

# SOUTHERN PLAINS LAND TRUST: CARBON FUNDING TO PRESERVE MORE GRASSLANDS



*Southern Plains Land Trust*  
GAINING GROUND FOR PRAIRIE WILDLIFE



Nicole Rosmarino, Executive Director, SPLT



“There are people who think of the prairie as boring, and it is hard not to pity them.”

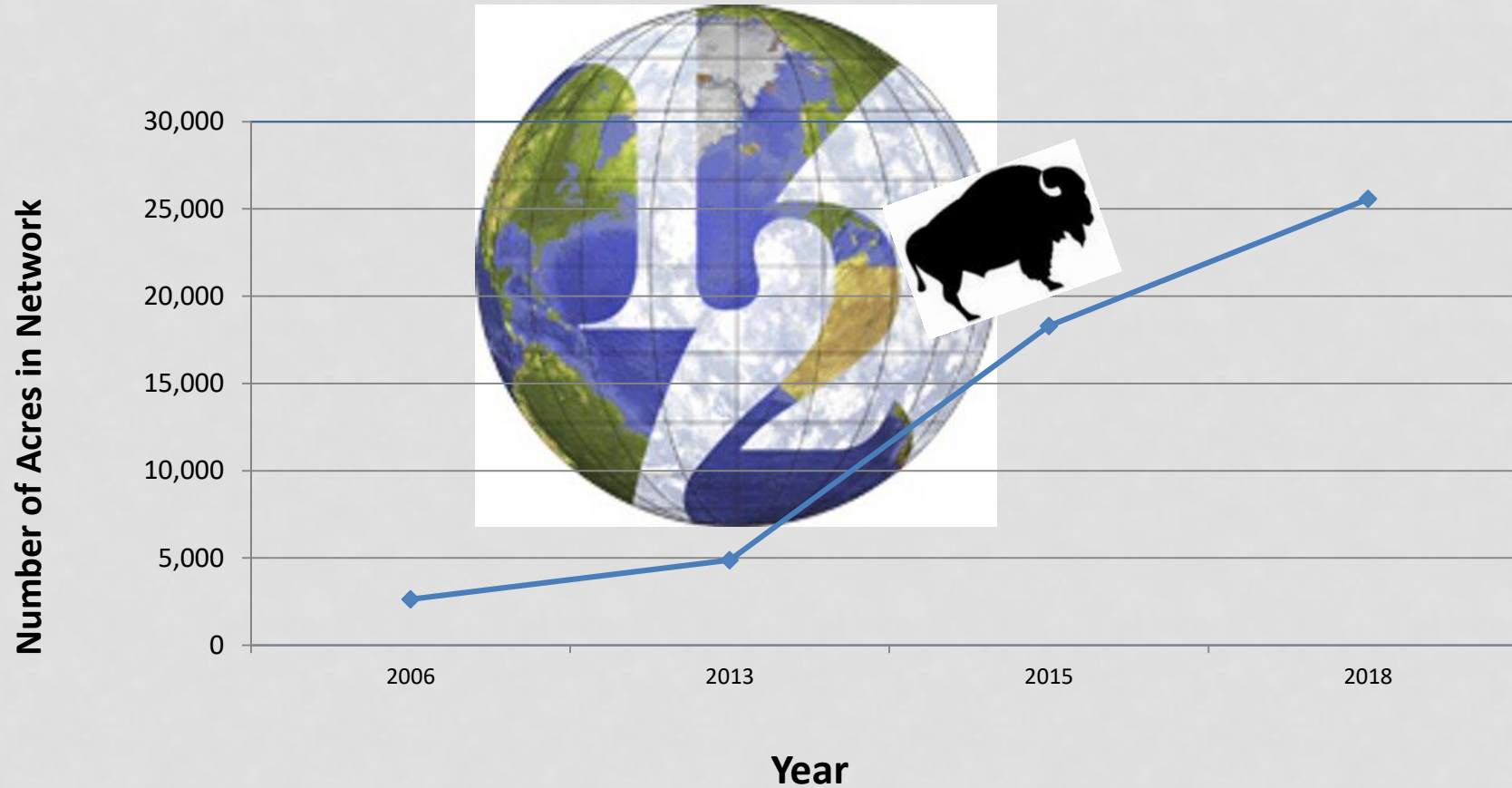
— Candace Savage, *Prairie: A Natural History*



