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MILLENNIAL CONSERVATIONISTS
Ag Lands and Waters
Community Ties
Cultivating Millennial Leaders
By Madeline Bodin

As more people in the land conservation community retire, land trusts may be thinking, “How do we create the next generation of leaders and donors?” By learning about the millennial generation—those who are poised to lead or who are already leading—land trusts can help to ensure the future of conservation.
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This past summer the land trust community lost a true leader with the passing of Jean Hocker. Her career included seven years as the executive director of the Jackson Hole Land Trust (accredited), which she co-founded, and nearly 15 years as the president of the Land Trust Alliance. She also served on the Land Trust Accreditation Commission and on the board of the Wilderness Land Trust, three years as chair.

I only had the opportunity to get to know Jean beginning in early 2016 when I joined the Alliance. In her gentle and wise way, she provided me with support and counsel on a number of occasions as I learned how to try to fill the very big shoes left by her and her successor.

I realize, of course, that she built decades-long relationships with hundreds of conservationists who were deeply inspired by her. After her passing, the tributes came pouring in. Wesley Ward wrote, “If there’s a shining example of a first-rate leader and human being, she was it. I admired her for her stature, presence, persuasive genius, her authenticity and her no-nonsense focus on the work of the Alliance. She made one feel proud to be part of the land trust movement.”

Similar sentiments were shared by many at the memorial service held in her honor. I could see and feel the incredible impact she had on the land trust community. Speakers recalled how during Jean’s tenure at the Alliance land trusts and land protection experienced an explosion of growth. And, during that time, the Alliance experienced significant professionalization, expanding its training programs and publishing *Land Trust Standards and Practices*.

But I was most moved by a note included in the program for her memorial service, which was added to explain why the event was titled “Rally for Jean!” It read:

When the fledgling land trust movement planned its first national gathering, someone said, “Let’s call it a ‘Symposium.’” No, Jean responded, “Let’s call it Rally!” This year nearly 2,000 people will attend the Land Trust Alliance’s national Rally, so in her honor we’re using that name today.

I am so grateful for the passion and energy Jean brought to the land trust community. Her legacy lives on in the work that all of us do on a daily basis to save the places that people need and love. Thank you, Jean.

Andrew Bowman

Watch a tribute video at www.lta.org/blog/honoring-jean-hocker.
Local Economies Get Boost from Conservation

A first-of-its-kind study has found that land conservation modestly boosts employment, a leading indicator of economic growth. The study, published in *Conservation Biology* by scientists at Harvard Forest, Amherst College, Highstead and Boston University, estimated the local net impacts of private and public land conservation over 25 years in 1,500 New England cities and towns.

“Assessing the Local Economic Impacts of Land Protection” showed that when land protection increased employment increased over the next five-year period, even when controlling for other factors. For instance, if a town with 50,000 employed people increased its land protection by 50%, it gained, on average, 750 additional employed people in the next five years. According to the authors, the gains in employment may be driven by new jobs in tourism, forestry and recreation.

That’s good news because about a quarter of New England’s land base is permanently conserved. “More than half of the region’s conservation has occurred within the last 25 years,” says co-author Spencer Meyer, senior conservationist at Highstead. “We now have further evidence that conservation generally boosts, rather than depresses, local economies through job growth.”


Endangered Bird’s Survival Signals Success

A red-cockaded woodpecker captured at Camp Blanding, a military base in Clay County, Florida, proves that a major wildlife corridor project led by the accredited North Florida Land Trust is benefiting wildlife.

Once common in the Southeast, the federally endangered birds are now restricted to pockets of their remaining old-growth forest habitat. The woodpecker made the journey to Camp Blanding from the Osceola National Forest 27 miles away—the first evidence of such movement since conservationists began banding and recording the birds over 25 years ago.

“The migration of this one little bird is a big deal because it proves the populations we have in the wildlife corridor want to move and expand over the landscape to find other red-cockaded woodpeckers to reproduce,” says Jim McCarthy, NFLT president. “Helping them and other species do that is the goal of our Ocala to Osceola Wildlife Corridor project.”

NFLT is working with partners and private landowners to preserve land and habitat along the corridor, which connects Ocala National Forest in central Florida to Osceola National Forest more than 100 miles to the north. The 1.6-million-acre landscape of public and private land protects iconic Florida ecosystems, providing habitat for Florida black bears and other imperiled species, such as the indigo snake and gopher tortoise.
More Help for New York Dairy Farms

In New York, dairy farming is big business. The state is home to nearly 4,000 dairy farms with more than 620,000 cows producing 14.9 billion pounds of milk. But dairy farmers around the country are struggling from years of low milk prices. The challenging economic climate has made it harder for dairy farmers to stay in business, increasing the likelihood of their land being sold for development.

To address this threat, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo announced this year that more than $18.6 million will be spent to fund conservation easements on 25 dairy farms. Through the Department of Agriculture and Markets’ Farmland Protection Implementation Grant program, farms can permanently protect their land using the proceeds from the sale of development rights to invest in their operations.

Since 2018, New York has awarded more than $30.7 million of the program funds to dairy farms, protecting 15,102 acres. “Agriculture is a critical component of our upstate economy, and our farms improve the quality of life for all New Yorkers,” says Cuomo.


California Land Trusts Share Knowledge and Nature

Over the summer, staff from four coastal California land trusts spent the day together in nature at the Land Trust for Santa Barbara County’s Arroyo Hondo Preserve—a magnificent canyon on the Gaviota Coast.

“The goal was to get to know our neighboring land trusts and share how we achieve our missions and meet the conservation needs of our communities,” says Jennifer Stroh, events and outreach manager for the accredited Land Trust for Santa Barbara County.

Other land trusts attending—spanning Ventura, Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties—included Ojai Valley Land Conservancy, Ventura Land Trust and the Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County (all accredited).

The morning started with a tour of the Arroyo Hondo Preserve and was followed by a presentation with each land trust describing its overall conservation history and goals, structure, programs and staffing. At breakout groups, staff sharing similar roles and responsibilities discussed their own relevant topics.

“This was a zero-waste event, a productive day outside enjoyed by all—likely to be the first of many more,” says Stroh.
conservation NEWS

Ruling in New Jersey Goes Beyond the State

A conservation crisis erupted five years ago when PennEast announced plans to build a 118-mile gas pipeline cutting through 4,300 acres of preserved open space and farmland in New Jersey. The private company planned to use eminent domain to seize 131 properties, including 42 preserved by the state.

In September the conservation community achieved a major victory when the Third Circuit of the U.S. Court of Appeals ruled that PennEast cannot legally condemn land preserved by the state. The court found that the state’s “sovereign immunity” under the Eleventh Amendment of the Constitution protects it from federal lawsuits brought by private companies.

The ruling has implications beyond New Jersey, as it applies to all state-preserved lands where the state is not a willing partner in condemnation proceedings. While the decision reduces the chance that the pipeline will be built, the company is likely to seek a rehearing by the Third Court.

But the court decision puts an end for now the company’s right to access and take state-preserved properties.

“New Jersey taxpayers have invested billions of dollars in preserving open space and farmland for future generations. These precious preserved lands should never be sacrificed for a private company’s profit-making endeavor,” says Michele Byers, executive director of the accredited New Jersey Conservation Foundation, which fought the seizure.

Breweries Support Drinking Water Protection

S ebagó Lake is the second-largest lake in Maine and among the country’s only lakes with water clean enough for use as drinking water without filtration. The Sebago Clean Waters (SCW) initiative in southern Maine works to protect this pristine resource—the water supply for one in six Mainers.

SCW recently enlisted an important new partner: local breweries. Beer is 90% water; with over 20 breweries in Maine’s largest city of Portland, local producers who brew with Sebago Lake water are natural partners of conservation.

SCW aims to conserve 35,000 acres of the watershed in the next 15 years and is raising a $15 million Water Fund from water users and others to protect critical watershed lands that filter and regulate their water supply.

Allagash Brewing Company, SCW’s founding brewery partner, has hosted fundraising events and made direct donations to conservation projects on-the-ground. For Earth Day 2019, Foundation Brewing Company crafted “Pale Blue Dot” pale ale, with proceeds directed to SCW. Bissell Brothers Brewing Company is donating $1 from the sale of every co-branded Nalgene water bottle to SCW.

Building on this support from breweries, SCW is engaging with other types of businesses that rely on Sebago Lake water, including industrial, technology and health care enterprises.
The Jardine Mine, located just outside Yellowstone National Park, has a rich history. In 1866, gold was discovered there, at the confluence of Bear Creek and the Yellowstone River, waters teeming with trout. Miners used the waters of both Bear and Pine creeks for mining and milling and to generate power. Over time they established and defended water rights to both streams.

A historic three-way deal has now protected the Gardiner, Montana, mine, which closed in 1996. Two complementary land-water conservation transactions were involved. In one, TVX Mineral Hill, Inc.—which conducted the last active modern gold and silver mining and milling operation—donated a conservation easement on the majority of the fee interest to Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation. In another, TVX Mineral Hill, Inc. made an outright donation of multiple senior water rights to Trout Unlimited.

Both transactions involved a new and emerging federal tax mechanism to protect and enhance water flows in Western states: the voluntary use of a donative transfer of water rights in exchange for a federal tax deduction.

“These donations of real property demonstrate how mining companies and public interest organizations can work together for common conservation goals,” says Laura Ziemer, lead counsel and water policy advisor for Trout Unlimited. “This conservation easement, along with public lands and other private lands protected by conservation easement, will help ensure the future of the northern Yellowstone ecosystem and its incredible fish and wildlife resources.”
From TV to music, fashion to politics, everywhere you look, Americans are paying homage to all-things '80s. From the big hair to the bright colors, the decade that saw the launch of the Land Trust Alliance is now having a sudden rebirth. The same is true of a critical conservation program established during that time, one that all land trusts should be aware of when seeking out important conservation dollars. I’m talking, of course, about the North American Wetlands Conservation Act, or NAWCA for short.

The Birth of NAWCA

While the 1980s may be best remembered as a time that ushered in massive socioeconomic changes worldwide (the fall of the Berlin Wall, Live Aid and, perhaps, padded shoulders), it also was the decade that saw a severe decline in North American waterfowl populations. Recognizing this as a problem, leaders within our community began envisioning strategies for how best to protect, restore and enhance critical wetland habitats. These efforts resulted in the 1986 signing of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP). A “vision of collaborative conservation,” the plan outlined a detailed partnership model whereby private and public entities would come together to provide for the long-term protection of bird species such as sandhill cranes have benefitted from the North American Wetlands Conservation Act.
of wetlands and associated upland habitats. However, as the plan gained traction, funding remained an issue. That is until April 1989 when former Senator George Mitchell of Maine stepped in to offer a solution.

Mitchell, the Senate Majority Leader at the time, recognizing a critical need to fund NAWMP, introduced the North American Wetlands Conservation Act on April 17, 1989. Within eight months, the bill would be signed into law by then-President George H.W. Bush.

Established as a cost-sharing program, NAWCA is now funded by a combination of congressional appropriations, fines, penalties and forfeitures from the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. The funds, which reached more than $70 million for Fiscal Year 2019, are placed into a specific conservation trust that distributes grants to worthy private organizations working to protect wetland habitats for waterfowl and other migratory birds.

