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Broadening the Base through Open Space: Addressing Demographic Trends by Saving Land and Serving People

Darcy Newsome

Bradford Gentry

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YALE PROGRAM ON STRATEGIES FOR THE FUTURE OF CONSERVATION

Broadening the Base through Open Space: Addressing Demographic Trends by Saving Land and Serving People

Conference Proceedings

**Asilomar Conference Grounds, Pacific Grove, California
July 9, 10 & 11, 2008**

Darcy Newsome and Bradford Gentry, Editors
Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies

Prepared with the assistance of Emily Biesecker
and conference participants

Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies 2008

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SECTION 1:
INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Broadening the base of support for land conservation – across ages, ethnic groups and income – is the key to the future of open space in the US.¹ Humans are a key element of preserving such spaces: “Laws don’t protect land, people do.”² As more children stay inside, communities of color grow, and income levels stratify, the traditional U.S. land conservation community needs to find and build from its shared interests across a more diverse range of partners.

The conservation community’s most valuable asset is access to open space – either owned or to be acquired in the future. How does land use based on the heritage and background of different cultures compare with that of the traditional land trust community? What are the opportunities to manage conserved sites in ways that attract a wider range of users? What are the risks of doing so?

The purpose of the 2008 Berkley Workshop, “Broadening the Base through Open Space: Addressing Demographic Trends by Saving Land and Serving People,” was to help answer such questions about how open space itself can best be used to broaden the base of support for land conservation. This was achieved in part by examining data, examples, and tools. Data on projected changes in the U.S. population, as well as on how land is valued and used by different communities, was presented. Examples of how people are addressing these population trends to engage with new communities around open space were described. Tools for assessing both the opportunities for and addressing the risks of such engagement were also offered for discussion. The outputs include action items and a list of questions requiring further investigation, as well as expanded networks for collaborations among the participants.

The workshop was held at the Asilomar Conference Grounds in Pacific Grove, California on July 9, 10 and 11, 2008. Thirty participants were drawn from the Land Trust Alliance’s “leadership group,” as well as from other organizations involved in land use by different communities, government agencies, and academic institutions (see Box 1 below). An experienced facilitator helped the participants derive the most benefit from the interactions, with free time left for unstructured conversations. Each session started with short presentations followed by group discussion.

This publication summarizes the workshop process and results. Background materials prepared by Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies graduate students Emily Biesecker and Darcy Newsome, as well as by several of the participants, are included. Overviews of the major themes of the discussions, as well as areas for further work are also provided. No joint “communiqué” was negotiated

¹“Strategies for the Future of Conservation: 2006 Workshop Summary and Background Materials,” <http://environment.yale.edu/publication-series/5338/strategies-for-the-future-of-conservation/>

²Judy Anderson in “How Can Conservation Help: 2007 Workshop Summary and Background Materials,” http://environment.yale.edu/publication-series/environmental_politics_and_management/5621/how-can-conservation-help/

during the workshop. As such, the opinions expressed herein are solely those of the individual authors and the editors.

Box 1 Workshop participants

Judy Anderson, Conservation Consultant
Forrest Berkley, Board Member, Maine Coast Heritage Trust
John Bernstein, Pacific Forest Trust
Emily Biesecker, Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies
Marcelo Bonta, Founder, Center for Diversity & the Environment
Corey Brown, Policy and Legal Consultant, Resources Legacy Group
Bill Burch, Professor, Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies
Ernest Cook, Director, Conservation Finance, Trust for Public Land
Kim Elliman, CEO, The Open Space Institute
Jay Espy, Executive Director, Sewall Foundation
Peter Forbes, Executive Director, Center for Whole Communities
Brad Gentry, Director, Yale Program on Strategies for the Future of Conservation
Cassandra Johnson, Understanding Changing Social and Natural Systems, USFS
Charles Jordan, Chairman, The Conservation Fund
Andy Kendall, President, The Trustees of Reservations
Marianne Krasny, Professor, Cornell University
Frances Kuo, Director, Landscape and Human Health Laboratory, University of Illinois
Bill Leahy, Executive Director, Big Sur Land Trust
Gil Livingston, Executive Director, Vermont Land Trust
Jeff Milder, Conservation Development Researcher, Cornell University
Jeff Passel, Senior Research Associate, Pew Hispanic Center
Dan Press, Professor, UC Santa Cruz
Nina Roberts, Professor, San Francisco State University
Robert Searle, Partner, The Bridgespan Group
Marc Smiley, Founder, Decisions Decisions
Peter Stein, General Partner, Lyme Timber Company
Rhea Suh, Program Officer, Packard Foundation
Rand Wentworth, President, Land Trust Alliance
Hazel Wong, Director of Government Relations, The Nature Conservancy, Nevada
Elva Yáñez, Director, The Audubon Center at Debs Park

Many thanks are due to several people for making the workshop possible and for its success. The catalytic funding provided by Forrest Berkley and Marcie Tyre started these workshops and continues to attract additional support. Kim Elliman and

colleagues at the Overhills Foundation have provided extremely valuable contacts, experience and resources as well. Marc Smiley, our facilitator, had the unenviable task of drawing people out around critical issues without interjecting too many of his own views – which are deep and well informed – into the conversations. Finally, Amy Badner provided our administrative support – making everyone feel welcome and cared for. Thanks to all of these people and many others for making the gathering such a productive and energizing session.

SECTION II:
WHY IS THERE A NEED TO BROADEN
THE BASE OF SUPPORT FOR LAND
CONSERVATION?

Projected Changes in the U.S. Population and the Implications for the Land Trust Community

Darcy Newsome
Yale University

OVERVIEW

Introduction

The face of America is changing rapidly and significantly. Studies reveal that the country is currently undergoing a swift transition. Trends in age distribution, racial makeup and income inequality predict that coming decades will see the emergence of a very different society from the one we see around us today. According to projections based on census data, 2050 will hold a United States population of 438 million people, increased from 296 million in 2005 (Passel). Who will these newcomers be? Where will they come from, how will they vote, and what will they care about? The changing makeup of American society will affect organizations from every corner of the map, and the land conservation movement is no exception.

The conservation movement across the nation has the potential to benefit greatly from these changes in the country's population. It also stands to lose much. Decisive action is needed to embrace shifting tides. To ignore burgeoning new constituencies at this time could result in a loss of relevance to society. On the other hand, to acknowledge the changing demographics of the country and reach out to new communities and groups could hold rich opportunities. Like a kayaker paddling upstream, conservationists may surely continue to fight the tide, making slow and laborious progress toward our important goals. Fortunately, though, another option exists: to ride with the current and gain momentum from it.

Changes in racial and ethnic patterns

The next few decades will see an end to white majorities throughout most of the country (Passel). Current minorities will come to represent an increasingly large portion of the population, and a powerful voice in local and national politics. For traditional land conservation organizations, which have been primarily white,

partnering with ethnically and racially diverse communities presents great opportunities for the benefit of all.

Income inequality

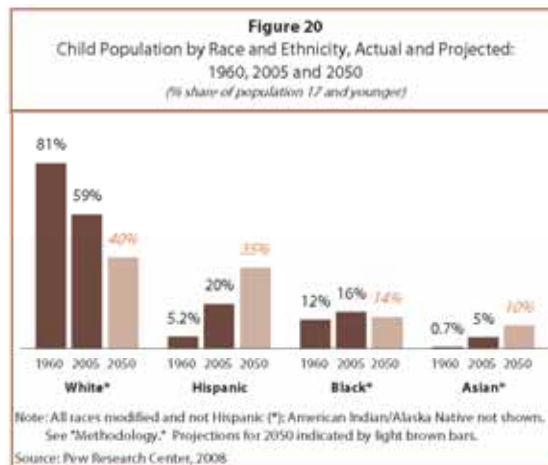
Disparities in income between the wealthiest and the poorest are reaching their highest levels since the 1920s. The richest individuals in America have amassed a staggering portion of the nation's wealth (Johnston). For land trusts to remain relevant to society as a whole they will have to reach out to its less wealthy members.

An aging population

The segment of the population that is 65 and older will increase significantly in coming decades. These older members of society comprise most of the conservation movement's membership. Outreach to young and working-age people is a strategic need for ensuring conservation leadership over time.

CHANGES IN RACIAL AND ETHNIC PATTERNS

Soon, it will be an anachronism to refer to communities of color as "minorities;" indeed, by 2050, non-whites will comprise 50 percent of the total population. A significant portion of this increase will be from the Latino population: from 2005 to 2050, this population will triple. Asians will experience similarly rapid growth, almost doubling from 5 to 9 percent of the overall population by 2050 (Passel).



By 2050, nearly one out of every five Americans is likely to be an immigrant. Compared to the 2005 figure of one in eight, this statistic can hardly be emphasized enough as a reflection of the drastic change in the face of America that is likely to come in the next few decades. During the 2005-2050 period, 82 percent of overall population growth is expected to result from the arrival of immigrants and their U.S.-born children.

Projections for future growth of minority groups are supported by similar trends in the recent past. From 1990 to 2000, the nation saw increases in the Native American population (a 92% jump), the Latino population (58%), Asian American and Pacific Islanders (50%) and African Americans (21%) – meanwhile, the white population grew by only 5% (Western States Diversity Project).

The sheer volume of such statistics can become overwhelming, as there are many ways to describe the racial and ethnic trends in America in coming years. One thing is plain, though: for the traditionally white land conservation establishment to ignore

the increasing numbers in communities of color is to shut out an increasingly prominent segment of our society. The conservation movement today is composed primarily of white constituents and donors. Demographic projections make it clear that whites will comprise a diminishing portion of the American people. Conservation groups might consider the increasingly exclusive nature of drawing on such a narrowing group. A wealth of humanity will soon populate America outside of conservation's traditional constituency; main-taining such separation could prove harmful to all parties.



Some questions for consideration

- 1) Given predicted trends in national racial and ethnic composition, what might be the consequences if land conservation organizations continue to depend only on their traditional constituencies?
- 2) What efforts can be made to reach out to the growing communities of color to bring them into the conservation movement?
- 3) How do conservation organizations currently engage with more diverse members of their communities?

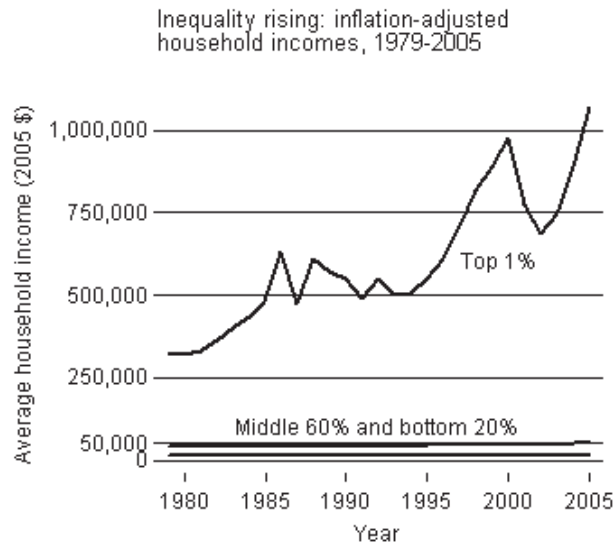
INCOME INEQUALITY

Wealth in the United States is moving to the very top fraction of the population, leaving most citizens behind in the process. Disparities between the richest people in the nation and the remainder of the populace is reaching levels not seen since the 1920s. One widely noted indicator of wealth inequality, the Gini coefficient, reached its highest level ever recorded in 2005 (Brookings Institution, cited in Plender).

“When the fruits of society’s labour become maldistributed, when the rich get richer and the middle and lower classes struggle to keep their heads above water as is clearly the case today, then the system ultimately breaks down; boats do not rise equally with the tide; the centre cannot hold.” – Bill Gross (as cited in Plender)

The graph on page 8 of household incomes from 1979-2005 presents a vivid picture of rising inequality.³ Similar studies reaching back to the early parts of the century reveal that current wealth disparity is rapidly approaching unprecedented levels. In 1979, the top 1 percent of households earned an average of \$325,000 (in 2005 dollars);

³ Note: Posttax-posttransfer incomes. The data are averages within each group. Source: Lane Kenworthy, using data from the Congressional Budget Office, “Historical Effective Federal Tax Rates: 1979 to 2005,” available at www.cbo.gov/ftpdoc.cfm?index=8885&type=2.



this climbed to \$1.1 million in 2005. By contrast, the poorest 20 percent of households saw an increase from \$14,500 to only \$15,500; the middle 60 percent of households increased their income from \$42,000 to \$51,000 (Kenworthy). The trend toward greater inequality reaches back several decades, but Emmanuel Saez of the University of California at Berkeley estimates that the process reached a new height during the period

between 2002-2006. During that short period, the top 1 percent secured nearly three-quarters of overall income growth (Kenworthy).

Certainly the dramatic and historic nature of the increase in income inequality in the United States is startling. But what might it mean for the land conservation movement? Like many non-profit causes, land trusts often must rely on the very wealthiest donors to fund much of their activity. The data presented here suggest that such individuals will, in the near future, come to represent a very small segment of the population. Donation-dependent organizations everywhere might reflect on the implications of representing such a narrow and privileged elite, as that tiny group ascends to yet greater separation from nearly the entire country. The organizations whose missions are to protect open spaces must ask themselves whether they feel secure representing only the most elite sliver of America. It is possible that conservationists, through outreach to a broader base of less wealthy people, could enhance their longevity by creating multitudes of stewards who will become their future donors and board members. It is also possible that failure to include a wider range of people could mean the eventual extinction of land trusts as they exist today.

Some questions for consideration

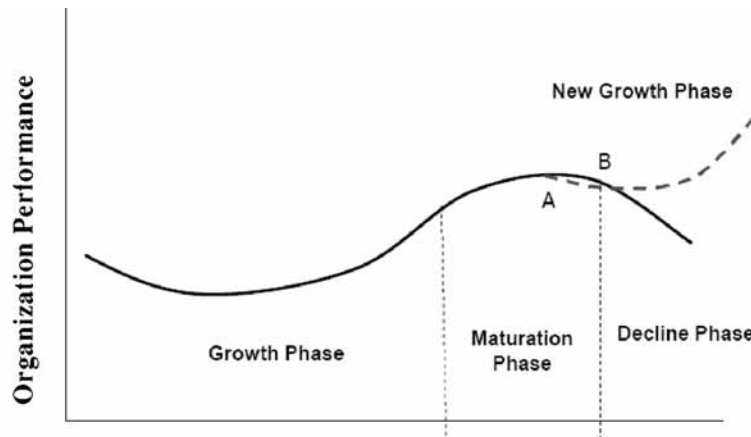
- 1) What might be some impacts on the conservation movement of the increasing disparity in income across the U.S. population?
- 2) What interests might low-income persons have that would be unvoiced in an organization whose members are mostly very wealthy? What impact could these concerns have on the effectiveness and viability of the organization over time?
- 3) If inclusivity in conservation is desirable, what steps could organizations take to stay ahead of changing income demographics?

- 4) Is it possible for private conservation groups to remain financially viable while expanding their membership to include a broader segment of the population?

AN AGING POPULATION

Demographers report that between 2005 and 2050, the nation's elderly population will double (Passel). By 2050, the elderly will comprise 19% of the overall population. As a point of reference, in 2006, Florida's elderly residents comprised only 17% of the state's total population.

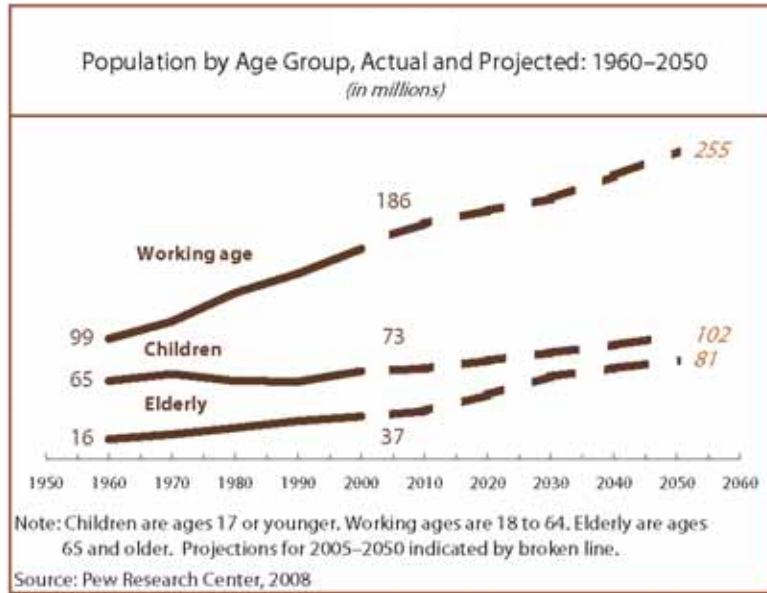
This surge in the nation's senior citizenry should not, however, be interpreted as being so significant as to dwarf growth in other important areas. Indeed, while the children's share of the population will drop slightly from 25% to 23% from 2005 to 2050, upcoming years will see a more rapidly growing younger set than has been observed in the last 45 years (Passel).



Source: Charles Handy *The Empty Raincoat: Making Sense of the Future*, Random House, 1995.

Charles Handy's sigmoid curve, shown above, portrays the typical growth pattern of organizations. A base introduction phase is followed by steady growth, maturation, and eventual decline. Handy argues that if organizations are to avoid this decline, they must reinvent themselves and start a new curve *before* the first one turns. In this way, conservation groups need to reinvent themselves and move away from the old model of courting primarily older donors and board members. Through organizational change to embrace younger constituencies now, conservation organizations can begin a second upward curve of growth, rather than risk fading into insignificance (Handy).

It is important for conservation groups to be aware of changing trends in the age of the nation, just as they should be aware of trends in the ages of their constituencies. While the 65+ age bracket will increase in decades to come, children will remain a robust and important part of the population. Furthermore, these children will be around much farther into the future than will their elderly counterparts. For that



reason, outreach to children and youth is a critically important step for the conservation movement to take. The section on Educational Uses of Open Space will explore this topic in further detail.

This graph divides the U.S. population into three age brackets and displays their actual numbers from 1950 with projections through 2060. The “Elderly” population slopes up sharply between 2010 and 2030, as baby boomers reach age 65, but notably the elderly population never overtakes that of children. The implication is that, while the older population segment will increase in coming years, children and working age adults will still comprise much larger segments of the population. Therefore, an organization relying primarily on the participation and interest of older citizens will fail to represent and engage the interests of the bulk of society.

Some questions for consideration

- 1) The shifting proportions of the American population’s age brackets will have many impacts on many aspects of society. What impacts can your organization expect to see in its ability to effectively pursue its mission?
- 2) To what extent might a reliance on elderly constituents pose obstacles for the conservation movement in the future?
- 3) What benefits and challenges might result from the conservation movement’s outreach to youth and working-age adults?
- 4) How might individual conservation organizations, as well as the movement as a whole, best apply knowledge of the aging population to their activities?

Some useful readings/works cited

Johnston, David. "Income Gap Is Widening, Data Shows." *New York Times*, March 29, 2007. <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/03/29/business/29tax.html>

Kenworthy, Lane: <http://www.u.arizona.edu/~lkenwor/index.html>

Myers, D., J. Pitkin and J. Park. California Demographic Futures: Projections to 2030, by Immigrant Generations, Nativity, and Time of Arrival in U.S. Population Dynamics Research Group, School of Policy, Planning, and Development, University of Southern California. February 2005.

Passel, Jeffrey S. and D'Vera Cohn. *U.S. Population Projections: 2005-2050*. Pew Research Center, Washington, DC. 11 February, 2008.

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Plender, John. "Mind the Gap." *Financial Times*. April 7, 2008.

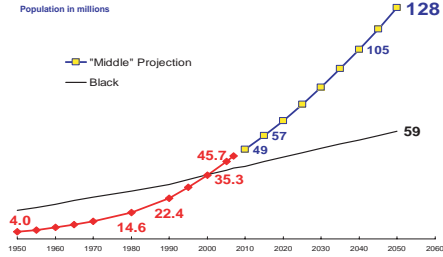
Jeffrey S. Passel, Ph.D.
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Demography of Diversity: Coming Changes from Immigrants to Their Children

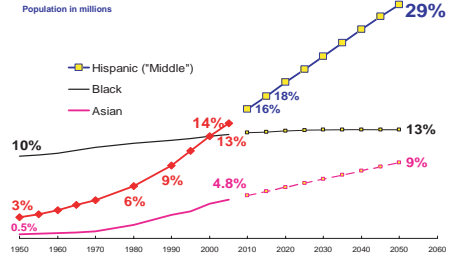


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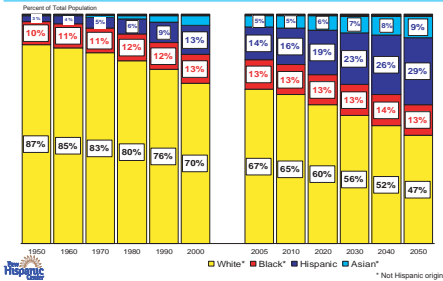
Hispanic Growth Likely to Continue -- Largest "Minority" Since ~2001



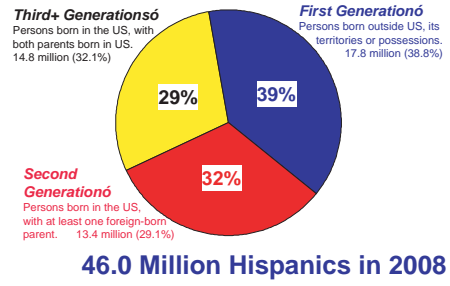
Hispanic Share Increases Rapidly -- Exceeds all Other Minorities by 2035



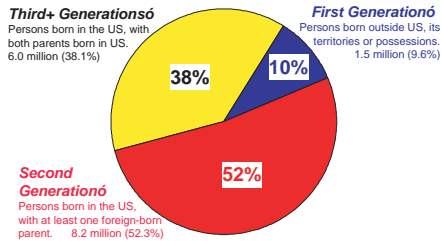
White, Non-Hispanic Share Drops -- No Longer a "Majority" by 2050



Latino Population by Generation

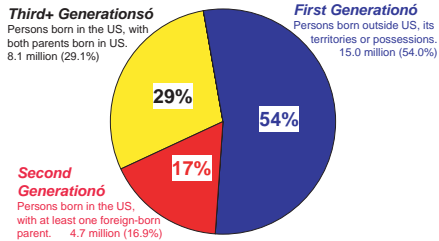


Latino Youth (<18) by Generation



15.7 Million Hispanics in 2008

Latino Working-Age (18-64) by Generation



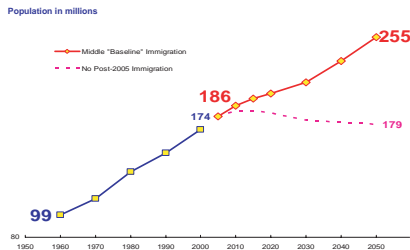
27.7 Million Hispanics in 2008

Younger Adult Growth Shifts

- Long-Term Immigrant & Hispanic Growth**
 - Without Immigration, 18-64 declines after 2015
 - Working-age Whites Decrease after 2010
 - Hispanic Growth Dominates from 1990s
 - **Native-born** Hispanic Growth is Largest after 2010
- Historic Changes**
 - Younger Ages Change First
 - Close to half of current births are to minorities
 - Hispanic growth dominates from 1990s
 - Hispanic share of working ages 14% → 31% in 2050
 - **Native-born** Hispanic growth is largest after 2010
- Hispanics in the Workforce**
 - Younger than non-Hispanic workers
 - Less educated than non-Hispanic workers
 - 40% of workers w/o HS diploma vs 14% overall

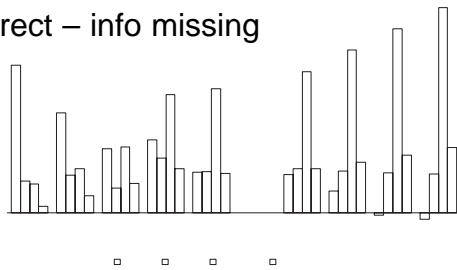


Labor Force Age Group Increases -- All Future Growth Due to Immigration

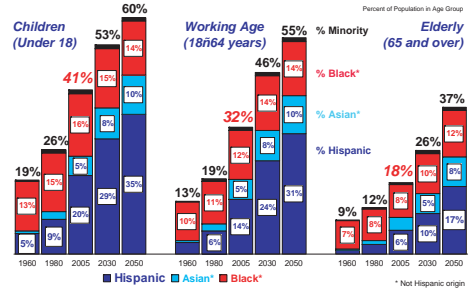


Hispanic (& Other Minority) Growth Dominates as White* Population Shrinks After 2030

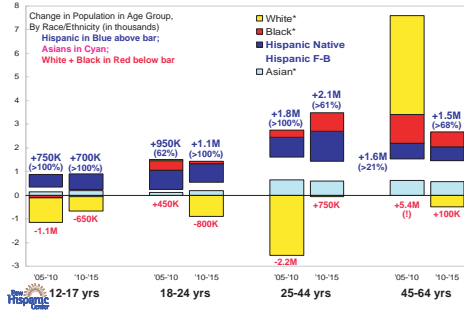
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Minority Shares Increased Over 50% by 2050 Younger Age Groups Change First



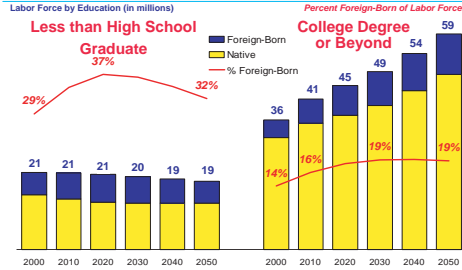
Hispanics Lead Age Gains for 10+ Years



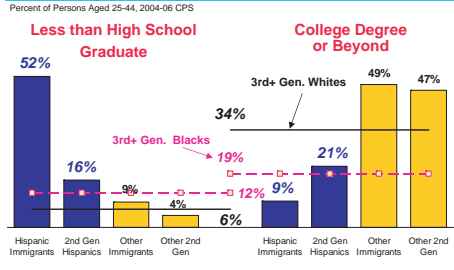
Education & Income Gains

- **Education**
 - Hispanics Very Low
 - Asians Very High
 - Major Gains Among U.S. Born-Children
- **Sources of Educational Gains**
 - General Upgrading
 - iAging Out of Older Cohorts
 - Generational Shifts
- **Income Gains Follow Education**
 - Increases with Education & Generation
 - Hispanic Incomes Still Lag Behind

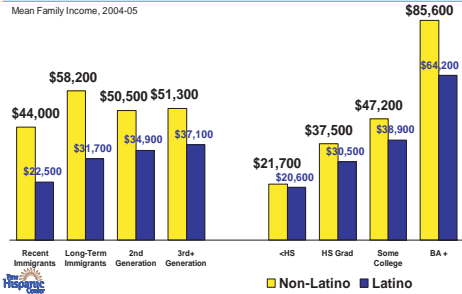
Low Education LF Shrinks -- College Degree LF Explodes



Hispanic Generations Progress; Large Upgrade in Education



Incomes Increase with Education But, Latino Incomes Lag



Conclusions

- **Population is Changing Rapidly**
 - Becoming More Hispanic & Asian
 - Immigration is Main Driver
 - Age Groups Differ
- **Youth and Young Adults**
 - Births for Important Now
 - Growth from 2nd Gen. Hispanics
- **Implications**
 - Educational Upgrading over time
 - Education is Obtained **HERE**
 - Incomes Increase Accordingly

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Building a New Movement: Land Conservation and Community

Helen Whybrow
Center for Whole Communities

INTRODUCTION

As I write this, twenty leaders from around the country are gathered in the old timber frame barn at Knoll Farm. Among them is a rancher, a state legislator, a migrant farm labor advocate, an urban gardener working with youth, a watershed ecologist, an environmental studies professor, an indigenous rights advocate, a faith leader, and a land conservationist. They are here to find ways to weave together their very different perspectives, values, needs, hopes and methods into a powerful whole. This is difficult, emotional territory, but it is also healing work. It is, as one participant said, “essential that there are safe places to have these difficult conversations, for without them we will not move forward in this country.”

For years at Center for Whole Communities we’ve been making the case for a more diverse, inclusive, community-oriented land conservation movement, the reasons for which Peter Forbes explores in his essay, “Conservation 2.0” (this volume). In our retreats and workshops, we put those ideas into practice. We try to bridge divides and eliminate the structures that keep these divides in place. We create a safe harbor where very different leaders and groups come together, see problems in the context of larger systems, find shared grammar, language and story, vision more boldly, and move forward in unconventional alliances. We teach that numbers alone – bucks and acres – don’t reflect our highest values or inspire others, and how instead, there are key “doorway” issues that can allow the conservation movement to enter the homes of more Americans with a story that is more relevant and compelling. These key issues are healthy children, healthy food, and justice and fairness between those who have these things and those who do not. Finally, we teach the power of story: Story helps us imagine the future differently. Stories create community, they help us to see through the eyes of other people, and they open us to the claims of others. We tell stories to cross the borders that separate us from one another.

As Peter explains in his essay, the changing demographics, land use patterns, and economic pressures in this country have put conservation at a crossroads. It cannot

stay the same and survive; it must adapt and change. This is not news to most leaders in the movement, and many see this crossroads as a tremendous opportunity to become even more effective at nurturing healthy landscapes, for more people. But even as we hear more and more leaders around the country speak loudly and clearly about these new values and ideas, grasping them fully and feeling inspired to adopt them as their own, we also know how hard it is to turn idea into practice, value into action. The “why” is being seen; the “how” is harder to grasp. The practice is full of obstacles, including the time it takes to change the way one works, the funding risks inherent in changing one’s standards of measurement, the difficulty of navigating a new set of relationships, the need to retain loyalty of one’s existing membership, and balancing the desire to do more of what one is good at with the desire to do one’s work differently.

With all of this in mind, Whole Communities is beginning a deep inquiry into how the crossroads is being mapped around the country, gathering the hopeful stories, relating the challenges, and providing resources to nurture this exciting new direction that has begun to take shape. We want to look at what we might take away from the examples we see, to help others begin this exciting process of broadening the movement to include land and people in the most inclusive sense.

The goals of our study might be best expressed as a set of questions:

- What is the role of people and community in conserving and in keeping land conserved?
- How well do conservation organizations represent the communities they serve?
- How well do the communities they serve match where they are located?
- What’s the range of policy on public access to protected lands?
- What do conservation organizations mean by community engagement and what are they doing on the ground?
- How do they perceive the crossroads of our movement at this exciting time, and what challenges do they face?
- How are they reaching out to others, and across what divides?
- What are the best methods and approaches for doing this new kind of conservation work?

Our inquiry began with a survey we conducted, in collaboration with the Land Trust Alliance, on the nature and extent of community engagement among traditional land trusts around the country. The excellent response to that survey gave us a sense of where we are starting from. That survey is included in this volume. Preceding the survey is a report on the themes and trends we found. This was prepared by Danyelle O’Hara, drawing from the survey and on many more in-depth follow-up interviews she initiated.

This summer, we are also traveling to several sites around the country to document innovative practices for community engagement and gather the voices and stories of

those in the center of the experience. Shamina de Gonzaga and Gala Narezo will be profiling the work of leading conservation organizations on the West Coast, in the Southwest, on the East Coast and several others in between. The book that will result from our inquiry will be released at the Land Trust Alliance Rally in 2009. It will include case studies and many more voices speaking about what it means, and what it requires, to do “whole communities work” successfully.

We are grateful to all those leaders we’ve had the great privilege to know, collaborate with, and learn from as part of this work, and we want to especially thank those who gave generously of their time for the survey and interviews. We hope readers of this preliminary report will be in touch with us to add comments, thoughts, and stories.

Conservation 2.0: The Case for “Whole Communities” Conservation

Peter Forbes

Center for Whole Communities

What does it mean when the world’s largest biodiversity conservation organization – The Nature Conservancy – talks about its role in alleviating human poverty? Is this a moral, strategic, or marketing dialogue, or all three? What does it mean for conservationists when a regional land trust in California decides to collaborate with migrant farm workers? What does it mean for conservationists when a suburban state-wide land trust on the East Coast merges with an urban gardening organization? What can we learn from a rural land trust providing below-market-priced timber from its protected lands for affordable housing?

Are these conservation organizations leaving their mission and becoming something different, or is the conservation movement itself creeping into a new mission?

This is evidence of what I’m calling Conservation 2.0. We are in a new era of American demographics and global politics, one that asks conservation for a new form of leadership. Version 1.0 of conservation was all about buying and protecting land because that’s what the times most needed. The language and skills of the era have been technical and legal, and its goals have often been focused on counting bucks and acres as the measure of success. We are deeply indebted to this period in the history of our movement for giving us our systems of national parks, wildlife refuges and conserved land all across the country. Conservation 2.0 is predominantly concerned with how, as a nation and a culture, we relate to that land.

Conservation 2.0 is about conserving land with a new set of tools on a much larger scale; it is about restoring our cultural and social landscape, through reconnecting people and the land. The skills needed in this practice of conservation include story, dialogue, cultural competency, dismantling racism, political agility and movement building. The opportunities for change open to us in this version is an expanded membership, greater public understanding, deeper collaborations, more funding, more legislative victories, and the chance to move beyond saving individual parcels of land to re-creating a land ethic throughout our country. This is the extraordinary

power of conservation today: to help create healthy people and whole communities, while at the same time building stronger, more resilient support for conservation itself.

Conservation has made many significant contributions to American society — in land protection, in law, and hopefully now, in culture itself. In the first era, we saw the land but not the people. In this new era, we value most the relationship between the two.

Our movement has been on a long journey. Emblematic of the beginning of that journey is this story: John Muir arrived in Glacier Bay, Alaska by canoe with a Presbyterian minister in 1879. Muir was awed by the vast forces at work in this sweeping landscape of mountain, glacier and sea. Being in Glacier Bay made Muir feel fully alive, and he translated his experiences in a series of popular articles sent in installments to the *San Francisco Bulletin* even before he got back to California. Muir's writing led directly to the creation of Glacier Bay National Monument in 1925 and helped establish the dominant theme of the early conservation movement: Keep safe what you find valuable by removing people and other species that may threaten it. Our national park system is indebted to these first efforts at forming a practice of conservation.

No one, tourist or Tlingit, isn't grateful that Glacier Bay remains today a largely healthy and whole ecosystem. Muir had a powerful vision that served nature well, but his vision was incomplete: he saw the landscape and not the people. On that first trip to Glacier Bay 125 years ago, as he tells it, Muir purposefully rocked the canoe so that his Tlingit guide would be unable to shoot and harvest a deer. Muir wrote this account to make clear his values, but today it seems a sad parable of two people unable to hear each other's stories about different ways of being in relationship with a place they both needed and loved.

In 2008, with a growing human population and appetite felt everywhere on this planet, it is no longer possible to protect land and nature *from* people. No property boundary will survive a suffering, greedy humanity. Today's conservationists, seeing land under greater threats than ever, speak of protecting land through "landscape-scale conservation," but how do these bigger approaches "save" land from climate change or acid rain or a public that simply no longer cares? And when the human response to a park or wildlife refuge is to develop all the land around the "protected" land, what have we achieved? To be meaningful and enduring, the work of conservation must seek more than working on a larger scale or with tougher legal statutes; it must engage the hearts, minds, and everyday choices of diverse people. The massive, vital work of conservation today is to re-weave this still spectacular landscape with the human experience.

There are both moral and strategic imperatives for this shift to Conservation 2.0. The leaders who accept these imperatives as invitations are shaping a more vibrant and inclusive practice of conservation by regularly asking this question: What is the work of conservation most needed now, and how do we really "save" land today? For many, the answer to this question includes people and community. Yolanda Kakabadse, the former president of the World Conservation Union, said, "The

slogan of poverty reduction is not a fair presentation of the work of conservation groups. We work for society. I don't work for the tree or for the species alone. They are important because they serve society.”

Conservationists have made a strategic error in assuming that our work is more a legal act than a cultural act, assuming we can protect land *from people through laws as opposed to with people through relationships*. The fact that we've put so much emphasis on law and the legal system, and relatively little emphasis on relationship and community is why conservation easements all over the country are being challenged, and why imminent domain threatens more and more conserved land by taking it for other purposes deemed more valuable by the community.

How is it that those of us who care about people and the land have ended up at odds with one another, unable to find common ground? The response to this question, in a word, is *divides*. A forest ecologist might call this fragmentation. There's the urban/rural divide that has pitted city people against rural people. There's the divide between rich and poor. There's the black and white divide: people of color in the United States are three times as likely to live in poverty as whites. And here's the most difficult part: our movements for change are *as divided and fragmented* as our culture. Let me draw a map of some subgroups within the environmental movement. This graphic is inspired by the work of Van Jones. We call this the Whole Communities map.



First, there is the divide between those whose orientation is largely toward people and those whose orientation is largely toward nature. This divide is worsened by the fracture between those who have privilege and those who do not. If you have financial resources and care about nature, you may be interested in conservation, endangered species, wilderness, rainforests

and these types of issues. If you're privileged and focused on people, you may be more interested in renewable energy, consumer choice and green buildings. If you have little privilege and care most about people, perhaps you are interested in public health, Hurricane Katrina, democratic participation and hunger. Lastly, if you have little privilege and care most about nature, you may be interested in clean air, access to parks and urban greening.

The point is this: All of these concerns are critically important, and none will succeed without the other. Those who care about endangered species will not make enduring progress without those who care about Katrina. The complexity of today's problems makes it unlikely for any effort to succeed in isolation. To focus on a single issue, like land conservation, is today both a privilege as well as a source of isolation.

And focusing on a single issue can lead an organization to be overly competitive, more prone to exaggeration, and less adaptive and resilient.

Our ability, as a movement, to reach more Americans and conserve more land in an enduring fashion is wholly dependent today on our capacity as individual leaders and coalitions of organizations to bridge these divides and to recognize new allies. This re-making of the landscape of conservation itself, addressing who's in and who's out and who's served and who's not, is the hallmark of Conservation 2.0.

The moral imperative

Because of conservation's success, the community legitimately expects conservation groups to go beyond narrow mission statements about conserving land. When conservationists control a percentage of the land in a community, a region and even a state, it shouldn't be surprising that the public looks to conservationists to have ethical positions on housing, growth, wealth and the future. Increasingly a diversity of people are challenging conservationists to explain how they can control so much land and not look more like the community itself. This call to conservationists is to make visible the ethics of not only *how* they work but *why and for whom*.

