

## FAITH & STRATEGIC PLANNING

We agronomists tend to react rather than plan. We are caught-up in circumstances rather than to carry-out our intention. So much so in fact, that strategic thinking is foreign to us. Not only do we enjoy the operational, it's all we know. The danger in this is that we can't see the storm, whether internal or external, until it's on top of us. Failure to plan strategically in a business is like failing to prepare for winter in the operational sense.

We were taught by our accounting professors that land is an asset, that land is an investment component of a business rather than the sole purpose of it. This idea has caused more grief than drought. Just thinking about land in the context of having expenses and thus needing revenues in excess of those expenses changes everything, particularly how we think about how those revenues occur. The land will either support its expenses or it will be subsidized from ancillary revenue. Book value establishes how long subsidization can be sustained. Old, low book value goes out the window with succession however, and our successors are accountable to the Treasury Department to pay-in capital on a new modern value, which in every case in agricultural land today, is more than it can bear. So, what do we do?

We do whatever is necessary to create revenue. For example;

- We choose to treat land like an investment, and prepare it to maximize profit from real estate.
- We subsidize it from accrued wealth, ancillary income, or government payments to maintain our lifestyle.

Unfortunately, these constitute the overwhelming majority resource land ownership demographic today. And unfortunately, neither contribute to any important culture, economy, or ecology in a way that will last. But, there is another approach, a functional approach that will work for any that want to have an enduring impact on the culture and environmental quality of their land and community.

Intentional land husbandry, or, the application of land practice (land-craft) is rarely achieved on a level that is seamlessly transferable between successors. Consequently two common results occur; necessary change occurs in contention between generations, and in the process much of the husbandry skill earned by a lifetime of practice, and experiencing the consequences of mistakes, is lost between generations.

There are many reasons for this; e.g. we believe what we have is by our own hand, we're victimized by government or other circumstances, we don't know any better, we lack faith of what we can achieve, we're afraid of giving up control, and perhaps most often, we like things the way they are and don't want change. Many of us have all of these aspects in our personality.

All of these reasons and many more have a common theme, that may be overcome by thinking about and clarifying an intention.

All things intentional begin with an idea. A vision of how we want a thing to be. For example, if we want to leave the environmental quality of our land better by our husbandry, saying it is a good start, but unless we are more specific we can't ever apply ourselves to making it happen. The degree to which we can make our land better has vast variation between landowners, depending on how clear our vision, and the extent to which we intentionally take steps to achieve it..