Now, 30 years after first being enacted, NAWCA is as important as ever—helping state and local governments as well as private organizations, such as land trusts, complete important conservation projects.

**The NAWCA Advantage**

The next time your land trust is looking to secure funding for a land conservation project, consider applying for a NAWCA Standard or Small Grant administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Division of Bird Habitat Conservation (DBHC). Each year these grants support land trusts in completing important work that may not otherwise have been funded—efforts that in the past have helped control floods, reduce coastal erosion and improve water and air quality nationwide.

The Standard Grants Program has two grant cycles in a fiscal year, providing funding of up to $1 million per project, while the Small Grants Program provides funding of up to $100,000 per project during its once-a-year grant cycle. The application process is similar for both programs.

When a land trust applies for a Standard Grant, its proposal is first reviewed by DBHC staff for eligibility. Next, the North American Wetlands Conservation Council (NAWCC), a nine-member committee, evaluates and ranks eligible proposals, scoring them based on several technical guidelines. Once proposals are scored and ranked, NAWCC submits its proposed slate of approved projects to the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission, a seven-member panel, which has final authority over what projects receive Standard Grants. Small Grants go through a similar process, but NAWCA makes the final decision regarding which projects will receive funding.

“It’s an honor and a privilege to participate in these important conservation conversations,” says Wendy Jackson, the Land Trust Alliance’s executive vice president who also serves as an ex-officio member of NAWCC. “If your land trust is involved in the protection and restoration of wetland habitats, NAWCA grants can be an excellent funding source. Not only do these grants provide critical conservation monies, they assist our nation’s land trusts in ensuring that we are advancing our conservation mission every step of the way.”

In fact, over the past 20 years, NAWCA has allocated more than $1.6 billion in grants, supported 2,800 individual projects and helped conserve, restore and enhance 30 million acres of habitat. In other words, land trusts like your own should explore opportunities to participate, especially as there are fewer opportunities to obtain federal funding. NAWCA not only protects habitat for migratory birds and other species that rely on wetlands, it also supports local economies, creating on average nearly 7,500 jobs annually. And, of course, wetlands play a significant role in improving and maintaining water quality. Yet despite these achievements, NAWCA still faces some uphill challenges related to its future funding and reauthorization.

**Advocate for NAWCA**

While fiscal year 2019 saw Congress appropriate $42 million for NAWCA, future funding and reauthorization remain uncertain. To address these concerns, in January 2019, the North American Wetlands Conservation Extension Act was introduced in both the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate. The legislation would reauthorize NAWCA through 2024 while increasing authorized funding to $60 million annually.

To see the latest status of this bill and ensure your members of Congress are signed on as co-sponsors, visit congress.gov and search by bill numbers for S. 261 / H.R. 925.

And as your own land trust seeks out new funding opportunities, don’t forget about NAWCA.

NAWCA’s success over the past 30 years is impressive. Across the United States, NAWCA funds have helped protect significant amounts of wetland habitat and played a tremendous role in increasing bird populations across the country. And for land trusts, that funding is what has often made the difference in being able to complete important work.

To learn more about the program and how to apply for funding, visit, www.fws.gov/birds/grants/north-american-wetland-conservation-act.php.

ROBERT SCHWARTZ IS AMBASSADOR PROGRAM MANAGER FOR THE LAND TRUST ALLIANCE.
Building

By the time Rally 2019 ended, 10 undergraduate college students from across the country had networked their way through the National Land Conservation Conference, hearing advice from mentors on such things as how to write a cover letter and how to gain the support of family members who might not be so keen on their loved one entering a conservation career.

The students are part of a new program created by the Land Trust Alliance and the Forest Service, an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The Scholars for Conservation Leadership Program is a career and leadership development program that aims to expand opportunities for students from underrepresented minority groups in the land conservation field, better enabling career opportunities in natural resources management and conservation.

During their first day, the students heard from distinguished leaders in conservation, including Forest Service personnel and land trust staff, gaining practical knowledge in support of their career development. Then, under the guidance of the program leaders and a mentor from the land trust community, the students attended two days of workshops and plenaries at Rally, where they had the opportunity to connect with conservation professionals from across the nation.

“I loved meeting so many people, especially women and people of color in conservation,” said scholar Sarah Howdy. “I was really important to me to see myself in the industry I want to take on, and it was so valuable to me to be a part of the change we all want to see implemented in the conservation world.”

“Having the incredible opportunity and privilege to attend Rally this year opened my eyes to the other career paths that are available in the conservation field,” said scholar Princess Mutasa. “I learned about what land trusts are and the important work they do with various partners. I also learned about the U.S. Forest Service and the vast opportunities and programs I could see myself working in one day.”

Scholar Papa Gueye said that his favorite thing about Rally was the networking.

The initial cohort includes:
- Austin Cary, North Carolina State University
- Pomaikai Cathcart, Colorado State University
- Kierra Christie, North Carolina State University
- Lillian Dinkins, Tuskegee University
- Papa Gueye, Florida A&M University
- Jocelynn Horton, Tuskegee University
- Sarah Howdy, University of Massachusetts – Boston
- Princess Mutasa, North Carolina State University
- Jana Pruitt, Tuskegee University
- Coria Richardson, Central State University

Lillian Dinkins was selected to participate in a paid yearlong fellowship with a land trust, starting in the summer or fall of 2020, to gain on-the-job experience at a critical time in her career.

“I’m really excited to start my fellowship,” she said. “I’m most excited about moving to a new area and getting experience working and hopefully turn it into a longer job!”

Alliance Executive Vice President Wendy Jackson said, “The Alliance is incredibly proud of this work of building platforms for young, bright students interested in conservation and natural resource management to connect with practitioners and opportunities for career development. For Rally 2020 and beyond, we hope to double the number of students attending.”

The program is being coordinated by Dr. Zakiya Leggett and Dr. Porché Spence of North Carolina State University.

“These students are not only bright and accomplished, they are passionate,” said Jamey French, chair of the Alliance board of directors. “They give us hope for the future.”

KARENA MAHUNG IS A CONSULTANT WITH LEADING FORESTRY CONSULTING PROVIDER INDUFOR NORTH AMERICA AND IS COMMON GROUND’S TECHNICAL LEAD AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT SPECIALIST. CHRISTINA SOTO IS EDITOR OF SAVING LAND.
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- Discount on the All-Access Pass and individual webinars for your entire team
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Liz Brownlee, age 33, blends life as a sustainable farmer in rural Indiana with 20 hours a week as the executive director of the Oak Heritage Conservancy. Sometimes this means taking a phone call as director while making the two-hour drive back to the farm from the butcher, hauling 275 whole chickens in coolers in the back of her truck.

Since Brownlee began her position as the Oak Heritage Conservancy’s only staff member four-and-a-half years ago, the land trust has added two board members under the age of 30 to its eight-member board. “Having peers on the board is valuable to me as a staff member, but is also incredibly valuable to us as an organization,” Brownlee says. The conservancy’s dedication to these younger board members and staffer is an investment in the forward-looking nature of its mission. Land trusts are always thinking of the future because they promise to protect the land they conserve forever, Brownlee says. Who will do this work? “Not just land trusts, but every nonprofit organization is thinking: How do we create the next generation of leaders and the next generation of donors?”

Being a young leader at a land trust is still the exception rather than the rule. That’s why Brownlee was surprised and delighted to find herself in a small discussion group at Rally 2016: The National Land Conservation Conference in Minneapolis with Rebecca Dahl, age 28, Zenda Farms program director for the New York-based Thousand Islands Land Trust (accredited) and Lianna Lee, age 29, communications specialist for the Northern Forest Center, which works in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and New York.

The three women bonded over a shared feeling, tinged with loneliness, of being the only millennial-age staffer at a small land trust. They kept in touch after Rally, connected by a shared question: “Where are the rest of us?”

Brownlee, Dahl and Lee wanted to build a community of millennials working for land trusts, where “millennial” is defined as anyone born between 1980 and 1996, as described in Pew Research Center reports and other sources. The first step, they decided, was a survey that would go out to Land Trust Alliance members.
Alliance staff helped the group frame the survey questions, distribute the survey through the Alliance’s digital newsletter and discussion boards on the Alliance’s Learning Center, and collect the responses. “We are grateful for how responsive the Alliance staff has been,” says Lee.

Over 500 millennials responded. Alison Delaney, age 37, development officer at the accredited Peconic Land Trust in Southampton, New York, was one of them. She had never self-identified as a millennial, as she didn’t see herself or her peers in the negative ways that stereotypes paint millennials as entitled and selfish.

However, after she attended the session on the millennial survey at Rally 2018 in Pittsburgh, she was over by the spirit behind the survey and its findings to identify as a millennial. At the presentation, Brownlee, Dahl and Lee described millennials, not in terms of negative stereotypes, but as people in a demographic group who share similar cultural experiences.

In the past 20 years, private college tuition rose 154%, while public college tuition rose by 221%, according to U.S. News & World Report. Millennials graduated with the greatest burden of college debt of any previous generation and the 2008 financial crisis set them back even further financially, according to a Pew Research Center report.

In this, Delaney recognized her own generation. When she spoke with Brownlee, Dahl and Lee after the presentation about getting involved in their effort on behalf of millennials, she found herself standing next to Chrissy Beardsley Allen, age 39, development director at Maine’s accredited Blue Hill Heritage Trust. Allen and Delaney were seamlessly folded into the group. The five women collaborated to write the Developing the Millennial Leaders That Land Trusts Need report based on the survey, which was released to Alliance members in April 2019. (See www.lta.org/millennials-land-trusts.)

Core Millennial Values
“The survey was open-ended; we didn’t want to force the narrative,” Dahl says. “We got back impassioned responses. Clearly, millennials at land trusts were looking for a platform to talk about these issues. The results are about how to bring talented staff to your land trust, and what you need to do to keep them long term.”

The authors arranged their top findings into eight pillars for developing millennial leaders. These pillars include relevance to millennial values, many of which overlap with the mission of land trusts. Diversity is another key millennial value, the survey found. Lee explains that this doesn’t just mean racial diversity, although that is important. A land trust that is diverse, according to the millennials surveyed, serves and includes people of different racial, cultural, socioeconomic and generational backgrounds.

“For the conservationists of color out there, and community members who sometimes feel as if they don’t belong in land conservation, you were seen and heard in this survey,” Lee says. “A diversity of lived experiences can help land trusts remain relevant into the future.”

Record-setting levels of student debt influence the way millennials look at health insurance, salary and benefits, the report says. Employees of all generations want to be paid fairly and want to be able to live on their salaries. But millennials, statistically, have never recovered from the combination of high student debt and the recession that put them on shakier financial ground at the start of their careers.

The report notes: “Millennials, as a block, work the same, owe more and make less.”

If meeting these needs sounds expensive, it doesn’t have to be. Dahl says, “There are a lot of creative ways to make a better work environment.” Benefits like flexible work
schedules, working from home, and time in nature are additional benefits millennials value, the survey shows.

