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The Measure of Wealth

“Our gross national product, now, is over eight hundred billion dollars a year, but that GNP—if we should judge America by that—counts air pollution and cigarette advertising, and ambulances to clear our highways of carnage. It counts special locks for our doors and the jails for those who break them. It counts the destruction of our redwoods and the loss of our natural wonder to chaotic sprawl. It counts napalm and the cost of a nuclear warhead, and armored cars for police who fight riots in our streets. It counts Whitman’s rifle and Speck’s knife, and the television programs which glorify violence in order to sell toys to our children.

“Yet the gross national product does not allow for the health of our children, nor the quality of their education, or the joy of their play. It does not include the beauty of our poetry or the strength of our marriages, the intelligence of our public debate or the integrity of our public officials. It measures neither our wit nor our courage, neither our wisdom nor our learning, neither our compassion nor our devotion to our country; it measures everything, in short, except that which makes life worthwhile. And it tells us everything about America except why we are proud to be Americans.”

Robert F. Kennedy
1967

“What gets measured get managed.”

Old Adage

Why do we need to describe and measure conservation differently?

Look at a newsletter or annual report from almost any conservation organization in America and you will quickly learn that success is most often measured in terms of acres saved and dollars raised. Acres and dollars are tangible, cumulative, and heroic. For many conservationists, acres and dollars have long been clear and hopeful indicators of victories, of making good progress. But, of course, acres and dollars are purely a way of marking the progress of land conservation and not any real tally of conservation's advancement in relation to the world we live in. Acres and dollars lack the big picture context of what's really going on in America.

Many conservationists see acres and dollars as increasingly inadequate measurements of our higher aspirations: to think and act with the whole landscape in mind, and to create a change in culture. To measure by acres and dollars means we naturally overvalue some projects and undervalue others, in particular those smaller projects like an urban garden in Harlem or an eagle nesting site on San Juan Island. Acres and dollars say very little about land conservation's success in restoring a sense of commonwealth to a world that is increasingly made up of haves and have-nots. Acres and dollars do say something meaningful about individual places, but say almost nothing about relationship. Most importantly, by counting acres and dollars alone, we will never be able to put forward a positive vision that amounts to more than playing catch-up with America's insatiable hunger for developing land.

To draw a parallel to Robert F. Kennedy's words, acres and dollars tell us everything about land conservation except why we are proud to be land conservationists.

As we mature as a movement, we have come to recognize that land conservation is just as much about protecting relationships as it is about protecting places. In fact, our skill in building and restoring relationships is the foundation of our ability to create a more durable change in the life of America. The power of the land, and the power of our conservation activism, helps to

heal the dividedness in our lives: the separation between white and black, between rich and poor, between people and their health, between people and nature. And yet, before this report, we had few ways of measuring or describing the type and quality of relationships that conservation might want to advance through conservation.

We know, too, that organizations and movements value what they measure. Being largely limited to acres and dollars as the measures of our success, we tend to value means more than ends, our tools more than our mission, and our spreadsheets more than our highest aspirations. Means, tools, and spreadsheets are critically important to the success of every movement, but alone they cannot be the vessel that will carry us to reach our greatest goals.

What will carry us there are the values and benefits we find in the connection to land itself. Land conservation can be a positive, transformative force in addressing fear and disconnection, in helping people to become more effective citizens, in expanding our collective moral universe, and in restoring our sense of belonging to something bigger than ourselves. In short, land conservation can respectfully realign power in a way that benefits everyone.

The purpose of this evaluation tool is to help conservationists find and express the values that might guide the movement toward nurturing a truly healthy American culture. It will help conservationists to pioneer the changes in land conservation that are needed to connect the diversity of landscapes with the diversity of people. It will help us to advance a practice of land conservation that is respectful, tolerant, open to new voices, thinks out of the box, and is courageous about addressing the larger issues of the day. *Measures of Health* will help us to articulate a new narrative about the role of land in a just and fair society.

As we move from saving land to creating a culture of conservation, we need guideposts to help us articulate what our intuition already tells us: that civil rights

for all human beings includes a healthy relationship to the land. These new ways of describing and measuring success will help conservationists to create a more durable form of change on the land, a change in how people live and act in their daily lives.

Measures of Health will help us to chose conservation initiatives that might teach and reflect the sort of world we most want to see. By using this rubric as both a training tool and a set of project and program selection criteria, we can begin a re-awakening of the conservation movement from within.

We hope this tool will help all of our colleagues to become more articulate about the value of land conservation in creating a more just and healthy world. We also hope it will help all conservationists to appreciate what they are already doing to make a difference in the world.

— Peter Forbes
Director
Whole Communities

The Origins of *Measures of Health*

This new tool, designed to help conservationists recognize and follow the trail between land, social equity, and healthy human and natural communities, was first created by the Trust for Public Land through their own pioneering efforts at redefining success.

Measures of Health evolved directly out of TPL's efforts to better understand what matters most to them as a mission-driven organization. TPL has always known that different landscapes have power to different people, and they have never discriminated where they conserve land. Because TPL has always worked in a variety of landscapes, from cities to wilderness areas, they have developed an inclusive, whole-landscape view of conservation as knitting together cities, suburbs, farms and wilderness areas.

One of TPL's values is their desire to conserve a great variety of landscapes—places that people love—for future generations. As is reflected in the organization's name, TPL believes in public values. Because TPL has remained close to the ground even while expanding its work all over America, they have needed to consistently re-examine their work to reflect the people and communities who need a relationship to the land. This breeds an openness to new ideas and a willingness to stretch, and is a hallmark of TPL's leadership.

It was in this spirit of re-invention and leadership that TPL set out, five years ago, to create a new set of guiding principles for their own conservation work. They began by asking the hard questions, What are the big picture objectives of land conservation? What is the change we hope to see in the world? How do our relationships to land shape our culture? Which of our projects and programs are most successful at creating the change we most hope for?

The pursuit of these questions began a very exciting moment in TPL's history. Their conclusions are on-going and far-reaching. TPL believes that one of their larger objectives is to create an element of cultural change, to help people live and act differently, through

the transformative power of giving people choices about their home and other natural and historical places that have meaning. TPL is working toward a society where more and more people have a meaningful, healthy relationship with one another and the rest of the natural world. There are many healthy land-and-people relationships that TPL helps to protect, including working the land, eating from the land, appreciating the beauty of the land, exercising our sense of fairness about other living species, and showing our capacity for restraint by allowing places to remain completely wild.

