



CENTER FOR WHOLE COMMUNITIES

Building A New Movement:
Land Conservation and Community

Partial draft, July 2008

Introduction

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

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

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

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

The goals of our study might be best expressed as a set of questions: **What is the role of people and community in conserving and in keeping land conserved? How well do conservation organizations**

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

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

This summer, we are also traveling to several sites around the country to document innovative practices in land conservation and gather the voices and stories of those in the center of the experience. Shamina de Gonzaga and Gala Narezo will be profiling the work of Land Paths in Santa Rosa, California, Taos Land Trust and partners in New Mexico, and the Eastern Shore Land Conservancy in Maryland. The publication that results from our inquiry will be released in part at the Land Trust Alliance Rally this September, and fully in 2009. It will include these case studies and many more voices speaking about what it means, and what it requires, to do "whole communities work" successfully.

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

With appreciation,

Helen Whybrow
Editor

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Conservation 2.0

The Case for “Whole Communities” Conservation

Peter Forbes

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

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

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

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

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

Our movement has been on a long journey. Emblematic of the beginning of that journey is this story: John Muir arrived in Glacier Bay, Alaska by canoe with a Presbyterian minister in 1879. Muir was awed by the vast forces at work in this sweeping landscape of mountain, glacier and water. Being in Glacier Bay made Muir feel fully alive, and he translated his experiences in a series of popular articles sent in installments to the *San Francisco Bulletin* even before he got back to California. Muir’s writing led directly to the creation of Glacier Bay National Monument in 1925 and helped establish the

dominant theme of the early conservation movement: Keep safe what you find valuable by removing people and other species that may threaten it. Our national park system is indebted to these first efforts at forming a practice of conservation.

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

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

There are both moral and strategic imperatives for this shift to Conservation 2.0. The leaders who accept these imperatives as invitations are shaping a more vibrant and inclusive practice of conservation by regularly asking this question: **What is the work of conservation most needed now, and how do we really "save" land today?** For many, the answer to this question includes people and community. Yolanda Kakabadse, the former president of The World Conservation Union said, "The slogan of poverty reduction is not a fair presentation of the work of conservation groups. We work for society. I don't work for the tree or for the species alone. They are important because they serve society."

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

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



First, there is the divide between those whose orientation is largely toward people and those whose orientation is largely toward nature. This divide is worsened by the fracture between those who have privilege and those who do not. If you have financial resources and care about nature, you may be interested in conservation, endangered species, wilderness, rainforests and these types of issues. If you're privileged and focused on people, you may be more interested in renewable energy, consumer choice and green buildings. If you have little privilege and care most about people, perhaps you are interested in public health, Hurricane Katrina, democratic participation and hunger. Lastly, if you have little privilege and care most about nature, you may be interested in clean air, access to parks and urban greening.

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

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

The Moral Imperative

Because of conservation's success, the community legitimately expects conservation groups to go beyond narrow mission statements about conserving land. When conservationists control a percentage of the land in a community, a region and even a state, it shouldn't be surprising that the

public looks to conservationists to have ethical positions on housing, growth, wealth and the future. Increasingly a diversity of people are challenging conservationists to explain how they can control so much land and not look more like the community itself. This call to conservationists is to make visible the ethics of not only *how* they work but *why and for whom*.

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

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

The Strategic Imperative

In purely strategic terms, are conservationists winning or losing the land-use race in America?

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

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

Glacier Bay while 2,000 tourists snap pictures with disposable cameras I have to question the wisdom of the 'current owners.'"

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

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

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

As conservationists aspire to speak to a broader range of Americans, we must understand that people are looking first for a response to these everyday realities. What conservationists do, provide people with a relationship to land, is still medicine for that which most ails our culture. Our healthy relationship to land is the means by which humans generate, re-create, and renew transcendent values such as community, meaning, beauty, love and the sacred, on which both ethics and morality depend.

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

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

Our success has also arisen from an ability to understand and use political and economic power, and the land trust movement has plenty of both. Not only can it effectively buy and control land, but it can change tax laws. And with that power comes an equal responsibility to use it equitably for all species and all people. In an age of visual metaphors, what is the face of land conservation today? Is it a man or a woman? Is it white or a person of color? Does it wear a crisp white shirt or a sweat-stained t-shirt? Or is it all of these? This *moment of becoming something new* asks something entirely different of every conservationist. This call is not to do more, not to do bigger, but instead to pause long

enough to reconsider the very questions that have motivated conservation, and to allow fresh answers to evolve about why and for whom we do our work. It is to ask the question, “What is a whole community, why should we care, and how do we get there?”

