

- 
- Power Building
  - Story-Telling and Messaging
  - Practice
  - Commitments

***Conservation Forward:  
New language and tactics to  
build Conservation Power***

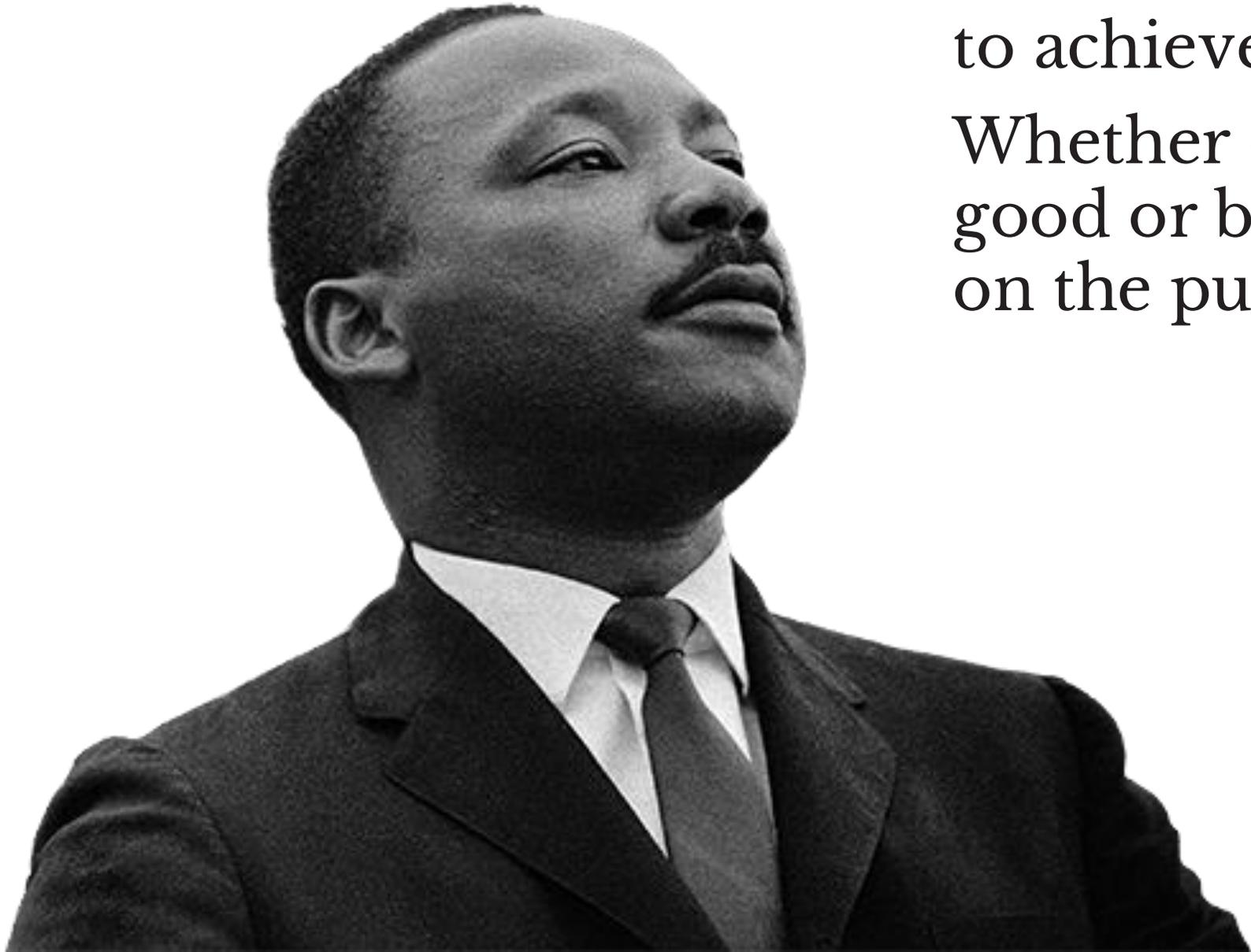
PSCC Annual Meeting 2025



# What If . . . ?

**What would we do with stronger Conservation  
Power in the State of Illinois?**

# What is Power?



“Power is the ability to achieve a purpose. Whether or not it is good or bad depends on the purpose.”



