Inclusion, Diversity and the Future of Land Conservation

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Be Willing to Be Uncomfortable

I'm Getting Out of My Comfort Zone!
Outline

I. Definitions
II. Where Land Trusts are Now
III. History of Community Land Trusts
IV. Where we fall short and how we solve it: Creating a more diverse and inclusive organization
V. Next Steps
VI. Questions
Definitions

The Diversity Spectrum

- race
- ethnicity
- class
- gender
- sexual orientation
- age
- mobility
- religion
- language
- culture
- place of birth
Definitions

Non-Traditionally Engaged Populations

Those not typically engaged in the work of land trusts in your community (e.g., non-landowners, people of color, poor people).
Definitions

Inclusion

Awareness of the historical and systemic patterns of privilege and inequality, being aware of one’s own privilege, and creating an environment that is welcoming to—and respectful of—people of all backgrounds and experiences.
Definitions

Privilege:

Historical access to resources by certain populations. Assumptions based on worldview that are exclusionary (e.g., assuming access to higher education, assuming that the environmental problems that matter to you matter to everyone.)
Definitions

**Barriers of Entry**

Economic, psychological, systemic ways in which non-traditionally engaged populations are being kept out of the field of conservation (e.g., only posting positions to your own website or to private colleges and universities).
Community Conservation

“Community conservation is an approach to land conservation in both urban and rural settings that embraces and is grounded in local, cultural, and socioeconomic diversity and local perspectives, is relevant and responsive to the concerns and priorities of the local communities in which it is practiced, and benefits a broad cross-section of the public.

Through authentic engagement, community conservation contributes to healthy and sustainable communities by advancing important matters like improving people’s health and quality of life, providing clean water and access to healthy food, providing equitable access to housing, generating economic benefits, and land-based education.”

Where Land Trusts Are Now

Conservation Achievements

- Protection of 47 million acres nationwide
- 1,700 land trusts nationwide
- 95,000 Conservation Easements held by Land Trusts
- More staff are paid, though most are volunteers
- Land Trust accreditation, conservation defense insurance, more federal and state tax incentive programs

Where Land Trusts Are Now

Conservation Achievements

- Farmland: 61% in 2010 said farmland conservation is a priority, up from 21% in 2005. Land trusts are also addressing more issues of farm transfer and affordable housing.
- Three-fold increase in focusing on urban parks, community gardens, and other green spaces (a priority for 27% of land trusts)
- 95.8% of land trusts say that community engagement is an important value.

Where Land Trusts Are Now

Community Conservation Achievements

- More ownership of farmland for food production and food access programs
- Public access on conserved properties for activities such as hiking, hunting, swimming, boating, fishing, birding, snowmobiling
- Educational opportunities for all ages on conserved or land trust-owned lands
- Universal Access programs & trails for those of all abilities
- Hiring of women
“The most popular diversity initiative being undertaken in environmental organizations is the promotion of Women already working in an organization to leadership positions” – The State of Diversity in Environmental Organizations, 2014
National Trends in Diversity

U.S. Population Will Become Increasingly Diverse

- Hispanic Origin
- Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander
- Two or More Races
- Black
- American Indian and Alaska Native
- White

Hispanic and Non-Hispanic Population by Race, 2010

Massachusetts Total Population: 6,547,629

Non-Hispanic, American Indian & Alaska Native: 10,778
Non-Hispanic, Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander: 1,467

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Redistricting Data (Public Law 94-171).
Release Date: March 22, 2011.
Lack of Diversity

- A lack of diversity is not unique to land trusts or even the environmental field.
- Representation in the sciences and engineering is just as worrisome.
- However, the environmental workforce is even less representative of the current demographics.

Graph taken from: http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/diversity-in-science-where-are-the-data/
Lack of Diversity

- Nationally people of color account for only 11% staff and 9% board of natural resource organizations.
- Yet ethnic minorities and people of multiracial backgrounds comprise about 38% of the U.S. population. Ethnic minorities are severely underrepresented in the environmental workforce.
- 33% of all environmental institutions have no people of color on staff.

Source: The State of Diversity in Environmental Organizations, Dorceta E. Taylor, PhD 2014

Lack of Diversity

• A 2008 study of 360 land trusts reported that 19.5% of their boards of directors and 31.2% of their membership were “somewhat” to “very” racially diverse.

• 67% of land trusts said their community at large was diverse. This means that land trusts are still fall short of representing the diversity of the populations that they serve.