An unintended result of the early efforts at conservation has been to exclude many Americans. Conservation must now be defined by the full awareness that our past efforts removed people from the land, primarily the rural poor, people of color, and native people. People have forever asserted their values over other people in politics, economics and, sadly, in conservation too. At Yosemite, the Ahwahneechee were forced out of the valley but later brought back in to the park to change bed sheets, serve Coca-Cola, and dress up as the more recognizable Plains Indians. At Great Smokey Mountains National Park, almost 7,000 rural people were told to leave only to have their barns and cabins re-assembled in a Mountain Farm Museum where actors play at hill-country life. And more recently, to create the Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve in Alaska, a 100-year practice of homesteading was stopped and people removed from their land. Partly as a result of this history and partly because of ongoing practices that inadvertently make some welcome and others less welcome, Frank and Audrey Peterman could travel through 12 national parks in 3 months in 1995 and see only two other African-Americans. What have we lost as a nation and as a people when conservation became a segregated movement?

The result, too, is that dispossessors are compromised along with the dispossessed. No conservationist will ever reach his or her goal without first gaining a broader sense of history and justice and embracing Saint Augustine's wisdom that one should never fight evil as if it is something that arose totally outside oneself. If you're the one losing your land or access to land, it matters little if the taker is a robber-baron, a land speculator, or a conservationist. Today, we must acknowledge this dispossession of native people and others, such as Black family farmers, without whom some significant portion of conservation would not have been possible, and that to heal this wrong — and to heal ourselves — requires not guilt but awareness, humility, and the courage to go forward differently.

The strategic imperative

In purely strategic terms, are conservationists winning or losing the land-use race in America? Conservationists have been enormously successful in protecting land, marshalling the money and skills to purchase more than 30 million acres of land across America, but Americans are no closer, by and large, to that land or to the values that the land teaches. As a result, conservation continues to be swept aside by the homogenizing and insulating effects of technology, electronic media, urban sprawl, and a culture of fear that contributes to the opposite of land conservation: destruction and the divorce between people and the land. Today, the purpose of land conservation must be to create a balanced, healthy people who carry the land in their hearts, in their skills, and in their concerns.

Conservation may have started with a landscape-as-museum philosophy, and a focus on one set of cultural needs, but the truth today is that we have conserved vast expanses of land which hold the possibility of a return in whole new way, in a manner never achieved before. Writer and homesteader Hank Lentfer suggests that we need an entirely new relationship to the land at his home ground at Glacier Bay. “Looking at the clear-cut hillsides around Hoonah, I would be reluctant to return title to the Tlingit,” he writes. On the other hand, “watching the smoke billow from the cruise ships idling in Glacier Bay while 2,000 tourists snap pictures with disposable cameras I have to question the wisdom of the ‘current owners.’”

How do we translate what we really care about in a way that brings forth a real response in our neighbors/communities? How do we expand conservation and make it endure in America?

This is a particularly important moment in the history of the conservation movement. Many of our leading organizations are 25, 30, and 40 years old. They have achieved tremendous successes, and yet there are signs that something new is required. Today’s challenges are bigger and far more complex than when many of these organizations got started – take climate change for example. A single organization is less able to confront the complexity of today’s challenges, and yet alliances with other groups often require new skills and competencies. At the same time, many conservation groups see their bases of support staying static or even shrinking as their demographic – white, up-scale and 65 age and up – becomes a smaller and smaller part of America.

Even more challenging is the perception of relevancy. Conservationists have vital work to do. Wealth has consolidated to the point where the richest 1 percent of our population now controls one-third of the nation’s wealth, creating a more dangerous and immoral divide between haves and have-nots. By 2050, 51 percent of United States will be non-white (major cities like SF will be majority non-white within the next 10-15 years.) There are political and strategic reasons to collaborate with new groups. All the polling data and election results suggest that people of color are the strongest supporters of conservation measures. But how often do their constituents see the benefits of land conservation?

As conservationists aspire to speak to a broader range of Americans, we must understand that people are looking first for a response to these everyday realities.

What conservationists do – provide people with a relationship to land – is still medicine for that which most ails our culture. Our healthy relationship to land is the means by which humans generate, re-create, and renew transcendent values such as community, meaning, beauty, love and the sacred, on which both ethics and morality depend.

But somehow this important work is criticized for being elitist and the province of just the wealthy. How did that unintentional outcome arise, and why is it a critique that has stuck? What is keeping us from becoming something new?

A substantial part of the answer, unfortunately, is success. In learning how to play the games of real estate, public finance and tax law we've picked up some tremendously powerful skills. It's taken formidable focus to hone those skills, but the downside of that focus is that other parts of one's vision are left out. For successful conservation groups, so much time and energy has been focused on what and how that it's been easy to lose sight of why and for whom.

Our success has also arisen from an ability to understand and use political and economic power, and the land trust movement has plenty of both. Not only can it effectively buy and control land, but it can change tax laws. And with that power comes an equal responsibility to use it equitably for all species and all people. In an age of visual metaphors, what is the face of land conservation today? Is it a man or a woman? Is it white or a person of color? Does it wear a crisp white shirt or a sweat-stained t-shirt? Or is it all of these? This *moment of becoming something new* asks something entirely different of every conservationist. This call is not to do more, not to do bigger, but instead to pause long enough to reconsider the very questions that have motivated conservation, and to allow fresh answers to evolve about why and for whom we do our work. It is to ask the question, "What is a whole community, why should we care, and how do we get there?"

A new leadership

There is a new breed of conservation leaders who run their organizations more like an ecosystem than a business. Their organizations have their own specialized niche, but they also collaborate, adapt and act interdependently. They know their own success is dependent on those with whom they once competed. For these leaders, "survival of the fittest" doesn't mean survival of the toughest, or survival of the one with the best messaging campaign, or the closest funding relationships, but those that cooperate and adapt. These successful organizations are able to quickly form new alliances, share resources, pick up new tools, and adapt to changing conditions. The core skills of this new leader are more relational than transactional; the new skills include movement-building, story, holding the tension between process and product, and developing personal and professional analyses of the role that race, power and privilege have played in America and in our conservation movement.

When leaders and their organizations work in this manner, new life flows to them. They become less brittle, more flexible and better collaborators. These leaders are using their land for food production and buying new land to create permanent locations for farmers markets. They are processing sustainably harvested wood from

conserved land for affordable housing. They are conservationists committed to building wealth for people with low incomes by selling their own restricted land to co-ops, and they are translating their newsletters and websites into Spanish. They are committed to making a meaningful response to global issues like climate change and scarcity of water.

Future generations will look back at the creation of very different parks like Glacier Bay in Alaska and Central Park in New York City with the same gratitude: they remind us of what it means to be human in healthy relationship to the world. We have been right to act quickly and to save these places from the grinding, numbing wheel of the industrial revolution. The vital work today is to re-weave people and the land with the specific intention of creating a more resilient community, one that cannot be achieved through fencing people out but only through the far more challenging work of inviting people in. We will never replace the dominant culture of fear and emptiness with a culture of care and attention until more Americans, of all colors and classes, carry the land in their hearts and minds.

*Peter Forbes is the co-founder and executive director of Center for Whole Communities. He lectures and leads workshops around the country on the purpose and practice of knitting together a stronger movement for social change and has inspired many to change the way they look at conservation. His books include *The Great Remembering*, *Coming to Land in a Troubled World*, and *What is a Whole Community?**

Land Trusts and Community Engagement: Survey Results*

Danyelle O'Hara
Center for Whole Communities

This survey was conducted in collaboration with the Land Trust Alliance and with the help of Mark C. Ackelson, President of the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, as a part of his Kingsbury Browne Award from the Land Trust Alliance and Fellowship from the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. We are deeply grateful for their partnership.

We would also like to give special appreciation to those who participated in the survey, and who gave generously of their time to the interviews. We welcome any feedback on this study.

* A report based on survey and interview data. Prepared for the Center for Whole Communities. May, 2008

Preface

“There’s really been a dramatic transformation – if you’re uncomfortable with the idea of change, it’s unsettling.” Andy Kendall, The Trustees of Reservations

It is a critical moment in the history of land conservation. Awareness is growing among land conservation professionals that much of the long-term success of their work depends upon the ability to develop a vision for conservation that resonates with the communities they serve and work in. But even more than this, the success of conservation depends upon the conservation sector’s ability to develop relationships with these same communities that allow for the co-creation and co-ownership of the vision. As such, land trusts and others are seeking models and tools to increase their effectiveness in working with and in communities.

In an effort to help establish a baseline for developing models and tools, the Center for Whole Communities, in partnership with the Land Trust Alliance, conducted an online survey of land trusts throughout the United States. The data presented here, and the full survey attached to the end of this report, is based on 361 responses from 39 states in the country. This response rate represents close to a quarter of U.S. land trusts that are members of the Land Trust Alliance. Subsequently, the Center for

Whole Communities interviewed fourteen senior staff of land trusts in depth, building on the data collected in the survey to get a fuller understanding of those responses and trends. The land trusts selected for these interviews represent the different geographical and cultural areas in which land trusts operate across the country. The purpose of the survey and interviews was to better understand how land trusts perceive and engage in the communities they serve and of which they are a part.

The survey and interviews provided a space for practitioners to reflect and report on different types of community, rationales for community involvement, and approaches for engaging the community. Through these reflections, we heard again and again the need for a broad range of case studies and examples of land trust work in and with communities. While individual land trusts want and need to understand how community engagement works in their specific communities and places, they also need models of how other organizations with missions similar to their own and in familiar landscapes are doing this work.

Recognizing that there are no “set” strategies for working with communities, as well as the very emergent nature of community engagement work among land trusts, this report is a modest effort to reflect back to land trusts some of the different approaches to community engagement being tested around the country. The report, which is based on interview and survey data, also highlights the opportunities surfaced through community engagement, as well as the challenges inherent for land trusts in pursuing it. In short, it draws a portrait of where the movement is today, newly arrived at an exciting crossroads, and beginning to make forays down paths that have great opportunity, as well as challenges, for re-imagining conservation on a greater, more inclusive, longer-lasting scale.

FINDINGS

I. Land Trusts operate in areas of changing demographics and land use patterns

A. *Uses/economics*

Obvious perhaps, but important to note, is that land trusts operate more and more in areas of shifting demographics and land use patterns. The ownership, use, and economies of landscapes around the United States are changing quickly and dramatically. Some quick examples to illustrate this include:

Rural Midwest: Large-scale industrial agriculture continues to grow even larger and become more of a player in the landscape.

Northwest: In the forest communities, logging companies have much control over the land, yet many of the mills have shut down, forcing communities to look for other revenue, such as tourism.

East Coast urban: Land use and land access issues changing with changing demographics and dramatic fluctuations in housing market.

West Coast: Issues with tourism versus agriculture in many coastal areas, the rising price of land making many smaller communities feeling like they're losing their character and the opportunities they had for agriculture and for middle and working class people.

B. Race

Of the fourteen organizations interviewed, seven are in historically “white landscapes” – Iowa (Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation), Wisconsin (Natural Heritage Lands Trust), Maine (Maine Coast Heritage Trust), Vermont (Vermont Land Trust), Oregon (Connecticut Land Trust), Washington (Columbia Land Conservancy and Cascade Land Trust), and Idaho (Wood River Land Trust) – where relatively small populations of color tend to be clustered in urban areas, and where rural areas have remained predominantly white, even with the growing Hispanic labor force. Among states in the interview pool with higher populations of color, like Massachusetts (The Trustees of Reservations) and Pennsylvania (The Nature Conservancy-Pennsylvania), rural areas have remained largely white. In California, the rural landscapes where the land trusts interviewed work are predominantly white in one (Brentwood Agricultural Land Trust) and in the other there is a significant non owning Hispanic labor force (Big Sur Land Trust). In the south (Black Family Land Trust), rural communities have historically been African American, white, and reflect the national trends with growing Hispanic populations. In Santa Fe, New Mexico (Santa Fe Community Trust), the white population is concentrated in the city and the rural population is composed principally of Indo-Hispanic families who have been engaged in farming and ranching since the colonial era.

C. Class

Class is closely linked to the economic uses of the land and to race. In some of the states where land trusts were interviewed, the rich and poor divide in rural areas is stark, with a fairly clear line separating big ranchers and growers, forestry companies, corporate agriculture and everyone else. In states where small-scale farming has remained the norm, like Vermont, rural class is more complex – very wealthy, middle class, and low income people all share the landowner title. This trend of low income landowners with few assets other than their land is similar among African Americans in the south and Indo-Hispanic families in New Mexico, where the land has been passed down through the generations for many centuries. In New Mexico, these Indo-Hispanic families share the same community as with the predominantly white and wealthy urban Santa Fe community, relative newcomers to the area. In the Big Sur region of California, the coastal community is wealthy and predominantly white, as are the rural grower and rancher communities. However, the rural labor force is mostly Hispanic, and behind the “lettuce curtain” in the Salinas Valley, the urban communities are primarily Hispanic and have few financial resources. In another example that points out the complexities of land use and class, the white farmers in Brentwood County, California, an agricultural community forty miles from the Bay

Area, operate at a much smaller and tenuous scale than the corporate growers in the Big Sur region. These farmers have become more and more vulnerable in the face of development interests that have played a key role in Brentwood County's tremendous growth (from 14,000 to 75,000 between 1990 and 2005).

II. Where, and whom, do land trusts serve?

Land trusts operate, often, in areas of shifting demographics and complex interplays between land use, race, and class. One of the goals of this survey was to get a snapshot of how that reality is also reflected in land trusts' work. The survey and interviews showed that there is not always alignment between *where* a land trust works and *who* has historically benefited from the land trust's work. For example, Daniel Claussen of the Santa Fe Conservation Trust reported that historically they have served the "Santa Fe upper class crowd, landowners," though that is changing. Mark Ackelson of Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation described that they work mostly in the rural environment but that most of their members are urban dwellers.

The question of where a land trust works and who it serves becomes more complex the more geographically dispersed the land trust is. Those doing statewide or regional work pursue their missions across large and often complex landscapes. As Mark Ackelson added, "*We operate statewide, so this whole issue of who is our community has been really challenging our thinking.*" *Some land trusts have chosen a community or demographic approach – rather than a landscape approach – from the outset, and thereby narrowing their focus.*" The Black Family Land Trust in the rural south, the Brentwood Agricultural Land Trust in northern California and the Santa Fe Conservation Trust, in Santa Fe are all examples of land trusts that work in specific regions or communities, with specific populations. Another solution some land trusts have found is to have both conservation easement programs and community programs. The conservation programs may continue serving the traditional constituency while the community programs reach beyond it.

Most land trusts interviewed and many survey respondents appear to be at a dynamic crossroads, particularly in terms of who they seek to serve – what was true ten or even five years ago may be completely different now. Of the fourteen land trusts we interviewed, eleven indicated rethinking their constituencies. While in the past many land trusts protected land for urban-based elites interested primarily in maintaining their quality of life, many of those same land trusts seek to broaden and deepen the base of people they serve and multiply their reasons for protecting land. In doing so, they increase the relevance of their work for a larger portion of the population and find that they gain greater support and name recognition, as well as address broader social issues.

- For example, Santa Fe Conservation Trust initially worked with the white Santa Fe community, and increasingly is working with Indo Hispanic agricultural communities outside of Santa Fe and Hispanic communities in the city. "*Now we're just beginning to really target the Indo Hispanic agriculture community and doing outreach with tribes as well,*" reported director Daniel Claussen.

- The Big Sur Land Trust initially worked with the wealthy from Carmel most interested in stemming growth to maintain their lifestyles. They have now expanded this to a diverse range of stakeholders (growers, ranchers, elite Carmelites, urban youth of color from Salinas, Hispanic rural workers, etc.) in Big Sur and the Salinas Valley. *“The lettuce curtain is the divide between the Salinas Valley, which is majority Latino (it just tipped that way in recent years) and the coastal communities (Carmel, Pebble Beach, Monterey, and Big Sur) . . . We’re trying to bring the lettuce curtain down.”* says Bill Leahy.
- The Vermont Land Trust has always served a range of people across the state, but is now in the process of identifying new methods and approaches to reaching deeper into the class (and increasingly race) issues, understanding how privilege works, and learning how conservation can be an effective agent for broad based community change.
- Brentwood Agricultural Land Trust started out with a focus on saving predominantly white middle class family farms in Brentwood County, but is now expanding to Bay Area underserved families concerned about obesity. *“While we may have spent the first few years thinking the farm families were the constituents, over the past few years, we’ve revised the constituency to be future generations in the Bay Area who want and need a source of food.”* Kathryn Lyddan, Brentwood Agricultural Land Trust
- The Trustees of Reservations’ charter has always been to serve the state of Massachusetts, but it hasn’t always executed its mission with attention to diversity in the state. This has changed significantly over the past ten years as the organization has set about raising its awareness and building its capacity to live into its mission. *“We see our mission as providing access across the state to all people in urban, suburban and rural communities. Historically the organization may have had that same mission, but didn’t pursue it with success in urban and diverse communities.”* Andy Kendall, Trustees of Reservations

III. Support and membership

Whom a land trust serves is deeply entwined with who supports the land trust. Most of the larger, more established land trusts reported that their support base is from a wealthy, white, rich, over 50-year-old urban population that does not necessarily live where the land trust operates. As land trusts begin planning and moving toward change in their constituency, they find that educating their support base (including boards of directors) about the reasons and opportunities for this change is critical. Although this process of explaining the needs for a new direction is not always easy, it is often met with support. When asked about this topic, most directors reported that their boards are “very supportive.” For example, both Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation and Big Sur Land Trust have recently completed strategic planning processes with community engagement as an important dimension.

According to the survey responses, land trusts consider membership to be the most effective method for providing feedback to and informing the land trust's work. Thus, as land trusts seek to expand and diversify their constituencies, it follows that the membership base should reflect these changes, bringing in new voices and viewpoints of what is relevant to the work. What is shown to be extremely important is that as land trusts expand their reach they also adapt their approach and work *with*, not *for*, their new members, understanding and listening to what is needed before coming in with a plan.

The reasons for expanding the membership base go beyond expanding constituencies, however. Other important considerations include increased name recognition; more perceived relevance so that people see the land trust as part of the fabric of the community rather than a rarefied type of operation supported only by the elite; and increased access to diversified sources of funding and influence that might result from this enhanced relevance.

Jane Arbuckle of Maine Coast Heritage Trust put it this way: *“Trying to broaden the membership base has several reasons – one, financially, we’ve had a core of generous donors and now they’re old, so financially we’ve got to broaden that base. But in addition, politically we need a broad base of support to get land legislation passed. To get more land, we need more people who know and like us and want to give land. Finally, there’s stewardship – people who live near conserved lands supporting them is the most important tool over the long term.”*

Expanding the membership base will involve re-thinking and possibly changing the definitions and boundaries of what members are and do. For example, as a land trust's membership changes to reflect the race and class diversity of the communities they serve or seek to serve, that land trust must make a shift from thinking of membership as less about financial support and political power to more about stewardship, ownership, and other ways of supporting the land trust. Many find this added dimension challenging.

What the interviews revealed is that although most land trusts are eager to expand their memberships, none wants to lose the base of support they currently has. Thus, expanding membership must include ample education among staff and board about new recruitment, as well as strategies for retaining support among those who are not yet necessarily on board with the new directions the land trust seeks to move. Finally, some land trusts reported that as their visions grow they are exploring new sources of support to lessen their financial reliance on their membership and increase their programmatic flexibility.

IV. What is the rationale for working with communities?

The survey revealed a widespread awareness that land trusts need to be engaged with the communities they serve, whether or not they are already doing so. While 93.4 percent of survey respondents said that they consider number of “acres conserved” an indicator of their success, 84.6 percent also said that collaborative efforts with the community was a critical indicator of success. These figures indicate that there is significant overlap between the perceived importance of protecting land and

engaging communities. According to directors of land trusts we interviewed in more depth on this question, the rationales and aspirations for community engagement and how they articulate with land protection vary widely. Some key themes that we can pull out from these responses include:

- A. Community engagement allows land trusts to be good neighbors, for public relations and public support for the land trust's work. This category of rationale might also include a desire to be more relevant in the community and / or an interest in accessing a broader base of funding.

"We want to be better known in the community. We have very poor name recognition – not necessarily a bad reputation, just no reputation at all. We want to figure out how to be known and be relevant." Jim Welsh, Natural Heritage Lands Trust

- B. Community engagement is seen by some as a critical means to the end goal of conservation – a way to unite people around the connection to and stewardship of the land.

"I see us becoming a land conservation organization that truly believes that working with the community is the only way to conserve land." Jane Arbuckle, Maine Coast Heritage Trust

- C. However, the reverse is also true: some see conservation as the means for community engagement and community building – conservation as a tool for bringing the community together and ultimately building capacity to define and address community needs.

"[The] greatest challenge and most important need to bridge is ownership from the community. So often environmental and conservation work happens from the top down, from the outside. The big challenge is how do we as organizations support the visions and facilitate a more cohesive vision emerging from the inside out. Re-conceptualizing and restructuring how we approach projects, strategic planning, and fundraising for that matter, as well as organizational board membership – from the inside out. Flipping traditional project work on its head." Daniel Claussen, Santa Fe Community Trust

"How do you build capacity and infrastructure around people making decisions and taking action? . . ." Gil Livingston, Vermont Land Trust

"How do we become an extension of the community . . . the executive arm of communities empowering themselves?" Daniel Claussen

- D. Community engagement is seen by others as a way to build capacity for community-centered conservation where communities define their own conservation goals.

"We're excellent on the deal side, excellent on the advocacy side, people know us, but we tend to do deals to communities. [We] need to figure out how to engage"

people in the choices about what gets protected, how it gets protected.” Gil Livingston

“The Trustees of Reservations has always thought we know what land to protect and that peoples’ thoughts aren’t that important. [We now] know, because of our strategic focus on engagement, that it’s what people view as important places that need to be protected.” Andy Kendall, Trustees of Reservations

“If you read our plan it’s not a land and acre plan, it’s a partnership plan . . . We want to make room for a lot of people to influence the specifics of it . . . work with our partners to define where we are working and what the “opportunity map” is.” Bill Leahy, Big Sur Land Trust

To work in a more diverse community requires not only cultural competency and visionary leadership, but the willingness to change the organization from within in order to overcome perceptions, approaches, or histories that have been divisive.

[We have to] overcome the fact that we’re looked at as an elitist, coastal organization. Land conservation is seen as a luxury that most can’t afford. Bill Leahy

V. Access to protected lands

This survey addressed the issue of land access because it is one of the most fundamental measures of a land trust’s engagement with a community. How accessible are its protected lands, and who is most likely to use them? What are the barriers to public access and how might those be overcome to make land conservation less exclusive? We found a range of responses.

- A. Almost all of the land trusts interviewed do easements for private landowners and cannot control what kinds of access private landowners will allow. Most land trusts reported that private landowners do not generally allow public access.
- B. Most land trusts interviewed take multiple approaches to use and access of lands they protect and own or that are in public ownership. All interviewed allow some level of public access to at least some of their sites, and most allow more than that.

“Our general rule is that we allow traditional uses [i.e. fishing and hunting] of the land. We made that decision because it’s just how you have to get along with the community.” Eric Allen, Columbia Land Trust

“We really focus on making sure the people who live where the preserves are know about them. We’re conserving them for those people – to continue their traditional uses.” Jane Arbuckle, Maine Coast Heritage Trust

“For the most part we actively invite access to the land we protect. Hunters and fishers – we actively invite unless there’s a reason not to.” Bill Kunze, The Nature Conservancy-Pennsylvania

1. Access is sometimes prohibited or strictly limited due to fragile ecosystems that cannot support extensive human activity.

“Some of our land has protected species, we don’t even tell people about that land.” Eric Allen, Columbia Land Trust

2. Some land trusts manage access to their sites with careful attention to carrying capacity.
- C. Survey responses indicated that 15.5% of land trusts post “No Trespassing” or “No Entry” signs on their land. Among that 15.5%, over half (51.5%) said that they post less than a tenth of their land; 14.7% said they post a quarter of it; 13.2% said they post about a half; and 20.6% said they post more than half of their land.
- D. Certain land trusts have programs specifically focused on public access and have plans to expand these programs (VLT, BSLT). The Trustees of Reservations seeks to increase the diversity of people who use their sites, all of which allow public access.

Public access programs are not without their challenges, and in some ways might even seem characterized by them. For example, while trails programs tend to serve a broad range of people, INHF highlighted that they can be contentious, drawing even deeper dichotomies between constituencies that are already at odds, for example, rural and urban residents. They also bring into focus different feelings about how the land should be used, and tensions about the pace of change. In rural Iowa, where small towns are dying, communities are losing their railroads, farms are in crisis, there is a lot of turmoil, and more change is looked at with fear and great resistance. There’s still an attitude that every acre ought to be farmed. One key strategy Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation has employed for managing conflict in their trails program is to slow down their work. *“Since we’ve become more attuned to these issues, we’ve begun slowing the progress down and engaging our neighbors . . . In one case, where we started out [seen as] opposition, now we’re joining the communities,”* explained Mark Ackelson.

VI. What do land trusts mean by community engagement?

In an effort to get a greater understanding of how land trusts define what they do, how they do it, and how they might describe community engagement, we asked a set of questions related to this in the survey and interviews. We came away with a broad array of responses, showing again the different approaches among traditional land trusts, as well as the different geographies and landscapes in which they operate. We found from the survey that the work of land trusts, as they define it, falls into some general categories, all of which includes this notion of community engagement:

- A. Connect people with land protected by land trusts.

Examples of programs linking urban people with rural land include: Trustees of Reservations (TTOR) makes its property available for use by partner organizations, such as the Boys/Girls Club and the YMCA for youth camps; Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation (INHF) convened an initiative to provide transportation for urban kids to participate in nature programs; Brentwood Agricultural Land Trust seeks to provide fresh produce from Brentwood County farmers for Bay Area kids.

Providing Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farms with a land base for their operations allows land trusts to make connections with the agricultural sector. INHF and Natural Heritage Lands Trust are looking at CSAs as a potential area of intervention, while TTOR already does it on a large scale. In fact, TTOR sees CSAs as a critical strategy for getting people onto the land.

B. Connect both rural and urban people more deeply with the land they inhabit.

Rural: Both Santa Fe Conservation Trust (SFCT) and Black Family Land Trust (BFLT) seek to help traditional farmers and agriculturalists move to the center of the conversation about conservation by helping them see themselves as the “true conservationists” with a role to play in setting the conservation agenda in their respective states.

“[We want to] help articulate a land conservation ethic that already exists within the landowning and agricultural community. Help the larger New Mexico culture understand that this heritage of traditional agriculture is the foundation for conservation in the state.” Daniel Claussen, SFCT

“The challenge is to help [African American] landowners see that they have been the conservationists – they have stewarded some of North Carolina’s most precious natural areas.” Dannette Sharpley, BFLT

The aspiration on the part of land trusts to help communities of color and other marginalized communities come to the agenda-setting table is significant given that these communities have historically been excluded from those conversations and decisions. Though critical to breaking down the cultural and social barriers to conservation, to be more inclusive also presents challenges from the outset: the conservation sector has often been perceived as having played a role in reinforcing exclusion, and therefore has to be very skillful and aware in its approach, if it wants to work differently:

“[The] legacy of black landownership is one of hard fought gains, scandalous, unjust loss. Conservation groups represented overwhelmingly by wealthy white professionals look like any other groups that have been trying to take their [African American] land for generations.” Dannette Sharpley, BFLT

Urban: The Bronx Land Trust (BLT) is chartered to bring the community together through community gardens. The methods and approaches BLT uses include outreach, technical assistance, conflict resolution, and capacity building to help community members make use of the resources available to them. BLT also facilitates broader inclusion by helping to identify alternative roles for traditional garden “gatekeepers” (people involved with gardens over such a long period that they begin to see the gardens as “theirs” rather than the community’s), as well as for youth, whom elders often fear and distrust.

- C. Develop and use land-based programs to serve as organizing mechanisms for community building, providing a link among diverse constituents.

An example of this is the work at Big Sur Land Trust (BSLT). They are involved in (and often initiate) land based projects that bring together a broad base of the community, such as municipal governments together with nonprofits, large scale growers and ranchers, and the wealthy coastal community. BSLT is able to play this role because they have intentionally taken a nonpolitical stance to the very political issue of land use.

“We’re one of the few organizations that can do it because we’re taking a nonpolitical approach to land use. We pick projects that can bring members of the community to have discussions about projects that meet a lot of needs. When the project is done, we can see that we’ve brought together the rancher, Latino, and environmental communities.” Bill Leahy, BSLT

There are significant challenges in trying to play the role that BSLT seeks to play, not the least of which is cultivating trusting relationships among the different players. An example given earlier that came up often in the course of this study is that many land trusts must overcome the fact that they are seen as an elitist white organizations by relatively poor communities of color, some of whom they seek to serve.

“Just because we say we’re going to do this doesn’t mean that we have folks rushing over to join us. There are huge trust, language, and skin color barriers.” Bill Leahy, BSLT

To use another example of this approach to community conservation, The Wood River Land Trust (WRLT) is using land as an organizing mechanism to initiate a conversation about land use and collaboration in Sun Valley, Idaho. With the help of the Center for Whole Communities, a consortium was formed to facilitate dialogues among the different nonprofit, governmental, and private organizations about how their respective activities overlap and impact (both positively and negatively) one another. This sharing and greater awareness across sectors has led to increased cross-pollination among programs and a collective sense of working toward a common good. The challenges include turnover in the consortium, uneven expectations which lead to uneven effort, and a desire on the part of some to do projects and create action versus that on the part of others to keep the consortium a place for discussion rather than project implementation.

- D. Engage in urban issues that impact conservation (affordable housing, smart growth).

Some land trusts are working with their communities on social issues that include land and conservation less directly but no less significantly. For instance, Cascade Land Conservancy (CLC) is working with multiple partners to make cities in the Washington Cascade region appealing and affordable places to live, work, and raise families. One of CLC's key strategies is to help identify and create opportunities for affordable housing in cities. Santa Fe Conservation Trust (SFCT) is also working with cities and counties on affordable housing master planning. SFCT can help guide and offer incentives through open space preservation, and in doing so, possibly leverage a greater percentage of affordable housing in certain developments. Vermont Land Trust also works on affordable housing issues by helping to identify tax credits and other incentives.

We heard often that partnering in sectors that are new to land trusts is challenging. For example, Natural Heritage Land Trust (NHLT) reported that their partnership with the affordable housing community has felt like a forced marriage because they have yet to find areas of common ground. Because land protected by NHLT tends to be in rural areas where bus lines don't run and access to work, shopping, school, and other destinations would be difficult, the obvious role of providing land for affordable housing is perhaps not the most useful role NHLT could play. In order to effectively partner, it may be necessary for land trusts to build capacity in affordable housing policy, tax credits, and other areas so that they have a menu of things to bring to the partnership table, as mentioned in the following section.

- E. Work with communities to identify ways conservation can benefit them and their agendas.

Some land trusts are helping communities gain access to new programs and/or funding, or can help underserved groups build capacity and have more of a voice in decision making. To play this role fully requires that land trusts bring a certain level of expertise, including the information about (and even access to) funding and other benefits, as well as connections, innovations, and imagination to leverage what others bring to the table. Examples include:

1. Santa Fe Conservation Trust (SFCT) is working with rural Indo Hispanic agricultural communities to understand and take advantage of agriculture tax credits. This makes the community work SFCT is doing legitimate to their board and it gives them credibility in their community.
2. A number of land trusts are working with affordable housing organizations to help them understand and take advantage of open space tax credits.

3. The founding premise of Black Family Land Trust is to use traditional conservation tools to help stem and reverse the loss of land among black farming families in the south.

Some land trusts, such as Maine Coast Heritage Trust and Vermont Land Trust are seeking to identify revenue streams through land based and/or agricultural enterprises and develop models for helping others to incubate profitable enterprises that allow them to stay on the land and continue traditions of sustainable working landscapes. There is no cookie cutter formula, as the solutions are different in different landscapes. In Vermont, agricultural opportunities are supported by Vermont's wholesome and clean "brand", a fairly intact connection to the land, a tradition of working landscapes, and proximity to urban markets. This model will be difficult to replicate in places that are more rural, or are less rural and have lost much of their working lands to sprawl.

VII. Changing organizations

What we saw from this study is that a shift in orientation towards community engagement requires a new organizational culture, which must not just be understood, but ultimately owned and implemented, by both board and staff. A new organizational structure may begin with a board and staff that are more representative of the community the land trust is engaged in, but it doesn't end there. It requires a great deal of education, training, dialogue, and redesigning that takes into account the issues of power and privilege as they play out around land, and that includes skill-building to reach out and build new alliances.

Gil Livingston of Vermont Land Trust put it this way: "*[We need to be] engaging staff in the larger constellation of values that drive the organization. [We] need to figure out a way to have a direct conversation about land and privilege.*"

At one end of the spectrum of how a land trust must change, is that board and staff must have the understanding to explain and promote the new values of the organization to external audiences. This includes funders, who must understand and be willing to support a fundamentally different metric of success. Some land trusts interviewed indicated observing changes of this nature in the foundation community.

"... funders with different areas of focus that historically don't cross over are starting to think more holistically about the approaches they support." Dannette Sharpley, BFLT

Another needed change in approach that was mentioned is an orientation toward the long term. This is also critical in community engagement work, and is fundamentally different from the timeframe required for conducting real estate deals. This requires a fundamental shift in the way that an organization views its mission, does its work, and allocates its resources.

"Some [of the lesson] is learning that some things work themselves out with time. Some is realizing that this is the long haul." Kathryn Lyddan, BALT

"We have to figure out where to put our resources. It takes a lot of time [so] there's always an interesting sort of tension . . . how much can we do? We're stable financially and we're able to do more. A lot of land trusts just aren't, local land trusts are often

month to month. I'm on the board of one . . . I know all this stuff, but I'm not implementing it on that board because I know the organization just doesn't have the resources." Jane Arbuckle, MCHT

To approach conservation as a mechanism for community building, land trusts are finding that they must take more of a community organizing approach to conservation. In addition to all the technical skills required to do conservation work, relationship and community building work require (among other things) patience, listening, adaptability, availability, and the ability to do one-on-ones. BLFT has learned that what is most effective is taking time and learning the language – in a figurative, literal, cultural, and social sense – of a community.

What we heard is that the skills and approach to work described above may not be readily available in traditional land trusts, which are often based in a practice of transactions. Community engagement and the relationships that are at its base are not transactional. For example, SFCT has found that glossy brochures and aggressive outreach aren't effective in the Indo Hispanic agricultural communities they are working in.

Relationship building, capacity building, and community organizing take time and resources and may be a serious challenge for small land trusts that have access to fewer resources. This study revealed clearly how some organizations have the budget and capacity to hire staff to focus on things like exploring economic benefits to conservation, learning new and beneficial tax credit programs, and reaching out to underserved communities, while for others, doing this kind of work will depend on their ability to form partnerships.

VIII. Partnerships to enhance competence and extend reach

"One way we've been able to accelerate [our work] is by finding good strong partners. We have a culture of having to do it all ourselves, and that's limiting . . . Turning this thing up in magnitude is about thinking beyond our four walls." Andy Kendall, Trustees of Reservations

Some key lessons around partnerships that were articulated in interviews include:

1. A merger of two organizations requires the willingness and ability to merge not just financial resources and databases, but the cultures of the two organizations coming together. This involves recognizing the value of both and not letting the bigger one (or more culturally dominant one) subsume the other.
2. Being clear about the strategic advantage the land trust offers in a partnership pushes a land trust to remain true to its mission. This requires maintaining a balance between building enough capacity to interface effectively with partners on the issues being addressed through the partnership and staying focused on the expertise and knowledge the land trust brings to the relationship.

“When you look at a big project like this [childhood obesity in the Bay Area] . . . you have to remember what everyone’s mission is. Our piece of it in working with these counties with farmers is to do the research and say . . . do we have the supply to meet this demand? How does the economics of this work for farmers? Can they make more money? Will it improve the economic sustainability of urban edge agriculture? Folks in the communities will figure out who needs to get the food, distribution to them, education about nutrition, etc.” Kathryn Lyddan, BALT

3. Partnerships can result in new resources and initiatives that wouldn’t otherwise have been tapped:

“The emergence of new partnerships in sectors that conservation has not traditionally partnered with means that there is access to new resources and that different and more innovative types of work can get done. They leverage one another’s resources. This extends to funders, who are now speaking the hybrid language of cross sectoral work.” Daniel Claussen, SFCT

Overall, we heard that land trusts are finding a great level of interest in and receptivity to partnerships and to what they can bring to the table

“Overall, the community is way ahead of us on this. They’re like, “What took you so long?” And they are very excited about it. Folks want to come on board, they see a role for themselves. This is coming from business people, the ranching community, we’re even getting a glimpse of it in the grower community (who are really fierce property rights people) . . . There’s a lot of pent up demand for this that is very exciting.” Bill Leahy, BSLT

“Wealthy nonprofits operating in Vermont that could have a connection with land, but haven’t, so now we’re connecting with them. Women’s organizations – all low income, women coming out of incarceration – developing a housing project that we could partner with them on . . . Interesting constellation of different organizations hitting low income communities around health, food issues. It’s an opportunity to connect with younger people because it’s more like mission work, it’s more tangible. People are very receptive.” Gil Livingston, VLT

Critical ingredients in a partnership include a willingness to be open, take risks, and think outside the conservation box:

“There are opportunities for real partnerships so long as we’re comfortable spending time with people we normally wouldn’t and thinking about things that are not traditionally land conservation. There are big opportunities.” Bill Leahy, BSLT

“I actually think this is a much more exciting way of going about land conservation. The traditional bread and butter deal making land conservation is quite limiting.” Andy Kendall, TTOR

As critical as partnerships are to land trusts' ability to truly engage communities and affect change, bringing all of the necessary groups together to identify common ground remains a relatively new kind of challenge that many recognize and that most sectors (conservation and others) have not yet mastered:

"It's going to take an effort that is much larger than the organization [SFCT]. How do you bring all the different groups together to see the commonalities – right now there is no venue and there is no discussion. They want the same thing and they don't see how to get it – [we] must identify and leverage the common ground." Daniel Claussen, SFCT

That, it seems, is the work ahead. From this crossroads, most seem to agree that it will take great skills – many of them new – to move forward, but that the rewards and opportunities for a new, more inclusive movement are not only great, but essential.

Themes from the Discussion

“Why is clearer than how.” Peter Forbes

The trends pushing many land trusts toward a broader engagement with the communities in which they work are increasingly clear. Not all land trusts will choose or be able to respond to these trends by moving toward a more inclusive vision. Some less financially affluent organizations may lose critical financial support over time. Others may lose some of their land or easements as eminent domain makes way for more pressing public needs. There is also the possibility that older, less nimble and relevant land trusts may be replaced by new, younger organizations. All face an era of shifting demographics and pressures.