“

Organizing is leadership that enables people to turn the resources they have into the power they need to make the change they want.

”



# Conservation Power in action (Montana)



BY TRISTAN SCOTT  
FEBRUARY 6, 2025

## Ennis Lawmaker Tables Bill to Restrict Perpetual Conservation Easements in Montana

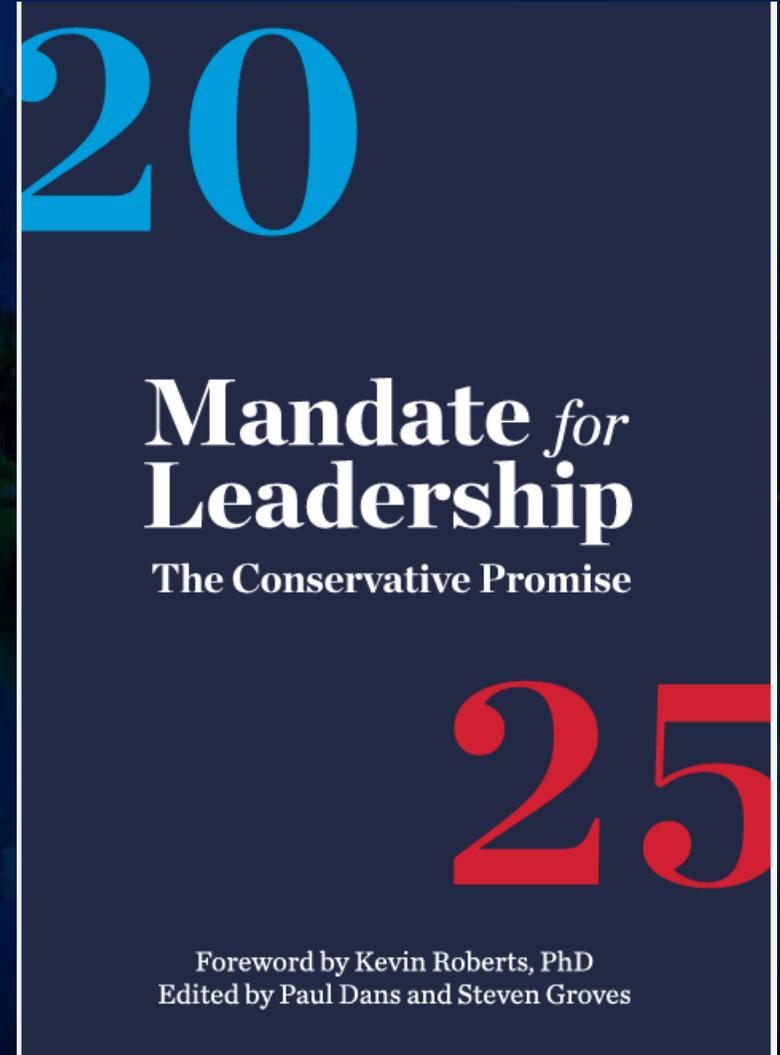


# Anti-Conservation Activism is out there

Currently, we have Project 2025 calling environmentalism “anti-human” with its focus on “population control and economic regression.”

*“The new Administration should, to the extent authorized by law, limit the use of permanent easements and collaborate with lawmakers to prohibit . . . permanent easements.”*

