Tape (CGT).

- a. Continue facilitating interagency convenings to increase the uptake of CGT tools and improve coordination for efficient, consistent permitting of beneficial restoration work.
- b. Leverage partnerships to broaden awareness of CGT within local governments and among attorneys who interact with stewardship practitioners.
- c. Explore where efficiencies can be gained that increase the pace and scale of fire and other environmentally beneficial forest treatments.

2. *Expand our understanding of key systemic barriers to and recommendations for empowering a stewardship workforce.*
 - a. Deliver a systems map that illustrates the key barriers to, and offers recommendations that address, hiring, mentoring, retaining, and providing a thriving wage to workers across conservation and stewardship sectors.
 - b. In pursuing this systemic issue, determine how this CLSN initiative can be complimentary to and reflect workforce empowerment efforts underway by others across the state.
3. *Explore the next step in CLSN's role communicating the elements necessary to build collaborative capacity.*
 - a. Determine how we can we better evaluate and share the impact of collaborative approaches in delivering on-the-ground stewardship outcomes.

Supporting the Landscape Stewardship Movement

1. *Maintain relationships with storytellers, artists, and thought leaders to bring forward the deeply human elements of our work.*
 - a. Continue gathering content to populate *Stories of Stewardship*.
2. *Map community organizing principles onto the work of coordinating cross-boundary partnerships.*
 - a. In response to broad interest in improving trust- and relationship-building skills—especially with California Native American Tribes and community-based groups—the JEDI Roundtable will explore how community organizing principles are an effective lens through which collaboratives can better engage partners and community members.
3. *Continue to support the Network's storytelling goals and offer resources for others.*
 - a. Revisit the 2019 *Stewardship Conversation Starter Kit* to see how the CLSN can continue spreading the essential message of what stewardship entails; why collaborative approaches are uniquely effective; and how this practice can highlight the importance of history, culture, identity, and participatory democracy.

The CLSN is uniquely positioned to identify broader issues and needs, facilitate convenings to engage organizations in problem solving those issues, and prepare white papers for network members and others to apply in ways that best fit their respective organizations capacity to consider and act on.

– Network Participant –

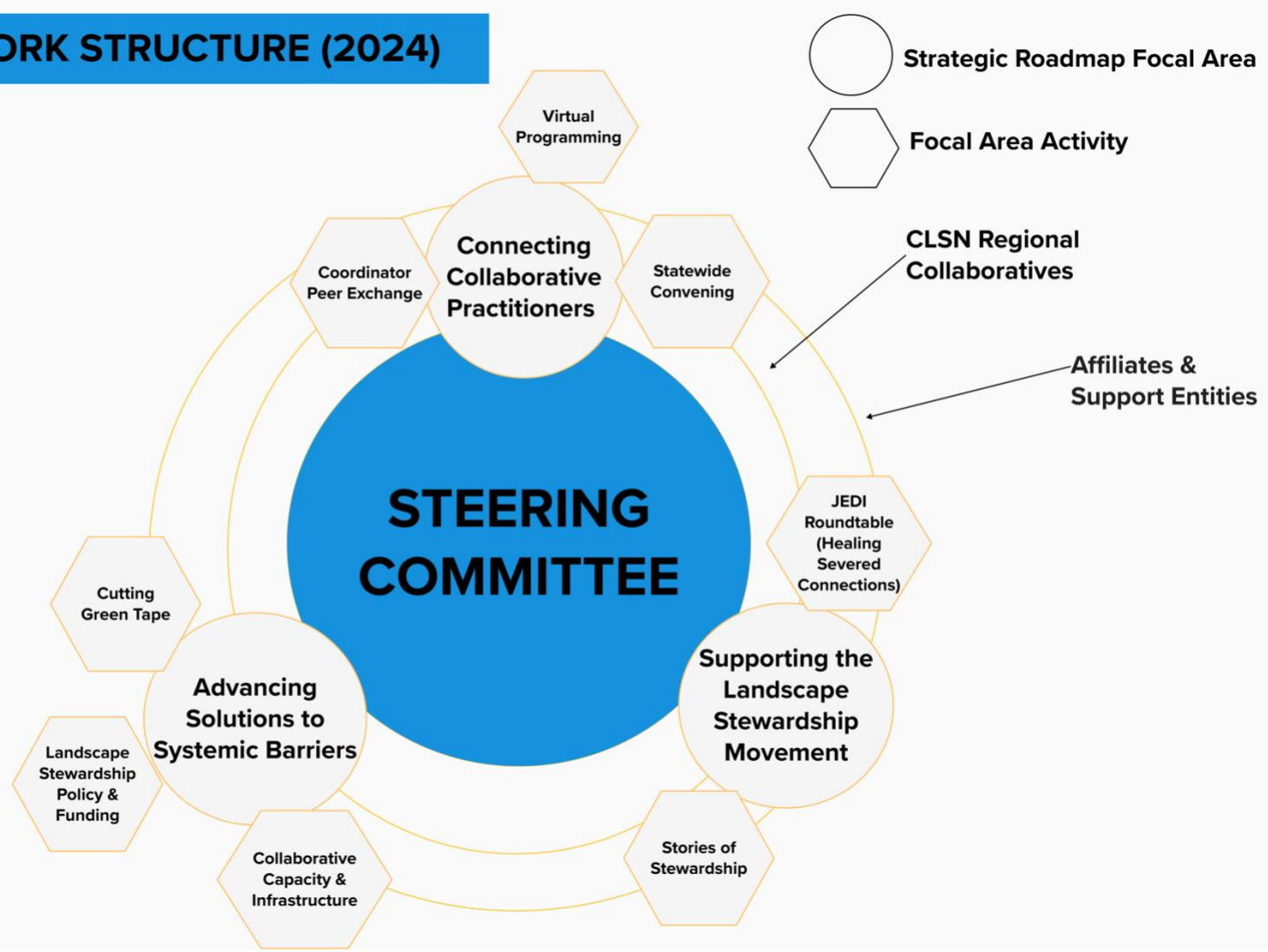
Part III: Sustaining the Network & Implementing This Roadmap