How best to respond is not at all clear, however. Most of the workshop focused on possible routes forward. As the participants moved from why to how, the themes included the following:

There are a range of views on why and how to engage with new communities

One perspective in the conservation community holds that land needs to be protected from people, and that more human interaction with open spaces will cause harm to the land. Another view emphasizes the need to connect people with the land through parks that people can use for recreation, gathering and other purposes. A few conservation organizations are moving toward a focus on people as the key to saving any land—in both the short and long term.

There appear to be two main camps in the discussion around broadening the base of support for land conservation. One is strategic in focus – “stealth environmentalism” or “relevant conservation.” Advocates of this perspective recognize that new alliances built around shared benefits are necessary in order to meet both traditional conservation goals, as well as the goals of new partners (whatever those goals may be). The second equates environmental protection with social justice, advocating that in order for human and natural communities to be “whole,” one must strive toward reconciling these often competing values.

“The past is the context for today.” Elva Yañez

There is a need to understand, acknowledge and build on the past

In conversations around race, power and privilege, the past is often a major stumbling block. Opening up the past raises fears – of having to give something up, of having even more taken away – that sometimes stop conversations in their tracks. Efforts to understand past injustices can become stuck in recriminations over historical harms. Discussions focused exclusively on moving forward from today are often undermined by the residual impacts of the past – promises unfulfilled, damage inflicted.

“A student once told me that ‘Granddad says that the KKK hangs people in the woods . . . so why would I ever go?’” Nina Roberts

Moving forward requires that the past be understood, acknowledged and used as the foundation for progress. Traditionally privileged groups need to understand and acknowledge the systemic advantages they have enjoyed as they seek to partner with new communities. People of color and lower-income communities need to think strategically about the balance between remedying past injustices and forging new partnerships in pursuit of shared goals. Doing so will by no means be easy for either side . . . but the workshop participants identified many reasons for hope.

“The land trust community needs to shift from transactional to relationship skills.” Peter Forbes

New skill sets need to be added

Engaging with new constituencies requires new sets of skills beyond the land acquisition expertise so well honed by most land trusts. Listening, cross-cultural understanding, coalition-building, relationship management and other more process-focused capacities are also critical. Land trusts will need to value and promote programs that support the establishment of long-term relationships with both the land and other community organizations.

“We are going to require humility in our approach.” Rand Wentworth

To the extent that majority white land trusts specifically reach out to communities of color or those who have not traditionally been partners in or beneficiaries of private land conservation, new capacities for working with urban populations are also going to be required. At a minimum, this means expanding the focus from just large-scale, rural conservation to human-scale, accessible sites. It may also mean new language capacities, as well as new programs – either alone or in partnership with other organizations.

“Most of my people would have no idea what we are talking about.”

Charles Jordan

New, engaging stories need to be told

Ecosystem services, habitat conservation, and biodiversity are all terms of deep meaning and relevance to many in the land trust community, but are incomprehensible and irrelevant to most other folks. Articulating the many ways that open/green space can bring value to other people – safe places for children to play, clean water, healthy food – is essential. Listening, understanding and speaking to the core values of new communities will be required.

A wider array of storytellers is also required. Working across communities is critical, but having a community member tell a shared story to their own community is even more powerful. Fortunately, a new generation of conservationists from traditionally under-represented communities is forming to help tell the new stories and engage with new audiences.⁴

Land trusts have a strong foundation from which to build new bridges within their local communities

Land trusts have assets many organizations do not – land, donors, access to political leaders, etc. These resources create opportunities for them to take the first step in reaching out to historically underserved communities to explore areas where their interests may overlap.

In fact, the land trust community’s focus on “permanence” has the potential to help address concerns over promises broken in the past by organizations that come in to a community and then move on. Land trusts have an opportunity to “stay the course” once engaged with a wider cross-section in their local communities. Weaving broader nets of community support also adds powerful cultural protections to the legal rights traditionally acquired by land trusts.

⁴ Such as the Center for Diversity and the Environment: <http://www.environmentaldiversity.org/index.html>

*SECTION III:
HOW CAN THE CONSERVATION
MOVEMENT BUILD DIVERSE
COALITIONS IN FAVOR OF OPEN
SPACE FUNDING?*

Voting Patterns on Open Space Issues

Emily Biesecker
Yale University

OVERVIEW

Introduction

Since 1988, the Trust for Public Land's LandVote project shows that more than \$46 billion in conservation funding has been approved through ballot measures (TPL). Money made available through these state, county, or municipal measures far outpaces conventional funding from the federal government for open space. LandVote estimates that ballot measures raise 90 percent or more of the public funding available for conservation initiatives, compared to spending that is enacted solely by legislatures and not voted on by the public (Levitt).

A ballot measure can call for funding for conservation through new taxes (sales, property, income) or borrowing (such as through bonding). Although voters are more likely to approve the "receive now, pay later" bonding measures than the "pay as you go" taxes, both sources are common and have been widely supported across the country (Nelson). In the November 2006 elections, 80 percent of conservation finance ballot measures were approved, with diverse groups responsible for the approval (TPL). Voting on open space offers conservation groups the opportunity to raise funds and awareness in their communities. Land trusts can also combine measures for open space with funding to answer other community needs such as historic preservation or affordable housing.

Who supports open space ballot measures?

Support for conservation finance ballot measures comes from across America's diverse voting population. Voters across the country, rich and poor, liberal and conservative, ethnic minority and ethnic majority, rural and urban, have approved billions of dollars of funding for parks, watersheds, open space, and working lands in their communities.

Land trusts and open space voting/spending

Private land conservation organizations are a crucial component in the success of open space ballot measures. They can help to initiate, design, and defend open space

ballot measures, and they can ensure that the programs approved meet the expectations of the voters.

WHO SUPPORTS OPEN SPACE BALLOT MEASURES?

Major ballot measures for conservation have passed in all regions of the United States. They have been supported in liberal communities, conservative communities, rich communities, poor communities, racially diverse communities and racially homogenous communities. While the majority of conservation ballot measures are in wealthy suburbs and resort towns in the Northeast, voter support for open space funding is moving to encompass new communities.

California's experience with open space voting has been a case in point. Statewide exit polls have shown that racial minorities, as well as low-income individuals, were among the greatest supporters of California's Proposition 40 in 2002. The bond provided \$2.6 billion for parks, clean water, and clean air. Proposition 40 was supported by 77 percent of African American voters, 74 percent of Hispanic voters, and 60 percent of Asian American/Pacific Islander voters – compared to 56 percent support from White voters. Low-income voters, those with an annual income of less than \$20,000, supported the measure at the rate of 75 percent, while 61 percent of voters with a high school diploma or less also voted in favor of Proposition 40 (Levitt).

Cobb County, GA

In November 2006, the residents of this conservative suburban county just northwest of Atlanta approved a \$40 million bond for land conservation with an overwhelming 72 percent voter support. Before this measure, the county had just over 2 percent of its land set aside as open space. In 2000, voters in the county opposed a conservation ballot measure that would have provided funding through a sales tax increase. The 2006 bonding option was much more palatable to the county's conservative base (Green).

In a study published in *Ecological Economics* in 2007, Erik Nelson, Michinori Uwasu, and Stephen Polasky found that communities with large populations, low population density, rapid growth in surrounding areas, and highly educated and environmentally concerned residents are more likely to hold open space referenda. These communities are especially likely to pass a proposed open space measure

when there are low unemployment rates and no new taxes. The authors also found that more racially homogenous communities are more likely to place conservation measures on the ballot and to pass the measures, and that voters in areas dependent on natural resource extraction industries are less likely to support measures (Nelson et al.).

Conservation funding focused only on fast-growing, affluent communities may not align with conservation priorities and does little to connect with communities underserved by open space. Conservation organizations can reach out to traditionally underserved groups in minority and low-income areas, at once building support for a particular measure and expanding a community of support for conservation in general.

Some questions for consideration

- 1) What factors are responsible for the success of open space ballot measures across the country?
- 2) If not represented in the traditional land trust membership, why do a diverse range of groups support open space ballot measures so strongly?
- 3) Are high approval rates for open space funding measures the case for poorer and more diverse communities outside of large urban centers?
- 4) What prevents communities from proposing or supporting conservation ballot measures?

LAND TRUSTS AND OPEN SPACE VOTING/SPENDING

The democratic approval of conservation funding does not guarantee its equitable distribution. After a ballot measure has passed, affluent and well-organized districts may receive the bulk of the public money, leaving lower income neighborhoods with fewer direct benefits from the program. According to a report from the University of Southern California, the City of Los Angeles' Proposition K (Parks for Kids) left many poor neighborhoods underserved. Between 1998 and 2000, the wealthy district of West Los Angeles received twice as much parks funding per-child as the neighborhood of South Central, a community with the city's second-highest poverty rate, greatest number of children, and lowest access to nearby parks (Wolch, Sherer).

To promote fairness and equity, and to expand the base of support for conservation, all communities should benefit from a ballot measure's open space funding, and those with the greatest need should benefit the most. There is a real role for conservation advocates to ensure that the promises of the open space measure are realized for all groups once the conservation program is in place.

Conservation organizations should also reach out to local communities during the design of open space measures in order to broadly understand the perceived needs of the residents. Parks and green spaces themselves may not be among a community's highest priorities, but often can be linked to other pressing issues such as drinking water, neighborhood safety, children and quality of life.

Some questions for consideration

- 1) How can the land trust community ensure that all local communities, especially the underserved, benefit from open space ballot measures?
- 2) How can the public trust be regained if a ballot-funded conservation program does not meet the expectations of the voters?
- 3) What range of community needs are served with the creation of parks and open space? How can these benefits be communicated to form coalitions in support of conservation ballot measures?

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Trust for Public Land, LandVote Database http://www.tpl.org/tier3_cd.cfm?content_item_id=12010&folder_id=2386

Among those doing good work on this issue

The Trust for Public Land's LandVote program maintains an extensive database of historical and upcoming conservation finance ballot measures, and the information is customizable by region, state, finance mechanism, and jurisdiction type.

www.landvote.org

The Conservation Campaign, an affiliate of the Trust for Public Land, offers resources to start campaigns and build support for conservation ballot measures and legislation to fund the protection of open space. Their services and resources include research, polling, ballot language, and coalition building.

www.conservationcampaign.org

The Conservation Strategy Group is a consulting and lobbying firm based in Sacramento. The Group helps their clients pursue public funding for conservation and natural resource management and has drafted and organized campaigns for several major natural resource bonds.

www.csgcalifornia.com

Voting on Open Space: Some Trends

Daniel Press
UC Santa Cruz

Between 1988 and 2008, 76 percent of land conservation ballot measures were successful, resulting in passage of 1,595 ballot measures, nation-wide (meeting the majority or supermajority vote requirements in their communities) and raising over \$46 billion for local open-space preservation.

As impressive as this sum may be, it almost certainly does not represent the full extent of local conservation expenditures – these data come from the Trust for Public Land’s “LandVote” database, which does not track special district votes and budgets. Adding in special districts would surely increase these figures by several billion dollars (California alone has over 100 special park and recreation districts, some of which have extensive holdings).

- Using data from the Land Trust Alliance, Table 1 shows that the mid-Atlantic states passed the largest number of measures (595) between 1988 and 2007, but communities in the West (mostly in California and Colorado) raised the largest amount of money (about \$14.7 billion), even though they faced the lowest approval rate (51 percent).

Table 1 Conservation bonds, by region, 1988-2007

Region	Number of Measures on Ballots	Measures Approved	Approval Rate	Funds Raised
West	183	94	51%	\$14.7 billion
Southwest	137	122	89%	\$3.4 billion
Rocky Mountain	176	134	76%	\$3.7 billion
Southeast	197	154	78%	\$5.2 billion
Midwest	265	184	69%	\$4.4 billion
New England	410	301	73%	\$1 billion
Mid-Atlantic	721	595	82%	\$13.2 billion
Total	2089	1584	76%	\$46 billion

Source: Trust for Public Land, 2007

California and New Jersey together funded close to half of all the successful open-space measures in TPL's LandVote database.

- But Californians, constrained by formidable super-majority requirements for bonds passed at the local level, raised nearly three quarters of their funding from state bonds, which require only simple majorities. California statewide parks measures: about 15 bond acts between 1928 and 2008, almost all passed.
- Voters in New Jersey raised less than half their open-space funds from state bonds. Moreover, residents of the Garden State use local ballot measures far more often (and for much smaller acquisition projects) than Californians.
- In effect, New Jerseyites used relatively easy simple majority voting rules to purchase small properties in and surrounding scores of townships. Californians purchased much larger, more expensive properties, often for use by the extensive state park system.

PREDICTORS OF SUCCESS AT THE BALLOT BOX?

Communities with large populations, low population density, rapid growth in surrounding areas, and highly educated and environmentally concerned residents most frequently asked their voters for ballot-box open-space support.

- Similar factors also lead to voter approval for open space.

There is general agreement that wealthier, more educated, and generally more liberal voters provide the most consistent support for local preservation, although studies are not perfectly consistent in that regard. Some poorer voters in communities of color support open space measures at higher rates than their white neighbors, so ethnicity may in this case “trump” income.

Partisanship really matters a lot. Few have looked at it, but in my own study, it was the most important factor, along with geography.

The role of development pressure is not at all clear. Are voters reacting to sprawl that they can see or is the effect really too hard to measure? Howell-Moroney (2004), Kline (2006), and Nelson, Uwasu, and Polasky (2007) all argue that population density and development pressure correlate strongly with increased local preservation, but Romero and Liserio (2002: 349) argue that open-space preservation is not a function of sprawled development, “for it is no more likely to occur in communities characterized by low population density than in those that already demonstrate relatively more concentrated development patterns.”

- In my own work, development pressure was a strong factor in motivating local open space preservation.

Regardless of the role development pressure plays in spurring preservation efforts, local open space unequivocally benefits wealthier communities – who can more easily afford open-space bonds and who do, in fact, vote for them – principally by raising property values.

COMPLEXITY OF CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL BALLOT MEASURES

- About 75 environmental measures on the California state ballot since 1928; about 2/3 passed.
- Park bonds from 30-40 years ago were relatively simple and involved relatively few actors. A few members of the state legislature, a member of Congress, and one or two agency officials could arrange for a federal budgetary earmark to allocate considerable land acquisition funds to a region, county, city, or township. Consider, for example, how California allocated park bond money in 1964 versus 2006. Proposition 1, the “State Beach, Park, Recreational, and Historical Facilities Bond Act of 1964” – a state law one page long – allocated \$150 million to various state and local agencies and named only two individuals with any responsibility or authority to spend the funds: the administrator of the Resources Agency and the director of the Department of Parks and Recreation.
- Looking forward to Proposition 84, a \$5.5 billion bond act, entitled the “Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006,” named twenty-one individuals, departments, and conservancies in eight pages of small print. The inclusion of more decision makers directly correlates with the increasing complexity and specificity of these bond acts.

ARE LEGISLATORS IN STEP WITH THEIR CONSTITUENTS?

I examined 40 legislative bond acts (LBAs) put on the ballot by the California legislature between 1970 and 2002, all environment-related.

- On average, Assembly Democrats voted “no” when their constituents voted “yes” 2.5% of the time; for Assembly Republicans, the average difference between legislators and constituents was 8.9%
- Almost identical in the Senate, 2.4% and 8.0%, respectively

Some exceptions:

1. Proposition 44, 1986 primary election. A water conservation bond. Opposed by 13 Assembly Democrats and 5 Assembly Republicans, for a total of 25% of the Assembly in session. No such opposition in the Senate.
2. Propositions 12 and 13, 2000 primary election. Large park and water bond acts that eventually got on the ballot and passed. No Democrats opposed; props 12 and 13 were opposed by 13 and 11 Assembly Republicans, respectively. A little less opposition, percentage-wise, by Senate Republicans.

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Communicating the Benefits of Parks and Open Space to Voters: Direct Mail Campaigns

Ernest Cook
Trust for Public Land

CONSERVATION FINANCE
Creating Public Funding for Parks and Conservation

Direct Mail Campaigns

Communicating the Benefits of Parks and Open Space to Voters

Protecting drinking water supplies ... Slowing growth, traffic, and congestion ... Preventing juvenile delinquency... Preserving wildlife habitat ... Saving family farms and ranches ... New parks and protected open space can offer a wide range of benefits to all kinds of communities. The Trust for Public Land has used direct mail to tell

hundreds of thousands of voters about these benefits and about the overall positive effect that park and open space spending can have on the places where we live. Polling, research, and community input guide the design and targeting process; nationally recognized direct mail consultants are often used to produce the pieces.



Leaving a legacy of protected open space for future generations has proved to be a motivating message, especially for older voters. Designed by TPL for "The Rivers" campaign in Ormond Beach, Florida.

In Dade County, Florida, Spanish-speaking voters learned how safe parks and well-designed recreational programs can deter gangs and juvenile delinquency. Designed by the Primacy Group for the Safe Neighborhood Parks bond act.

A new coalition of ranchers, environmentalists, and businesses was featured in the campaign to protect ranchland in Rout County, Colorado. Designed by Bates/Neimand for the Ranchlands and Natural Areas Initiative.



Conservation Finance Program 33 Union Street, 4th Floor, Boston, MA 02108, (617) 367-6200, (617) 367-9885 (fax)
National Office 116 New Montgomery Street, 4th Floor, San Francisco, CA 94105, 1-800-714-LAND, www.tpl.org



Letting voters know exactly how funds will be spent can be the key to gaining public support. *Designed by TPL for the Forsyth County, Georgia, sales tax extension campaign.*

Public opinion polls show that conserving land to protect drinking water supplies is a top priority for people from Cape Cod to California. *Designed by Shea & Associates for the Friends of the Cape Cod Land Bank.*

Parks and kids make for a winning combination at the ballot box. *Designed by the Primacy Group for the Los Angeles County Safe Neighborhood Parks Act.*

Protecting wildlife habitat was an important priority for voters in Arnold, Missouri. *Designed by TPL for the "Collins Tract" referendum.*

Voters in many fast-growing communities want to slow down the pace of development and offer new greenways and trails to minimize traffic congestion. *Designed by Bates/Nemand for the DuPage County, Illinois, Forest Preserve bond referendum.*

Direct Mail Campaigns



Protecting farmland and agricultural heritage are important priorities for many communities. *Designed by Stearns Consulting for the Weld County, Colorado, sales tax referendum.*

Clean water and open space preservation go hand in hand, especially in coastal states like Florida. *Designed by Stearns Consulting for the Safe Parks and Land Preservation bond in Broward County, Florida.*

Preserving places for children to play is consistently identified as key to the quality of life in rapidly growing communities. *Designed by the Primacy Group for the Cobb County, Georgia, special sales tax campaign.*

Themes from the Discussion

Given the scale of the conservation funding now coming from local, county and state ballot measures, it is critically important to understand who is supporting them and why. Surprising new coalitions have been formed that offer some suggestions – and cautions – for moving forward to broaden the base of support still further.

The first step in building support is to listen

Understanding what the voters want is the key first step in building a successful ballot measure. Work to date demonstrates that voters share many values around drinking water protection, water quality improvements, safe places for kids to play and related, human-centered values. At the same time, there are often surprisingly high levels of support for more abstract values – such as wildlife protection – even in communities that are unlikely to spend much time in wilderness areas. Building any campaign around these local concerns is the key to success.

Communities of color and lower income communities tend to support open space ballot measures

While open space bond measures are most likely to be approved in wealthier, more educated communities, there are an increasing number of examples where Latino, Asian and African-American voters were more supportive than their white counterparts. In addition, voters in both the upper and lower income levels tend to be more supportive than middle-income voters. White males over 50 tend to be the least supportive voting group. At the same time, they often control the levers of power in rapidly developing local communities.

“97 of the 100 fastest growing counties in the US voted for President Bush.”

Ernest Cook

Many of these differences appear to stem from different views of government. If government-provided services are your only route to open space, you are more likely to support government funding for those services. Providing safe and attractive parks in which families can gather or reducing the environmental burdens in the local community are often appealing arguments to urban voters. If you have a private

option to access open space directly, however, you may be less willing to support government funding. This effect may be exacerbated if you are also a supporter of smaller government. As a result, recent voting on open space ballot measures also tends to follow partisan lines.

The land trust community is a bit schizophrenic on private/public funding and benefits

These differences in views on government are echoed in some of the debates/divisions within the land trust community. Clearly, many land trusts were formed to do what government was not (i.e. to protect land from development using private market tools). This fits well with the wealthy, small government voter/donor – “Let’s just go buy the parcel.”

Questions of access and community relevance are less of an issue if purely private means are used to acquire land. As more financial support is provided by governments, however – whether as tax deductions or grants – more difficult questions are posed around the public benefits from such investments. What is the right balance between the value of protecting land/wildlife from people and the more direct value to people of providing access to open space for recreational and other uses?

“I worry about conservation groups renting Latino constituencies rather than serving them.” Rhea Suh

More work needs to be done to understand where and how the money is actually spent

Concerns were expressed that this tension in the land trust community may lead to big coalitions to support ballot measures, followed by more fractured efforts to capture the funding for individual projects. More research needs to be done to understand the existence and scope of any such problem.

If, however, broad coalitions were formed around the health and quality of life benefits of access to open space in order to pass a ballot measure, but then the vast majority of the proceeds went to acquire lands offering little actual public access, then the ability to form such coalitions in the future might well be undermined. If land trusts are reaching out to more diverse communities to support funding measures, they also need to do what they are able to ensure that the benefits of any funding received are shared equitably with those communities. Actually doing so may well require changes within the land trusts themselves – particularly in their organizational values and project prioritization, as well as the diversity of their boards, staff, skills and partnerships.

*SECTION IV:
HOW CAN OPEN SPACE BE USED TO
BROADEN THE BASE OF
CONSERVATION THROUGH
RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES?*

Recreational Uses of Open Space

Emily Biesecker
Yale University

OVERVIEW

Introduction

Recreation, from jogging or picnicking to hiking and camping, is how most of us relate to and come to appreciate natural areas and open space. Time spent outdoors in green environments, be they highly manicured urban parks or seemingly untouched wild lands, is psychologically revitalizing and promotes healthy, physically active lifestyles. Local open space brings increased physical and mental health and can add to the social strength of communities.

Different patterns of recreational use and expectations for parks emerge across racial and ethnic groups. Though all people can benefit from recreation in open space, all people do not use parks in the same ways or at the same levels. Some communities lack easy access to open space and many experience other barriers to outdoor recreation.

Benefits and distribution of outdoor recreation

The benefits of outdoor recreation – to physical, mental, and community health – are universal, but the distribution of opportunities for outdoor recreation is not. Communities with access to parks and open spaces are safer and healthier; unfortunately, they also tend to be wealthy and White. There is a great need within the conservation community to help make the benefits of open space more widely available.

Patterns of use for outdoor recreation

Numerous studies have shown that different racial and ethnic groups have different preferences for outdoor recreation and patterns of use in open space settings. Land owners and managers should explore the expectations of diverse groups and integrate them into their management of open spaces.

BENEFITS AND DISTRIBUTION OF OUTDOOR RECREATION

According to the Trust for Public Land's *The Benefits of Parks* report, 34.9 percent of White adults in the United States pursue regular exercise as a recreational activity, while only 25.4 percent of African-American adults and 22.7 percent of Hispanic adults engage in regular exercise. Adults living below the poverty line are three times more likely than high-income individuals to report never being physically active. Health problems caused by physical inactivity, including obesity, diabetes, and heart disease, are chronic in the United States. Among U.S. adults aged 20 and older, nearly two-thirds are obese or overweight, as are one in six children (Gies). Accessible, nearby open spaces can offer relatively low-cost opportunities for physical activity in locations where few other options exist.

Though distance is not the only factor that limits the access of certain groups to open space, a lack of local green space is an obvious obstacle to outdoor recreation. In Los Angeles, only 30% of residents live within walking distance of a park. Park space is concentrated in White, wealthy neighborhoods. While majority-White neighborhoods in L.A. can boast of 31.8 acres of park space for every 1,000 residents, African-American neighborhoods contain only 1.7 acres and Hispanic neighborhoods only 0.6 acres per 1,000 people (Gies, Sherer).

Green space can have a crucial, direct role in promoting human health, both mental and physical. Researchers have found that senior citizens with access to walkable green spaces had significantly lower mortality rates, regardless of their socioeconomic status and original health status (Takano). Urban residents living near green space report less mental fatigue and better coping ability than residents without access to nature (Gies, Kuo 2001, Groenewegen et al.).

The Los Angeles State Historic Park at the Cornfield

A rare piece of large open space in downtown Los Angeles and the only park serving the Chinatown neighborhood, Cornfield is a success story for urban parks. In 1999, the City Project helped bring together a diverse alliance to oppose the development of the 32-acre site and to persuade the State of California to purchase the land and protect it as open space. The park now provides educational and recreational opportunities and celebrates the natural and cultural history of the city.

More indirectly, outdoor recreation can build up social networks within a community. In a 1998 study, Frances Kuo and colleagues demonstrated the importance of hospitable neighborhood common spaces in building local community (Kuo et al. 1998). Parks provide a place to spend time with family and friends. As neighbors see each other outside in a common space, they can come to know and trust one another. These informal social connections lead to greater community safety and local social capital.

Some questions for consideration

- 1) What steps can be taken after the creation of a park/acquisition of open space to enhance its benefits for the surrounding community?
- 2) Should the goals of open space recreation differ between urban and rural settings?
- 3) What is the relative importance of distant wild lands as compared to local green space?

PATTERNS OF USE FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION

Different racial and ethnic groups frequently have distinct expectations for their use of open space, and these can potentially diverge from goals in the design and management of a site. It is important to understand how different groups use open space and to design and manage parks to promote a range of uses. Without an effort to reach out to these users, conservation groups risk losing support because they will be unable to show that open space is used and valued by most of a community's residents.

In a 2004 study by Cassandra Johnson, J.M. Bowker, and H. Ken Cordell, the authors found that U.S.-born Latinos, African Americans, and Asian Americans are significantly less likely than Whites to engage in nature-based outdoor recreation. Foreign-born Latinos, however, are even more likely than Whites to participate in nature-based recreation (Johnson et al. 2004). Numerous studies have established that African Americans are much less likely than Whites to travel to regional wildland environments or to spend time in pristine, undeveloped areas (Johnson 1997). However, African Americans report higher participation rates than Whites for urban outdoor activities within the local community (Johnson 2007, Tierney et al.). Such studies have also confirmed that socioeconomic factors alone do not provide an adequate explanation for White and non-White recreational choices. When controlled for variables such as income, education level, and political disposition, distinct differences in outdoor use among ethnic groups remain.

When diverse groups do choose to use open spaces for recreation, their preferred activities often differ from those commonly pursued by White users. African Americans and Latino Americans generally use open space in conjunction with family and other groups, while Whites are more likely to prefer more solitary activities. The collective orientation of Blacks and Latinos is also expressed in their preference for group activities like picnicking over solitary activities such as hiking or walking (Johnson 1997, Johnson 2004). A 1994 study found that Blacks are as likely as Whites to engage in fishing, off-road vehicle use, picnicking, and driving for pleasure when participating in nature-based recreation (Dwyer). In 1999, a study tracked visits by African Americans and Whites to wild natural areas in and around the Apalachicola National Forest in Florida. The study found no racial differences for consumptive recreational activities like hunting, fishing and wild plant gathering, but African Americans were found to be significantly less likely than Whites to engage in

non-consumptive nature-based activities like camping, hiking, wildlife watching, and canoeing (Johnson et al. 1999). To respect these preferences, land trusts and land managers could consider how best to encourage group outings and organize group-related activities. Where acceptable, open space managers could also promote hunting, fishing, and gathering activities, as well as the use of cars and off-road vehicles in designated areas.

A lack of understanding of such ethnic preferences can threaten the conservation community's ability to engage with new groups. Rules prohibiting certain uses of a conservation area might disproportionately affect certain groups and dissuade them from visiting open spaces. Many factors, including the diversity and language ability of park staff, signage, and amenities such as food, tables, and bathrooms all influence a visitor's experience. African Americans and Hispanics Americans are more likely than Whites to cook and eat outside, when possible. So restrictions on grilling or a lack of picnic tables might particularly hinder their use of a park (Lanfer).

At the same time, different recreational preferences could come into conflict on a particular conservation site. Large groups of users actively socializing might interfere with an individual seeking a quiet spot to relax or watch wildlife. Understanding and accommodating these differences is likely to become an even more pressing challenge for the land trust community.

Some questions for consideration

- 1) How can land trusts best come to understand different patterns of open space use within their local communities?
- 2) What obstacles prevent recreational uses of open spaces by different groups? What can land trusts do to help address these obstacles?
- 3) What can be done to make open space recreational areas more appealing across the range of groups within a community? When should a park be designed with only one particular group in mind, at the risk of excluding other groups?
- 4) How can local communities be involved in the development and implementation of plans for the recreational use of open space?

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Among those doing good work on this issue

Fresno National Parks Family Day is a free annual community event designed to introduce the National Parks to all residents of Fresno County. The popular project is a partnership between The National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) Pacific Office and the Central California Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (CCHCC). www.npca.org/familyday/

The City Project is an organization in Los Angeles focused on parks and recreation, playgrounds, schools, health, and transit. It has helped to create a number of important urban parks in L.A. www.cityprojectca.org/index.php

Earthwise Productions is a group dedicated increasing involvement in recreation and protection of natural places, particularly among underrepresented racial and ethnic groups. It publishes the periodical "Pickup & GO!" to educate and encourage urban communities to access open space.

www.earthwiseproductionsinc.com/

“Provide It . . . But Will They Come?” A Look at African American and Hispanic Visits to Federal Recreation Areas

Cassandra Johnson
U.S. Forest Service et al.

INTRODUCTION

White Americans are the primary visitors to nature-based outdoor recreation areas in the United States, including visitors to national forests and other public lands (Chavez 2001). A good deal of research dating from the 1960s indicates ethnic and racial minorities make relatively little use of public recreation areas (Floyd 1999; Meeker 1973; Mueller, Gurin, and Wood 1962). Much of this earlier work compared participation rates between African Americans and whites, with findings showing African Americans were significantly less likely than whites to engage in forest-based activities such as camping and hiking or water-related activities other than fishing (Mueller, Gurin, and Wood 1962). Forty years later, African American participation in specific wildland-based activities such as day hiking and developed camping has increased (Cordell et al. 2004). Overall, however, Black Americans’ use of undeveloped, natural settings remains notably low considering their proportion in the general population (Tierney, Dahl, and Chavez 1998).

In contrast, Hispanic use of urban-proximate national forests in some parts of the country has increased significantly over the past twenty years (Chavez 2001). This is due, in large part, to the increasing Hispanic population in the U.S., particularly in southern California. While public lands managers are still faced with challenges to eliminate structural barriers to participation, such as lack of communication with minority communities, and to adapt site attributes to better reflect ethnic preferences, increased use by Hispanics and Asians is prompting managers to search for innovative ways to respond to the different natural resource values held by minority visitors (Chavez 2002; Chavez 2001; Tierney et al. 1998). For example, in southern California, some national forest recreation managers have implemented “adaptive management” programming which includes redesigning recreation amenities to reflect the recreation styles of Hispanic visitors and also including the

opinions and preferences of non-traditional cultural groups in recreation planning (Chavez 2002).

This study examines African American and Hispanic awareness, knowledge, and use of federal recreation areas and also their attitudes about user fees on national forests. The investigation was prompted by preliminary findings from the National Visitor Use Monitoring Survey (NVUM), which showed striking differences between visits made by African Americans and Hispanics to national forests in regions where proportions of these two minority groups are comparatively high (National Visitor Use Monitoring Survey 2004). The present analysis augments the NVUM data by examining household-level data from a national-level dataset, the National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (NSRE). The NSRE contains data on the public's awareness of and visitation to federal recreation areas and attitudes and opinions specific to national forest management (Cordell et al. 2004). These data are intended to provide a broader framework for understanding discrepancies between Hispanic and African American visitation to national forests. By examining each group's perceptions of the Forest Service, we hope to uncover factors that might help explain visitation rate differences displayed in the NVUM data.

We might expect Hispanic populations in the southwest and African Americans in the south to respond similarly to opportunities for outdoor recreation on national forests for several reasons. First, both groups represent significant proportions of the population in their respective regions. Roughly twenty-five percent of the population in four southern states (Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, and South Carolina) is Black, and just over one-third of the population in Arizona, California, New Mexico, and Nevada is Hispanic (U.S. Census Bureau 2007). Second, both groups live proximal to national forests in their respective regions; third, Hispanics and African Americans are comparable with respect to socioeconomic status (percent of Blacks with a four year college degree or higher is 14, Hispanics 10 percent. 1999 median household income for Blacks was \$29,423; \$33,676 for Hispanics) (U.S. Census Bureau 2004a; U.S. Census Bureau 2004b); and fourth, the groups have displayed similar outdoor recreation styles and preferences which emphasize large extended family gatherings and collective activities (Floyd 1999; Gramann 1996).

BACKGROUND

The Forest Service's recent survey of recreation visitors to national forests across the country shows that the overwhelming majority of visits to most national forests are accounted for by whites (92.7 percent) (National Visitor Use Report 2004). Such findings are hardly remarkable given the low number of racial and ethnic minorities in regions where many national forests are located, for instance the Forest Service's Intermountain (southern Idaho, Nevada, Utah, western Wyoming) Northern (Montana, North Dakota, northern Idaho, northwestern South Dakota), and Rocky Mountain (Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota, Wyoming) regions. (An exception is Colorado and Nevada where the proportion of Hispanics is at least twenty percent and Puerto Rico, where the majority of residents are Hispanic.)

However, there is notable ethnic diversity among visitors to forests in the Pacific Southwest and Southwest regions (Arizona, California, New Mexico), particularly on urban-proximal forests near Los Angeles, CA. Preliminary data showed that approximately 25 percent of estimated visits to the Los Padres National Forest in southern California were made by Hispanics from 2002-2003, and close to 20 percent of estimated visits to the San Bernardino National Forest were accounted for by Hispanics during this time (NVUM 2004).

The relatively high percentage of visits made by Hispanics, no doubt, reflects the large numbers of Hispanics in southern California – Hispanics are 35 percent of California’s population and approximately 47 percent of the Los Angeles County population (U.S. Census Bureau 2007). These numbers are consistent with the opportunity explanation of racial/ethnic differences in outdoor recreation participation, which accounts for minority visitation to outdoor recreation areas in terms of minority presence within a population. That is, minorities are expected to visit outdoor recreation areas in proportion to their presence in the population proximal to resources (O’Leary and Benjamin 1982).

Also, the proportion of estimated visits by Asians to forests in the Southwest and Northwest is closer to the population proportion of Asians in these same areas. Nine percent of visits to the Cleveland National Forest in southern California were accounted for by Asian-origin individuals in 2002 and 2003. Close to six percent of visits to the Wenatchee National Forest (Washington) were made by Asians. Asians have higher than national average population proportions in both California (10.9 percent) and Washington state (5.5 percent) (U.S. Census Bureau 2006a; U.S. Census Bureau 2006b).

By comparison, African Americans are conspicuously absent from national forest recreation areas in regions of the country where blacks are highly concentrated. As discussed, one-quarter of the population in Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, and South Carolina is African American. Black concentrations are even higher in sub-regions in the south. As a specific example, roughly sixty percent of the city of Atlanta’s residents are African American, and close to thirty percent of metropolitan Atlanta’s residents are Black (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2004b). Also, a higher than average proportion of metropolitan Atlanta’s Black population is middle-class (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2004a).

Similar to the Los Padres, San Bernardino, and Cleveland National Forests, the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest in Georgia is an urban-proximal forest near Atlanta. The Chattahoochee portion is a roughly two hour drive from Atlanta and is included in the forest’s local county area (Recreation and Tourism Statistics Update 2006). Also, the Oconee portion is in the “Black Belt” Piedmont surrounded by rural counties with Black populations between 20 and 44 percent (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2004b). This part of the forest is within an hour’s drive of metropolitan Atlanta and is a part of the forest’s local county area. Despite this proximity, African Americans made only about two percent of the estimated visits to the Chattahoochee and Oconee forest reserves combined from 2002-2003.

Similar scenarios occur elsewhere in the South. The rural Black population in some counties adjacent to national forests in Alabama and Mississippi exceeds 50 percent of the total. Again, visits made by Blacks to national forests in either of these states were less than one percent of the total (NVUM 2004). In addition, South Carolina's upper Charleston County, which includes significant portions of the Francis Marion National Forest, has an African-American population of 64 percent (Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments 2002). But here, only about five percent of visits to the forest were accounted for by blacks in 2002 and 2003 (NVUM 2004).

ⁱ These explanations are made more explicit by literature focusing on specific constraints to leisure and outdoor recreation participation. Constraints are generally classified as internal or external. Internal constraints have more to do with personal or cultural factors that might inhibit one's leisure involvement, for instance lack of companionship, interest, or knowledge about specialized forms of leisure. External constraints involve structural impediments such as poorly maintained facilities, unsafe recreation areas, or lack of public transportation. Whether a particular constraint should be classed as internal or external is not always clear, as the fundamental reason for a limiting factor may not be readily apparent. For instance, lack of transportation may be considered by some to be an external factor in the case of lower income groups with limited access to public transportation; while others may argue that transportation is a personal responsibility. The constraints literature continues to form a significant part of the race and ethnicity leisure scholarship. Recent work in this area includes an edited volume by Jackson (2005); Shiner, Floyd, and Parry (2004); and Pennington-Gray and Kerstetter (2002).

LITERATURE REVIEW

An important question then is why, relative to population proportions, Hispanic visits to national forests in southern California far exceed African American visitation in the South, given that the two populations are similar in terms of ethnic minority status, leisure styles, and proximity to national forests? A number of explanations have been posited by recreation researchers to explain Black "under-participation," vis-à-vis white participation in outdoor recreation activities. Most notable among these are the marginality and ethnicity theses. The marginality theory attributes recreation differences to societal forces such as inequitable distribution of resources and discrimination; whereas the ethnicity explanation attributes differences to more endemic group factors such as ethnic group value systems and sub-cultural mores (Washburne 1978). As mentioned, the opportunity theory of outdoor recreation participation attributes racial differences in visitation or participation to the lack of a significant minority presence in places near forest reserves. This explanation seems to hold for Hispanics and Asians in the Pacific west but does not adequately explain Black visitation in the South.ⁱ

Little or no scholarship has been put forward to explain differences in forest-based recreation among ethnic and racial minority groups. The explanations cited above address majority/minority differences. Yet, differences among ethnic and racial minorities are important to consider, in terms of resource use and management, because of the growing numbers of minorities relative to the U.S. population as a whole. By 2050, the non-Hispanic white population is projected to increase by about 7 percent, compared to 188 and 71 percent, for Hispanics and Blacks, respectively (U.S. Census Bureau 2004c). The implications of this population diversification are not entirely clear, but resource managers acknowledge that traditional ways of managing for recreation visitors may change because of differences in environmental meaning and contact (or lack thereof) held by non-white ethnic groups (Stankey 2000).