The idea for this tool came out TPL's strong desire to be more effective in reaching its goals. TPL is now freely sharing the tool to help galvanize and strengthen the conservation movement at a compelling time for new leadership and new solutions.

For forty years, the conservation movement has been guided by the principles of conservation biology, which have expanded our understanding of the natural world, made us less blind to the impacts of our actions, and have led to the protection of many species on the brink of extinction. However, that skill at observing and understanding the habitat needs of flora and fauna has never been focused on ourselves, the human species. Aldo Leopold spoke of this problem more than fifty years ago when he wrote, "One of the anomalies of modern ecology is the creation of two groups, each which seems barely aware of the existence of the other. The one studies the human community and calls its findings sociology, economics and history. The other studies plants and animals . . . the inevitable fusion of these two lines of thought will constitute the outstanding advancement of our time."

Leopold's "inevitable fusion" has proved elusive. The conservation movement has come to understand how the "web of life" extends through nature, but it has acted as if this web stopped at our door. Conservationists didn't create this problem; we are merely reflecting a larger fracture that exists in our culture. Sociologists are begin-

ning to document what poets have always said: we hurt the land and we hurt ourselves. The evidence of this is now seen everywhere.

We live in a culture that now produces more malls than high schools, more prisoners than farmers, and devours the land at the warp speed of 363 acres per hour. Today, the average American can recognize one thousand corporate logos, but can't identify ten plants and animals native to their region. On the one hand, conservationists have been enormously successful in protecting land, marshalling the money and skills to purchase more than 14 million acres of land in the last decade. But are Americans, or is American culture, any closer to that land or to the values that the land teaches? On balance, despite important examples to the contrary, *neither the values of the land nor the creatures of the land are succeeding in America.*

The pathologies of isolation and alienation that characterize our modern relationship with the land are sweeping biodiversity away. Most conservation biologists would agree, and are asking themselves how their work can have a greater impact on the way our culture behaves. Conservationists must begin to treat human alienation as a root cause of biological devastation.

From public health officials to psychologists to social entrepreneurs, there is a growing understanding that our weaknesses as a culture come, fundamentally, from our increasing separation from the natural habitats that have sustained us. This is an extraordinary opportunity and moment for the conservation movement to lead in a new way that might more authentically reform our culture.

Sadly enough, today, there are not enough new models and tools to guide us through this necessary time of re-invention. There are dozens of different cri-

teria for species habitat protection. And there are standards and practices for *how* conservation should be practiced. But, there are few measures of success about *why and for whom* we protect land. Until *Measures of Health*, there is no tool describing or measuring the healthy American culture we might seek to advance through land conservation.

Measures of Health was created to fill this gap. It offers the beginning foundations for a highly integrated, whole systems approach that effectively embraces a wide variety of practical issues including biodiversity, social equity, civic engagement and landscape-scale conservation.

It expresses a clear set of big picture values which link environmental and social goals, and it sets out ten well-articulated and practical objectives to which we need to be responsive in order to reach those values. Its simple evaluation process invites users into a conversation about vision, values and practice. It celebrates success as well as helps organizations to be more self-aware about unintended consequences. It knits together objectives to help the movement see the connections between cities and wilderness and between biological and cultural diversity. *Measures of Health* will help the conservation movement to articulate a new meta-narrative about the role of land in a just and fair society.

***Measures of Health* gives the conservation movement a values-based ethical standard for how and why land is conserved.**

This clarity about our vision and values will make us stronger leaders, make us better conservationists, and enable others to more fully appreciate how our work creates a better world. And, most important, we will be creating a better world.

Our thanks to those who have contributed to the creation of Measures of Health:

<i>Alan AtKisson</i>	<i>Jan Flora</i>	<i>Deb Love</i>	<i>Dave Sutton</i>
<i>Ralph Benson</i>	<i>Peter Forbes</i>	<i>Felicia Marcus</i>	<i>Steph Taylor</i>
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What does success for land conservation look like?

Mission Values

Success for land conservation is working locally, regionally and nationally to create projects and programs that achieve the following *mission values*, and which allow our movement to prosper not just for today but for the long-term:

1. Thinking about the whole.

When conservation takes responsibility for the whole, from inner city to wilderness, it speaks biological truths, serves to connect landscapes, and educates people about critical interdependencies. A whole natural system, including humans, is what conservation ought to protect.

2. Protecting the places people love.

Conservation should highlight people's shared values and their local passion for what they know and love. This brings people together and helps them fear one another less. By protecting what people love, we offer a positive vision of the world we want to live in.

3. Integration of healthy land and healthy people.

Conservation is about economic, mental, physical, and spiritual well being. It's often about healing ourselves and other life around us. Through this view of life as one healthy whole, restoration of land and restoration of oneself become the same.

4. Striving for fairness.

Conservation's impact becomes more profound as it serves all people, regardless of income, race, or neighborhood. Everyone needs and deserves a relationship with the land. Further, it is fair and moral for conservation to honor the gift of all life, not just human life, and to respect the life, health, and independence of all ecosystems.

5. Honoring home.

By focusing on where people live, work, and play, conservation protects the places that enable us to think about who we are and where we belong. It roots us, and helps us to better value and appreciate the places immediately around us. The work of local conservation provides the daily reminders that what we do to the land, we do to ourselves.

The Measures of Health Tool

The original concept of the rubric as a tool for mission-driven learning organizations was very kindly given to TPL by David Grant, executive director of the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation (see interview on p. 20). David spoke at the 2002 meeting of the Center for Land and People's Advisory Council. The council met with senior TPL staff for three days to help them think about the long-term work of re-defining success for conservation organizations.

In developing this tool, we already knew that the two most important leverage points for achieving an expanded practice of land-and-people conservation were: 1) better storytelling and 2) re-defining our measurements of success.

We also knew that there are some benefits of land conservation that can be measured and some benefits that simply cannot. Storytelling is, we knew, the best way to make more clear the benefits and values that

cannot be measured. David Grant introduced us to the simple idea that *measuring* may not be as important as *describing*. A great deal of power and transformation can come merely from getting better at describing the values and benefits of our mission.