The report includes questions to help land trusts assess their own strengths and weaknesses in developing millennial leadership. Invite your staff to lunch, Lee suggests, and you’ll not only get feedback important to your land trust’s future, you’ll create a warmer environment and demonstrate a culture of gratitude, too (another value appreciated by millennials).

Making Adjustments
Blue Hill Heritage Trust (BHHT) illustrates many of these pillars. BHHT was founded in 1985 by a group of people who ranged in age from their 20s to their 70s. Its 80% donor retention rate is incredible, says Allen. But this loyalty meant, as the decades passed, that donors, staffers and board members grew older as BHHT itself did.

“When I came on,” Allen says, “I was part of a push to become a more community-focused organization.” At the time, Allen was 20 years younger than anyone else on staff. BHHT realized that having younger staffers who understood their peers’ values, such as equal opportunities for open space, food equality issues and climate change, is important to its community focus.

Addressing BHHT’s relevance to the community was another, early part of this push, Allen says. Like many land trusts, BHHT faced a false idea in its community that land trusts just protect the views of rich people. It needed to work to show community members the truth, that land trusts protect the places that are important to everyone. “It worked,” Allen says.

BHHT also adjusted its policies to make it a better place for younger staffers to work. Board meetings were scheduled so parents could tuck their young children into bed. Staffers became eligible for retirement benefits after one year of employment, instead of after several years.

Allen found the retirement benefit particularly powerful, especially since salaries and benefits tend to be minimal in the nonprofit world. “It felt totally different,” she says. “I was being treated like an adult for the first time.”

Connecting Peers to Place
The accredited Gallatin Valley Land Trust (GVLT) experiences the balancing act of land conservation a little more extremely than most. The Bozeman, Montana, region has been the fastest-growing area of fewer than 50,000 people in the nation for two years in a row, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. But the area’s main attraction is its wide open spaces. “Everybody who loves living here has a connection to our mission,” says EJ Porth, age 32, GVLT’s communication and outreach director and manager/coordinator of the NextGen Advisory Board. But with newcomers pouring into the region, how could GVLT make the connection that the land trust is responsible for keeping the area’s natural beauty accessible to all?

GVLT’s NextGen Advisory Board is an important outreach tool. It’s a group of developing conservation leaders who, at the moment, range in age from 21 to 45, although most are in the 28- to 35-age range, Porth says.

“They raise awareness of what we do in the community, connecting people to place, especially among their peers,” Porth says. The group helps GVLT reach new people, understand its community, engage donors, host events and develop future leaders. The NextGen Advisory Board also provides feedback and a different perspective to GVLT’s board of directors. For example, it steered the board toward focusing on diversity and inclusion during its strategic planning process.
It’s difficult for people who are building both careers and families to commit to volunteering. “Beer helped,” Porth says, only half-jokingly. In the NextGen’s early years, about four years ago, a member owned a brew pub and meetings were often held there. More recently, there are events like a costumed scavenger hunt on bikes. “It’s silly and fun,” Porth says.

And it’s working. This year GVLT received 34 applications for 10 open volunteer spots in the group, Porth says.

**Developing Millennial Donors**

In some ways, developing millennials as donors is not that much different from developing donors of older generations, Delaney says. Reaching young people, even if they haven’t accumulated significant wealth, is important for cultivating future giving, she and Allen say.

An important step toward reaching digital-first donors, whether they are millennials or baby boomers, is through an online donation form on your website, Delaney says. Also, for the first generation of digital natives, the social and competitive nature of an online crowd-funding campaign “is fun and works,” Allen says.

Allen created a successful “40 Under 40” campaign for Blue Hill Heritage Trust. The price of admission for a brewery event was a membership at any level.

But while millennials—or any donors—may come for the beer, they stay for the mission. “We have to prove why we are an organization worth donating to,” Allen says. That means showing how land trusts are doing the work millennials care about. For example, allaying climate change is a value many millennials share. Land trusts do this work in many ways, including when they conserve wetlands that capture carbon. Land trusts need to connect those dots for millennial donors and prospective donors.

Connecting with millennial donors also means showing that your land trust reflects the diversity of the community it serves, which is as true for donors as staffers and board members, the report team has found. “We want everyone to be able to look at our organization and see themselves reflected,” Allen says.

In this meeting of personal and generational values with a land trust’s mission, millennials are no different from other generations. Values connect staffers, board members and donors to your organization.

“We all want to be with people who share our values,” says Brownlee. After years away from her rural Indiana home, the Oak Heritage Conservancy was the first to say, “We’d like you to get involved.”

“It made me feel wanted,” Brownlee says. “I recognized it as a place where I can make a difference. I may be young, but I think that’s what all humans want.”

**What makes your job satisfying?**

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Chart re-created from “Developing the Millennial Leaders That Land Trusts Need.” (Allen, Brownlee, Dahl, Delaney, Lee, April 2019). For more information about the survey, questions and results, visit www.lta.org/millennials-land-trusts. There you will find slides, graphics and content from the presentation at Rally 2018.
A Community’s Lifeblood: Protecting Agricultural Lands and Waters

BY MARINA SCHAUFFLER
L
ike rivers merging, land conservation and water protection run together in farming regions. Waterways can be degraded by a wide range of agricultural practices, from tilled fields left bare to manure stockpiles and streamside grazing. Yet the waters at risk are often the foundation of community well-being—supplying drinking water, providing recreational opportunities and supporting wildlife.

By conserving upland areas that protect aquatic resources, land trusts can help to keep local farms thriving and, in some cases, provide alternatives for farmers on non-productive land. And watershed-scale work grows more important—and more challenging—as climate disruptions like droughts and floods increase.

Integrating agricultural land and watershed protection, while potentially complex, often fosters exciting partnerships and builds public support for land trust work, as the following stories demonstrate.

Restoring Wetlands

“We’ve been thinking about clean water from the very beginning,” reflects Rob Krain, executive director of the accredited Black Swamp Conservancy (BSC), an Ohio land trust dedicated to protecting both agricultural and natural lands. Its first conservation agreement protected Lake Erie marshland, and the organization draws its name from a wetland ecosystem that once spanned 1,500 square miles in northwest Ohio and northeast Indiana.

Settlers converted much of that original wetland to farmland by installing subsurface drainage tiles, and now soil nutrients from agricultural fields routinely wash into tributaries of Lake Erie, prompting toxic algal blooms there.

Even before the 2014 crisis in Toledo, when the drinking water supply for half a million residents was shut down for days due to toxic algae, BSC had recognized the importance of restoring wetlands. Those ecosystems provide natural filtration for what Krain describes as a “landscape dominated by agriculture, with little natural land cover and wildlife habitat.”

In 2012, BSC began working to restore stretches of floodplain farmland with poor productivity into wildlife-rich wetlands. It was exciting, Krain says, to see “how quickly the wildlife responds.” Land trust members were also enthusiastic about this initiative, with several key donors significantly increasing their gifts.

The land trust drew on partners such as The Nature Conservancy and Ducks Unlimited (both accredited) for technical expertise, and forged agreements with local park districts and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to assist with habitat management required in the early years of restoration.

Even with that help, Krain acknowledges, the wetland restoration work required “a lot of technical and scientific expertise we didn’t have previously,” and involved grant-reporting requirements “a lot more onerous” than those for land acquisition.

BSC took its time building skills and forging partnerships, Krain says, sitting out some earlier funding opportunities for water-quality work and keeping a low profile. The reward for that patience came this year, when the state created a substantial H2Ohio fund—aimed at preventing nutrient runoff and restoring wetlands to protect Lake Erie. BSC submitted six proposals for consideration, Krain says, and had “built a reputation for being able to do these projects well.”

Thanks to that preparedness, BSC is now poised to manage $3 million in restoration projects over the next two years through that program alone—a major leap forward for a land trust with six staff members. While grant awards are still being finalized, Krain is prepared for change: “Our budget may increase three-fold next year!”

land we love

PHOTOGRAPH BY Ana Caicedo Macia
STORY BY Danielle Herman
Within one of the fastest-growing regions of the country, Bailey and Sarah Williamson Preserve offers a glimpse into Wake County’s agrarian past. Standing in the midst of the fields, looking around at the historic buildings and forests, it’s easy to forget you’re just 15 miles away from Raleigh, North Carolina’s state capital.

Bailey and Sarah Williamson first approached the accredited Triangle Land Conservancy about their 405-acre property in the early 2000s, and with support from several sources, TLC purchased it at a generously discounted price in 2013 from their daughters, Betty Brandt Williamson and Sally Williamson Greaser.

Set to open to the public on April 25, 2020, the preserve encompasses all of TLC’s conservation priorities—safeguarding clean water, protecting natural habitats, supporting local farms and food and connecting people with nature. Once a plantation, parts of the land will now serve as an innovative regenerative farming demonstration site with opportunities for agricultural education and training. Regenerative agriculture practices make farms more resilient to climate instability by increasing biodiversity, enriching soils, improving watersheds and enhancing ecosystem services.

With more than 14 miles of trails that connect to a larger greenway system, the community will be able to bike or walk through the preserve, engage with local farmers, pick up produce and learn about the history of the property and people, including the Native Americans and enslaved families who lived and worked on the land. There are rich and complex stories to share—with more to be made in the years to come.
Learning Best Practices

For farmers in bucolic Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, the tidal waters of the Chesapeake Bay may seem distant from their daily lives. But runoff from the county’s farms is the largest source of agricultural pollution entering the bay, making improved land management there a top priority in the bay’s restoration. The accredited Lancaster Farmland Trust (LFT) joined this effort in 2009 after President Obama signed an executive order to protect the Chesapeake Bay.

Among the many organizations and agencies working to improve the Chesapeake Bay’s health, LFT saw a niche it could fill—building on three decades of “good working relationships” with farmers, notes Jeff Swinehart, chief operating officer. The land trust works extensively with Plain sect (Amish and Mennonite) landowners, who “want to do the right thing,” he says, but face various hurdles, such as a concern that government grant funding for easement purchases or agricultural best management practices might jeopardize their exemption from social security.

To help overcome farmers’ financial barriers, LFT sought grant support for agricultural best management practices and has received generous awards from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, which is “often the first one through the door, serving an instrumental role in helping to leverage other support,” Swinehart notes. Since agriculture dominates the local economy, the trust also receives state economic development funds as well as foundation grants. “The general community wants to see ag thrive here.”

Over the years LFT has learned that “farmers take a lot of direction from peers,” Swinehart says. So it created a “Learning Farms” initiative in which those who have adopted best management practices for water quality (like streamside buffers) invite fellow farmers, “telling them why these practices are important, how they put them in place and how they help their bottom line.”

LFT’s focus on water quality is building stronger alliances with municipalities and with what it calls “trusted advisors” of the farming community, such as veterinarians and agricultural service providers.

Intensive staff training by local engineers and experts has helped LFT staff become conversant in the many technical and regulatory details that apply to local waters, like MS4 (stormwater) permits. The jargon can be intimidating, Swinehart admits, but LFT staff members stay focused on their overall goal: “to do everything in our power to put farmers in the best position” to care for their lands well.

