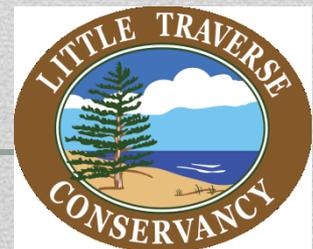
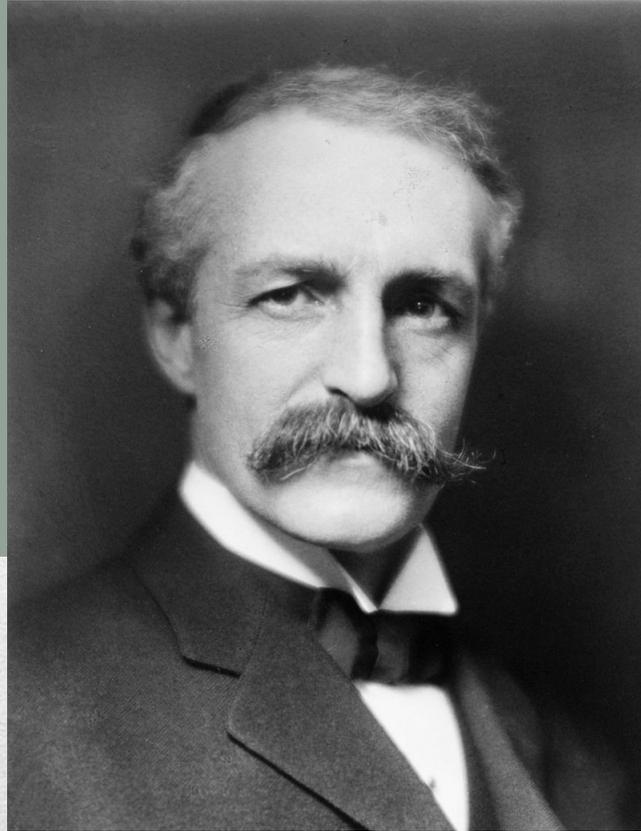


What is our role?

Defining Stewardship and reviewing the motivations for nature conservation

Derek Shiels - derek@landtrust.org





Gifford Pinchot, 1909

- ❖ Char Miller, *Gifford Pinchot and the Making of Modern Environmentalism*. Island Press, 2001
 - ❖ USFS, The Audubon Society, Yale School of Forestry
-

Conservation's ethical side

- Conservation is data, empirical, objective answers

Yes, and...

- Requires making difficult decisions
- Land ethic
- Moral imperative
- Mission-driven discipline
- Conservationists need to be value guided decision makers

❖ Petriello and Wallen. Integrative reflections on the new conservation science debate. *Biodiversity Conservation*, 2015

What are your values?

What motivates you?