Tierney et al. (1998) developed and tested a model predicting wild land participation for four ethnic/racial groups – African Americans, Asians, Hispanics, and whites. Predictor variables included socio-economic status, ethnic identity, assimilation, and perceived discrimination. Results suggested that the decision to recreate in an undeveloped natural area involved more than material considerations such as transportation and income, but more importantly, perceptual factors related

to ethnic group preferences, assimilation level, education, and perceived discrimination. With the exception of education, these factors suggest wild land recreation participation is motivated to some extent by intangible meaning and feelings associated with this particular type of recreation place.

We also offer that differences between Hispanic and African American visitation may be due, partially, to the different histories the two groups have with wild lands in this country. When considering constraining factors, it is important to look not just at contemporary issues, but historical factors as well. For instance, Johnson and Bowker (2004) argue that African Americans have developed an aversion for wild lands because of past associations with slavery, plantation agriculture, lynching, and compulsive work in the southern forest industry. This aversion is rooted in a Black “collective memory” of exploitative work relationships involving agricultural and wild lands.

According to Schelhas (2002), Hispanic associations with cultivated lands in the U.S. also involve a history of labor exploitation and land disenfranchisement in the southwest. However, southern Blacks may be more tightly bound by recollections of oppressive land relationships because of their continuous association with the land. The southwest Hispanic population has been infused with continual streams of immigrant groups from various Latin American countries who may have less negative associations with U.S. wild lands, compared to southern Blacks.

Of course, differences between Hispanics and African Americans may also have to do with less nocuous factors such as the higher rate of Black landownership in the South. Although Black landownership has declined precipitously over the past century, the greatest amount of Black landownership is still concentrated in the South (Gilbert et al. 2002; U.S. Bureau of the Census 2005). Black “under-representation” on national forests in the South may, in part, be explained by African-Americans recreating on privately held lands.

Another practical issue is user fees. Previous research shows that both African Americans and Hispanics are less likely than whites to approve of entry fees to public recreation areas (Bowker et al. 1999). Whether or not Blacks are less accepting than Hispanics of user fees on national forests is a matter of empirical inquiry. Fee opponents argue that federal recreation areas should remain free and open spaces available to all Americans regardless of the ability to pay (More 1999). Others maintain that entrance fees are beneficial for sustaining recreation resources because fees have the effect of reducing recreation impacts (Rosenthal et al. 1984).

Despite past or present obstacles, it is incumbent upon natural resource agencies to engage various constituencies and to redress applicable barriers. Federal agencies are mandated by Executive Order 12898 to identify differential consumption of natural resources by minorities and low income populations. This mandate in effect extends the definition of environmental justice to include access to outdoor recreation amenities on federal lands. Also, Executive Order 12862, (“Setting Customer Service Standards”), requires Federal agencies to (a) identify the customers who are, or should be, served by the agency and to (b) survey customers to determine the kind and quality of services they want and their level of satisfaction with existing services (Federal Register 1993; Federal Register 1994).

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

As indicated, empirical and theoretical investigations of racial/ethnic differences in outdoor recreation behavior have focused mostly on macro-level factors such as culture, socioeconomic position, or history (Floyd 1998; Johnson and Bowker 2004). Much less attention has concentrated on factors more specific to a given resource, such as awareness, or the administration of that resource and how these may vary among minority groups. Given the larger structure in which resource interaction decisions may be made (cultural meaning, historical references), we believe that the decision to visit a national forest is based, in part, on a number of practical factors that have to do with awareness of federal lands, knowledge of an agency's mandate includes recreation, and opinions about appropriateness of user fees.

We posit that Blacks are less aware than Hispanics of federal lands because federal agencies are less predominant in the East (where more blacks live) than in the West. Also, we believe Blacks will have less knowledge than Hispanics of the Forest Service's multiple-use mandate (which includes recreation) because of their relative unfamiliarity with the agency. We also hypothesize that African Americans would be less supportive than Hispanics of user fees because of a generalized lack of familiarity with recreation and fee structures on public lands. Also, following results from the NVUM, we expect blacks to visit federal lands less than Hispanics. Specific research hypotheses follow: (See table 1 for questions and statements in the NSRE that measure each of these factors. Note that the fee item refers to both recreational and commercial uses of national forests and should be interpreted as such).

- H₁: African Americans are less likely than Hispanics to be aware of the federal land system.
- H₂: African Americans are less likely than Hispanics to be aware of the Forest Service's multiple-use mandate.
- H₃: African Americans are less likely than Hispanics to agree that user fees should be charged on national forests.
- H₄: African Americans are less likely than Hispanics to visit federal recreation lands.

Finally, we examine whether differences in awareness, knowledge of agency mandate, and attitudes about user fees contribute to Black/Hispanic differences in visitation to federal lands. If these variables are included in a visitation model along with race/ethnicity and other control variables, we expect predicted visitation differences between Hispanics and African Americans to be somewhat mitigated.

Table 1. NSRE questionnaire items.

Between 1870 and 1950, the United States Congress established a federal land system, including national forests and national parks. Congress also established federal agencies to manage these new federal lands in the national interest. Tell me . . .

H ₁	Were you aware of the federal lands we have in this country? Yes No Don't know
H ₂	Please tell me which one of the following statements best describes your understanding of the United States Forest Service. (order was randomized) a. The Forest Service manages national forests primarily to preserve wildlands and wildlife. b. The Forest Service manages national forests primarily to provide timber, livestock grazing, and other commercial products. c. The Forest Service manages national forests for multiple uses including timber production, wilderness preservation, livestock grazing, wildlife habitat, recreation, and clean water.
H ₃	On a scale of 1-5, with 1 meaning strongly disagree and 5 meaning strongly agree, please indicate how much you agree with the following statement. a. The Forest Service should finance itself through fees charged to commercial and recreation users of the national forest
H ₄	Have you ever visited any federal lands, such as a national forest or a national park? Yes No Don't know

METHODOLOGY

To test our hypotheses and examine the discrepancy in likelihood of visits to federal recreation areas between African Americans and Hispanics, we examine responses to the questions and statement in Table 1. These were included in the NSRE (Cordell et al. 2002). The NSRE is the eighth in a series of U.S. national recreation surveys that began in the 1960s. The 2000 NSRE began in 1999 and ended in 2004. It is a random-digit-dial telephone survey of more than 85,000 households nationally administered in 18 sequential versions of roughly 5,000 observations per version. Survey Sampling, Inc. (SSI) supplied researchers with a listing of “working block” telephone exchanges, from which the sample is compiled. A block consists of a set of 100 contiguous numbers identified by the first two digits of the last four numbers (e.g., in the number 854-4400, “44” is the block). Selected numbers are entered into a computer-aided telephone interviewing system (CATI), and potential respondents are chosen from these numbers.

The NSRE collects data on a range of outdoor recreation and environmental topics, including outdoor recreation participation, environmental attitudes, natural resource values, attitudes toward natural resource management policies, household structure, lifestyles, and demographics. The data are weighted using post-stratification procedures to adjust for disproportionate age, racial, gender, education, and rural/urban strata (Cordell et al. 2002). Other forms of potential non-response bias are not addressed.

Of the eighteen versions of the NSRE, we employ data for this analysis from version fourteen because only this version has questions and statements relevant to our investigation of national forests. Per NSRE protocol, roughly 40 percent of version 14 respondents (n=2,524) received questions querying knowledge of and attitudes about federal lands. The sample was reduced further by omitting any

observation that had missing data for variables included in the analysis. “Don’t know” and “refused” responses were also recoded as “missing” and subsequently omitted from analyses. The percentage of “don’t know” and “refused” responses ranged from 0.35 to 4.55 percent for the respective variables. The resulting sample of 2,246 contains 1,884 whites, 140 Blacks, 93 Hispanics, and 80 Asian and Native Americans (grouped as “other”). The respective sample sizes for Asians and Native Americans precluded analyses of these groups individually.

Table 2. Means and standard deviations for model variables— $n = 2,246$.

Variable	Sample means $n = 2,246$	Black means $n = 140$	Hispanic means $n = 93$	White means $n = 1,884$	Other means $n = 80$
Aware of federal land system	0.53 (0.37)	0.44 (0.50)	0.66 (0.48)	0.84 (0.36)	0.74 (0.44)
Knowledge of Forest Service mandate	0.75 (0.43)	0.61 (0.49)	0.68 (0.47)	0.76 (0.43)	0.74 (0.44)
Support user fee	0.32 (0.47)	0.31 (0.47)	0.41 (0.49)	0.32 (0.47)	0.29 (0.46)
Visit federal lands	0.83 (0.37)	0.54 (0.50)	0.80 (0.41)	0.86 (0.35)	0.84 (0.37)
Black	0.06 (0.24)	1.00 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
White	0.83 (0.37)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.00 (0)	0 (0)
Hispanic	0.04 (0.20)	0 (0)	1.00 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Other	0.04 (0.19)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.00 (0)
Female	0.54 (0.50)	0.66 (0.47)	0.54 (0.50)	0.54 (0.50)	0.55 (0.50)
Age	44.41 (16.45)	36.49 (13.60)	37.81 (15.88)	45.44 (16.50)	40.51 (15.74)
Bachelor's degree or higher	0.38 (0.49)	0.34 (0.48)	0.25 (0.43)	0.39 (0.49)	0.34 (0.48)
Westerner	0.27 (0.44)	0.09 (0.29)	0.49 (0.50)	0.26 (0.44)	0.46 (0.50)

Analysis

To compare African American and Hispanic responses to awareness of the federal land system, knowledge of the Forest Service’s mandate, attitudes about fees, and visitation, we use binary logistic regression models (Greene, 2000, pp. 811-837). We use these models to estimate the probability that a respondent will respond positively (in our case, “yes” or “agree”) to the questionnaire items in Table 1, given a set of explanatory variables. All dependent variables are binary. The model takes the form:

$$P = \text{Prob}(Y=1|X) = \frac{Z}{1 + e^{-Z}} \quad (1)$$

where, e is the base of the natural logarithm and

$$Z = b_1 + b_2x_2 + \dots + b_ix^i \quad (2)$$

The model parameters are estimated by maximum likelihood. The Z component may also be interpreted as logit (P) or the logarithm of the odds of the outcome

$$Z = \text{logit}(P) = \ln(P/1-P) \quad (3)$$

Dependent variables are 1) awareness of the federal land system; 2) knowledge of the Forest Service’s multiple-use mandate; 3) opinion about appropriateness of fees to finance Forest Service operations, and 4) whether respondent had visited a federal recreation area. Awareness and visitation are coded one for “yes” responses and zero for no responses. For knowledge of the Forest Service’s mandate, the correct response is “c,” which lists the agency’s multiple uses (Table 1). This response was coded one, and the two other responses were collapsed into a single category and coded zero.

The fee item was originally coded on a five-point scale ranging from “strongly agree” (5) to “strongly disagree” (1). To create a binary dependent variable, we collapsed values of four and five into an “agree” category and the remaining values into a “not agree”. The middle response (3) was not explicitly defined to respondents as a neutral position, so it is not clear whether respondents interpreted this response

as neutral or some combination of “agree”/“disagree.” For the fee item, we modeled the probability of an agree response, as opposed to disagree.

Three binary explanatory variables were used to depict the race/ethnicity categories, Black, White, and Other. Each of these was coded one, with the base case being Hispanic (coded zero). Binary variables were also used for gender (female=1), education level (bachelor’s degree or higher=1), and residence in West=1 (residence in the Forest Service’s Alaska, Intermountain, Northern, Pacific Southwest and Northwest, Rocky Mountain, or Southwestern regions =1). Age is continuous.

RESULTS

Table 2 shows estimated means and standard deviations for the total sample and for each ethnic/racial group. Overall, 53 percent of respondents were aware of the federal land system, compared to 44 percent for Blacks and 66 percent for Hispanics. With respect to the Forest Service’s mandate, the white and other mean was closer to the overall mean of 75 percent. Blacks were least likely to know the agency’s mandate (61 percent), but Hispanics scored closer to the mean at 68 percent. A greater percentage of Hispanics (41), relative to the overall sample (32 percent) indicated support for user fees. Other respondents indicated the least support (29 percent). The proportion of blacks reporting visits to federal lands was noticeably lower than percentages for the other groups. Only about one-half of blacks indicated visits, compared to 80 percent for Hispanics, 86 percent for whites, and 84 percent for others and the sample.

Logistic results for awareness, knowledge of agency mandate, and support for fees are reported in Table 3. Table 4 shows results for the visitation question. Both Tables 3 and 4 include maximum likelihood regression coefficients, odds ratios, model chi-square, model significance level, and percent of correct predictions. An asterisk next to a maximum likelihood estimate for a predictor variable indicates a statistically significant difference between that variable and its comparison group.

Awareness of federal lands

Table 3 shows that African Americans were significantly less likely than Hispanics to be aware of federal lands, but whites were more likely than Hispanics to be aware. Females were less likely than males to be aware of federally designated lands. However, the likelihood of awareness increased with age, and those with at least a bachelor’s degree were more likely to be aware than less educated respondents. Those living in the West were more likely than respondents in other parts of the country to be aware of federal lands.

The odds of an African American being aware of federal lands were about 0.52 of those of a Hispanic respondent, whereas whites were three times as likely as Hispanics to be aware of federal lands. Substituting values for the independent variables into equation (2) and solving for (1) provides estimates of awareness probabilities for various combinations of the independent variables. For instance, the probability that a Black female with education below college level, age 30, and residence in the east

would be aware of federal recreation lands would be 18 percent. The awareness probability for a Hispanic female with a similar demographic profile is about 30 percent.

Table 3. Logistic regression estimates of the probabilities of awareness of federal lands, knowledge of Forest Service mandate, and support for user fees for the American public—maximum likelihood estimates, odds ratios, model chi-square, model significance, and percent correct predictions.

Dependent variable	Awareness of federal lands		Knowledge of Forest Service mandate		Support for user fee	
	Maximum likelihood parameter estimates	Odds ratio	Maximum likelihood parameter estimates	Odds ratio	Maximum likelihood	Odds ratio
Intercept	-0.67		0.65**		-0.35*	
Black	-0.65**	0.52	-0.88**	0.42	-0.03	0.97
White	1.11**	3.03	-0.09	0.91	-0.38**	0.69
Other	0.29	1.33	-0.43	0.65	-0.68**	0.51
Female	-1.01**	0.37	-0.05	0.95	-0.25**	0.78
Age	0.03*	1.03	0.01*	1.05	0.01**	1.01
Education	1.29**	3.65	0.76**	2.13	-0.24*	0.78
West	0.57**	1.76	0.38**	1.47	-0.40**	0.67
Model chi-square	496.34		105.50		48.10	
Significance level	<0.0001		<0.0001		<0.0001	
Correct predictions (%)	77.2		60.7		55.6	

n = 2,246.

*P ≤ 0.05; **P ≤ 0.01.

Table 4. Logistic regression estimates of the probabilities of awareness of federal lands, knowledge of Forest Service mandate, and support for visits to federal recreation areas, reduced and expanded models—maximum likelihood estimates, odds ratios, model chi-square, model significance, and percent correct predictions.

Dependent variable	Visit (reduced model)		Dependent variable	Visit (expanded model)	
	Maximum likelihood parameter estimates	Odds ratio		Maximum likelihood parameter estimates	Odds ratio
Intercept	0.30		Intercept	-0.05	
Black	-0.79**	0.45	Black	-0.61**	0.54
White	0.64**	1.84	White	0.32*	1.38
Other	0.35	1.42	Other	0.51	1.36
Female	-0.57**	0.57	Female	-0.58**	0.69
Age	0.03**	1.03	Age	0.01*	1.01
Education	1.01**	2.75	Education	0.68**	1.97
West	1.34**	3.69	West	1.18**	3.25
			Aware	1.38**	3.96
			Forest Service mandate	0.08	1.09
			Fee	-0.43**	0.65
Model chi-square	312.51			452.28	
Significance level	<0.0001			<0.0001	
Correct predictions (%)	73.7			79.0	

n = 2,246.

*P ≤ 0.05; **P ≤ 0.01.

Knowledge of Forest Service mandate

Results also indicate Blacks were less informed than Hispanics about the Forest Service's mandate. The odds of African Americans selecting the multiple use response were about 42 percent, compared to Hispanic responses. Older persons, those with higher education levels, and westerners were more likely to provide the correct response. In substantive terms, the probability of either a Hispanic male or female, age 45, living in the west, with a college education, knowing the agency's mandate is about 88 percent. The probability is 76 percent for a Black male with the same characteristics and virtually the same for a Black female with a similar demographic profile (75 percent).

Financing through user fees

Whites and Others were less likely than Hispanics to agree that the Forest Service should finance operations with user fees. Also, females, more educated individuals, and those living in the west were less likely to agree user fees should be charged. Older persons were more likely than younger respondents to agree with national forest fees.

The probability of an agree response for this question would be about 35 percent for both a Black and Hispanic female, age 40, with eastern residence, and college education. Whether one lives in the western part of the U.S. has a notable impact on attitudes towards fees. For instance, the probability of agreement for black and Hispanic females with the above profile would decrease to 27 percent for women who live in the West.

Visitation

Hypothesis 4 states that African Americans are less likely than Hispanics to visit federal recreation areas. We also hypothesized that visitation differences between African Americans and Hispanics would diminish with the inclusion of variables in a model indicating awareness, knowledge of agency mandate, and attitudes about fees. To assess the effects of these variables on visitation probability, we first modeled visitation (reduced model) only as a function of demographic variables, including race/ethnicity, gender, age, education level, and region.

The reduced model in Table 4 shows the “black” variable is significant with the expected results. African Americans were less likely than Hispanics to say they had ever visited federal recreation lands, and whites were more likely than Hispanics to visit. Also important are gender, age, educational, and regional differences. Older respondents, those with more education, and Westerners were more likely than their counterparts to visit federal lands. Females were less likely than males to say they had ever visited a federal recreation area.

Next, we modeled visitation as a function of the demographic variables, plus awareness (aware), knowledge of agency mandate (FS mandate), and attitudes about fees (fee). The expanded model in table 4 shows blacks were still less likely than Hispanics to indicate visitation, even when awareness, knowledge, and the fee variables in were included in the analysis. White and age remain significant as well although their effects are diminished. Both gender and region remain highly significant. Women were still less likely than men to visit, and westerners were still more likely to visit.

Those who were aware of the federal land system were more likely than others to visit; whereas those supporting user fees were less likely to visit. Residence and awareness are by far the strongest predictors of visitation, both in terms of model coefficients and odds ratios. The odds of visitation for those aware of federal lands were nearly four times the odds of those not aware of the system, and the odds of westerners visiting were more than three times those of non-Westerners.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

We hypothesized that Blacks are less likely than Hispanics to be aware of the federal land system, less likely to be aware of the agency’s multiple-use mandate, less likely to agree the agency should charge user fees, and less likely to visit federal lands. We also posited that visitation differences between African Americans and Hispanics could be explained by differences in awareness, knowledge, and attitudes about user fees. Findings support research hypotheses one, two, and four. Results did not indicate

significant differences between blacks and Hispanics for the fee item (hypothesis 3), and visitation differences between the two groups remained despite the inclusion of awareness, knowledge, and attitudes about fees.

Findings concerning awareness of federal lands are consistent with prior research on outdoor recreation constraints which found that among non-participants, Blacks were more likely than whites to say they did not participate in their favorite activities because of a lack of awareness of opportunities (Johnson et al. 2001). In terms of user fee findings, prior research shows minorities are less likely than whites to support fees (Bowker et al. 1999). Our analyses found no statistically significant differences between African Americans and Hispanics on this issue, which suggests Blacks and Hispanics may hold similar attitudes about user fees. Still, we believe it important, given sufficient sample sizes, to disaggregate responses for different racial/ethnic groups because the category “minority” may not be sufficient to explain the responses of particular groups included in a generalized category.

Contrary to expectations, differences in likelihood of visitation did not diminish significantly when we included variables indicating awareness of federal lands, knowledge of agency mandate, and attitudes about fees in an expanded visitation model. These results suggest that visitation differences may be explained better by factors not included in our models. We posited that factors directly related to a resource such as direct knowledge of the resource and attitudes about paying for access to the resource would better explain visitation differences. While this may indeed be the case in some instances, it may also be that some of the more overarching cultural and structural factors play a role in Black visitation, particularly for Southern blacks.

Social and cultural definitions of outdoor places may be important considerations in the selection of recreation destinations. If a given recreation site has acquired the label of a “Black” or “Hippie” park or a “redneck” fishing site, then groups that define themselves in opposition to such labels are likely to avoid these areas. In other instances, the lack of visitation by a certain group may have more to do with the desire to avoid perceived or actual discrimination, either from site managers or other recreation visitors.

Rural areas, particularly minority communities, are beset with many problems common in urban Black environments such as lingering poverty, low educational attainment, and a lack of recreational services (Rankin and Falk 1991). The Forest Service could help address some of these concerns by becoming more of an active participant in rural schools, where the emphasis would center on environmental education and practical training programs in the natural sciences and recreation programming. Results from a recent exploratory study of rural communities adjacent to a national forest in South Carolina suggested that African American students at a predominantly Black area high school had very little knowledge of the natural environment in the area, despite the fact that they lived in a forested community (Johnson and Floyd 2006). These educational efforts could have the immediate effect of producing better land stewards and could possibly result in increased numbers of African Americans pursuing advanced training in natural resource fields.

Western residence was also a consistently strong predictor of awareness, knowledge of agency mandate, fee attitudes, and likelihood of visitation. These results make sense given that there is more federal land in the West, and Westerners are more familiar with agencies and policies regarding these lands. Westerners were also more likely than those in other parts of the country to visit federal lands. Again, this likely has to do with abundance of federal land and the presence of federal agencies in the culture of the American West.

Our analysis provides only an overview of factors that potentially influence forest visitation. To more fully understand factors affecting Black visits, more specific data are needed to address: 1) types of recreation activities preferred by blacks; 2) suitability of national forests for engaging in these activities; 3) the availability of private lands as alternative places to recreate outdoors; 4) perceived constraints to national forest recreation (both internal and external); and 5) meanings associated with forested settings and national forests.

We should emphasize that the goal here is not to impose a set of normative outdoor recreation interests on ethnic minority communities with the expectation that African Americans should behave similarly to Hispanics or any other racial/ethnic group. It may be that “outdoor recreation” for some groups (even rural dwellers) involves more structured settings in an urban environment and that urban forestry outreach efforts may prove more fruitful for engaging these populations. It is not incumbent upon forest managers or the federal government to change recreation interests and behavior but to provide the opportunity for all Americans, irrespective of background, to experience the many benefits of nature engagement on public lands.

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Use of Public Lands and Open Space for Recreation: Connecting with Diverse Communities

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INTRODUCTION

*“If you came to help me, you are wasting your time and can go home.
But if you see my struggle as part of your own survival,
and have come because you understand that your liberation is
bound up with mine, then let us work together.”*

The passage above is from an Aboriginal Australian woman and consists of words that seek action. The United States is not alone in striving to engage people of diverse backgrounds when it comes to providing opportunities for a quality outdoor recreation experience. People of color, particularly in the U.S., have substantial connections with the land often based on their histories, typically stemming from both their country of origin and in America. This fact notwithstanding, commonly held perceptions by some ethnic groups as well as their white counterparts would suggest that minorities have little background with, or interest in the natural world. For instance, social trends show an often deep and profound connection to the land yet, culturally, there are numerous sub-cultural as well as self-imposed personal constraints limiting outdoor recreation experiences.

Explanations and remarks such as “It’s a white thing, my people just don’t do that” or “I can barely afford to feed my family so packing for a picnic in the park is not a priority” are testimony to some of the issues and challenges often faced by people of diverse backgrounds. Factors such as one’s age, education, ethnicity, and socio-economic status for instance, are real forces in people’s lives often influencing their recreational patterns and preferences regarding venturing into the “great outdoors.” As a result, understanding constraints and current needs is often a good first place to begin when it comes to community engagement.

After listening and learning, one of the most essential responsibilities of land managers is to provide visitors and potential visitors with the information needed to both access, find their place in the outdoors, and enjoy use of open space. This often means working extra hard to reach everyone who might benefit from the wide-ranging programs and services. This notion of “everyone,” however, can be daunting to land trust managers especially when it comes to new users and/or immigrant populations as part of the surge of “changing demographics.”

If the commitment and resources are in place, then ensuring that opportunities are accessible and programs are relevant becomes an enormous, yet valuable responsibility. While the “why” behind this is important and has become more commonly accepted among conservation leaders and land management agencies, the “how-to” is often less understood and, at times, more challenging to implement.

The suggestions for engaging diverse communities, as offered in this article, can be successful if there is a commitment beyond “good intentions.” This is not to say well meaning professionals don’t get stuck; the issue is both simple and complex, but it should be remembered that it can be an enjoyable process just the same. That is, embracing different perspectives about natural resources and recreational use of open space is as satisfying as it is necessary if we are to gain the support required for open space protection whether through public ownership, conservation easements, or any other form of land management. And, we should celebrate small successes and progress.

DEVELOPING TRUST

“As our Nation grows more diverse, the need to reach out to all segments of society particularly the underserved populations and communities, becomes more pronounced” (Forest Service, 2001, p. 2). This cannot occur successfully without first developing a level of trust with the communities you are trying to reach. To build stronger linkages between resource conservation efforts and outdoor recreation programs for a diverse constituency, a fundamental practice is to establish key community contacts and ensure communication occurs in the most appropriate, most effective way (Forest Service, 1998; Roberts, 2007).

In general, connecting with diverse constituents should occur through fostering relationships and cultivating rapport (Sachatello-Sawyer & Fenyvesi, 2004). Programs being considered should be planned with the community you want to serve, whenever possible, not for them. Part of how this occurs is through “building bridges.” While this may sound like a cliché, talking candidly about differences, especially, may help with cross-cultural understanding and ultimately enhance awareness leading to greater belief in your intentions.

One of the most critical ingredients of this subject is the fact that underserved communities, for example, have gotten used to broken promises. This has occurred with both non-profit organizations and federal land agencies alike. Along these lines, what typically results is the very groups we are trying to reach begin to feel abandoned as a sense of long-term commitment falls by the wayside. By applying the

simple strategy of not promising anything you can't deliver, your organization will earn the respect desired as you authentically strive for positive changes (Gwaltney, 2003; Sachatello-Sawyer, B. & Fenyvesi, 2004; Roberts, 2007). What is the "bottom line?" Trust and relationships must be built over time.

THE ISSUE OF ACCESS

Given the nature of land trusts and other conservation lands, some areas have extremely limited public access for the protection of sensitive or endangered plants and wildlife, or to allow damaged ecosystems the chance to recover. Hence, many protected areas are under private ownership and this limits access as well. In many cases, landowners as well as non-profit groups may work together to open up various lands to the public for recreation often in the form of hiking, camping, wildlife observation, hunting, fishing, water sports, and other responsible outdoor activities. This is often with the assistance of community groups or government programs.

What has occurred over the years, however, is that some community groups get left out. Conservation groups have public events, meetings, opportunities to involve the public yet rarely ask themselves "Who is not here?" And, certain community members ask themselves "Why weren't we invited to the table?" This is distinct from people invited who elect not to show up; the aim here is to bring attention to the fact some individuals or groups are simply not included in public input decisions whether subconscious or conscious.

How, then, will we stimulate a "green vote," for instance, if there's lack of access to the open space we manage, cultural disconnects with our organizational values, or misunderstandings about the policies that are instituted based on years of tradition. Some ethnic minorities have expressed concern that parks and public lands have "too many" rules and puzzling or hard to understand value systems. For instance, Leave No Trace, wilderness use policies, fishing regulations, parking rules, or even "appropriate" music volume, are traditions that may not be seen as relevant to certain cultural groups. Additionally, unjustifiable attention by law enforcement towards targeted users creates a level of discomfort that causes more challenges for everyone.

All these factors, and others, vary from community-to-community and land managers should "first seek to understand, then to be understood." While such principles and best practices assist with managing and maintaining pristine natural environments, education must also be coupled with access. Through a process of cooperation, more benefits will be realized in the long run and are often as important as the programs themselves.

LEGISLATIVE SUPPORT FOR OPEN SPACE

Ethnic minority and low-income communities have been among the biggest supporters of bonds for green space, clean air, and clean water in the past several years. For example, the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Act of 2002 (Proposition 40) had strong minority support. This measure "allows the state to sell \$2.6 billion of general obligation bonds to

conserve natural resources (land, air, and water), to acquire and improve state and local parks, and to preserve historical and cultural resources.”

According to the Trust for Public Lands, “More than 56% of those residents voting approved the bond, one of the largest conservation funding measures ever passed by a state.” Furthermore, of this 56%, overwhelming support was from racially diverse communities. That is, Proposition 40 passed with the support of 77% Blacks, 74% of Latinos, 60% Asians and 56% of non-Hispanic White voters. This has also helped dispel the myth that people of color “don’t care about the outdoors.” Support from voters with an annual family income below \$20,000 and with a high school diploma or less were the highest supporters among any income or education levels. Despite this extraordinary end result, 64% of Californians say poorer communities have less than their fair share of parks and recreation opportunities (García, Flores, & Hicks, 2004).

Important questions include: “How does your community vote for important open space and protected area legislation? Has your organization determined the most effective means of communicating these essential governmental acts ensuring prospective users comprehend the implications? Do potential new users know how any given political vote affects their family and local community in terms of “relevance” and the connection to recreational opportunities?”

More diverse populations might engage in programs and pursue opportunities presented to them if information is provided in a way that combines benefits and values of participation with why these laws are so crucial for all people, not just a privileged few.

ORGANIZATIONAL TOOLS

Gwaltney (2003) offers five basic concepts he notes are “critical to making positive and sustained change” in multiple areas of diversity. While his paper relates to the National Park Service, his model supports action items that any organization might be inclined to execute. These concepts include: eliminate excuses, create accountability for poor performance and recognize superior performance, provide tools and resources necessary for success, track results, and “go the extra mile.”

As pointed out by Gwaltney, there is a difference between difficulties to be resolved and the excuses that create institutional barriers to progress. Without accountability from all levels of staff within an organization, it’s easy to perpetuate the “same ole’ same ole.” Furthermore, performance that does not show forward movement in meeting organizational diversity goals should be dealt with and exceptional staff/employee performance ought to be acknowledged. Next, when it comes to truly embracing diversity, even the best and brightest professionals need help; providing training, tools, resources, evaluation, etc. can mean the difference between frustration and confidence.

Then when it comes to tracking results, this is often where organizations fall short. Evaluation and measuring outcomes is sometimes perceived to be arduous; evidence speaks louder than words and if organizations don’t have the internal capacity to

track outreach efforts there are many consultants who can assist. Create a baseline, develop benchmarks, and determine if you value your vision enough to reach your goals.

Finally, Gwaltney notes managers must be prepared to “go the extra mile” for diversity to truly be part of an organizations daily culture. Shifting our way of thinking and doing may, perhaps, be our greatest challenge to achieving the change we wish to see and experience. Organizations should also share lessons learned around difficulties and challenges. Subsequently, personal and institutional knowledge will expand.

A DOZEN STRATEGIES FOR ENGAGING DIVERSE COMMUNITIES¹

According to the U.S. Census, by 2050 there will be a majority-minority population (Census, 2008). Breaking down barriers that may exist is not only the right thing to do, it's purely good business. There are literally hundreds of strategies that are known to be tried and true and an equal number of programs that exist based on both research and experience. This brief list is a sample of suggestions to assist organizations with enhancing their diversity efforts and working towards becoming more culturally competent.

- 1) Strive to overcome linguistic, cultural, institutional, geographic, and other barriers to meaningful participation in outdoor recreation activities.
- 2) Develop bilingual conservation education literature and programs as part of your efforts to effectively engage new/non-traditional users. Hire/engage bilingual staff and volunteers whenever possible.
- 3) Increase representation on Board of Directors and/or staff to enhance area where you might be lacking (e.g., ethnicity, gender, people with disabilities, etc).
- 4) Integrate tribal representation in a manner that is consistent with the government-to-government relationship between the U.S. and tribal governments, the Federal Government's trust responsibility to federally recognized tribes, and any treaty rights. (*Author note: Don't hesitate to engage tribes that may not be “federally recognized” given the perpetual exclusion of many tribes today in Government programs.*)
- 5) Include visible examples of employment and program participation by ethnic minorities, women, older/senior citizens, and youth in pictures and other visuals (e.g., brochures) as well as audio public information materials and relevant media sources.
- 6) Develop a commitment to the employment of youth at the high school and college/university levels in seasonal or intern programs. Include this as part of a strategic plan. Assure high quality supervision, mentoring, and meaningful work experience.

¹ Various sources adapted for this list of strategies. See work cited and supplemental resources provided.

- 7) Consider the possibility of providing financial support through scholarships, stipend programs, hourly wages, and/or other arrangements to culturally diverse high school and college/university students, with the intent of eventually bringing them into your workforce.
- 8) Support various community-based organizations through cooperative agreements that have large minority membership. Support minority and women-owned businesses through purchasing of products and services you might need.
- 9) Connect with diverse communities based on their preferred modes and sources of communication. Understand and properly consider language issues in your planning.
- 10) Bring diverse students together from different schools to explore shared environmental issues and use critical thinking necessary to foster building healthy human and natural communities (*Author note: conservation programs are no cure for acute societal issues yet by nature, these programs emphasize group processing and communication skills*).
- 11) Collaborate with minority serving institutions (or other groups of interest) on funding proposals to create new programs or recreational opportunities for using open space.
- 12) Provide diversity/cultural sensitivity training for your staff, and Board of Directors, and/or volunteers.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Why does all this matter? What are the likely impacts to open space lands and conservation efforts if the growing segments of our population do not value the natural environment the way we'd like them to? The key is they don't have to value the land they way we want them to, nor should they. Education is essential; yet providing a quality recreational experience is vital. Understanding community needs and desires is equally important. Support will follow and, for those who are developing a conservation ethic, this too will surface.

Conservation organizations and land trusts must consider implementing management plans that will ensure the fair distribution of the benefits of open space lands, enhance human health and the environment, promote economic vitality for all communities, and engage full and fair public participation to determine the future of these lands.

Ethnic minorities have made remarkable contributions to the conservation of natural resources across the country. Although he focuses on African Americans, Stanton (2002) makes salient points that can relate across cultures. He notes that unfortunately, due to past laws, discrimination and segregation, the contributions of people of color have not been well represented in history books or in the popular media. Furthermore, many scholars, in recent years, have substantially increased the

body of knowledge involving history, achievements and contributions of various cultural groups. Yet the “story” of these people in organizations and programs relating to the conservation of our natural heritage is not widely known, let alone recorded. This applies to numerous ethnic groups and “change,” while attempted, has really just begun to move beyond the template of tradition.

While traditions are noteworthy to maintain, this is indisputable, conservation organizations and land managers must begin by understanding every community has their own set of shared beliefs and agreements where they live, work, and play in nature. Assumptions can have unintended consequences. As also noted by Jacobson, McDuff and Monroe (2006) in their book *Conservation Education and Outreach Techniques*, abundant examples for engaging diverse communities exist. Professionals merely need to step up and act more effectively, and with intention. Providing access, information, and opportunities for recreational use of open space to people from diverse backgrounds will bring about a more sustainable future for all of us.

Some questions for consideration

- 1) Has your organization determined whether you value diversity, is it a priority, and how will you prioritize what needs to occur to create change and expand opportunities?
- 2) What audience or stakeholders are you trying to reach and do you know their backgrounds, desires, interests and current conservation practices (if any)?
- 3) Do you understand how to communicate with the diverse populations and potential participants in your area? Does your traditional means of communication work for all of your new and/or potential participants? If not, has it been determined what needs adapting?
- 4) Are you effectively using non-traditional means, networks, or partners to reach out to non-traditional populations?
- 5) Regarding the communities you want to serve, do you know what they care about and what their immediate needs are?
- 6) What diversity programs, projects and/or initiatives planned have been accomplished? Is the process on track? If not, have you assessed your work, addressed missteps and setbacks or revisited our plan?
- 7) Have you examined the different levels of decision making in your organization? And, have requisite changes needed (if any) been discussed?

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Supplemental sources

Association for Environmental & Outdoor Education / Diversity in Outdoor and Experiential Education

This site offers a wealth of information regarding articles, organizations, events and opportunities, training/professional development, multicultural EE providers, books/magazines, museums, exhibits, lesson plans and teaching materials all highlighting diversity.

aeoe.org/resources/diversity/index.html

Center for Diversity and the Environment

“. . . Provides strategic direction on diversifying the environmental movement . . . provides information about efforts, organizations, people, research and strategies that are diversifying the environmental movement.”

www.environmentaldiversity.org/

Consultation on the Outdoors for All: Diversity Action Plan

This Plan “encourages making opportunities for disabled people, people from black and minority ethnic communities, young people and people from inner cities to enjoy the countryside and green spaces. The Diversity Action Plan asks questions about how we can help to give more people the opportunity to enjoy the countryside and green spaces. At the moment many people don’t have the chance to enjoy the outdoors or don’t think it’s a place they can enjoy spending time in.”

www.diversity-outdoors.co.uk

Minority Environmental Leadership Development Initiative

MELDI is a “project at the University of Michigan”’s School of Natural Resources and Environment. The project aims to enhance the leadership and career development opportunities available to minority students and minority environmental professionals. The project seeks to provide information that will help more minority students embark on careers in the environmental field. It is also designed to help minority students and professionals in the environmental field take advantage of networking and mentoring opportunities.”

www.umich.edu/~meldi

National Hispanic Environmental Council

NHEC “seeks to educate, empower, and engage our community on environmental and sustainable development issues; encourage Latinos to actively work to preserve and protect our environment; provide a national voice for Latinos before federal, state, and nonprofit environmental decision-makers; and actively assist Latinos to pursue the many career, educational, and policy opportunities in the environment and natural resources field:

www.nheec.org

New America Media Expanding the news lens through ethnic media:

news.newamericamedia.org/news

NAM Directory 2008 “A bridge to America’s ethnic media and communities.”

news.ncmonline.com/news/view_custom.html?custom_page_id=263

Outdoor Industry Association, Outdoor Foundation, Research The Hispanic Community and Active Outdoor Recreation

www.outdoorfoundation.org/research.hispanic.html

Rising to the Challenge Strategies for enhancing diversity within environmental organizations. 2004. Environmental Diversity Working Group. Fort Washington, MD: The Kenian Group (Consultants) *Strengthening Organizations through Diversity*.

www.keniangroup.com

Stewardship Council Established in 2004 as part of a Pacific Gas and Electric Company Land Settlement:

www.stewardshipcouncil.org

Youth Investment Program

www.stewardshipcouncil.org/youth_investment

Student Conservation Association (Celebrated 50 years in 2007): National Urban and Diversity Program

www.thesca.org

Cultural Resources Diversity Internship Program in partnership with the National Park Service

www.nps.gov/history/crdi/internships/intrnCRDIP.htm

Ethnic minority visitor use and non-use of parks and participation in conservation education/outdoor recreation programs

A FEW QUICK FACTS

July 2008

(Reference list available upon request)

Popular myths & misconceptions

- People of color are not interested in conservation or environmental issues.
- Historically, people of color have not been involved in environmental issues, resulting in a dearth of people of color who can serve as role models in conservation education.
- The issues receiving primary attention in conservation and environmental education curricula have universal appeal.
- People of color aren't interested in pursuing careers in conservation, environmental education (and related).
- The needs and interests of people of color are recognized and addressed by those setting the national conservation or environmental education agenda.