Rallying a Community

For the accredited ClearWater Conservancy in central Pennsylvania, protection of land and water have always been inextricably bound, dictated by the region’s karst topography of soluble rocks and disappearing streams. “Our drinking water supply comes from the land beneath our feet,” says ClearWater Executive Director Deb Nardone. “What happens on the land’s surface has a direct impact on groundwater and on our world-class trout streams. Land conservation is essential to protect waters for our community and for all those who live downstream.”

The region encompasses an expanding university town, State College, the second-fastest growing community in Pennsylvania. The town’s designated growth boundary was expanded in recent years, allowing a former farm to be converted to townhouses. That controversial decision, Nardone says, helped community members realize that much of their drinking water came from an area of farmland and open space just outside the present growth boundary that would be “next in line for development.”

Fortunately, ClearWater had come to this realization years earlier, Nardone says, by “proactively thinking about the areas most important to protect and letting science be the driver.” In order to protect 300 acres of farmland in this area, home to a beloved community dairy offering milk in glass bottles and homemade ice cream, the land trust committed to the largest fundraising campaign in its
A FREQUENT CONTRIBUTOR TO THIS MAGAZINE, Marina Schaufler, is an environmental writer and columnist in Maine.

almost all of Costilla County was part of the Sangre de Cristo land grant from Mexico in the 1860s, in which Spanish people who agreed to settle the area received long, narrow strips of land called “varas.” These parcels included access to shared irrigation canals known as acequias (pronounced “ahsekias”). “The early Hispano settlers saw their water rights as inseparable from the land, and their descendants still do,” Lopez says.

Community members grew concerned that the increasingly valuable water rights of Culebra valley lands might get separated and sold, depriving neighbors of the scarce water needed to sustain agricultural operations and traditional lifestyles there. When COL learned of those community concerns in 2012, it began working with landowners to bind water rights to their land, both through purchased agricultural easements and by partnering with the Sangre de Cristo Acequia Association and Colorado University Law School to help each acequia (each farm/ranch identifies by its acequia name) draft and formalize a set of bylaws. The bylaws in turn formalize the management of each acequia. By putting the oral tradition of water sharing in writing, the acequias receive state recognition as viable water management systems under Colorado law.

COL also helped organize an annual congress, the “Congreso,” which brings acequia landowners together to learn about the bylaws (which have now been applied to 40 of the 76 irrigation ditches) and to hear about options for improved land and water management.

In 2016, COL launched a more ambitious Acequia Initiative, raising funds to acquire easements that prevent subdivision and preserve water rights on seven tracts of farm and ranchland in the county. The Natural Resources Conservation Service and several foundations have been “so supportive of our work,” Lopez says, helping preserve not just the land and water but the unique cultural heritage of the Culebra basin properties, which have the state’s oldest water rights.

Lopez is not surprised by the enthusiasm of funders. In addition to state funds provided by Great Outdoors Colorado, it was the only project in the state to receive an NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Program award in 2017, of $1.7 million. She credits the community itself with a compelling vision for conservation and a deep commitment to “protect what they love.”

Historically, the county’s population is underserved and, while land-rich, is cash-poor (the median household income reported in 2017 was $29,000). The sale of agricultural easements has given landowners more resources to reinvest in their farms, helping them make their properties more sustainable and resilient over the long term.

So far, all the existing water rights have remained in the valley, keeping the community united. As Steven Romero, a farmer, rancher and Costilla County commissioner, observed in a COL video: “Water is the lifeblood, the blood that connects the whole community together. We all understand how important water is.”

Joining Water Rights to the Land

Costilla County lies at the southern end of Colorado’s San Luis Valley, an area the size of Connecticut that is “one of the highest mountain deserts in the world,” notes Judy Lopez, conservation project manager at the accredited Colorado Open Lands (COL). It receives less than 10 inches of water annually, and the valley has “essentially been in drought” since 2002, raising concerns among farmers and ranchers about access to water.

Almost all of Costilla County was part of the Sangre de Cristo land grant from Mexico in the 1860s, in which Spanish people who agreed to settle the area received long, narrow strips of land called “varas.” These parcels included access to shared irrigation canals known as acequias (pronounced “ahsekias”). “The early Hispano settlers saw their water rights as inseparable
“Community conservation isn’t what we do,” says Tom Sanford, executive director of the accredited North Olympic Land Trust. “It’s how we do it.”

As challenges build for global and local communities alike—climate change, economic downturns, health concerns, a breakdown in civil discourse—land trusts are deepening relationships and building relevance through conservation that is true to their communities’ needs and cultures.

Four land trusts around the country show how community conservation takes shape in ways as diverse as the people they serve—yet the benefits of these relationships are the same.

Taos Land Trust: “It brought us back to life”

Community conservation is the reason Taos Land Trust didn’t close its doors forever in 2012.

Since 1988, Taos Land Trust had operated in a project-based, grant-funded way to protect northern New Mexico’s landscapes. Then two executive directors in a row left, funding ran out and “conservation as usual” couldn’t keep the doors open. The board wrestled with how to manage conservation work that should last into perpetuity.

Current Executive Director Kristina Ortez was hired with just enough funding to work 10 to 15 hours per week to help figure out next steps. “In the year we were closed,” she says, “we lost a lot of trust in the community. We didn’t know what they wanted us to do.”

So in partnership with the accredited Trust for Public Land and multiple local organizations, Taos Land Trust embarked on a multi-year project, investing substantial funds in a five-part community engagement and mapping process. “This changed our direction,” says Ortez.

Initially they hosted a series of workshops, which boasted successful attendance numbers, but the same people—almost all white, retired and financially secure—showed up each time. “We were grateful for their participation,” Ortez says, “but it didn’t tell us the full story.”

Taos County is tri-cultural, comprised of Hispanic/Latino, Taos Pueblo and Anglo residents. The land trust had historically done the majority of its work with Anglo landowners. To get a more accurate sense of community needs, they began interviews and focus groups, concentrating on Hispano and Pueblo residents, and on artists, teachers and farmers.

“Our planning is based on community outreach but also driven by data,” says Ortez. They overlaid community priorities with data they gathered about wetlands, water sources, soils, existing trails and more. This was especially important given the different conservation priorities that emerged between Anglo, Hispano and Pueblo residents.

During the process, the land trust identified a parcel of land representing everything the community prioritized: water, agriculture, habitat and recreation potential. “This piece of land has been our other transformation,” Ortez says.

The property, purchased in 2015, now houses the land trust headquarters and Rio Fernando Park, set to open to the public around Earth Week 2020.

Overcoming such serious challenges has required serious investment. Ortez is thankful for “amazing donors” along the way, as well as funding through the Trust for Public Land, the Land Trust Alliance and the National Recreation and Park Association, all of which enabled the land trust to invest in the community engagement and mapping process while also being able to hire several full-time staff and begin farmland and wetland restoration in Rio Fernando Park.

“We can now create an ambassador landscape that meets community needs,” Ortez says, “and do remarkable demonstration projects on invasive species, wetland restoration and sustainable agriculture.”

“We’re building trust,” she says of her accredited land trust. “We can do the projects we used to do, and we’re building community support to allow us to work on projects that we can support financially, like lands held by folks who are land rich and cash poor.”

How does a land trust come back from such a huge setback? Ortez sums it up: “Talking with the community. Opening yourself up to what’s wrong with your organization. Opening up to hope and possibility.”

Potomac Conservancy: “Conservation over credit”

“I help people get their hands dirty and their feet wet for clean water,” says Katie Blackman, the accredited Potomac
Conservancy’s senior director of community conservation. “I help them take collective action.”

Those actions include tree plantings, collecting native seeds for reforestation and cleaning up litter. (The conservancy, headquartered in Maryland, has helped its community prevent about 250,000 pounds of trash from entering the Potomac, the “Nation’s River.”) Summertime also means “alternative happy hours”—two-hour community paddles down the Potomac.

“If we can get people out to do something positive, if we can introduce them to the Potomac or deepen their connection,” Blackman says, “they’ll be in a position to protect it.”

Potomac Conservancy was started about 25 years ago by a community of paddlers. “People were missing then from the environmental messaging,” Blackman notes. “About 12 years ago, the current president updated our mission to include ‘connect people to our natural treasure.’”

Potomac Conservancy now has two full-time positions dedicated to community conservation. “It’s a big investment for a small organization,” says Blackman.

The continuing evolution of community conservation has been guided by this core belief: “Conservation over credit—the more power and authority we turn over to communities, the better,” Blackman says.

They’re currently restructuring the program to better reflect that core belief. “We’re creating teams of volunteers who can do work and organize work in their own communities,” she says.

Blackman names two long-time volunteers who attend practically every event. When the conservancy was down a staff member, Blackman says, “We didn’t miss a beat because they ran with it.” They have become founding members of the new volunteer leadership team.

“Putting power in volunteers’ hands is conservation over credit,” Blackman says. So is creating strong, strategic partnerships. “We’re also working with groups like Outdoor Afro, Latino Outdoors, Green Muslims, Corazón Latino, creating inclusive spaces outdoors.”

Blackman notes the conservancy isn’t always the right messenger. “We look for organizations with a record of working with untapped communities. There’s a wealth of power historically excluded from the environmental movement and yet those who hold it are the most impacted. Without them, we cannot succeed.”

LandPaths: “Diverse, like an ecosystem”

In 2002, Executive Director Craig Anderson set out to diversify LandPaths, a Sonoma County, California, land trust. “It’s a lot harder than a ‘translate this website’ button,” Anderson says. Change started with a new diversity statement to guide hiring.

“We couldn’t ask the community to be part of our work unless we changed ourselves,” Anderson says. “We didn’t realize that by becoming more diverse, understanding more diverse needs, that we would back our way into community conservation.”

Anderson defines LandPaths’ community as the “full spectrum of cultures, languages, skin colors and narratives.” Omar Gallardo, new audiences manager at LandPaths, adds, “It’s great to get highlighted for our relationship with the Latino community, but that’s just the start.”

Community conservation is “best when it’s diverse, like an ecosystem,” Anderson says. “It’s all these different factors and people and wild places and agriculture that come together to create a healthy place for our kids and grandkids.”

LandPaths constantly evaluates the cultural relevance of its work. “My job is going out in the community,” Gallardo says, “asking people who work long hours outside, on someone else’s land, to come back out and hike or do physical work, and promising they’ll cherish this experience with their family. It’s intimidating.”

Gallardo emphasizes community ownership as a way to connect people to conservation. “LandPaths only holds the title or manages the land,” Gallardo says. “We tell community members the land is...
Outreach is not always successful. “We learn from that,” Gallardo says. “And we show we’re committed to people because we’re constantly there.”

Two tangible examples of presence and community ownership are the Santa Rosa urban farms LandPaths manages.

“We started Bayer Farm in 2006. People said, ‘That isn’t land trust work,’” Anderson recalls. “It was a pipeline to get to all the other land we were protecting. The people around now accept us. They now go to our other preserves outside the urban area.”

Two-acre Bayer Farm is in walking distance of eight schools. “We nurture healthy children and families through our programming,” Gallardo says. “Kids are growing up in the garden. Families are doing what they know, reconnecting with their childhood or the place they left.”

LandPaths has lost donors who disagree with its community conservation efforts. But, Anderson says, the community itself has stepped up its support.

