

SAVING land

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SUMMER.2018
www.landtrustalliance.org VOL.37 NO.3

Integrating Land and Water *CONSERVATION*



BILL PORTLOCK

14 COVER STORY ▶

The Interdependence of Land and Water Protection

By Madeline Bodin

With its landscape-scale, multifunder network, collaborative partnerships and technical innovation, the Chesapeake Bay Land and Water Initiative provides a good model for similar efforts across the country.



SKYLER BALLARD/CHESAPEAKE BAY PROGRAM

ON THE COVER:

The Chesapeake Bay, the third largest estuary in the world, is the focus of an unprecedented effort to reverse the impacts of pollution and restore healthier water quality to this important region.

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◀ WATER WE LOVE 20

Saving History

Preservation of historic artifacts of indigenous peoples goes hand in hand with efforts to clean up the Chesapeake Bay.



ARCHIE BONYUN, KELT VOLUNTEER PRESERVE STEWARD OF BONYUN PRESERVE

◀ FEATURE 22

On Delicate Ground: Communicating about Climate Change

By Marina Schaffler

When communicating about climate change, it helps to follow some common sense guidance from those who have successfully reached their targeted audiences.



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◀ FEATURE 26

Building Deep and Wide Support for Land Conservation

By Elizabeth Ward

Most Americans have never heard of land trusts. The Land Trust Alliance intends to change that.

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ERRATA

CORRECTIONS TO THE SPRING 2018 ISSUE INCLUDE:

P. 23—THE CAPTION FOR THE PHOTO ON P. 22 SHOULD HAVE BEEN MARIN AGRICULTURAL LAND TRUST (ACCREDITED) STEWARDSHIP MANAGER JIM JENSEN (RIGHT) AND FORMER STEWARDSHIP MANAGER PATRICIA HICKEY (LEFT) VISIT THE RANCH OF A LOCAL PRODUCER TO ASSESS INDICATORS OF RANGELAND HEALTH AS PART OF THE CARBON FARM AND CONSERVATION PLANNING PROCESS.

P. 38—SIDNEY VAN ZANDT'S NAME IS MISSPELLED.

OUR MISSION ▶ To save the places people need and love by strengthening land conservation across America.

THE LAND TRUST ALLIANCE REPRESENTS MORE THAN 1,300 LAND TRUSTS AND PROMOTES VOLUNTARY LAND CONSERVATION TO BENEFIT COMMUNITIES THROUGH CLEAN AIR AND WATER, FRESH LOCAL FOOD, NATURAL HABITATS AND PLACES TO REFRESH OUR MINDS AND BODIES.





MAKE A LASTING DIFFERENCE

"We believe there is no greater legacy that one can leave than permanently protected land. Establishing a planned gift with the Land Trust Alliance to ensure the perpetuation and permanence of programs such as conservation defense, land trust accreditation, Terrafirma insurance and community conservation is enormously gratifying and essential to us and for those who follow."

— Peter and Alice Hausmann

Providing a gift that will keep on giving to the Land Trust Alliance is an easy and gratifying way to help ensure this legacy.

To discuss gift options, contact Clara A. Nyman, CFRE, vice president of development, at 202-800-2220 or cnyman@lta.org.

For more information about planned giving and the Land Trust Alliance Legacy Society visit landtrustalliance.org/planned-giving.



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GET THE MOST FROM YOUR MEMBERSHIP

There are many benefits to being a land trust member of the Land Trust Alliance, including the fact that each member organization automatically receives three subscriptions to *Saving Land* magazine. Please visit our membership page for more information about your valuable member benefits at www.lta.org/membership. If you would prefer to receive only one copy of *Saving Land* or want to discuss your member benefits, please email jastorga@lta.org.

As I've traveled the country this spring to deliver keynote presentations to various audiences, I've been talking about the Land Trust Alliance's new strategic plan (www.lta.org/strategic-plan). I make a point to talk about the four R's that make up the Alliance's conservation goals—relevance, rate, rigor and resilience.

The latter three goals are relatively easy for people to understand, especially if they are part of our community. After all, those goals parallel the Alliance's focus since 2010 on the pace, quality and permanence of land conservation. The first goal—relevance—takes a bit more explaining. That goal is all about countering the long-term threat of public apathy and disinterest in land conservation, as well as the growing lack of connection between many Americans and the land.

For the past few years, the Alliance has sought to address this problem through our focus on community conservation. We believe that when land trusts engage all people in their communities—especially those who have not traditionally been served by, engaged in or moved by land conservation—they make land conservation inclusive and relevant. Moreover, when land trusts take part in this work, they build broad and deep support for land conservation. They also address inequities regarding access to land, open space and a healthy environment; increase financial and political resources for land conservation (and, therefore, the rate of land conservation); make land trusts more reliant on and enriched by the communities they serve; and, ultimately, ensure the permanence of land conservation.

The Alliance will continue to produce robust programming and services to help land trusts engage in community conservation in ways that are tailored to their circumstances and unique realities. But it can do much more as a national organization that represents 1,000 land trusts from across the country. Namely, the Alliance can complement and amplify the local efforts of land trusts with a national, coalition-based call-to-action campaign around land conservation. This "relevance campaign" is absolutely essential to building broad and deep support for land conservation in communities across the nation, as described on page 26.

We're going to need your help as we design and launch this bold initiative. As with so many other challenges and opportunities that face the land trust community, we look forward to collaborating with you to identify the best ways to tailor and disseminate effective messages to new audiences in the communities you serve and across the country.

Andrew Bowman



D.J. GLISSON, II

BY Kirsten Ferguson

Realtors and Quality of Place



STEPHEN JOSEPH

Save Mount Diablo and the real estate industry are partnering to promote “quality of place” in Antioch, California’s Sand Creek Focus Area.

Recognizing that the real estate industry depends on quality of place, California’s Save Mount Diablo (accredited) recently launched a new partnership with real estate professionals, enlisting Paragon Real Estate Group as the first firm to join. Under the program, Paragon will give Save Mount Diablo membership gift packages to its clients at closings and other special occasions.

“This will provide a unique and meaningful way to welcome someone to the new community and get them involved with a local nonprofit organization that is helping protect their recent real estate investment and quality of life through its efforts to conserve the

lands of the Mount Diablo area,” says Ted Clement, Save Mount Diablo executive director. “The real estate industry can do much to help us protect the natural beauty of the Mount Diablo area for the benefit of all.”

Realtor education is also important, as realtors and buyers of protected land may have little understanding of what a conservation easement is or how it works. To address this shortcoming, the accredited Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy in Michigan put together a handy set of resources to help sellers and realtors market conserved land to potential buyers. See <https://tlc.lta.org/realtorguide>. •

Protection for Historic Neighborhoods

Since the late ’90s, River Fields in Kentucky (accredited) has sought attention for a historically significant neighborhood on Upper River Road in Louisville, where freed African Americans established a community following the Civil War. After River Fields took State Historic Preservation Officer David Morgan to tour the neighborhood, the Kentucky Heritage Council officially recognized the area as having two eligible National Register Districts that protect them from federal undertakings.

River Fields also invited major state leaders to see this important historic area and led tours for national preservation officials. In 2017 it initiated an active planning process for the neighborhood that includes both eligible historic districts: the Jacob School Neighborhood and the James Taylor Neighborhood. A draft neighborhood plan is now complete, funded by a \$40,000 grant from River Fields for a contract with the Center for Neighborhoods to implement the planning process and produce a plan that will be presented to the Louisville Metro Council for approval. Look for updates at <http://riverfields.org>. •

Help Revise the Forest Management Standard

Earlier this year the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) launched a two-year revision process for the FSC U.S. Forest Management Standard—and it seeks input from land trusts and landowners.

“We’re looking at how the standard aligns with national and global expectations,” says Amy Clark Eagle, FSC’s director of science and certification. “A priority issue is how we incorporate climate change considerations. A lot has changed in recognition of the major role that forests can play in climate change adaptation. We’re also making sure our standard stays relevant and accessible for small family forest owners as well as large-tract owners.”

The FSC standard, last revised in 2010, certifies that landowner practices meet a set of indicators for protecting ecosystems, engaging the community and providing economic and environmental benefits. For land trusts, it provides the benefit of knowing their forestland is managed to a high standard.

“If a land trust manages certified forest, we’re interested in feedback on what has worked or not worked. For the land trusts that have not managed certified forests, we’d like feedback on the barriers to getting their land certified,” says Eagle.

Look for multiple opportunities to join the process. “The number one action we ask of land trusts is to join our email list, which we will be using to share information and provide opportunities to comment on standard revisions. You can join this consultative forum by filling out a short form on our website,” says Brad Kahn, FSC communications director.

In 2019, during the public review period, FSC will hold listening sessions, webinars and focus groups to get further feedback. To get involved, visit <https://us.fsc.org/en-us/certification/forest-management-certification/fsc-us-forest-management-standard-2018-2019-revision>. •



Research has identified multiple benefits to humans of spending time in a forest.

The Land Wins Big



FOREST SOCIETY

In a win for New Hampshire forests and conserved lands, the proposed Northern Pass hydroelectric transmission project has been formally rejected.

The New Hampshire Site Evaluation Committee (SEC) voted unanimously in early February to deny a Certificate of Site and Facility, saying the utility failed to prove the 192-mile, \$1.6 billion transmission line would not disrupt the orderly development of the region. In late March the SEC released a formal 287-page decision to deny the application, saying the project would have a negative impact on land use.

The accredited Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests (Forest Society) has opposed the project since Eversource announced the plan in 2010 to bring Hydro-Quebec electricity to the New England grid.

“We opposed Northern Pass because of the direct impacts it would have on existing conserved lands in New Hampshire, including lands we own and easements we hold,” says Jane Difley, president/forester of the Forest Society. “From the beginning, we recognized that we had a legal and ethical obligation to defend those lands and the state’s landscapes from a very large commercial development proposal.”

“The Forest Society used its strengths,” says Jack Savage, vice president of communications and outreach, “engaging the grassroots and providing credible information, changing policy, protecting land and defending legally what we’ve protected, and immersing ourselves in the permitting process. And all along we built a support network to help fund our action.”

Northern Pass said it will review the order and expects to file a motion to reconsider. If the SEC denies the motion, and Eversource appeals the decision to the state Supreme Court, the process could take at least a year. •

Darkness Worth Protecting



RONALD GLEASON

Over 80% of the U.S. population lives under skies so polluted by man-made lights that celestial objects like the Milky Way are almost invisible. A growing number of communities—especially in the American West—are determined to preserve pristine views of the stars and dark night skies.

Utah—which has more dark-sky places than any other state—is emerging as a global leader in protecting night skies, thanks in part to a former board member of Ogden Valley Land Trust (UT) and a group of academics and others who have helped to found a multi-university dark sky study center called the Consortium for Dark Sky Studies (CDSS).

Based at the University of Utah, CDSS is the first academic center in the world dedicated to discovering and applying

knowledge to help protect the quality of night skies. To further dark-sky protections, CDSS is bringing together more than 25 universities, industries, community and government partners to take part in researching light pollution.

“One of our priorities in working with the International Dark-Sky Association has been to develop model language for conservation easements, and we have been able to do that with some excellent guidance from the accredited Scenic Hudson in New York. Dark-sky provisions are now a part of the Land Trust Alliance Learning Center’s wealth of information and conservation tools,” says a CDSS representative. Learn more at <http://darkskestudies.org> and search “dark sky” on the Learning Center. •

An App for Wild Places and Open Spaces

Adventurers in Illinois are exploring the state’s natural places with help from a new smartphone app developed by Prairie State Conservation Coalition (PSCC), a coalition of 40 Illinois land trusts. The Prairie State Hike App, available as a 99-cent download on iTunes and Google Play, gives users access to dozens of guided hikes and trails statewide. Driven by GPS, the app’s maps show hikers their exact location and points of interest along a trail.