What's the difference between values and benefits?

For our purposes in this rubric, **values** refer to the specific long-term social and natural changes that we hope our mission creates in the world. These are listed in this report in the previous section. **Benefits** are the attributes and qualities we seek to deliver through our conservation work to specific communities. We refer to the qualities listed at the top of the chart that follows (such as Care-taking and Stewardship, Teaching and Storytelling, etc.) as **Mission Benefits**.

1. Care-taking and Stewardship

[Negative] -1	[Neutral] 0	[Modest] 1	[Strong] 2	[Exemplary] 3
<p>Our work removes people from the land or disrupts traditional cultural connections to the land.</p> <p>The land is largely for private use and will not have any significant degree of public care-taking or stewardship.</p> <p>Land has specifically been posted not allowing public access.</p> <p>No mechanism is in place to prevent the owner or steward from developing or damaging the land.</p> <p>Funding for management is likely to be inadequate.</p> <p>Years after being protected, the land has become degraded.</p>	<p>No concrete management objectives exist which address public use and enjoyment of the land.</p> <p>No funds have been set aside or directed for this purpose.</p>	<p>A sound management plan is in place that recognizes and respects traditional, cultural, spiritual, recreational and ecological values.</p> <p>Funding to take care of the land has been identified.</p> <p>Five years out the land is still being cared for properly.</p> <p>The steward has experience with this type of land.</p> <p>There is a modest number of people involved in care-taking and stewardship of the land.</p>	<p>Skilled staff or volunteers are committed to carry out the management plan.</p> <p>Significant funding has been dedicated to stewardship.</p> <p>Through wise stewardship, the property is restored or improved.</p> <p>The use of the land is legally restricted so that its permanent protection is virtually assured.</p> <p>There is a broad community of people involved with the stewardship of this land.</p>	<p>The property serves a rich natural and cultural set of objectives and we know, through research, the sustainable uses that will maintain the health of that land for the foreseeable future.</p> <p>Funds are perpetually in place to maintain the land.</p> <p>A diverse cross-section of the community is committed to ongoing stewardship.</p> <p>This work has led those involved to take care of other lands.</p> <p>There are people all over the country who are interested in the care and proper stewardship of this land.</p>

Mission benefits are seen as a result of this work in:	5-10 years +1	3-5 years +2	1-3 years +3
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2. Teaching and Storytelling

[Negative] -1	[Neutral] 0	[Modest] 1	[Strong] 2	[Exemplary] 3
<p>Our work negatively impacts the health of the land, diminishes direct human experience of the land, or clearly privatizes property.</p> <p>The story most people hear leaves a poor impression of our organization.</p> <p>Our work diminishes the public's respect for land conservation, parks or conservation organizations.</p> <p>It appears that we has treated land as a commodity for organizational gain.</p>	<p>No significant story or lesson emerges that speaks directly to the values of land conservation.</p>	<p>The process of conservation provides a good “how” story, illustrating technical tools we use to conserve land or create parks.</p> <p>The story and its lessons benefit only those people who participate in the conservation effort or who visit and experience the land.</p> <p>The project teaches technical skills and how to overcome conservation or restoration obstacles, and as such its stories are largely about our work, not the land itself.</p>	<p>The story of our work expresses values fundamental to our mission.</p> <p>The lesson teaches about an innovation in conservation or park-making practice.</p> <p>The story is shared among many people in the community.</p> <p>The lessons are not only about our efforts but also about the value and meaning of the land.</p>	<p>The narrative is powerful and convincing in demonstrating that parks or protected land are vital to human well-being in many ways.</p> <p>The narrative has outstanding value in teaching conservation or park-making skills.</p> <p>The story is unique and compelling, so that it changes people's hearts and minds to support parks and conservation.</p> <p>The story is told in many communities beyond where it originated.</p>

Mission benefits are seen as a result of this work in:	5-10 years +1	3-5 years +2	1-3 years +3
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3. Cultivating Connections to Nature

[Negative] -1	[Neutral] 0	[Modest] 1	[Strong] 2	[Exemplary] 3
<p>The outcome is that people are denied use of the land as a recreational, intellectual, or inspirational resource.</p> <p>Our work degrades the health of the land.</p>	<p>The natural and other resource values of the land are protected, but they are not promoted in any consistent way.</p> <p>Land is largely inaccessible to people.</p> <p>Use by people is not incompatible with the health of the land.</p>	<p>The explicit purpose of the project is to encourage direct human connection to the land through recreation, work, where food comes from, or the simple beauty of the land.</p> <p>Our work will promote opportunities for learning or inspirational experiences linked to the land.</p> <p>This project/program makes it possible for one generation of a family to stay connected to a specific piece of land thereby helping to establish stronger family connections to place and to community.</p> <p>Land being protected has been thoughtfully chosen for its value in connecting people with nature.</p> <p>Our work protects two or more ways that people can connect with the land.</p>	<p>There are widely recognized natural and cultural values on this land that can be experienced by people either as direct experience on the land or as intellectual or personal inspiration from afar.</p> <p>The benefits of a connection to nature are available to people throughout the community and beyond.</p> <p>This project/program makes it possible for <i>more than two</i> generations of a family to stay connected to a specific piece of land thereby helping to establish stronger family connections to place and to community.</p> <p>Human use or experience of the land improves its health.</p> <p>Our work protects four or more ways that people can connect with the land.</p>	<p>By providing people with the direct experience or indirect inspiration of the land, they come to understand the needs and realities of the larger ecosystem, thereby helping people to consider and take responsibility for the whole.</p> <p>This project/program makes it possible for <i>more than three</i> generations of a family to stay connected to a specific piece of land thereby helping to establish stronger family connections to place and to community.</p> <p>The natural experience associated with this project is unique, yet a diverse spectrum of people is able to have this experience.</p> <p>Our work protects all six of the ways people can connect with the land.</p>

Ways people connect to the land:

- Recreating
- Working the land and waters
- Eating food
- Experiencing beauty
- Being inspired by the complexity and interconnectedness of life
- Believing in and advancing a land ethic

Mission benefits are seen as a result of this work in:	5-10 years +1	3-5 years +2	1-3 years +3
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4. Greenprinting: Fostering Responsibility for the Whole Landscape