*Project 2025*



# Anti-Conservation Organizes for Power

## STOP THE LAND GRAB

W O R K B O O K

### Ten Steps to Effective Citizen Activism

1. Land under a conservation easement is no longer Private Property.



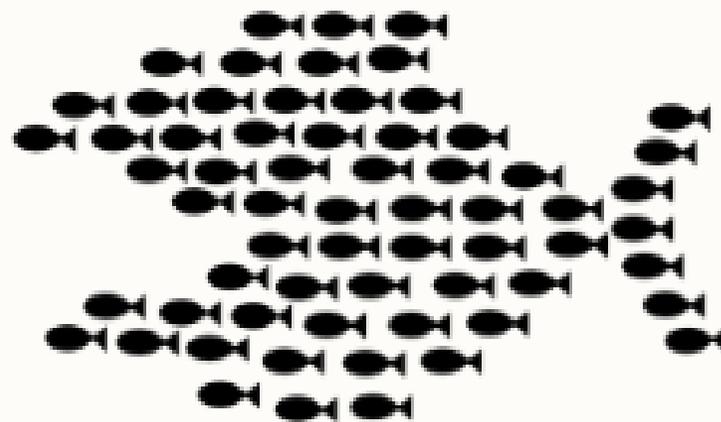
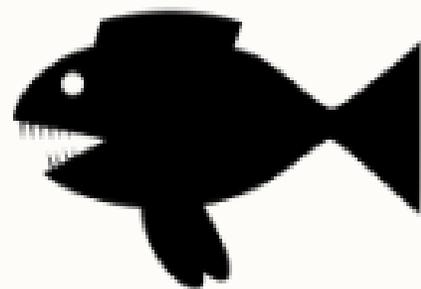
# How Do Others Build Power in Illinois?

- *Illinois Farm Bureau*
- *Illinois Realtors Association*



# Call to Action

***ORGANIZE!***





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# Building Power

*Tips, Tricks, and Tools*

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# Where do I even begin?



How do I go about getting a meeting with an elected official?



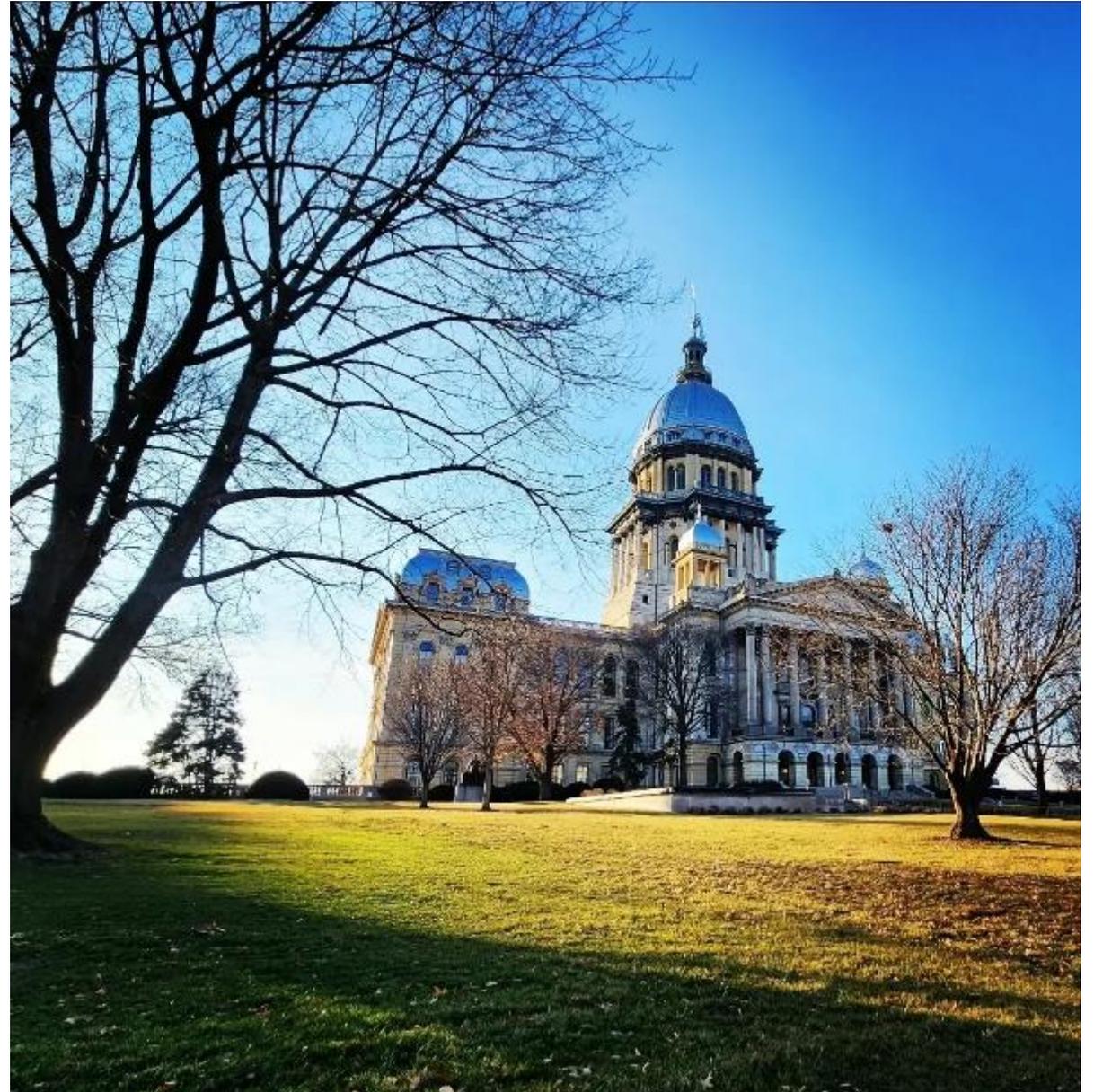
What should I say?