“The Prairie State Hike App is available to all PSCC members to help promote their wild places and open spaces,” says the coalition’s

Sandy Kaczmariski. “The app is a way for land trusts to tell their stories about the lands they protect and cherish using photos, videos and audio narration to share the rich history and native features enjoyed by those who visit. The app has been used to promote one-time events, tours of hiking trails, canoe trips and anything else within a member’s imagination. An educational tour for school groups could include bird sounds, native plants and wildlife to be identified.”

For more information, visit www.prairiestateconservation.org/pssc/hikeapp. •

Finding Common Ground Through Language

Meaningful conversations in Spanish about issues of food and land in Kingston, New York, happen regularly thanks to Comida y Tierra, a Spanish-immersion conversation series launched last year by Kingston Land Trust in collaboration with the Kingston YMCA Farm Project. The dinners, held at Hispanic-owned restaurants and community picnics, attract both native Spanish speakers and non-native speakers practicing their Spanish at an intermediate or more advanced level.

Each dinner focuses on current land and food issues affecting Kingston, such as the Greenline, a network of urban trails and green spaces. Through the Comida y Tierra series, Kingston Land Trust produced outreach materials in Spanish about upcoming Greenline projects to remove the language barrier that can discourage the area's Hispanic population from participating in the public process.

"Our Spanish conversation series is building a base of trust and new cross-cultural relationships," says Julia Farr, Kingston Land Trust executive director. "We have identified volunteer interpreters to attend relevant public meetings so that those who speak Spanish as their dominant language—15% of the population of Kingston—

can participate. In addition to learning from our growing and diverse base, we are engaging the Comida y Tierra attendees in public input into future Kingston Land Trust projects." •



KINGSTON LAND TRUST

The Comida y Tierra meet-ups bring the Kingston community together.

Immersing the Next Generation of Stewards

Conservationist Baba Dioum once said, "In the end we will conserve only what we love, we will love only what we understand, and we will understand only what we are taught." The accredited Blue Ridge Land Conservancy in Virginia took that maxim to heart when creating Bay Day, which teaches students how they affect the environment around them.

Launched in 2012, the Chesapeake Bay Day Program invites fourth-grade students in Botetourt County to a local conservation easement property to learn about water quality and watersheds. Over two days students rotate through learning stations about clean water, natural resources, soil erosion and how their actions at the headwaters of the James River can impact water quality in the Chesapeake Bay.

Bay Day has been such a success, the conservancy expanded the program into neighboring watersheds in 2016, where schools participate in River Days, with a focus on the Roanoke and New rivers.

Bay and River Days are part of the conservancy's larger focus on outdoor education for all. A summer 2018 outdoor adventure series includes opportunities for people of all ages to hike the tallest mountains in the area, discover nocturnal species, learn about locavore eating and kayak on America's founding river, the James.



BLUE RIDGE LAND CONSERVANCY

Students learn about how water affects their lives and how they affect water quality and watersheds during Bay and River Days hosted by the Blue Ridge Land Conservancy.

"Blue Ridge Land Conservancy's outdoor adventure series aims to bring the community outside, learning about the ecosystems that surround them while discovering the value of conserved land," says Outdoor Educator Grace Boardwine. Learn more at www.blueridgelandconservancy.org and read about work to restore the Chesapeake Bay on page 15. 🌊

BY Sarina Katz

ADVOCATING TOGETHER FOR *Conservation*



DI GLISSON, II

The Land Trust Alliance Advocacy Days 2018 brought together a powerful cohort of ambassadors for land conservation.

The week of April 9 was a very busy one in Washington, D.C., as land conservationists arrived in the nation's capital. On behalf of their land trusts back home and for land conservation around the country, advocates came from Alaska, Florida and everywhere in between to attend the seventh annual Land Trust Alliance Advocacy Days and associated networking receptions.

For some, walking the halls of the Senate and House buildings has become much like a walk in the park. For others, this was their first time learning to navigate on the Hill. But for the experienced and the newcomers alike, this was an opportunity to push land conservation priorities to the forefront of their representatives' agendas and reiterate the fantastic work our community does day in and day out to protect our country's working lands and natural spaces.

Land Trust Alliance Advocacy Days

Advocacy Days 2018 was held at a strategic time to maximize the potential to advance multiple federal funding and policy priorities for the land trust community, including passing legislation to halt conservation easement tax shelters, advocating on behalf of our Farm Bill recommendations and urging reauthorization and funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Almost 120 land trust participants attended more than 200 meetings with elected officials and their staff.

Conservation Easement Tax Shelters

Thanks to support in the form of bipartisan bills in the House and Senate, we have an opportunity to stop conservation easement tax shelters (also referred to as syndicated transactions) once and for all.

Fortunately, we had members in town from the districts and states of sponsors of H.R. 4459 and S. 2436, the Charitable Conservation Easement Program Integrity Act.

Oliver Bass of Natural Lands (accredited) and Brian Gallagher of Western Pennsylvania Land Conservancy (accredited) attended a meeting with bill sponsor, Rep. Mike Kelly (R-PA). Bass and Gallagher have been attending Advocacy Days from the very beginning and strongly believe in the power of community. "Coming here helps me to keep up to date on policy issues and also shows a concentrated effort on behalf of the land trust community," Bass said. In a brief discussion in the hall outside the congressman's office, Bass and Gallagher discussed a strategy for their meeting with Kelly's policy director, Lori Prater. Both incorporated



Brian Gallagher (left) and Oliver Bass (right) meet with Rep. Mike Kelly, who sponsored a bill to stop tax shelters.

all they learned from briefings provided by the Alliance into their talking points.

The two thanked Prater and Rep. Kelly for their support of H.R. 4459 and their continued leadership on this issue. "If it looks like a tax shelter, smells like a tax shelter, it's clearly a tax shelter," Prater said. "It's undermining the goodwill of the community and the original intent of the federal conservation tax incentive."

All those who attended Advocacy Days were encouraged to urge their representatives to support H.R. 4459 and S. 2436 in the weeks to come.

Farm Bill

The reauthorization of the Farm Bill was another top priority for Advocacy Days. As the single largest federal source of funding for private land conservation, the next Farm Bill package will have a significant impact on the future of conservation across the country.

Land trust coalitions, like the Partnership of Rangeland Trusts (PORT), came prepared with stories and statistics about how the Farm Bill, and particularly the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP),

have supported conservation work on their properties for years.

During one particular meeting, members of PORT met with Ashley McKeon, a senior staffer in Sen. Debbie Stabenow's (D-MI) office. Sen. Stabenow, who also spoke at a breakfast hosted by the Alliance during Advocacy Days, is the ranking member on the Senate Agriculture Committee and has been a longtime supporter of the Farm Bill conservation programs and its reauthorization.

Speaking to McKeon, Erik Glenn, executive director of the accredited Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust, reiterated the community's desire to see ACEP funding restored to \$500 million. He also honed in on the community's desire to increase the flexibility of the Agricultural Land Easements program, hoping to streamline applications and ongoing management.

For other delegations, Farm Bill discussions took a less traditional route. Nicole Braddock, executive director of the accredited Solano Land Trust in California, greeted Rep. John Garamendi (D-CA) like

an old friend. "Our representatives appreciate us coming in person to talk about these issues. It's a big gesture and helps us to stand out in such a large state," Braddock says.

The California delegation discussed the Farm Bill in great detail, urging Rep. Garamendi to support reauthorization. But their discussion soon turned to home; many land trusts in the room are still recovering from devastating fires, and funding from Farm Bill sources could help establish programs for fire and forest management.

Linus Eukel, executive director of the accredited John Muir Land Trust, thanked the congressman for his continued support: "You've been a champion of our work for a long time, and we can't thank you enough."

The efforts of all those who attended Advocacy Days, and the ambassadors who work from afar, have paid off. At press time, almost all of the Alliance's recommendations for the 2018 Farm Bill have been included in the most recent House Bill. For the latest on the Farm Bill, visit www.lta.org/farm-bill. 🌱

SARINA KATZ IS COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING COORDINATOR FOR THE LAND TRUST ALLIANCE. THIS WAS HER SECOND ADVOCACY DAYS.

Celebrating NRCS

This year the land trust community and the Department of Agriculture came together to celebrate 25 years of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) conservation easement programs. NRCS provides America's farmers, ranchers and forest landowners with financial and technical assistance to voluntarily put conservation on the ground. NRCS is responsible for the implementation of the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program, which includes the Agricultural Land Easements program and the Wetlands Reserve Program, both authorized and funded through the Farm Bill.

The reception gathered members of Congress, federal agency staff and many partner organizations. Chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee Pat Roberts (R-KS), USDA Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation Bill Northey and Acting NRCS Chief Leonard Jordan all delivered remarks during the event. Sen. Roberts underscored the importance of the Farm Bill and noted the strong bipartisan commitment to getting it done in the Senate. Under Secretary Northey recognized that "conservation requires lots of different approaches to get lots of different things done."

All speakers encouraged continued bipartisan cooperation for these programs. Jordan promoted a message of people and partnership. "We have to do everything in our power to keep working lands working," he stated. The Alliance and its members are hoping for another successful 25 years!



Imani Rowe, second from left, poses with other interns in the Intern and Leadership Program of the accredited Lookout Mountain Conservancy. Master gardener and volunteer Kathleen Robinson (far left) works with the students in the teaching garden.

LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN CONSERVANCY

There are three overall steps:

1. Write an essay, get three teacher recommendations and your transcript and meet with LMC staff;
2. Volunteer 20 hours;
3. Interview with current LMC interns and staff.

Once you get into the program you will face a series of challenges, and some will make you want to quit. I can remember a few times I wanted to just give up, but everyone keeps you going and lets you know that times get hard and that you always have a shoulder to lean on. On that note I would like to thank Ms. Ashley, Ms. Robyn and all the board members for the support of LMC.

One of the many reasons I chose to apply to LMC was because I aspire to become a zoologist. The program helps you with your future career choices by having a series of people work with you to fulfill your dreams. They set up internships, job shadows and connect us with other programs that benefit us. Also they give us an order of our priorities so that we can become successful:

- School: Our first priority, the most important; without school we can't be successful.
- Extracurricular: Always give back to your community or school.
- LMC: The place I work.

You gain an excessive amount of life qualities working at LMC. You learn communication skills, perseverance, teamwork, and you grow a personality that you didn't have before. I have always loved being outside and always knew how to interact with people, but this program has taught me that there is always room to grow. I have learned how to not be so independent while working. I have learned to strategize more and think things through. Another great thing about this program is its equity and diversity. Not only are some of the interns different ethnicities or races, but so are the volunteers and youth we work with. We learn different things about one another's cultures and how we all can relate to one another. 🌱

Room to Grow

The following is adapted from a speech Imani Rowe, a student at the Howard School in Chattanooga, Tennessee, presented at the Land Trust Alliance's Southeast Conference in March 2018.

My name is Imani Rowe, I am 15 and in the 10th grade. I have been working for Lookout Mountain Conservancy (LMC) for a little under a year and it has been one of the best things I have chosen to invest my time in. I have received a prodigious amount of opportunities regarding my future career choices, my present life and just life experiences as a whole.

What intrigued me to want to join LMC? Two words: Alethea Frady.

Alethea, my older sister, wasn't always the most positive influence. Yet when she joined the program I started to notice big changes in her life. Her attitude became more positive and she began to be more interested and driven toward her school life. Overall, she became a better person. My sister had never been the outgoing type so to see her getting up early, excited to go to work made me wonder: What was so special about this job of hers and how could I get into it?

I thought it would be as simple as filling out an application, but for anybody who knows, that most definitely was not the case.



“The support that the Land Trust Alliance has provided North Olympic Land Trust over its existence has been incredibly impactful for the organization’s overall evolution.”