[Negative] -1	[Neutral] 0	[Modest] 1	[Strong] 2	[Exemplary] 3
<p>Protection of the land diverts resources from more important or more threatened areas of the landscape.</p> <p>The use of the land being protected will degrade the natural or cultural value of other lands.</p> <p>The project influences community members to believe a program to save land or create parks is inappropriate or not feasible.</p>	<p>We undertake a project without considering its potential impact on related parts of the landscape.</p>	<p>Our work is guided by a thoughtful plan or vision, supported by the community, for how land conservation can protect a natural or cultural resource.</p> <p>We complete several projects over a period of time that collectively have a significant impact on protecting a single resource.</p> <p>We provide information and advice on greenprinting that is used by a community to develop a vision that links parks for people, working lands and wildlands, and a new source of funding.</p> <p>As a result of this work, the community is inspired to attempt a broader parks or conservation program.</p>	<p>The vision for land conservation integrates protection of multiple resources (parks for people, working lands and wildlands).</p> <p>The work creates new government funds for land acquisition that will make clear progress in carrying out a vision that links parks for people, working lands and wildlands.</p> <p>We are committed to a series of transactions over a period of years, including fundraising as necessary, that will have landscape-wide impacts.</p> <p>Our work in protecting parks for people, working lands and wildlands helps people to integrate and connect these different places. For example, a farmers' market in a core city helps people to understand value of working lands.</p>	<p>Through this project we are engaged with a community, or with a landscape that transcends community boundaries, over a period of years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to evaluate all lands that need protection in the next decade; • to promote public and private funding needed for protection; and • to carry out a series of conservation transactions that protect high-priority parks and conservation lands. <p>We recognize and respond to other uses of the land such as for housing and economic development.</p> <p>This work connects people to a variety of landscapes, and a more ecological view of the interconnectedness of culture, economy and land.</p>

Mission benefits are seen as a result of this work in:	5-10 years +1	3-5 years +2	1-3 years +3
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5. Healthy Natural Habitat for Communities

[Negative] -1	[Neutral] 0	[Modest] 1	[Strong] 2	[Exemplary] 3
<p>This project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fosters development in a flood zone, • degrades water supplies, • creates significant air or water pollution, • leads to the release of toxins, • allows deforestation, or • promotes human use of environmentally unsafe lands. 	<p>Overall air and water quality are not advanced by this project in a measurable way.</p>	<p>The conservation effort prevents a likely future use that would have degraded local air or water quality, or created local environmental hazards.</p> <p>We are researching and publishing information on the importance of land conservation to the human environment.</p>	<p>This project is protecting a large landscape that plays a very important role in purifying air or water quality for a community or region.</p> <p>The project is remediating hazardous wastes that posed a threat to the community.</p> <p>We are “undeveloping” land to remove structures and improvements that created environmental problems.</p> <p>This single project creates awareness of the need for conservation on a larger scale to protect environmental quality.</p>	<p>This conservation work, because of its scale or location, is critically important to public health and safety for an entire community or region, such as protection of a sole-source aquifer.</p> <p>Our action has a major impact on public policy that strengthens government efforts to protect or create a healthy habitat for humans.</p> <p>The program or strategy becomes adopted in many other states or communities across the country.</p>

Mission benefits are seen as a result of this work in:	5-10 years +1	3-5 years +2	1-3 years +3
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6. Healthy Natural Habitat for Individuals

[Negative] -1	[Neutral] 0	[Modest] 1	[Strong] 2	[Exemplary] 3
<p>This project limits access of people to opportunities for exercise.</p> <p>The park or conservation area being protected exposes people to inappropriate safety risks.</p>	<p>The land being protected does not encourage more exercise by the general public or preserve an existing recreation resource.</p>	<p>The project provides a safe place for children to play.</p> <p>It creates attractive opportunities for people to exercise.</p> <p>Providing healthy food is a primary objective.</p> <p>The project/program reduces stress and noise pollution, and creates more beautiful places for people to enjoy.</p> <p>Our work will result in educating people on the health values of parks and land conservation.</p> <p>New trails and walkways are created and protected that give people a safe and healthy alternative for traveling to schools, work and entertainment.</p>	<p>A significant cross section of the community will benefit from better opportunities for recreation, relaxation and improved mental health.</p> <p>Playgrounds are being created for schools so that children have healthier environments.</p> <p>The project/program helps a specific community to produce and consume food that is healthier for them and which connects them to their local landscape.</p> <p>Lands being protected are used to instruct people in healthy ways to exercise, eat and live.</p> <p>Our work cleans up hazardous waste and reduces toxins that affect human life.</p>	<p>This conservation work revitalizes a human culture by restoring a link to the land that promotes community-wide physical and mental health.</p> <p>The project/program helps a specific community to produce and consume food that is healthier for them and addresses specific medical concerns for that community. For example, it helps this community to reduce obesity or to reduce diabetes related to poor diet.</p> <p>The project/program creates a visible model for improving health that influences foundations and governments to devote more resources to parks and land conservation.</p> <p>The project/program helps a specific community to produce and consume food that is healthier for them and addresses specific medical concerns for that community <i>while also serving to connect that community with its local, indigenous landscapes.</i></p>

Mission benefits are seen as a result of this work in:	5-10 years +1	3-5 years +2	1-3 years +3
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7. Civic Engagement, Community Health and Well-Being

[Negative] -1	[Neutral] 0	[Modest] 1	[Strong] 2	[Exemplary] 3
<p>This work disenfranchises a local population, because it is undertaken in the absence of effective community outreach.</p> <p>This work polarizes the community or alienates important players.</p> <p>The project/program creates divisiveness.</p> <p>The project/program does not adequately listen to and respond to the diversity of community voices.</p>	<p>The project/program has no local involvement due to limited public awareness, or there are no people living near the land.</p>	<p>The project is made possible by a group of local citizens who catalyze awareness and support.</p> <p>Many people play a positive role in fostering protection of land or creation of parks, along with ongoing stewardship</p> <p>In the process of creating parks or protecting land, cooperation and new associations and alliances are fostered.</p> <p>Protecting the land or creating new parks brings diverse people together.</p>	<p>The project helps a community become more self-aware. The standard of citizenship is raised as more people rally around a common conservation cause, and thus the public sphere is expanded, and opposing forces are brought together in healthy debate about a wide range of issues.</p> <p>The conservation effort avoids a change in land use that would have broken important community bonds.</p> <p>Benefits of this land extend beyond a local community to a regional constituency.</p>	<p>This work galvanizes the community to better understand itself, work together, shift political structures and create significant new social capital.</p> <p>This project/program helps to immediately address economic, environmental and social inequities within a community.</p> <p>Many different sectors of the community develop a sustained commitment to conservation efforts through this project/program.</p> <p>The conservation of land helps restore to a community a sense of “public ness” or shared values.</p> <p>The community recognizes the connection between parks or land conservation and other fundamental issues of life such as education, justice, and common welfare.</p>