What if I don't know all the answers?



5 easy steps



# Step 1: Define the Goal



You want them to support a piece of legislation



You want them to visit a preserve



You want to educate them on a key issue: importance of easements, prescribed fire, restoration work, etc.



You want to introduce your land trust & the work you are doing in their district



You want to offer support for something they are doing or thank them for previous work

# Step 2: Schedule the Meeting

## Tips:

- Polite Persistence
- Plan in Advance
- Be flexible
- Don't underestimate influence of staffers

### Draft Email:

Dear [Insert Name],

*I Hope you are well and gearing up to enjoy the summer.*

*On behalf of [insert land trust], I wanted to reach out to find a time to connect with you over the next month on the work our land trust is doing in Montana and the importance of land protection agreements for farmers and ranchers in our state.*

*Montana has a unique connection with its natural spaces. From local timberland and ranch land to small family farms, our way of life has always been closely tied with the natural world. [Insert land trust] has been working with local communities to ensure that way of life is protected through land protection agreements. A recent national poll showed overwhelming support for property owners having the right to decide how their land is used through voluntary land protection agreements, and I'd love to share these poll results with you*

*It would be great to discuss with you, hear what questions you have, and talk about how [Insert land trust] can [help/assist/be a resource/etc.]. Insert additional sentence on subject matter if necessary.*

*Please let us know how I can work with your schedule to find an appropriate time for you, and I look forward to connecting. Finally thank you for all you do for Montana and Montanans.*

*Thank you in advance, and we look forward to connecting.*

*Sincerely,  
[Insert name]*



## PROTECT ILLINOIS WETLANDS HB 3596 (Moeller)/SB 2401 (Ellman)

**Illinois wetlands are at risk.** Federal rollbacks have left communities more vulnerable to flooding and water pollution. This bill safeguards Illinois wetlands to protect clean water, reduce flood damage, and preserve vital habitats.

Wetlands improve water quality, provide important flood control, protect our groundwater, and preserve endangered habitats.

The U.S. Supreme Court rolled back U.S. Clean Water Act protections for many wetlands and waters, including freshwater wetlands we rely on for flood control and habitat along major rivers.

Illinois lacks a comprehensive program to protect our wetlands that are no longer federally protected.

Illinois has already lost around 90% of its wetland acreage.

Nearly 75% of US voters in 2023 rated "pollution of rivers, lakes, and streams" as their top conservation issue.

Regardless of their political affiliation, hunters and anglers nationwide strongly favor (92%) restoring Clean Water Act protections for wetlands and streams.