Community Land Trusts

Barbara Knecht, R.A., Urban Farming Institute of Boston
2 April 2016 MA Land Conservation Conference
Historic Principles

• 100 years of theoretical underpinnings (Henry George and Ebenezer Howard), practical experiments, and social movements

• Land is a shared resource - part of the “commons”

• Human obligation to the future is “stewardship”
Rural roots

• Charles Sherrod, Bob Swann, Slater King, C.B. King
• African American farmers limited access or losing land
• 1968: concept of “usership” instead of “ownership”
• 1969: New Communities - 5K acres, Albany, GA
Urban migration

• 1978 Woodland Community Land trust, TN, 17 acres, residential development, resale controls

• 1978 Covenant Community Land Trust, ME, homes on 10 acre leaseholds

• 1980 Community Land Cooperative of Cincinnati, Permanent control over home pricing and conveyance
Urban priorities

- affordable housing preservation
- anti gentrification and displacement
- building a social and political base
- rearrange relationship of property and power
Growing Movement

• 1990: growth through intentional strategy (ICE)
  • clear definition and structure
• 1992 Federal definition = funding HCDA (CHDO)
• 2006 National CLT network, manuals, conferences
• 2015 >260 CLTs across the country
new applications

- 1972: multiple applications envisioned, focus became affordable housing

- 2012: 37 involved in ag (community gardens, greenhouses and urban farms)
Case Studies: California Council of Land Trusts

Their Recommendations:

1. **Deepen – Don’t Change – Your Mission.**

2. **Know Your Community.** Land trusts need to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the human side of their communities in order to connect more broadly.

3. **Advance One New Direction.** Each land trust can start by advancing one new direction that broadens the connection with people in its community in ways both meaningful to them and consistent with the land trust’s mission.

4. **Diversify Your Board and Staff.** By diversifying boards and staff in age, ethnicity, and background, land trusts will broaden their capacity and credibility to authentically engage with local communities, connect with new partners, and grow broader constituencies.

**Full plan:**
Conservation Horizons: keeping conservation and land trusts vital for the next age
Case Study: National Park Service

Their current action plan includes:

• Asking visitors to create their own stories about the parks
• Giving cultural competency training to all their employees
• Targeted outreach to people of color
• Targeted outreach to youth
• Educational programming that engages and informs through different platforms not just traditional ones

Full plan: achieving relevance in our second century A five-year interdisciplinary strategy for interpretation, education, and volunteers as we enter the second century of the national park service
Case Study: Appalachian Trail Conservancy

Their Approach:

• Diversity and Youth Training for ATC Staff

• Update Hiring and Recruitment, and Youth policies and practices

• New EEO

• Develop pathway programs: CLC, MYTaSC, internships

• Next Generation Advisory Council

• Assess Education Strategies

• Grow and expand partnerships!
The Wall.....
Challenges to Creating an Inclusive Organization

Overview: Focusing on external without internal work

**External**: outreach and engaging communities/hiring people with diverse backgrounds (can lead to a more diversity, but not necessarily inclusion). Can lead to one-time initiatives or tokenism.

**Internal**: an organization's own work to create: a more welcoming and inclusive culture; more cultural competency and authenticity; and greater awareness of privilege, history, and institutional assumptions.
Job Posting

• Don’t just hire from the same pool. Create a diverse pool through strategic outreach to institutions and communities.
• Hire the people you’ve trained.
• Hire more people of color.

“Environmental jobs are still being advertised and environmental organizations recruit new employees in ways that introduce unconscious biases and facilitate the replication of the current workforce...

...environmental organizations are not recruiting from places where they are most likely to find new and talented ethnic minorities.”

The State of Diversity in Environmental Organizations, 2014
Job Posting

List of organizations where land trusts could advertise jobs: your new recruits are probably not looking at your very specific job boards and websites. Cast a wide net.

• Make contact and share position announcements with organizations like Latino outdoors and Outdoor Afro and work with them and other organizations to create a more diverse pools of applicants

• Organizations like Summer Search mentor and train young people of color through High School and College who could become entry level staff, interns, or volunteers
Messaging & Language

Outreach Materials/Website/Social Media:
• What message are you sending in your outreach materials?
• Who is seeing themselves in this?
• Is it inclusive of folks not traditionally engaged in conservation (e.g., what language is it in, how are you talking about conservation-is it targeted just to landowners? How can it be made more relevant to different groups?).
Diverse Partnerships

• Engaging with diverse groups can help land trusts achieve their mission
• We are missing out on reaching new/existing constituencies in our communities.
• Diverse partnerships support existing efforts and initiatives in the community by bringing in more people who want to work or volunteer for you.
• Land Trusts become more integrated and relevant to these communities, not as much of an outsider.