There’s risk in breaking new ground, in expanding the definition of community. But Anderson encourages other land trusts to reach out to people and to partners “where you’re not sure you’ll be invited in.”

North Olympic Land Trust: “It’s all building community”

“This organization had always seen itself as the land trust of this community,” says Tom Sanford, executive director of the North Olympic Land Trust in Washington state. “In recent years, we’ve done tangible things to formalize and purposefully talk about it.”

Sanford credits Land Trust Alliance conferences and leadership programs with helping him put language to the concept and create a community engagement staff position.

When the land trust updated its strategic plan in 2017, it included a top-level goal to foster a community-wide land ethic that balances habitat, resources and aesthetics. “When these three things are in balance, they support each other and the community,” Sanford explains. And when the land trust allows this to guide its strategy, he adds, “We’re not just saving specific pieces of land, we’re building community in the process.”

The land trust staff members participate in their community outside of conservation, too. Sanford, for example, sits on the board of the area’s Federally Qualified Health Center, which seeks to provide healthcare access to all people regardless of ability to pay.

“In my view, this isn’t radically different than land conservation,” Sanford says. “You need clean air and water, places to recreate, the healing power of nature. You also need access to quality healthcare and a strong economy that can support schools. It’s all building a healthy community.”

Sanford advises other land trusts, “Don’t get pigeonholed into one specific role. Take a posture of listening.”

Right now the land trust is listening closely to conversations about affordable housing, and asking, “How can we build community in a way that provides access to affordable housing and keeps the environment safe?” As climate change displaces more and more people, the needs of climate migrants will also become a larger part of this conversation. Through presence and listening, Sanford hopes to help the community make healthy decisions.

“Our board has led on this. They’ve embraced this as how we do work,” Sanford says. “It’s not an extra or an add-on.” This is so important because if it were thought of as “normal land trust operations vs. community conservation,” Sanford says, “it would be on the cutting block when the next recession hits.”

Worth the challenge

Land trusts that take the time to get to know their communities are doing both the right thing and the smart thing; they are taking steps to ensure their survival and the survival of land conservation into the future. And each organization’s path to transformation is unique.

“It’s been fun over the past couple of years to watch our organization shift from a group that had its head down focused on completing projects, to an organization that is becoming deeply embedded in a variety of our community’s efforts,” Sanford says.

Anderson adds, “The real challenge is letting go and allowing the community to guide us.”

MEGHAN MCDONALD IS A FREELANCE WRITER FOCUSED ON SCIENCE, SUSTAINABILITY AND NONPROFITS.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND BOARD CHAIR:

A Dynamic Duo for Conservation

Often the roles of board president and executive director are described in terms of how they are different, with the board president focused on the future and the executive director focused on daily organizational management and program implementation.
But, ideally, these two individuals act as a dynamic duo. Like Batman and Robin or Xena and Gabrielle, together the board president and executive director are tasked with working toward fulfilling a common mission. A strong partnership between these two individuals—based on trust, communication and respect—not only helps the board and staff to understand each other’s needs and work more efficiently, but also sets the tone for interactions throughout the organization.

**Work Out Your Roles**

How can you go about creating a dynamic duo for your organization? The first step is to make sure the board president and the executive director understand each other’s roles. On high-functioning teams, each player has a particular role. Understanding this is essential if organizational leadership is to be effectively shared. In nonprofits these roles are typically grounded in an understanding of the difference between governance and day-to-day management.

Nonprofit experts often describe the relationship in “one-size-fits-all” terms, drawing clear lines between the board chair’s role in governance and leading the board versus the executive’s role in managing the day-to-day operations and leading staff. But that division of labor does not always have to be followed. In her article “Effective Board Chair–Executive Director Relationships: Not About Roles!,” Mary Hiland provides examples where the board president has regular communications with staff and even provides strategy guidance to staff. However, her main message is that roles need to develop by mutual agreement, designed to benefit the organization, and should be discussed, evaluated and revised over time.

The work of determining roles and building trust does not have to happen only at the start of the dynamic duo relationship. Indeed, most of the pairs studied by Hiland worked out their roles together as their relationship evolved; pairs who defined expectations early did not necessarily develop the strongest relationships.

**To Do #1: Discuss the traditional division of roles based on the board chair’s role being governance and the executive’s role in managing the day-to-day operations and think about whether that model makes sense for your organization. How does the typical model play out in various scenarios? How might variations from the traditional model of hard lines between governance and management serve the organization; how might it cause problems? What approach do you agree to utilize and why?**

**Learn About Each Other’s Abilities and Styles**

As you discuss the division of roles between the executive director and board chair, take into account the unique skills contributed by each member of your dynamic duo.

Explore each other’s strengths, weaknesses and styles—by the way, this requires that you share transparently with each other and be willing to bring your whole authentic self to your role. This level of sharing might require some uncomfortable conversations about topics like cultural difference, power and privilege. In her blog on “10 Great Board Chair Practices,” Marla Cornelius advises leaders to “be aware about your own power and privilege . . . through examining aspects of your personal identity such as race, gender, age or class.” Leadership of the organization will benefit from leaders willing to work together in ways that maximize strengths and compensate for weaknesses. Keep talking, learning and accommodating changes as the relationship evolves.

**To Do #2: In determining how to best develop the board chair-executive director leadership partnership for your land trust,**

Use the following questions to have a dialogue and co-create a relationship with your board president or executive director based on mutual understanding and expectations.

- What does effective board president leadership look like from our perspective?
- What does effective executive director leadership look like from our perspective?
- What are our shared and different roles in leading the land trust?
- How frequently shall we have regular communications?
- Who is responsible for 1) creating board meeting agendas, 2) talking to underperforming board members and 3) holding board members accountable for their commitments?
- What are our strengths and weaknesses? Where can we leverage our strengths to support our weaknesses?
- What does disagreeing constructively look like?
- What are our commitments to each other? To the land trust?
- How will we exemplify mutual trust and respect?
- How do our land trust policies and procedures support and guide our roles? •
consider the unique skills and strengths contributed by each member of your dynamic duo as well as each other’s weaknesses. Where can the two of you agree on flexibility to tap each other’s unique skills and abilities? How can one person’s strength complement the other’s weakness? If necessary, find someone who can help you navigate challenging issues like power and privilege.

Agree on Strategic Direction and Priorities

Imagine if Batman and Robin disagreed on which bad guy to confront or on which baby to save. Their partnership would be rocky to say the least. Similarly, if your executive director and board president aren’t headed in the same direction, your organization will be in for trouble.

But note that while it is vital that both leaders work toward fulfilling a common mission, their perspectives will be different. Winning teams have some players who keep their eyes on the big goal and others who orchestrate the details. Each team member must have both a commitment to the team and the desire to achieve the team’s goal.

This sounds easier than it is. Many nonprofits are working toward a vision that cannot possibly be accomplished in a single board chair’s term, or even a single lifetime. It takes a special kind of commitment to lead an organization under those conditions. It means keeping the long-term goal in mind and making sure short-term decisions don’t undermine the overall direction of the organization. If the two top leaders aren’t clear on how to do this, no one else will be either.

To Do #3: Take some time to sit down together and go over your organization’s strategic priorities at least quarterly.

Keep Communication Channels Open and Respectful

Maybe you don’t have a bat phone you can use to call each other, but your dynamic duo needs to establish regular communication channels. Does one of you prefer email and the other texts? Respect those preferences and your communications will go much more smoothly.

Keep in mind that both of you are busy. Always have a meeting agenda, shared early, for each meeting—even phone and online meetings—that result in moving forward on issues. Establish expectations for responding to communications and establish boundaries that respect personal time, such as not expecting the executive to respond after work hours or on weekends.

Be ready for conflict, a part of any successful relationship. The board president and executive director should exemplify respectful disagreement and conflict resolution for the rest of the board and staff.

I was recently facilitating a board retreat and a great question came up about the protocols of communication when a board member has a concern about how something is going in the organization. I loved the executive’s response: “When we have a problem, think about how you would want to be treated. Show me the same courtesy. We will talk things through.”

To Do #4: Agree on what information must be shared, the form of contact that is preferred (email, in-person meetings, phone calls, texts) and how frequently to communicate. Determine how you will respectfully and promptly address and resolve disagreements and how you will present disagreements publicly if they aren’t resolved.

Build Mutual Trust and Respect

Trust is absolutely indispensable to the two organizational leaders. When she studied 16 board chair–executive director partnerships, Hiland found that trust-building was the most important dynamic influencing the relationships, and that the best relationships were based on closer, more personal connections.

According to Hiland, “The importance of connection, caring and meaning should not be lost in an over-emphasis on more ‘business-like’ practices and claims of harried busyness.”

Other ways to build trust include being comfortable sharing bad news, and sharing the work of solving problems rather than assigning blame.

To Do #5: Rather than avoid personal connections with your counterpart, look for ways to build a personal dimension into your relationship.

It is never too late to build a stronger relationship. Even successful board chair–executive director teams with years of experience working together can benefit from sitting down together and working on their relationship. Spending at least as much time building your own dynamic duo as you do watching the latest superhero movie will be one of the best investments you can make.

Resources


SARA WILSON, CERTIFIED PROFESSIONAL CO-ACTIVE COACH AND PRINCIPAL CONSULTANT OF MAYES | WILSON & ASSOCIATES, LLC, HAS MORE THAN 20 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE AS A CONSULTANT TO NON-PROFIT CONSERVATION ORGANIZATIONS, GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND NATURE CENTERS. SHE HAS HELPED MANY ORGANIZATIONS OPERATE MORE EFFECTIVELY; GOVERN IN ALIGNMENT WITH CURRENT NONPROFIT BEST PRACTICES; PREPARE AND APPLY FOR ACCREDITATION; NAVIGATE THROUGH BOARD AND STAFF LEADERSHIP TRANSITIONS AND DIFFICULT ORGANIZATIONAL CHALLENGES; AND PLAN COMPREHENSIVELY FOR THE FUTURE. SARA@MAYESWILSONASSOCIATES.COM
Five days after her first Land Trust Accreditation Commission meeting, volunteer commissioner Karen Ferrell-Ingram's property was destroyed by a wildfire. As harrowing as this experience was, it gave her a new perspective, she says, “on the restoration of conservation values and on rebuilding a home on an easement property.”

While she credits her parents with instilling in her a love of nature, Ferrell-Ingram was reinspired almost 20 years ago when she and her husband realized they had built a home within an important deer migration corridor. “How could we permanently preserve our land, as well as create an opportunity for other residents to maintain their open spaces?” she wondered. “We looked around and discovered the land trust model, and with Land Trust Alliance assistance, we co-founded Eastern Sierra Land Trust.”

Ferrell-Ingram began her term as a commissioner in January 2015. “The accreditation process made a big difference for my land trust back in 2011 and I wanted to pay it forward.” She estimates she volunteers about 400 hours per year. “As anyone who has experienced accreditation knows, we are very detail-oriented, so our meetings and calls are not brief, although they are very well organized!”

“We have such a wealth of knowledge on the Commission and the level of competence and commitment of the staff is incredible,” Ferrell-Ingram says. Although it isn’t just the staff that she enjoys working with. She also values “getting to know accredited land trusts and the amazing projects they pursue.”