Mission benefits are seen as a result of this work in:	5-10 years +1	3-5 years +2	1-3 years +3
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8. Justice and Fairness

[Negative] -1	[Neutral] 0	[Modest] 1	[Strong] 2	[Exemplary] 3
<p>The result is exclusive and private use of the land.</p> <p>This work displaces the use of the land by a non-dominant culture.</p> <p>The project's primary benefits are to people who already have higher-than-average benefits from parks and conservation lands.</p>	<p>This work doesn't explicitly protect use of the land by a non-dominant culture, but it benefits people across the demographic spectrum fairly proportionately.</p>	<p>The park or conservation land is particularly valued by or accessible to people of below average income or groups that are underserved by traditional park and open space systems.</p> <p>We are working in partnership with groups dedicated to environmental, social and racial justice.</p>	<p>This work makes significant progress in correcting inequities, for example by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • helping an Indian tribe regain the use of lands that are important for cultural or economic purposes. • adding parks in low-income neighborhoods that fall below minimum standards for access to parks. <p>This conservation work creates change within the community, by building support, fostering institutions, or generating resources that have widespread beneficial impacts on justice and fairness.</p>	<p>The park or conservation effort redresses a widely perceived injustice and is widely recognized for its significance.</p> <p>This work leads to a meaningful and lasting change in policy by governments, foundations or NGOs to promote justice and fairness in access to parks and conservation lands.</p> <p>Our work illustrates the fundamental human respect for nature. This project elevates what it means to be human by addressing our human sense of fairness toward all life.</p>

Mission benefits are seen as a result of this work in:	5-10 years +1	3-5 years +2	1-3 years +3
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9. History

[Negative] -1	[Neutral] 0	[Modest] 1	[Strong] 2	[Exemplary] 3
<p>Any work that disenfranchises a local, regional or national population by negating their story and history of relationship with the land.</p> <p>Work that diminishes the ability for future generations to understand the history of a place.</p>	<p>The project or program has no known or expected history of human use, good or bad, that might be an illustrative story for future generations.</p>	<p>The project/program recognizes the presence of a past human use or story of importance to human culture in the design of the conservation plan, but there is no identified funding sources or legal structures in place to ensure the historic attributes of the land.</p>	<p>The project/program recognizes the presence of a past human use or story of importance to human culture in the design of the conservation plan, <i>and contains the funding and legal structures to ensure the implementation of that plan.</i></p> <p>There are multiple histories of human use to this landscape and the conservation plan treats each fairly.</p>	<p>The conservation and interpretation of this landscape serves to record fairly and transparently the humans uses of the land in a manner that helps future generations to live more responsibly.</p> <p>This conservation project preserves a significant public place that is very important to maintaining and strengthening social and cultural ties between people.</p> <p>The story of how humans have lived on this land has been conserved for future generations and in manner that weight help present and future generations to live more fairly and responsibly.</p>

Mission benefits are seen as a result of this work in:	5-10 years +1	3-5 years +2	1-3 years +3
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10. Healthy Land, Wildness, and Biodiversity

[Negative] -1	[Neutral] 0	[Modest] 1	[Strong] 2	[Exemplary] 3
<p>This project or program fragments the land in a way that diminishes habitats, threatens endangered species, or diminishes a wildlife corridor.</p> <p>The health of the land is diminished by uses allowed by the conservation organization such as pesticide spraying, creation of monocultures, diversions of waterways, inappropriate forestry practices.</p> <div data-bbox="212 1325 602 1696" style="border: 2px solid black; padding: 10px; margin-top: 20px;"> <p>By land health, Aldo Leopold meant, “the capacity of the land for self-renewal. The land consists of soils, water, plants, and animals, but health is more than a sufficiency of these comments. It is a state of vigorous self-renewal in each of them, and in all collectively.”</p> </div>	<p>The project/program neither diminishes or supports known natural habitats.</p> <p>The size of the land being protected is too small or too isolated to serve as healthy habitat.</p>	<p>There are no endangered species on this land, but the project/program conserves land of enough size or quality that it can be expected in the future to support and buffer neighboring significant habitats.</p> <p>The project/program conserved significant sized landscapes, relative to surrounding areas, that includes core areas that may be able, <i>in the future and through restoration efforts</i>, to support greater degree of biological diversity and land health.</p>	<p>There are endangered species on the land being protected, and the purpose of the conservation project is to maintain the health and well-being of that species.</p> <p>The size of the protected land, relative to surrounding landscapes, creates an area of wildness that can support a diverse ecosystem now and the foreseeable future.</p> <p>This project/program keeps intact in its natural, wild state a highly-recognized and/or highly evocative landscape the conservation of which helps to inspire present and future generations of humans.</p>	<p>There are endangered species on the land being protected, which is large enough and healthy enough to support that endangered species in the long term.</p> <p>This conservation project/program creates and/or perpetuates a healthy landscapes as determined by its size, quality, diversity. Healthy land is defined as that which can sustainably support biological and cultural diversity.</p> <p>This project/program keeps intact in its natural, wild state a highly-recognized and/or evocative landscape, and the conservation plan perpetuates a healthy landscape as determined by its size, quality, diversity.</p>

Mission benefits are seen as a result of this work in:	5-10 years +1	3-5 years +2	1-3 years +3
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Thoughts on how to use Measures of Health

Measures of Health is offered as a tool to help conservation groups maintain or achieve excellence as learning and evolving organizations. It is useful in three ways:

1. First, it is a highly effective training tool designed to help us learn more about the natural and social benefits of our mission.
2. Second, it is a useful evaluation tool to describe and measure the benefits of completed projects and programs, especially those that were completed long enough ago to begin to see the types of effects that are highlighted in the rubric.
3. Third, it offers a sophisticated and yet easy-to-use form of project selection criteria to help staff make choices over projects and programs.