“Not engaging effectively or in a relevant way with communities can have many negative impacts, both for land trusts and for the community. Land Trusts focused on “doing deals” or selling and advocating for conservation before learning what the community most needs creates the sense that what matters most is the land trust, not the community...They become isolated in a small circle of people who speak the same language of conservation easements, but it is not the language of inclusion.”

Diverse Partnerships

Events:

• Is your land trust continuing to outreach to the same groups for your events?

• Are you leveraging community initiatives, not competing.

• Can you collaborate with groups already engaged in the community (e.g., inviting a Latino Outdoors group to hike on one of your properties, participating in a Food Bank event)
Diverse Partnerships

Examples of non-traditionally engaged community groups:

- La casa latina
- Summer Search
- Nuestras raíces
- A Better Chance Inc
- Association of Black Foundation Executives
- Environmental Professionals of Color (EPOC)
- Environmental Groups (e.g., Latino Outdoors, Afro Outdoors)
- Religious Groups
- Environmental Leadership Program
- Educational Institutions (e.g., Community Colleges, Private Colleges and Universities, non-traditional schools, International/Language Immersion Schools)
Examining institutional & individual assumptions, prejudices and practices.

Setting internal goals to address unconscious institutional biases (e.g., privilege & inclusion workshops, internal conversations about where the organization wants to go)
Creating a more inclusive organization

• Workshops: e.g., diversity & cultural competency trainings, exploring privilege
• Support the development and leadership of your staff and board
  • Organizations need to invest in their hires, especially if they are a token minority
    • Being the only person of color in the office can be alienating, can lead to imposter syndrome (never feeling like you are enough for the position because there are few examples of people like you filling the role that you are filling), and can lead to resentment, poor job performance, and the eventual departure of your new staff or board member.
  • Aim for full staff and board Education & Participation: are there any particular skills, from public speaking to financial knowledge to land deals knowledge that you are taking for granted in your new hire or board member: give all your staff and board the tools to succeed.
Assumptions in Organizational Mission

• Exploring & revising assumptions in your organizational mission & objectives (e.g., representing landowners- not non-landowners/farmers/poor people)

SAMPLE MISSION: “The XYZ Land Trust helps landowners save the land they love.”

Assumption:
• all the members are landowners
• that your audience will care about protecting private land
• that the audience will make connections between protecting private land and the benefits of land conservation
“Despite the claim of few job openings, most of the organizations in the study reported that they hired staff in the last three years. A low percentage hired minorities in that same time period.”

Source: The State of Diversity in Environmental Organizations, Dorceta E. Taylor, PhD 2014
“Though environmental organizations host ethnic minorities as interns, they have been very reluctant to hire these talented students onto their staff. In effect, this creates a ruptured pipeline in which talent flows into the organizations but is allowed to dissipate out instead of being nurtured through the entire organization.”

“Once hired in environmental organizations, ethnic minorities are concentrated in the lower ranks. As a result, ethnic minorities occupy less than 12% of the leadership positions in the environmental organizations studied.”

Source: The State of Diversity in Environmental Organizations, Dorceta E. Taylor, PhD 2014
Proactively addressing “-isms” & biases

• Non-discrimination clause only works if hiring pool is not homogenous.
• Policies need to go beyond “equal opportunity” to address issues that diverse staff members might face (e.g., racism, sexism). How will the organization handle these issues?
• Address unexamined biases within your organization. How are these biases impacting your hiring practices?
Benefits to Inclusion Work

Internal Benefits
• Higher job satisfaction, especially among staff of color.
• Lower turnover.
• Higher productivity.
• Higher employee morale.
• Improved problem-solving throughout the organization.
• Increased creativity and innovation.
• Increased organizational flexibility and ability to learn from people at all levels.
• Improving the quality of personnel through better recruitment and retention.
• Decreased vulnerability to legal challenges.

External Benefits
• Broaden your impact and build a stronger constituency for conservation.
• Become more embedded and relevant in your community and less isolated.
• Access greater financial and volunteer potential.
• Become a more resilient and beloved organization.
• Gain broader and authentic connections with the communities you serve. Gain more visibility and trust in your community.


Part 2

CLT Structure and Organization
CLT Guiding structure

• **Ownership**: multiple parcels, circumscribed geography, held permanently, improvements traded, long term ground lease balances interests

• **Organization**: tri-partite governing structure representing leaseholders, geographic area, public interest

• **Operation**: steward improvements and balance wealth for the current generation and affordability for next; transfer control
10 Features

- non profit tax exempt cooperation
- dual ownership
- leased land
- open place based membership
- community control
- tripartite governance
- perpetual affordability
- perpetual responsibility
- expansionist program
- perpetual development
“Classic” CLT

- Governing Board profile assures no single interest predominates:
  - 1/3 leaseholder representatives
  - 1/3 local residents of CLT catchment
  - 1/3 public interest representatives
Variation

- 1988 Dudley Neighbors, Inc. (DNI) Roxbury, MA

- subsidiary 501c3 of Dudley St Neighborhood Initiative

- DSNI’s representative board (race, ethnicity, business, residents, religious orgs, CDCs, etc.)

