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## International Land Conservation Network Newsletter, January 2022

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### News

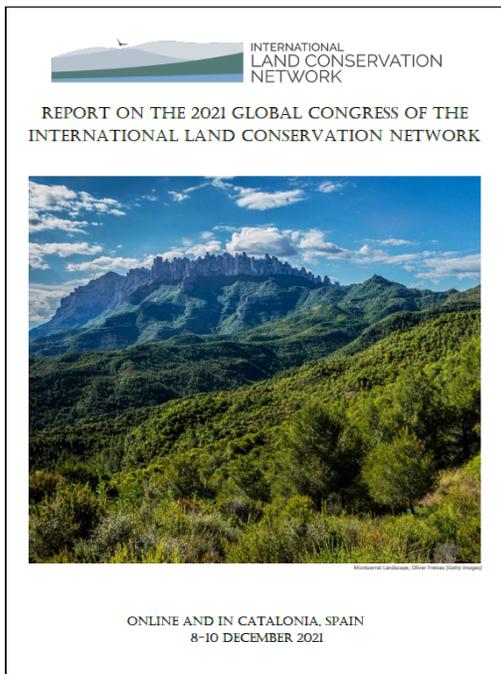
#### **ILCN-ELCN 2021 Global Congress Report and Session Recordings Are Now Available**

More than 400 participants from all over the world joined us virtually for the ILCN-ELCN 2021 Global Congress. **The full report from the Congress is now available [at this link](#).**

If you missed the event or a particular session, or if you'd like to revisit the content, **recordings are now available on YouTube [here](#)**. Links to sessions may also be found in Appendix 2 of the Congress report.

Thank you to all of the speakers and attendees who joined us synchronously and asynchronously, to share their work, expertise, and experience with our networks. We hope that these recordings serve as living resources which will continue to be of use to the private and civic land conservation community.

Finally, keep a lookout for the updated Global Congress webpage on the [ILCN website](#) in early February for easy access to the Congress report, recordings, and other materials.



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## Chilean Congress Approves Statute Granting Tax Incentives for Conservation

Roberto Peralta, a Chilean tax lawyer and a longtime friend of the ILCN, shared exciting news last week that may have enormous implications for voluntary private land conservation in Chile:

*“After 22 years of continuous and enduring work, [on Wednesday, January 26th, 2022] both houses of the Chilean congress unanimously approved a new statute granting tax incentives for a variety of public interest matters, including conservation and environmental protection.”*

As Roberto notes, the approval of this statute is the result of more than two decades of efforts by conservationists in Chile to strengthen the country’s institutional framework for conservation on private lands. Private donations - whether of cash, property, or intangible assets such as conservation easements – up to a value of approximately \$1,300,000 million per year will now be tax deductible.

The new legislation is a critical counterpart and follow-on to the passage, in 2016, of Chile’s breakthrough private lands conservation law, the Derecho Real de Conservación (DRC) or “real right of conservation.” The law, the first of its kind established in a civil code country in Latin America, enables landowners to enter into long-term legal agreements to protect and conserve their lands – like a conservation easement or conservation covenant used in many common law countries.

Financial incentives such as tax incentives are key to enabling and motivating landowners to conserve their lands using the DRC, and will be central to building greater interest and support for conservation on private lands throughout Chile. While the new legislation is still pending several steps – including validation by the constitutional court, execution by the President, publication in the Official Gazette, the issuance of a regulation by the Ministry of Finance, and the implementation of an online nonprofit registry – the approval of the statute is a major milestone. As Roberto noted, “the statute has been enacted and the government is legally obligated to implement it.”

Congratulations to all of our partners and colleagues in Chile for their tireless work and for this remarkable achievement!



*A picture taken at the Senate after the approval, where civil society leaders met with a group of senators that enthusiastically supported this new statute (Photo courtesy of Roberto Peralta)*

## **Trust for Nature CEO and ILCN Steering Committee Member Vic Marles Appointed a Member of the Order of Australia**

Congratulations to ILCN Steering Committee member Vic Marles, who last week was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia for significant service to conservation and the environment, and to the community, as part of the 2022 Australia Day Honours List.

"I am honoured to receive this recognition. The conservation work I am part of at Trust for Nature is so important and it is truly wonderful to work with landholders, supporters, partners and staff who are so passionate about protecting Victoria's special wildlife and environment," Vic said.



Photo Courtesy of Trust for Nature

For over a decade, Vic has served as CEO of Trust for Nature, a leading conservation organization in the Australian state of Victoria which protects native plants and wildlife in cooperation with private landowners. She has championed private land conservation in both Australia and around the globe, as a board member for the Australian Land Conservation Alliance and in her role with the ILCN, where she has been a Steering Committee member since the network's founding.