A New Leadership

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

When leaders and their organizations work in this manner, new life flows to them. They become less brittle, more flexible and better collaborators. These leaders are using their land for food production and buying new land to create permanent locations for farmers markets. They are processing sustainably harvested wood from conserved land for affordable housing. They are conservationists committed to building wealth for people with low incomes by selling their own restricted land to co-ops, and they are translating their newsletters and websites into Spanish. They are committed to making a meaningful response to global issues like climate change and scarcity of water.

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

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

Land Trusts and Community Engagement

**A report based on survey and interview data
Prepared for the Center for Whole Communities
by Danyelle O'Hara, May, 2008**

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

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

Preface

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

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

In an effort to help establish a baseline for developing models and tools, the Center for Whole Communities, in partnership with the Land Trust Alliance, conducted an online survey of land trusts throughout the United States. The data presented here, and the full survey attached to the end of this report, is based on 361 responses from 39 states in the country. This response rate represents close to a quarter of U.S. land trusts that are members of the Land Trust Alliance. Subsequently, the Center for Whole Communities interviewed fourteen senior staff of land trusts in depth, building on the data collected in the survey to get a fuller understanding of those responses and trends. The land trusts selected for these interviews represent the different geographical and cultural areas in which land trusts operate across the country. The purpose of the survey and interviews was to better understand how land trusts perceive and engage in the communities they serve and of which they are a part.

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

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

Findings

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

A. Uses/economics

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

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

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

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

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

B. Race

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

C. Class

Class is closely linked to the economic uses of the land and to race. In some of the states where land trusts were interviewed, the rich and poor divide in rural areas is stark, with a fairly clear line separating big ranchers and growers, forestry companies, corporate agriculture and everyone else. In states where small-scale farming has remained the norm, like Vermont, rural class is more complex –

very wealthy, middle class, and low income people all share the landowner title. This trend of low income landowners with few assets other than their land is similar among African Americans in the south and Indo-Hispanic families in New Mexico, where the land has been passed down through the generations for many centuries. In New Mexico, these Indo-Hispanic families share the same community as with the predominantly white and wealthy urban Santa Fe community, relative newcomers to the area. In the Big Sur region of California, the coastal community is wealthy and predominantly white, as are the rural grower and rancher communities. However, the rural labor force is mostly Hispanic, and behind the “lettuce curtain” in the Salinas Valley, the urban communities are primarily Hispanic and have few financial resources. In another example that points out the complexities of land use and class, the white farmers in Brentwood County, California, an agricultural community forty miles from the Bay Area, operate at a much smaller and tenuous scale than the corporate growers in the Big Sur region. These farmers have become more and more vulnerable in the face of development interests that have played a key role in Brentwood County’s tremendous growth (from 14,000 to 75,000 between 1990 and 2005).

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

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

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

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

1. For example, Santa Fe Conservation Trust initially worked with the white Santa Fe community, and increasingly is working with Indo Hispanic agricultural communities outside of Santa Fe and Hispanic communities in the city. *"Now we're just beginning to really target the Indo Hispanic agriculture community and doing outreach with tribes as well,"* reported director Daniel Claussen.
2. The Big Sur Land Trust initially worked with the wealthy from Carmel most interested in stemming growth to maintain their lifestyles. They have now expanded this to a diverse range of stakeholders (growers, ranchers, elite Carmelites, urban youth of color from Salinas, Hispanic rural workers, etc.) in Big Sur and the Salinas Valley. *"The lettuce curtain is the divide between the Salinas Valley, which is majority Latino (it just tipped that way in recent years) and the coastal communities (Carmel, Pebble Beach, Monterey, and Big Sur) ... We're trying to bring the lettuce curtain down."* says Bill Leahy.
3. The Vermont Land Trust has always served a range of people across the state, but is now in the process of identifying new methods and approaches to reaching deeper into the class (and increasingly race) issues, understanding how privilege works, and learning how conservation can be an effective agent for broad based community change.
4. Brentwood Agricultural Land Trust started out with a focus on saving predominantly white middle class family farms in Brentwood County, but is now expanding to Bay Area underserved families concerned about obesity.

