



# 2015

## ANNUAL REPORT

### Greetings!

While annual reports are designed to recap the past year, we believe what you're about to read is a prediction of the future and what's next for the Institute.

As we started to compile these stories, one thing became clear. Moving forward, our work is firmly grounded in developing leadership and collaboration for both individuals and organizations that care about the Earth.

You might be thinking, "Hey, that's no different from ICL's approach over the past 25 years." Well, here's what's different: we have been called to engage with partners on much larger, more complex projects that can have ultimately have a bigger impact.

Yes, we're using the same approaches that you've come to expect from ICL. Yet we find ourselves working on a completely different scale - bigger, broader, bolder.

So we say to you, our friend and supporter: Thank you. Your support is appreciated more than you know. I hope you enjoy this quick peek into the Institute for Conservation Leadership's world, which we gratefully share with you.

Thank you,

*Dianne Russell, President,  
Institute for Conservation  
Leadership*

*Mauricio Velasquez,  
Board Chair*





# SYNERGY SPECIALISTS

Here at the Institute for Conservation Leadership (ICL), we don't have the exact recipe, but we know this: good facilitation, communication, and organization can make a huge difference. When people work together effectively - when we combine our skills, talents, and aspirations in productive ways - we can all accomplish a lot more.

**At ICL, we're the synergy specialists.** We help individual leaders, organizations, and collaborations become more productive and effective.

*How do you take something good and make it even better?  
How can you turn a great idea into tangible, on-the-ground, measurable change? What's the "secret synergy sauce" that creates 1+1=3?*

## **GOING BIG FOR CLEAN WATER**

The William Penn Foundation in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania is making a big bet on clean water. They recently launched the Delaware River Watershed Initiative (DRWI), one of North America's most ambitious projects to protect and restore an entire watershed.

Fifteen million people rely on the watershed for drinking water. Its purity depends on the ecological health of the landscape - forests, farms, suburban and urban areas - and the rivers that flow through it.

Since initiating the project, the William Penn Foundation has recruited nearly 50 nonprofits to

participate, including land trusts, nature centers, academic institutions and advocacy groups. It's a complex web of relationships designed to address a really complex problem.

## CALL THE COMPLEXITY EXPERTS

How did they manage all that complexity? They recruited a longtime partner, ICL, to help organize and facilitate the network.

"Because we were so focused on getting the science right, we neglected to think about how fifty organizations could best work together on an initiative of this scale," says Andrew Johnson, Program Director at the William Penn Foundation. "ICL was instrumental in fostering collaboration among our partners. This initiative is both ambitious and innovative, and in many ways we're flying the plane while we're building it. With ICL's help, we're flying it a lot better."

"We've catalyzed an enormous amount of activity," said Peter Howell of Open Space Institute, one of the leadership groups in the network. "Collectively, we're doing more and we're moving faster than any group could have done individually."

"ICL's role has been essential," he adds. "They highlight the 'how' of our work, not just the 'what.' Ultimately, that's just as important."

This is the alchemy of collaboration. When we focus on strengthening the network – better communication, clear structure, and developing new leaders – all that collaborative energy pays off. "Small organizations value being part of something bigger," says Johnson, "and that only works for us due to ICL's mediation and facilitation."

Working together, several DRWI partners combined their expertise to generate \$13 million in new funding from the US Department of Agriculture Regional Conservation Partnership Program – a victory made possible through the DRWI's robust cooperative model.

## A TOOLBOX FOR COLLABORATION

ICL was founded 25 years ago to strengthen the leaders, organizations, coalitions and networks that protect and conserve the Earth.

With the DRWI project – essentially a big network comprised of smaller networks – we're using every tool in our toolbox, including consulting, training, coaching, research, and meeting facilitation skills.

"ICL understands organizational tissue," says Howell. "Our nonprofit provides the conservation content; they provide coordination and collaboration services. They're the mortar between the bricks, that holds the whole project together."



Andrew Johnson,  
Program Director at William Penn Foundation

## THINKING UPSTREAM, DOWNSTREAM, AND BEYOND

ICL occupies a unique niche: we're all about conservation and we're all about leadership.

We combine, in the words of John Mitterholzer of the George Gund Foundation, "a deep knowledge of environmental issues" with a deep commitment to leadership development.

ICL is the go-to resource for conservation leaders, organizations, projects, and networks that want to:

- › Build stronger staff and board teams
- › Work with partners more effectively
- › Proactively plan for the future
- › Create and strengthen the next generation of leadership

Furthermore, we serve nonprofits and government agencies across North America. Thanks to our geographic reach, we often share information, make introductions, and cross-pollinate work across different regions.

"Sometimes I call ICL and ask, 'Is this unique to Ohio?'" says Mitterholzer.

"Are you seeing this elsewhere?"

And then I ask, 'How do we make these environmental issues less polarizing?'"

On the Delaware River Watershed Initiative, we're creating opportunities for partners to connect more intentionally and effectively.

"With ICL's help, we're communicating better," says Jennifer Adkins of the Partnership for the Delaware Estuary. "Thanks to the initiative, we've improved our partnerships with upstream organizations. We're thinking

more comprehensively about our geography – for example, paying more attention to forest protection in the upper basin, hundreds of miles upstream."

## IN IT FOR THE LONG HAUL

The William Penn Foundation has committed \$60 million over ten years to safeguard the region's water, while also strengthening the capacity of local nonprofits to preserve land, use science for monitoring and protection, work together effectively, and to create change in their communities.

*Alchemy: A power or process of transforming something common into something special.*

- Merriam Webster

The Institute for Conservation Leadership will remain part of the leadership team for as long as we're needed. After 25 years, we know that change takes time. We are in it for the long haul, because the Earth asks no less of us.