"I was delighted to hear that Vic has been appointed a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for

significant service to conservation and the environment, and to the community," said Laura Johnson, former ILCN Director, "The ILCN has benefited from Vic's wonderful presence from the very beginning when a small group of land conservation leaders from around the world convened in September 2014 to chart the future course of an international network. Vic's participation at that meeting and subsequent ILCN global Congresses, and her role on the ILCN Steering Committee, has helped position Australia in the forefront of international land conservation efforts. Vic is both practical and visionary, deeply knowledgeable and always open to learning and exchanging ideas. She's also a lot of fun to be around. I am very grateful to have worked with Vic and ILCN is very fortunate to have had her leadership."

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## **Miquel Rafa Fornieles to Lead the IUCN WCPA Specialist Group on Privately Protected Areas and Nature Stewardship**

Miquel Rafa Fornieles will lead the International Union for the Conservation of Nature's World Commission on Protected Areas Specialist Group on Privately Protected Areas and Nature Stewardship from 2022 forward.

Miquel is eminently qualified for this role: he is the Director of Territory and Environment at Fundació Catalunya La Pedrera, where he oversees a large network of privately protected areas in Catalonia, Spain. Miquel's commitment to private and civic land conservation and nature stewardship spans decades. With support from current PPA Specialist Group co-lead Brent Mitchell at the Quebec Labrador Foundation, Miquel played a major role in establishing the Land Stewardship Network of Catalonia, now known as the Nature Conservation Network of Catalonia (XCN), and both XCN and FCLP are now key project partners of Eurosite - the European Land Conservation Network. In that role, Miquel and FCLP were key sponsors and hosts of the ILCN-ELCN 2021 Global Congress.



Photo Courtesy of Fundacio Catalunya La Pedrera

Brent Mitchell will continue to support the group, as he takes on a new role as a thematic vice chair of the theme Scaling Solutions at the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas. Congratulations Miquel and Brent!

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## **Eurosite-ELCN Co-Hosts Meeting of the European Commission Expert Group on the Nature Directives (NADEG) on Tools and Incentives for Private Land Conservation**

*By Carolina Halevy, ILCN Regional Representative (Europe)*



A typical forest in Finland. *Photo Credit: Getty Images*

On January 19th, Eurosite-ELCN co-hosted a meeting of the European Commission's "Expert Group on the Nature Directives" (NADEG) on Tools and Incentives for Private Land Conservation. The meeting was very well attended with 115 participants, including representatives of the authorities of 20 different European Union (EU) Member States.

Traditionally, NADEG has coordinated the implementation of the EU's core nature conservation legislation: the Birds Directive and the Habitats Directive ("the Nature Directives"). Lately, NADEG has expanded its scope and addressed the implementation of EU biodiversity policy more broadly. It is now the most important working-level platform for dialogue between the European Commission, EU member states, and interest groups on EU nature conservation issues.

The European Commission arranged this NADEG meeting to highlight the relevance of private land conservation in the EU and to discuss with member states how long-term, voluntary private land conservation can support the EU Green Deal and EU biodiversity targets, e.g. to protect at least 30% of EU's land and sea by 2030, to improve management effectiveness and coherence of the European network of protected areas "Natura 2000", to restore degraded ecosystems, and to enhance biodiversity in the wider countryside.

The meeting provided examples of how private landowners and users can be mobilized to take voluntary action for nature on their land. Landowners, authorities, and NGOs may not have the same objectives, but we do share a concern for nature.

Andrew Bowman, President of the Land Trust Alliance, made a presentation to the group regarding how over the past four decades land trusts in the US have made a remarkable contribution to land conservation and formed a vital movement through legal tools for conservation and financial incentives. Specifically, he underlined the huge impact of conservation easements in connection with tax incentives in the US and the potential applicability of this approach to the EU.

This view was shared by Sue Stolton and Brent Mitchell from the IUCN Privately Protected Areas Specialist Group as well as Jim Levitt and Chandni Navalkha from the International Land Conservation Network, who attended the meeting as external experts to answer questions from the audience. In addition to conservation easements, privately protected areas and land stewardship agreements were highlighted as promising tools to scale up private land conservation in the EU.