As a commissioner and application reviewer, Ferrell-Ingram hopes the land trust community will accept accreditation as “a regular part of doing business.” She says that the recent impact evaluation found that accreditation has definitively helped position land trusts to preserve more land and to do it permanently. “I’m hoping that through our focus on continuous improvement we can build on our role as a valued partner to land trusts.”

First-year commissioner Andrew Kota admits he was surprised when the Commission first asked him to join as a volunteer, but it didn’t take much to convince him. “I thought it was an opportunity to contribute to a cause greater than that of the land trust I work for, and a way to learn more about the best practices land trusts around the country are implementing in their work.”

He says, “Staff and commissioners alike are intelligent, hardworking and thoughtful people who care about the integrity of land conservation around the country and who truly want land trusts to succeed with their mission. I’m impressed by the incredible level of expertise in various fields that each commissioner and staff member brings to the Commission.”

Growing up in West Virginia, Kota always knew it was important to protect open spaces for people to experience nature, and he’s been involved in land conservation ever since. Starting as a land trust intern, he has since built a land trust stewardship program, spent years doing conservation transactions, worked in fundraising and development, and most recently, had the good fortune to lead his land trust, the Foothills Conservancy of North Carolina, as executive director. “I’ve had my hand in most aspects of this work,” he says, and his background helps him evaluate land trusts in the accreditation process.

Kota hopes that the Commission will continue to add value to the land trusts engaged in the accreditation process and that it attracts greater participation. For him, the best part of working with the Commission has been seeing how his land trust is “part of something that is much larger than each of our organizations individually.”

Karen and Andrew: By the Numbers

| Collective years volunteering with the Commission: | 5-½ |
| Collective years working at land trusts: | 28 |
| Total hours volunteering with the Commission per year: | 700+ |
| Total pages read before each meeting: | 680+ |

CAITY PINKARD IS MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR AT THE LAND TRUST ALLIANCE.
Camping for Conservation

Whether offering a primitive backcountry campsite or a high-end ‘glamping’ experience, land trusts have many opportunities to incorporate camping into their programming.

Sometimes existing campgrounds are included as part of a larger land acquisition package. For example, when the accredited Truckee Donner Land Trust, in California’s Sierra Nevada Mountains, acquired its Webber Lake property in 2012, it conveyed a historic hotel and outbuildings. The legacy of camping on the property predated the acquisition, harkening back to the mid-1850s.

The accredited Kennebec Land Trust in Maine received a donor bequest that required the maintenance of two primitive cabins in order to acquire the Wakefield Wildlife Sanctuary property. Then an interesting partnership developed with a local television show, “Maine Cabin Masters.” The show’s craftsmen helped the land trust develop the “eco” angle of the cabins, which are low impact and off the grid. Solar panels, composting toilets, gray water systems and other green features were recommended by Maine Cabin Masters. The land trust held a watch party after the eco-cabin project aired on local public television, coinciding with its rollout of its Airbnb site, and online reservations were available to attendees and viewers.

Multiple partners helped the accredited Mohonk Preserve create the Samuel F. Pryor III Shawangunk Gateway Campground in 2015, including the American Alpine Club, the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and the Palisades Interstate Park Commission.

American Prairie Reserve developed its suite of camping facilities—remote Buffalo and Antelope Creek camps, self-service hut systems and Kestrel glamping yurts—as a way to bring visitors onto the remote landscapes of Montana’s Hi-Line prairie and the Upper Missouri River. It is committed to providing basic amenities to explore the prairie, which can be difficult to reach.

The accredited Trustees of Reservations in Massachusetts manages two distinctly different campgrounds. Dunes’ Edge offers the solitude of the
Cape Cod shore and access to the nightlife of Provincetown. The property’s acquisition came with a multigenerational cohort of RVers. Tent-only Tully Lake campground, located on an inland waterway in central Massachusetts, is managed by the Trustees on a 15-year lease from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

**Maintaining Balance**

The balance sheet on camping facilities should reflect the “triple bottom line” ethic of providing benefit to investors (land trust members and donors) through returns via social, environmental and financial channels.

**Social.** Campground operations must balance the protection of natural resources with public access. To maintain proper balance, land trusts should engage the local community. The social bottom line is different for each land trust, depending on size, location, target audience and local population.

The Trustees’ Dunes’ Edge acquisition came with an existing group of campers dedicated to maintaining the site, according to South Shore and South Coast Properties Director Andrew Gallagher. And because its other property, Tully Lake Campground, is located a short drive from Boston, it contributes to the community by offering employment opportunities in addition to outdoor amenities.

The Trustees captures data to follow up with visitors to Dunes’ Edge and Tully Lake. According to Director of Business Operations Chris Ward, “At most of the Trustees’ 118 properties, the average visit is one to two hours. At the campground, it is one to two days. This allows visitors a deeper engagement with nature, to unplug and connect, and helps to build a deeper relationship with the organization.” The Trustees brand the campsites to create a sense of community, according to Ward.

Community culture is very much a part of Mohonk Preserve’s efforts to inspire people to enjoy and explore the Shawangunk Mountains. The Preserve’s Pryor campground engages a niche community of climbers but also serves trail runners, cyclists and local residents. Gretchen Reed, director of marketing and communications, notes, “It’s true community conservation, with many meetings with the neighbors to identify issues of concern.”

**Environmental.** Campgrounds can showcase the environmental stewardship values of the land trust. “Campgrounds are great drivers of public support for our work,” says American Prairie Reserve’s director of public access and recreation, Mike Quist Kautz. “It shows our commitment to public access.”

“Recreation is in our mission,” says John Svahn, associate director of Truckee Donner Land Trust, “but the question remains: ‘How do we manage access while ensuring that our resources are protected?’ There is never a time when we don’t look toward the public for reference, and we feel that we have balanced environmental needs with public access.”

Campground ‘sprawl’ is a common problem. Ward looks at stewardship of resources “to minimize the impacts of the campground. For example, overuse causes vegetation to suffer. We always consider the ecology of the site as well as providing a pleasant visitor experience.” Tom Por manages the Tully Lake Campground so that there’s little pressure on the site. “Our campground has a capacity, and we don’t want to overdo it. We understand our limitations.”

The Mohonk Preserve campsites are low impact by design, reflecting their values of protecting and preserving the Shawangunk Mountains. They also work to inspire people through environmental education and conservation science. Like Kennebec Land Trust’s eco-cabins, the Sam Pryor Campground has environmentally friendly features, including composting toilets and pervious pavement and surfaces.

**Financial.** As a part of the growing ecotourism industry, land trusts investing in camping facilities should follow trends in campground management, attend trade shows, upgrade online and social media profiles and track and analyze visitor metrics. “You’re in a service industry now,” says Por.

The Trustees uses an enterprise business model for its acquisitions. Loosely translated, it looks at sustainability, i.e., the revenue-producing potential of the property, along with the environmental and cultural values.

As with any long-term endeavor, there are costs that must be recouped to sustain operations. Property taxes, online reservations systems, insurance, fuel, infrastructure, marketing and facility upgrades are some of the line items that must be considered, along with staff time.

Kennebec Land Trust hopes that the income generated will pay for property taxes, time and staffing and that future revenues will offset long-term stewardship costs. Although the initial startup costs may not be totally recovered, Kirsten Brewer, director of membership and programming, believes that the cabins will break even in two or three seasons.

**Developing Capital Campaigns**

Packaging the campground projects into capital campaigns is a tried and true method of providing for future operating costs. Truckee Donner Land Trust included funds for stewardship in its campaign for acquisition of the Webber Lake property.

With an engaged fundraising board, American Prairie Reserve undertook a capital campaign around its hut system and new Antelope Creek campground. With members spread over a large region, these facilities provide members and donors a place to experience the land through board-led tours. In addition, the outfitters of APR’s luxury Kestrel Campground can customize trips to fit donor preferences.

Whether rustic or high-end, says Kautz, “all the APR properties have one overriding goal: Get people to visit the prairie.”

Ward sums up the camping venture: “Understand what it takes, find the model that works best for your organization and take care with your planning. When done well, it is an awesome experience.”

**ANNE SUNDERMANN is a freelance writer and former executive director of Calvert Nature Society.**

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In September the Chesapeake Conservation Partnership (CCP), a coalition of more than 50 organizations, released “Marking Milestones: Progress in Conserving Land in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.” The report is the most comprehensive survey of land conservation and funding in the Chesapeake watershed in a decade.

Marking Milestones showcases the tremendous value of the Chesapeake watershed and the remarkable success stories of people working to protect the land that supports the quality of life of the watershed’s more than 18 million residents. Eighteen profiles provide examples of land conservation projects, from new wildlife management areas to newly protected farms and urban parks.

Data from the multiagency Chesapeake Bay Program shows that as of the end of 2018, 1,358,456 acres of land throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed have been permanently protected since 2010. This achieves 68% of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement goal to protect an additional 2 million acres by 2025. Only five years remain to conserve the remaining 640,000 or so acres to achieve this goal. The agreement was signed in 2014 by the governors of Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia, the mayor of the District of Columbia, the administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on behalf of the federal government, and the chair of the Chesapeake Bay Commission.

“Land conservation successes and challenges in the Chesapeake watershed present an international example of how communities can use innovative science, partnerships and finance to achieve ambitious conservation goals,” said Joel Dunn, president and CEO of the Chesapeake Conservancy and a lead convener of the CCP. “The Marking Milestones report provides very convincing evidence that if we sustain and enhance current public funding and attract new private capital investments, then it will be possible for us to meet our 2025 goal of protecting 2 million acres and more ambitious goals in the future.”

He explains, “We choose to do this important land conservation work because we all depend on land for clean water, for habitat so that our wildlife can thrive, and for sustaining and enhancing our way of life. We choose to do this because we believe that current and future generations deserve the opportunity to enjoy a healthy Chesapeake and a livable planet. The Chesapeake Conservation Partnership has accepted this challenge and will continue to work together to create and expand protected areas, leverage science and take conservation actions around the watershed in concert with our community priorities.”

“The Marking Milestones report is a significant waypoint for the land conservation community in the Chesapeake,” says Jennifer Miller Herzog, Mid-Atlantic senior program manager for the Land Trust Alliance and a member of the CCP’s steering committee. “It helps us recognize what’s already been accomplished by land trusts and local, state and federal agencies in conserving the watershed’s critical land and water resources and it points the way forward.”

Sharing Data for the Good of All

“I’M A SENIOR GEOSPATIAL ANALYST AT THE CHESAPEAKE CONSERVANCY, and I’ve been here for a little over three years now,” says Jake Leizear. “I work mostly in the world of geographic information systems, using high-level mapping technologies to help identify areas for precision conservation.”

Leizear works at the conservancy’s Conservation Innovation Center, created to leverage cutting-edge research and technology and make it accessible to the conservation community. In 2016, CIC and its partners completed the Chesapeake Bay High-Resolution Land Cover Project, an immense one-meter resolution land cover dataset that classifies landscape features for use in planning and goal tracking. The database is available to all nonprofits, governments, and businesses for free as open data to help conservation organizations of all sizes better protect habitat, water quality and heritage sites. A new grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will build on this database to provide updated, high-resolution data about landscape changes.