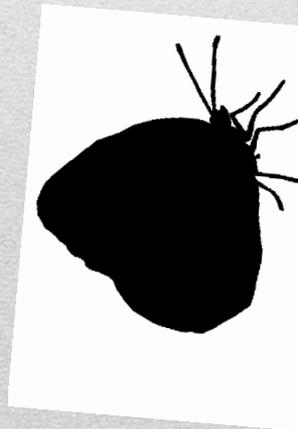


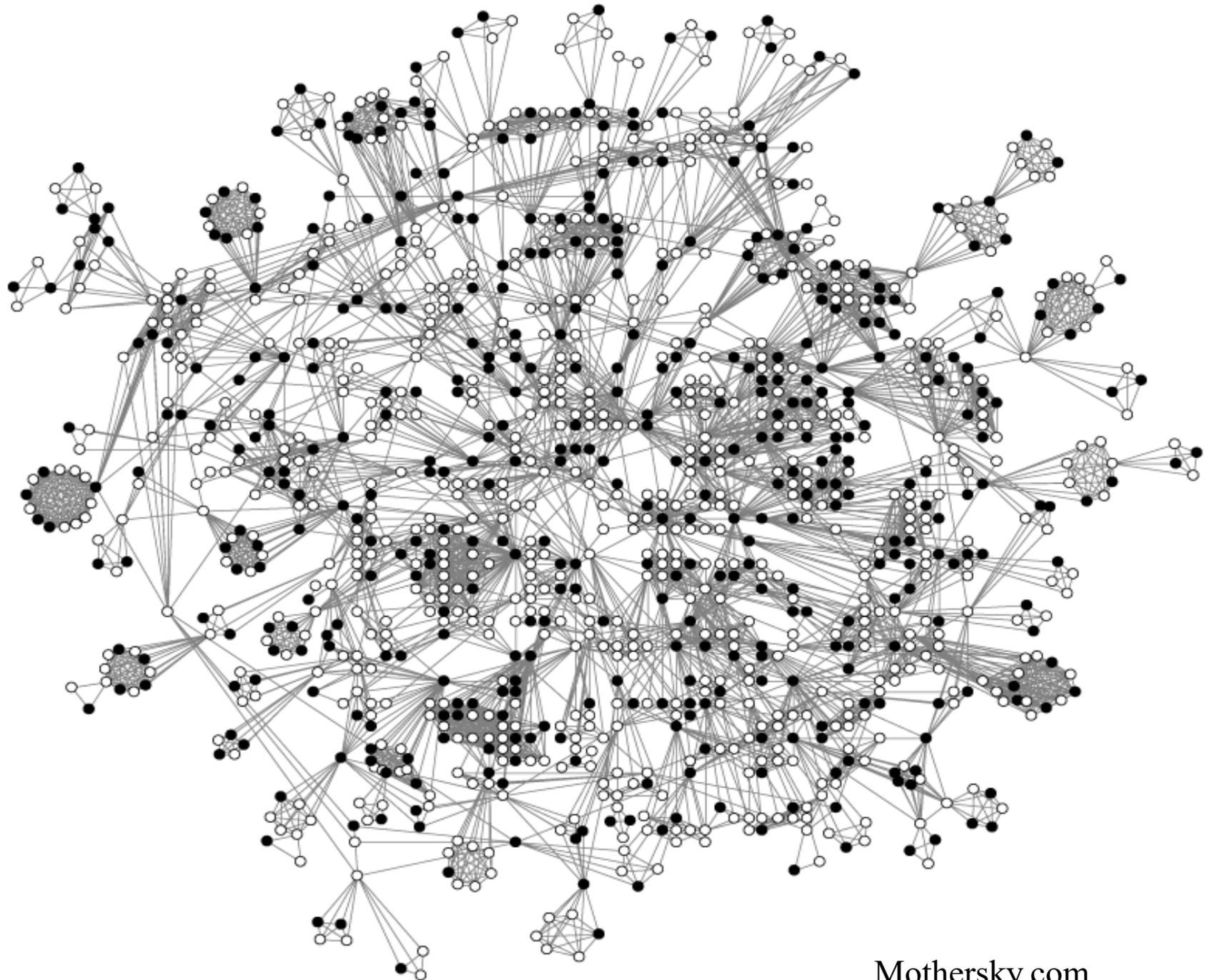
Hoffius Family Nature Preserve, Cheboygan County



“A battle for the soul of conservation science?”

- Or just part of being human?
- How I came to these questions (and why these are good questions)
- Look at the modern take of the conservation debate
- Throw some more logs on the fire
- Take-aways





Questions leading me to questions



Jack and Tucker Harris Working Forest Reserve, Cheboygan County



- ❖ Craig Harper. Managing Early Successional Plant Communities for Wildlife in the Eastern US. University of Tennessee

Questions leading me to questions



We've adopted the language of resourcism or possession

“Perfectly awful word”

STEWARD-

Old English stiward, stigweard “house guardian, housekeeper,” from stig “hall, **pen for cattle and hogs**, part of a house”



**Traditional Conservation
Preservation (Muir)
Ecocentric view**

- Intrinsic value

**New Conservation
Wise Use (Pinchot)
Anthropocentric view**

- Instrumental value/ecosystem services

- 1. Diversity is good**
- 2. Ecological complexity is good**
- 3. Evolution is good**
- 4. Species have intrinsic value in themselves**
 - Extinction, fragmentation, and non-native species are bad, and cultivated nature is never as good as wild nature



Traditional Conservation Preservation (Muir) Ecocentric view

- Intrinsic value
- **Inattention to human well-being**
- **Missing key motivations for conservation**
- **There is an indifferent public**
- **Not adequately addressing human rights**
- **Outdated to handle growing pressures**

New Conservation Wise Use (Pinchot) Anthropocentric view

- Instrumental value/ecosystem services
- Tied to human well being
- Broader than just biology
- Recognize good of novel ecosystems and resilience
- Protected areas alone are not enough
- Pristine nature does not exist (think climate changes long reach)
- Working with corporations can be a positive force
- Works only if people support conservation goals



Traditional Conservation Preservation (Muir) Ecocentric view

- Intrinsic value
- **Protecting biodiversity protects the stability of ecosystems (not the other way around)**