Presentations from EU member state officials supported this assessment. Santiago Gracia from the Spanish Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge and Pilar Vendrell from the Government of Catalonia (department of Climate Action, Food and Rural Agenda) showed that Spain is a frontrunner in the EU in using land stewardship agreements for nature protection. By 2019, 3.100 agreements protecting 578.000 ha of land had been signed by 218 entities. Mikko Kuusinen from the Finnish Ministry of the Environment presented the Forest Biodiversity Programme for Southern Finland (METSO) as a tool to create privately protected areas on a voluntary basis. Landowners receive compensation payments for entering into permanent, legally binding agreements. This bottom-up approach has protected 83.000 ha so far.

Carl De Schepper from the Flemish Agency for Nature and Forest explained the new Belgian system of management planning for nature reserves introduced in 2017 and Pascal Bargiarelli, from the France Ministry of Ecological Transition, introduced the French approach towards applying conservation easements – real environmental obligations (ORE). The use of OREs in France is still relatively modest as until now only about 1000 contracts have been signed. This may be partly due to its complicated incentive structure. The state provides the tool, but the financial compensation has to be established between the two contracting parties, and local authorities decide on compensations such as property tax deductions. The presented tools were illustrated by examples and words of encouragement from a Finnish and Spanish landowner.

Three key messages emerged from the following discussion between the EC, member states, and experts:

1. In addition to the quantity or acreage of land conserved, the quality of the nature that is being protected matters,
2. Peer learning is an important factor in upscaling private land conservation tools, and
3. Building trust between stakeholders and decision-makers is key.

The meeting was an important opportunity to underscore the potential of private land conservation in the EU. It became clear that the European Commission places high hopes in the ongoing LIFE project "European Networks for Private Land Conservation". Eurosite-ELCN is called upon to continue and intensify the networking among private land conservation practitioners in the various EU member states.

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## Advancing Nature-Based Solutions in China - Water Funds in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province

By Shenmin Liu, ILCN Regional Representative (Asia)



Photo Credit: The Nature Conservancy China

Water Funds are a nature-based solution with growing relevance around the world, thanks in large part to the leadership of The Nature Conservancy. Water funds are "organizations that design and enhance financial and governance mechanisms which unite public, private and civil society stakeholders around a common goal to contribute to water security through nature-based solutions and sustainable watershed management." ([TNC Water Funds Toolbox](#))

Since 2014, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) has been working in Hangzhou, China, with Qingshan village to carry out small water source protection projects using the water fund model. The village's nearby water source, Longwu Reservoir, was built in 1981. It provides drinking water for approximately 4,000 villagers in Qingshan village and surrounding villages. However, the nitrogen and phosphorus levels have been rising and the water quality has been declining since 1980s due to overuse of fertilizer and pesticides for bamboo plantations in the upstream catchment area.

TNC worked with Wangxiang Trust and Alibaba Foundation to launch the first water fund in China in 2015, the Shanshui Water Fund. It was the first trust in China with a public welfare purpose for small source water protection. The Shanshui Water Fund supports the Longwu Reservoir Protection Project in Qingshan village directly by establishing a market-oriented, diversified and sustainable ecological compensation mechanism as well as by building a nature education center and attracting eco-tourism. With an initial investment of \$50,000 from the Alibaba Foundation, the water fund earns its ongoing funding from the sale of organic bamboo shoots, eco-tourism and educational activities. After 6 years, Shanshui Water Fund has not only improved the water quality of the Longwu Reservoir, but notably increased the income of local residents participated in the project. In addition, Qingshan village has become a well-known eco-village, attracting tourists from Hangzhou, as well as those from further afield in Shanghai and Beijing.

The Shanshui Water Fund is governed by a multi-stakeholder advisory board, which includes TNC, farmers' representatives and a food company. Farmers can enter a five-year contract for the fund to manage their forestland via a property right trust. Wanxiang Trust serves as the legal trustee and the main management body of the water fund. TNC serves as an advisor for trust execution and helps with the design of the watershed conservation model as well as forestland management planning, conservation impacts assessment and coordination of public resources. 43 households in Qingshan Village have signed the contract since 2015, covering 70% of the forestland near the watershed catchment area (around 82 acres). The contract forbids the use of fertilizers and herbicides in this area and farmers can receive compensations in return.

To expand the water fund model to a larger scale, as well as to protect Hangzhou's most important water source – Qiandao Lake, Wanxiang Trust, supported by TNC and with an initial \$1.6 million fund from by Alibaba Foundation and Minsheng Life Foundation, established the second trust on December 31, 2017. It attempts to improve the management of more than 165 acres of agriculture land near Qiandao Lake sub-watersheds, which eventually will supply water to 10 million people in Hangzhou.