— Alana Linderoth, Community Engagement Specialist
North Olympic Land Trust (accredited)

OUR MEMBERS ARE AT THE HEART OF EVERYTHING WE DO.

The Land Trust Alliance is here to support you through crises and join you in celebrating your victories. Most of all, we share your passion for conservation, and we are inspired by all that you do to conserve our lands and waters and to foster healthy, vibrant communities now and for future generations.

Thank you!

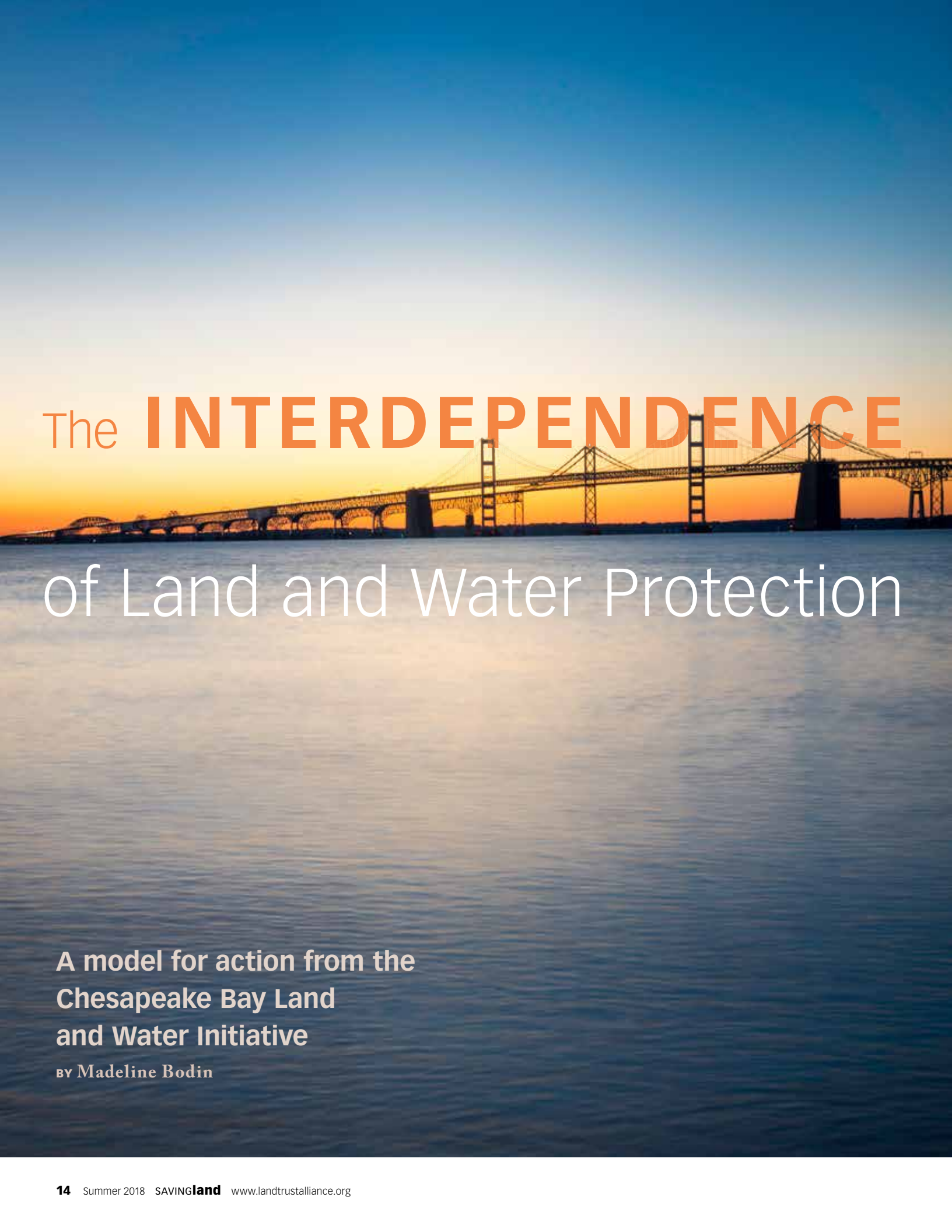


“We’re rocking it right now, and that’s because the Land Trust Alliance came in at the right time to help us just take off.”

— Kay Ogden, Executive Director
Eastern Sierra Land Trust,
California (accredited)

The Land Trust Alliance is here for you:

- ▶ We invest in our members so **you can take your career and your organization to the next level.**
- ▶ We advocate for sound conservation policy so **you can conserve more land.**
- ▶ We offer conservation defense tools to help our members ensure that protected land stays protected—and so **you can sleep at night.**
- ▶ We connect our members to each other, to experts and to potential partners so **you never feel alone.**
- ▶ We provide our members with standards, training and expertise so **you have what you need to run and grow your organization.**
- ▶ We are champions of our members’ reputation so **you have the support of your community and the public.**
- ▶ We keep our members abreast of the latest developments, trends and opportunities so **you feel confident, informed and inspired.**
- ▶ Our events and platforms help **you share your success stories and lessons learned with the land trust community.**



The **INTERDEPENDENCE** of Land and Water Protection

**A model for action from the
Chesapeake Bay Land
and Water Initiative**

BY Madeline Bodin

In addition to providing environmental benefits, the protection and restoration of the Chesapeake Bay and related waterways are essential to a healthy economy. The fishing, tourism, real estate and shipping industries all depend on the bay's health.

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Water covers 71% of the Earth's surface. It makes up to 60% of our bodies. And year after year, it tops all environmental concerns in a Gallup environmental issues survey. In the 2017 Gallup poll, 63% of those surveyed worry "a great deal" about the pollution of drinking water. Another 57% worry a great deal about pollution of rivers, lakes and reservoirs.

"Clean water is a big concern to Americans," says Jennifer Miller Herzog, program manager for the Land Trust Alliance's Chesapeake Bay Land and Water Initiative (the Initiative). "I think we're in a great moment when land trusts are thinking about this issue in a deeper way. And we want to help them do that."

One sign of a great partnership, she says, is when each party seems to be the answer to the other's toughest questions. Such is the case with land and water in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

This 64,000-square-mile estuary—America's largest, and the world's third largest—is in the midst of an epic, unprecedented effort to reverse the impacts of pollution and restore healthier water quality to the region's more than 100,000 rivers and streams and to the bay itself. A key factor in that effort is land: land management, land use, land cover. "Land determines the quality of water we have to drink, play in and work in, and land trusts are a prime player in protecting and stewarding this critical resource," says Miller Herzog.

"Land trusts know a property with river frontage is a high-value property ecologically," she says. "But the Initiative asks them to take that one step farther, looking at a property's link to water quality with a greater level of sophistication."

That means getting specific about how using best management practices on the land will reduce the levels of water

pollutants, such as nitrogen and phosphorous, she says. It also means targeting strategic land conservation with more precise water quality and pollution data. For many land trusts, that will require new tools and new skills.

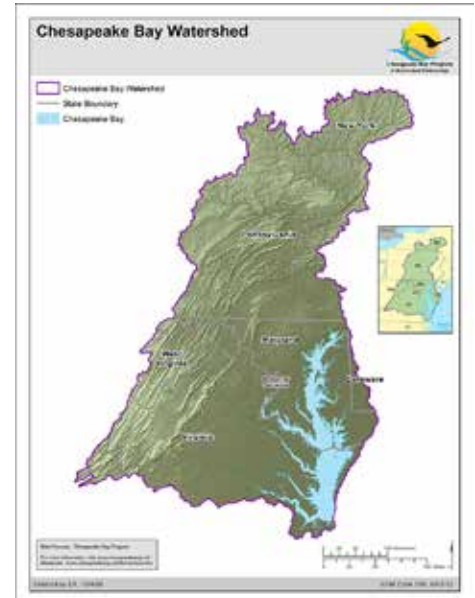
For land trusts, working on water issues is a way to stay relevant and gain public support for their work. It's also a possible avenue to new sources of funding.

"A Really Productive Partnership"

Foundation leaders active in the Chesapeake Bay Funders Network (CBFN) saw the ingredients for a perfect partnership emerging. CBFN members had been funding activities to improve water quality in the Chesapeake Bay since before the network's founding in 2003. Especially in its early years, CBFN focused on agricultural practices and building the capacity of grassroots watershed restoration organizations. Many of those organizations also worked to get laws passed that would improve the water quality of the bay.

"There are lots of funder affinity groups throughout the nation organized around geography or issue," says Jamie Baxter, CBFN's program director. "When the Chesapeake Bay Funders Network was founded, it was with a bias for collaborative action. We are always looking for the places where working collectively will make a bigger difference than we could make individually."

It was good work, but Sam Stokes, then the board chair of the MARPAT



Foundation, a member of the network, thought more was needed. "Laws mandating the reduction of pollutants and sedimentation can be changed," Stokes observed. "Riparian buffers protected by easements are forever." And while water quality is determined by land management, those working on watershed restoration often struggled to gain access to private land. Likewise, was every acre conserved in the watershed delivering cleaner water? Likely not yet.

Four years ago, Stokes asked his CBFN colleagues to consider another focus to their collective grant making, which had grown

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to include capacity building, stormwater management and working with farmers: land conservation. They would do this by working with land trusts.

Stokes tapped Alliance Northeast Director Kevin Case and Heather Richards (now director of the accredited Conservation Fund's Virginia program) to meet with 20 CBFN members to consider how funders could encourage the region's land trusts to accelerate land protection with the greatest potential impact on the bay's water quality in the near term.

CBFN formed the Land Trust Working Group, with co-chairs Stokes and Megan Gallagher, a foundation trustee from Virginia, and commissioned the Alliance to study the current work and capacity of land trusts in the Chesapeake Bay watershed to improve water quality. "We wanted to know how land trusts addressed water resources and how our funding might expand strategic land protection and stewardship for water quality," Gallagher says.

The assessment, led by consultant Mary McBryde of Long Haul Conservation

Advisors, found that water resources matter to land trusts, and, in partnership with others, the land trusts are developing new tools, skills and programs to protect, improve and restore water quality.

Most important, the assessment stated that land trusts—given their on-the-ground presence, landowner relationships, stewardship of millions of acres of land and broad community focus—are uniquely positioned to accelerate land conservation that achieves specific water quality goals while building strong communities. The assessment also highlighted the critical role of, and need for, science-based tools and training tailored for land trusts.

"The assessment was not only about the Chesapeake," says McBryde. "There are huge water issues across the country. We identified tools, strategies and approaches

Land trusts are uniquely positioned to accelerate land conservation that achieves specific water quality goals while building strong communities.



Greg Kearns, a naturalist at Patuxent River Park in Prince George's County, Maryland, leads a tour of osprey nests on the river during annual efforts to band juveniles. Approximately one-quarter of all ospreys in the contiguous United States nest in the Chesapeake Bay region, which includes the Patuxent River.

SKYLER BALLARD/CHESAPEAKE BAY PROGRAM

Can historic preservation protect drinking water? In Jefferson County, West Virginia, the answer is yes. "The Jefferson County Historic Landmarks Commission has acquired properties along the Potomac River to preserve their history, protecting drinking water in the process," says David Lillard with West Virginia Rivers Coalition.

to promote water quality that could be replicated in other places."

Stokes, Gallagher, Case and Richards, with their funder and Alliance colleagues, adapted McBryde's recommendations to create the Alliance's Chesapeake Bay Land and Water Initiative. "Both Sam and I have land trust backgrounds and years of experience working with either Kevin or Heather, which made for a really productive partnership," Gallagher says.

The Chesapeake Bay's watershed reaches into six states: New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, West Virginia and Virginia. Overlapping local, state and federal regulations can make coordinating efforts to improve the bay's water quality challenging. But, with its landscape-scale, multifunder network, collaborative partnerships and technical innovation, the Initiative provides a good model for similar efforts across the country.