1. As a training tool for mission delivery:

Working as a group, pick ten completed projects that span the scope of a region's landscapes, from core city to working lands to wildlands, and discuss each project in terms of the ten mission benefits. Speaking aloud, score each project based on each mission benefit and explain your decisions. Go into detail when there are disagreements over what score to use for each mission benefit. These disagreements are an important source of learning. The more this tool is used to train project and program staff, the more sophisticated and mission-driven the organization will become.

2. As a public affairs, development, and mission evaluation tool:

Every quarter, pick two projects that were completed ten years ago and evaluate them in terms of *Measures of Health*. Your discoveries will be helpful to future project selection efforts and will likely produce excellent stories for newsletter articles and communication with supporters.

Here's an example from the Trust for Public Land: Most TPLers know about the organization's efforts in

the 1980s and 1990s to protect the boyhood home of Dr. Martin Luther King in Atlanta, Georgia. In applying this tool to that series of projects, one quickly sees that there are a variety of stories to tell about that important conservation effort. There are stories about the difficulty of the real estate negotiations, stories about the politics, and stories about the meaning of Dr. King to American culture. This tool helps us to recognize the different stories that are embedded in all of our projects.

Project Example

Martin Luther King National Historical Site

TPL rescued and protected several buildings in the neighborhood of the home of Dr. Martin Luther King. Without TPL's intervention, it is doubtful that the national historic site would have been created. The story of this project could simply be: TPL successfully acquires at auction and protects homes in the MLK neighborhood and works through an extremely difficult political process to have this important African American cultural site added to the National Park Service.

A more mission-rich way of telling this story would be this: TPL acts decisively in the marketplace to save a culturally significant African American cultural site, despite an Administration that was not interested. Also, a mainstream conservation organization learns about the needs and aspirations of African Americans, and builds new inroads into communities that need and deserve land.

Finally, an exemplary way of describing the mission benefits of this conservation effort might be: While overcoming enormous financial and political risks, TPL saves a culturally significant property and helps to raise important questions which remain unanswered: What is the role of MLK and civil disobedience to the American culture, to the practice of land conservation and to the way we lead our daily lives?

3. As *project and program selection criteria*:

The simple scoring system can help every staff member to evaluate a potential project or program based on its mission value. Every project will score differently in each of the eight mission benefits. A project can readily be exemplary in one category but score negatively in another. These differing scores will help conservationists to see the strengths and weaknesses of their efforts from a purely mission standpoint. The Center for Whole Communities hopes that *Measures of Health* becomes a project selection tool for conservation organizations across the country.

A Look to the Future

Think of *Measures of Health* as a living document, never static, that helps the conservation movement to better understand the role of land in shaping a healthier, happier, more responsible American culture.

Measures of Health, now just in version 4.0, will evolve every year (if not every month) as it is applied by conservationists everywhere. As you use it, you will have many suggestions for how to improve it. All of your suggestions will be heard and acted upon. Like a software program, it will become more useful the more it is tested and applied. As it becomes more sophisticated, our conservation initiatives will as well. The more this model is used, the greater change our conservation will make in the world.

A Conversation between David Grant of the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation and Peter Forbes of the Trust for Public Land

November, 2003

David Grant: I imagine your extraordinary rubric may seem a little overwhelming at first to people who are perusing this site wanting to learn about assessment. So, *I'm hoping in our conversation we can introduce and explain the rubric in a way that will help people understand it.* Would you begin by summarizing the process that led to its creation?

Peter Forbes: Yes. Let me start, if I might, with a Robert F. Kennedy quote about "The Measure of Wealth." I've actually found that reading this to my colleagues, either in land conservation, or just at TPL, has been the single most helpful way to explain why we needed the rubric in the first place.

"The Measure of Wealth"

"Our gross national product, now, is over eight hundred billion dollars a year, but that GNP – if we should judge America by that – counts air pollution and cigarette advertising, and ambulances to clear our highways of carnage. It counts special locks for our doors and the jails for those who break them. It counts the destruction of our redwoods and the loss of our natural wonder to chaotic sprawl. It counts napalm and the cost of a nuclear warhead, and armored cars for police who fight riots in our streets. It counts Whitman's rifle and Speck's knife, and the television programs which glorify violence in order to sell toys to our children.

"Yet the gross national product does not allow for the health of our children, nor the quality of their education, or the joy of their play. It does not include the beauty of our poetry or the strength of our marriages, the intelligence of our public debate or the integrity of our public officials. It measures neither our wit nor our courage, neither our wisdom nor our learning, neither our compassion nor our devotion to our country; it measures everything, in short, except that which makes life worthwhile. And it tells us everything about America except why we are proud to be Americans."

Robert F. Kennedy – 1967

This is a very powerful political statement. But it transcends one's Republican/ Democratic politics, and you can see the connection right away to land conservation. In the introduction to the rubric, I say, "To draw a parallel to Robert F. Kennedy's words, acres and dollars tell us everything about land conservation except why we are proud to be land conservationists." That's at the heart of it. You know, we wanted to figure out what matters most to us, because we're at a time in our history when it felt like we needed to remind ourselves how we could make the most amount of change.

DG: Were there people at the time who said to you, "Why change anything?" After all, Trust for Public Land is one of the most important and influential nonprofits in the country.

PF: Yes, and the way we measure success is still valuable. There's a lot of hope that's conveyed in acres saved and dollars raised. But I think what we all recognized is that those figures don't convey any information about the kinds of relationships that we're changing, and *that's* where the most juice is for creating social change. In our 30th year we recognized that the saving of individual parcels is really important, but it is not the story that is going to lead to our culture being any different. And what we want is a different world. That's why we're in the land-saving biz—we want to create a better world.

DG: So, you're clearly going after big game here. . . . Ok, that's great, but how do you go about the conversation of determining what matters most?