A healthy network structure and leadership capacity is essential to delivering on the CLSN's three focal areas. Our governance and operations will continue to be guided by the idea that “form follows function,” remaining fluid and adaptive to the Network’s interests and needs.

The current structure of the CLSN in 2024 is visualized on the following page.



NETWORK STRUCTURE (2024)



Steering Committee Composition and Capacities

To continue its strong legacy of dedicated leadership, the CLSN Steering Committee will explore pathways for sustaining its impact by:

- Seeking new members with skillsets and backgrounds in natural resources policy, private lands stewardship, and Tribal and Indigenous-led stewardship.
- Updating its Steering Committee volunteer position description to include clear roles, responsibilities, and baseline expectations.
- Creating a consistent selection process that involves onboarding in the first quarter of the year, and first in-person meeting at the annual Steering Committee retreat at the beginning of the second quarter.
- Exploring mentorship models that connect new and incumbent Steering Committee members over the first six months to pose questions, evaluate how new members are adding and receiving value, and devise ways in which new members can play discrete roles on the Steering Committee.

Business Model

Our ability to connect, share, and amplify common interests is our ultimate value-add. To that end, the CLSN will center its efforts around building its convening power by exploring the following pathways for sustained funding and operational capacity:

- Maximize our ability to receive unrestricted funding to stay nimble and adaptive to emerging needs as well as to continue to deliver practitioner convenings.
- Explore the role that public investment can play in supporting our efforts that directly advance state and federal initiatives through catalyzing locally led collaborative stewardship action at scale.
- Maintain dedicated Steering Committee capacity to cultivate and sustain relationships with funders interested in supporting cross-boundary, collaborative work.

Implementing This Strategic Roadmap

This Strategic Roadmap is a living document, meant to adapt to changing conditions and our growing knowledge about how to best pursue a vision for statewide collaboration centered on equity and inclusion. The CLSN will monitor and evaluate its implementation through the following pathways:

- Monthly Steering Committee meetings and annual retreat that use the Strategic Roadmap as a “north star” for decision-making on CLSN activities that are value-driven and reflect statewide interests.
- Semi-annual conversations with regional partnership coordinators that identify how current and emerging opportunities align with this document and increase the Roadmap’s efficacy.
- Semi-annual meetings with contacts at partner organizations and support entities advancing the policy, practice, and performance of landscape stewardship.
- Annual statewide in-person convenings planned for 2024 through 2026.
- Other connectivity pathways as they emerge.

Most importantly, the CLSN will keep this document alive by maintaining a culture of innovation, participation, and joy that sees collaborative stewardship as an essential human practice to reconnect us to each other and to places we care for.

Reach out to coordinator@calsn.org with your ideas.



The California Landscape Stewardship Network is a fiscally sponsored project of **The Stewardship Network**, a 501(c)(3) organization.