As the water fund model spreads to different contexts around the world, highlighting its relevance to communities facing water supply and quality impacts in the face of climate change in China and elsewhere can illustrate how funding and stakeholder engagement mechanisms can be adapted and scaled up the world over.

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## **Conserving Indigenous Forests for Indigenous Peoples - A Self-Sustaining Forest Carbon Project Emerges on New Zealand's Mount Huruiki**

*By Sean Weaver, CEO, Ekos (New Zealand) and Cecilia Riebl, ILCN Regional Representative (Australasia)*

New Zealand's Mount Huruiki is one of the highest points on the eastern coast of Northland, overlooking Whangaruru Harbour and its many bays and islands. The mountain is of great cultural significance to Māori tribal groups, Ngāti Hau and Ngāti Wai. For 50 years, Huruiki was held in private, non-Māori hands.

In 2011, Brandon Edwards, a descendant of the original tribal owners/guardians, and his wife, Kiri, bought back Huruiki mountain and surrounding pasture – around 350 hectares. "It was purchased for emotional, sentimental, cultural ... reasons," says Brandon. "But after buying the property ... we then had to turn our minds to how we were going to make it work."

As well as running an Angus cattle breeding and finishing operation, Brandon and Kiri are now turning hill country pasture on its flanks back into native forest where, one day centuries hence, their descendants will walk in the shade of a majestic kauri forest with giant trees that live for millennia.

While there is no formal protection over the land currently, there is a strong culture of protection and stewardship in the management of the land. As Brandon says: "hapū and iwi will always protect Huruiki because it's part of our whakapapa; it's part of who we are."

But reforesting this farmland will cost seven figures and grant funding options are limited to a fraction of this. To help them design the project and arrange a loan to finance their dream, the Edwards family approached [Ekos NZ](#), a social enterprise that develops self-sustaining forest carbon projects and links investors through carbon measurement and offsetting services. Ekos developed a restorative native forest carbon project business case for Mount Huruiki and found a willing investor – [Terraformation](#), a global native forest restoration company based in Hawai'i. Local groups also provided grant funding used to pay for native seedlings and planting labor. Now thousands of seedlings are being planted by whānau, hapū and iwi (local Māori community) and the journey has begun. Landowner, investor and grant funder have built a strong connection based on a common purpose, and a common commitment to conserving Indigenous forests for Indigenous peoples.

In practice, Ekos will monetize carbon credits generated through this project by supplying them to their business clients that want to go net zero carbon. These businesses and organizations voluntarily measure their carbon footprint, then fully internalize the external cost of their carbon pollution by purchasing premium carbon offsets (packed full of nature and community co-benefits) and reduce their emissions to lower their exposure to the cost of carbon. The overall effect is a low carbon, nature positive, and climate resilient economy.

Brandon and Kiri are keen for this opportunity to spread to other Māori landowners in their region, and Ekos wants to help by finding investors that can support a regional native reforestation program utilizing innovative debt financing. The scale of native forest restoration is then limited only by the appetite of investors to get a modest financial return and landowners who want conservation to pay for itself.

The need for native forest conservation globally and in just about any nation outstrips the capacity of grant funding by an order of magnitude. This is why innovative commercial approaches to conservation financing can be transformative. And when grant funders reposition themselves as providers of catalytic capital (seed funding in a commercial venture) instead of funding the whole job, we can make it easier for the private sector to carry the primary financing burden and stretch grant funds way beyond their current reach.

As Sean Weaver, CEO at Ekos NZ has said: "At Ekos we have now built forest conservation carbon projects with various partners across New Zealand and the Pacific Islands, and we are thrilled to work with such wonderful people across this 'supply chain of good.' Together we are changing the world for the better, one forest at a time."

*For the interview with Brandon Edwards quoted from here, which took place on 11 October 2021, access [this link](#) at 18:51. It is also available [here](#).*

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## **What We're Reading**

**Land Lines Magazine Feature: [A Climate of Conservation](#)**

The January 2022 Lincoln Institute of Land Policy's quarterly magazine features a number of pieces on conservation. In "[A Climate of Conservation](#)," the most recent Kingsbury Browne fellow, Mark Anderson from The Nature Conservancy, is among the land conservation leaders making the case that climate change is a top priority. Other pieces of interest include a [message from LILP President George McCarthy on 30x30](#) and an in-depth profile of the [growing civil society movement for conservation in China](#).

**Preview - From the Ground Up: How Land Trusts and Conservancies Are Providing Solutions to Climate Change**

Private and civic land conservation is critical to mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change. This Policy Focus Report presents a dozen case studies that demonstrate how land trusts, conservancies, and other nongovernmental civic organizations have meaningfully

addressed climate change over the past several decades.