PF: By unharnessing TPL to have discussions about what its values are as an organization, and what our values are as individuals. We did this in a very serious way. We collected the best writings that I could find on the role that land plays in our culture, and we published it, in ten chapters—it's called *Our Land, Ourselves*. Then we had a listserve discussion (this was 5 years ago) each week that was devoted to a single

chapter. We had all of our \$1,000 donors, all of our staff, all of our board members, all of our advisory councils—we had almost 750 people on this listserve. Then we invited all of the authors, and we had a free for all, open discussion, which got really startling at times. This was a discussion where a receptionist who had been at TPL for three weeks was on an equal footing with our president. There was such respect conveyed, and there were such hard feelings, too, about where TPL had failed. Yet it was all done with great, great respect. The issue of, for example, second homes, came up. Now you can imagine, quite a few of our \$1,000 plus donors, and board members, and staff, have second homes. And so we had a question about what is the morality about having second homes? It was very very heartfelt. And some people were saying, “You know, second homes are the scourge of our culture, and it’s only because people messed up their first nest that now they think they can have this romantic vision of a second home somewhere else.” And then other people said, “Well hold on here, Thoreau wrote from a second home, and Leopold wrote from a second home.” So, hard issues were accessed, and we began to feel free—I used the expression “released”—to more readily talk about what matters most. But it did begin five years ago. And then the retreats followed.

DG: Please talk about that. These listserve conversations were courtesy of technology, but when you use the word “retreats” I’m assuming you mean face to face.

PF: Yes. Well, we started with the computer-based e-mail based listserve, which if there were almost 750 people on it, maybe a quarter of them actually sent messages. So most people were bystanders and readers of it. But there was enough energy that we thought the next step was to have a retreat, and we did it at the Vallecitos Mountain Refuge in New Mexico. It was a real risk. Everyone, including our president was questioning, “Do we really need to take a week? We’ve never taken a week to do anything. We decide our entire budgets in three-day marathon 28 hour sessions, why take a whole week?” But we did.

DG: So how did you frame that week for people? What

was the invitation like to come? What did people *think* was going to happen?

PF: TPL was really struggling about our role in the movement. We had launched the Green Cities Initiative, but we had sort of backed off it. It wasn’t really clear who we were, and I think people felt that. We had a new president come on, and he had high aspirations, and a group of us were just saying, “You know it feels like we’ve gotten away from our original purpose and we’re drifting a little bit.” We can’t even say what success looks like for us anymore. We’re divided. Some of us think that it’s greener cities, others think “this,” and, others think “that” and, you know, we’re just not, we’re not there.

DG: I can imagine people reading the transcript of your words now, and nodding and applying some of the same notions to their own organizations. How did you then get from good conversations about important things to what essentially is an assessment tool – this rubric here?

PF: I don’t think any of this, in fact none of it, *would have* happened without our new president, Will Rogers, in place. He’s an individual who has a great ability to see the value in being self-aware. Self-aware as individuals, but also as an organization. And it takes a lot of sometimes difficult, uncomfortable self-awareness to do this process. All the way along. And that self-awareness comes from a real desire in our heart of hearts to create change. There’s a guy at Harvard professor by the name of Mark Roberts who came and spoke to us and he gave us a wonderful definition of leadership, which was “being responsible for what actually happens in the world.” So we asked ourselves, “Well what *is* really happening in the world, and what’s our connection to it?” You can’t ask that question responsibly without initiating a process of inquiry.

So Will detailed me to continue and carry the ball on this, which I wanted very much to do. And I would say that within the first six months of the process we hit the realization that an organization is what it measures. And part of our problem is that we were only evaluating acres—we were only looking at acres and dollars, and it didn’t say anything about relationships and change and

our highest aspirations and where was all that being handled? Around the water cooler? That's silly.

DG: This is the classic dilemma that I hear in working with organizations where whenever something comes up that they care deeply about they say, "You can't measure that." But you have burst through some sort of barrier there.

PF: Bursting through the barrier was the contribution that you made to our Advisory Council, which was set up to help me think through this for the organization. That group met on four occasions, and they were really focused on specific tasks. One was language, the second one was philosophy, and the third one was how we defined success. So we knew what the leverage points were by the time you came to the session on defining success. When you said you don't necessarily have to quantify and analyze – describing it can be just as powerful – lights went on for everyone.

DG: That makes a lot of sense. I remember the lights in the eyes because I've frequently been with groups where I say, "If you can describe it, you can measure it." And here was a group that had spent a lot of time finding the right words to describe what mattered, and in a way the rubric gave them a place to put them.

PF: Exactly. It was a really clear tool.

DG: Now, the rubric will in some ways explain itself for people who can access it on this site, accompanying our interview. But do you want to say anything about the conversation about how many values to include? Or let me put it another way. If you could imagine strangers reading the rubric, what would you like to point out to them?

PF: Well, the first thing I'd like to point out is that pretty early in the process, the most interesting thing that came up was our desire to have a "negative" column. This wasn't self-flagellation, it was, "Hey, this is a learning tool and this is a training tool and part of our sophistication is seeing really that we haven't done as well as we would like, and that for every positive thing we can do, there can also be at least one unintended consequence. And if we really want to be

mature, we have to realize that there are unintended consequences of our work.

DG: That seems to me to be a very important contribution to the art and science of rubric writing. It's the first rubric I've ever seen with a negative number attached and, of course, it makes a very strong point that there's something much more problematic than work that's simply not good. We also have to consider the consequences of work that actually does harm.

PF: Yes. It isn't an exercise just in criticism, it's an exercise in looking at wholeness and seeing that every piece of good work that we do also carries the potential for doing bad work. At this stage in the maturity of the conservation movement we need to be self-aware enough to recognize that there are unintended consequences of our actions, of our success.

DG: So, to summarize where we are, you went through a very careful process of cultivating the ground before even writing the rubric.

PF: Yes.

DG: You needed to be in a certain place, a certain frame of mind, before you could consider doing it.

PF: Yes, that's right, and that first came from the list-serve, the process of unharnessing TPL to be open to larger discussions about our purpose and values. It was the equivalent of preparing the soil before planting seeds. I really don't think the rubric would be able to take hold at TPL without having first done these retreats. We have now done these week-long retreats for five years, and 25 percent of our staff have been to them. About three years ago we began in earnest a program called "Redefining Success," and we started that by first asking ourselves, "Well, what is a mission bulls' eye project at TPL?" When we queried all of our staff, we got lots of stories, which we digested and boiled down. I think we came up with twenty benefits that we saw ourselves delivering. And we worked with a bunch of different consultants at different times. Some of it was helpful and honestly some of it took us down the wrong path. What we were struggling with all along was "How do we con-

nect the role of land to social change? How do we show that what we do around land conservation creates a change in people?”

