

A Vision for the ChicoryLane Foundation

Illustrated in the ChicoryLane Symposium

John B. Smith

Purpose

One definition of *a leader is someone who creates a vision and leads others toward it*. This paper sets out my vision for ChicoryLane. It reflects the ideas that shaped its founding and, in broad terms, are shared by the Smith family, though we differ in emphasis and detail.

The paper does two things.

- First, it places ChicoryLane within a spectrum of conservation organizations.
 - Second, it shows how that vision is made concrete in the ChicoryLane Symposium. My aim for the Symposium is to “set a mark”—to illustrate what ChicoryLane is about and to create a durable touchstone for future work.
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Spectrum of Conservation Domains

Conservation work falls into four overlapping domains that differ in scale, focus, and method.

Climate

Global in scope. Climate organizations work through policy, regulation, and influence on governments and major economic sectors. They are often supported by large donors and emphasize systemic change more than personal engagement.

Examples: Rockefeller Foundation, Bezos Earth Fund, Green Climate Fund.

Core question: How do we stabilize the global system?

Environment

Regional in scale. Environmental organizations focus on air, water, pollution, pesticides, and other forces that degrade natural systems and human health. They tend to be populist, acting through financial, educational, and advocacy processes. Their physical impact is often indirect.

Examples: World Wildlife Fund, The Nature Conservancy, Environmental Defense Fund, Audubon Society.

Core question: How do we limit harm and protect human and natural health?

Land Conservation

Regional or local in scope. They usually focus on obtaining and maintaining conservation easements on specific properties. Stewardship programs normally monitor boundaries and land uses. These organizations are often supported through public donations and membership programs, often with large numbers of members relative to protected landowners. They also often offer ancillary activities that combine community-building with environmental services.

Examples: Clearwater Conservancy, Centre County Farmland Trust, Linn Conservancy, We Conserve PA.

Core question: How can we preserve specific properties and their intended land uses, as well as offering community-building environmental activities?

Ecological

Local, personal, and direct. Ecological organizations focus on specific places and hands-on work with the Land over extended periods of time. Learning arises from observation and engagement, but may be programmatic within established, continuing organizations. Can include research activities and tracts may measure in the thousands of acres. Over time, such actions can produce real physical change, broadly disseminated.

Examples: Tallgrass Prairie Center, Aldo Leopold Foundation, The Land Institute.

Core question: How do we maintain and improve particular places, learn from that practice, and broadly disseminate that knowledge and motivation?

Where does ChicoryLane belong?

Place-Based Ecological Foundations

- **ChicoryLane unusual, but not unique.**
 - Belongs to a small cohort of place-based ecological foundations whose identity and learning are inseparable from a usually single landscape.
 - Treat land not as a venue, but as a living subject.
 - Work is about stewardship, not scale; about care over time, not replication.

- Knowledge grows from observation, experiment, and continuity and is shared as insight rather than prescription. They work in human time—seasons, decades, generations.
 - **IRS-accepted mission.** ChicoryLane Foundation (CLF) will conduct activities in two, separate but mutually supportive and integrated areas: preserve, own, and operate an ecologically significant undeveloped parcel of land and water, and conduct a program of educational, aesthetic, and research activities associated with the ecology of that land and water.
 - **Place-based.** ChicoryLane is centered on a particular largely undeveloped tract of Land. Its aim is not simply to preserve, but to help that Land become the best version of itself.
 - **Learning from practice.** Knowledge arises from working with the Land and informs education, outreach, and aesthetic experience.
 - **Private operating foundation.** Supported by an endowment, ChicoryLane is largely free from fundraising pressure. It need not chase growth, novelty, or performative metrics. It can take the long view.
 - **A living model.** ChicoryLane is not an abstraction. It is a working landscape where ecology, learning, and personal engagement are embodied in one actual physical place.
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The ChicoryLane Symposium

The Symposium gives concrete form to the ChicoryLane vision. It is meant to “set a mark” and serve as a touchstone for future work. It closely mirrors the Foundations vision, outline above.

Friday — *Motivation*

Doug Tallamy Keynote

An ecological view of the oak tree across the seasons and across scales—from small in-town lots to larger suburban 10-acre parcels. The talk blends science, beauty, and motivation, and explores ecological thinking in practice.

Saturday — *Understanding*

Six guided walks or workshops focused on:

- Birds in ecological context

- Native shrubs and the services they provide
- Insects, with attention to spiders and caterpillars
- Herbaceous plants across environments
- Woodcock daytime habitats
- Open questions and answers about ChicoryLane, itself

All emphasize place-based learning, emphasizing direct observation

Sunday — *Engagement*

Personal or small-group engagement with the Land. Participants choose their own mode: painting, drawing, photography, writing, slow walking, sitting, observing, or quiet reflection. Guides will be present to answer questions and offer suggestions, but the emphasis is on following one's own interests and instincts.

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