The Congress Preview was launched in December 2021 and the full report will be available in February 2022.

[Read the preview report here.](#)

### **Privately Protected Area Management Guidelines Training Materials**

BfN's International Academy for Nature Conservation and the IUCN WCPA's Specialist Group on Privately Protected Areas and Nature Stewardship has partnered to prepare training materials based on the PPA Management Guidelines.

The materials are intended to build and develop capacity for establishing, identifying, recognizing, supporting and reporting PPAs. The resources will help practitioners, government counterparts, students and academics to understand all aspects of establishing, managing and securing PPAs.

Available resources include written materials with complementary videos, as well as a bibliography on PPAs.

[Access the training materials here.](#)

### **Our Next Evolution - Transforming Collaborative Leadership to Shape Our Planet's Future**

Collaboration and partnership will be central to achieving ambitious global targets, from protecting 30% of the world's land and waters by 2030, to restoring degraded ecosystems, to ensuring equal and equitable access to nature.

In [Our Next Evolution: Transforming Collaborative Leadership to Shape Our Planet's Future](#), Laura Calandrella offers a framework for 21st century leadership that can enable and strengthen collective action for nature.

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## **Upcoming Events**

### **IUCN Africa Protected Areas Congress**

*Originally Scheduled for March 7, 2022; now postponed to July 18, 2022  
Kigali, Rwanda, and Online*

The IUCN Africa Protected Areas Congress (APAC) is the first ever continent-wide gathering of African leaders, citizens, and interest groups to discuss the role of protected areas in conserving nature, safeguarding Africa's iconic wildlife, delivering vital life-supporting ecosystem services, promoting sustainable development while conserving Africa's cultural heritage and traditions.

Kiragu Mwangi, ILCN Regional Representative (Africa), will represent the ILCN at the Congress. He will host a Knowledge Cafe session and help to coordinate a Conservation Finance session at the Congress. Keep a lookout on the ILCN website for more information.

[Learn more and register here.](#)

### **Australia Private Land Conservation Conference: Recover, Restore, Redouble**

*March 8-10, 2022  
Sydney, Australia*

The Australian Land Conservation Alliance (ALCA) will hold its sixth annual Private Land Conservation Conference, PLC2022: Recover, Restore, Redouble from 8-10 March 2022

at Doltone House Darling Island In Sydney, hosted by the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust.

[Learn more](#) and [register here](#).

### **Conservation Finance Learning Lab: Successfully Selling your Project**

Join this five-part Conservation Finance Learning Lab produced in partnership between [Highstead](#) and [The Conservation Finance Network](#) and made freely available to registrants. The webinars will take place from December 2021 to April 2022, and will feature panel discussions, case studies, and networking opportunities for participants to take a deep dive into tangible, innovative approaches to conservation funding and financing. The concepts and lessons learned from the case studies presented will be broadly applicable to practitioners everywhere. Each session will build on the previous sessions, culminating in the “Dolphin Tank” exercise\*, where participants will have the opportunity to analyze and deliberate solutions to real-world conservation problems. [Learn more](#).

#### **Part IV: Corporate Engagement: Successfully Selling your Project**

*Tuesday, March 8th at 2 PM ET*

*Online*

Focus on cracking the nut for corporate engagement, considering advocacy as an underutilized form of corporate support, and a key aspect of the pitch.

[Register here](#)

### **NatureServe Biodiversity Without Boundaries Conference: Coming Together for Conservation**

*March 22-24, 2022*

*Pittsburgh, PA, USA*

The [Biodiversity Without Boundaries Conference](#) is a must-attend for biodiversity & conservation scientists and other professionals who strive to ensure our shared lands and waters are thriving now and in the future. Working with all sectors of society, from scientific research institutions and government agencies to non-profit organizations and private industry, NatureServe’s role of connecting science with conservation has never been more in-demand. Learn more about the new developments in our efforts to make it possible—and easy—for people to use accurate, current scientific information as the basis for conservation decisions and actions.

[Learn more and register here](#).

## **Highlights from the ILCN**

**We are excited to share stories from ILCN members. If you have a successful conservation initiative, story, event, or webinar to share, then please contact us at [ILCN@lincolninst.edu](mailto:ILCN@lincolninst.edu).**

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and people around the world that are accelerating voluntary private and civic sector action that protects and stewards land and water resources.  
Learn more at [landconservationnetwork.org](http://landconservationnetwork.org).



The ILCN in a project of the [Lincoln Institute of Land Policy](http://Lincoln Institute of Land Policy).



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