



## LandLife Workshop Report



Date: 22-23 April 2013

Location: Montpellier, France

Hosted by: Conservatoire d'espaces naturels du Languedoc-Roussillon (CEN L-R)



LIFE 10/INF/ES/540

## BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

This workshop was organised within the LandLife project, which is funded by the European Commission under the LIFE+ programme (LANDLIFE\_LIFE 10/INF/ES/450). The aim of the LandLife project is to communicate the value of land stewardship as an effective and successful tool for the conservation of nature and biodiversity. The project includes a wide variety of activities, including the publication of a European manual for land stewardship, the celebration of the European Week of Land Stewardship in the autumn of 2012, the creation of an online webspace and online course on land stewardship, and the organisation of regional seminars and workshops that will lead towards a European conference to be held in Catalonia in 2014 to close the project.

Supported by:



This workshop, kindly hosted by CEN L-R, was one of three connected workshops organised by the regional partners (CEN L-R: 22-23 April, Montpellier, France; Legambiente: 10-11 May, Giussago, Italy; XCT: 29-31 May, Tavertet, Spain). These workshops are key activities of the LandLife project and contribute to promoting land stewardship as a conservation tool for Europe's nature and biodiversity. Through these workshops we were able to draw upon and share the best of good practices being developed and applied across Europe, increase knowledge on land stewardship and existing legal and policy frameworks (e.g. Natura 2000) and facilitate contacts and synergies between entities to define opportunities and promote cooperation on land stewardship initiatives within the framework of the LandLife project.

The results gathered during these workshops will feed directly into the European Land Stewardship Congress that will take place in Barcelona in November 2014. The key messages and conclusions gathered will help shape the programme of next year's Congress.

For more information please visit [www.landstewardship.eu](http://www.landstewardship.eu)

## PARTICIPANTS – NUMBERS & FIGURES

Over the course of two days, 63 delegates from five countries, including Spain, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, the USA and France (the largest group) participated in this workshop.

37 organisations were represented and there were four individual attendees. Amongst the organisations present were nine local authorities, ten NGOs (including three other CENs and the overarching CEN federation), four public research organisations and one public institution (in charge of wildlife conservation management). Twelve land managers and ten landowners participated, including one farmer (N.B. some land managers were also landowners).



**Photo 1.** Seminaire LandLife, 22 avril 2013 - Montpellier  
Crédit: R. Jullian CEN L-R

## WORKSHOP PURPOSE

The main purpose of the workshop was to share information and practical know-how on applying land stewardship agreements and improving their management, and to build a theoretical framework for land stewardship. More specifically, the workshop aimed:

- To communicate land stewardship as an effective tool for nature and biodiversity conservation;
- To exchange experiences and best practices;
- To increase knowledge on land stewardship and existing legal and policy frameworks;
- To facilitate contacts and synergies between entities to define opportunities and cooperation on land stewardship initiatives within the framework of the LandLife project;
- To explore how land stewardship approaches facilitate the implementation of public policies like Natura 2000 or the new European Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

The workshop provided the opportunity to draw up a theoretical framework for land stewardship in France, to discuss and to learn from concrete experiences of its implementation in different countries and to explore opportunities for land stewardship development in existing and future public policies. Some work remains to be done on the strengthening of the stakeholders' network and the definition of future common actions and efforts.

## WORKSHOP SUMMARY

This workshop took place in Montpellier, France from April 22nd to April 23rd 2013. It was designed in partnership with the Conservatoire d'espaces naturels du Languedoc-Roussillon (CEN L-R) and the LandLife consortium. The workshop was the first in a series of three European land stewardship workshops.

The workshop provided a valuable opportunity for, amongst others, landowners, public bodies and NGOs to discuss their land stewardship approaches and compare current (best) practices.



Dealing with the subject "Rethink and initiate land stewardship in France", the workshop was divided into two parts:

- the first day focused on communicating land stewardship and strategies to initiate it. It targeted all CEN L-R's partners, and the different speakers shared their views on land stewardship;
- the second day was devoted to drafting the key principles of land stewardship in France.

Over the course of the two days, there were ten presentations and three interactive group sessions.

On the first day, the facilitator Raphaël Mathevet (a geography researcher at the CNRS and specialist of the ecological solidarity concept) explained the objectives of the workshop, and gave a short introduction to the environmental/land stewardship context. He summarised speeches, ensured smooth shifts to new sessions,

identified links and led the various debates throughout the day.