- Natural resource programs are presented in ways that appeal to, and are relevant for, all audiences.

Common constraints across cultures

- Socialization and exposure (e.g., upbringing and/or current social practices)
- “Marginalized” nature of racial ethnic minorities (e.g., cost/financial constraints, lack of transportation, access issues)
- Historical context / perspective of current outdoor natural resources areas based in historical perspectives.
- Safety issues and fears (e.g., physical, emotional safety, concern about being injured, fear of natural elements, navigation and uncertainty of getting around, other people and “places you dare not go”)
- Lack of people of color visible in marketing and/or promotional materials.
- Don’t feel comfortable or welcome in certain parks, forests, and other outdoor areas.
- Perceived discrimination/interracial interactions (e.g., potential for others to create a negative effect on visitation or avoiding outdoor areas due to possibility of cultural conflicts or discrimination).
- Lack of knowledge and/or awareness (e.g., what to do, where to go)
- “No Time” = more pressing priorities.
- Few friends travel or recreate in more remote natural areas or wildlands.

“I was taught early on in my life about the power of nature . . . And, working the land was the hope of survival . . . Nowadays, only those of us who maintain our bonds to the land draw spiritual strength from nature . . .” ~ bell hooks, author/scholar

Differences between cultural groups

(Sample constraints that may apply to certain groups but not others, based on upbringing, economic status, level of assimilation/acculturation, language, etc.)

- Language barriers (e.g., signage, brochures, materials, communication with park staff and other personnel).
- Desire for more “luxury accommodations.”
- Perception of being “too crowded.”
- Perception of not being enough people around (prefer larger crowds).
- Health issues or physical limitations, general.
- Concern about not having “proper” outdoor clothing, gear, equipment necessary for activity or overall enjoyment.

- Lack of discretionary money that might be needed (e.g., entrance fees, specialized clothes, food, travel costs, gear/equipment, etc.)
- Lack of ethnic diversity among workforce (e.g., people of color underrepresented as part of the ranks of public land employees)

Positive connections with nature experienced across cultures (sample)

- Picnics and family gatherings rate highly across all ethnic groups as reasons for enjoying recreation outdoors.
- Increased personal health. Recognition that outdoor activities have multiple benefits: physical, mental, emotional and spiritual (e.g., enhanced confidence, physical development, emotional adjustment, social interaction skills, mental acuity, spiritual/religious contact)
- Strong values towards nature (“nature appreciation”) and belief in conservation and stewardship of the environment.
- Stress relief, fresh air, natural beauty.

“The outdoors is where people belong. All of the real rhythms that exist in the world are all based in nature . . . This is America, my native land and these natural resources are part of my heritage and are here for me to enjoy, too . . .” ~ Bill Gwaltney, National Park Service

Strategies for community engagement (sample)

- Examine individual and organizational prejudices, beliefs, and values (e.g., conduct a “diversity assessment”).
- Actively seek to learn more about other cultures with whom we want to connect.
- Recognize the diversity of environmental issues facing our audiences; emphasize relevancy to their lives and communities.
- Gain a broad perspective on issues by collecting input from a variety of sources and community leaders.
- Ensure a balanced perspective on the values and contributions of ethnic minorities is represented in our organizational cultural, on our staff, relating to our board (if applicable), and within our documents (such as strategic plan) and promotional materials, etc.
- Utilize opportunities for collaboration with minority businesses and minority serving institutions, broadly.
- If engaging students, involve parents or guardians, and/or other caregivers. Connect with families (broadly).

- Cultural pluralism based upon respect for differences should be held as the ideal approach to societal development.
- A balance of different ethnic groups should be represented in images and/or texts of materials put out by our organization or agency.
- Establish interface of trusted leader(s) in the community who can be the bridge, the intermediary between our agency and the community.
- Engage or Improve use of various ethnic media sources in your area (T.V., radio, newspapers, newsletters, etc). Prioritize building relationships with key journalists for local ethnic newspapers and other types of media to ensure coverage of our programs, initiatives, events, etc. to broader audiences.
- Consider employment opportunities targeting youth/young adults of ethnically diverse backgrounds. Ensure hiring practices and policies are not barriers to recruitment efforts.

Outreach Programming to Diverse Audiences: Programs, Resources and Best Practices

Compiled by

Nina Roberts

San Francisco State University

Bill Gwaltney

National Park Service

I. Sample programs (national prototypes and models)

- Asian Pacific American Program – U.S. Forest Service
www.fs.fed.us/cr/sepm/apap/
- Beckwourth Mountain Club and Outdoor Education Center
www.beckwourthmountainclub.org/
- Becoming an Outdoors Woman (BOW)
www.uwsp.edu/CNR/bow/
- Big City Mountaineers
www.bigcitymountaineers.org/
- Crissy Field Center (partnership of the Golden Gate Nat'l Parks Conservancy & NPS)
www.parksconservancy.org/our_work/crissy/
- EarthTeam
www.earthteam.net
- Eagle Eye Institute
www.eagleeyeinstitute.org/
- FamCamp® (California State Parks)
www.parks.ca.gov/oci
- GirlVentures
www.girlventures.org/
- Inner City Outings (Sierra Club):
www.sierraclub.org/ico/

- Latino Issues Forum: Sustainable Development Program
www.lif.org/
- Mosaic Project
www.mosaicproject.org/
- Outdoor Youth Connection
www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=24511
- Pacific Leadership Institute (PLI) at San Francisco State University
www.plipprograms.org
- Santa Fe Mountain Center
www.sf-mc.com/
- Student Conservation Association (SCA), National Urban & Diversity Program
www.thesca.org/
- Urban Treehouse Program (BLM)
www.blm.gov/education/LearningLandscapes/explorers/joinin/treehouse.html
- WildLink
wildlink.wilderness.net/
- Wonderful Outdoor World (WOW)
www.funoutdoors.com/coalitions/wow

II. Key organizations and miscellaneous Internet resources (alphabetical order)

- African American Experience/National Association for Interpretation
www.naisections.org/AAE/index.htm
- African American Experience/National Park Foundation
www.aaexperience.org/
- African American Travel Conference
www.aatconline.com/
- African American Village
www.imdiversity.com/villages/african/village_african_american.asp
- American Indian Higher Education Consortium
www.aihec.org/
- American Indian Science and Engineering Society
www.aises.org
- Asian American Village
www.imdiversity.com/villages/asian/village_asian_american.asp
- Association of African American Museums
www.blackmuseums.org/
- Black Outdoor Sportsman Network
www.b-o-s-n.com/new/
- Black Travels.com
www.blacktravels.com/
- Center for Diversity & the Environment
www.environmentaldiversity.org

- EarthLinks
www.earthlinks-colorado.org/
- Earthwise Productions
www.earthwiseproductionsinc.com/index.html
- Filipino Americans
www.filipinoamericans.net/
- Goombay Adventures
www.goombayadventurers.com/
- Hispanic Village
www.imdiversity.com/villages/hispanic/village_hispanic_american.asp
- Hmong Cultural Center
www.hmongcenter.org/
- Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences
www.manrrs.org/
- Multi-ethnic Advocates for Cultural Competence
www.maccinc.net/
- National African American RV Association
naarva.com/
- National Association of Black School Educators
www.nabse.org/
- National Association for Multicultural Education
www.nameorg.org/
- National Black Tourism Network
www.tourism-network.net/main/index.php
- National Hispanic Environmental Council
www.nheec.org
- National Multicultural Institute
www.nmci.org/
- National Parks Conservation Association – Cultural Diversity
www.npca.org/cultural_diversity/
- Native American Fish and Wildlife Society
www.nafws.org
- Native Americans and the Environment
www.cnie.org/NAE/index.html
- Native American Village
www.imdiversity.com/villages/native/village_native_american.asp
- North American Association for Environmental Education
www.naaee.org/
- OutdoorEd.com
www.outdoored.com/
- Outdoor and Experiential Education for Adolescent Girls
www.womanonsafari.org/girlsresource/
- Society for Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science
www.sacnas.org/

- Women in Natural Resources
www.cnr.uidaho.edu/winr/

III. Colleges and universities

- Asian American and Pacific Islander Institutions
www.dotcr.ost.dot.gov/documents/dotpart/AAPIColleges.htm
- Historically Black Colleges and Universities
www.littleafrica.com/resources/colleges.htm
- Hispanic Serving Institutions
www.molis.org/hsis.asp
- Indian/Tribal Colleges, Institutes, and Universities
www.cs.wisc.edu/~sodani/indian-colleges.html
- American Indian Institute (University of Oklahoma)
www.occe.ou.edu/aai/
- Center for Urban Education (University of Northern Colorado)
www.unco.edu/urbaned/
- Diversity Database – “Moving Towards Community” (University of Maryland)
www.unr.edu/sapd/highered.html
- Diversity Research Laboratory (University of Illinois)
www.diversitylab.uiuc.edu/index.html
- Environmental Justice Resource Center (Clark Atlanta University)
ejrc.cau.edu
- Hispanic Leadership Program in Agriculture and Natural Resources (University of Texas, San Antonio) – The Culture and Policy Institute
utsa.edu/cpi/hlpanr/index.htm
- Minority Environmental leadership Development Institute (University of Michigan):
www.umich.edu/~meldi/

IV. Learning options, sensitivity tools, sample publications

- African American concern for the environment – Dispelling Old Myths
www.umich.edu/news/Releases/2003/May03/ro52903.html
- Black and Brown Faces in America’s Wild Places (youth version also available)
www.adventurepublications.net/tek9.asp?pg=products&specific=jqfmrolo
- Building Capacity Through Diversity Project
www.environmentaldiversity.org/initiatives.html
- Building Relationships with Communities of Color: The Western States Diversity Project:
www.environmentaldiversity.org/documents/TNC DiversityStudy.pdf
- Cultural Diversity in Conservation Organizations and Programs
www.naturalresourcescouncil.org/ewebeditpro/items/O89F5307.pdf
- Diversity and the Future of the U.S. Environmental Movement
environment.yale.edu/5175/diversity_and_the_future_of_the_us/

- Diversity Matters
www.diversitymatters.info
- Diversity Inc
www.diversityinc.com/
- Environmental Justice Resources
www.sierrainstitute.us/PWCFC/projects/ej_resources.htm
- Environmental Stewardship for the 21st Century: Opportunities and Actions for Improving Cultural Diversity in Conservation Organizations and Programs
www.naturalresourcescouncil.org/ewebeditpro/items/O89F3677.pdf
- Forging New Alliances: Building a Common Vision for California's Environment
www.lif.org/publications/LIF_env.pdf
- National Park Service – Diversity site and “NPS Diversity Connections”
www1.nature.nps.gov/helpyourparks/diversity/
- “Whose Heritage? Attracting Minorities to National Parks”
www.fs.fed.us/demographics/s4_pp5.htm

V. Research, statistics and demographic information / data (no particular order)

- 1) National Park Service, Social Science:
www.nature.nps.gov/socialscience/products.cfm
Race/Ethnicity in NPS:
www.nature.nps.gov/socialscience/pdf/SSRR_2.pdf
Ethnic and Racial Diversity of National Park System Visitors and Non-Visitors:
www.nature.nps.gov/socialscience/pdf/Ethnic_and_Racial_Diversity_Report_12_2003.pdf
Demographics/Visitor Centers:
www.nature.nps.gov/socialscience/pdf/NPS_Inf_Tech_Report.pdf
Visitor Use/Interpretation Media:
www.nature.nps.gov/socialscience/pdf/Visitor_Use_and_Evaluation.pdf
Searchable database of completed NPS research:
npsfocus.nps.gov/
- 2) The Visitor Services Project (VSP): University of Idaho conducts research at 10 parks each year. Many survey instruments and summary reports are available on-line. Reports can be downloaded and information can be obtained on a park-by-park basis.
www.psu.uidaho.edu/vsp.htm (follow link to Survey Reports and Questionnaires).
- 3) Association of Race/Ethnicity, Gender, and Social Class in Outdoor Recreation Experiences: State of the Knowledge Report:
nature.nps.gov/socialscience/pdf/Rodriguez_Roberts_Rep.pdf

- 4) National Park Service, Diversity site: Has many resources not just related to NPS (this has research information as well, so you just have to search for what you specifically want).
www1.nature.nps.gov/helpyourparks/diversity/
- 5) NPS Public Use Statistics 2007
www.funoutdoors.com/files/Nov%20Report_FINAL.pdf
- 6) Outdoor Industry Foundation (includes various demographic info)
www.outdoorfoundation.org/research.index.html
- 7) Outdoor Industry Association – Social Research
www.outdoorindustry.org/research.social.php
- 8) Outdoor Recreation in America / Research:
www.funoutdoors.com/research and/or
www.funoutdoors.com/taxonomy/view/or/62
- 9) U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Research and Development Center (ethnic diversity)
corpslakes.usace.army.mil/employees/ethnic/erdc.html
corpslakes.usace.army.mil/employees/ethnic/refs.html
corpslakes.usace.army.mil/employees/related.cfm?Id=ethnic
corpslakes.usace.army.mil/employees/ethnic/ethnic.html
- 10) National Parks Conservation Association
www.npca.org/who_we_are/diversity/
- 11) Center for Diversity and the Environment
www.environmentaldiversity.org/
- 12) US Forest Service/Research and Development
www.fs.fed.us/research/scientific.shtml
- 13) National Survey on Recreation and the Environment:
www.srs.fs.usda.gov/trends/Nsre/nsre2.html
- 16) Tribal Wilderness Research Needs
www.treesearch.fs.fed.us/pubs/21959
- 17) Customer Diversity and the Future Demand for Outdoor Recreation
www.fs.fed.us/pl/rpa/93rpa/divrn.html
- 18) Women and Diversity:
goliath.ecnext.com/coms2/gi_0199-4351/With-over-13-000-facts.html
- 19) Implications of increased Racial and Ethnic Diversity for Recreation Resource Management, Planning, and Research
www.rpts.tamu.edu/specialareas.shtml
- 20) Quantitative Study on the Reach, Impact and Potential of Ethnic Media
findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_moEIN/is_2002_April_23/ai_85011435

VI. A few selected individuals/consultants (alphabetical by first name)

- a) Angela Park, Founder & Director, “Diversity Matters”:
www.sustainabilityinstitute.org/fellows/2004fellows.html#Angela
- b) Bob Stanton, Consultant (Former NPS Director)
Conservation Policy, Planning and Management
Ph. 703-503-5844; RGS617@aol.com
- c) Carolyn Finney, Ph.D., Assistant Professor
Department of Environmental Science, Policy and Management:
www.berkeley.edu/news/berkeleyan/2007/11/28_finney.shtml
- d) Dudley Edmonson, Photographer
Author: “Black and Brown Faces in America’s Wild Places”
dudley@raptorworks.com
raptorworks.com/
- e) Emilio Williams, Founder/President
The Koi Group
Ph. 301-779-0389; ewilliams@koigroup.com
www.koigroup.com/
- f) Iantha Gantt-Wright, Founder/President
The Kenian Group
Ph. 301-292-6677; thekeniangroup@earthlink.net
- g) Jack Shu, Consultant
Community Involvement Programs, Diversity Strategies for Organizations,
Outdoor Recreation Leadership
Ph. 619-460-9315; jkshu@cox.net
- h) Julian Agyeman, Associate Professor and Chair
Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning.
www.tufts.edu/~jagyemo1/
- i) Marcelo Bonta, Founder/Director
The Center for Diversity and Environment
mbonta@environmentaldiversity.org
www.environmentaldiversity.org/
- j) Nina Roberts, Ph.D., Consultant, Roberts & Associates
Training & Facilitation/Diversity and Social Justice Assistant Professor,
San Francisco State University
home.earthlink.net/~ns_roberts/mainpage/id16.html
- k) Van Jones, Founder/President
“Green for All”
www.vanjones.net/

APPENDIX

(A few more sample organizations and university programs)

Urban Ecology
582 Market Street, Suite 1020
San Francisco, CA 94104
www.urbanecology.org

Coalition on the Environ. & Jewish Life
443 Park Avenue South, 11th Flr.
New York, NY 10016
www.coejl.org

Haskell Environmental Research
Studies Center
Haskell Indian Nations University
155 Indian Avenue Box 5001
Lawrence, Kansas 66046
cobweb.ecn.purdue.edu/~tosnac/pdf_hers%20brochures.pdf

Environmental Leadership Program
1609 Connecticut Ave NW #400
Washington, DC 20009
www.elpnet.org

Center for Environmental Citizenship
200 G St., NE #300
Washington, DC 20002
www.envirocitizen.org/

The Conservation Fund
1800 North Kent Street, Suite 1120
Arlington, VA 22209-2156
www.conservationfund.org

Urban Habitat Program
P.O. Box 29908 Presidio Station
San Francisco, CA 94129-9908

Native American Water Quality & Aquatic Environment Monitoring Project Office
131 W. 6th Ave., #3
Anchorage, AK 99501

New York Restoration Project
254 31st Street, 10th
New York, NY 10001
www.nyrp.org

Student Conservation Association
Diversity Internships
689 River Road, PO Box 550
Charlestown NH 03603-0550

Southwest Network for Environmental & Economic Justice
PO Box 7399
Albuquerque, NM 87105
www.sneej.org/

National Hispanic Environmental Council
106 N. Fayette Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
www.nheec.org

National Tribal Environmental Council
2221 Rio Grande Blvd., NW
Albuquerque, NM 87104
www.ntec.org/

Earth Force
1908 Mount Vernon, Second Floor
Alexandria, VA 22301
www.earthforce.org

Native American Environmental Protection Coalition
PO Box 248
Valley Center, CA 92082
www.naepc.com

National Wildlife Federation
11100 Wildlife Center Dr.
Reston, VA 20190
www.nwf.org

Urban Habitat & Race Poverty and the Environment
436 14th St. # 1205
Oakland, CA 94612
urbanhabitat.org/

District Interracial Coalition for Environ. Equity
PO Box 12045
Washington, DC 20005

Environmental Justice Resource Center
Clark Atlanta University
223 James P. Brawley Drive
Atlanta, GA 30314
www.ejrc.cau.edu

National Conservation Training Center Conservation Leadership Network
Route 1, Box 166, Shepherd Grade Rd.
Shepherdstown, WV 25443
www.conservationfund.org/training_education

Fresh Water Institute
PO Box 1889
Shepherdstown, WV 25443
www.freshwaterinstitute.org

Howard University
2441-6th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20059
www.coas.howard.edu

Jackson State University
Departments: Environmental Education;
Environ Sciences; Biology; Fisheries; Aquatic Sciences; Botany; Plant Physiology
PO Box 18538
Jackson, MS 39220

Cultural Resources Diversity Internship Program, National Center for Cultural
Resources National Park Service
1849 C Street NW, Suite 350
Washington, DC 20240
www.nps.gov/history/crdi/internships/intrnCRDIP.htm

Earthwise Productions, Inc.
450 Piedmont Ave. Suite #1512
Atlanta, GA 30308
www.earthwiseproductionsinc.com

Native American Fish & Wildlife Society
750 Burbank Street
Broomfield CO 80020
www.nafws.org

Wilderness Inquiry (people with disabilities)
808 - 14th Avenue S.E.
Minneapolis MN 55414-1516
www.wildernessinquiry.org

Northern Arizona University
c/o Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals
PO Box 15004
Flagstaff, AZ 86011
www4.nau.edu/itep/

Association for American Indian Affairs Hungerford Drive, Suite 12-B
Rockville, MD 20850
www.indian-affairs.org

Sample Best Practices Relating to Engaging Diverse Communities

Nina Roberts

San Francisco State University

New York Restoration Project

Celebrated entertainer Bette Midler founded the nonprofit New York Restoration Project in 1995 in the belief that clean, green neighborhoods are fundamental to the quality of life, and that every community in New York City deserves an oasis of natural beauty. Seeing many parks and open spaces in dire need of cleanup and restoration, Bette Midler created NYRP to be the “conservancy of forgotten places,” particularly in New York City’s underserved communities.

To achieve this vision, NYRP partners with individuals, community-based groups, and public agencies to reclaim, restore, and develop under-resourced parks, community gardens, and other open spaces in New York City. They’ve removed over 875 tons of garbage from project sites and reclaimed more than 400 acres of under-resourced and rundown parkland. They’ve rescued scores of community gardens from commercial development and served over 10,000 at-risk urban youngsters with free environmental education programs.

NYRP has made a substantial impact on the economic and social revitalization of underserved communities. They’ve grown into an effective and admired partner with public agencies that are reshaping the urban environment. NYRP is now one of the leading partners of the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation in developing underused and new parkland. Through their park and garden restoration, environmental education, and public programs, NYRP has become an important catalyst for sustainable community development.

Information: <http://www.nyrp.org/>

Trust for public lands and brownfields: “brownfields to parks”

Brownfields are real property, includes the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of this property (typically in urban areas) which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. Cleaning up and reinvesting in these properties takes development pressures off of undeveloped, open land, and both improves and protects the environment.

The Trust for Public Land has been involved by helping communities renew contaminated areas and transform them into parks and playgrounds. They understand how to assemble park and green space funding and has the real estate and technical expertise to secure and clean up these sites on behalf of the public. Most importantly, TPL understands the vision of making formerly unsightly and hazardous land available for public use and recreation. They scrutinize the hazards and the opportunities of potential Brownfield conversions in terms of contamination, human health risk, opportunity cost, and the potential of impacting a neighborhood economically. TPL works closely with community members, public agencies, and technical experts to ensure a safe and successful outcome from planning through construction.

Information: http://www.tpl.org/tier2_pa.cfm?folder_id=945

USDA Forest Service

A. Urban and Community Forestry Program

The Urban and Community Forestry Program helps people in urban areas and community settings sustain shade trees, forest lands, and open spaces. This program improves the quality of life in urban communities across the Nation by maintaining, restoring, and improving the health of trees, forests, and green spaces.

- The program helps State forestry agencies, local and tribal governments, and the private sector improve natural resource management of trees and forests in urban areas and community settings.
- The program encourages and facilitates the active involvement of volunteers in the management and protection of their community's natural resources.
- The program analyzes, develops, disseminates, and demonstrates scientific information about protecting, managing, and maintaining community forest resources.

Information: http://www.tpl.org/tier2_pa.cfm?folder_id=945

B. Forest Information Van

The Forest Information Van (FIV) ran from 1994 through 2001 on the Angeles National Forest in southern California. The FIV was a small, movable visitor center that took forest information to where Latino recreation visitors were. For example, if the visitors were in the East Fork of the San Gabriel Canyon, then that is where the FIV went. A pull-out canopy that had pillars/panels with brightly colored pictures of animals was attached to the van. These pictures were used to attract the attention of Latino visitors. Visitors could acquire information about forest rules and regulations, and what to see and do in the area. General educational and recreational materials were available. Information at the FIV was available in English and Spanish, and the FIV staff was bilingual. (Program ended due to significant reduction in the R5 budget).

What land trust managers can do

Programs like the Forest Information Van can be modified to meet your needs and used to help recreation managers disseminate conservation information and recreational use options to a wide variety of diverse users including non-English speaking groups.

Becoming an outdoorswoman

Becoming an Outdoors-Woman (BOW) means “becoming more competent, more confident, and more aware.” BOW serves over 20,000 women per year; this is an outdoor skills program that offers women a chance to grow.

More than 80 weekend-long workshops are held all across North America each year. The workshops introduce women to a variety of activities from hunting and fishing to canoeing and camping. Participants choose from a list of over 20 activities. With the help of funding provided by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Shooting Sports Foundation, Wisconsin Environmental Education Board, and other organizations, BOW launched several projects that assessed the needs, attitudes and participation of women in outdoor activities.

The program welcomes women from all backgrounds to enjoy camaraderie with other women in a supportive, non-competitive learning environment. And, participants span the ages of 18 to 80+. They have also researched ways to better welcome women with disabilities to outdoor recreation.

Information: <http://www.uwsp.edu/CNR/bow/>

Conservation Fund

Series of trainings and workshops: New starting last year in 2007: “Diversity & Conservation: A New Model for the 21st Century.” This is an “introductory diversity and conservation pilot course provides participants with an understanding of what diversity is and what it means as a business and social imperative to the conservation movement.”

Elected Charles Jordan, the first African American, as Chairman of the Board; he was elected to the Board of Directors in 1989 and subsequently elected as Chair in 2003 and still holds that office today. The following sample efforts and initiatives have occurred over the years and may or may not still be in existence or operation:

- The CF has initiated a wide range of programs for protecting America’s land and water resources, including historic properties at the Booker T. Washington National Monument and historic Park Hudson (LA), both areas relating to the role of African Americans in the nation’s history.
- Has worked with a largely Hispanic community in Roma, Texas, in preserving historic resources and promoting heritage tourism and ecotourism development.
- Assisted Native Alaskans in Southwest Alaska in protecting their land through the purchase of conservation easements, effectively helping indigenous landowners generate income, and sustain their way of life.

- Has expanded engagement with largely African American communities in Florida and North Carolina regarding conservation and sustainable economic development.
- Worked with the native people on the Island of Molokai (Hawaii) to develop a community-based master plan for a 5,000 acre ranch which occupies nearly one-half of the Island and is the home to important resources including sacred sites.
- Has partnered with State and Federal Agencies and nonprofit groups at multiple levels to help low and moderate-income farmers and landowners. Partnered with the Episcopal Farm-worker Ministry to support the development of a program for teaching English for the benefit of migrant farm workers.
- Worked with more than 50 grassroots community development, conservation, and environmental justice groups across North Carolina to help diverse groups and agencies to work more cooperatively and effectively in rural areas.
- Partnered with land tenure advocates, conservationists, community developers, farmers, landowners and academics to help establish the nation's first Black Family Land Trust, which with a coalition of more than 40 organizations provide tools and resources to help landowners retain their land.

Source: "Cultural Diversity in Conservation Organizations and Programs: Follow-up Survey of Progress, Initiatives, Programs and Accomplishments by Selected Member Organizations of the Natural Resources Council of America, May 2002 – May 2004: A Report Prepared for the Natural Resources Council of America." By Robert Stanton, Consultant, Conservation Policy, Planning and Management <http://www.naturalresourcescouncil.org/ewebeditpro/items/O89F5307.pdf>

National Hispanic Environmental Council (NHEC)

Mission Statement: "NHEC seeks to educate, empower, and engage our community on environmental and sustainable development issues; encourage Latinos to actively work to preserve and protect our environment; provide a national voice for Latinos before federal, state, and nonprofit environmental decision-makers; and actively assist Latinos to pursue the many career, educational, and policy opportunities in the environment and natural resources field. We develop programs – in partnership with our supporters – that accomplish this mission, and furthers our guiding credo: "because it's our environment too."

Program goals revolve around Education, National Advocacy and Representation, Fighting Stereotypes and Dispelling Myths, Network Link for Hispanic Professionals and Community Organizations, and Serve as an Information Clearinghouse. NHEC also sponsors an annual Minority Youth Environmental Training Institute for teens ages 16-19.

Information: <http://www.nheec.org/>

Stewardship Council – Youth Investment Program (philanthropy model)

The Stewardship Council believes that outdoor experiences (whether in urban or wilderness areas) can positively transform young people personally, socially and academically. Unfortunately, the most "needy", poor and underserved youth, have the least access to these life-changing experiences. By providing grant monies to existing

community parks and youth development programs, as well as new programs in underserved communities, the Stewardship Council is working to make a difference in the lives of young Californians and nurture the future stewards of this state.

Grantmaking Objectives:

- Increase the participation of underserved youth in successful outdoor urban and wilderness programs.
- Improve the cultural relevance of outdoor and park programs to better serve and reflect the diverse youth of California.
- Make the outdoors a more integral part of youth's lives to improve their general health and well-being.
- Improve the infrastructure of community parks and urban open spaces to make them more accessible and welcoming.
- Support coordinated approaches to helping youth get outdoors and to increase their well-being through partnerships among diverse sectors involved in youth development (e.g., health, environmental justice, mental health, education, and juvenile justice).

Program strategy

In 2008, the Stewardship Council will continue to implement a strategic grantmaking program to reduce physical, financial, and social barriers to enable youth participation in outdoor experiences. To achieve its stated goals and objectives, the Stewardship Council will direct grants to support:

- Emerging, grassroots efforts aimed at reducing barriers for youth engagement in outdoor activities in communities with significant needs (Catalyst Fund);
- Day-to-day operations of promising programs and high-impact organizations (Impact Fund);
- Collaborative ventures that advance the field of outdoor education, health and well being, and cultural relevance through thought leadership and innovative partnerships; and
- Substantial improvements in the infrastructure of community parks and urban open spaces that are planned and executed by established organizations that have demonstrated capacity (Infrastructure Fund).

Priorities

- Demonstrate well-rounded approaches to youth development (e.g., combining outdoor education with academics, health, food, environment, environmental justice, leadership, media, or other youth development models).

- Employ best practices for outdoor and/or environmental education that actively engage learners, promote discovery, and address the interconnectedness of relationships in the natural and social environments.
- Provide ongoing opportunities for connecting youth to the outdoors that go beyond the one-time outdoor experience.
- Integrate outdoor education into the lives of young people and transfer the lessons learned from outdoor experiences to school, home, and community.
- Recognize and address the need for adult relationships in youth's lives and seek to incorporate adult relationships as a component in its approach. This relationship may be in the form of mentors, extended kin care, foster care, families or extended family members.
- Demonstrate a commitment and capacity to collaborate with others in the field to make the outdoors a more integral part of youth's lives.
- Share and reflect the core values of the Stewardship Council including collaboration, stewardship, discovery, sustainability, and leadership.
- Bring resources and funds beyond those of the Stewardship Council to ensure continuance of efforts over time.

Information: http://www.stewardshipcouncil.org/youth_investment/index.htm

Miscellaneous examples and other ideas for consideration

A. Sample ways to connect with schools and kids

- On-line education materials and activity kits
- Camp, Summer, Ranger programs
- Develop "what would you do" scenarios
- Outreach programs
- Provide transportation as best as possible (obtain sponsor to assist with cost?)
- Inspire the "I must learn another language" response
- Healthy lifestyles
- Kids to Nature
- Art and imagery
- Multi-generational
- Teacher training opportunities
- History projects (relating to the heritage of your state)
- Recognize existing connections with schools (awards, certificates, incentives, etc)
- "Heroes" (who are your community leaders that can be acknowledged as "heroes"?)
- Debate/discourse
- Film and media

- Hands-on learning
- Family amenities in facilities and new facility designs
- Others?

B. Sample ways to connect with colleges

- Provide internships for ethnic minority students in programs such as conservation biology, natural resources, environmental education, outdoor recreation, parks management, and related disciplines (paid is preferable!).
- Recruit at minority serving institutions
- Attend career fairs at minority serving institutions
- Various language programs (Latino / Asian in particular)
- Ethnic Studies
- Environmental Justice
- Women's Studies
- Civil Rights
- Links to local college/university campuses and departments in your area of interest
- Events – Cultural, Music, Food (keep in mind: music gives students a voice)
- Others?

Themes from the Discussion

Most individuals enjoy spending time outside – but often in very different ways and locations. Understanding both the similarities and the differences, as well as ensuring that they are reflected in efforts to attract new users to protected areas are an important new arena for land trusts.

“Can we meet people where they live?” Cassandra Johnson

Proximity and practical/group access matters

Being able to get to a site and feeling safe/welcome once there are two prerequisites for the recreational use of any open space. Access by walking or public transportation is critical for many lower-income communities. Use by “others like me” is important for members of any ethnic group.

A surprisingly wide range of circumstances can create practical barriers to uses of open space by more diverse communities, such as:

- “Catch-and-release” rules for fishing from urban piers limiting use by communities practicing sustenance fishing.
- Locked bathrooms in the early morning limiting use by Asian tai chi practitioners.
- Immovable picnic tables inhibiting use by Latino extended families.
- Failure to maintain trails/roads/entrances from African-American communities making walking/biking access much more difficult.
- The lack of Spanish-language capacity reducing the attractiveness of nature preserves to surrounding Latino communities.

Clearly there is a tension here – should each park be allocated to just one cultural/ethnic group so that it can be managed to meet their particular interests and needs? Given the constantly changing demographics of US communities, the answer has to be no – but the need for more inclusive and adaptable management approaches across sites is also clear. This includes an understanding of and sensitivity to the historical, structural differences across race and class that affect individuals’ experience with and choices around use of open space.

“Open up Outside magazine . . . how many people of color do you see?”

Peter Forbes

Broader, cultural messages matter as well

The media’s depiction of outdoor recreational activities is overwhelmingly white and affluent. While this may well reflect the economic reality of the situation today, it contributes to the barriers for attracting more people of color – “why would I do that/go there; that’s for white or rich people.” How do individuals become comfortable seeing themselves and people like them in the picture of any particular place? Given the projected changes in the US population, this type of media coverage increases the need for the conservation community to find new ways to attract more people of color onto the lands that have been protected. Doing so will require making a wider range of recreational opportunities accessible and welcoming.

African-American use of open space is lower than Latino or Asian

There are many differences in recreational uses of open space across different communities of color. Use by African-Americans is the lowest. A number of reasons have been offered for this low rate of use, ranging from the practical barriers to access noted above, to the history of violence/oppression in rural areas, to leisure preferences and patterns of assimilation. More work should be done to better understand the explanations for these differences. At the same time, listening and applying management practices that build from a local community’s hopes and concerns is the key to helping to increase recreational use by any particular group.

Wealth/class/preference differences also drive different recreational uses

The Appalachian Mountain Club maintains a system of hiking trails and huts used by thousands of people each year across large parts of the Eastern US. As part of its effort to connect with the communities in which it owns land, it set up a session in Northern Maine to offer cross-country skiing opportunities to local teenagers. Unfortunately, not one of the many local kids invited had ever been cross-country skiing before – much to the surprise of the AMC staffers, but maybe not unlike the children in California who have never been to the beach. While the staffers and teens in Maine were of the same ethnic group, differences of preferences, access and resources had driven them to very different uses of open space – skiing versus snow-machining.

Disputes between advocates for and against motorized and non-motorized recreation are frequent. So too are conflicts between hunters and non-hunters, music-lovers and meditators, animal watchers and dog owners, and many other competing uses that transcend ethnicity. Seeing these differences not as something to be eliminated, but as factors to be understood and woven into a mosaic of uses across different types of lands – and all as part of the larger, more diverse coalition in favor of protecting open spaces – is a major challenge for the land trust community going forward. Land trusts should increasingly move to providing places for different user

groups as part of this mosaic, rather than just focusing on the traditionally narrow user group of “nature lovers.”

“Who are going to be your donors in the future?” Hazel Wong

Engaging with new communities is mission enhancement, not mission creep

Some people within the land trust community see efforts to engage in new ways with new communities as “mission creep” – diverting their organization’s focus from its real work of acquiring land. As more and more land trusts explore this area, however, more and more are coming to the conclusion that broader engagement enhances, rather than detracts from their work. Increased membership, new sources of funding, new partners for recreational/educational programs, increased credibility/relevance in the local community are among the many immediate benefits cited. In addition, the likelihood that the local community will want to help protect their lands permanently will also increase. This requires an openness to redefining what constitutes “conservation work” in any given place and time, as well as an organizational commitment to becoming adaptive and responsive over time.

Clearly, making this transition is difficult, taking time, resources and courage, as well as requiring new skills, people and contacts. An increasing number of land trusts, however, are finding that these investments are well worth making in pursuit of their core mission of permanent land protection.

*SECTION V:
HOW CAN OPEN SPACE BE USED TO
BROADEN THE BASE OF
CONSERVATION THROUGH
EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES?*

Educational Uses of Open Space

*Darcy Newsome
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OVERVIEW

Introduction

Young people are the key to the future of the land conservation movement. Fostering an environmental ethic in the next generation is critical to ensuring the permanence of conservation gains. In addition, the physical and mental health of children is improved by exposure to open space.

At the same time, the membership of many conservation organizations depends heavily on older individuals. While such enthusiasts provide a valuable source of support, their efforts need to be connected with those who will one day be responsible for carrying the work forward. Educational uses of open space serve both communities and are becoming an increasingly important part of the mission of the land trust community.

Benefits for conservation

The conservation movement stands to gain much from outreach to the younger generation. Involving youth in the outdoors creates future leaders in open space preservation. Furthermore, stretching the age range of support for conservation assists the overall goal of broadening the base of support, thereby ensuring a more resilient and enduring conservation coalition for decades to come.

Benefits for children

Studies show that children benefit from exposure to nature in significant ways. Cognitive development shows improvement with outdoor play and proximity to green space, as does physical health through exercise. Young people who have access to nature have a great opportunity to grow in ways not available within the confines of man-made structures.

The movement to “Leave No Child Inside”

Recent years have seen a nationwide push to send more children back outside. Partially in response to research showing the benefits of outdoor exposure, initiatives

such as “No Child Left Inside” put nature as a priority in education. Some proponents of these efforts hope that nature will one day hold as high a priority as science and math as part of a balanced and whole education.

BENEFITS FOR CONSERVATION

The conservation movement faces a need to foster the next generation of environmental leaders. The goal of conservation organizations to exist in permanence can only be realized through the cultivation of environmental stewardship ethic in children. Today’s children will develop a connection to nature primarily through experiences connecting with the earth directly (Charles et al.) It is therefore in land trusts’ best interest to take proactive steps to bring young people into contact with nature.