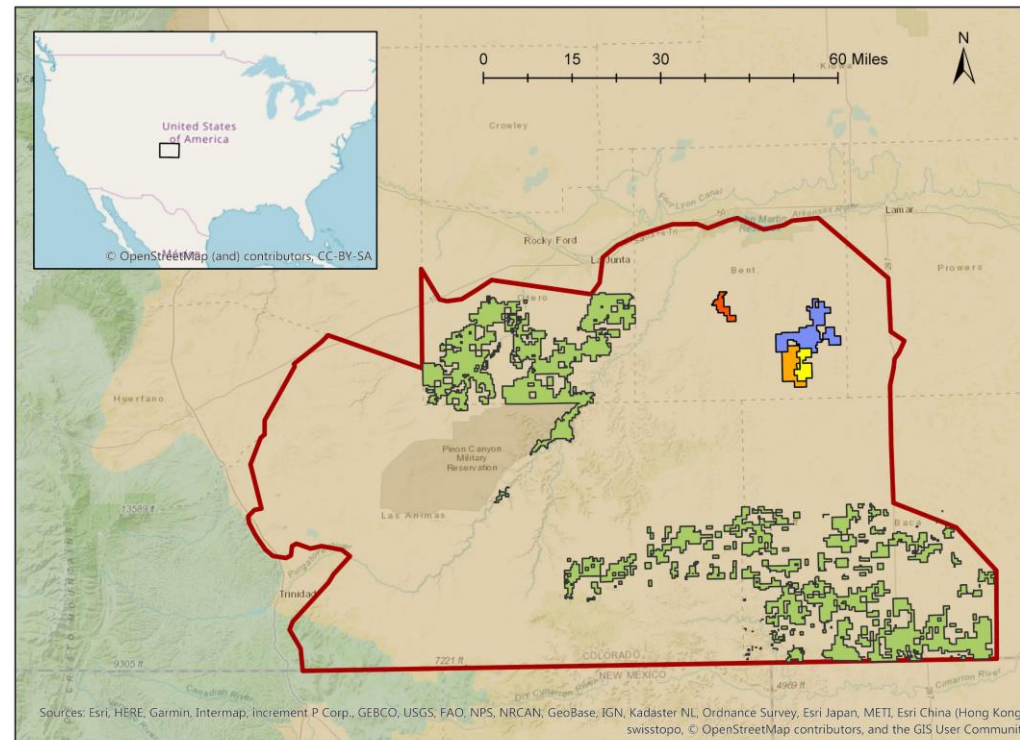
# SPLT's Acquisition Focus Area: Prairie Wildlife Refuges in Southeastern Colorado



# GROWING THE SPLT PRESERVE NETWORK



# GROWING THE SPLT PRESERVE NETWORK



- Heartland Ranch Phase 1
- Heartland Ranch Phase 2
- Raven's Nest
- Potential SPLT acquisition
- Comanche National Grasslands
- Greater SPLT Boundary
- Ecoregion boundaries
- Colorado Rockies forests
- Western shortgrass prairie



# SOUTHEASTERN COLORADO BIODIVERSITY HOTSPOT





# VARIED WILDLIFE: UNIQUELY NORTH AMERICAN









# MAKING PROGRESS WITH A SMALL PIECE OF THE PIE

\$410.02 billion



3% **Environment/Animals**

# CARBON OFFSET PORTFOLIO

## SPLT'S CARBON PROJECTS

- Raven's Nest Nature Preserve
  - 4,772 acres
  - 1,900 metric tons
- Heartland Ranch Nature Preserve
  - 18,160 acres
  - 8,700 metric tons
- Overall
  - 22,932 acres SPLT owns in fee
  - 10,600 metric tons





# BENEFITS OF CARBON PROGRAM

- Expanded capacity to accomplish more land preservation, which sequesters more carbon
- New source of revenue for up to 50 years
- Entrepreneurial direction
- Leverage traditional philanthropy





# CHALLENGES OF CARBON PROGRAM



- Size of project important
  - About 50% of our properties have eligible soils
  - Fewer metric tons per acre in our area versus other systems
- Low cost per metric ton on voluntary market
- Up front costs and ongoing external and internal costs
  - Project development fees
  - Conservation easement transaction costs
- Steep learning curve
- CIG Pilot project – thank you EDF and CIG partners!
- Timing: need conservation easement in the works
- Additionality question



# NEW LAND PURCHASE THROUGH CARBON FUNDING

- Positive feedback loop: carbon sales from existing preserves generate capacity to purchase more grasslands and sequester more carbon
- How about the funds upfront? Terrific answer to additionality question!
- Part of portfolio for new land acquisition funding: leverages grants, donations, financing





# CARBON CAN BE A GAME CHANGER

- Need enough land or land with high enough carbon values
- Meet the irrigation tests if necessary
- Do work in house if possible
- Long-term commitment to program (100 years for each vintage) compatible with perpetual nature of land trusts
- Move from voluntary to compliance market would help to absorb transaction costs even more





# OUTREACH ON OUR PROJECT



- EDF Solutions Magazine article
- Media work with CAR, EDF, NRCS, & Microsoft
- America's Grassland Conference 2017
- Plains Safaris Conference 2018
- Conservation Finance Network Conference 2018
  
- Neighbors
- Land Trust Alliance
- Other land trusts









Photo Credit: Sean Boggs for EDF







THANK YOU FOR LISTENING!