This first day included a series of case studies illustrating actual land stewardship practices (from the Netherlands and France) and presentations on the founding principles of land stewardship, in scientific research and policies related to land stewardship (from the USA and France). In addition to the welcoming speech and various introductions (LandLife project, Fédération des Conservatoires d'espaces naturels - FCEN), there were six presentations each followed by a 10-15 minute question and answer session with the participants.

A researcher in sociology, André Micoud, who was invited to be an 'observer' of the day, took part in the debates to underline new ideas and clarify concepts to increase understanding. At the end of the day he presented the ideas and questions he had collected during the day.

On the second day, only the speakers, the LandLife partners, CEN L-R's staff, and other CEN and FCEN representatives continued to work on what had been said the day before and to sort out the ideas and key messages. These results are included in this report and will also be the basis for a publication in an online scientific paper.

The Facilitator aided the process to effectively gather input for these ideas and key messages. The selected participants, 23 in total (including two facilitators), were split into three groups of seven participants, and a representative was appointed to each group. The facilitator identified four questions:

1. What is land stewardship?
2. What are the added values of land stewardship?
3. What are the strength and weaknesses of land stewardship?
4. What actions and targets to promote land stewardship?

For each question, the groups had 30 minutes to debate and define answers. Ideas and answers to the questions were collected as they were generated and written down and projected on a large screen. This allowed the discussions to be fed continuously. After 30 minutes of dealing with one of the questions, there was extra-time to discuss the results between groups.



MAIN MESSAGES OF THE SPEECHES AND DEBATES



**Marc Maury** (Director Network Development and Territorial Actions)

*Role and place of the Conservatoires d'espaces naturels in land stewardship*

- 2,534 sites managed on 136,223 ha, lead 130 Natura 2000 sites, main partners are farmers
- State-Region agreement for the recognition of values and approach of CEN
- CENs are involved all along the nature conservation process and can sign stewardship agreements with all stakeholders

***Stewardship in the CEN takes the form of individual/collective involvement and empowerment for natural & cultural heritage protection.***



**F. Stuart « Terry » Chapin, III** (Ecosystem ecologist - University of Alaska - USA)

*Ecosystems' and human communities' sustainability in a rapidly changing context*

- Ecology is not enough → earth stewardship uses all sciences to integrate human societies in nature
- Sense of place, attachment
- Strengthen both the ecosystems' resilience and human well-being

***There is a clear need to "proactively" define a more sustainable pathway with civil society and ecological solidarity.***



**Aad Van Paassen** (Landschapsbeheer Nederland - LBN)

*Wetlands stewardship in the Netherlands*

- Cooperation between LBN volunteers (an NGO) and local farmers (65 volunteers, 48 farms, 1,500 ha) for the conservation of a Black-tailed Godwit critical nesting site (meadows) and the creation of a reserve of 1,000 ha
- Population monitoring results (nests, pairs, chicks), available on-line for better communication. Agreements and management plans adjusted yearly depending on the headcounts
- 2012: a 3-year contract was signed with farmers giving them full responsibility for the reserve's management. The bird population is stable since 1995.

***Success is also a question of individual motivation and involvement.***



**Virginie Maris** (Environmental philosopher - CEFE-CNRS)  
*Land stewardship and environmental ethics*

- Land stewardship as 'management' → anthropocentric, Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, ecosystem services, optimization, learning by doing
- Land stewardship as 'care' → vulnerability and interdependence, needs
- Land stewardship as 'respect' → socio-ecological communities, Aldo Leopold, heritage, stewardship
- But uncertainty of socio-ecological systems → necessity of adaptive management

***It is important to increase resilience and adaptability of socio-ecological networks.***



**Hervé Coquillart** (Director of the Conservatoire d'espaces naturels Rhône Alpes)  
*Programme LIFE « Nature et Territoire » from CEN Rhône-Alpes*

- 4 years, 18 very different Natura 2000 sites in terms of biodiversity and socio-economical issues
- 4 behaviours identified towards site management: 1) rejection, 2) accepted as an answer to a specific question (e.g. tourism pressure and regulation, information/education), 3) perceived as a help to maintain economical activities, 4) fully integrated to a land/community development plan
- 3 decisive key elements for project success: 1) history of nature conservation actions on the site, 2) dialogue/consultation around management plans, 3) governance and presence of a local leader. Ecological or geographical features seem not to be decisive