Grants for Water Quality

The Initiative made its first round of grants in 2017. The accredited Virginia Eastern Shore Land Trust (VES Land Trust) received one of them.

When VES Land Trust director Hali Plourde-Rogers says, "What happens on the land, happens in the water," she knows that more than most. On Virginia's Eastern Shore, you are never more than a few miles from the Chesapeake Bay. When the clouds ride low and the air gets heavy before a rain storm, you can smell the salt in the air. And when the clouds part and rain moves on, the bay is a little browner from everything the rain just washed into it.

"Water quality is essential to our existence," Plourde-Rogers says. The VES Land Trust holds 74 donated conservation easements on 14,000 acres and has two staff members.

In recent years, VES Land Trust has required all its new conservation easement holders to have a 100-foot buffer in between their agricultural operations and any body of water. But some older easements grandfathered in narrower buffers. VES Land Trust is working with landowners to



DAVID LILLARD

increase those buffers to 100 feet. It used an Initiative grant to accelerate that process.

VES Land Trust contracted with the Chesapeake Conservancy's Conservation Innovation Center to get LIDAR (laser-based measurement technology) data that show tiny dips and folds in the land, and, from that, exactly how water is moving across the landscape. The maps that were created let the VES Land Trust see where improved buffers are needed most.

Plourde-Rogers says that encouraging residents of the Eastern Shore to focus on water quality requires the same balancing of needs that it does in places where residents never smell the tang of salt in the air. Maintaining local drinking water quality is important, she says, as is being able to enjoy the region's famous blue crabs and oysters in the years to come.

The second round of Land and Water Initiative grants was awarded recently, and it included a project by the accredited Brandywine Conservancy, which works in the scenic Brandywine watershed in southeastern Pennsylvania. As an organization that has "dependable water supplies" as part of its mission, the conservancy leverages national Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) regulations under the Clean Water Act to further its goals.

One aspect of the regulations requires municipalities to reduce the nutrient pollution and sediments flowing into waterways. "Agricultural best management practices are a much cheaper route to better water quality than projects in urban or suburban

areas," says John Goodall, Brandywine Conservancy's Western Area manager.

Local farmers see the Brandywine Conservancy as a trusted resource that can provide or guide them to funding for conservation projects, help them sort out government regulations and paperwork and even help manage contractors.

"Farmers are busy," says Grant DeCosta, senior planner for the conservancy. "Having that assistance is invaluable to them, which has helped us get so much done in this area." And, he says, when giving assistance, they always keep in mind that farming is a small business. They explain the benefits in terms of saving money or improving the family's quality of life, such as having safe drinking water.

Where it all comes together, says Goodall, is when the water quality work is done on farms that already have conservation easements. "It's a wise use of our funds," he says, a way for the investment to have the longest possible life. "You know that benefit is going to be preserved."

Far-Reaching Collaborations

The Initiative also supports new partnerships of different organizations to improve water quality. The Shenandoah Valley Conservation Collaborative is doing this in a big way. It brings together eight conservation organizations—including a watershed group, a county conservation easement authority, two land trusts and four groups interested in land use, transportation and historic preservation—who

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all share an interest in the Shenandoah Valley region of Virginia.

“When diverse partners meet across the table, what comes along is all their relationships throughout the community and all the respect they’ve earned within their constituencies,” says Kate Wofford, executive director of the Shenandoah Valley Network, a land use organization.

Although the collaborative is relatively new, Kim Woodwell, executive director of the Shenandoah Forum, another land use organization, says that she’s already seeing the benefits of this extended network. One partner may identify a pristine stretch of river or productive farmland and find that another partner already has a relationship with the landowner.

Wofford and Woodwell say that while the organizations in the collaborative had been working together for more than 10 years, the grant opportunity from the Initiative brought them together formally in pursuit of their shared land and water goals for the first time.

One of the partners in the collaborative is the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation. The rich cultural resources found throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed mean that battlefield preservation

organizations are an important source of funding, knowledge, personnel and local political will to several Initiative projects.

But what’s most exciting, say Wofford and Woodwell, is the collaborative spirit behind the partnership. There are groups working to preserve historical sites all around the country, but, they contend, when you get down to it, it’s not just the history that’s important, but reaching out to new partners. “What’s innovative,” says Wofford, “is bringing in non-land trust partners to advance land conservation goals.”

As the collaborative gets started, Wofford says, “We find ourselves asking why we didn’t do this 10 years ago because there really are some exciting prospects.”

Connecting with Farmers

Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, is just 90 miles from the Chesapeake Bay, but to most of the county’s residents, the bay is a world away. Lancaster is marked by cornfields, dairy cows and historic barns adorned with colorful hex signs. For members of the Plain sects that the county is known for, such as the Amish, the distance seems even farther because it is traveled by horse and buggy.

So when staffers from the accredited Lancaster Farmland Trust sit down at the kitchen table with a local farmer, they don’t mention how trees shading a stream or good manure storage can help a Chesapeake Bay fisherman keep his job. Although the land trust knows this is true, says Deputy Director Jeff Swinehart, during that conversation, staffers focus on local benefits, such as keeping local drinking water sources safe to drink.

Farmers have faith in Lancaster Farmland Trust because of all the good it has already done in the community. By the end of 2018, it will have conserved 500 farms and 30,000 acres of land. That’s especially important in this part of the country, where farmers have cultural reservations about dealing with government agencies that make up the federal and state regulatory framework of bay restoration, Swinehart says.

Funding for projects that ultimately benefit water quality, such as an area to store manure over the winter, plays a big role in getting these projects done, says Swinehart. But they are only part of the story. For the past 12 years, the land trust has been meeting with farmers one-on-one to talk about the connection between their farming practices and water quality. The depth of this interaction means that when funding for farm improvements becomes available, the land trust already has an established relationship with the farmers who will benefit most.

Protecting Land to Protect Water

Whitewater paddling and fishing are significant parts of West Virginia’s heritage. Nearly 30 years ago, outdoor enthusiasts founded the West Virginia Rivers Coalition (WV Rivers) to look out for the health of the state’s watersheds. The group became a statewide water policy organization, focused on drinking water as well as recreational streams.

In 2014 it championed a law to protect drinking water supplies, designed to identify threats and engage the public and utilities to work upstream of water intakes. Its Safe Water for West Virginia program combines the talents and resources of utilities, agencies, watershed associations and civic groups.

The Initiative’s new grant opportunity, with its focus on partnerships, inspired WV Rivers to invite land trusts to work together to protect streams vital to drinking water. “The best way to protect water might be to protect land,” says David Lillard, coordinator of WV Rivers’ Private Lands, Public Waters collaborative. The goal is to collaborate with local land trusts to bring land conservation into a watershed-based approach to protecting drinking water. “Our aspirational model is New York City, which has been conserving land to protect its water supply for decades,” he says.

In 2018, it is identifying lands in Jefferson and Berkeley counties that are high priorities for water quality, especially the streams that feed the Shenandoah and Potomac rivers, which meet in Jefferson County. The Potomac then flows into

Thank you to the 11 Chesapeake Bay Funders Network members that have generously made pledges and contributions that collectively total more than \$1 million to the Chesapeake Bay Land and Water Initiative. The Alliance is working to match their investment 1-to-1 to maximize the program’s reach and impact.

To support this Initiative, contact Jennifer Miller Herzog, Chesapeake Program Manager, jmillerherzog@lta.org, or Suzanne Erera, Director of Foundation and Corporate Relations, serera@lta.org.

Learn more and see the full list of funders at www.lta.org/chesapeake-bay.



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Mike Kane, John McCarthy and Claire Catlett, staff from Piedmont Environmental Council, took Jennifer Miller Herzog, Land Trust Alliance (far right) and Jennifer McGarvey, Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, on a tour of the Upper Rappahannock Watershed, reviewing PEC's protection work in the area.

Chesapeake Bay, so better water quality for West Virginians also means a healthier and more productive bay. The Initiative funding is helping the collaborative develop conservation planning models and create public awareness of the link between land conservation and water quality.

Revolving Loan Fund Keeps Giving

At the edge of the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area, in Virginia's northern Piedmont, farmers and rural landowners are working to adopt agricultural best management practices (BMPs) to improve water quality in the Goose Creek watershed, which feeds into the Potomac River and the Chesapeake Bay, and is an important public drinking water source for the Northern Virginia suburbs.

Public agencies—such as local soil and water conservation districts—offer programs that reimburse farmers for installing those BMPs, like fencing that keeps livestock away

from streams and new wells and watering systems that provide livestock an alternative source of drinking water.

The problem is cash flow, says Michael Kane, director of conservation for the accredited Piedmont Environmental Council (PEC) of Warrenton, Virginia. Implementing BMPs can be expensive, at times costing more than \$100,000. Some farmers simply don't have the money for the up-front costs of installing the BMPs, even though they may be reimbursed later. The result: a short term funding gap is preventing willing landowners from implementing BMPs that can improve water quality in the Goose Creek watershed.

By repurposing funds from PEC's James Rowley Goose Creek Conservation Fund, originally established for real estate acquisitions in this important watershed, PEC will offer short-term capital to landowners to cover the up-front costs of participating in BMP cost-share programs.

An \$18,000 grant from the Initiative is filling a small funding gap in PEC's plans, just as the revolving loan fund fills the need for farmers, Kane says. Careful work by legal counsel will create the documentation that ensures that each project is done to specifications and that the funds return to assist the next project. Even better, this will be a model template that can be used by other organizations, particularly in Virginia, that are planning similar projects.

Just the Beginning

"We're just beginning to scratch the surface of what's possible for land trusts in terms of their role in delivering cleaner water to their communities, local creeks and streams and the bay," says Miller Herzog. "I hope that one day we're going to look back and say, 'Wow, now that was a watershed moment.'"

MADELINE BODIN IS A FREQUENT CONTRIBUTOR TO SAVING LAND.

water we love

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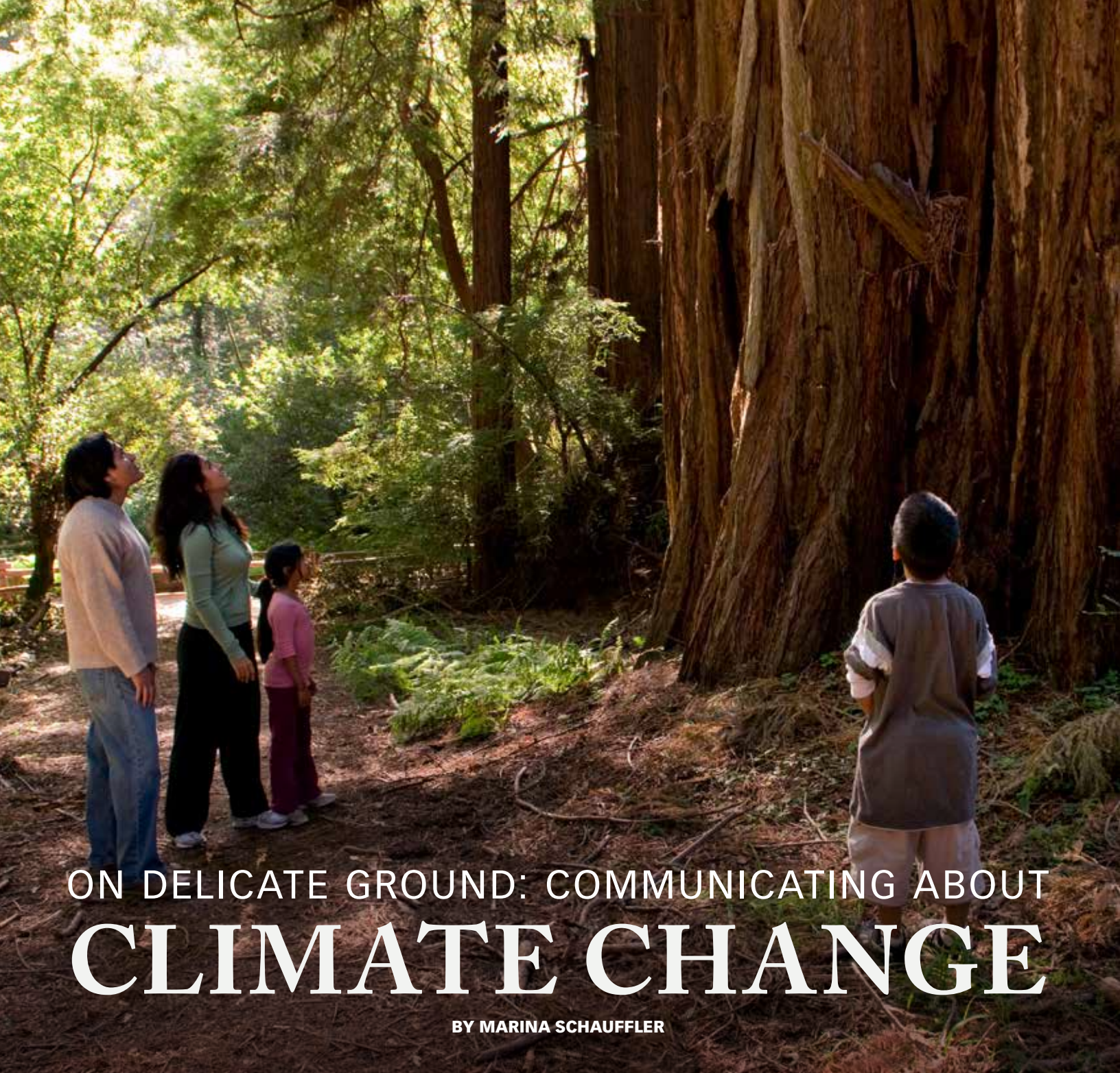