## 74<sup>th</sup> District: Representative Fritts



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**BILL HB 3596 (MOELLER)  
CREATE A STATEWIDE  
CRITICALLY IMPORTANT**

# The Shapes of Stories

## by Kurt Vonnegut

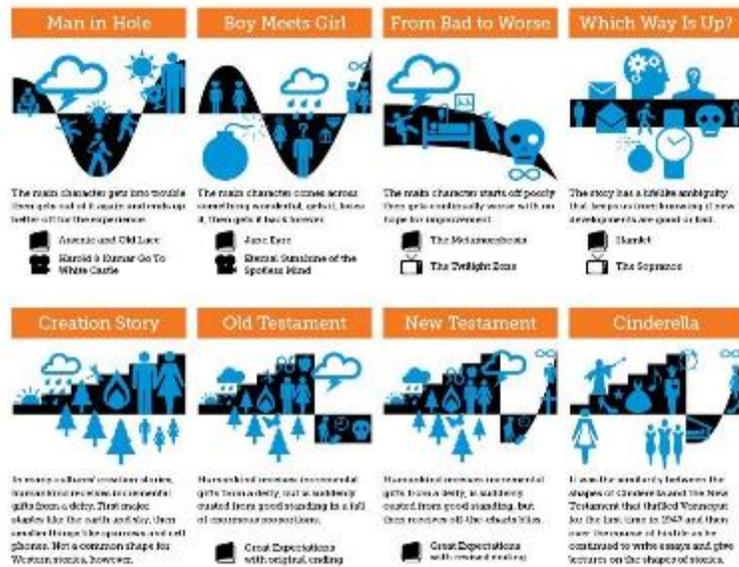
Kurt Vonnegut gained worldwide fame and adoration through the publication of his novels, including *Slaughterhouse-Five*, *Cat's Cradle*, *Breakfast of Champions*, and more.

But it was his rejected master's thesis in anthropology that he called his proudest contribution to his culture.

The basic idea of his thesis was that a story's main character has ups and downs that can be graphed to reveal the story's shape.

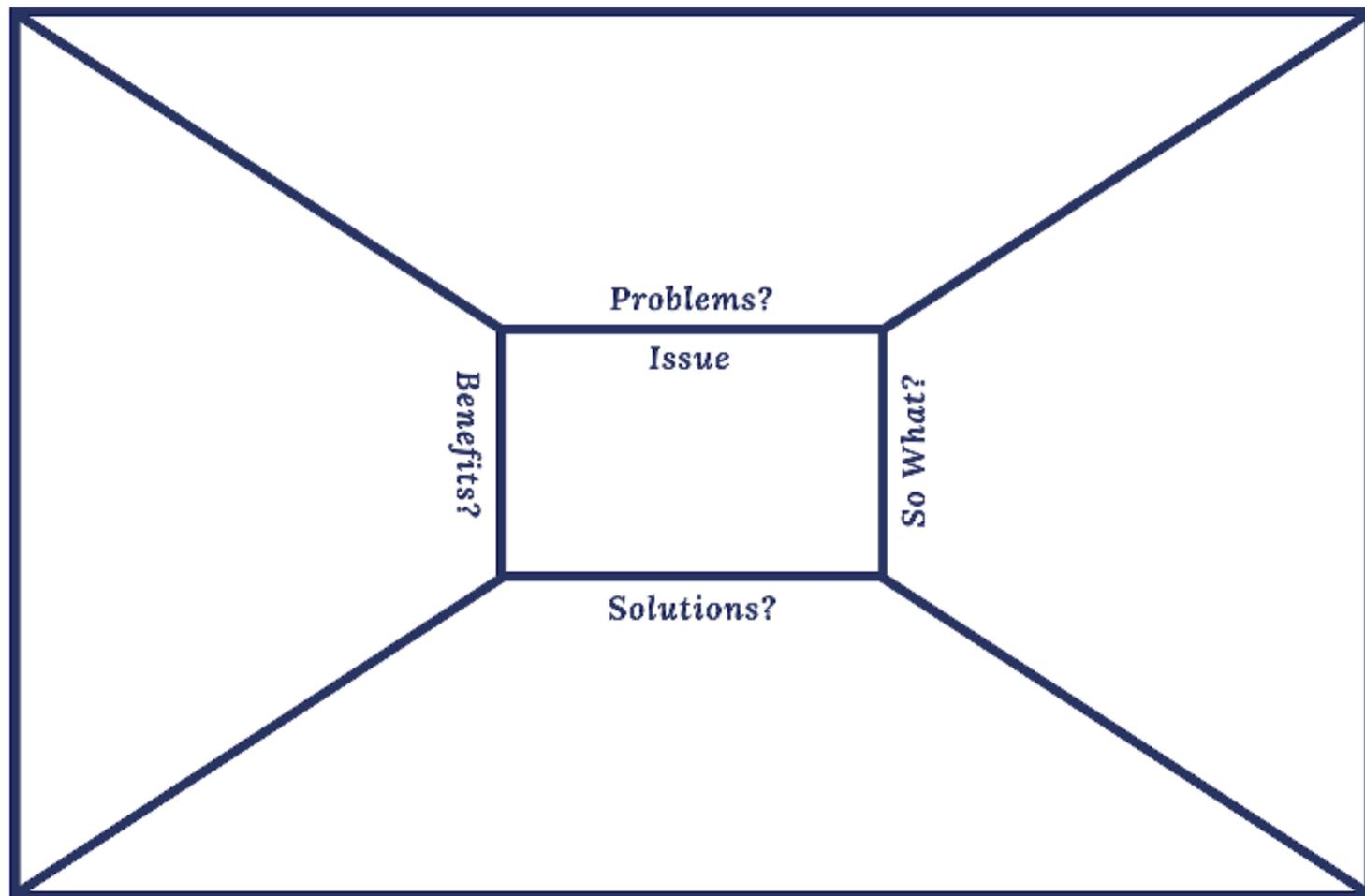
The shape of a society's stories, he said, is at least as interesting as the shape of its poets or speechmakers. Let's have a look.