So eventually we boiled those twenty benefits down to eight that we could really stand by. We had a task force, including our president and all our chief management people, and we met for four days. We agreed what those eight benefits are, and those are the eight that you see here now, in the rubric. We spent a lot of time wordsmithing—why this word, why that word? And we brought these eight to the Advisory Council meeting that you attended and, all of a sudden, you gave us the rubric. All we did was then “pour” those eight into the form. And of course it took a few months of getting the language right on each one and figuring out how it applied for us, but actually at that point, it was very quick work.

DG: I remember being struck at that weekend by the fact that a rubric not only gives you a place to put your descriptive words, but also a place to put your stories. I was using the word “indicators” then to describe how each story could illustrate what you mean by the descriptive language in the rubric. It seems like you have included little sentences in this rubric that are hints to larger stories.

PF: Yes.

DG: And if we can imagine a rubric as being an infinitely expandable box, these contain your books as well.

PF: Yes. We might become more sophisticated and adept at telling stories through the use of this rubric. But that’s the next stage for TPL. If this is accepted, and I think it is, as an important way of describing our work, then we need to do one of these that’s all just stories.

DG: Let’s talk about what happens now and in the future. Again, in talking about your specific work, we’re trying to understand the role of assessment in improving the work of lots of different organizations. I think you’ve made it very clear how much it took to get to where you have a rubric in hand. Now, what do you do with it?

PF: There are two places that the rubric goes. One is inside of TPL, and the other is out to the larger conservation community. So within TPL we’re using it in three ways:

- The first is as a mission-training tool. Every new project and program manager will be given the chance to sit down with this and talk about how their current projects or past projects are evaluated based on those eight criteria. And as far as we’ve used it so far, just the conversation alone has been catalytic. Because people argue, “Well, I wouldn’t give that a 2, I’d give that a 3, and here’s why.” Or “No, no no, that’s a -1 on that one, however, on this other one, it’s a 3, it’s exemplary.” That has been phenomenal in creating a learning organization setup.
- The second is for our public affairs staff, who are always a little separate from the field staff. This gives them a tool to really understand the best language that we have to offer about our mission. And that’s why we spent a lot of time on language.
- The third is, and this is the hardest, as a screen that, eventually, we want to have at the front of the engine that decides where TPL does its work. But because of the strong culture, that’s going to take years to do. Like all really important things, it’s going to take time to work it into the machinery of TPL.

DG: I sometimes urge people to write “DRAFT” on the top of the rubric. What’s your sense about whether you may go back to this and revise it with use?

PF: Yes.... We’ve described this as a free software program that we’re creating, not only for TPL, but for the larger conservation community. And my commitment is to update it regularly, whether that’s every six months or every year, we don’t know yet. We want this to be the equivalent of what the conservation biology movement had 40 years ago when it set out to figure out what areas habitats were needed to preserve endangered species. Or what *were* endangered species? And what

we're saying here, through this rubric, is that the joyful, responsible human being is an endangered species, and we want to be able to describe and measure the role that land plays in addressing this. I hope outside of TPL that this revised rubric becomes an annual document that's gets better and better at describing what humans need in terms of habitat.

DG: Peter, it's inspiring work, and I hope that you and I can sit down two years, three years from now and ask some questions like, "What happened next?" and "How did you feel that the work of TPL was getting better and better?" and "Did this assessment work affect a larger arena than just TPL's work, or even just land conservation?"

PF: Well, and then we'll know, won't we, that land is much more than just about conservation, right? And that's the point.

My hope is that what's represented in this rubric can eventually be adopted in the same way that the "precautionary principle" has. By that I mean the idea that if we don't know, if we're not sure that a human action won't create harm, then we shouldn't do it. In other words, we're far enough along in the destruction of the planet that we have to be sure, we have to be absolutely sure, that our activities are not harming the planet. I hope that it becomes widely accepted that if you're doing land conservation in this country, it will be done along guidelines like this. Because land conservation doesn't have anything like this right now. We have lots of information about the how, but very little information about the why.

DG: Would you give an example?

PF: Well, one comparison I'll offer is the story I gave earlier about Classy Parker and the Urban Garden. In

the conventional way of evaluating our work, acres and dollars, a 3,000 sq. ft. urban garden on 121st Street in Harlem does not exactly compare with the Columbia River Gorge. Or even a 100-acre farm we might have protected on the Columbia River Gorge. And that's a very, very sad thing, because TPL does both of those projects, and yet we might be risk treating the staff who work on the Classy Parker Urban Gardens as second-class citizens because the value of their work has been impossible to describe and measure.

DG: And with the new rubric in mind, these guys are stars.

PF: They're heroes. But so is the person who does the farm on the Columbia River Gorge, because their set of language is in here, too. And real change will occur where we as an organization can connect the dots between the two. Then the value of that Urban Garden will be equated to the Columbia Gorge.

DG: And both projects, being done, create a kind of a synergy. And the big picture benefits from both being done.

PF: That's right. And in fact when we do them both, there is a whole other story about them together, and that is called thinking of the whole. There is a connection between what we do in our cities and what we do in our Sierra. That connection resonates with people because it's true, and it speaks to biological truths – it's true in nature.

DG: I can't think of a better place to stop than with the truth. So why don't we part with the notion that we could pick up this conversation later. I'll be fascinated to see how things unfold in the next couple of years.

PF: I welcome that, I look forward to that. Thank you.

DG: Thank you.



Whole Communities is a bridge between people and the land. It is a bridge between the diverse elements of the conservation movement, and a bridge between today's practice of conservation and one that offers a more compelling alternative for integrating ecological values into the American culture. We strengthen conservation organizations and communities by helping both to find shared values, to achieve more authentic collaboration, and to act more courageously from those aspirations. We provide trusted forums where diverse leaders are safe to gather and to learn together, and we pioneer new definitions of success for the conservation movement, from acres and dollars to a more complex understanding of the values and benefits that arise from healthy land and people.

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