New Conservation Wise Use (Pinchot) Anthropocentric view

- Instrumental value/ecosystem services
- **Undermines ethical motivations for conservation**
- **Supplants biodiversity based conservation with economic growth**
- **Humanitarian movement-not conservation biology**
- **Allows for inconvenient species (think lions, wolves, jaguars)**
- **Increasing incomes affects increase in ecological footprint**
- **Replaces wild places with domesticated landscapes**



Traditional Conservation Preservation (Muir) Ecocentric view

- Intrinsic value
- **Declining interest in environmentalism**
- **The intrinsic value motivation is too narrowly inspiring**

New Conservation Wise Use (Pinchot) Anthropocentric view

- Instrumental value/ecosystem services
- Protected areas are a cornerstone but alone are not enough
- Work with human self-interests (a call to realism)
- Focusing on the poor because it's the right thing to do and because its effective
- Broaden the tent of conservation (reach other segments of societies)



Traditional Conservation Preservation (Muir) Ecocentric view

- Intrinsic value
- Need to respect the right of nature to persist without direct value to humanity
- Shutting out doom and gloom terms deflect society from hard, necessary choices
- Large protected areas and connectivity are key

New Conservation Wise Use (Pinchot) Anthropocentric view

- Instrumental value/ecosystem services
- **Human exceptionalism as a justification**
- **If economics justify protection they also justify extinction**
- **Novel ecosystems result in global homogeneity**
- **Economic growth hasn't helped reduce poverty and will not help nature (nod to failures of neoliberalism)**
- **Resilience requires perturbations to cease**

❖ Miller, Soule, Terbough. 'New Conservation' or surrender to development?
Animal Conservation, 2014



Confront and Resist the Anthropocene for Conservation

Anthropocene-aware Conservation



- ❖ Fremaux and Barry. *The “Good Anthropocene” & Green Political Theory: Rethinking Environmentalism, Resisting Ecomodernism*. Political Study in the Anthropocene. Cambridge U. Press, 2019
- ❖ Ellis. *Too Big for Nature*. After Preservation. U. of Chicago Press, 2015.
- ❖ *An EcoModernist Manifesto*

Conservation community is broad and expansive

- Garden Metaphor- Amy McEuen and Megan Styles.
- Nishnaabeg intelligence – Leanne Simpson
- Abundant Futures Manifesto – Rosemary Claire Collard et al. 2015
- Convivial Conservation – Buscher and Fletcher