"While we may have spent the first few years thinking the farm families were the constituents, over the past few years, we've revised the constituency to be future generations in the Bay Area who want and need a source of food." Kathryn Lyddan, Brentwood Agricultural Land Trust

5. The Trustees of Reservations' charter has always been to serve the state of Massachusetts, but it hasn't always executed its mission with attention to diversity in the state. This has changed significantly over the past ten years as the organization has set about raising its awareness and building its capacity to live into its mission.

"We see our mission as providing access across the state to all people in urban, suburban and rural communities. Historically the organization may have had that same mission, but didn't pursue it with success in urban and diverse communities." Andy Kendall, Trustees of Reservations

III. Support and Membership

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

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

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

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



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

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

IV. What is the rationale for working with communities?

The survey revealed a widespread awareness that land trusts need to be engaged with the communities they serve, whether or not they are already doing so. While 93.4 percent of survey respondents said that they consider number of "acres conserved" an indicator of their success, 84.6 percent also said that collaborative efforts with the community was a critical indicator of success. These figures indicate that there is significant overlap between the perceived importance of protecting land and engaging communities. According to directors of land trusts we interviewed in more depth on this question, the rationales and aspirations for community engagement and how they articulate with land protection vary widely. Some key themes that we can pull out from these responses include:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We're excellent on the deal side, excellent on the advocacy side, people know us, but we tend to do deals to communities. [We] need to figure out how to engage people in the choices about what gets protected, how it gets protected. Gil Livingston

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

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

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

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

V. Access to Protected Lands

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

A. Almost all of the land trusts interviewed do easements for private landowners and cannot control what kinds of access private landowners will allow. Most land trusts reported that private landowners do not generally allow public access.

B. Most land trusts interviewed take multiple approaches to use and access of lands they protect and own or that are in public ownership. All interviewed allow some level of public access to at least some of their sites, and most allow more than that.

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

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

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

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

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

2. Some land trusts manage access to their sites with careful attention to carrying capacity.

C. Survey responses indicated that 15.5% of land trusts post "No Trespassing" or "No Entry" signs on their land. Among that 15.5%, over half (51.5%) said that they post less than a tenth of their land;

14.7% said they post a quarter of it; 13.2% said they post about a half; and 20.6% said they post more than half of their land.

D. Certain land trusts have programs specifically focused on public access and have plans to expand these programs (VLT, BSLT). The Trustees of Reservations seeks to increase the diversity of people who use their sites, all of which allow public access.

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

VI. What do land trusts mean by community engagement?

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

A. Connect people with land protected by land trusts

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

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

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

Rural: Both Santa Fe Conservation Trust (SFCT) and Black Family Land Trust (BFLT) seek to help traditional farmers and agriculturalists move to the center of the conversation about conservation

by helping them see themselves as the “true conservationists” with a role to play in setting the conservation agenda in their respective states.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

There are significant challenges in trying to play the role that BSLT seeks to play, not the least of which is cultivating trusting relationships among the different players. An example given earlier that came up often in the course of this study is that many land trusts must overcome the fact that they are seen as

an elitist white organizations by relatively poor communities of color, some of whom they seek to serve.

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

1. Santa Fe Conservation Trust (SFCT) is working with rural Indo Hispanic agricultural communities to understand and take advantage of agriculture tax credits. This makes the community work SFCT is doing legitimate to their board and it gives them credibility in their community.
2. A number of land trusts are working with affordable housing organizations to help them understand and take advantage of open space tax credits.
3. The founding premise of Black Family Land Trust is to use traditional conservation tools to help stem and reverse the loss of land among black farming families in the south.