The need to nurture the next generation of leaders is of sufficient importance that it merits a place in organizations’ mission statements. Environmental education, as a core tenet of the conservation agenda, will enable land trusts to develop strategic alliances with national groups such as Boy and Girl Scouts and 4H clubs. Partnerships may also be found in the private sector, as well as with religious leaders, who “recognize that the root of spiritual life is a sense of wonder” (Charles et al.). Direct contact with land significantly impacts environmental attitudes from a young age; indeed, most environmental leaders report having had some significant outdoor experience as a child. Land conservation groups can encourage participation by teenagers through paid internships and award-based incentives, inspiring them toward positions of future environmental leadership.

Some questions for consideration

- 1) To what extent is it important for conservation groups to embrace youth outreach and education as a part of their core missions?
- 2) How can land trusts best build leaders/supporters for the future?
- 3) What can conservation groups do to instill a land ethic in young children? How will this approach differ with older youth?
- 4) What alliances might be formed at the national, regional and local levels with educational and youth organizations?
- 5) What are the risks to land preservation in the U.S. as the population ages and how can environmental education help address those risks?

BENEFITS FOR CHILDREN

Health care experts agree in numerous studies that time spent outdoors is beneficial to children’s physical and mental health. Unfortunately, today’s youth suffers from a drastically reduced ability to play outside as compared to recent generations. In years past, parents enjoyed the freedom to encourage much unsupervised outdoor play among their children; indeed, before television and computers, this was the primary

leisure activity for youth. However, children and adolescents today can easily grow to adulthood with hardly any contact with nature at all (Faber Taylor & Kuo).

Studies show a significant decline in past decades in the time that children are spending outdoors. According to one report, 31 percent of children play outdoors every day, as compared to 70% of their mothers who did so when they were young (Charles et al). Recent years have shown an even greater increase in this trend; between 1997 and 2003, there was a 50% reduction in the proportion of children 9 to 12 who spent time hiking, walking, fishing, gardening and playing on the beach. Clearly, the advent of the internet age has become a significant factor in encouraging children to remain inside. Technology-based entertainment is only one cause of the trend, however. Obesity and attention-deficit disorder can create a self-perpetuating cycle by making children wish to spend more time alone. Fear of strangers also contributed heavily to the end of the era when children would spend hours outside; today, parents prefer to ensure their children's safety in supervised environments. Compounding the problem is a substantial reduction in the amount of unstructured time in children's daily lives. Children today are under increasing pressure to keep every moment scheduled, shuttling from lessons to sports practice. The time that children do spend at home is often devoted to increasingly high homework loads, as schools strive to prepare them for standardized tests. Reduced access to natural areas further distances young people from spending time outdoors. All in all, children today enjoy far less contact with nature than ever before (Ginsburg).

The potential health benefits for increased exposure to nature are substantial. In 2007, *The Nation's Health* reported that the time children spend outdoors has a significant positive effect on reducing obesity and diabetes risk (Charles et al 2008). Children also may experience mental health benefits. Proximity to nature in a child's home area is linked to the development of analytical and evaluative abilities, according to a study by Stephen Kellert of Yale University (Charles et al 2008). This notion is supported by research on the links between attention deficit disorder (ADD) in children and their contact with nature (Taylor et al). Children's ability to cope with ADD was shown to increase with greater exposure to green space, and this effect is amplified in more natural areas such as conserved parkland. Cognitive functioning has also been shown to improve with time spent in nature (Wells).

Some questions for consideration

- 1) Given the prevalence of ADD today, how might research into nature's effect on the disorder be used to leverage support for conservation?
- 2) What can be done to address reduced access to open space by urban children?
- 3) How can conservation groups and children's groups provide young people with opportunities to enjoy green space while accounting for today's busy schedules and fear of strangers?

“Children who played in windowless indoor settings had significantly more severe symptoms than children who played in grassy outdoor spaces with or without trees did.”
Faber Taylor et al., “Coping with ADD: The Surprise Connection to Green Settings”

THE MOVEMENT TO “LEAVE NO CHILD INSIDE”

The movement to get children into nature entered the national spotlight in 2005, when Richard Louv’s *Last Child in the Woods* turned heads. By the time the World Future Society ranked “nature-deficit disorder” as one of the top five most important trends that would shape 2007, movements were beginning to build across the nation. In New Mexico, Washington and California, state legislatures have acted to fund greater outdoor education.

Termed “No Child Left Inside” by a broad coalition of groups, it has been called a national back-to-nature movement, and its members are diverse and highly active. Steps in recent years include the introduction of the “No Child Left Inside Act” in Congress in July 2007 to provide funding for outdoor education in schools, state-based initiatives to bring families to state parks, and the U.S. Forest Service’s “More Kids In The Woods” effort to fund dozens of environmental education projects.

“A shared desire to connect seemingly disparate groups and individuals around the common vision of connecting children to nature can be used to create positive change for the overall community.”—
Children and Nature

Many conservation organizations are already becoming actively involved in these efforts. In 2007, the Sierra Club launched the “Building Bridges to the Outdoors” campaign, bringing 11,500 urban youth out into nature. While examples of such initiatives continue to grow, many land trusts are still working through questions such as: where do our priorities lie between acquisition and stewardship of land? Within our stewardship efforts, where do resource intensive educational initiatives fit? What partnerships might we form to have others organize programs on our land and under what conditions?

Donations and memberships in conservation organizations are fueled by passionate interest in the benefits of preserving open space, and for parents there is little that fuels passion as quickly as a desire to improve the lives of their children. The movement to reconnect children and nature has already gathered an impressive head of steam; it remains up to conservationists to reach out and tap into this energy to ensure that children will be able to enjoy natural places for generations to come.

Some questions for consideration

- 1) What are some of the ways that the land trust community might best engage with the “No Child Left Inside” movement?
- 2) What potential obstacles face efforts to connect children to nature through the preservation and stewardship of open space?
- 3) If, as research shows, having trees close to a child’s home is key to improving cognitive development, how can land trusts help provide access to green space for urban youth?

- 4) When the movement's moment in the spotlight has faded, what can land trusts do to ensure that bringing children into nature continues to benefit both young people and the land preservation movement for years to come?

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Among those doing good work on this issue

Head Start Neighborhood House, Seattle, Washington

Helps immigrant and refugee parents spend time outside with their children.
hookedonnature.org/HeadStartNeighborhoodHouse.html

Sierra Club's Building Bridges to the Outdoors Project

Works with a diverse set of coalition partners to bring young people, many from inner-city neighborhoods, in to the natural world.

www.sierraclub.org/youth/intro.asp

The National Wildlife Federation Green Hour

A national campaign to persuade parents to encourage their children to spend one hour a day in nature.

www.greenhour.org/

The Conservation Fund, National Forum on Children and Nature

Enlists governors, mayors, cabinet secretaries, corporate CEOs, non-government organizations and the business community to work toward the goal of raising visibility for the importance of bringing children into nature. Raises funds and public support for projects nationwide.

www.conservationfund.org/children_nature

Garden Mosaics

Sponsors activities in community gardens, neighborhoods, home and school gardens, and indoors to bring youth and adults into work with sustainable communities and agriculture.

www.gardenmosaics.cornell.edu/index.htm

Environmental Education's Contributions to Broadening Land Trust Goals

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LAND TRUST GOALS AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

In a recent report on strategies for the future of conservation, two answers were offered to the question of when and how land trusts should engage with community groups: “only occasionally, when it helps the land trust achieve its goals on a particular project,” or “all the time, as the land trust builds its credibility and stature as a valued institution in the community” (Gentry et al. 2007). A quick skimming of *Exchange: the Journal of the Land Trust Alliance* reveals a shift in emphasis from the technical aspects of conservation easements and related aspects of land preservation, which dominated articles from 2001-2005, to a broadening discussion about diversity, education, and community outreach within the last several years. A recent article by Soto (2006), for example, suggests that outreach to diverse communities can lead to greater support for land trust projects, stronger ties to the community, and a deeper understanding of the why of conservation, as well as healthier vibrant communities in which land protection lasts.

As land trusts both seek wider support for their mission and engage in discussions about their role in the larger community, they are increasingly looking at the potential of environmental education (EE). Whereas EE may include education about land trusts, which can be important in helping sometimes hostile audiences understand the conservation and economic benefits of preserved land, we focus largely on EE directed at children in this article. Such EE can play a role in reaching internal land trust goals, as when the positive publicity surrounding a field trip of school children to a preserve results in increased membership and donations (Wilson 2006). When designed according to research-derived principles about factors that lead to environmentally responsible citizens, EE also can help create a new generation of conservationists. Further, EE can contribute to more immediate conservation goals when it becomes part of volunteer “civic ecology” practices, such as the

engagement of citizens in invasive species removal and other aspects of preserve stewardship. However, research suggests that different approaches to EE will have different outcomes, both for the children and for the broader community. Thus, in becoming involved in EE, land trusts should clearly define their own goals and then identify EE practices that are most likely to help them attain those goals. In this paper, we explore several potential EE approaches that could be used by land trusts, and their possible outcomes both in terms of the land trust and broader community. In so doing, we present results from EE research that has relevance for the future of the land trust movement.

YEARLY SCHOOL FIELD TRIPS TO LAND TRUST PRESERVES

Many land trusts host school field trips, where classrooms visit a preserve once a year to learn about birds, frogs, trees, and other aspects of natural history. Such programs often bring high visibility and even financial donations to the land trust as photographs of these events appear in local newspapers (Wilson 2006). In a recent article in the *Chronicle of Philanthropy*, a director of an Indiana land trust commented about a field trip program:

The program has created buzz about the land trust, which has attracted attention and donors interested in educational opportunities. Also . . . the program is helping to cultivate the next generation of land-trust supporters.

There may be some direct benefit in the short term in money raised or some land saved because someone heard about us. But the real payoff will come 50 years from now. It sounds so cliché to say, but investing in kids – introducing them to these unique and beautiful places – is investing in the people who will be making the decisions about our land and how our environment will look in the future. (Blum 2008)

But do once-a-year field trips result in children becoming future conservationists? A body of research on “significant life experiences” reveals that the most important factor cited by adults who are environmental professionals or otherwise engaged in pro-environmental behaviors is *repeated* time spent in nature, often in the presence of a caring adult (Chawla and Cummings 2007). Similarly, research evaluating environmental education programs has shown that whereas short programs of one day may help children master concepts, especially if they are connected to the school curriculum (*i.e.*, include pre- and post-field trip classroom activities), programs lasting several days or repeated experiences in nature are critical to changing students’ environmental behaviors (Peacock 2006, Rickinson 2001). This is not to discount the value of one-time field trips for kids; they may play a role in supporting the school science curriculum and are important as one of a number of nature experiences for children. Rather the point is that once-a-year, short-term experiences in nature, taken in isolation of other nature-based activities, are not enough if our goal is for children to adopt more environmentally responsible behaviors or to become future conservationists.

FACILITATING REPEATED EXPOSURE TO NATURE

My own experience as a child confirms what the EE research suggests – it was repeated exposure to nature with family and other caring adults that had an impact on my commitment to conservation. Land trusts are in an ideal position to facilitate such ongoing exposure to nature, by opening up their properties to visitors, and by encouraging families, classrooms, as well as participants in big brother/big sister, 4-H, and other programs that pair youth with caring adults to take advantage of local opportunities to spend time in nature. Because they are widely distributed across the landscape, land trust properties can provide opportunities for repeated exposure to nature for a large segment of the population. Urban land trusts can similarly provide opportunities for repeated exposure to nature, through the community gardens, pocket parks, and similar properties they maintain, often within walking distance from where children are living.

Whereas many land trusts already allow access to their properties, I am suggesting that they go one step further by actively encouraging and promoting such access. This can be done through building trails and advertising opportunities for visiting their properties in brochures, articles in school newsletters, talks with youth group leaders, and information on websites. Such informational efforts can also include resources on how spending time in nature helps parents and community members to meet their own goals. For example, websites can mention the importance of ongoing contact with nature in creating the future conservationists needed to help ensure local and global ecosystem health. They can link to the extensive information about the physical and psychological benefits of exposure to nature. They might also link to EE websites that suggest nature activities for families visiting natural areas. Or they might show how nature education can support science education in schools, and encourage teachers to incorporate research or monitoring on land trust properties into science projects.

Land trusts will need to limit visitation to those preserves where visitors do not negatively impact sensitive habitats and rare species; however, many land trusts have significant holdings with less sensitive habitat where they can encourage wider use by community members. Encouraging visitation, and thus making it more obvious how preserves benefit the broader community, can help build local support for land trusts, including for the tax exempt status granted to preserve properties.

FOSTERING CONSERVATION BEHAVIORS

As visits to preserves increase one can expect further benefits to land trusts. These benefits have to do with fostering conservation behaviors among children and adult visitors. Such behaviors may immediately benefit a land trust through expanding the number of volunteers engaged in habitat enhancement and similar stewardship activities. Further, though fostering positive environmental and conservation behaviors among youth, both now and as they mature into adults, land trusts can help ensure their own future and the sustainability of their properties. In so doing, land trusts will also address the most important goal of EE as set forth in the

landmark Tbilisi Declaration (UNESCO 1976), *i.e.*, increasing environmentally responsible behaviors.

Several lines of research suggest that repeated visits to preserves will lead to volunteer engagement in conservation behaviors, which in turn will result in learning and future commitment to conservation. Studies of place attachment, including place dependence (use of an area for recreational and other needs) and place identity (feeling an emotional connection to a place), suggest that people who spend time in nature develop emotional ties to their local ecosystems, and are much more likely to engage in environmental behaviors (Vaske and Kobrin 2001). Although the research on environmentally responsible behaviors tends to focus on actions like recycling, saving water, and advocating for environmental issues, one might expect that conservation behaviors related to actual management of natural resources would also increase as a result of spending time at a preserve and developing place attachment. For example, we can expect that families who have spent time hiking in a preserve will develop place attachment (to the preserve) and be more apt to participate in an invasive species removal day, as compared to families who have never visited the preserve. Thus, whereas land trusts may feel threatened by the prospect of increasing numbers of visitors to their properties, they can also view visitation as an asset. Land trusts can capitalize on visitors, including children, by further engaging them in conservation activities.

Although conservation non-profits often separate opportunities for EE from opportunities for volunteering, recent educational research suggests that participation in volunteer conservation activities is an effective means of education and learning (Peacock 2006). According to “situated learning” theory, the context or situation in which learning takes place is critical to what children learn (Rogoff *et al* 2003). Thus, “situating” conservation learning in conservation practice, such as planting trees to attract desirable wildlife, or stewardship that involves observing and reporting changes in bird species on a preserve, is important. Young people may join the adult volunteers who are already engaged in such activities. The children will start off as observers of a particular conservation practice, but quickly move to becoming “peripheral” or partial participants alongside the adult volunteers. Eventually, through continuing their engagement with an adult conservation “community of practice,” children become full fledged participants, having mastered the skills needed to plant trees or monitor a preserve.

In addition to situated learning theory, retrospective studies of the experiences of adult environmentalists would suggest that active engagement in conservation will lead to future conservation behaviors. The fact that wildlife population monitoring, habitat enhancement, and similar conservation activities occur over an extended period of time and under the guidance of adult role models suggests that they will be effective in producing future conservationists. A study of urban residents revealed that active participation in environmentally-related behaviors through gardening and tree planting, as opposed to more passive observation of nature, predicted active participation in nature as an adult (Lohr and Pearson-Mims 2006). In a study of adults belonging to conservation organizations, perceived level of skill in using

environmental action strategies, environmental sensitivity (which similar to place attachment develops through contact with nature over an extended period), and locus of control were important predictors of environmentally responsible behaviors (Sivek and Hungerford 1989/90). A program in which young people actively engage in nature through monitoring and restoring local habitat can be expected to foster such environmental skills and environmental sensitivity. Further, seeing the positive outcomes of their work, and that their actions make a difference to the community and ecosystem, would lead to locus of control. Youth who are unable to carry their environmental action projects to fruition may feel disempowered. On the other hand, youth who can see people using a trail they have built, or native species they have planted thriving where invasive species once dominated, will feel that they have made important contributions to their larger community. Such feelings of self-worth and accomplishment will encourage youth to become further engaged in conservation.

CONSERVATION EDUCATION AND DIVERSITY

As part of their efforts to maintain public support for conservation, as well as to contribute more broadly to community well-being and sustainability, land trusts also are examining their role in an increasingly more culturally and ethnically diverse society. William Cronon has written widely about the ties between nature and culture, including in a recent issue of *Exchange* where he talks about the connection of rural, urban, and agricultural land trusts to long-held cultural views in US society. Other recent *Exchange* articles speak about the broadening diversity of the land trust movement as witnessed by the growing number of urban land trusts, by preserves that incorporate cultural features such as historic Hispanic churches in New Mexico and archeological sites in Hawaii, and by the Black Family Farm Land Trust in the Southeast (Soto 2006).

What role can education play in integrating cultural and ethnic diversity into the land trust movement? Garden Mosaics, an environmental education program that links children with elder community gardeners in cities across North America, provides one model for how land trust education programs can incorporate diversity (Krasny *et al* 2006). Community gardeners represent the diversity of city dwellers in the US. African-American retirees, who grew up on farms in southern states and migrated to northeastern cities for work, are reconnecting to their farming roots and sharing with city youth their rural heritage by growing cotton, okra, and other southern crops. In the Bronx, Mexican-American and Puerto Rican community gardeners build small casitas, in which they play dominoes and cook traditional dishes flavored with garden herbs. And Laotian refugees in Sacramento grow a diversity of foot-long and other beans, eggplants, and squashes from Southeast Asia. Through Garden Mosaics, youth in after-school and summer camp programs venture into these gardens, some of which are protected by urban land trusts, and all of which integrate culture and nature. There they work alongside the elder gardeners, and interview the gardeners about the connections between plants and their cultural heritage. Urban land trusts wishing to incorporate EE into their portfolio could use

the Garden Mosaics educational materials, which have been designed so that they can be adapted to multiple learning and cultural conservation settings.

In our work at Cornell, we have coined the term “civic ecology” to describe the theory and practice of multiple stakeholder engagement in natural resources management that integrates cultural, civic, and environmental values (Tidball and Krasny 2007). Similarly, we use the term “civic ecology education” to describe learning that occurs when young people work alongside adults engaged in conservation, such as the community gardeners described above. Our work has been largely in cities, where because of the diversity of the adult community gardeners, youth can work alongside role models who represent diverse cultures and ethnicities. In exurban and other communities, where youth are similarly diverse but there may be fewer adults of different ethnicities volunteering in conservation projects, a slightly different approach may be needed. For example, land trusts that employ youth in summer work programs might hold community days, in which they invite families to learn about their children’s contributions, while also encouraging the parents and grandparents to share their own childhood stories of farming and engagement with nature. Efforts to include low-income youth may need to include financial incentives, such as paying young people through partnering with a county summer youth employment program. The land trust community may want to further explore how a civic ecology approach to incorporating cultural, civic, and environmental values into land management and education might meet help to increase the diversity of conservationists.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Following are some recommendations about how EE might help land trusts might meet their own goals.

1. *Be explicit about what goals you are trying to reach through your EE program.* It is fine to use EE to address land trust publicity and development goals through one-time programs, but don’t expect such programs to lead immediately to environmental or conservation behaviors.
2. *Longer-term programs lead to more significant participant impacts.* Land trusts that open up their holdings and foster public visits throughout the year will be contributing to a growing children and nature movement, which espouses the psychological and physical health benefits of exposure to nature on an ongoing basis.
3. *Encouraging community members to visit preserves can lead to multiple benefits for land trusts.* These include public support as well as building a volunteer conservation community of practice that helps with preserve stewardship activities.
4. *Incorporating opportunities for youth to participate in stewardship activities and to see the positive outcomes of their work addresses EE and preserve management goals.* Youth who participate in conservation communities of practice develop environmental and conservation behaviors.

5. *Incorporating cultural values into EE and conservation can help programs reach out to diverse audiences.* Cultural and ethnic diversity goals can be addressed through EE programs in which youth and adults of diverse backgrounds learn and work together, as well as through addressing the financial and other goals of young people.

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Engaging Latinos in Land Conservation and Open Space: Experiences in Northeast Los Angeles

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INTRODUCTION

Despite a limited amount of research on Latinos and land conservation, there is growing consensus in the field regarding their strong conservation ethic. There is also a sense of urgency about finding effective pathways to engage this large and politically significant population with which the traditional land conservation movement has little familiarity.

The premise of this paper is that effective engagement of low-income communities of color in land conservation requires 1) a thorough understanding of the culture and history of a particular group coupled with 2) an analysis of the socio-economic context in which the group currently operates. This understanding and analysis should drive the strategy for the engagement process, including the prioritization of relevant land conservation projects or educational programs as well as the development of corresponding goals, objectives and tactics.

The geographic focus of this document is Northeast Los Angeles, a predominately Latino community located 5 miles from downtown Los Angeles. After a description of this community, this paper examines barriers to land conservation and presents a model of urban conservation. This paper concludes with a case study of one recent effort to engage Latino residents of Northeast Los Angeles in land conservation and lessons learned from this initiative.

While the term Latino(s) is used here to refer collectively to the U.S.-born Mexican-Americans or Chicanos and more recently-arrived immigrants from Mexico or Central America who live in Northeast LA, it would be unwise to consider these diverse sub-groups as one when developing programs for these populations. This paper and the efforts described herein recognize the heterogeneity of this population in terms of life experience, generational status, level of acculturation and language dominance among other socio-demographic factors.

NORTHEAST LOS ANGELES

According to Los Angeles Planning Department statistics, there are approximately 260,000 people living in the 24 square miles of Northeast Los Angeles. Sixty seven percent (67%) of the population is Latino. At 16%, Asian-Americans/Pacific Islanders are the second largest segment of the population. Whites comprise 13% of the population and African Americans 2% (City of Los Angeles Census 2000). Approximately 20% of the residents of Northeast LA have incomes below the federal poverty level (City of Los Angeles Census 2000). Almost half of the population is foreign born and 80% speak a language other than English (City of Los Angeles Census 2000).

Jan Lin, a sociology professor at Occidental College, describes the communities of Northeast Los Angeles as having been on the decline for a number of years and “challenged by a number of protracted social problems. These include an overcrowded and deteriorated housing stock, economic decline along its major commercial corridors, crime and gang activity, academic failure, child abuse and neglect, teenage pregnancy and a variety of public health and environmental quality issues . . . [T]hese communities of Northeast Los Angeles display the range of characteristics commonly associated with ‘inner city’ or declining urban areas. Despite the presence of a number of human assets and community resources . . . Northeast Los Angeles is a rather ‘invisible’ part of the metropolis in terms of public perception, media coverage and political representation” (Lin).

While this densely populated and highly urbanized area is surrounded by five freeways, it is also endowed with significant natural resources. The Los Angeles River separates Northeast Los Angeles from Chinatown and downtown to the south. Heading northeast from the confluence, the Arroyo Seco tributary traverses the area’s historic core, home to the first suburbs of the City. Other important natural resources located in Northeast LA are its iconic hillsides which constitute some of the last privately-owned, undeveloped open space in Los Angeles.

BARRIERS TO LAND CONSERVATION

Exclusionary land use processes

Marginalized by their socio-economic status, discrimination, and institutional bias, people of color and immigrants in the United States have historically been relegated to live in blighted, industrialized neighborhoods with few commercial or public amenities, including parks and open space (Yanez and Muzzy). Moreover, in the *barrios* of Los Angeles and throughout the Southwest, Latinos have historically paid the price of systemic and structural neglect by municipal land use and planning bureaucracies. Institutional racism and elitism has resulted in institutional practices that generally have excluded low-income Latino communities from decision-making on land use, redevelopment and planning issues, including the distribution and placement of parks and open space. Regressive land use and planning policy has negatively impacted the economic and health conditions of low-income, Latino

communities; in some instances, it has led to the physical destruction of vibrant, intact neighborhoods (Diaz).

There are many examples of how the protracted history of discriminatory land use and planning practices continues to impact Latino communities in Los Angeles. The low-income residents of Northeast LA who live in the neighborhoods adjacent to the River and the hillside open spaces have only recently become active in the complex processes that regulate development. Consequently, these neighborhoods have not benefited from the type of land use policies that more affluent neighborhoods have effectively utilized over the years as an important adjunct to land conservation efforts. Recent efforts by Northeast residents to regulate poorly planned or speculative hillside development through traditional planning tools has been met with resistance from powerful development interests and little enthusiasm from a planning bureaucracy with few mechanisms for connecting to the community.⁵

Park and open space inequities

In the dense, built-out metropolis of Los Angeles, land conservation efforts oftentimes involve revitalization of compromised natural resources like the LA River and amelioration of the severe inequities in the distribution of parks and open space. According to the Trust for Public Land, more than 2.6 million Angelenos do not live within a quarter mile of a park facility (Yanez & Muzzy). Researchers at the University of Southern California have documented these deep-rooted inequities in Los Angeles' poor, majority-minority neighborhoods. To say that these areas have fewer parks and open space amenities compared to other more affluent neighborhoods is a stark understatement. While Los Angeles has 7.3 parks per 1,000 residents overall, communities that are predominately Latino have 1.6 acres per 1,000 residents; Asian-Americans/Pacific Islanders have 1.2 acres park acres and African American neighborhoods 0.8 park acres per 1,000 residents. In contrast, predominately White neighborhoods enjoy 17.4 park acres per 1,000 residents (Wolch).

Given the severe disparities in parks and open space in urban settings with growing immigrant communities, it is also important to recognize that Latinos bring new perspectives and uses for open spaces in their communities. James Rojas, a Los Angeles-based planner and founder of the Latino Urban Forum, has observed that Latinos who live in dense communities with little accessible park or open space are retrofitting urban spaces on their own to meet varied social, community and economic needs, including waiting for work, gardening, or exercising. Rojas notes that while few understand the nuances involved in effectively conserving land for varying uses within the Latino community, this phenomena is unfolding to bring community members together in a positive and proactive way (Rojas).

Traditional conservation institutions

The ability to conserve land through the acquisition process is concentrated in a small number of government agencies and non-profit organizations that have the requisite technical skills in real estate, law, project planning and design, construction,

⁵ The Northeast Hillside Interim Control Ordinance was enacted by the Los Angeles City Council on December 10, 2006 as a temporary measure to impose regulation over hillside development. Residents have advocated for more permanent regulations, in the form of a specific plan, to minimize environmental impacts of hillside development.

revitalization or restoration, and in some cases ongoing operations and maintenance. Undoubtedly, the land conservation work undertaken by these institutions has been far reaching and of the utmost environmental value. And yet, with notable exceptions, the land conservation movement has had minimal involvement in urban conservation efforts in poor neighborhoods populated by Latinos, African Americans, and other racial/ethnic groups.

This lack of involvement should be examined elsewhere in more detail since it is difficult to move forward effective engagement strategies without a clear understanding and acknowledgment of past practices as well as their impact on underserved communities and the relationships between conservation organizations and these communities. Understandably, lack of interaction can often be interpreted by organizations working in communities of color as indifference to their community and interests. In other cases, lack of interaction can stem from a history marked by poor communication and/or conflict. Regardless of the specific history, rigorous self-reflection by mainstream organizations which have had little involvement in communities of color coupled with outreach by leadership level staff is likely to be respected by groups working therein, opening the door to the possibility of future dialogue and collaboration.

The mainstream approach to land conservation naturally reflects the cultural values of its primary constituency, which is for the most part White, well-educated and affluent. Inherent in this approach is a fairly consistent vision that prioritizes the preservation of significant landscapes with ecological, scenic, and/or historic value. The traditional approach to conservation does not generally incorporate a socio-economic analysis that explores the intersection of race, class, power and conservation. Nor does it prioritize a social or environmental justice agenda – which often takes a back seat in the operations of traditional groups but clearly informs the conservation interests of people of color denied access to environmental amenities by virtue of their poverty or low-income status.

This divergence in vision and values may explain why there have been so few people of color occupying higher level leadership positions in mainstream land conservation organizations or sitting on their boards of directors. It may also explain the reluctance of most non-profit conservation entities to get involved in the land use decision-making processes that serve as a defacto barrier to conservation in marginalized urban communities. Finally, a vision that does not acknowledge or address the fundamental needs of the poor and people of color may explain why many traditional conservation groups do not have the capacity to undertake effective and culturally-relevant outreach, education and organizing for land conservation projects in these communities.

Public finance

Unfortunately, the public funding required for acquiring, developing and maintaining land for urban parks and open space remains difficult to come by, especially in distressed communities. Funding for land conservation projects in Los Angeles depends upon the regular infusion of conservation finance funds generated

at the local or state level through public finance measures. Los Angeles City and County conservation finance measures passed in the early and mid-90's have helped keep local land conservation projects afloat throughout the region.⁶ The most recent local measure that has benefited parks and open space in Los Angeles provides capital dollars for storm water treatment projects.⁷

Statewide natural resource bonds provide local communities regular infusions of funding to sustain conservation efforts throughout California. Crafted and promoted by mainstream conservation groups, the money generated by these voter initiative funding measures is generally directed to traditional conservation projects located in non-urban settings. Out of the \$5.6 billion generated by Proposition 84 – the Clean Water, Parks and Coastal Protection Act, the most recent natural resources bond measure, \$400 million was specifically designated for local and regional parks. Two years after passage, that money has yet to be allocated by the legislature.

Private funding

There has been limited investment by foundations in urban conservation or building organizational infrastructure and capacity in those communities most affected by the aforementioned barriers and inequities. Re-granting programs have made short-term investments in community-based organizations to build support for land conservation in Los Angeles' Latino communities. However, some grantees have expressed concerns that the external political agendas of these programs divert energies rather than provide the resources and technical assistance required to engage low-income people of color in land conservation for the long term.

PROGRESS IN CONSERVATION

Despite the many barriers to land conservation facing low-income, communities of color in Los Angeles, there has been an upswing in park creation and open space preservation by local and state agencies and organizations including the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy, the Trust for Public Land and the Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust. Local, non-profit environmental groups have instituted educational programming on urban ecosystems in these communities. Described in more detail below, NRDC and other environmental law firms assisted Northeast Los Angeles residents in a complex land use matter.

Together, the revitalization activities along the Los Angeles River, new urban park initiatives, expanded educational programming and controversial land use battles have increased public awareness of the conservation challenges and opportunities in these underserved communities.

There is an important correlation between the expansion of conservation activities in Los Angeles' low-income communities of color and the increasing numbers of Latino elected officials at the local, state and national levels who were born and raised therein. It is noteworthy that many of these elected officials frame conservation of land for parks and open space as quality of life rather than environmental or

⁶ Los Angeles County voters enacted Proposition A, the Safe Neighborhood Parks Proposition, in 1992, generating \$540 million dollars for parks and open space; voters provided an additional \$319 million when they voted for Proposition A again in 1996. Los Angeles City voters enacted Proposition K-LA for Kids Program, in 1996, creating a 30 year citywide assessment district that generates \$25,000,000 each year.

⁷ Los Angeles City voters enacted Proposition O in November 2004 creating \$500 million for storm water improvement projects, including projects that will increase water conservation, habitat protection, and open space.

conservation issues. Complementing the efforts of elected officials are the growing number of Latino professionals working in leadership positions at local conservation agencies as well as the increased involvement of community-based organizations representing the interests of Latinos and other racial/ethnic groups in land conservation projects and issues.

LEARNING FROM OTHERS

The conservation community has the opportunity to learn from the experiences of others who understand the importance of meaningfully engaging with diverse cultural groups as part of their work. In the public health arena, for example, there is a growing body of knowledge that has resulted from government and foundation funding of research on and evaluation of health interventions in low-income communities of color. This knowledge base provides important evidence-based strategies and practices.

Capacity building and civic engagement are considered key elements of successful health interventions in communities of color. Effective capacity building and civic engagement require adequate investment in: developing organizational infrastructure in these communities; community organizing and coalition building; and provision of relevant technical support or assistance. Effective initiatives in low-income communities of color build upon an understanding of impact of race and poverty on health status as well as community strengths and assets (Policy Link 2002, 2007; Lafronza).

Further, deepening knowledge of the social and physical factors that shape health has translated into an upsurge of advocacy to improve the safety and accessibility of built and natural environments. Health professionals are coming to appreciate how profoundly access to parks and open space, for example, can modify health behaviors, like physical activity, that can in turn influence health outcomes. In this process, health professionals and advocates are striving to become educated about land use planning, terminology and leverage points. Increasingly, health policy advocates are branching out into new domains and this creates a window of opportunity for collaboration between health advocates, environmentalists and community stakeholders interested in advancing inter-related goals (Mikkelsen).

A JUSTICE/EQUITY MODEL OF URBAN CONSERVATION

The urban conservation model presented in Figures 1 and 2 visually conveys a justice or equity approach to working on urban conservation issues in low-income communities of color. It was developed by the author, Director of the Audubon Center at Debs Park. The Center is an urban environmental education center located in a large regional park in Northeast LA. The model reflects the author's previous work in public health and was influenced by perspectives offered by the Audubon Center's Master Teacher Naturalist, Jeff Chapman, and the work of the Center for Whole Communities.

Figure 1 depicts the ‘where,’ ‘what’ and ‘how’ of the Center’s work. From a natural resources standpoint, the Center is located on the Arroyo Seco tributary which connects it to the Los Angeles River and, by extension, the broader Los Angeles watershed. This positioning provides the Center a range of conservation issues to work on, from water quality to habitat protection, and from ecological restoration to hillside preservation.

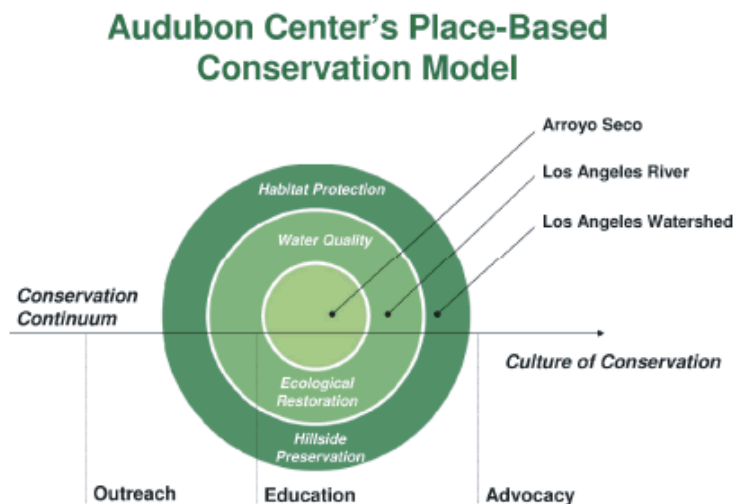


Figure 1

The horizontal line that cross-cuts the diagram represents the ‘conservation continuum’ or the incremental process of community change that results in a culture of conservation. In this context, community change includes revised social norms and behavior as codified by direct conservation action or achievements as well as environmental policy change. The ‘how’ is the work of the Center and involves three broad types of interaction that encourage constituents along the continuum – including outreach and organizing, school-based and community educational programs, and opportunities for advocacy action on public policy matters.

Figure 2 depicts the underlying, value-driven approach to the Center’s outreach, education and advocacy work. In order to have meaning and significance, this work must be culturally relevant, language accessible and equity-focused to address the social, economic, health and other needs of the target audience. As a community change agent, the Center strives to work at the intersection of the underserved neighborhoods located within a 2 mile radius of Debs Park; the social justice issues facing these groups; and, the relevant environmental concerns of this community.

Value-Driven Approach to Environmental Outreach, Education and Advocacy

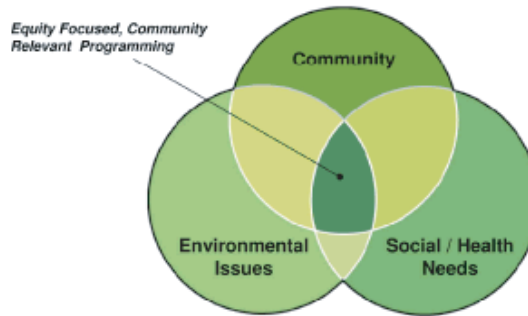


Figure 2

CASE STUDY: ELEPHANT HILL

Since the 1980's, residents of El Sereno have opposed Tract 35022, a controversial development of 24 luxury homes on 110-acre Elephant Hill. Elephant Hill is the largest unprotected hillside open space remaining in Northeast LA; it is made up of hundreds of privately-owned lots. Ironically, Elephant Hill surrounds neighborhoods that have less than one acre of parkland per 1,000 residents.⁸ El Sereno is a predominately Latino, working-class community that shares many of the characteristics of Northeast Los Angeles described above.

⁸ Park equity data provided by Marybeth Vergara of the Trust for Public Land, Los Angeles. 2007. <http://www.preventioninstitute.org/sa/pdf/RWJNC.pdf>



Elephant Hill - March 2006

Opposition to Tract 35022 originally focused on the very old and incomplete Environmental Impact Report (EIR) that did not address the area's unstable soil, an underground stream and other environmental impacts on residents and natural resources. When the vested tract map was approved by the City in 1992 residents were

not aware of their legal options under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) nor did they have the resources to undertake such a challenge. The development did not move forward, however, due to a recession and a downturn in the real estate market.

In August 2003, after receiving 11 years of plan extensions, Tract 35022 was sold to a new owner who began moving the project forward for approval of the final tract map. In January 2004, after learning about the renewed project, a group of residents canvassed the neighborhoods surrounding the hillside and found widespread opposition to the development. Residents concerns now included the old EIR, increased traffic and pollution, insufficient infrastructure, gentrification, habitat destruction and loss of open space. Without knowledge of land use planning, development or conservation, these residents initiated a grassroots organizing campaign in opposition to the development. The campaign garnered significant support among residents in El Sereno and greater Northeast Los Angeles.

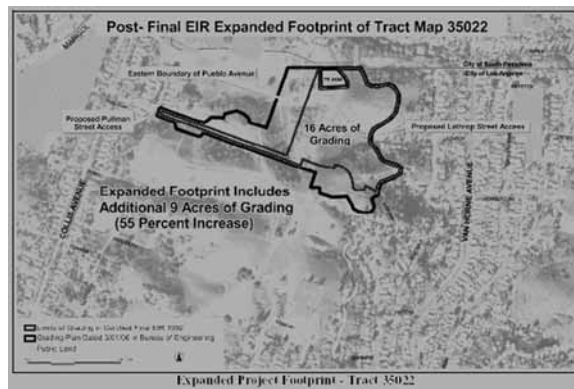
In early July 2004, when it was clear that the developer was not going to meet his conditions of approval prior to the deadline, he sued the City of Los Angeles. The Engineering Department expedited the outstanding approvals and the City Council subsequently approved the final map for Tract 35022 upon recommendation of the City Attorney. Despite this set back, residents continued to monitor the project and document conditions over the next 21 months. Then, on April 14, 2006 – Good Friday – workers installing fencing around Tract 35022 created a large sinkhole with their backhoe near the underground stream causing flooding.