# INVESTING IN LEADERSHIP

When Kate Fritz was hired to lead the South River Federation in Maryland, one of her first moves – at the urging of her board – was to enroll in ICL’s Executive Leadership Program. The program combines two multi-day training retreats with a lot of remote learning, coaching, and peer networking.

“It was immediately relevant,” she says. “I learned that being a good leader is a lot broader than just being able to do your job well. You need to build your own leadership model based on who you are.”

Kirk Mantay is the organization’s Director of Watershed Restoration, the longest-serving employee, and a self-described “science nerd,” adding, “I’ve taken and taught most science classes.” But he’d never received training in leadership development.

“I needed Kate to be successful,” he says – and increasingly, she was. As he observed the growth and change in her leadership skills, he decided to sign up for ICL’s Leading From Within, another long-term, intensive program.

With two alumni of these complementary programs leading in the same organization, the culture began to shift. “We’re more introspective,” says Fritz. “Our work is less transactional and more strategic.” Mantay adds, with a laugh, ‘I use the word intentional a lot, which is new. Before taking action, I do a real quick scan. What might the results be? I’m less likely to blindly fire off emails.’

According to Fritz, “The other staff members see our personal work, the way we connect on work-life balance and managing ourselves, and they’re more interested in their own personal development. We’re seeing the changing culture reflected back to us.”

“We used to hire for skills,” she adds. “While we still do, but now we also hire for personality and for curiosity. We want people who are intellectually curious.”

This culture shift has rippled out beyond the organization and into the wider community. In 2016, South River Federation was voted Best Nonprofit in Annapolis by the readers of a local magazine. “We’re seen as thoughtful, strategic,

systems thinkers,” says Mantay. “After 15 years, the broader nonprofit community – the hospital, social service agencies, funders – have started reaching out to us. Donors are asking questions like, ‘How might you work with the hospital?’ That’s new, and it’s exciting.”

Reflecting on the ways that ICL has changed his work and his perspective, he adds, “All these changes came from left field, and I am so grateful. This new way of thinking, this new culture, are like tiny, daily investments that have immense payouts all the time.”

## BECAUSE LAND IS VITAL

Across Illinois, the landscape is threatened by a combination of development, pollution, and other pressures. A patchwork of protected lands – parks, forests, conserved areas – is set aside to preserve biodiversity, habitat, open space, and recreation opportunities.

The key word is “patchwork.” Until recently, there’s been little effort to connect these fragments into a larger, more resilient network.

Vital Lands Illinois was created by the Grand Victoria Foundation to both preserve threatened

places and create opportunities to connect them into a larger conservation vision for the state. ICL was invited by the foundation to help plan, convene, and facilitate the Vital Lands Illinois network, which now includes a broad mix of nonprofits and government agencies.

“The land is fragmented, but the environmental community was even more fragmented,” says Pen DauBach of Clifftop, a land conservancy in Southern Illinois. “From the start, ICL provided facilitation services, trained us to build consensus, and helped to keep things focused.”



Pen DauBach, Clifftop

ICL’s involvement has yielded increasing synergy throughout the network, according DauBach. “Our individual leadership is stronger,” she says, “which means our organizations are stronger. We’re protecting more land. Because of the network, groups are coordinating their efforts to preserve larger blocks, which has a greater conservation impact. We’re working more effectively with state agencies.

“It’s amazing to see how 60 organizations coalesced – and it wouldn’t have happened without ICL.” The next step? “More facilitation training from ICL,” she says, “so we can manage our network more effectively.”

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Wilmington Green Jobs program teens learn how to survey for freshwater mussels in the Brandywine River.  
- Jennifer Adkins, Partnership for the Delaware Estuary

### Investing in Leadership

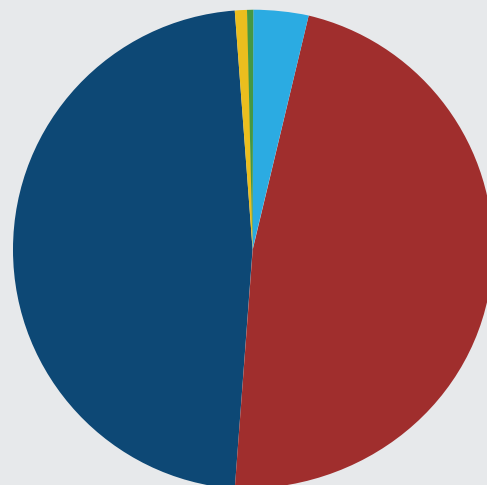
Kate Fritz, South River Federation

### Because Land is Vital

Pen DauBach, Clifftop

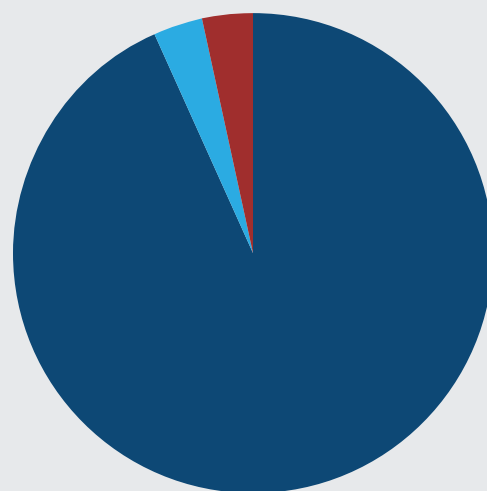
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# FINANCIAL INFORMATION



## Revenue

Contributions	48,619
Foundation Grants	646,185
Project Fees & Contracts	651,856
Interest & Dividend Income	9,941
Other Income	4,357
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>1,360,958</b>



## Expenses

Programs Expenses	1,114,872
Fundraising Expenses	41,427
General & Administrative Expenses	40,447
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>1,196,746</b>