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

VII. Changing Organizations

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

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

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

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

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

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

We have to figure out where to put our resources. It takes a lot of time [so] there's always an interesting sort of tension ... how much can we do? We're stable financially and we're able to do more. A lot of land trusts just aren't, local land trusts are often month to month. I'm on the board of one ... I know all this stuff, but I'm not implementing it on that board because I know the organization just doesn't have the resources. Jane Arbuckle, MCHT

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

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



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

VIII. Partnerships to enhance competence and extend reach

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

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

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

partnership and staying focused on the expertise and knowledge the land trust brings to the relationship.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

As critical as partnerships are to land trusts' ability to truly engage communities and affect change, bringing all of the necessary groups to together to identify common ground remains a relatively

new kind of challenge that many recognize and that most sectors (conservation and others) have not yet mastered:

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

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

Center for Whole Communities
Land Trust Community Engagement Survey
 January 2008

Are you a land trust:

	Response Percent
Member <input type="checkbox"/>	14.9%
Staff member <input type="checkbox"/>	51.0%
Board member <input type="checkbox"/>	40.0%
Community member <input type="checkbox"/>	4.5%

What state is your land trust located in?

	Response Percent
AZ <input type="checkbox"/>	2.8%
CA <input type="checkbox"/>	6.7%
CO <input type="checkbox"/>	3.1%
CT <input type="checkbox"/>	5.6%
FL <input type="checkbox"/>	1.4%
IL <input type="checkbox"/>	1.1%
IN <input type="checkbox"/>	2.2%
IA <input type="checkbox"/>	3.9%
ME <input type="checkbox"/>	6.7%
MD <input type="checkbox"/>	4.8%
MA <input type="checkbox"/>	5.9%
MI <input type="checkbox"/>	5.6%
NH <input type="checkbox"/>	3.9%
— <input type="checkbox"/>	

NJ	<input type="checkbox"/>	2.8%
NY	<input type="checkbox"/>	9.2%
NC	<input type="checkbox"/>	3.1%
OH	<input type="checkbox"/>	2.5%
OR	<input type="checkbox"/>	1.7%
PA	<input type="checkbox"/>	5.6%
RI	<input type="checkbox"/>	2.0%
SC	<input type="checkbox"/>	1.7%
TN	<input type="checkbox"/>	2.2%
TX	<input type="checkbox"/>	1.7%
VT	<input type="checkbox"/>	2.2%
WA	<input type="checkbox"/>	1.7%
WI	<input type="checkbox"/>	2.5%
WY	<input type="checkbox"/>	1.1%

All other states: each has less than 1% of responses

What community (ies) does your land trust serve?

Who are the people of the community (residents, farmers, second-home owners, etc)?

36% are in mixed urban/suburban/rural communities, 30% are rural areas (mostly farming), 16% are in changing rural/suburban

How would you define the level of economic and racial diversity within the community (ies) you serve? (check one in each category)

	very diverse	diverse	somewhat diverse	not diverse
Economic diversity?	30.9%	30.9%	31.7%	6.5%
Racial diversity?	10.5%	11.0%	28.0%	50.6%

How would you define the level of economic and racial diversity in the community-at-large?

	very diverse	diverse	somewhat diverse	not diverse
Economic diversity?	38.5%	35.7%	23.6%	2.2%
Racial diversity?	14.8%	21.3%	31.0%	33.0%

How would you rank the priority of community engagement in terms of your organization's (check one in each category):

	among the top two or three priorities	important, but not among the top two or three priorities	not a priority
Values and philosophy:	57.5%	38.3%	4.2%
Budget and staff allocation:	34.7%	46.6%	18.6%

Does your land trust partner with the community (ies) it serves to (check all that apply):

	Response Percent
Identify projects	89.9%
Design projects	60.6%
Define outcomes	53.5%
Ensure stewardship	78.6%

Other (please specify)
Random sample of responses:

- * Educational programming, developing a cooperative weed management area, regional partnerships focusing on individual watersheds, cooperation with other orgs to ensure interconnectedness between properties
- * It's hard to define community in such a big area where groups of people are often divided from each other (as a result of racial tension, etc.)
- * We partner primarily with other agencies (so not community engagement in a really grassroots way)
- * We have the movers and shakers of the community on our board; we leverage our knowledge into votes at town meeting, but we don't have the resources to invest in grassroots community outreach
- * In a town of 125 people, we are strongly represented in the community, but we don't formally partner
- * We have lots of volunteers, lots of excitement to participate in work weekends
- *Design trails
- * We work with the fish & game office and several local nonprofits, but not necessarily the public at large

- * We work with the local conservation commission.
- * We try to work with the local governments
- * No formal process, but we're a small, homogeneous community so everyone has a sense of what's going on.
- * We're the lead player in conservation -- there are no requests for projects -- we identify them.