***Natura 2000 management plans are above all social constructions: "Taking care successfully of nature often means taking care of people first".***



**Benoît Grimonprez** (Senior Lecturer in Private Law - University of Franche-Comté)  
*Strength and outlook of the environmental contractual policies*

- Legitimacy of land stewardship, a cooperative, voluntary and horizontal approach, complementary to the regulatory approach
- Land stewardship's tools: purchase or land use "control" by private individual agreements (management) or easements (working group on conservation easements promising in France)

***Land stewardship is negotiated/flexible making it more adaptable to local contexts, but also breakable. Opportunity of the future conservation easement.***



**Xavier Poux** (Researcher-expert consultant agronomist – AscA)  
*'Greening' of environmental public policies*

- Environmental concern gradually integrated in public policies, but efficacy difficult to prove
- Land stewardship's opportunities: High Natural Value Farming, Ecological and Economical Interest Groups, a new status in the future agriculture act
- Persuading local stakeholders as well as decision makers (responsible for public funds, laws, public policies) of the benefits of this approach is highly

***"Land stewardship is not a choice, it is an environmental and health emergency" - Land stewardship has to radically reconsider public policies.***

Debates following speeches stressed that:

- One of the strengths of land stewardship is that it can be complementary or an alternative to other conservation strategies (regulatory or market-based).
- As land stewardship means 'acting on people', it is essential to know and understand people's motivations. It is therefore recommended to integrate experts from the social sciences within the scientific councils of nature protection organisations.
- In land stewardship, each stakeholder should find an interest in the other's presence and take into account the expectations of the one living in the place. Land stewardship initiatives will benefit from a good sense of reciprocity from all the actors involved.
- Land stewardship should remain flexible. Standardisation and homogenisation of practices should be avoided: land stewardship is effective because it is highly adaptable to local conditions –it can therefore easily be applied to specific locations and be linked to that place's particular history.
- A 'sales point' should be built for convincing a wide range of actors who are not yet aware of the possibilities that land stewardship can bring.
- It is always essential to work with farmers (and other landowners) on a basis of respect and equality.
- A territorial leadership/regional cooperative process is essential for success. Through a coordinated, facilitated approach all stakeholders should be involved in a process to get to workable land stewardship solutions and work together on something that could be called community conservation.



### 1- What is land stewardship?

- At once the strategy, the way to the action and the action itself;
- An ecological, social and cultural territory/area, a “sense of place”, from which materialises a socio-ecological system;
- A new form of governance and management, which equally takes into account all stakeholders and others concerned (a diversity of uses and multifunctionality are a priority - production, leisure, biodiversity etc.) and allows for sustainable solidarity to arise even in complex situations;
- A collective responsibility towards the environment, considering natural heritage (biodiversity, landscapes and services) as common goods: it decreases individual responsibility and increases collective responsibility and collective actions, even amongst groups that aren't used to cooperating;
- An adaptive, cooperative, bottom-up strategy to improve nature conservation whilst respecting the local context, based on team work, voluntary actions, agreements and reciprocity.

### 2- What are the added values of land stewardship?

- It can be complementary or an alternative to other strategies (regulatory, market-based) in terms of duration and areas, and goes beyond nature protection's traditional boundaries. It fills a gap between market-based strategies and regulatory approaches;
- It allows for a better definition of issues and the co-building of solutions through the voluntary participation of stakeholders (particularly users and land owners). Thanks to the social recognition of the engagement, it can create a local spark for its development;
- It provides a set of principles that can be applied adaptively to local conditions, different scales and changing environments;
- It enables actions with few (or already existing, but not applied) resources → better efficiency (ratio cost/benefits);
- It uses, shares and promotes scientific as well as non-academic knowledge → allows nature conservationists to share nature conservation responsibility with other stakeholders, leading to an understanding of problems and solutions among all stakeholders;

### 3- What are the strength and weaknesses of land stewardship?

#### Strengths:

- Adaptability (geographically, temporally, to different political scales/administrative levels);
- Recognition/promotion of non-academic knowledge;
- Necessity of a territorial leadership process (coherent, consistent and coordinated approach);
- Facilitation of citizen-led initiatives for nature;
- Contract-based approach (gradual, flexible and adaptive);
- Successful case studies prove that it works.