Saving *History*

Indigenous peoples were the Chesapeake Bay region's earliest human residents and among the first in the Western Hemisphere to encounter European explorers and colonists. They did not leave written accounts of their time, but they did leave records in the form of artifacts such as stone tools, animal bones and ceramic pots. Today tens of thousands of people in Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia and the District of Columbia identify as American Indian.

Scientists estimate there are at least 100,000 archaeological sites in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Just a small percentage of these are documented. Most archaeological sites are susceptible to destructive natural and man-made factors, such as development, farming practices and sea level rise. Fortunately, preserving historic artifacts goes hand in hand with efforts to clean up the bay. For example, stabilizing shorelines and using such agricultural conservation practices as conservation tillage help reduce erosion and protect areas where archaeological sites are most likely to exist.

Source: www.chesapeakebay.net/discover/history/archaeology_and_native_americans 🌿



ON DELICATE GROUND: COMMUNICATING ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE

BY MARINA SCHAUFFLER

Embarking on discussions of climate change can feel like venturing into a conversational minefield. Since climate science became politicized, many people hesitate to speak or write about the topic for fear of alienating others. Reticence carries its own risks, though, and land trust leaders feel increasingly compelled to break the silence.

Some land trusts have learned how to engage and inform members on this topic without sparking controversy. The accredited Pacific Forest Trust (PFT), for example, began climate outreach a quarter-century

ago when few landowners gave thought to this issue. From the beginning, says its co-founder and president, Laurie Wayburn, PFT “broached it as a triple bottom-line solution” offering ecological, social and

financial benefits. Inviting people to be part of the solution, she adds, “we’ve found to be a unifying message.”

Land trusts may decide to communicate about climate change because they are doing climate-related work and need to secure support and resources for that work. They may feel that as it represents a threat to their work they need to raise awareness among their supporters. And they may do so to attract new supporters

who have an interest in climate issues, among other reasons.

Finding the promise, rather than the peril, in climate communications takes research and effort. Fortunately, stories from pioneering land trusts and the insights of communications experts can serve as guides.

Know Your Audience

The Land Trust Alliance, in partnership with the accredited Open Space Institute and with support from the Jane's Trust Foundation, encouraged 16 accredited land trusts to survey their members last year, gathering 1,282 responses. The consultant, Water Words That Work, gauged the members' and stakeholders' receptivity to climate outreach from their local land trusts and determined if this is a topic they thought their land trusts should engage in.

In recent workshops informed by the surveys and designed to help land trusts navigate the challenges of communicating about climate change, Water Words' Eric Eckl says he "encountered a lot of resistance [among participants] to ruffling the feathers of climate skeptics, who are perceived to be more numerous than they are." Those dismissive of global warming represent only 9% of Americans in polling done by Yale, but media coverage has amplified their voices.

Eckl's group found that eight out of 10 land trust members are receptive to learning more about climate change, but they don't perceive land trusts as authorities on the topic or understand what land conservation and climate change have to do with each other. Land trusts, Eckl says, "very clearly need to connect the dots."

Recognize the Power of Beliefs and Emotions

While it's best to target outreach to the receptive majority, it can be hard

to sidestep dissenters. Climate scientist Katharine Hayhoe, in a recent webinar for Alliance members, shared her strategy for deflecting arguments, which often take the form of what she calls "sciencey-sounding smokescreens." Hayhoe, an evangelical Christian who directs Texas Tech University's Climate Science Center, is skilled at bridging divides in this polarized sphere. "Don't get engaged—more than a single sentence," she advises, "then pivot to what you want to cover. Otherwise, it becomes a whac-a-mole game."

Effective outreach is less about information sharing and more about breaking through emotional resistance and tribal identities. "Facts are filtered through... preexisting beliefs and ideas," Cara Pike and co-authors write in *The Preparation Frame*. Ironically, the more scientifically literate people are, the more polarized they become as they seek out data supporting their views. Even firsthand experiences—of extreme weather, for example—get skewed by partisan filters. "What could possibly be stronger than [the impressions of] our own eyes?" asks Hayhoe, before answering: "tribalism and political polarization," tribalism being the behavior and attitudes that stem from strong loyalty to one's own social group.

Communications experts also warn of another significant barrier, what Pike calls "climate fatalism." More than half of respondents in polls feel helpless to do anything about climate change. So while it may be important to convey a sense of urgency, experts advise against portraying climate disruption as inevitable.

Land trusts successful in climate outreach often avoid discussing causes or placing blame on humans for precipitating this crisis. "Having a conversation about whether or not you are guilty is not a productive discussion," cautions Wayburn. Focus

Choose Words Carefully

In discussions of climate change, sidestep jargon that may be clear to specialists but not to the general populace. Words like resilience, mitigation, adaptation and sequestration should give way to more accessible terms like readiness, reducing pollution, disaster preparedness and carbon storage.

See www.lta.org/climate-language for more help.

instead on the importance of stewardship and solutions, themes that land trusts traditionally emphasize.

Meet People Where They Are

Framing climate in terms of shared values, such as prosperity, public health or security, can be more effective than approaching it as an environmental issue. Most critical of all, Hayhoe notes in a recent *Sierra* magazine interview (see Resources), "You need to enter the conversation as if the person you're speaking with has exactly the right values they need to care about climate change—that, in fact, they're the perfect person to care and act."

Rita Hite, who co-chairs the Forest Climate Working Group in her role at the American Forest Foundation (AFF), operates from a similar assumption and connects with forest owners across the political spectrum. She emphasizes what no one disputes—that trees take carbon dioxide out of the air and store it. For forest owners, she says, that means "we're not part of the problem; we're part of the solution." If landowners aren't concerned about climate change, she emphasizes other benefits of careful forest management, like enhanced wildlife habitat or reduced wildfire threats.

Land trusts need to be "culturally sensitive" when broaching climate change, observes Greg Abernathy, executive director of the accredited Kentucky

Framing climate in terms of prosperity, public health or security can be more effective than approaching it as an environmental issue.

ON DELICATE GROUND: COMMUNICATING ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE

Natural Lands Trust (KNLT). Working in Appalachia—which, he points out, media often demonize in broad-brush “coal country” portraits—KNLT emphasizes how conservation of a large and connected forested landscape can foster tourism and help create communities that retain and attract the talent needed for a region in transition from coal to outdoor recreation. The land trust forges strong alliances with artists, who he says provide “critical crossover points with all sorts of issues.”

Many KNLT events present multiple perspectives on the land, like its free Wildlands Social Club gatherings, held in partnership

with a contemporary arts hotel and area brewing company. Each event features music or poetry and short talks on conservation science, art, the economy and health that, Abernathy says, often touch on climate concerns. Integrating art, he adds, helps information “ripple through more audiences.”

Focus on Local Impacts

Where people are already noticing local changes in weather and wildlife, land trusts can help link those observations to larger climate trends. The accredited Northwest Arkansas Land Trust (NWALT) uses its website to extend awareness of “observed changes,” like earlier leaf-out dates or a longer ragweed season to “predicted changes,” like higher average temperatures and decreased water availability.

NWALT summarized local climate impacts in a four-minute video that its program coordinator, Pam Nelson, describes as one of the trust’s most effective outreach tools; the trust consistently tries to share “local voices of people with an intimate connection to the land.” Hite echoes the power of having “real people tell real stories” about climate impacts.

For the accredited Save the Redwoods League (SRL), citizen science offers a way to engage people in documenting local impacts. Climate change is not new for redwoods, which have evolved over millions of years, explains Emily Burns, SRL’s science director. “But the way they’re experiencing it now, the unprecedented rate of change, is novel.” Examining impacts on this beloved species and related plants in the understory is “a softer way to have that conversation,” Burns says. “People are hungry to get involved and engaged in data collection,” she adds, and they come to see that “it’s just good management to understand how your land responds to climate.”

SRL, NWALT and the accredited Kennebec Estuary Land Trust (KELT) in Maine are among a number of land trusts that engage young people in studying and documenting climate change. They have found students, teachers and administrators to be highly receptive, and a recent Yale study reported overwhelming public support nationwide for teaching students about the causes, consequences and potential solutions of climate change.

KELT Executive Director Carrie Kinne sees land trusts as well-positioned to talk

Resources

Find the Water Words That Work report at the Alliance’s climate change site: <http://climatechange.lta.org/communications-report>. Also, the Alliance’s Learning Center has a “land and climate” discussion forum (<https://learningcenter.lta.org>)

Katharine Hayhoe recorded webinar at www.lta.org/webinar/demand-2018-webinar-series; also “Katharine Hayhoe Reveals Surprising Ways to Talk about Climate Change” in *Sierra*, March 20, 2018, by Katie O’Reilly at www.sierraclub.org/sierra/katharine-hayhoe-reveals-surprising-ways-talk-about-climate-change

Research reports and Climate Opinion Maps by the Yale Program on Climate Communication at <http://climatecommunication.yale.edu/publications>

“Connecting on Climate: A Guide to Effective Climate Change Communication” (2017), a joint publication of ecoAmerica.org, Columbia University and the Center for Research on Environmental Decisions at the Earth Institute. Available as a PDF online: <http://ecoamerica.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/ecoAmerica-CRED-2014-Connecting-on-Climate.pdf>



A Wildlands Social Club evening sponsored by Kentucky Natural Lands Trust gathers people to talk about conservation, art, health and economy, but often segues into discussions about climate change.

MARC EVANS, KNLT BOARD CHAIR

Kennebec Estuary Land Trust works with local middle school science classes to present a unit on climate change. These students are measuring potential sea level rise impacts on Bath's downtown infrastructure along the Kennebec River. They measured what infrastructure would be impacted by 2 feet, 4 feet and 6 feet of sea level rise.

about climate change impacts because “we can see in practice what is happening”—whether in water-quality testing, wildlife changes or tree die-offs due to saltwater intrusion. KELT and other regional land trusts recently prepared maps that illustrate which areas are most vulnerable to expected changes and most critical to protect.