How involved is your land trust in conversations in the community-at-large about fairness and equal access to land and other resources (across history, culture, social class, race, ethnicity, gender, and other)? (check one)

	Response Percent
very involved <input type="checkbox"/>	10.8%
involved <input type="checkbox"/>	21.9%
somewhat involved <input type="checkbox"/>	35.2%
not very involved <input type="checkbox"/>	32.4%

What role does your land trust play in the above conversations? (check all that apply)

	Response Percent
Convene <input type="checkbox"/>	29.2%
Facilitate <input type="checkbox"/>	40.3%
Participate <input type="checkbox"/>	81.3%
Provide feedback <input type="checkbox"/>	51.7%

Other (please specify)

Random sample of responses:

- * We are helping towns acquire land for passive open space
- * We have tried all kinds of outreach, but the town doesn't give a damn about the land trust in spite of our efforts to engage them. It's just not something they care about.
- * We conserve public trails.
- * We're just providing the trails; it's a suburban community where people are busy and don't really have time to talk about these things and we don't feel the need to ask them.
- * We're 40 years old, we started the whole conversation, but right now the threats have moved and they have re-tooled accordingly.
- * It's a private landowner's decision (a proud tradition)
- * We try to be as little involved as possible; it's an inflammatory subject.
- * Educational outreach and events for the public at large

* Our trails program seeks to provide a comprehensive network of trails serving all neighborhoods and linking to our nearby public lands. Our private land conservation program does not push public access as a condition of the easement, but works to create a better climate for voluntary access by landowners and responsible use by recreating public.

* Conflict resolution

Has community engagement led your land trust to become involved in other issues in the community-at-large (for example, affordable housing, public health, economic development, public education, public recreation, local sustainable food production and access, human rights, or other)?

	Response Percent
Yes <input type="text"/>	63.5%
No <input type="text"/>	36.8%

If yes, how?

Random sample of responses:

* We have engaged in law suits to protect groundwater sources. We open our walks and lectures to the public. We work with local government to program public lands. We promote local agriculture. We work with government to raise funds to establish parks and recreational areas.

* We've talked about sustainable food production, we understand it's important, but we haven't had time to get involved.

* Recently getting involved in climate change, affordable housing, and local food production efforts

Not directly involved ...but we have initiated partnerships that will support these issues with partners in the lead.

* Educational talks and trips, recreational hikes, public access to land

work with communities and parks and recreation organizations to assist in identifying key land parcels, identify and apply for grants, provide information to assist in funding efforts; involved in an elementary school natural resource education project

* Changing land use patterns and rapidly escalating land values are squeezing out traditional agriculture. We are working with other organizations, city and county officials to promote diversified, intensive, (more-sustainable) local agriculture. We are very involved with community planning for public recreation and alternative transportation.

* Land use planning; public education

* Economic development, public recreation, food production, environmental services

* Conservation based affordable housing projects; public education

sustainable agriculture, preserving community character, creating habitats for threatened and endangered species

* We are in discussions with partners about making a better connection between land conservation and affordable housing, and with another set of partners about local food production.

* Most all mentioned to the left, we are working to adopt Whole Measures.


* Just beginning to be involved in some discussions regarding public health and public recreation

* Combining land conservation efforts with efforts to find affordable housing and local sustainable food production. We are also working to combine land conservation efforts with historical and cultural heritage

What avenues exist for the community-at-large to provide feedback to and inform your land trust's actions? (check all that apply)

	Response Percent
land trust <input type="text"/>	84.7%



membership

board membership		74.9%
community meetings and/or outreach by staff		76.6%
community-wide surveys		19.7%



Does your land trust post land it protects with “no trespassing” or “no entry” signs?

		Response Percent
Yes		15.5%
No		84.8%

If yes, roughly what percentage of the land protected by your land trust is posted with “no trespassing” or “no entry” signs?

		Response Percent
Less than 10%		51.5%
25%		14.7%
50%		13.2%
More than 50%		20.6%

Is the community you serve the same as the membership that supports your land trust?