By this point in time, organizers had established relationships with many of the mainstream environmental and environmental justice organizations in Los Angeles. Working with open space advocates from other communities, they had also made open space a campaign issue in the 2005 City Council election for District 14 which covers El Sereno. Newly elected Councilmember Jose Huizar's platform included

support for more parks and open space as well as the Northeast LA land use policy mentioned at the start of this paper.

In May 2006 resident organizers learned through a public records request that the developer had added newly-acquired, adjacent parcels into his project plans. This resulted in a 55% expansion of Tract 35022, going from 16 to 25 acres of land. The organizers began building an informal, but broad-based coalition of environmental, environmental justice and community-based organizations, and initiated a grassroots policy advocacy campaign to secure a Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) for Tract 35022.



The campaign's leadership team included a resident organizer, who by then had been hired by the Audubon Center at Debs Park, and representatives from NRDC; the Santa Monica Mountain Conservancy; Chatten-Brown & Carstens, a private law firm; the Latino Urban Forum, an emerging organization focusing on land use policy and quality of life issues like parks and open space; and Green LA, a pan-environmental coalition. Technical support was provided by other policy, conservation and legal experts as well.

In November 2006, Councilmember Jose Huizar responded to the coalition leadership's request for support and introduced a motion calling for additional environmental review of this problematic development. Although conserving Elephant Hill's open space was a priority for most involved in this effort, strategy dictated that the primary campaign issue was securing the SEIR.

From January to October 2007, campaign organizers mobilized El Sereno residents, coalition members and the broader Northeast LA, environmental and environmental justice communities to write letters, make calls and turn out a consistently strong public presence at 10 public hearings on this complex land use policy matter. The campaign provided the support needed by Councilmember Huizar and other Council allies to persuade the full Council to disregard planning and engineering staff recommendations and require an SEIR from the developer of Tract 35022.

On October 24, 2007, in a 13-0 vote, the Los Angeles City Council required a Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) for Tract 35022.⁹ This land use policy victory ensured:

⁹ See Los Angeles City Council File 04-1413 for Council documents and actions concerning Tract 35022. Website address: <http://cityclerk.lacity.org/CFI/DisplayOnlineDocument.cfm?SRT=D1&cfnum=04-1413> u

- Public safety through examination of all relevant environmental factors associated with the expanded project and new information regarding an underground stream that was not addressed in the original EIR;
- Equitable environmental protections under the law for El Sereno residents from the City agencies responsible for land use and development in Los Angeles.

The lawsuit filed by the developer against the City of Los Angeles for not issuing the building permits for Tract 35022 is pending. Four El Sereno residents and the Latino Urban Forum intervened in this lawsuit; NRDC and Chatten-Brown & Carstens are representing these plaintiffs.

STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

The Elephant Hill campaign benefited from experienced resident organizers, dedicated technical support from outside experts and other key strategies and tactics summarized here:

- Local grassroots base – relationships and credibility developed early on through door-to-door organizing
- Diverse coalition – required time, energy and pre-existing relationships
- Consensus-based decision-making – small, cohesive and skilled leadership team
- Relevant policy goals and objectives – strategic, clearly articulated and achievable
- Strong champion – campaign issues and timing influenced support
- Strategic, professional and positive communications – stakeholders regularly updated and messengers strategically selected and deployed
- Finely-balanced political tactics – insider negotiations vs. grassroots mobilizations
- Effectively countered opposition tactics
- Technical assistance from local, state and national organizations

LESSONS LEARNED

Land use conflicts are a barrier to open space conservation in low-income communities of color in Los Angeles

While proactive land acquisition is a preferable approach to conservation, there isn't enough money available for urban projects to avoid conservation-related land use battles. Other struggles of this kind include the Cornfields and the South Central Farm. The community's land use victory that saved 32 acres of land known as the

Cornfields from being developed for warehouses led to acquisition and creation of the Los Angeles State Historic Park. Unfortunately, the heroic efforts to conserve the 14 acres of industrial land transformed by immigrant Latinos into a South LA urban agricultural oasis did not succeed.

The significant support for both land use equity and conservation in low-income Latino communities deserves further study

The residents who live next to Elephant Hill understand gentrification and the implications of developing million dollar homes in their working class neighborhood. Residents who were offended that they were not receiving equitable services from the agencies responsible for land use and development also had had significant concerns about the potential loss of hillside open space and the habitat in their neighborhood. The strategic value of linking land use equity and conservation issues should be explored further, especially in light of the other inspiring land use campaigns described above. Additionally, land use equity issues have significance for environmental justice and community-based organizations, groups that should be involved in all urban conservation efforts and are essential to building broad-based coalitions. Funding local land use organizing projects with a focus on building community capacity and providing technical assistance would be a good place to begin this work.

Direct organizing and grassroots campaigns are effective strategies for engaging Latino residents and building bridges with mainstream environmental groups

House-to-house outreach by neighbors who care about their community is a powerful and effective methodology for engaging communities like El Sereno. Grassroots campaigns provide hope and opportunities to meaningfully involve concerned residents who live in communities that are held back by the social problems described previously. Dynamic campaigns with the potential to effect significant change in low-income communities of color capture the hearts and minds of local residents as well as those living in other kinds of neighborhoods and working in other sectors. The Cornfields, South Central Farm and Elephant Hill demonstrate that these kinds of campaigns have the capacity to bring together residents of low-income and more affluent communities, traditional environmental groups as well as community-based organizations with social and environmental justice agendas.

Building action teams composed of resident-organizers and specialists in conservation and other relevant fields is an effective strategy for campaigns waged in Latino communities with limited resources

The most recent Elephant Hill campaign was led by a collegial, well-functioning team made up of organizers, conservation planning specialists, and lawyers who had developed relationships and trust prior to the campaign. Consequently they were able to focus their attention exclusively on developing and implementing a strategic policy campaign and deploying their skills and expertise in an efficient and effective

manner. Experiences in the public health arena demonstrate that technical assistance from outside experts can significantly improve the opportunities for success of community-based initiatives. Much like a domino effect, as successes are won, resident groups and community-based organizations are able to share lessons learned and help build the grassroots capacity for future efforts.

Relevant models of social change and adequate resource investment are required to reap the benefits of civic engagement and capacity building in low-income communities of color for the long term

While the Elephant Hill coalition won a significant victory, the lack of dedicated funding did not allow the campaign to formalize the strong support for land use equity and conservation demonstrated by residents. In order to harness untapped Latino support for conservation into meaningful long-term civic engagement, it is essential to develop strategic initiatives based on specific models of social change and invest adequate, multi-year funding for: building institutional infrastructure; increasing community capacity; and, engaging in grassroots organizing and public education campaigns. This author learned from work in philanthropy and the public health arena that offering small, short term grants or stipends to organizations operating in communities of color is not an effective approach to create robust and mutually beneficial bridges between mainstream issues and non-traditional partners.

Messaging must frame for relevance and communications techniques must be community compatible

The messaging for Elephant Hill campaign waged in 2004 reflected the concerns articulated by residents including gentrification, excessive traffic and pollution, environmental degradation and public safety concerns. Public education materials were developed in English and Spanish and distributed door-to-door and at house meetings; articles about the campaign were also placed in the local monthly newspaper. In 2006, this messaging was adapted for a new campaign and policy goals, and focused on securing equal environmental protections for El Sereno residents. Because most of the residents who live in the neighborhoods surrounding Elephant Hill do not have or regularly use email, campaign updates and action alerts were disseminated door-to-door. One campaign volunteer produced large posters notifying residents of upcoming hearings and posted them at strategic intersections. Communications to the broader coalition, mainstream supporters and the general public were conducted via email blasts. While it took a long time to get the media's attention, the story was first picked up by an alternative newspapers followed by mainstream newspapers, including *the Los Angeles Times* and the *Daily News*, and Spanish-language *La Opinion*.

CONCLUSIONS

Broadening the base of support for open space offers a unique opportunity to meaningfully activate the strong conservation ethic of Latino communities by

focusing on the social determinants of park and open space inequities in these and other communities of color. Aside from voting on conservation finance measures, those who are most affected by these inequities have little voice in deciding where and how conservation resources are distributed. In order to engage those historically excluded from participating in conservation planning and decision-making there must be a willingness to develop more effective partnerships and formulate new approaches. These collaborations and initiatives must transcend previous models that vested primary responsibility and funding for land conservation in a well-established network of private organizations and government agencies.

Effective and sustainable diversification strategies necessitate engaging multiple fields and nontraditional organizations in activities to promote conservation as well as acknowledging the root causes of environmental inequities including but not limited to race, income and educational attainment. By definition, these strategies must involve the sharing of power and resources. Sharing power and resources translates into making long-term investments in building viable institutional infrastructure and capacity in these communities through civic engagement, policy change, community organizing, coalition building, and public education. By sharing power and resources the traditional conservation movement has the potential to create stronger, authentically diverse leaders and constituencies actively engaged in open space creation and preservation – seamlessly from inner city brownfields to larger non-urban landscapes.

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Themes from the Discussion

“We have land, but no programs . . . they have programs, but no land . . . sounds like a partnership opportunity to me.” Andy Kendall

There are lots of things happening around environmental education with little land trust involvement

At least three major movements around connecting children with land/nature are underway – without substantial involvement by many land trusts. The efforts on “environmental education” seek to foster environmentally responsible behavior in children. The “no child left inside” movement seeks to expose children to the health benefits of “Vitamin G” (for green), ranging from cognitive development to weight loss. The shifts to “slow food/local agriculture” seek to reconnect families with the land to help build healthy and resilient communities.

All of these activities require open space, which can be in short supply in many areas. While not all land trust properties will be appropriate for educational uses and not all land trusts will want to offer such programs, there are often relatively straightforward opportunities for partnerships. For example, The Trustees of Reservations and the Appalachian Mountain Club have partnered with many local chapters of Boys and Girls Clubs to make land available for their children’s programs. Others have set up community gardens or farmers’ markets on their properties. An increasing number of land trusts are establishing staff positions to connect young people to the land through schools, home-schools, community groups, and headstart programs. These and similar initiatives have multiple benefits: from engaging children with the land at a young age, to having them bring their families along.

Regular visits to land for activities alongside adults are key

The environmental education literature suggests that children develop their connection to the land at a relatively early age. The most effective mechanisms for doing so are regular visits to parks and open sites to take part in activities alongside adults.

Given the “permanent” protection afforded sites owned by land trusts, they offer a perfect location for repeat visits over time by children from the local community. Groups like the Audubon Center at Debs Park in Los Angeles have paired with local schools to build regular visits to the park into the curriculum, both within any one

year, as well as across years. For example, eighth graders are now teaching the incoming kindergarteners about the park. Community gardens, where students can work beside senior citizens and other adults also offer great examples of these opportunities – to which many land trust lands seem well suited. Engaging older students from local high schools and colleges can also be a great resource. The land trust does need personnel dedicated to managing such programs/partnerships in order for them to achieve the best results.

“A student once told me that they thought ‘Audubon’ meant a highway in Germany.”
Elva Yañez

Local programs meeting local needs are the most effective

In addition to busing kids to “nature,” offering programs where kids live is an important strategy and may spark a long-term engagement with the environment. As local, community based organizations, land trusts either have lands or the ability to acquire lands that can be part of this network of green spaces on which local, life-long learning can occur.

Some conservation organizations (like Audubon) have developed their own programs. Others have not, but partner with those who do. Finding educational partners that are rooted in the local community instantly expands a land trust’s network and ability to help sponsor programs that fit local interests and needs.

New funding sources/measures of success need to be developed

Most land trust funding is to acquire land. Increasing amounts are going to stewardship. Expanding into educational activities requires either the land trust to raise new money or the educational partner to tap into sources not usually available for land conservation. To the extent that land trusts raise the money, they will need to develop new measures of success for their educational and other stewardship programs. For example, repeat visits by children and/or families over time can be a high quality measure of success. In addition, continuing, long-term sources of funding are key for encouraging repeat visits over time – whether they come from traditional or new conservation or educational sources.

*SECTION VI:
HOW CAN THE CONSERVATION
MOVEMENT CAPTURE THE
OPPORTUNITIES FOR USING LAND
TO ENGAGE WITH NEW
COMMUNITIES?*

Assessing the Opportunities

Darcy Newsome
Yale University

OVERVIEW

Introduction

There exists significant potential to strengthen conservation organizations by connecting with diverse constituencies. By expanding to encompass a broad base of support from a wealth of ages, races and incomes, the conservation movement can help ensure its resiliency into the future.

It is time for environmentalists to move beyond the era of protecting land *from* people and look toward a time of reconnecting people with green areas. By reaching out to communities in the enjoyment and protection of natural areas in and around them, conservationists can build robust coalitions to fight the destruction of green places nationwide over the long term.

Diversifying within the conservation movement

Broadening the conservation movement necessitates a change from within. The staff and boards of conservation organizations are dominated by a narrow range of class, age, and race. Members of a wide array of communities must come to feel a true, participatory stake in the organization in order for bonds of support to form and strengthen.

Outreach to new communities

Reaching out to communities and engaging them in conservation will catalyze great strides in protecting open spaces. Conservationists should regard underserved constituencies as potential allies, fully respecting their needs and making genuine full-faith efforts to forge partnerships. These alliances would strengthen the movement in the face of a changing nation over the next upcoming decades.

DIVERSIFYING WITHIN THE CONSERVATION MOVEMENT

In order to begin to expand the base of support for conservation in America, diversification must occur within environmental organizations. Diversification does

not simply refer to the addition of token minorities on the board or staff. Such nominal policy initiatives frequently serve only to bring in new faces on a temporary basis, as individuals feel alienated by a culture that remains homogenous and exclusive. Conservation groups need to engage in a cultural embrace of the values of diversity, in all aspects of the word, across all walks of humanity. Only when this is accomplished will groups find the ability to create working coalitions across diverse communities.

Inclusion of minority individuals in the leadership of conservation groups is essential, so that there is a voice of one who has “walked in both worlds.” Unfortunately, according to a University of Michigan study in 2007, the prevailing notion among environmental groups is that minorities are not interested in working for them. This perception leads to missed opportunities, as the study reports that “minority students represent a ‘robust pool of talent’ waiting to be tapped” (Capos). Many of these students reportedly express a willingness to work for the restricted salaries offered by environmental groups in the same manner as do White students. Conservation groups should note that this source of employees exists, as the hiring of minority staff would help connect the organizations with this rapidly expanding segment of the population. Over time, shifting national demographics are likely to demand that environmental organizations diversify their hiring practices in order to retain their effectiveness.

Some questions for consideration

- 1) How can conservation organizations foster a culture of inclusivity that permeates all aspects of the workplace?
- 2) What steps can be taken to encourage applications to conservation organizations by more diverse candidates?
- 3) What problems remain when a few minority employees and board members are brought on without any accompanying shift in mission or culture?
- 4) What shifts in mission or culture beyond hiring are most important to enable stronger connections to be made to a broader base of support?

OUTREACH TO NEW COMMUNITIES

The work of conservation necessitates the engaged support of surrounding communities in order to ensure that the land remains protected for generations. The ethic of keeping people away from land, instead of connecting them to it, has contributed to a culture in which legal tools and processes are the key focus of efforts to keep “them” from spoiling “our” land. In order to expand the base of support for the land trust community the emphasis of land protection must grow beyond legal maneuvers to encompass community-building and the fostering of human relationships.

Adrienne Brown wrote in an essay for *Grist* magazine that, in order for the modern environmental movement to effectively reach out, “an end must come to the portrayal of natural demands as separate from human ones” (Brown). Potential allies in diverse communities should be approached where they are, with an eye toward addressing the issues that are important to their lives. Problems such as mercury-contaminated water should be partnered alongside efforts to increase urban green space, in addition to increasing public access to preserved wild land.

Engaging more communities of color and lower-income residents with the conservation community offers the potential for a powerful voting bloc with strong environmental sympathies. These feelings are noteworthy; a California poll finds that 60 percent of Latinos report that the environmental positions of a gubernatorial candidate are “very important,” versus just 44 percent of whites (Micek 2006). Polls also report that Latinos harbor a strong conservation ethic; indeed, many communities regard environmental stewardship as a pillar of their culture.

“The purpose of conservation is to enable people to find their spirit in the natural world and, in doing so, making all of life more whole and complete.”

—Peter Forbes, 2002

Alliances with communities of color may only flourish after careful establishment of trust. Steps to ease the process include defining a project that is mutually beneficial for both parties to engage in, and sharing funding resources that may be direly needed. These actions establish good faith and lay the groundwork for equal and active partnerships. Trust can be bolstered by an expressed understanding of community needs as well as their potential and interests: people feel included and engaged when they are called on to invest their energy into conservation projects. Volunteer organizing is therefore valuable. These bonds between conservation groups and communities of color can be further strengthened through partnerships with local and national groups that are already working in the communities, such as the Urban League and Boys and Girls Club. This step works well for outreach to young people as well, through Boy and Girl Scouts and 4H. It is in land trusts’ best interests to get people directly involved with the land around them, as this effort will strongly affect attitudes toward the environment.

At the same time, it is important to pay attention to possible concern that outreach will result in mission creep, and that there may be wariness from both parties in light of past failed efforts (Western States Diversity Project). Good faith initiatives to establish working partnerships have the potential to strengthen both communities of color and the conservation movement as a whole.

Some questions for consideration

- 1) What are some effective techniques for reaching out to communities with which your organization has never worked?
- 2) What are some of the issues around which coalitions of diverse communities and traditional land trusts might be built?

- 3) How can issue-based alliances transition into enduring coalitions of support for open space protection?

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Among those doing good work on this issue*Center for Whole Communities*

Offers retreats and workshops to explore and deepen the connections between land, people and community.

www.wholecommunities.org/about/mission.shtml

Center for Diversity and the Environment

Works with environmental organizations to develop diversity assessments and catalyzes efforts to diversify the environmental movement.

www.environmentaldiversity.org/

Latino Issues Forum's Sustainable Development Program

Works to provide Californians with access to a healthy environment, economic prosperity and social well-being.

www.lif.org/display.asp?catid=3&pageid=13

Sustainable South Bronx

Addressing land-use, energy, transportation, water & waste policy, and education to bring environmental justice to the South Bronx area. Sustainable South Bronx utilizes economically sustainable projects that are informed by community needs.

www.ssbx.org/

The Conservation Fund's Resourceful Communities Program

Helps North Carolina's underserved communities to create new economies that protect natural resources.

www.resourcefulcommunities.org

Ella Baker Center for Human Rights' Reclaim the Future Program.

Creates opportunities for low-income communities and people of color in the "green economy," utilizing policy advocacy, public outreach, and the Green Job Corps.

ellabakercenter.org/page.php?pageid=5

Trust for Public Land's Tribal & Native Lands Program

Works with Native American tribal communities to protect ancestral homelands. Goals include land conservation, natural resource restoration and cultural heritage.

www.tpl.org/tier3_cdl.cfm?content_item_id=1180&folder_id=217

Diversifying the Conservation Movement

Marcelo Bonta
Center for Diversity & the Environment

Charles Jordan
Conservation Fund

100 million people . . .

Envision, for a moment, what the conservation movement might be like if it brought in a major infusion of new supporters. What would it look like? What would it mean to have so many advocates? At first glance, an expanded constituency would translate into more political victories for conservation, more public support, more members, a larger volunteer base, richer partnerships and more financial support. In other words, we, the conservation movement, would find more success in conserving our natural resources.

The good news is that an immense opportunity stands before us. Today, our nation boasts a population of over 100 million people of color (about 33 percent of the population), many of whom support environmental issues at a higher level than their white counterparts (Fairbank, Metz & Weigel; Bendixen; Los Angeles Times; Mohai). For example, an exit poll for a 2002 California multi-billion dollar bond issue for water quality and open space protection revealed 77 percent of African Americans, 74 percent of Latinos, 60 percent of Asians and 56 percent of Caucasians approved the measure (Los Angeles Times). We need to be more effective at connecting people of color to the conservation movement and leveraging their substantial support and talents.

The sad news is that the movement continues to struggle with diversity, whether it's in outreach, collaborations, hiring and retention practices, or other facets. For example, people of color are not well represented in the conservation workforce. In a recent study of 158 environmental institutions, the Minority Environmental Leadership Development Initiative found that 33 percent of mainstream environmental organizations and 22 percent of government agencies had no people of color on staff (Taylor). Another study found that people of color make up only 11

percent of the staff and 9 percent of the boards for organizations that are members of the Natural Resources Council of America (Stanton).

To many conservation leaders, this last set of statistics actually seems to over-represent the involvement of people of color on boards and staff of conservation organizations and does not reflect other considerable problems that go much deeper than simple numbers. People of color are often hired as support staff and into positions not necessarily earmarked for leadership potential. The few people of color who actually are a part of a professional staff often leave conservation organizations (and at times the movement altogether). Many feel unwelcome and uncomfortable in institutions because of the homogeneous culture within both specific organizations and the movement in general. The bottom line is that most organizations fall short in devoting adequate staff time, money and resources to improving the diversity of their respective organizations.¹⁰ Organizations that want to diversify often are at a loss regarding what to do and where to start, and eventually either do nothing or venture down a path destined for failure. There is no question that diversifying is a difficult task; however, it still needs to be done.

The diversity crisis goes further than issues within organizations. Effective outreach to communities and groups of color, especially in the areas of cultural competency and equitable collaboration, is rare. A common belief in the movement is that people of color are not an important constituency because of the assumption that they do not care about the environment. However, polls and studies reveal the contrary. For example, a recent poll showed 77 percent of Latino voters (versus 65 percent of all voters) support “a small increase in taxes” to “protect water quality, natural areas, lakes, rivers or beaches, neighborhood parks and wildlife habitat” (Fairbank, Metz & Weigel). Furthermore, many organizations and professionals do not work on diversity issues because they believe it to be merely optional and not a requirement for successful work. Also, both current and past diversity activities are not well known among the environmental community, in part because they are not well publicized. Finally, a lack of funding dedicated towards diversity efforts severely limits the movement’s capability to diversify in a comprehensive way. These overwhelming issues have led the movement to a crisis.

Therefore, how do we respond to one of the conservation movement’s greatest challenges? Diversifying the movement is complex, and the changing demographics of our nation will not make it easier. By 2050, the number of people of color in this nation will more than double, growing to almost 220 million, and will comprise the majority of the population. The political and social implications of an increasingly diverse nation are vast. Communities of color continue to have a mounting influence on society and politics, including the distribution of public finances, the way cities develop and grow, and the strength and creation of environmental laws and policies.

We, as a movement, need to respond accordingly and immediately if we are to succeed. We need a movement that appeals to and benefits all Americans from all walks of life. It will not be an easy road to follow. But change is not an option, it is a *must* if we want a movement that is sustainable and relevant in the public and political consciousness. We have a great opportunity and responsibility before us.

¹⁰ The authors acknowledge that many organizations have limited resources and are deeply engaged in various conservation efforts. However, this should not be an excuse to diversify. We hope the recommendations within this article will provide a framework within which to work more efficiently and effectively.

How we respond will determine the fate of our movement. We need a strategy that will sufficiently address the diversity crisis and create sustainable, lasting change."

HOW DO WE DIVERSIFY?

There have been numerous past efforts to diversify organizations and the movement. We need to acknowledge the pioneers of the 1970s, 1980s and early 1990s for pushing diversity at a time when the movement and organizations were struggling to survive and experiencing growing pains. Over the past 35 years, leaders, such as Sydney Howe, Gerry Stover, George T. Frampton, Jr., Richard Moore and Pat Noonan, identified the looming diversity crisis and raised questions as to the direction of the movement. There have also been a number of articles, research and discussion sessions devoted to the topic (Jordan & Snow). A late 1980s survey revealed that many leaders from over 500 environmental organizations felt "the lack of racial and cultural diversity in their own organizations and throughout the environmental movement makes the movement less powerful and less effective in accomplishing its goals" (Jordan & Snow). There is no doubt that these leaders and early efforts raised awareness on diversity issues, yet sustaining an effective, long-term effort has been challenging, to say the least.

In order for diversity efforts to be sustainable, conservation leaders need to view diversity as a top priority. Diversity needs to be worked on in many areas and interwoven throughout organizational operations, such as programs, projects, initiatives, mission and policy statements, recruitment, staff retention, partnerships and collaborations, outreach, and work experiences for young people. We need to work on making the movement and our organizations attractive places to work for a diverse array of people while also drawing out the conservation values of people of color, especially to the point of pursuing a conservation career.

Recruitment is the main area in which many conservation organizations focus their diversity efforts. Hiring people of color at all levels, including the executive level and board, and having a diverse job interview panel is essential. However, the amount of energy many organizations put into recruiting a diverse staff may be misplaced. Organizations will most likely find more success in recruiting people of color and diversifying if they work on diversity in multiple areas, including changing the organizational culture and working equitably with communities and organizations of color. Limiting diversity efforts to recruitment only, especially at entry-level positions or for support staff, is insufficient and will fail more often than not.

Creating cultural change within conservation institutions and the movement is arguably the most important aspect of diversifying. It could be daunting to be the single person of color or one of a few in an organization that is homogenous in its appearance as well as thinking and culture. Transforming into a multicultural movement requires continually addressing diversity and providing workplaces where all staff feel comfortable and are attaining their true potential. It entails becoming culturally competent and adept at understanding different ways of acting and communicating. A multicultural organization acknowledges that remaining diverse

¹¹ The authors acknowledge that they present options and tools that may help diversify the movement. They by no means claim to be experts, yet they are fully committed to and have devoted their careers to diversifying the movement.

and managing various viewpoints will be an ongoing challenge and provides regular discussions, open forums, and learning opportunities to help resolve organizational diversity issues. Institutions that become multicultural will discover that people of color will want to work for them and stay for the long term, and will most likely find it easier to work with any community or organization.

Diversifying also means effectively reaching out to communities of color. Being culturally competent is crucial to outreach efforts and can be the deciding factor of a successful connection or not. If we want to start engaging people of color, we need to meet them where they are and speak to their environmental values. We will need to invest time building relationships and trust and provide something of value. We must also choose our messengers wisely because sometimes the messenger may actually be more important than the message. Finally, we will need to communicate effectively by understanding the community with which we want to work, adjusting our language and communication methods accordingly, and working through the community's main information sources, which may be the local church or an elder.

To effectively reach out to communities of color, environmental institutions will need to expand their partnerships and collaborations. They will need to work with groups that already effectively work with communities of color, including organizations of color, such as Latino Issues Forum, youth-serving organizations, urban parks and recreation departments, and schools. Many of these groups, a number of which are led by people of color, have a proven track record of successfully working with communities of color. They have earned the respect and gained the trust of these communities. Most importantly, partnerships need to be based on equity, meaning all parties equally share resources, power and decision-making responsibilities.

Conservation organizations seeking to diversify will need to partner and work together to share information, efforts and lessons learned about diversifying while more efficiently using resources and keeping costs down. Diversifying on your own is challenging. Organizations attempting to diversify have commonly done it alone, and many have ended up aborting their effort because the hill became too difficult to climb. Failure is no longer an option. Diversity is a necessity for building a successful and effective organization. Working together will ease the difficulty and provide more lasting results.

Foundations are an integral part of diversifying, not merely because they can provide much-needed funds but because they are another segment of the movement looking for diversity guidance. The Environmental Grantmakers Association, a leader in promoting diversity in its over 250 foundation members, has found that many environmental foundations want to diversify. If foundations see this diversity need in their funded organizations as well, then they can work on making progress together. Also, as organizations show their commitment to diversity, it would be extremely useful for foundations to devote more funds to help leverage the existing efforts and create more impact.

Working along the educational pipeline by providing opportunities for young people of color from kindergarten to graduate school is essential to achieving a

diverse environmental community for generations to come. We need more organizations like Environmental Learning for Kids in Denver and Outward Bound Adventures in the Los Angeles area, both of which help raise the next generation of environmental stewards by providing positive outdoor experiences for young people of color. Partnering with youth-serving organizations and urban parks and recreation departments is important to making the youth connection. Providing opportunities for youth to exercise leadership skills and voice their opinions is an effective way to engage young people. Also, internships are often the entry point to conservation careers for young folks. Therefore, it may be essential for organizations to provide paid internships.

In sum, diversifying on many fronts, especially on cultural change, recruitment, outreach, partnerships and the educational pipeline, will be more effective than focusing a diversity effort in one area.

Recommendations for the conservation movement

Our diversity crisis is a systemic problem. Therefore, we must approach the problem systematically across the movement. A comprehensive strategy for diversifying includes working on cultural change, outreach, partnerships and collaborations, recruitment, and the educational pipeline. To carry out this strategy, every organization, business, agency, foundation and academic institution that works on conservation issues needs to commit to the cause. Therefore, movement-wide, we must focus on four major areas in order to initiate effective change:

- (1) *Create Cultural Change.* Creating cultural change within conservation institutions and the movement is imperative to diversifying. Cultural change means having an inclusive, diverse mindset that translates into actions, behaviors, and attitudes that exemplify multiculturalism and equity. We need to build a conservation movement that is relevant to all Americans. To help create cultural change, organizations need to incorporate diversity throughout their operations.
- (2) *Seek Partnerships and Collaborations.* We need to seek strategic alliances both within and outside the movement. Within the movement, collaborating with each other on our diversity efforts is essential, so we can move forward synergistically and grow exponentially. We also need to work across movements, including the labor, civil rights and faith movements. Expanding our list of partners will extend our reach, improve our understanding and ensure our relevance.
- (3) *Engage Young People.* We need to effectively connect young people of color to nature through environmental education programs and provide positive work experiences for students of color if we want an effective movement for generations to come. How we engage young people today will have significant effects far into the future since many of these same people will be our conservation leaders when people of color make up our nation's majority.

- (4) *Connect the Generations.* We need to unify the generations that are currently working within our movement and cultivate emerging leaders of color. We need to learn from and build upon the progress of those who have worked on diversity issues in the past. Experiences, wisdom and lessons learned need to be passed from one generation to another if we are to effectively move forward on the diversity continuum. Baby Boomers need to identify and mentor emerging leaders who can carry the mantle forward. Likewise young, emerging leaders need to take the initiative in connecting with more experienced conservationists.

A LEADING ORGANIZATION

In order for the movement to carry out these recommendations, we need adequate funding and an organization or partnership to serve as the central hub for diversifying the movement. It will be charged with carrying out movement-wide diversity actions and periodically assessing our progress on achieving diversity goals. Other responsibilities include providing technical assistance and guidance on what to do and how to proceed in a responsible and culturally competent way, facilitating the creation of accountability measures and measures of diversity, and directing funds strategically towards diversity efforts.

As we wait for a leading organization to coalesce, there are existing organizations that can be effective at serving in this lead capacity. Organizations such as the Land Trust Alliance and the Environmental Grantmakers Association, who have hundreds of member organizations, can (and have already on some fronts) provide leadership, guidance and technical assistance on diversity issues. This service would be especially helpful for organizations that have limited capacity and resources and have struggled to initiate a diversity effort. By providing guidance on strategic actions, lead organizations can help catalyze stronger partnerships and more efficient uses of resources.

Recommendations for organizations

Comprehensively solving our diversity crisis means the involvement of every conservation organization. Leadership support, dedicated resources (i.e., staff time and money), and diversifying throughout organizational operations are critical to maintaining an organizational diversity initiative. To facilitate change, organizations need to take these important general steps:

- (1) *Attain leadership support and a commitment of resources.*
- (2) *Conduct a diversity assessment* to establish a baseline from which to work. An assessment helps identify an organization's current status, its needs, its goals and tools to diversify. It may also include a comparative perspective of other organizations' diversity activities (see the Center for Diversity & the Environment at www.environmentaldiversity.org regarding other efforts).

- (3) *Create a diversity action strategy* to implement the assessment's recommendations. Each organization is unique and may need a distinct strategy to meet its needs. The strategy should include periodic evaluations of progress towards diversity goals.

Recommendations for individuals

We, as individuals within the movement, have the most important roles and the greatest responsibility. Our individual beliefs, values, thought processes and actions make up the movement. Therefore, we need to hold ourselves accountable for transforming the conservation movement. While it is urgent to begin diversifying our movement immediately, we should not feel that we have to do it all now. This will be a long process. Even small steps from each of us can take us a long way. Here are some actions we, as individuals, can take to push forward on diversity issues:

- *Find allies.* Talk to others at your workplace and to people working on diversity issues outside your organization. Find and/or create a network of people with which you can comfortably discuss diversity issues. Organize a regular gathering of like-minded people within or outside of your organization. For example, a group of environmentalists of color in Portland, Oregon, called the Young Environmental Professionals of Color, meets monthly to network, strategize and discuss various environmental topics that affect them.
- *Find opportunities to diversify within your spheres of influence.* Figure out what you can start doing today. For example, if you have access to discretionary funds or control of budgets, earmark money towards diversity activities. If you work on outreach, learn how to become culturally competent and expand your outreach activities to include communities of color. If you participate in an organizational strategic planning process, incorporate diversity strategies and language into vision statements, the mission and goals of the organization. Of course, if you have major clout, you can implement the broader recommendations for the movement and organizations described earlier.
- *Broaden your thought processes.* Think long term and with an expansive vision. Constantly question your "business as usual." Ask yourself questions like "For whom am I protecting these lands?" "What kind of movement am I going to hand over to my children and grandchildren?" "When thinking of the communities or constituencies I serve, whom do I think of? Whom should I think of?" "When advertising a job opening to my network, who is included (or not included) in that network?" "What type of people would find working at my workplace appealing or not appealing? Why?"
- *Engage organizational leadership.* Ask them to adopt diversity as an organizational priority. Ask for a commitment of resources, especially money and staff time.

- *Start building relationships with communities and organizations of color now, especially before you may actually need their help.* Do your homework about the community and offer something useful first.
- *Seek opportunities to broaden your experience, expand your network and continue learning.* Some conferences, such as the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference and the Environmental Grantmakers Association annual conferences, have offered one-day pre-conference diversity workshops and trainings. Other conferences may provide individual, or a series of, diversity sessions. The Conservation Fund and the Land Trust Alliance have started offering a diversity training course for land conservation organizations. Become involved in efforts that bring a broad range of organizations and people together, such as the Environmental Diversity Working Group in Washington, D.C., and the Diverse Partners for Environmental Progress series of national summits and regional roundtables. Numerous diversity resources can be found on the websites of organizations (see Resources below). Reading reports such as the *Soul of Environmentalism and Environmental Stewardship for the 21st Century: Opportunities and Actions for Improving Cultural Diversity in Conservation Organizations and Programs*, provide beneficial learning opportunities.

CONCLUSION

As the nation continues to diversify, the conservation movement is left with one of the greatest challenges it will face this century. Will we diversify so that we can be successful and relevant to generations to come, or will we ignore our diversity problem at our own peril? We have no choice. Diversifying is not an option. It is a necessity. At the very least, it means survival of the conservation movement. At most, it means creating a healthy, influential and sustainable movement. Our response to the diversity challenge today will have reverberations and repercussions for generations to come. We must invest our resources at once or our children and grandchildren may inherit a world with dwindling natural resources and a movement with no significance in the modern world. We owe it to ourselves, the conservation movement and the American people to get it right. The future of conservation and our future generations are at stake.

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Resources

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Kyra's Path

Marcelo Bonta

Center for Diversity & the Environment

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Reflecting on his daughter's future, a father says the green movement must diversify

10 June 2008

The face of America is changing—is the environmental movement ready to face change too?

“Kyra, do you know this is yours?” I ask, looking down at the skinny little girl with big, curly, dark brown locks. Her hair to body proportion resembles Thing One and Thing Two from Dr. Seuss’ *Cat in the Hat*.

“What do you mean?” A furrowed face of mostly cheek and big brown eyes replies.

My four-year-old daughter and I have just spent an early summer morning exploring the Leif Erikson Trail in Forest Park. It’s 75 degrees and not a cloud in the sky – a perfect day in Portland, Ore. Wide-eyed and humming her favorite Sunday school tunes, Kyra had picked and smelled flowers of an array of colors, listened to bird songs and leaves rustling in the gentle wind, identified maidenhair ferns and banana slugs, found a red-backed salamander under the bark of a fallen log, come eye-to-eye with “the biggest snail in the whole wide world,” and discovered that a small side trail sometimes leads to something bigger and better. So far, it’s been a magical day.

Kyra could stand there indefinitely waiting for an answer. Her senses are alert, and she is focused on the question at hand. Her intrigue is endearing.

“The trees, the flowers, the stream, this trail. This is all yours,” I finally answer.

“It is? How can this all be mine?”

“Well, it’s actually everybody’s. This forest was set aside so you and all people can always enjoy it. It will always be here. No one will ever build houses or big buildings or anything like that on this land,” I explain.

“Oh,” she says, allowing the information to sink in. As she slowly realizes what I’m saying, a slight twinkle in her eye gradually grows into the big smile that always makes me melt.

“This is my trail,” she says, happily skipping past me back toward the distant trailhead.

My moment of nirvana is disrupted by concern about Kyra’s future – something that seems to happen fairly often.

What if, for instance, Kyra decides to follow a career path in conservation and land protection? Her love of nature is pure. And simply by exposing her to the right opportunities, I’ve found that she absorbs anything that has to do with plants, animals, and being green. All of which makes me happy. My main concern is this: I don’t see many people who look like Kyra working for environmental organizations.

You see, Kyra is a unique mix of Jamaican, Filipino, Caucasian, and Spanish heritage. What would it be like for her to maneuver in such a homogeneous culture? As Kyra’s parent, my job is to protect her and allow her to thrive, grow, and be the best she can be at whatever she does. Unfortunately, with its unintentionally exclusive culture, today’s environmental movement does not provide that atmosphere for her.

When the time comes, I will be honest with Kyra and share my experiences working in the mainstream environmental movement – such as encountering ignorant comments and being the only person of color on a national wildlife group’s conservation staff. I will also share with Kyra that those unfortunate experiences and my commitment to make the world a better place for her and her sister drove me to commit the rest of my career to diversifying the movement. Through my consulting activities and the creation of the Center for Diversity & the Environment, I am doing everything within my ability to ensure that Kyra and her sister, Stella, do not relive the same experiences I went through. My hope is that the movement will be inclusive by the time Kyra enters the workforce.

To get to that point – especially if it wants to remain relevant far into the future – the movement needs to prepare itself for Kyra and her generation, which will be the most diverse generation our nation has ever seen. Some estimate that the population under the age of five in the U.S. is 40 to 50 percent children of color. As this generation grows older and begins to inherit leadership positions around the year 2050, the U.S. population will be more than 50 percent people of color. I often hear conservationists mention that they are saving this or that parcel of land for future generations. But how often do they think about what those future generations will actually look like?