“When there’s only so many hours, funding, capacity and people to do conservation work, it’s more important than ever to make sure conservation efforts get the most bang for their buck,” Leizear says. “That’s why precision conservation, or getting the right practices, in the right places, at the right scale, at the right time and making sure they are working, is so key to what I do here.”

Bookmarks

Report and Website

When it comes to harnessing the ability of America’s farms and ranches to combat climate change, women farmers and non-operating landowners may be the key to success, according to a new report from American Farmland Trust.

There are now nearly 1 million women farm operators and over half a million additional women landowners who lease their land to farmers.

The report, featured on an AFT website along with profiles and videos, is part of its Women for the Land initiative. “Testing the Women Landowner Conservation Learning Circle Model” has found that women landowners are important in the broader implementation of conservation practices on farms and that women-only learning circles work as a means for expanding conservation actions.

Learn more about this new research and the Women for the Land initiative at https://farmland.org/women-for-the-land.

Blog

From Bloomerang comes the blog post “3 Ways to Use Your Form 990 as a Marketing Tool.” Explaining that GuideStar and Charity Navigator pick up 990s from the IRS and post them for public consumption, “Even if you think people aren’t reviewing your Form 990, it’s out there and available. GuideStar published an article [https://trust.guidestar.org/new-research-shows-nonprofit-transparency-matters] about how nonprofit transparency truly matters. A study of over 6,000 nonprofits revealed that ‘nonprofits that earned a GuideStar Seal of Transparency averaged 53% more in contributions the following year compared to organizations that didn’t earn a Seal.’ They concluded that donors give more to transparent organizations and that transparent organizations are stronger organizations.”

The post concludes, “This is a compelling argument for putting your best foot forward on the 990, to ensure that anyone who’s reviewing the form on GuideStar or elsewhere gets a true sense of your organization.” See the blog at https://bloomerang.co/blog/3-ways-to-use-your-form-990-as-a-marketing-tool.

Leizear, who describes himself as a millennial but “almost a Gen Z’er,” adds, “This is the work that’s worth doing and work I believe in. Getting to bring my skillset to a greater movement dedicated to protecting and restoring the special places of my home is something I’m really grateful for, and I’m always coming to work excited about what we can do next to meet those goals!”
Land Trust Alliance board chair Jamey French welcomed 1,800 people to Rally 2019: The National Land Conservation Conference in Raleigh, North Carolina, saying, “There’s room for everyone in our growing community. We’re better together.”

Two main themes running through the conference this year were inclusivity and climate change. Alliance Executive Vice President Wendy Jackson described the Alliance’s listening and learning initiative, Common Ground, as being about “equitable access to the many benefits of conservation.”

“This isn’t about adding seats at the table. This is about building a new table with room for all,” said Karena Mahung, Common Ground team member. The team shared that the feedback so far has been rich, multilayered and constructive, and that the conversations are already leading to new strategies for building a more equitable and inclusive movement.

In addition to the 114 workshops and many networking opportunities offered at Rally, the conference featured a variety of speakers with strong messages, including Alliance President Andrew Bowman, Noticias Telemundo Senior Correspondent Vanessa Hauc and former U.S. Surgeon General Regina Benjamin.

For 23 years as a journalist, Vanessa Hauc has covered stories that affect her community and the world. At first, she says, climate change was a distant issue that few people knew about; now she covers it every day. She was there to see the heartbreaking devastation of the fires in the Amazon: “It was like an atomic bomb had gone off.”

“For me, climate change is not something I read in a book or something a scientist told me in a sound bite, it is something very real, and I see every day how those most vulnerable are most affected by it.” Worried for her son’s future, she says she decided “to invest all of my resources, knowledge and strength into telling the story of climate change.”

In her travels, she has seen how “the way that we live is deeply affecting every single creature on our planet.” Named one of the 10 Latinos leading on climate by the website HuffPost, she co-founded Sachamama, or “Mother Jungle,” a nonprofit organization that works to inspire, empower and educate the Latino community on climate issues and sustainable attitudes, behaviors and lifestyles.

Dr. Regina Benjamin linked the work of land trusts to improved health. “Improved quality of life and health outcomes are directly related to fresh air, physical activity and mental health. The work you are doing directly impacts the health of your community and the health of all our communities.”

She said that as surgeon general, she was the doctor responsible for 300 million American patients.

“The power of prevention occurs where we live, learn, work, play and pray.”

In 2011 the National Prevention Council, led by Benjamin, published the “National Prevention Strategy,” a holistic and integrated approach to community health. “Land trusts clean our air, provide healthy food, provide healthy drinking water, address climate change, provide critical places for people to exercise and spend quiet time. Land trusts are a national prevention strategy in action.”

A big proponent of walking, she understands that to walk, there must be land to walk on. To this “group of dedicated leaders” she said, “Know that you’re making a difference in so many people’s lives. You are critical partners in ensuring that people have equitable access to nature.”

Zoraida Lopez-Diago of the accredited Westchester Land Trust welcomed everyone to the first Conservationists of Color Reception at Rally 2019, organized by the newly formed affinity group with support from the Land Trust Alliance.
The Awards

THE KINGSBURY BROWNE CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP AWARD AND LINCOLN INSTITUTE OF LAND POLICY FELLOWSHIP was awarded to Jane Difley, now-retired president and forester of the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests (accredited). Difley, only the fourth executive of the 118-year-old Society but the first woman, has been “busting into boys’ clubs her whole career,” says William Dunlap of the New Hampshire Historical Society. Accepting her award, she said, “Thank you from the bottom of my heart and from the bottom of my hiking boots.”

The National Land Trust Excellence Award went to the accredited Sonoma Land Trust in Santa Rosa, California, which takes a landscape-scale approach to conservation and employs a community-driven land use planning process. “The future of conservation depends on the support and engagement of everyone,” said Neal Ramus, director of community programs. “Bringing diverse groups of people, perspectives and projects together is hard work and time intensive, but it is also necessary. This new era of community conservation takes dedication, and, sometimes, a little convincing. But most of all, it takes faith in the notion that nature is for everyone.”

The Advocacy Ambassador Award was given to Ashley Demosthenes, president and CEO of the accredited Lowcountry Land Trust in Charleston, South Carolina. “I’m here to advocate that you advocate,” said Demosthenes. “The Land Trust Alliance does a magnificent job demystifying the experience. I will see you in D.C. in the spring [at Advocacy Days].”

1. The first cohort of scholars from the Scholars for Conservation Leadership Program (see page 12) are (from left to right): Papa Gueye, Lillian Dinkins, Chris French (U.S. Forest Service), Jana Pruitt, Wendy Jackson (Alliance), Jocelynn Horton, Kierra Christie, Andrew Bowman (Alliance), Princess Mutasa, Sarah Howdy, Pomaikai Cathcart, Austin Cary, Coria Richardson and Dr. Regina Benjamin.
2. Vanessa Hauc reporting on location.
3. Award winner Jane Difley’s leadership style, according to Janet Zeller of the U.S. Forest Service, includes mentoring, encouraging and empowering others to lead.
If they woke up feeling anxious, the high school students in the accredited Montezuma Land Conservancy’s summer Agriculture Immersion Program in Colorado could voice those feelings in a safe, supportive environment during the daily morning “circle up.”

The nine young people who participated in the program this past June face challenges and stress on many fronts. Many started the days at MLC’s farm feeling weighed down by concerns about their health, family, relationships, money—even homelessness.

The check-ins encouraged discussion and sharing, where everyone was heard and respected. Then we moved into our day, striving to make ourselves and our situations better.

I recall one day filled with hard work, lively conversation and interaction with horses, when we did a culminating “circle down.” Students who had started their day downcast found new energy, and for those who started the day feeling good, the support they were able to offer their friends further cemented their positivity. Similar days followed. By the time the month-long program had concluded, I was routinely hearing how proud of themselves the students felt for showing up for work and for each other.

Working with these amazing young people and seeing what they experienced has changed my view of community conservation. Rather than focus on traditional measures of success, such as conserved acres or number of members, it’s clear to me now the difference we can make by devoting energy to growing young people.

We do our best work when we create a supportive environment where all people can connect with the land and with one another. By simply providing a shared goal and letting the power of teamwork and nature take hold, land trusts can transform lives. The experiences like the ones my students enjoyed can bring more joy and hope into the world.

JAY LOSCHERT IS OUTREACH AND EDUCATION COORDINATOR FOR MONTEZUMA LAND CONSERVANCY.
CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FOLLOWING LAND CONSERVATION GROUPS

NATIONAL
· Access Fund
· Ducks Unlimited and its affiliate, Wetlands America Trust
· The Conservation Fund and its affiliate, Sustainable Conservation
· The Nature Conservancy
· The Trust for Public Land
· The Wilderness Land Trust

ALABAMA
· Freshwater Land Trust
· Land Trust of North Alabama
· Weeks Bay Foundation

ALASKA
· Great Land Trust
· Interior Alaska Land Trust
· Kachemak Heritage Land Trust
· Southeast Alaska Land Trust

ARIZONA
· Arizona Land and Water Trust
· Central Arizona Land Trust
· Desert Foothills Land Trust

ARKANSAS
· Northwest Arkansas Land Trust

CALIFORNIA
· Bear Yuba Land Trust
· Big Sur Land Trust
· California Farmland Trust
· California Rangeland Trust
· Cayucos Land Conservancy
· Center for Natural Lands Management
· Eastern Sierra Land Trust
· Elkhorn Slough Foundation
· Fairbanks Land Conservancy
· Feather River Land Trust
· John Muir Land Trust
· Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County
· Land Trust for Santa Barbara County
· Land Trust of Napa County
· Land Trust of Santa Clara Valley
· Land Trust of Santa Cruz County
· Marin Agricultural Land Trust
· Mendocino Land Trust
· Mojave Desert Land Trust
· Mother Lode Land Trust
· Northcoast Regional Land Trust
· Northern California Regional Land Trust
· Ojai Valley Land Conservancy
· Pacific Forest Trust
· Peninsula Open Space Trust
· Placer Land Trust
· Rivers & Lands Conservancy
· Sacramento Valley Conservancy
· San Diego Habitat Conservancy
· San Joaquin River Parkway and Conservation Trust
· Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority
· Save Mount Diablo
· Save the Redwoods League
· Sempervirens Fund
· Sequoia Riverlands Trust
· Shasta Land Trust
· Sierra Foothill Conservancy
· Solano Land Trust
· Sonoma Land Trust
· Sutter Buttes Regional Land Trust
· Tejon Ranch Conservancy
· Transition Habitat Conservancy
· Tri-Valley Conservancy
· Truckee Donner Land Trust
· Ventura Land Trust
· Wildlife Heritage Foundation