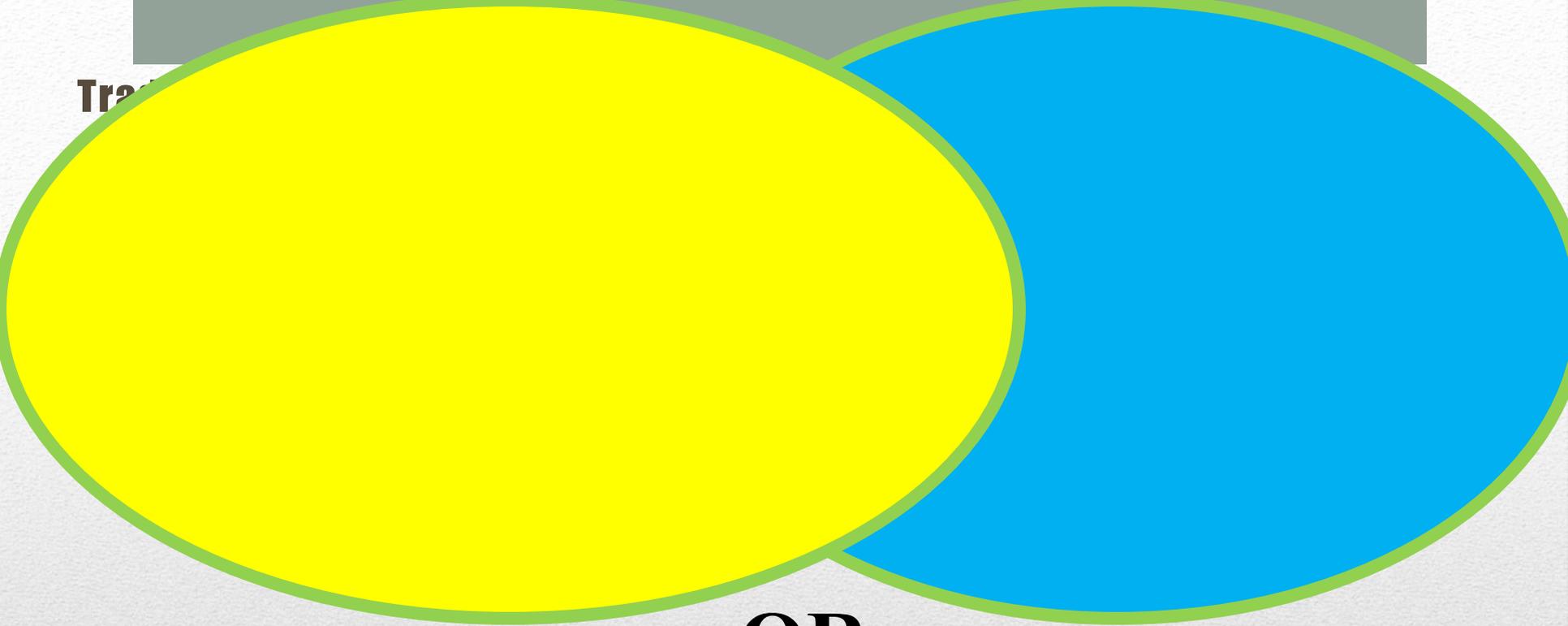


Conservation community is broad and expansive

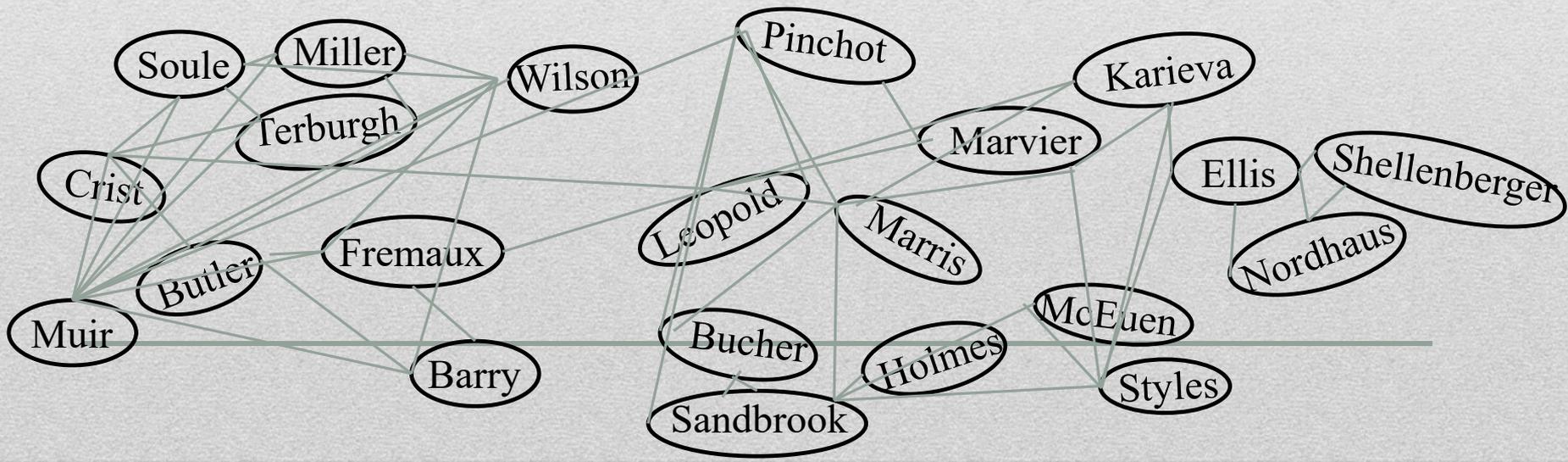
- Shared views on key issues provide the bedrock for any social movement
- Seek common ground - identify the specific areas of consensus
- Be inclusive **AND** unified.
- Debates need to include all of the diversity of conservationists
- Conservation is riddled with contradictory values and views