Sharing those maps with community members provides “a confirmation that we’re doing the work we need to be doing,” says Anna Fiedler, director of land conservation at the accredited Midcoast Conservancy in Maine. It also offers a chance to explain the importance of linkages among conserved parcels—so that wildlife can move and better adapt. “We can offer a solution,” notes Ruth Indrick, KELT’s project coordinator. “We can do things that make the place better for other species and make it more vibrant.”

Highlight Solutions

Increasingly land trusts recognize the importance of emphasizing solutions in climate outreach. Yet many of their members remain unaware of the significant ways that conserved lands can lock up atmospheric carbon dioxide and help buffer some climate disruptions—like droughts and more heavy downpours. Hite notes the “constant education work that needs to be done” to help people understand the huge potential that conserved tracts and sound land management have to absorb and store atmospheric carbon (see the article on natural carbon solutions in *Saving Land*, Spring 2018). American foresters asked about the carbon storage potential of ecosystems talk about “avoiding deforestation in the tropics,” Hite says, not management practices they can employ on their own lands.

“People often don’t think there are any palatable, sensible solutions” to climate change, Hayhoe told *Sierra*, “but of course there are in spades!” Land trusts can emphasize not only the important role that natural ecosystems and well-managed woodlands and farmlands play but also progress being made in renewable energy. “You want to talk about solutions that will



RUTH INDRICK

make people feel like better versions of themselves,” Hayhoe adds, “more pragmatic, more competitive, more innovative, maybe even more fiscally conservative.”

NWALT has found its climate change initiative igniting broader conversations. “As we moved forward,” notes Nelson, “we saw community leaders taking on a stronger voice” and recognizing how “land conservation brings value to climate resiliency.” Now the land trust is going a step further, organizing a roundtable discussion where community leaders will discuss what they’re doing to address climate change. In this event, as in other forms of outreach, Nelson’s goals are the same: “Highlight local impacts and local voices; identify potential partners; consider solutions; and leave people feeling empowered.”

MARINA SCHAUFFLER IS A FREQUENT CONTRIBUTOR TO SAVING LAND.

Seven Guiding Principles

- Focus on local, observable impacts
- Begin with what audiences care about
- Build on nonpartisan values (such as stewardship and responsibility)
- Tap uncertainty as a reason to prepare (“it’s prudent to take precautions”)
- Emphasize the cost of inaction
- Promote practical solutions
- Articulate what will get better if action is taken

(adapted from *The Preparation Frame: A Guide to Building Understanding of Climate Impacts and Engagement in Solutions*, Climate Access, 2015)



Building Deep and Wide Support *for Land Conservation*

by Elizabeth Ward

The first conservation goal of the Land Trust Alliance's new strategic plan (www.lta.org/strategic-plan) is to "elevate land conservation as a priority nationwide." To do this, we will "design and launch a coalition-based 'Relevance Campaign,'" or, in other words, a marketing campaign with calls to action and a goal of public engagement in land conservation.

This is not a new idea. In fact, the Alliance's strategic communications plan, which was adopted by the Alliance board of directors in 2013, calls for the Alliance to develop a campaign and raise funds. Moreover, the Land Trust Leadership Council has been enthusiastic about a marketing campaign since at least 2016. And other land trusts and organizations have been pursuing local and state campaigns: the Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts, Texas Agricultural Land Trust (accredited), Montana Association of Land Trusts, Openlands (accredited) in Chicago and the Conservation Trust for North Carolina (accredited) are only some of the organizations that are planning to or have launched campaigns.

Understanding the problem

All of these initiatives seek to solve the same problem, which is that most Americans have never heard of land trusts. Land and land conservation play little or no role in their lives, at least as far as they are concerned.

This past January, DHM Research conducted a national survey on behalf of the Alliance of 1,202 Americans to set a baseline for Americans' understanding and impressions of land trusts. The survey split respondents into two groups, asking about land conservancies and land trusts separately. The results? While 86% of Americans have a favorable impression of land conservancies, only 58% feel the same about land trusts. And 29% don't know what a land trust is.

The good news is that when the respondents were offered a definition of a land trust or land conservancy, they were 15 times more likely to offer a positive response. In other words, we need to get out there and tell our story if land trusts are to secure enough dollars, votes, volunteers and ambassadors to pursue their essential work. (You can get to the full survey results at www.lta.org/survey-says.)

Why the Land Trust Alliance?

As the national voice for land trusts, the Alliance is particularly well-positioned to launch a relevance campaign. With its partners, the Alliance

- can build a campaign that is focused on the issue of land conservation rather than any one brand.
- can speak with authority about land conservation and its myriad benefits.
- can tap into relationships and networks maintained by its land trust members across the country while also pursuing national partnerships.

Finally, and most important, land trusts are asking for this. Feedback from our members includes:

- “We would be glad to participate in a national campaign with a unifying message of land conservation. I think this is a great idea to increase knowledge of our mission and work!”
- “I love the idea of a national campaign connecting regional efforts to a bigger picture. I’d like to see as much diversity in the people represented in the campaign as there is diversity in the landscapes we protect.”
- “This is a great idea, and could be very beneficial to smaller land trusts like ours.”
- “We’re all in. We communicate nationally, regionally and locally and will be sure our colleagues throughout over 30 states are engaged in this ever-more-important Alliance-led campaign.”

What is a relevance campaign?

For those of us over a certain age, think back to watching TV in the ’70s and how you felt the first time you saw the “crying

Indian” commercial, in which an actor portraying a Native American stands on the edge of a highway as a car drives by and throws trash at his feet. The camera then holds on his face as a single tear slides down. The campaign used the line “People Start Pollution. People can stop it.” The ad became one of the most memorable and successful campaigns in advertising history.

Today’s campaigns look very different. Regardless of your position on the issue, this year’s #NeverAgain campaign, which culminated in the March for Our Lives on March 24 in cities around the world, offers a terrific example of a modern campaign that includes many characteristics that we would do well to incorporate into our campaign:

- A concise, consistent and compelling goal: “Never Again”
- An actionable and focused call to action: “Vote.”
- A sense of urgency: “Act before the next school shooting.”
- Social media: Student leader Emma Gonzalez had 1.56 million Twitter followers as of April 16 of this year (compared to 920,000 followers for the 67-year-old Nature Conservancy (accredited)).
- Agility: The students launched the #NeverAgain Facebook page the day after the shooting in Parkland, Florida, and they have been quick to create memes and responses to opposition messaging, often within hours.
- Flexibility and graciousness: The survivors of the Parkland shooting embraced other young people who had different experiences and agendas, including 11-year-old Naomi Wadler from Virginia, who spoke on behalf of African American female victims of gun violence whose stories never made the front pages of newspapers.
- Celebrity engagement: The march featured such performers as Miley Cyrus and Jennifer Hudson.
- Diversity: The core group of speakers were diverse in terms of ethnicity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status—everything except age, as every speaker at the Washington march was 18 or younger.

- Authenticity: Unlike the Keep America Beautiful campaign, whose “crying Indian” was actually an Italian-American actor from Louisiana, every speaker at the D.C. march was a victim of gun violence.
- Stories: Emotionally resonant stories were at the heart of this campaign.

What was not in evidence for this campaign but what is an essential element for most successful campaigns now are corporate sponsors. Also missing were brand names of one or more sponsoring or partnering nonprofit organizations.

Other campaigns that are worth looking at are Feeding America’s “Give a Meal,” Best Friends’ “Save Them All” and the Entertainment Industry Foundation’s “Stand Up to Cancer.”

How will we do it?

We are just getting started, and we have lots to do. In 2018, to build up momentum for the campaign, our goals are to

- develop strategic recommendations for a successful call-to-action campaign;
- conduct initial audience and message testing;
- complete a funder/partner feasibility study.

Most important, we need to start gathering the stories that demonstrate how conservation has changed people’s lives.

How you can help

As a true community, the Alliance, its members and its partners must share the work of building a national campaign. Here are a few early steps you can take:

- Tell us your land trust’s interest in participating.
- Ask us questions and give us your concerns and ideas.
- Let us know of any other campaigns in the works.
- Send any research studies.
- Send us stories and photos.

Contact me at marketing@lta.org.

ELIZABETH WARD IS VICE PRESIDENT OF COMMUNICATIONS AT THE LAND TRUST ALLIANCE.

BY Darci Palmquist



PETRA AND GÜNTER PORZER, WESTLIGHTART

KEEPER OF THE *trees*

The Tennessee River Gorge.

How an executive director and his board educated themselves before entering the carbon market

Rick Huffines didn't know exactly what he was getting into when he decided to attend a 2013 workshop on carbon markets.

"Let's just go and see," was his attitude. "Listen, learn and find out if there's an opportunity here."

Huffines had been in the role of executive director of the Tennessee River Gorge Trust (TRGT) for less than a year. At the same time, the California carbon market (also called cap-and-trade) had just launched, representing the best opportunity in the United States to participate

in a regulated carbon market for a group like TRGT with forests—and therefore sequestered carbon—to offer.

He persuaded then board president Dean Poi to join him at the workshop. Afterward—brimming with hope, skepticism and questions—they shared what they had learned with the full board.

While the board had talked about carbon offsets in the past, these discussions had taken place prior to the existence of an actual market, says Poi. This time everyone agreed there was a new opportunity on the table. But

they had a lot to learn: about the role of forests in capturing carbon, the viability of the market and how land trusts could participate.

With everyone's curiosity piqued, TRGT's board created an ad hoc committee led by Huffines and Poi that undertook a 13-month process of research and education, ultimately leading TRGT to an offset project that would make a commodity out of 5,000 acres of forest in its domain and **double its general operating fund**.

Getting Started

Carbon markets are complex, presenting a steep learning curve. At its most basic, a carbon market includes sellers of offsets—units of stored or sequestered carbon, such as found in trees—to buyers who need to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. In California's market, the industries that produce the highest emissions, such as electrical power plants, industrial plants and fuel distributors, are mandated by legislation to participate.

The carbon market is one of many strategies that California is undertaking to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions to 40% below 1990 levels by 2030. The California Air Resources Board estimates the market will account for 25% of these overall emission reductions.

"There's so much jargon involved and no matter how much you distill it, there is a lot to grasp about how the market operates, who the players are and what the landscape is," says Poi.

While the idea of helping reduce carbon in the atmosphere was exciting to everyone on TRGT's board, it was important to have a solid understanding of what was involved and know what kind of real benefits—both for TRGT and its goal of addressing climate change—could be achieved.

Needing a resource to walk them through the potential opportunity, Huffines and Poi reached out to Finite Carbon, a project developer specializing in bringing forest carbon offset projects to the market.

"There weren't a lot of other land trusts doing this that we knew of," says Huffines. "We found one—the Downeast Lakes Land Trust in Maine—and talked with them. But there was really no one else to look to as an example for how to do this."

Building Confidence

The board had questions—lots of them—leading to round after round of meetings.

"I talked with scientists and experts from all over the world, and I went back to the board many times," says Huffines. "I'd give them updates, they'd ask more questions, I'd go back out for more answers, bring them back more information and so on."

One concern was about the long-term obligations of a potential project, which is typically 100 years. While land trusts are used to working under long timelines—"conserved in perpetuity" is common

language for easements—that didn't make it easy to undertake a century-long project.

"That was the first concern, the commitment," says Huffines. "But we said, 'How is this any different than the commitment we have on the land now?' Then people saw it as more of an administrative issue than a change in our commitment."

There were other operational concerns that they learned how to address. They could pay Finite Carbon's fees with a percentage of credits from the project, so the upfront costs would be minimal. And they could set up an endowment that would pay for the ongoing costs of the project through its 100-year lifespan—such costs as required inventories and monitoring of the project.

"We didn't want to bind the hands of future boards and staff with the burden of taking care of this," explains Huffines. "I'd hate to be an executive director 50 years from now, coming in and saying, 'Who thought of this!? We don't have money to do this!'"