		Response Percent
Yes		58.2%
No		42.1%

If different, how would you define the level of economic and racial diversity within your land trust's membership? (check one in each category)

	very diverse	diverse	somewhat diverse	not diverse
Economic diversity?	16.1%	25.5%	46.4%	12.0%
Racial diversity?	3.2%	0.5%	27.5%	68.8%

How would you define the level of economic and racial diversity on your land trust's board?

	very diverse	diverse	somewhat diverse	not diverse
Economic diversity?	11.4%	26.1%	44.4%	18.1%
Racial diversity?	1.1%	2.5%	15.9%	80.5%

In external communications (e.g. newsletters and annual appeals) how does your land trust describe its successes? (check all that apply)

	Response Percent
Fundraised revenue <input type="checkbox"/>	59.3%
Acres conserved <input type="checkbox"/>	93.4%
Number of education programs <input type="checkbox"/>	50.1%
Visitors to properties <input type="checkbox"/>	23.1%
Collaborative efforts with other organizations in the community <input type="checkbox"/>	84.6%

Other (please specify)

Random sample of responses:

* No so much acres, but the virtues of the property protected

* Assistance to Partners

* We primarily describe the successes of our partners and regularly showcase our partners' work and successes. *

Sustainability is not about what we do, but it is, instead, about community residents taking ownership and leadership on triple bottom line efforts.

community benefit - public use, gathering places, neighborhoods

* Our project media always talks about the "significance" of each project (ecologically, recreationally, effect on things like

wildlife, scenery or water quality). We occasionally mention public health (more often if you consider water quality), quality of life, or economic value, esp on trails. We also define/describe our successes * by awards we've won because these awards come from partners who value our role in meeting THEIR missions as well.

* profiles on issues related to our community conservation efforts

* Shoreline footage preserved; successful capital campaigns; number of "quality" transactions;

* value of conserved land especially creating connected open spaces preserving large blocks of open space as well as spaces people can enjoy with trails

* survival as a beleaguered organization - when an organization works to conserve a local source of food on an urban edge where vast amounts of money could be made from development, just surviving is an accomplishment

* Research programs and results

* Species present and research studies

* outcomes of restoration work on properties

* volunteer participation in time and gifts

* Public benefits of land conservation; number of landowners served (even if no conservation easement); kinds of acres and landowners (agricultural, etc.); other values (food, culture, habitat, legacy); link between land and culture.

Do you use qualitative tools to help you measure your success?

	Response Percent
Yes <input type="text"/>	42.3%
No <input type="text"/>	58.0%

If yes, please list them here.

Random sample of responses:

- * One measure for success is are we protecting the lands that our community cares about?
- * Have done articles about how people feel about the land
- * Interviews, observation and process notes
- * Photo stations
- * Number of acres, cooperation with other organizations, public participation in trust events, number of contributors and amount contributed
- * Membership growth, # of outreach activities. To a less degree, funding to support land acquisition and community outreach
- * Our success is judged by our community support and praise.
- * Strategic plan
- * Maintain database of donations, projects, and landowners in the area.
- * Quarterly indicators reports
- * Number and diversity of projects and the type of access provided to the public
- * We have land trust criteria for properties as well as five-year goals and annual goals.
- * By looking at the types of articles written about us in the press and the nature of the articles (whether the press writes about our organization in a positive light).
- * Level of civic engagement over land issues. Degree to which the development process now reflects smart growth principles.
- * Mission Rubric (closely tied to Whole Measures)

Are you familiar with the Whole Measures evaluation and planning tool?

	Response Percent
Yes <input type="text"/>	20.2%
No <input type="text"/>	80.1%

If so, please describe briefly the basic concept behind it:

Random sample of responses:

* Methodology for est. measures of success that are more qualitative, that can lead us to be a more responsive and more expansive public benefit organization. More linked to community values than to tactical measures.

* The concept is a systems or holistic approach to sustainable communities, reflecting the three-legged stool of environment, economy, and social equity.

* measure more than acres protected and funds raised; include community involvement and access to resources a comprehensive approach to ensuring community-wide outcomes

* Stop measuring success by number of acres conserved and \$'s raised look at a project in much more wholistic way and what kind of impact (positive hopefully) our doing that project will effect the community as a whole. We are just starting to adopt this, I know some projects will rate higher than others. But it will be interesting to look at projects through a different lens.

