

A Fireside Chat With Land Betterment's Co-founder and President, Kirk Taylor

NEWS RELEASE BY LAND BETTERMENT CORPORATION

Northampton, MA | February 24, 2022 10:27 AM Eastern Standard Time



Hello - I'm Stephanie Conzelman, Stakeholder Engagement Director with Land Betterment. The following is a continuation of my recent meetings with Land Betterment's founders team. In this week's Fireside Chat, I sat down with Kirk Taylor, Land Betterment's Co-founder and President. Kirk is a dynamic financial and governance leader having spent the first 15 years of his career at national and regional public accounting firms focusing on complex business structuring and financial reporting. He enjoys working towards productive solutions to complicated challenges.

I was really struck by how prevalent AUTHENTICITY IS TO THEIR BUSINESS MODEL. Everything Land Betterment does always comes back to authenticity. This a mantra/ethos which is woven throughout the Company and is really helping them make a genuine difference in the communities devastated by the fossil fuel industry. We also spoke about his favorite Land Betterment business pillar, Betterment Harvests. He did say, however, that he is **EXCITED ABOUT ALL OF LAND BETTERMENT'S BUSINESS PILLARS** - *eko, Betterment Harvests, Land Betterment Exchange (LBX), Coal Craft Spirits, Pollinate, Betterment Recycling and Betterment Metal Recovery.*

Kirk noted, "It's really fun to chat about our work! All members of the founding team have enjoyed these chats because it gives us a chance to reflect upon why we created Land Betterment. It's helpful to talk about what we are doing. Too often you get head down doing the work instead of talking about the reasons for doing the work."

Q: Being Authentic is at the core of Land Betterment. How has that been beneficial?

A: *We provide solutions to the actual challenges of the communities. We are not creating a solution to a challenge that does not exist.*

I often hear from environmentalists that we need to shut down all the coal mines, 100% and NOW. My response is, "How do these folks feed their families once the coal mines are shut down?" And then the conversation stops. You need to provide a real solution to the challenge. There are generational talents such as creativity and the willingness to work VERY hard in these areas (Appalachia and Central Virginia) and

Our authenticity has been with us since we started American Resources (Nasdaq:AREC) back in 2006. We have been in these communities in Appalachia for a long time and have been creating jobs through different cycles of the coal mining industry. By being partners with the people and working side by side with them, we have gained authenticity within the communities. We are providing new and appropriate solutions to address the challenges they are facing today. We are not trying to make a quick buck off anyone or their hardships. We are listening to the stakeholders and the communities to hear what they want as the communities transition. We then provide them a viable solution based on their input.

Q: Can you share an example of how not having the trust has negatively impacted Land Betterment?

A: *Outreach and buy-in is very important for Land Betterment. We have reached out to many of the transition focused entities in the area working for economic change, as these communities grapple with what is next after coal mining.*

There is really only one instance that stands out in my mind when we did not achieve the desired buy-in. We were speaking with a non-profit whose mission is "the advancement of Appalachia." Initially, we had great conversations and they really supported what we are doing. But when they asked what led Land Betterment to the region and we spoke about our past in the region and how we got there, the conversation quickly took a negative turn – a 180-degree flip in fact. They spoke about the devastation that the fossil fuel industry has caused the community both environmentally and socially and said they would never work with us, nor support us or communicate with us again because of our economic activity in the region in the past. This was really eye opening. It was a valuable

learning experience however, because we learned that we need to better navigate through some of those prejudices about economic viability in these regions.

You can't simply throw out history or the past. You need to build upon it and create transition, not just throw it out and start new. YOU GET ZERO BUY-IN FROM THAT. It was eye opening and made us more determined to continue our dialogues so that we can continue our work that we are so committed to.

Q: Which Land Betterment Business Pillar excites you the most (

A: I AM EXCITED ABOUT ALL OF THEM!

Betterment Harvests is really exciting. It is the exact case study of bringing positive environmental change coupled with positive social change to transitioning communities.

Land Betterment does a great job at remediating former industrial properties and doing all the appropriate environmental cleanup work. We then communicate with community and stakeholders and ask them what they want to do with this cleaned-up property. Is it more trees, more forests, more jobs, etc.? We work with them in a way to do our land remediation work to fit the end use. This way everything is more efficient quicker and has more of a positive environmental impact. Then you couple that with new jobs that are created from these sustainable endeavors. With our partnership with the local community technical college, we enable them to train their students in our facility which creates a generation of indoor farmers where the former generations were coal miners. We are making a seismic shift in the community, touching both the environmental and social impact in the overall transition in their economy. We are super excited about the scalability of it. We can create a new domestic food logistic supply chain centered in Appalachia which is well located to reach both coasts.

Q: What types of crops are you growing in the newly converted Willard Elementary School?

A: *The school will be designed for propagation – the first stage of plant growth. We will be taking the seed from seed to seedling. These will be high value crops such as several tomato and pepper varieties.*

The conversion of the Willard Elementary school is a case study on correct adaptive re-use. This school has a bunch of individual rooms where you can grow different crops in each room. From a business standpoint you can mitigate your risk of crop loss because you will never have wide spread crop disease because each crop is growing in a different room, in isolation.

Q: Why is Appalachia so conveniently located and will you be able to reduce Carbon Footprints?

A: *You are shortening the truck route. If you have to truck a seedling from Canada to a greenhouse in Kentucky – that is a lot of CO2 that is emitted, right? But if you grow that seedling just 10 miles down the road or next to the green house, that is a lot less miles on the road. We look at both carbon footprint as well as land foot print in most of our decisions. Whenever you can reuse prior disturbed land, .”*

About Land Betterment Corporation

Land Betterment Corporation, an Indiana Benefit Corporation and Pending B-Corp, is an environmental solutions company focused on fostering a positive impact through upcycling former coal mining sites to create sustainable community development and job creation. The Company utilizes a complete solution-based lifecycle program to restore and rehabilitate the environment and revitalize communities in need of change and opportunity. Land Betterment accomplishes this by identifying un-reclaimed, run-down and neglected coal mining sites, fixing the environment through reclamation and remediation, and then repurposing the land to support a sustainable business that serves the community. Land Betterment firmly believes that with real solutions it is possible for restoration of impacted areas to live side-by-side long term employment, while building sustainable and safe surroundings for communities and our planet. Connect with the Company on **LinkedIn Twitter** and **Facebook**.

Company Contacts:

Mark LaVerghetta 317.537.0492 ext. 0 Chief Governance Officer, Corporate Finance **info@landbetterment.com**

Stephanie Conzelman 207.205.0790 Stakeholder Engagement Director **info@landbetterment.com**

View additional multimedia and more ESG storytelling from Land Betterment Corporation on 3blmedia.com