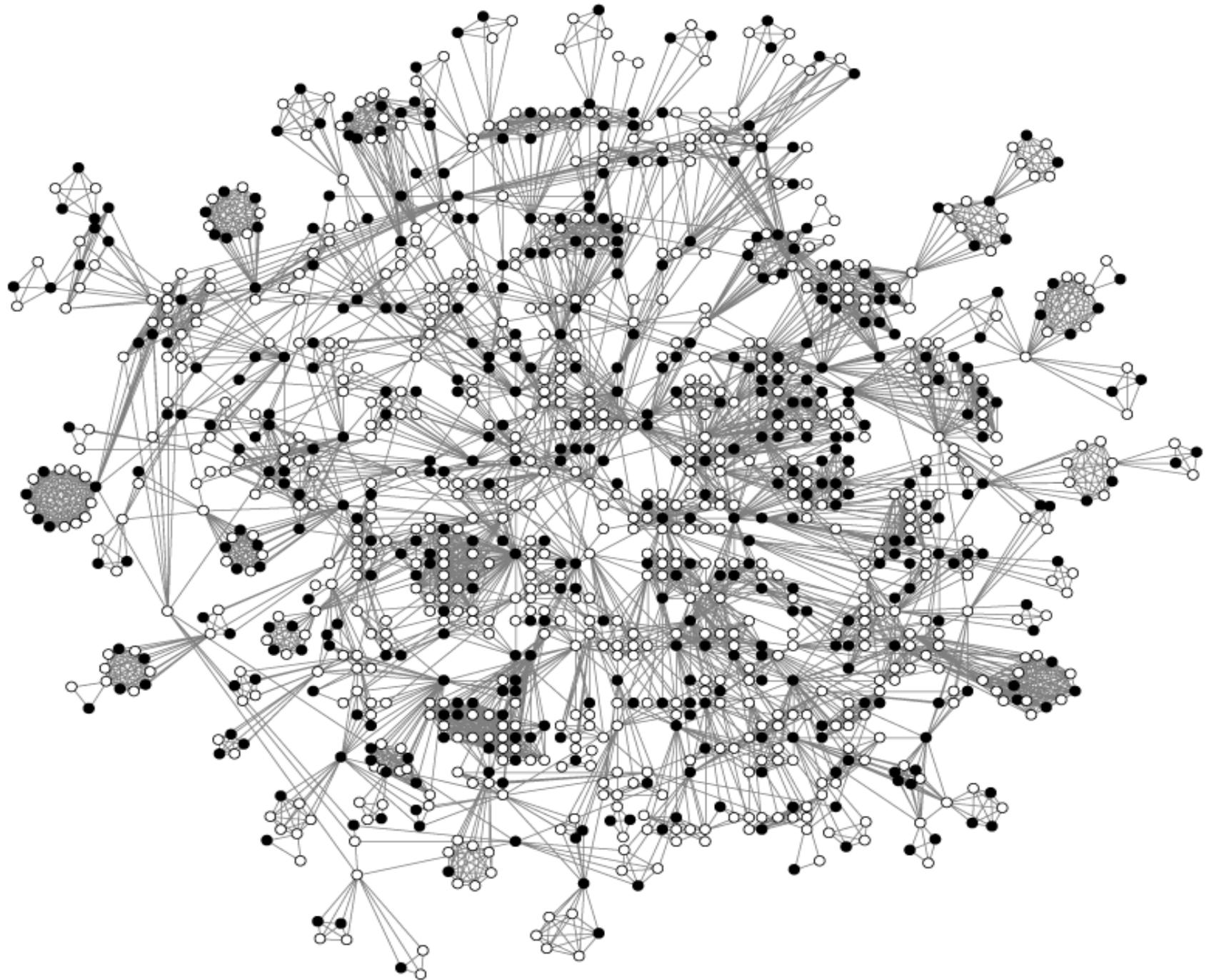


Trad



OR





So Plurality, but how?

We Need to Navigate Contradictions

- Conservation is backward looking...to find our path forward?
- Humans are destroying nature and are the only species that can save nature?

People are doing more harm to the earth but people are flourishing?



We Need to Navigate Contradictions

- Go into them, see where they lead
- Transcend
- Examine your conceptions from a dispassionate point of view

Be okay with tension

Can't get rid of the chaos

❖ Peter Rollins

❖ Erik Meijaard

❖ Tony Reznicek



Withdraw, but don't retreat

- Approach our role with deep ambivalence, both convinced and unconvinced of our control over nature
- Our role is political, we interact in shared spaces
- An obligation to respond
- Hypocrisy is inevitable – deep irony at the heart of environmentalism **is not a reason to dismiss it**
- Unavoidable anthropocentrism
- Response-ability



Guided by your values



Tanton Family Working Forest Reserve, Emmet County

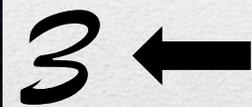


Photo by Holger Link on Unsplash

steward

- Old English stiward, stigweard “house guardian, housekeeper,” from stig “**hall, pen for cattle, part of a house**”
- Weard “guard” (from Proto-Germanic wardaz “guard,” from root wer, “perceive, watch out for”)

-ship

- word-forming element meaning “**quality, condition; act, power, skill; office, position; relation between,**” Middle English *-schipe*, from Old English *-sciepe*, Anglian *-scip* “**state, condition of being,**” ...
-

Wise Care



Wise, humble Care



- ❖ McEuen and Styles. Is gardening a useful metaphor for conservation and restoration? History and controversy. *Restoration Ecology*, 2019