- DSNI Board appoints DNI Board
CLT Resources

• Institute for Community Economics
• Equity Trust
• National CLT Network
• Schumacher Center for New Economics
• Burlington Associates
• Roots and Branches
A Toolkit for Moving Forward

**Step 1:** Creating an Inclusiveness Committee (Module 1).

**Step 2:** Engaging in inclusiveness/diversity training and hiring consultants/trainers (Modules 2 and 3).

**Step 3:** Defining inclusiveness and diversity and creating the case for inclusiveness for your organization (Module 4).

**Step 4:** Completing and analyzing information gathered, including available facts and stakeholder perspectives regarding your community, your field, and your organization (Modules 5, 6, and 7).

**Step 5:** Completing an inclusiveness blueprint (similar to a diversity strategic plan) that spells out concrete goals, objectives, and tasks to help your organization realize the change it seeks (Modules 8-17).

**Step 6:** Implementation of the inclusiveness blueprint (Module 18).
Moving Forward

How long will it take and how much will it cost?

- An inclusiveness initiative is an investment in the long-term future of your organization.
- Learning is free but consultants can cost $75 to $175 per hour.
- This work can take 2-to-4 years.
- But the work is never done- you must educate new hires and constantly question your own assumptions.
- Are you ready to embark on an inclusiveness initiative? Take the “pre-test” in the Introduction of the Denver Foundation toolkit.

“...inclusiveness work is never absolutely complete in the same way that a non-profit mission is (almost) never completely achieved. Rather, as your organization becomes more inclusive, you will likely find that an awareness of inclusiveness will be integrated into all of your work. Inclusiveness is a continual process rather than a fixed destination”

Becoming a more Diverse **AND** Inclusive Organization

- Organizations that have a Diversity Manager tend to be more diverse.
- A dedicated group, like an Inclusion Committee is vital to keeping the conversation moving forward.
- ED or CEO buy-in and leadership is crucial in creating an inclusive non-profit.
- Recognize and commit to a long-term holistic approach.
- Relax! Slow down! It takes time to build trust and long-term relationships.

“The CEO of a nonprofit organization almost always establishes the level of commitment, the attitude, the pace and the behaviors related to an organization’s overall inclusiveness practice.”


“One organization spoke of the importance of valuing an individual’s ability to work in diverse communities to such an extent that positions will be held open until candidates who are able to work in diverse communities and environments”
MassLIFT- is already providing training, mentorship, and has proven successful in creating a functioning pipeline for the next generation of Conservation Professionals.
Of the 89 members completed their service from 2010-2014, we know where 83 of them are:

- 26 (27.1%) are working as professional staff at land trusts

- 39 (40.6%) are working in other professional conservation jobs (e.g. Government Agencies, Regional Planning, Env. Education, Urban Conservation, Farm and Food Systems, Env. Engineering, etc.)

- 9 (9.4%) are in grad school pursuing advanced conservation-related degrees
How to make MassLIFT even stronger:

• Make MassLIFT more diverse
• Work with MLTC to reach diversity goals
• Create partnerships with organizations serving and preparing diverse youth or other aspiring professionals for success: Summer Search, A Better Chance Inc
An On-going Dialogue..... who’s in?!?!

• How can we keep this dialogue going in the MA land trust community?
  • E.g., A statewide action group to keep this conversation going?
  • Feel free to sign up to stay part of the conversation!

• Other ideas?????
  • ______________
  • ______________
  • ______________
  • ______________
Resources:

- https://www.nps.gov/getinvolved/upload/IEVStrategicPlan_FINAL.pdf
- http://www.diversegreen.org/the-challenge/
- http://peterforbes.org/sites/default/files/Land%20Conservation%20and%20the%20Public%20Trust%20fin%204_0.pdf
- http://www.nonprofitinclusiveness.org/inclusiveness-work-how-build-inclusive-nonprofit-organizations
- http://www.nonprofitinclusiveness.org/inclusiveness-work-how-build-inclusive-nonprofit-organizations
- http://www.cwsworkshop.org/pdfs/CARC/White_Identity/4_Life_Long_Journey.PDF
- Anti-Racist Organizational Development. Dismantling Racism Project. Western States Center.