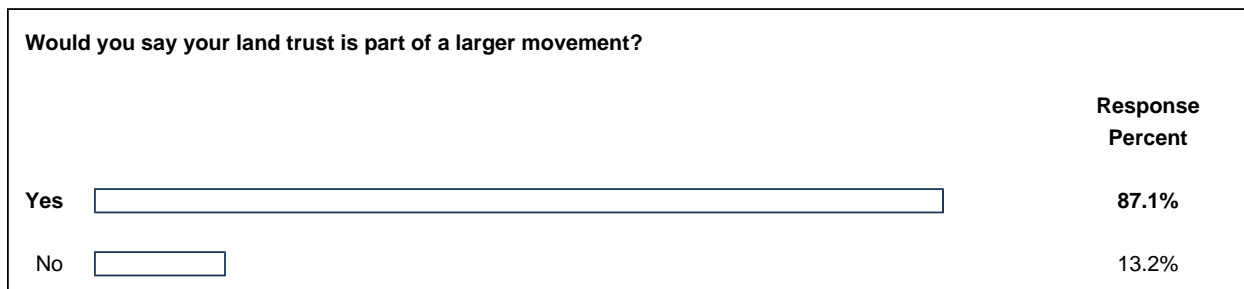
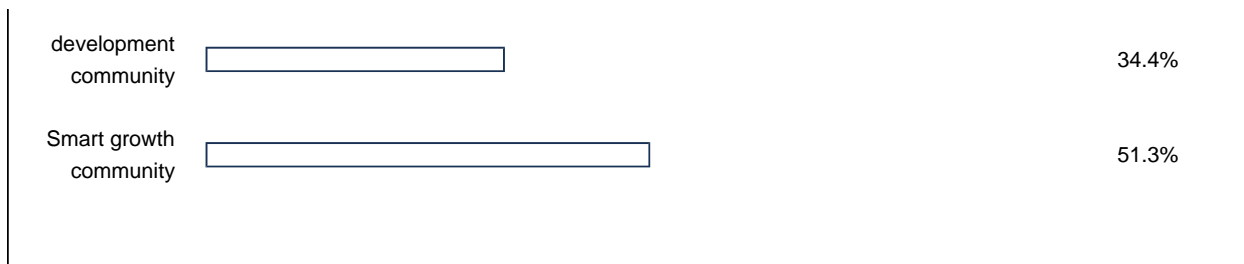
* It prompts us to think about success in land preservation in a different way -- a way that includes and addresses the needs of all members of the community.

* Identifying and measuring actions beyond just acres and dollars

* A broad based qualitative approach to measuring the impacts that our mission and work has on the larger community in which we work

Which larger communities is your land trust a part of? (check all that apply)

	Response Percent
Environmental community <input type="text"/>	96.1%
Agricultural community <input type="text"/>	57.5%
Public governance community <input type="text"/>	56.1%
Business community <input type="text"/>	43.1%
Real estate community <input type="text"/>	36.9%
Community	



If yes, can you describe what the larger movement is?
Random sample of responses:

- * Environmental Movement
- * Sustainable activity and resource conservation
- * Promoting a healthy way of life and stronger stewardship ethics
- * Conservation is a hot topic and of high priority for everyone in our region.
- * The movement to serve communities by conserving open spaces, important habitat and water resources for generations to come
- * Land trusts as mediators between traditional environmental groups and large, conservative landowners.
- * We participate in regional group re: Highlands Coalition; active in county, multi-municipality issues.
- * Land conservation in general, green initiatives, agricultural land preservation
- * To conserve the economic viability, beauty and usefulness of the landscape of Vermont
- * A growing community of people that recognize our permanent impact on the earth and strive towards a more ethical footprint and fulfilling experience with the natural world.
- * Conservation to protect open space, wildlands, public trust natural resources, such as wildlife and fisheries habitat, and sustainable farms, forestlands and rangelands.
- * Sustainability and integration of water and land use goals.
- * Conservation and preservation of quality of life.
- * Sustainable, livable and vibrant communities.

open space

- * Part of both a broad Parks and Open Space movement, and also of the community revitalization movement.
- * Protection of communities quality of life, which includes land protection, affordable housing.
- * Ag land, wildlife habitat, openspace, watershed value and natural resource conservation