Designer: Mike Clark, [www.mikeclark.com](http://www.mikeclark.com)  
Source: *A Man Without a Country and Other Essays* by Kurt Vonnegut



## The Message Box

Audience: \_\_\_\_\_



# Step 5: Follow Up



Have another in-person meeting with the member at their office or offsite.



Invite and host a member on a Field Day trip.



Thank a lawmaker (and tag them) on social media for a recent positive action they took.



Share your Land Trust's annual report or other resources with an offer to help.



If you take photos during a field visit or in person meeting, send them as a follow up to the lawmaker's office.

# Let's Practice

*Sample Pitch:*

*Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I'm from [insert land trust]*

*Thank you for your leadership and support of [insert example].*

*Knowing you're interested in [insert example], I think you'll be interested in the work our organization is doing with land protection agreements.*

*Story: This is important to the people you represent because \_\_\_\_\_.*

*Ask: That's why I hope you'll \_\_\_\_\_.*

*I'll follow up by reaching out to set up another meeting so we can continue this conversation, and I'll send over some additional resources on land protection agreements.*

*Thank you!*

You'll need: Groups of 2-3

The Plan:

- (5 minutes) Take a couple minutes to Jot down notes for a pitch (you can use the message box or the story handout to jot down a quick pitch)
- (Five Minutes) Share your pitch with your partner
- (Five Minutes) Debrief
- (Five Minutes) Switch roles
- (Five Minutes) Debrief

Example Asks:

- Support legislation
- Visit a Preserve
- Educate on an issue (easements, Rx Fire)
- Introduce your Land Trust
- Offer Support

Sample Debrief Questions:

- 1.What was the strongest part of your pitch to the elected official?
- 2.As the listener, what made you perk up? What points resonated most?
- 3.What would you say or do differently next time?
- 4.Was there anything that surprised you about this interaction?
- 5.What was difficult/What was easy?

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**What is one thing you can  
commit to this year?**



The Nature  
Conservancy



THE  
CONSERVATION  
FUND

LAND SUSTAINS US

**Thank you!**  
**Ashely Maybanks, TNC**  
**Emy Brawley, TCF**