Some people are thinking about it, to be sure. People like Iantha Gantt-Wright, Charles Jordan, Angela Park, and Emily Enderle, and organizations like the Center for Whole Communities, Environmental Leadership Program, Diversity Matters, and Green for All are laying the foundation for a more diverse movement. These people and groups, through their leadership, speeches, articles, books, trainings, and workshops, are raising awareness around diversity issues, committing themselves to action-based solutions, and paving the way to a better tomorrow for our children.

But in order to succeed on a movement-wide level, every environmental organization, foundation, agency, business, and academic institution must follow suit and begin comprehensively diversifying now so that the movement will be ready to successfully pass the mantle to Kyra’s generation. This strategic approach entails committing a flood of support and resources toward creating multicultural

organizations, recruiting and retaining people of color at all levels of staff, engaging young folks in positive environmental experiences, effectively reaching out to communities of color, and establishing diverse partnerships.

If the environmental movement entrusts itself to this approach, it will be in a much better place 15 to 20 years from now – a time when people of color will be over 140 million strong in the U.S. Simply by heading in this new direction of diversifying and effectively engaging people of color, the movement may solve its most pressing problems and encounter success beyond its members' wildest dreams. If it doesn't make the shift, the movement will be at grave risk of losing its relevance and influence. It will be a movement for a few instead of a movement for all.

Brushing aside my worries, I come back to the moment. My eyes focus on Kyra leading the way down the path, and I realize that I am just here to guide and teach her. Which way she goes is ultimately up to her.

Seeing Kyra smile back at me as she hums and skips with flowers in her hand reassures me, as I have no choice but to smile back and follow her.

For now, life's perfect. Kyra's happy. I'm happy. We're hiking on Kyra's path.

When he is not changing diapers or playing house, Marcelo Bonta runs the Center for Diversity & the Environment and the Young Environmental Professionals of Color and does whatever he can to diversify the environmental movement.

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Experience Capturing the Opportunities from Connecting with More Diverse Communities

Andy Kendall

The Trustees of Reservations

With the assistance of Emily Biesecker

When Andy Kendall joined The Trustees of Reservations (“TTOR”) as the organization’s Executive Director in 2000, he was welcomed by a stark portrayal of their work. In 2000, The Trustees published *Land of the Commonwealth: A Portrait of the Conserved Landscapes of Massachusetts*. The book showcased the exceptional scenic, historic, and natural lands that the organization had protected. The landscapes, while beautiful, were devoid of humans; not a single picture included a person. The photos offered an unsettling perspective on the history and priorities of TTOR.

At that time, the Trustees treated land acquisition as the most important goal of their work. And, perhaps more importantly, few within the organization seemed to wonder whether this was enough. TTOR had striking capacity: an endowment of more than \$80 million, membership near 25,000, a budget of close to \$10 million, 84 reservations owned and 188 parcels under conservation restrictions. However, the organization’s considerable resources were directed in a very limited way. While half of Massachusetts’ residents lived within five miles of a Trustees property, the other half of the population was concentrated in ten cities. In addition, there was a persistent rumor that TTOR’s public access signs were often hung in places where no visitor was likely to find them.

It was clear that the greatest gap in their efforts to provide access to open space was in urban areas. When reaching into Massachusetts’ big cities, Kendall recognized that TTOR could never replicate the great work of a group like the Boston Natural Areas Network (BNAN). As such, they decided to affiliate with BNAN in 2006 and raise an endowment for its stewardship activities, empowering rather than competing with the organization. Affiliations or mergers can accelerate change within an organization, but they are radical moves. The Trustees ensured each organization

would complement the work of the other. Where BNAN gained permanence through funding, the Trustees gained relevancy in a new and important community. The greatest risk involved is the possibility of mission misalignment, as might be expected between an urban and a rural group, but this was alleviated by Kendall's pre-existing relationship with the president of BNAN.

“Before The Trustees’ reinvention, we knew what land was important: our donors’ backyards. Now our priority is people first, and we are no longer simply a museum of the Massachusetts landscape.” Andy Kendall

Following another partnership formula, TTOR has pursued relationships with the Boys & Girls Clubs of diverse Massachusetts communities. The Boys & Girls Club of Greater Holyoke will develop its summer program headquarters next to property purchased by The Trustees. Similar collaborations were undertaken in Leominster and Fitchburg. It is a wise, long-term strategy to partner a land-rich and program-poor group like TTOR with a land-poor and program-rich group like a local Boys & Girls Club or YMCA. Massachusetts hosts approximately 150 land trusts and 130 Boys & Girls Clubs – a wealth of partnership opportunities prime to be pursued. In many cases, the local Club is better organized than the local Trust. Neighbors such as these mean a committed source of stewardship for a land trust's conservation sites. Food issues also address a basic connection to the land, important in rural and urban communities alike, and afford TTOR diverse partnerships with local farmer's markets and churches.

TTOR's expanded focus has not distracted the organization or slowed its growth. Their recent work has engaged countless new communities and has improved the organization by every standard metric. The operating budget has grown steadily, as has the amount of land protected and the membership – now at well over 40,000. To reach new communities without jeopardizing the core strengths of the organization, the President and Chairman of the Board had to share the vision and move to change the existing governance structure. Before TTOR could make this transition, Kendall felt he had to convince his board members that they were, in fact, a major impediment to the organization's progress – as well as its best hope for starting to move toward its future structure and direction.

Even after such success, Kendall worries about the durability of TTOR's new structure and expanded mission. The average tenure of a land trust's president or board member is much shorter than the time the organization feels it will need to institutionalize comprehensive change. In its ten-year strategic plan, launched in 2007, The Trustees formalized their commitment to communities of all kinds. It will be important to cultivate the next generation of leadership within the organization, so that departure of any of its progressive leaders will not reverse the new course. Because it is hard to change a plan when it has thousands of owners, The Trustees must build support for its mission in the communities and members it serves.

*“Engaging a delighted new generation of conservationists,
one neighborhood at a time.”*

The Trustees of Reservations Annual Report 2007

Breaking with the past procession of pictures of fields, streams, and lakeshores, the cover of The Trustees' 2007 *Annual Report*, does not feature a natural place, but shows two children standing in front of urban brownstones and wearing bright wildlife masks. “Hello, Neighbor!” on the front page announces the new, inclusive character of the organization. On the second page, the masks are removed, revealing two children prepared to march with TTOR personnel in the Western Massachusetts Puerto Rican Parade. New staff, board members and partners, committed to the revised priorities, are being attracted by the organization's successes and hope to keep TTOR moving in these new directions. They have already come a long way since 2000, and theirs seems an effort likely to endure.

Themes from the Discussion

“Who is going to take over the work in the future?” Marcelo Bonta

For many land trusts, reaching out to new communities is unfamiliar and uncomfortable territory. It takes courage to understand and acknowledge the legacy of the past, as well as to embrace the changes necessary for the future. As more conservation organizations move in these directions, more lessons are learned about how to do so effectively. Among the themes discussed at the workshop were the following:

Both external and internal changes are required

In addition to connecting with new communities externally, most conservation organizations are going to need re-examine their internal cultures and systems. The effort to broaden the base of support is not just about adding wealthy people of color to the board of directors. It is about becoming a revered community institution, reflecting the values and diversity of the communities served.

Obviously, the implications of these changes will vary across organizations. In some, it will mean changing the governance structure or make-up of the board to support the cultivation of these new connections. In others, it will mean moving from a homogenous, nature-centered organizational culture to a multi-cultural organization working to improve the health of both natural and human communities. The process of change – in terms of engagement and transparency – will often be as important as the substance of the changes made. Both attracting and, even more difficult, building a welcoming culture that retains individuals from more diverse backgrounds will be essential for these efforts.

These transitions will require the individuals involved to confront, acknowledge and build from the historic disparities and systems that have helped separate us by ethnicity and class. This is not an easy process at all for many land trusts. Many were founded and, to date, have prospered because of their access to wealthy donors. Fortunately, an increasing number of hopeful examples – such as The Trustees of Reservations, the Big Sur Land Trust and others – are helping point the way forward.

Listen and do homework first

When approaching a new community, the first task is to understand the range of local interests and needs. Identify the major sources of information, both written and oral. Understand and respect the hopes and fears of local people. Begin to look for areas of overlapping interests where shared benefits may be possible to achieve. In some cases, it may be possible and appropriate to create new land trusts representative of and serving new and diverse communities.

Be invited in

Most communities of color and lower income communities have heard it all before – with many promises by outside groups broken over time. Some conservation groups and projects have fallen into this trap – arriving from “outside” to “protect” the land from the people who live there. This is not the best way to build community support for the long run.

Given that the mission of land trusts is to protect land “permanently,” time can be taken to identify individual members of new communities who might be interested in and supportive of your efforts. Recognize that lasting conservation will depend on lasting relationships and trust. Become a community “listener” and partner before you desperately “need” help on any particular initiative. Work to identify the other community messengers with whom to connect more widely, as well as the credible community organizations with which to partner over time. Put your ego aside and let your local messengers lead the way – quite often to much better and more durable results.

“For many young professionals of color, the environment is a social justice issue.”

Marcelo Bonta

Engagement is a two way street

All groups need to benefit from and participate in any joint effort to conserve open space. As with the discussions earlier around voting coalitions, the land trust’s engagement with new communities cannot stop as soon as the money is authorized. Bolstered by the internal changes described earlier, land trusts need not only to work in particular communities, they need to bring real value to an increasingly broad spectrum of residents. This may range from the traditional practices of acquiring land for public access, to more expansive stewardship programs, to new training sessions on sustainable management of working lands. They will also need to engage in ways that are as transparent as possible and provide meaningful opportunities for shared decision-making.

“Land ownership establishes a permanent relationship.” Andy Kendall

Stay the course

Land trusts must see the permanence of their missions as meaning that they will not only protect land in perpetuity, but that they will also commit to bringing value to a wide swath of the community in perpetuity. This means changing with the times, but doing so in a manner that ensures the durability of both the organization and its relevance to the local community.

*SECTION VII:
HOW CAN THE CONSERVATION
MOVEMENT ADDRESS THE RISKS OF
USING OPEN SPACE TO ENGAGE
WITH NEW COMMUNITIES?*

Assessing the Risks

Emily Biesecker
Yale University

OVERVIEW

Introduction

Outreach to new groups in conservation brings new partners and new potential, but also new risks to the land trust community. Increased public use of open space can threaten conventionally protected conservation assets and may raise concerns about legal liability.

While the hazards of not engaging with a broader suite of communities are likely to outweigh these risks, the risks are very much on the mind of many land trusts. Conservation groups can begin to manage the risks of unconventional uses and partnerships by determining their conservation goals in the particular context of the local community. They can then choose engagement, management and other approaches to reduce the risks and capture the opportunity.

Managing increased human use

The engagement of new groups in conservation projects will often mean increased human use of open spaces. While greater involvement of community members is a positive, it can carry with it risks to the ecological conservation values of a site. A variety of approaches can be taken to manage those risks.

Liability

Increased use of open space also raises liability concerns for land owners and managers. These risks can generally be well-managed with careful planning on allowable uses and insurance.

MANAGING INCREASED HUMAN USE

Increased public access to and use of conservation land is an important tool in bringing value to a community. The benefits of open space can be communicated by the land itself, while the presence of community members indicates their support for the site and its sponsors. Poorly managed human uses, however, can damage both the ecological and recreational resources of a site.

Land managers should consider human impacts on as comprehensive a scale as possible and should investigate the potential impacts of different public uses. While trampling by visitors is responsible for most of the impact of recreation on soils and plants, higher impact activities like the use of off-road vehicles or snowmobiles may raise other concerns (Cole). Managers must also determine if, through intentional or unintentional oversight by the previous owner, local community members have become accustomed to using the land in particular ways. The land trust can then take steps to sanction those uses or to work with the local community on why, how and when they can be phased out.

Successfully managing public use begins with deciding which human uses are acceptable and which unacceptable on which parts of a given property. The land trust should clarify the conservation values that it and the community want to protect and what impacts those values can withstand. Perhaps some uses should be allowed only at certain times of year. Instead of cordoning off an entire site, particularly sensitive pieces of land could be identified and closed to public use. The goals of public use, community engagement, and relevance could outweigh the typical ecological conservation assets of a piece of land. Land trusts must be clear and open about the potential impacts and prohibitions of various uses on their properties. Community members should be educated about the full effects of their use, and should be involved in the development of conservation and use guidelines.

Some Initial Questions for Land Managers

- What ecosystems are present?
- What important native species are present?
- What is the site's ecological context in space and time?
- What is the current condition of the ecosystems at the site?
- How are human activities likely to affect the site?
- What might the site have looked like historically, and what are the opportunities for restoration?
- What other human factors affect how the site can or should be managed?

— Pearlman and Milder, 2004

Some questions for consideration

- 1) What are the public uses most likely to threaten ecological conservation goals?
- 2) How can land trusts best engage surrounding communities on stewardship plans and activities for protected lands?
- 3) How should land trusts address the fear of so-called mission creep in their transitions away from purely ecological conservation goals?

LIABILITY

The vast majority of states (47 in 2002) have adopted recreational use statutes (or RUSs), legislation which encourages landowners to open their lands to public use and limits their liability (IMBA). A liability primer published by the Land Trust Alliance warns that RUSs vary dramatically among states. Urban lands and rural areas may be treated differently under the statute, as may land and water sites. In general, an easement holder's liability is determined by how much the easement holder exercises "control and possession" of the land, and they can generally assume the same protection as a landowner under the state's RUS (Silberstein).

Land trusts are not universally protected from liability, however. In some urban areas, insurance companies may reject coverage to or charge beyond what land trusts can afford for coverage due to site locations and use. In more rural areas, certain activities, such as hunting, caving, climbing, and swimming from docks, are considered high-risk and may be uninsurable. Some popular activities, such as riding snow mobiles or off-road vehicles, may also raise particular concern. The land trust also assumes a much greater level of responsibility for visitors to their properties if access fees are charged to use the land. The Land Trust Alliance recommends that any land trust should own commercial general liability (CGL) insurance to protect against liabilities for personal injury, property damage and deaths on their conservation lands.

Overall, legal liability should not stand in the way of efforts to broaden the base of support for open space. Land trusts can manage their liability risks by understanding their properties, engaging with their communities, taking advantage of the RUS in their state, purchasing insurance and stewarding their lands in a manner that helps mitigate any major risks.

Some questions for consideration

- 1) What are the most pressing liability concerns faced by urban and rural conservation projects? How do these concerns differ? What can be done to minimize these concerns?
- 2) What uses of conservation land should be avoided, if any?
- 3) What can land trusts do to ensure transparency and community involvement while determining what land uses will be permitted or prohibited on a property?

Some useful readings/works cited

Cole DN. Minimizing Conflict Between Recreation and Nature Conservation. 1993. Available at <http://www.treesearch.fs.fed.us/pubs/23602>

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Silberstein B and E Rosenzweig. "Minimizing Liability for Public Access on Private Lands." Land Trust Alliance Law Update. Spring 2002. www.lta.org/publications/exchange/exchange_21_02_09.pdf

Among those doing good work on this issue

The Appalachian Mountain Club maintains 1,400 miles of heavily utilized trails in the Northeast. The Club's volunteers and staff are dedicated to trail protection and to the preservation of a backcountry experience for all users, and encourage adherence to the Leave No Trace use ethic.

www.outdoors.org/conservation/trails/work/index.cfm

The Southern Bronx River Watershed Alliance is a coalition of groups committed to protecting the southern reaches of the Bronx River as an ecological, economic, and social asset for their densely populated and diverse community.

www.southbronxvision.org/

Conserve-A-Nation[®] is the nation's leading underwriter of property, casualty, and directors and officers liability coverage for conservation organizations. It was formed with partnership of The Nature Conservancy, the Audubon Society, and the Land Trust Alliance.

www.franeymuhaalliant.com/programs/conservation.htm

Parks and Trails New York is actively working to improve liability protection for landowners and managers in New York. Two of PTNY's Legislative Priorities for 2008 are bills that address liability protection for trail developers and maintainers in the state.

www.ptny.org/advocacy/agenda.shtml

Framework for Thinking about Different Lands and Possible Uses

*Jeff Milder
Cornell University*

A first step in thinking about the risks and opportunities of expanding public use of protected land is to consider why a particular property was protected in the first place. In other words, who or what is the land protected for and who or what is it protected from? Clarifying the land’s conservation purpose will also help reveal synergies and tradeoffs between conservation and human use. For example, local nature areas may require active human management – such as invasive species removal, hunting, or trail work – to retain their original conservation purpose, and these management activities may offer a perfect opportunity for community engagement. On the other hand, many conserved farm and ranch lands remain in the hand of private owners who are concerned that public access would impede their ability to manage for profitable agriculture.

Conservation objectives and public use of different types of open space in the United States

Type of “open space”	Protected FOR	Protected FROM	Public access?	Examples of Activities
1) Wilderness and nature reserves	Intact ecosystems Threatened habitat/species Watershed protection	Land development Harvesting/extraction Ecological degradation Other human disturbance	Sometimes	Hiking, nature study, research
2) National & state parks	Intact ecosystems Threatened habitat/species Recreation & education	Land development Harvesting/extraction Ecological degradation	Yes	Hiking, camping, ranger programs
3) Multi-use areas (USFS, BLM, state forests, etc.)	Forestry/agricultural production Watershed protection Intact ecosystems Threatened habitat/species	Land development [Ecological degradation]	Yes	Hunting, camping, mountain biking, snowmobiling

Type of "open space"	Protected FOR	Protected FROM	Public access?	Examples of Activities
3) cont.	Hunting & fishing Motorized and/or unmotorized recreation			
4) Working lands	Forestry/agricultural production [Protection of viewsheds, watersheds, and/or habitat]	Land development [Viewshed alteration]	Occasionally education	Agri-tourism,
5) Local nature areas	Local access to nature Nature-based recreation Protection of watersheds, habitat, and/or viewsheds	Land development [Ecological degradation]	Yes	Walking, bird- watching, environmental education
6) Recreational spaces (parks, school grounds, yards, etc.)	Sports, other play Social gatherings [Protection of watersheds, habitat, and/or viewsheds]	[Land development]	Usually	Team sports, jogging, picnicking
7) "Civic ecology" spaces	Local community uses Land restoration	Land development	Yes, though may be limited	Community gardening, environmental education
8) "Accidental" urban & suburban open spaces	Usually no formal program of uses	Usually not protected	Sometimes	Dog walking, "unstructured play," vagrancy, illicit activities

After: D. Perlman & J. Milder. 2005. *Practical Ecology for Planners, Developers, and Citizens*. Island Press, Washington, DC. The term and concept of "civic ecology spaces" was suggested by Marianne Krasny.

Experience Addressing the Risks of Engaging with More Diverse Communities

Bill Leahy

Big Sur Land Trust

With the assistance of Emily Biesecker

“This land trust will face a very shaky future if we do not continue to change.” Bill Leahy

In 2002, with \$37 million in public funds and in partnership with The Nature Conservancy, The Big Sur Land Trust purchased the Palo Corona Ranch. Nearly 10 thousands acres, Palo Corona stretches for 10 miles and connects 13 other ecologically important conservation properties.

A project involving so much taxpayer money, from California’s Proposition 40 and the Monterey Regional Parks District, comes with high expectations for public benefit. The Land Trust recognized the potential recreational opportunities of the site and hoped to draw users from across the county, but the property did not draw much interest from inland, largely Hispanic, residents. As the Land Trust’s activities drew more public attention outside of wealthy coastal communities, more groups started to question the relevance of its work and the value they would derive from yet another protected site. Although a prize to the conservation community, the Palo Corona Ranch was a world away from most other communities in the Salinas Valley.

In part as a result of this disconnect, The Big Sur Land Trust (now thirty years old), has recently expanded its focus to serve all of Monterey County. Bill Leahy, the Executive Director, sees little risk associated with this move toward a more inclusive conservation approach. Through increased community engagement and recreational access, Leahy believes his organization can help heal the rifts in the often divided county. In 2004, The Land Trust drafted a new vision and mission to consider Monterey County in its entirety – looking past the “lettuce curtain” that figuratively partitions the inland working-class communities from the elite coastline. Attracting people with a human narrative, not maps and technical expertise, the new vision

document reads like a story and includes commitments to lofty goals, such as durable local economies.

“I asked, if you could design a land trust for the 21st century, what would it look like? What would it do? Who would it serve?” Bill Leahy

In 2007, The Big Sur Land Trust bought the Marks Ranch, an 800-acre property which tucked into an already important community asset, Toro Regional Park. The Marks Ranch – which evokes images of John Steinbeck’s *Pastures of Heaven* – was perennially threatened by development, but is now protected and one of the Trust’s first projects completed on the Salinas Valley side of the “lettuce curtain.” Toro Regional Park carries a heavy use load, packed with families on the weekends, many of them Latinos from nearby Salinas, one of the most park-poor cities in the California. With cars full of families lined up in the street each week, overuse is a concern at Toro. Marks Ranch, which also harbors an important historic ranch house and associated buildings, will be restored and updated by the Land Trust and its youth and family partners to create expanded, facilities, both welcoming and sustainable, and will dramatically boost appreciation and connection for this critical landscape.

The purchase of the Marks Ranch represented a shift away from The Land Trust’s conventional conservation thinking and the Salinas Valley is now a principal target for the organization’s future efforts. The scale and importance of conservation work in Salinas cannot be overstated. Monterey, the county’s largest coastal city, has a population of less than 30,000, while the city of Salinas has 150,000 residents, nearly two-thirds of whom are Hispanic. Salinas is more densely populated than Los Angeles, has a poverty rate well above the U.S and California averages, and is desperately underserved by open space.

A 500-acre site in the heart of Salinas, Carr Lake, may become a much-needed central park for the city. While donors have been supportive of The Land Trust’s recent work, urban projects bring new challenges to groups traditionally concerned with rural places. In Salinas, some city residents saw the urban conservation project as a challenge to workforce housing, which is a major need in the community. The Land Trust is addressing this concern and is partnering with local housing trusts and social activists to identify opportunities for integrating residential development, developed recreation and other community needs within the Land Trust’s conservation plans; these projects have the potential to improve the area while keeping the community intact.

Diversifying on another front, The Land Trust has expanded its work within the ranching community. Ranches make up half of the important conservation land in Monterey County. Deals with ranchers require special sensitivity to their concerns about public access on their properties. These projects have inspired a commitment within the organization to help maintain ranching as a viable enterprise. The Land Trust has also begun to build programming for children around working farms and ranches in the region. They hope to bridge two diverse groups and directly connect this work to the Latino community, engaging Latino families who depend on land for food or livelihood.

*“We needed to move from protecting viewsheds
to protecting human connections to the land.” Bill Leahy*

Each project of The Big Sur Land Trust requires major investments of time and resources; Leahy anticipates the Carr Lake project will take around 15 years to complete. Problems can arise if board members only focus on the number of deals the staff completes in any given year. Early in the organization’s overhaul, The Land Trust reformed its structure of governance, allowing the staff to better engage the community. Some board members, however, remain cautious or hesitant towards some of the changes. So-called “mission creep” was the most commonly cited fear from the board and the membership in response to The Land Trust’s expanded focus. Uncomfortable with unfamiliar partners and concepts, some board members are slow to accept outreach to certain groups, such as religious or development oriented organizations. Even the use of terms such as “environmental justice” is difficult for the organization to incorporate into the day to day vocabulary of Land Trust work. Because board diversity has been a challenge for The Land Trust, they are taking lessons from local nonprofits that have had more success broadening the membership of their boards.

Many working families were displaced from their homes during the 2008 Big Sur fire – a large proportion of them Latinos. In a major departure from its typical projects, The Big Sur Land Trust made a grant of \$100,000 to provide relief to the displaced families. A few board members opposed the grant, claiming the land trust was not a relief organization and the project was far outside of their mission. The grant, however, has inspired significant good will and opportunities for deep collaboration on issues of long term community viability and sustainability in Big Sur. The Land Trust has already received \$25,000 in donations toward supporting the grant, and, importantly, it earned The Land Trust a place in the wildfire recovery and resilience planning effort going forward.

The basic goals of land trusts – to acquire and manage land – can encompass a wide range of outreach efforts. By moving beyond its traditional tools, The Big Sur Land Trust has been able to help address the greatest needs of the communities it serves – thereby broadening its base of support over the long term.

Themes from the Discussion

Using conserved land to engage with new communities raises a multitude of concerns in the minds of many conservation professionals – “Wait a minute, isn’t our whole goal to protect land from the impacts of people?” This is certainly true for some sites. It is equally true that many protected sites can support a wide variety of human activities. It is also increasingly apparent that providing value to wider segments of society is the key to ensuring the permanence of conservation gains over the long term. Some of the themes of the workshop discussion on such risks and returns included the following:

Different lands can be managed differently

As illustrated by Jeff Milder’s matrix, different sites have different ecological and human values. This means that across a land trust’s or a community’s portfolio of protected sites, different sites can be managed for different uses – from no human presence to active recreation by large groups. There is a rich body of literature on the carrying capacity of recreational open space that can help inform site-specific decisions. More guidance should be made available to local land trusts on options for site management reflecting local preferences/values. Community conservation design and recreational planning could help clarify some of these issues for land trusts. This is particularly true around the different languages in which ecological and human values are expressed – from protecting land *from* somebody to protecting land *for* somebody. Ultimately, the very definition of conservation might be expanded more regularly to include working landscapes, such as farms, pastures, and working forests.

Land protection fits within a broader mission of healthy communities

Enhancing the mission of land trusts to engage with new communities does not take away from the core goals of acquiring and stewarding land. In fact, an increasing number of land trusts are finding that viewing their land as part of a healthy community – one that reflects environmental, social and economic goals – is a path to increased membership and progress on other traditional measures of success.

This is particularly true in areas where local governments are unable or unwilling to take on regional questions of land use goals and needs. In such cases, land trusts, working in concert with other local organizations, may be able to play a key role to catalyze and incubate such regional discussions. In such situations, the broader

community can help set the vision, while the land trust can augment its traditional role of acquiring and stewarding locally important parcels by assisting in connecting people to the land.

The risks of not expanding the base of support are much greater

If the land trust community remains predominantly white, wealthy and older it will fade away, as will the protections on the lands in which it has invested. This overwhelming risk can only be mitigated by taking other risks – of reaching out to new partners, of examining old and continuing injustices, of working with people who do not necessarily think or look like you, of sharing access to precious sites, and of building from the shared benefits of open space. Finding new, longer-term measures of success – beyond bucks and acres – is going to be critical to these efforts.

SECTION VIII:
SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS

Summary and Next Steps

The overwhelming sense of the workshop was one of hope

A common thread of discussion centered on the hope that progress is now being made, or that it will be in the future, and that this progress will be sustainable over time. Clearly, issues of broadening the base of support have been around for decades – in fact, Peter Stein noted that 23 years ago he was in a meeting in the very same room at Asilomar talking about similar themes. Equally clear is that these are hard issues and that they will take time to work through. Even so, participants felt energized by the focus on how to move forward while acknowledging and building from the past – both good and bad.

Among the major indicators of hope are the following:

- Real change has been shown to be possible if land trusts decide to pursue it.
- More land trusts are doing so in order to enhance their mission by making them more relevant and effective.
- More examples are available of how land trusts can successfully move to engage with new communities.
- More potential partners are being identified and effective collaborations formed.

Much of the hope stems from the successful, new partnerships that are being created

A huge amount of innovation is occurring at the local level with new partnerships around open space. Participants offered a broad and exciting variety of examples across partners (boys and girls clubs, religious groups, educators, farmers, municipal officials, chambers of commerce) and uses (recreation, education, agriculture). This decentralized innovation across local communities responding to local needs is an incredibly powerful and hopeful development. It will be important to identify land trusts that are working to become more inclusive and relevant in their communities, including those of varying organizational scale, region, and mission. Given that over half of land trusts are volunteer-based, the land trust movement will need to celebrate and promote these types of partnerships and conservation initiatives at the small-scale, local level.

Analyses of successful partnerships suggest that four major factors are key: individuals, substance, process, and timing. Each appears to be present in the current momentum toward new collaborations around open space protection.

“One needs to be a bit of a ‘chaos pilot’ to move forward on these issues.”
Andy Kendall

Individual leaders with “powerful humility” are emerging in the land trust community

Partnerships start with individuals. While many collaborations are between institutions (land trusts and public schools, for example), they all begin because individuals within those organizations realize that they cannot get where they need to be by acting alone. Frequently, these individuals have oxymoronic skill sets such as “cynical optimism,” “strategic idealism,” or “powerful humility” that allow them both to listen and to lead in ways that draw in an expanding group of partners. They also need courage and passion – and support from colleagues – to sustain their efforts over time.

An increasing number of examples of such leaders are emerging in the land conservation arena. Whether they are board members supporting expanded missions or new staff of color, or executive directors pursuing new initiatives, each are contributing to the shift in thinking now taking place within the conservation community.

Opportunities for shared benefits from shared investments are being captured

The substance of a partnership comes from the opportunity for partners to combine their skills and resources to achieve shared – or at least overlapping – goals within any local constraints. The partnerships between land trusts with their open space and other organizations with their outdoor programs are a classic – and increasingly effective – example. Tailoring the substance of these collaborations to focus on repeated exposure of children and families to open space has a huge potential for dramatically expanding and diversifying the pool of tomorrow’s conservation leaders and donors. The goal of permanently stewarding land that is at the heart of the land trust movement is an incredibly powerful foundation on which to build such partnerships.

Processes that build legitimacy over time are being used

While most people key in on the substance of a partnership, failure to focus on process at the same time has destroyed many a partnership opportunity. The different goals of the different partners need to be understood, accepted, respected and pursued by everyone involved. Transparent and inclusive processes need to be used, while still making progress toward the ultimate goals. Opportunities for shared decision-making need to be provided. Flexible mechanisms for adapting to the changes that will come over time also need to be included. Again, more and more land trusts appear to be expanding their skill sets to include the process, as well as the substance, of engaging communities in the protection of open space over the longer term. Providing access to locally valued open space in perpetuity is a key part of this effort.

“Owning land and making it accessible are the keys to Audubon’s donations for its educational programs.” Elva Yañez

There is enough of a “crisis” mentality that people are willing to change

While many partnerships make sense in theory, most only take shape when the partners believe that they are unable to make progress by acting alone. For better or worse, many land trusts now find themselves in this position. The examples of The Trustees of Reservations, Big Sur Land Trust and others provide models for land trusts that are beginning to reach the limits of their traditional ways of working.

While there is hope, there are also many areas about which to worry

Many land trust supporters view engaging in new communities as a form of mission creep to be avoided. Other worries focus on how best to build the new skill sets needed to undertake this work in an effective manner. Still others focus on finding the new language and stories that can connect the traditional science/ecologically-based culture of land trusts with the more human-centered and relationship-based efforts to engage with new communities. It will be critical for land trust organizations to embrace welcoming and empowering stories instead of inaccessible arguments. At the same time, how best to work through the challenge of building durable collaborations among people of diverse backgrounds and interests remains a puzzle for many.

The reactions of the participants to the workshop are quite encouraging

Many of the participants have been working on these issues for years – yet still felt energized by the freshness of the discussions. Others are newer to the field, coming from more diverse backgrounds and passionately committed to seeing progress made at scale and soon. Many pointed to the pragmatic traditions of land trusts as problem solvers that get things done as a basis for real optimism.

All contributed to the impression that – while much remains to be done – a tipping point has been reached and paths to progress are becoming clearer. The “why” seems to have led to a wonderfully creative and decentralized set of experiments on the “how.”

The final workshop session asked each of the participants to identify: (1) some questions on which they felt further research should be done; and (2) some actions they were considering taking within their own organizations. No effort was made to reach consensus on any of their ideas. Rather, each individual was free to take whatever items from the discussions they found valuable and apply them as they see fit.

The areas for further research identified by individual participants included the following:

- Attracting more ethnically diverse researchers to examine these questions of connecting open space and people over time.

- Understanding better the different factors affecting how individuals and groups use/value open space and making that information available to land trusts.
- Continuing to investigate why different types of people vote the way they do on open space funding measures, while expanding the effort to track where the money goes once approved.
- Collecting, assembling and disseminating lessons learned from the myriad of new partnerships being crafted with new communities.
- Developing tools to help land trusts manage their lands at varying degrees of human use intensity reflecting the ecological values of individual sites.
- Digging more deeply into the potential connections with community/economic development in both rural and urban areas, as well as with “working lands” and the people (farmers, foresters, etc.) who work them.
- Tapping into the new data sources from the U.S. Census (such as the American Community Survey) to help understand the composition of local communities.
- Comparing biophysical assessments of “conservation hotspots” to socioeconomic data on the communities that live there.
- Expanding the language used to connect across communities with different histories/usage of open space to make it more welcoming and inclusive.
- Examining the history, impacts and responses to “gentrification” in areas receiving new investment.
- Applying the lessons learned by the environmental education community more directly to the development of strategies for land trusts.
- Expanding and disseminating the results of the research on the links between access to greenspace and human health.
- Increasing the research on the ecological and social impacts of restoration activities.
- Examining the apparent gap in the funding/foundation community between the stated goals for diversity efforts and how those goals are actually reflected in existing programs.
- Identifying and publicizing land trusts that are undertaking work beyond direct land acquisition. Valuing this work as being on par with land acquisition.
- Articulating the day-to-day benefits of exposure to intact ecosystems for human communities in ways that are accessible to a broader segment of the population.

- Surveying the land trust community on the public's use of their protected lands.
- Pursuing establishment of academic fellowships in anthropology and sociology to examine cultural attitudes about land conservation from different social, racial and economic strata.

“When you work with people, it’s not about the tree, but about what the tree does to help improve other social functions.” Bill Burch

Among the actions individual workshop participants said they were going to explore were the following:

From among the land trust participants:

- Sharing with other land trusts stories of their successes – and failures – in reaching out to/partnering with new communities.
- Encouraging white colleagues to talk about race, power and privilege, as well as how their success is increasingly bound up with the success of others.
- Taking local partnerships to scale by working with state level associations (such as Boys and Girls Clubs) to connect their local chapters with local land trusts.
- Finding ways to expand the information/encouragement-sharing networks among individuals working on these issues (resources, referrals, support).
- Thinking about how best to reflect these issues/opportunities in the accreditation standards for land trusts (such as a standard and practice on community engagement).
- Changing the composition of their boards and staff to reflect the diversity of the communities within which they work – not only ethnic, but also economic.
- Working with small and medium sized land trusts to help them make progress on issues of cultural diversity as well.
- Focusing on attracting children – and through them their families – to protected sites and considering how the design of these sites impacts the users’ interest and repeated experience.
- Using the imperative of climate change to connect with new audiences around land.
- Focusing on local food and the links to families.
- Finding partners/messengers in respected, local community institutions not traditionally associated with land conservation (churches, chambers of commerce, education departments, etc.).

- Starting new programs focused on smaller parcels in suburban and urban areas.
- Reaching out to the community land trust movement to explore opportunities for collaboration with affordable housing.
- Pushing the land trust community to state that social justice is one of its core values.
- Adding an ideological/ethical component to the demographic/strategic reasons for engaging with new communities.

“I realized that I need to expand my current focus on pristine, large and distant sites, to add accessible, human-scale and locally relevant sites to my work.” Marc Smiley

From those in foundations and other funding organizations:

- Finding ways to support capacity building around the new skill sets required (fellowships, internships, scholarships, training courses, case study write-ups, etc).
- Offering challenge grants for new collaborations focused on broadening the base/engaging with new communities
- Supporting expansion of the connections between land trusts and the environmental education community.

From participants working in other types of organizations:

- Finding ways to place conservation/outdoor stories in ethnic media.
- Linking with Latino and other political groups that see people as part of the solution to environmental problems.
- Building a culture of urgency around building community via land, as well as building a lasting stewardship ethic by investing in children.
- Working to convince foundations that it is important for them to support staff positions that will build long-term relationships in communities, as well as supporting smaller, local, organizations working on inclusive conservation.

From The Land Trust Alliance:

- Fostering partnerships to help engage with new communities around open space.
- Initiating a new fellowship program with the Student Conservation Association to recruit and place people of color in land trusts.
- Building an inclusiveness training program for land trusts.

- Expanding the definition of how, where and for whom the land trust community does conservation.
- Gathering, disseminating and celebrating success stories.
- Raising an innovation fund to provide seed capital for projects in urban areas and with communities of color/lower income communities.
- Increasing three to four times the number of workshops on inclusiveness being offered as part of the Alliance's training programs.
- Supporting land trusts' efforts to expand their work around environmental education.

From the Yale Program on Strategies for the Future of Conservation:

- Continuing to match graduate students with U.S. conservation organizations on projects/internships to help engage with new communities.
- Working with funders and the F&ES admissions office to attract and serve more students of color and students from lower-income communities.
- Working with the administration and faculty to attract and retain more faculty of color.
- Collaborate with faculty at other institutions to help expand the research being done on these issues.
- Revamp the curriculum for the annual Conservation Strategies class to address these issues more directly.
- Explore the possibility of focusing the 2009 Berkley Workshop on the links between land conservation and economic/community development, particularly around working lands.

Editor Biosketches

Darcy Newsome is a Masters of Environmental Management Candidate at the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies. Her research and course work has included the conservation discourse as represented in the land conservation movement in the United States, broadening the base of support for the land conservation movement, innovative strategies for conserving land with a focus on Transfer of Development Rights, and problem-oriented natural resource management based in the policy sciences. She has worked in environmental consulting, and also completed an internship with the non-profit Cascade Land Conservancy in 2008, there completing a paper on the competition between Transfer of Development Rights programs and affordable housing programs. She plans to complete her degree in May 2009.

Emily Biesecker graduated from Yale University in 2008 with a B.A. in Environmental Studies. As a student, she spent summers researching fisheries, wildlife, and rural development programs and policies in the Philippines and Alaska. Most recently, she has worked with land trusts and other environmental agencies and organizations to study collaborations for the conservation of private land in the Northern Rockies. She will return to the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies in the fall of 2009 to complete her Master of Environmental Management degree.

Bradford S. Gentry is the Director of the Program on Strategies for the Future of Conservation, Director of the Center for Business and the Environment, as well as a Senior Lecturer and Research Scholar at the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies. Trained as a biologist and a lawyer, his work focuses on strengthening the links between private investment and improved environmental performance. He is also a partner in Working Lands Investment Partners, an advisor to GE's office of corporate environmental programs, a member of the advisory board for Suez Environnement and board chair for the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies. His teaching includes multi-disciplinary courses on the emerging markets for ecosystem services, as well as legal, financial and managerial strategies for land conservation.

