This convening and the immediate follow-up projects it spawned are complete. Developing water as a forest environmental service market has the potential to create new value streams for forest landowners, protect working forests, and help ensure an abundant, clean supply of water for drinking and other purposes. In April 2011, The Endowment convened more than 60 funders and experts on water market issues who identified the following priority next steps:

- Work with the water utility industry to promote the benefits of source water protection;
- Investigate the potential to use Clean Water State Revolving funds for source water protection;
- Clarify the potential of source water protection to reduce water treatment and storage costs;
- Prioritize watersheds where source water protection efforts are likely to be successful; and
- Enhance peer-to-peer communication among groups working on source water projects.

The highest priority recommendation from the Chicago Convening, to develop a strategy for outreach to the water utility community, was funded through a $23,000 contract to John Tynan, an elected water commissioner; this project was funded with savings from the Chicago meeting and an additional $10,000 from the Knobloch Family Foundation. Tynan’s report, completed in March of 2012, provides good insight into the water utility community and recommends next steps;

The second priority, to investigate Clean Water State Revolving Funds for source water protection, was addressed through a $40,000 contract to The Trust for Public Land. Several states with large acreages of private, forested watersheds where Revolving Fund projects might be successful were identified.

Several other projects identified as priorities by this group are underway and described in separate dashboards.