COLORADO
· Aspen Valley Land Trust
· Black Canyon Regional Land Trust
· Central Colorado Conservancy
· Colorado Cattlemen’s Agricultural Land Trust
· Colorado Headwaters Land Trust
· Colorado Open Lands
· Colorado West Land Trust
· Crested Butte Land Trust
· Douglas Land Conservancy
· Eagle Valley Land Trust
· Estes Valley Land Trust
· La Plata Open Space Conservancy
· Montezuma Land Conservancy
· Mountain Area Land Trust
· Palmer Land Trust
· Rio Grande Headwaters Land Trust
· San Isabel Land Protection Trust
· Southern Plains Land Trust

CONNECTICUT
· Avalonia Land Conservancy
· Branford Land Trust
· Candlewood Valley Regional Land Trust
· Colchester Land Trust
· Connecticut Farmland Trust
· Cornwall Conservation Trust
· East Haddam Land Trust
· Essex Land Trust
· Flanders Nature Center & Land Trust
· Granby Land Trust
· Greenwich Land Trust
· Housatonic Valley Association
· Joshua’s Tract Conservation and Historic Trust
· Kent Land Trust
· Land Conservancy of Ridgefield
· Lyme Land Conservation Trust
· Naromi Land Trust
· New Canaan Land Trust
· Newtown Forest Association
· Norfolk Land Trust
· Redding Land Trust
· Roxbury Land Trust
· Salem Land Trust
· Salisbury Association
· Sharon Land Trust
· Steep Rock Association
· Warren Land Trust
· Weantinoge Heritage Land Trust
· Winchester Land Trust
· Wyndham Land Trust

FLORIDA
· Alachua Conservation Trust
· Conservation Florida
· Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast
· North Florida Land Trust
· Tall Timbers Research Station
· Land Conservancy
· Tampa Bay Conservancy

GEORGIA
· Athens Land Trust
· Central Savannah River Land Trust
· Chattapoga Conservancy
· Georgia-Alabama Land Trust
· Georgia Piedmont Land Trust
· Mountain Conservation Trust of Georgia
· Ocmulgee Land Trust
· St. Simons Land Trust

HAWAI‘I
· Hawaiian Islands Land Trust
· Hakalau Forest Land Trust

IDAHO
· Kaniksu Land Trust
· Land Trust of the Treasure Valley
· Lemhi Land Trust
· Palouse Land Trust
· Sagebrush Steppe Land Trust
· Teton Regional Land Trust
· Wood River Land Trust

ILLINOIS
· Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation
· Lake Forest Open Lands Association and its affiliate, Lake Forest Land Foundation
· Natural Land Institute
· Openlands
· Prairie Land Conservancy
· The Conservation Foundation
· The Land Conservancy of McHenry County
• Vinalhaven Land Trust
• Three Rivers Land Trust
• Orono Land Trust
• Buzzards Bay Coalition and its affiliate, Acushnet River Reserve
• Dartmouth Natural Resources Trust
• Groton Conservation Trust
• Kestrel Land Trust
• Lowell Parks and Conservation Trust
• Massachusetts Audubon Society
• Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust
• Sheriff’s Meadow Foundation
• Sudbury Valley Trustees
• The Trustees of Reservations and its affiliates, Hilltown Land Trust and Massachusetts Land Conservation Trust
• Wareham Land Trust

• Scenic Rivers Land Trust
• Potomac Conservancy
• Lower Shore Land Trust
• Eastern Shore Land Conservancy
• American Chestnut Land Trust

• Oceanside Conservation Trust
• Midcoast Conservancy
• Maine Coast Heritage Trust
• Maine Farmland Trust
• Harpswell Heritage Land Trust
• Kennebec Estuary Land Trust
• Kennebec Land Trust
• Mahoosuc Land Trust
• Maine Coast Heritage Trust

• Land Trust for the Mississippi Coastal Plain

• Ozark Regional Land Trust

• Bitter Root Land Trust
• Five Valleys Land Trust
• Flathead Land Trust
• Gallatin Valley Land Trust
• Montana Land Reliance
• Prickly Pear Land Trust
• Vital Ground Foundation

• Nebraska Land Trust

• Nevada Land Trust

• Ammonosuc Conservation Trust
• Ausbon Sargent Land Preservation Trust
• Bear-Paw Regional Greenways
• Five Rivers Conservation Trust
• Lakes Region Conservation Trust
• Monadnock Conservancy
• Piscataquog Land Conservancy
• Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests
• Southeast Land Trust of New Hampshire
• Squam Lakes Conservation Society
• Upper Saco Valley Land Trust
• Upper Valley Land Trust

• D&R Greenway Land Trust
• Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space
• Great Swamp Watershed Association
• Harding Land Trust
• Hunterdon Land Trust
• Monmouth Conservation Foundation
• New Jersey Conservation Foundation
• Raritan Headwaters Association
• Ridge and Valley Conservancy
• South Jersey Land and Water Trust
• The Land Conservancy of New Jersey

• New Mexico Land Conservancy
• Rio Grande Agricultural Land Trust
• Santa Fe Conservation Trust
• Taos Land Trust

• Adirondack Land Trust
• Agricultural Stewardship Association
• Catskill Center for Conservation and Development
• Cazenovia Preservation Foundation
• Champlain Area Trails
• Columbia Land Conservancy
• Dutchess Land Conservancy
• Edmund Niles Huyck Preserve
• Finger Lakes Land Trust
• Genesee Land Trust
• Genesee Valley Conservancy
• Greene Land Trust
• Hudson Highlands Land Trust
• Indian River Lakes Conservancy
• Lake George Land Conservancy
• Mianus River Gorge
• Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy
• Mohonk Preserve
• North Salem Open Land Foundation
• North Shore Land Alliance
• Oblong Land Conservancy
• Open Space Institute and its affiliate, Open Space Institute Land Trust
• Orange County Land Trust
• Otsego Land Trust
• Peconic Land Trust and its affiliate, South Fork Land Foundation
• Putnam County Land Trust – Save Open Spaces
• Rensselaer Land Trust
• Rensselaer Plateau Alliance
• Rondout-Espopus Land Conservancy
• Saratoga P.L.A.N.
• Scenic Hudson and its affiliate, Scenic Hudson Land Conservancy
• Thousand Islands Land Trust
• Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust
• Wallkill Valley Land Trust
• Westchester Land Trust
• Western New York Land Conservancy
• Winnacunnet Land Trust
• Woodstock Land Conservancy
NORTH CAROLINA
- Blue Ridge Conservancy
- Catawba Lands Conservancy
- Conservation Trust for North Carolina
- Conserving Carolina
- Davidson Lands Conservancy
- Eno River Association
- Foothills Conservancy of North Carolina
- Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust
- Mainspring Conservation Trust
- New River Conservancy
- North Carolina Coastal Land Trust
- Piedmont Land Conservancy
- RiverLink
- Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy
- Tar River Land Conservancy
- The Walthour-Moss Foundation
- Three Rivers Land Trust
- Triangle Land Conservancy

OREGON
- Deschutes Land Trust
- Friends of the Columbia Gorge and its affiliate, Friends of the Columbia Gorge Land Trust
- Greenbelt Land Trust
- McKenzie River Trust
- North Coast Land Conservancy
- Southern Oregon Land Conservancy
- The Wetlands Conservancy
- Wallowa Land Trust
- Western Rivers Conservancy
- Wild Rivers Land Trust

PENNSYLVANIA
- Allegheny Land Trust
- Brandywine Conservancy & Museum of Art
- Central Pennsylvania Conservancy
- Chestnut Hill Conservancy
- ClearWater Conservancy
- Countryside Conservancy
- Delaware Highlands Conservancy
- French and Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust
- French Creek Valley Conservancy
- Heritage Conservancy
- Hollow Oak Land Trust
- Lancaster County Conservancy
- Lancaster Farmland Trust
- Land Conservancy of Adams County
- Land Trust of Bucks County
- Natural Lands and its affiliate, Montgomery County Lands Trust
- North Branch Land Trust
- The Land Conservancy for Southern Chester County
- Tincum Conservancy
- Western Pennsylvania Conservancy
- Westmoreland Conservancy
- Wildlands Conservancy
- Willistown Conservation Trust

PUERTO RICO
- Conservation Trust of Puerto Rico

RHODE ISLAND
- Aquidneck Land Trust
- Block Island Conservancy
- Sakonnet Preservation Association
- South Kingstown Land Trust
- Tiverton Land Trust
- Westerly Land Trust

SOUTH CAROLINA
- Aiken Land Conservancy
- Beaufort County Open Land Trust
- Congaree Land Trust
- East Cooper Land Trust
- Edisto Island Open Land Trust
- Kiawah Island Natural Habitat Conservancy
- Lord Berkeley Conservation Trust
- Lowcountry Land Trust
- Pee Dee Land Trust
- Spartanburg Area Conservancy
- Upper Savannah Land Trust
- Upstate Forever

TENNESSEE
- Land Trust for Tennessee
- Lookout Mountain Conservancy
- Tennessee Parks & Greenways Foundation
- Wolf River Conservancy

TEXAS
- Bayou Land Conservancy
- Colorado River Land Trust
- Frontera Land Alliance
- Galveston Bay Foundation
- Green Spaces Alliance of South Texas
- Hill Country Conservancy
- Hill Country Land Trust
- Houston Audubon Society
- Katy Prairie Conservancy
- Native Prairies Association of Texas
- Pines and Prairies Land Trust
- Texas Agricultural Land Trust
- Texas Land Conservancy

UTAH
- Summit Land Conservancy
- Utah Open Lands

VERMONT
- Greensboro Land Trust
- Lake Champlain Land Trust
- Northeast Wilderness Trust
- Stowe Land Trust
- Vermont Land Trust

VIRGINIA
- Blue Ridge Land Conservancy
- Capital Region Land Conservancy
- Historic Virginia Land Conservancy
- Land Trust of Virginia
- New River Land Trust
- Northern Neck Land Conservancy
- Northern Virginia Conservation Trust
- Piedmont Environmental Council
- Valley Conservation Council
- Virginia Eastern Shore Land Trust

WASHINGTON
- Bainbridge Island Land Trust
- Blue Mountain Land Trust
- Capitol Land Trust
- Chelan-Douglas Land Trust
- Columbia Land Trust
- Forterra
- Great Peninsula Conservancy
- Inland Northwest Land Conservancy
- Jefferson Land Trust
- Lummi Island Heritage Trust
- Methow Conservancy
- Nisqually Land Trust
- North Olympic Land Trust
- PCC Farmland Trust
- San Juan Preservation Trust
- Skagit Land Trust
- Whatcom Land Trust
- Whidbey Camano Land Trust

WEST VIRGINIA
- Capron and Lost Rivers Land Trust
- West Virginia Land Trust

WISCONSIN
- Caledonia Conservancy
- Door County Land Trust
- Driftless Area Land Conservancy
- Geneva Lake Conservancy
- Groundswell Conservancy
- Ice Age Trail Alliance
- Kettle Moraine Land Trust
- Landmark Conservancy
- Madison Audubon Society
- Mississippi Valley Conservancy
- Northern Wisconsin Land Trust
- Northwoods Land Trust
- Ozaque Washington Land Trust
- The Prairie Enthusiasts and its affiliate, TPE Trust

WYOMING
- Jackson Hole Land Trust
- Wyoming Stock Growers Land Trust

As of November 2019
Bolding indicates new decision
Indicates First Renewal
Indicates Second Renewal

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