The questions continued, each one leading to the next. What would happen if the trees were damaged by fire, insect infestation or other natural disasters? The answer: A "buffer pool" of credits would be created to provide a type of insurance policy. What if the carbon market dissolves in the future—would they owe money back? The answer: No, once the transaction takes place, the money is TRGT's and does not have to be returned except in cases of violation of the program requirements.

As each question was answered, the board's understanding and confidence grew. Slowly they started to see the trees they were already protecting as a commodity that could provide multiple benefits.

Putting a Price Tag on Trees

To find out how much carbon was being stored in the trees owned by TRGT, a forest inventory was necessary.

"Once we took that initial walk-through of a portion of the property and put dollars on it, people lit up," says Poi.

With the forest inventory data, Finite Carbon conducted a feasibility study to estimate the potential returns if TRGT were to go forward with a full project. This proved to be a turning point.

"Suddenly we realized we were sitting on an asset," explains Poi. "Not only an asset that had monetary value, but an asset that was quietly performing for the community every day, 24-7. There was a new awareness that forests are a vital piece of air quality and of a conservation group's commitment to its community."

Ultimately, the group still needed to decide if participation in the carbon market would be beneficial in helping address climate change.

"We wanted to know if this was a positive thing we'd be doing—would we be supporting something good?" says Huffines.

Through their careful evaluation and education process, they felt optimistic. If the market worked, it could serve as an example for other states and countries trying to develop their own market-based systems. And with the funds from the sale of their sequestered carbon,



GÜNTER PORZER, WESTLIGHTART

Rick Huffines, executive director of the Tennessee River Gorge Trust (at motor), with intern Quran Whatley, photographer Petra Porzer and her daughter Sarah.

conservation groups like TRGT can protect even more forestland, creating a cycle of positive change.

High Returns

In 2016, TRGT signed the contract on their forest carbon offset project. The final numbers were impressive—219,981 tons of carbon sequestered on 5,000 acres of forest and a net profit of over \$2 million for TRGT—and produced a ripple effect of positive outcomes that no one could have foreseen.

“This has given us a lot of exposure and new connections,” says Huffines. “I’m invited to speak at events and talk with people I wouldn’t have before—they want to know about our forest carbon project, but also our other work.” He cites TRGT’s progressive climate vulnerability assessments and migratory bird research as examples.

“If anything, this project has given us an added measure of credibility when we speak to foundations about our climate-related research,” adds Poi. “The fact that we went through a very challenging process and delivered on it says a lot.”

This increased exposure is good both for TRGT and the carbon market. Poi believes more and more land trusts are considering these types of projects and it’s

important for people to start talking to each other and looking for information, since the process is so complex. It also raises awareness.

“People hear about clearing the Amazon and the forests in Papua New Guinea, Indonesia and so forth, and I’m not sure that they make the connection,” says Poi. “The California carbon market is bringing in organizations with forest carbon projects to learn more and educate their constituents.”

All in all, Poi and Huffines have witnessed no negative impacts of the project. By making the project sustainable, they don’t have to worry about future costs, and supporters are thrilled that more donations can go directly to funding programs rather than operational costs.

And what about the board?

“The board is very happy with this project,” says Poi. “It created another issue, which is what other conservation opportunities will we pursue now that we have an inflow of funds? But that’s a good problem to have.”

For more information about carbon markets and how land trusts can participate, see the article in the Spring 2018 Saving Land “Looking to the Land to Mitigate Climate Change.”

DARCI PALMQUIST IS A WRITER AND EDITOR BASED IN AMHERST, MASSACHUSETTS.

BY Francesca Dalleo

Requirements that Minimize Risk

LAND TRUST ACCREDITATION COMMISSION

An independent program of the Land Trust Alliance

When all-volunteer Chebeague and Cumberland Land Trust faced an easement crisis in 2014, board members were forced to deal with issues well beyond anything they had ever been through.

In 1997 a family enlisted the land trust's help to place a conservation easement allowing for limited development on an oceanfront estate. However, when the family sold the property to a developer in 2014, and then the developer sold a portion of the land to the town providing the public access to the shorefront, the family sued both the town and the land trust.

Accreditation has long required that accredited land trusts secure funds sufficient to cover long-term costs of stewarding and defending the land and conservation easements they hold (see indicator element 6A5). Through a combination of reserved funds and insurance, the land trust was able to navigate three years of litigation and ongoing increased stewardship demands. Eventually the court ruled in its favor and public access to the shoreline was assured. And according to board President Penny

Asherman, it is hard to imagine having this success “without the discipline, procedures and the rigor we gained through the accreditation process.”

Soon after the Land Trust Alliance revised *Land Trust Standards and Practices* (the Standards) in 2017, the Land Trust Accreditation Commission set to work on aligning the accreditation requirements with the new Standards, relying on guidance from land trust practitioners and advisers, its own decade of experience and testing draft requirements with the land trust community.

This new and improved 2018 *Requirements Manual*, released in March, is more straightforward and reduces the amount of time land trusts spend applying for accreditation. “Already we are hearing from land trusts that they appreciate how clear the 2018 manual is,” says Commission staffer Jennifer Brady-Connor.

“Transitioning to four primary categories—Governance, Finance, Transactions and Stewardship—really simplified the process and reduced redundancy,” says Katrina Shindledecker, director of conservation at Hudson Highlands Land Trust in New York. “This new format gives greater specificity about how indicator elements are verified, making it easier for me to compile documentation for accreditation.”

Shindledecker especially finds the new Finance requirement 6A4—that organizations build and maintain sufficient operating reserves to sustain operations—critical for land trusts to avoid risk. She recognizes that “dedicating the resources to build and maintain operating reserves is foundational for land trusts that are committed to protecting land and easements forever.”

Another updated requirement in the Transactions category is helping Hudson Highlands Land Trust avoid risk. The requirement now states that, starting in 2019, verbal notification to potential land or conservation easement donors will no longer be sufficient.

Shindledecker explains how that's a good thing. “I have been told so many times by easement donors, ‘I don't remember your saying that,’ and have then fallen back on the fact that the information is in the packet of material we give prospective grantors,” she says.

She notes that the updated requirement is also simpler as it no longer requires information submission for other low-risk items.

“The new manual and updated requirements are even better tools to help our land trust avoid risk,” she says, “and position us well for the future.”

FRANCESCA DALLEO IS A COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH CONSULTANT FOR THE LAND TRUST ACCREDITATION COMMISSION.



KEVIN BRUISE PHOTOGRAPHY

At Knight's Pond Preserve, saved by the Chebeague and Cumberland Land Trust in Maine.

YOU CAN FIND THE *REQUIREMENTS MANUAL* AT WWW.LANDTRUSTACCREDITATION.ORG/STORAGE/DOWNLOADS/REQUIREMENTSMANUAL.PDF.

BY Margaret Sands



Attendees at Wild Ideas for Getting Outside (2017) line up for local food, some of which is sourced from TLC-conserved farms.

CAROLINE GILMORE

wild ideas for Communicating Conservation Through Events

Events. Registration lists. Caterers. Marketing. Venues. Rain plans. Every time I drag myself home after a major event and crack into the caterer's leftovers I ask myself is it all worth it? At the accredited Triangle Land Conservancy (TLC) in Durham, North Carolina, it's not just our aptitude for southern hospitality that led us to host 60 events last fiscal year. Our strategic plan and commitment to saving land for tomorrow are built on goals that make face-to-face interactions essential opportunities for communicating conservation. Along the way we've learned a few methods and lessons (like don't host 60 events in one year) that we hope could help your land trust to better communicate conservation through events.

In the 35 years since TLC was founded, the Triangle population more than tripled and the majority of people moving to the area are young professionals. Less than 60% of the population now identifies as white and our home city of Durham is

actually a city with no ethnic majority. But TLC's demographics had not changed over the years: Our donors and enthusiasts aged right along with us and representation of new groups and faces in our organization was limited.

Planning for the Future

In 2014, TLC completed a strategic plan and realized that if we are going to conserve land for tomorrow we need our audience to look less like our past and more like the Triangle's present and future. We think about our work and land projects through the lens of four public benefits: supporting local farms and food, connecting people with nature, protecting wildlife habitats and safeguarding clean water. These benefits are the basis for all of our conservation decisions and our communications, especially our events. That is why our signature event is no longer a fundraiser or a gala but an awareness event series, Wild Ideas, which started in 2014 to communicate the benefits of land conservation to new audiences in an engaging and interactive format. Less than four years

later, we've now hosted 10 Wild Ideas events totaling 1,675 attendees, with 205 community partners, featuring 66 speakers.

Wild Ideas is a low-cost event that young professionals can attend after work to learn about how land conservation benefits them and how they can get involved. It's always on a weeknight from 5:30–8 p.m. and is usually held at a co-working space to help appeal to our target audience: young professionals new to TLC. For each event we choose a fresh take on one of our four public benefits to keep things interesting and relevant.

Last year we hosted Wild Ideas for Getting Outside (“connecting people with nature”), Wild Ideas for Clean Water (celebrating Raleigh’s user fee program that “safeguards clean drinking water”) and Wild Ideas for Walnut Hill (“farms and food” featuring our new farm preserve). Once a theme is chosen and a date is set, we brainstorm sub-topics and partners who can help make the theme more digestible and appealing to various groups; then we present them with a challenge.

Presenting Concisely, Partnering Effectively

Five speakers are invited to create 15 picture-heavy PowerPoint slides that automatically advance after 20 seconds, giving them each just 5 minutes to make an impassioned public presentation on their topic. An emcee introduces each speaker and tells the audience of around 200 what they are up against. This twist on “Pecha Kucha” presentations (Google it) works to keep the audience engaged and the atmosphere high energy. For speakers, the time limit is challenging but helps them strip down to the essential message they want to convey. Many of them adopt this style for other contexts afterward.

Some of the presentation topics have included beer brewing, oyster farming, beekeeping, wild foraging, hog farming under conservation easement, heirs property and mountain biking. One five-minute presentation is always reserved for a member of TLC staff, board or other representative to share how our land conservation work provides community



Former TLC board member Dale Threatt-Taylor, who now works for the local soil and water conservation district, emcees at Wild Ideas for Clean Water.

benefits and connects to the other presenters’ topics. Partners are the cornerstone of the Wild Ideas model—not only would our team revolt if we were solely responsible for all of the presentations at every Wild Ideas program, but inviting community partners to participate makes for more interesting content and always draws in new people.

Choosing who helps deliver our conservation message is one of the most important and impactful decisions we make. For a while we were doing well representing age and gender diversity in our Wild Ideas speakers, but lacked racial diversity. Now, we are always expanding our networks as we seek presenters and programs that increasingly reflect the diversity of our community in our events.

After the presentations, the audience visits “the Expo” of display tables of 20–30 organizations working in the chosen theme for more in-depth conversations about what’s happening in their community and ways they can be involved with us or one of our partners. This exposure to nonprofits, businesses and government departments builds community capacity.

The secret ingredient to prolonged interest and attention throughout this event is—big surprise—free food and beer. Heavy appetizers are our biggest cost, but it makes the event viable and is a chance to support vendors in line with our mission and theme. Our food is always local, served on compostable materials, and has even featured ingredients from farms we conserve. Beer

is another opportunity to seek out kindred spirits since many local breweries make naturally inspired beers like our previous pours Beekeeper Honey Wheat, Till Farmhouse Ale or the Streamside Citra. We feature one local brewery at each event and now have a strong network of brewery contacts and a great reputation among attendees.

Building Support

Wild Ideas is *not* a fundraiser. After starting out with pretty much just in-kind donations, opportunities grew with the event and now a mix of corporate and grant support covers all the event costs, including staff time to plan and pull off the event. However, after realizing in 2016 that only about 10% of Wild Ideas registrants were TLC members (meaning we really are reaching new people!) we couldn’t resist running membership challenges at six of our last Wild Ideas events, which inspired 172 gifts. Over 800 new names were added to our database through Wild Ideas, we regularly draw over 150 attendees, and approximately 50% of them are under the age of 45. Wild Ideas has brought us new board members, supporters, partnerships, publicity and, of course, a plethora of wild ideas. For Triangle Land Conservancy’s mission, events aren’t just worth it, they are it. The leftovers aren’t bad either. 🌱

MARGARET SANDS IS MEMBERSHIP AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH COORDINATOR AT TRIANGLE LAND CONSERVANCY.

HARNESSING TECHNOLOGY to Improve Conservation

Working Lands for Wildlife and the Sage Grouse Initiative (SGI), led by USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, have developed an interactive web app to bolster conservation outcomes across the American West. This innovative new technology empowers public agencies and nongovernmental partners to target ranchland sustainability practices and reduce threats to at-risk wildlife.

The free online mapping tool allows practitioners to easily visualize, download and interact with resource data across the vast sagebrush sea. Powered by Google Earth Engine, the app uses the latest satellite imagery to perform instantaneous custom analyses, letting users quickly identify, compare and evaluate opportunities for ecosystem restoration or threat-reduction.

"This new technology puts data directly into the hands of the people working on the ground. It helps prioritize conservation planning by providing a birds-eye view of the western landscape," says Brady Allred, SGI research scientist.

The tool shows both a landscape-level view across ownership boundaries, as well as site-specific data for individual parcels. Data layers will continually be added to the app.

Collectively, the app increases conservation effectiveness by putting a landscape context around local projects and by matching the right practices to the right places.

SGI conserves at-risk wildlife and America's western range-lands through voluntary cooperation, incentives and community support. It applies the power of the Farm Bill to target lands where habitats are intact and sage grouse numbers are highest. To date, it has partnered with 1,474 ranchers to conserve 5.6 million acres across 11 western states.

Emerging technologies made possible by partnerships among SGI, Silicon Valley, NRCS and the Bureau of Land Management are accelerating grazing land conservation and creating on-the-ground efficiencies for landowners and resource managers. Find information at www.sagegrouseinitiative.com/harnessing-technology-improves-conservation-effectiveness. • —BY BRIANNA RANDALL



Research scientist Brady Allred, left, explains how the SGI web app informs conservation planning for wildlife and working lands across the West.

Back to School to Work with Military Lands

LAND TRUSTS SEEKING TO PARTNER WITH THE MILITARY on land projects might be interested in North Carolina State University's College of Natural Resources new Graduate Certificate in Military Land Sustainability program. The program offers a number of online courses and a two-week resident field course that requires one week's participation on campus to complete. The two-week resident field course can only be taken if all other certificate requirements are met. The online courses may be taken as part of a certificate or degree program or by non-degree seeking students on a course-by-course basis. Those interested in taking individual courses without enrolling in a degree or certificate program must first enroll as a Non-Degree Studies student.

The list of courses includes such titles as Sustainable Military Land Management, Managing Natural Resources in an Arena of Conflict, Fundamentals of Climate Change Science and Barriers to Climate Change Literacy. To learn more, visit <https://militarysustainability.cnr.ncsu.edu>. •



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Loan Guidance for Beginning Farmers

THE NATIONAL YOUNG FARMERS COALITION has released “Farm Service Agency Loans: The Ins and Outs of Growing a Farm with Federal Loans,” an illustrated guidebook for farmers looking to secure credit from USDA. This is the first comprehensive plain-language guide to FSA loans since before the introduction of the popular microloan in 2013.

Written from the perspective of a young farmer, the guidebook helps farmers navigate every step of the loan process. It includes such things as a family tree of all the people who make loans at USDA through the Farm Service Agency, descriptions of FSA’s different loan types, charts with up-to-date interest rates and loan terms and case studies from farmers who received FSA loans.

View the guidebook at www.youngfarmers.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/NYFC_FSA_Loans_Guidebook.pdf. •

How Does Your City Score?

FIND OUT WHICH U.S. CITY leads the way in park access and quality in the Trust for Public Land’s ParkScore® index, the most comprehensive tool available for evaluating park access and quality in the 100 largest U.S. cities. The interactive website at www.tpl.org/parkscore also includes “8 ways parks improve your health” and other interesting information. 🍌



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Partners Protect Land UNDER FLIGHT PATH

What does conservation of an Eastern Shore farm have to do with our nation's defense? "Quite a lot," says Jody Couser, director of communications at the Chesapeake Conservancy.

A partnership between the U.S. Navy, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, The Conservation Fund (accredited), The Nature Conservancy (accredited) and the Chesapeake Conservancy has led to the permanent protection of 230 acres on a family-owned farm in Dorchester County, Maryland. "This corridor of protected land is beneath the Atlantic Test Ranges special use airspace, used by aircraft out of Naval Air Station-Patuxent River," says Couser.

The farm is within the Middle Chesapeake Sentinel Landscape, an area designated by the Departments of Agriculture, Defense and the Interior that spans portions of Maryland, Virginia and Delaware. The national Sentinel

Landscape program is a unique public-private partnership designed to preserve the working and rural character of key landscapes, conserve natural resources and protect vital test and training missions conducted by military installations. There are currently seven Sentinel Landscapes in the nation.

Spread over three parcels, the farm is made up of prime agricultural fields and forested lands in the Nanticoke River watershed, one of the Chesapeake Bay's most pristine landscapes and an important habitat for migratory birds.

The property provides a key connection between two large ecologically important

areas that have been protected, creating a 7,730-acre corridor. Protecting large conserved areas is important for the health of the Chesapeake Bay given recent trends of urban expansion, species decline, loss of agricultural lands and habitat fragmentation.

The Nature Conservancy and The Conservation Fund worked with the landowners to create the easement, the purchase of which was made possible by a combination of federal funding through the Department of Defense's Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) program, state funds from Maryland's Rural Legacy Program and private funds from the Chesapeake Conservancy, through a grant from Mt. Cuba Center.

"Conserving this farm aids the military's need to test aircraft while benefiting local communities and conserving our environment," Chesapeake Conservancy President and CEO Joel Dunn said. "It's a win for the Chesapeake Bay, the state of Maryland and the nation." •

Ear to the Ground

Molly Morrison, president of the accredited Natural Lands, has announced plans to retire by the end of 2018 after 14 years as leader of the conservation organization that has preserved permanently more than 32,000 acres of open space in eastern Pennsylvania and southern New Jersey. This year will feature the opening of Natural Lands' first public garden, Stoneleigh: A Natural Garden in Villanova.

The Land Trust Leadership Council recently honored the career of one of its own: **Rock Ringling**, managing director of the accredited Montana Land Reliance. In his 28-year career with MLR, Ringling was a tireless advocate for expanded federal funding for land trusts. He grew MLR's conservation easement holdings, proudly helping the organization conserve over 1 million acres of land, an impressive legacy as he enters retirement this year. "I know the land we've saved is always going to look the same." •



The farm in the Middle Chesapeake Sentinel Landscape.

TEENA RUARK GORROW

A Boat That Does More than Float

SCIENCE AND ART—AND FUN—ARE POWERFUL TOOLS for engaging people. Galveston, Texas, nonprofit Artist Boat uses all three to raise awareness about the protection of the Texas coast and the Gulf of Mexico.

Through its STEAM Powered IQWET (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math Watershed Education Training) program, the organization teaches students how to discuss and visually understand the concepts of climate science. Galveston, like many islands, is especially vulnerable to climate change effects, such as sea level rise and the loss of wetlands that sequester carbon and prevent erosion. Exhibit A is the terrible flooding caused by Hurricane Harvey in 2017.

Artist Boat connects people to the Gulf Coast environment through such experiences as its kayak adventures in Galveston

Bay, where students paddle through wetlands for a watercolor lesson before painting their own landscape masterpieces—a program that combines estuarine ecology, plein air water coloring, water quality and paddling safety.

Artist Boat also does residencies at underserved public schools—mixing the arts and sciences through such activities as public art mural paintings of marine animals. Students learn about dune, prairie and salt marsh restoration, planting grasses and other native species to build up those ecosystems and increase their resilience to sea level rise.

Artist Boat has conserved 669 acres on west Galveston Island to form the Coastal Heritage Preserve (envisioned to be 1,400 acres), which provides places for habitat migration and helps fight climate change by sequestering blue carbon in the wetlands. (Blue carbon is the carbon stored



Creating art on the water.

in coastal ecosystems, such as mangrove forests, seagrass meadows or intertidal saltmarshes.)

“Getting people of all ages involved in protecting and conserving our island’s ecosystem is the only way to create stewards of our Gulf and island treasures,” says Artist Boat Executive Director Karla Klay. “We want everyone who experiences our Gulf Coast to value and protect its natural beauty.” •

Sequencing Redwoods and Sequoias

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, DAVIS, JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY AND SAVE THE REDWOODS LEAGUE (accredited) recently announced an ambitious plan to fully sequence the coast redwood and giant sequoia genomes—for the first time—utilizing conifer genetic sequencing techniques unavailable



Redwoods in Butano State Park.

until now. By the end of this five-year project, the genome sequences and the screening tools developed will allow researchers to quickly assess genetic diversity in redwood forests to inform management plans that restore the health and resilience of these forests throughout their natural ranges as they face environmental stressors such as climate change.

“The League was founded in 1918, and much of our work during our first century focused on protecting coast redwoods and giant sequoia from the ‘timber rush’ and development,” says Sam Hodder, League president and CEO. “At this point, we have protected nearly all of the old-growth groves that remain on Earth, but there’s so much more we can do for the recovering redwood forests that surround and sustain them. Much of our work is now shifting to forest restoration and finding new ways to transform the previously cut-over redwood forests into magnificent old-growth wonderlands.

Understanding redwoods at the genetic level will help us continue to protect both species over the coming millennia.”

Initial inquiries by the League confirm that some trees are better at surviving drought, fire, pests and diseases than other trees, according to Emily Burns, the League’s director of science and the lead investigator for the genome project. By identifying the genes responsible for these adaptations, scientists can compile a scalable database that will aid resource managers as they plan long-term conservation strategies.

The League is planning for long-term, too. It has recently released the first-ever “State of Redwoods Conservation Report,” providing a contemporary look at the state of coast redwood and giant sequoia forest health in California. Its purpose is to serve as a reference guide to their status today and discuss the key variables that matter most to their future health. You can find it at www.savetheredwoods.org/RedwoodsReport. 🌲



Students read surrounded by majestic redwoods.

ANNIE BURKE

Reading the Redwoods

To celebrate its centennial in 2018, the accredited Save the Redwoods League organized a reading contest to inspire young people to discover California's redwood forests.

Acclaimed author T. A. Barron served as the contest's ambassador, which ran from March 10 to May 10.

"Books allow you to travel wherever you like—no ticket required. That's what's so great about Save the Redwoods League's Reading the Redwoods contest," said Barron, who is also a council member of the League. He invited "families from everywhere to participate and discover a sense of wonder about nature."

Stories of adventure, mystery and friendship awaited young readers who participated in this free, online reading contest with prize packages awarded on a weekly basis, culminating in the chance to win the Grand Prize of a stay in Redwood country with a guided tour.

"We want to connect as many people to the redwoods as we can during our centennial year and beyond, especially children, who are the future stewards of the redwoods," said Jennifer Benito-Kowalski, chief communications officer for Save the Redwoods League. "T. A. Barron has captured the imaginations of young people around the country with his books that are grounded in the preservation of nature, and especially trees and redwoods. We are thrilled to partner with him on this contest to bring the magic of the redwoods to children everywhere."

See the book lists, both audio and visual, here:

www.savetheredwoods.org/100-years/reading-the-redwoods/listening-list

www.savetheredwoods.org/100-years/reading-the-redwoods/reading-list 🌲

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