#### Weaknesses:

- The translated word in French “Intendance du Territoire” (Cf Quebec), is not really understood in France and doesn't imply it is about nature → vagueness and danger of misappropriation;
- No official recognition in France;
- Contract-based approach (private agreements, easily broken);
- Necessity of a territorial leadership process (difficulty matching different approaches and levels);
- Lack of coherence between public policies and local public services;
- Lack of financial resources in a crisis context.

### 4- What actions and targets should be undertaken to promote land stewardship?

- Gather essential stakeholders - by publishing/distributing brochures and publications -e.g. scientific articles on the concept-, developing marketing strategies, involving private funding, defining land stewardship principles and criteria.
- Investigate public policies - determine how to link land stewardship with existing policies and make proposals for its integration, join the French GIEE working groups (on the future agriculture act), identify



local representatives that can spread the message.

- Lobby - institutions, European parliamentarians, assess local stakeholders' level of acceptance of the concept).
- Make land stewardship assessments - identify nature management items in actual 'packages' to budget what could be a land stewardship national policy with clear cost/benefit analyses for policy-makers.
- Facilitate communication - establish a platform for sharing experiences, training courses on LS open to all and on communication for naturalists, convince other land managers to include land stewardship as a tool to achieve their objectives, spread the word and concept amongst local authorities, mayors, farmers organisations etc. to get people to join.



## OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

During the workshop, participants confirmed that a wide spectrum of individuals and organisations have specific responsibilities in practising land stewardship. Nature conservation and landscape management is not always carried out by employed personnel of an agency or an NGO –individual private landowners or farmers in particular have an essential role to play in the delivery of conservation objectives. There is often the need for a coordinated approach to manage relationships at a level beyond individual property to ensure agreed activities are being delivered.

Key areas for future action include developing ways to:

- increase capacity and ensure (public) organisations facilitate land stewardship practices because they are aware land stewardship supports the delivery of conservation objectives
- improve performance by building knowledge about on-site management processes and practices involved in implementing land stewardship.



## MAIN CONCLUSIONS OF THE WORKSHOP

- Land stewardship is a set of voluntary actions, which offer civil society and local stakeholders the opportunity to play an active and decisive role in environmental conservation and land management. It is based on a sense of place, a sense of ownership and a group or community.
- Land stewardship is an adaptive, functional and ecosystemic approach, complementary or an alternative to regulatory or market-based conservation. It concerns the spaces 'in between' (between protected areas) and creates a more global network for biodiversity.
- Land stewardship is a sustainable method of acting for biodiversity and landscape conservation within a demanding social and environmental context. It takes into account both the needs of local communities and conservation objectives.
- Land stewardship is based on the development and implementation of many existing public policies (such as Natura 2000 or the National Strategy for Biodiversity) but is not recognised as an official tool.
- Currently land stewardship's success is highly dependent on individual motivations and involvement. Whilst allowing this involvement land stewardship also empowers and recognises local stakeholders (for their knowledge or their environmental actions), thereby enhancing the durability of the actions towards natural and cultural heritage protection.
- The "negotiated agreements approach" is both a strength and a weakness. The French government currently works on an equivalent of conservation easement. This could be a real opportunity to improve the durability and effectiveness (and efficiency) of conservation measures.
- Land stewardship requires few resources, but even that is a struggle in the current economic crisis, especially without an official recognition of the concept and tools. Lobbying actions could help to obtain this recognition.
- Land stewardship should be promoted in general. Therefore it is essential that official representatives carry the message at all levels and in different networks (political, agricultural...). As the translated word in French is not always understood in France, promotion through successful examples and shared experiences should be developed.

## KEY WORDS:

voluntary agreement  
citizen capacity  
shared-  
knowledge  
commons  
collective action  
recognition  
solidarity  
responsibility  
empowerment

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are very grateful for the expert contributions, in particular for the sharing of the successful examples of land stewardship. We also thank the CEN L-R staff in Montpellier and all the speakers. Copies of all presentations and associated materials can be downloaded at: [www.landstewardship.eu](http://www.landstewardship.eu)

In addition we would like to thank the European Commission for its valuable support (through the LIFE+ programme), without which this successful workshop would not have been possible.

PHOTO GALLERY:

