

Flexible Framework for Evaluating Community Conservation



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Sincerely,

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Flexible Framework for Evaluating Community Conservation

This tool provides guidance about the kinds of changes you can expect from community conservation and how you might quantify these changes. It also provides step-by-step instructions and tips on how to create measures that are realistic and meaningful to your organization, your partners and your activities.

Before embarking on enhanced programming or projects, it makes sense to design measures to define the impact you are seeking. A well-conceived measurement framework will help you determine if you are succeeding or need to adjust.

every community (see a list with definitions on the next page). Any work your land trust may do in your community will impact one or more of these assets.

Your land trust will likely want to impact the community assets that you are interested in and that are within your capacity to impact, as well as those the community cares about. This is why it is so critical to understand the needs of your community. Without understanding your community's needs, it will be difficult to create outcomes meaningful to the people you wish to serve.

“If you can’t measure it, you can’t improve it.” — Peter Drucker

“You can’t manage what you can’t measure.” — William Deming

Measurement should not be an after-the-fact undertaking. You can and should start the measurement process after you assess your projects and programs but in parallel with planning for greater impact.

A companion tool from the Land Trust Alliance, *Assessing and Planning Community Conservation Impact*, is designed to help land trusts gauge to what extent they are already doing community conservation, frame opportunities and prioritize new approaches.

Assessing and Planning Community Conservation Impact and this *Flexible Framework for Evaluating Community Conservation* are built on a framework that recognizes that all communities have a variety of assets. This framework identifies nine assets found in

The more assets your organization impacts and the higher the degree of impact on each asset, the farther along the “community conservation continuum” you are. You can start by using *Assessing and Planning Community Conservation Impact* to assess the importance of different assets to your community and your work, as well as how much of an impact you’re already having on those assets.

You can then use this information to plan for what comes next, whether that is preparing to have a greater impact on assets you’re already working on or impacting additional assets. Once you’ve assessed, and as you begin planning, it is time to think about how to measure the expected outcomes of your community conservation work.

COMMUNITY ASSETS

RESOURCE-LEVEL IMPACTS



Natural and Working Lands

Healthy natural resources (air, water, land, flora, fauna, etc.), working lands and systems in a region. Investments include preservation, restoration, maintenance, access and engagement.



Financial

Monetary assets invested in other attributes. Financial assets can be invested in land protection, site improvements and/or programming to build the community's economic health using land as a tool or catalyst.



Built

Infrastructure, including trails or other structures, that serves the needs and desired experiences of a variety of community users. Investments include construction, renovation and maintenance as well as the relevancy of these attributes to the community.

SYSTEMS-LEVEL IMPACTS



Equity and Access

Programming, planning and opportunities that promote just practices, increase equity of access and experience to all parts of the community, and remove disparities.



Political

Small 'p' political power is individual, group and/or organizational connections that can be held, spent or shared to achieve desired ends. It is demonstrated by the ability to influence the distribution of resources and to set the agenda about what resources are available. Investments are made through inclusive organizing that includes information gathering and dissemination, increasing community voice and increasing access to and inclusion among decision-makers.



Social

Trust, relationships and networks that support communities and regions. Investments may lead to unprecedented conversations, shared experiences and connections between otherwise unconnected individuals and groups, as well as those that strengthen relationships within groups.

HUMAN-LEVEL IMPACTS



Intellectual, Emotional and Spiritual

Knowledge, innovation, creativity and spirituality in a region. Investments include activities that engage the imagination, enhance spirituality, connect people with the environment (or land and water) and generate new knowledge.



Skills and Health

The individual skills and physical and mental healthiness of people in a community or region. Investments can include programming and direct experiences on, or associated with, the land and water.



Cultural

Practices that reflect values and identity rooted in place, class and/or ethnicity. Investments can include support for venues to showcase cultural achievements, programs to preserve and pass on cultural knowledge and skills, and support for cultural transformations.

MEASURING IMPACT¹

Measurement is a critical process to help determine whether your organization is having the impact it expected to have. More and more land trusts are considering ways of using their mission and strategies of land conservation to address challenges faced by community groups, such as at-risk youth, veterans, the un- and under-employed, the hungry, older people, the disabled and others. As you ramp up your community conservation projects and programs, measurement is essential to determine if the time and treasure you are committing are being used wisely and creating the expected outcomes.

WHY MEASURE?

Transparency and accountability are key concepts in philanthropy and nonprofit management. As a nonprofit organization, your land trust is accountable to your board, members and other supporters, including any foundation or corporate funders. With a comprehensive measurement framework, you can deliver the transparency and accountability funders and supporters seek, but measurement does more.

Creating a measurement framework creates new information and new patterns of information flow. Often, in the drive to get things done, we do not collect the information we really need to monitor our activities and make better decisions.

Designing and implementing a measurement framework can help you figure out how to get the information you really need, which could mean accessing new information or making information available to those who never had it before. New patterns of information flow result from collaboration with different sources of information, whether they are people, databases or organizations.

Partners

Because community conservation, in the vast majority of cases, benefits from working with other organizations, measurement can and should be done in collaboration with your partner organizations. The best time to engage your key partners is early in the process, during the planning stages. Bringing them on board as early as possible will build trust, get their input and help to align your respective expectations of impact. In some cases, your partners may be best positioned to identify and report on the changes you're hoping to see.

Engaging Partners

Engaging partners is critical to accomplishing successful community conservation work. Partners in your work should also be partners in measuring progress. Key questions to ask as you're thinking about partners to engage include:

- Are there partners who are critical to helping us accomplish our goals?
- What kinds of information do they, or can they, collect?
- What is in it for them to engage with us? This is the value proposition.

The Land Trust Alliance's *Stakeholder Analysis Tool* provides a way of understanding more about your community, the people in it and what they care about. Using this resource, you can begin to understand how your values intersect with the values of others in your community. These insights can help spark new ideas for partnerships and programs that benefit your land trust and your community. For more information see Appendix B: Engaging Partners.

¹ Many of the measurement concepts in this document are adapted from Yellow Wood Associates' You Get What You Measure® process. For more information, visit www.yellowwood.org/you-get-what-you-measure.html.

Measuring

Measuring your work helps you to learn from experimentation and risk-taking. It allows you to capture the results of your actions so you can determine if it is getting you closer to your goals — whether or not you are making a difference. You can then determine if you should be doing more of one thing, doing less of another or otherwise modifying your approach.

The process of measuring helps you, and those you collaborate with, understand what really matters to you as individuals, organizations and partners. Shared understanding and shared goals can allow for even greater levels of collaboration among partner organizations.

Finally, measuring the results of your work helps you tell your stories, which are the most powerful way of conveying complex ideas quickly. Measurement helps you answer the question “So what?”

Case Study: Measuring

A Maine community wanted to get information on the pollution status of its clam beds so that they could work to have the beds reopened quickly. One group member contacted the government agency in charge of these records and got through to the individual record-keeper. The record-keeper told this group member that although they collect the information on clam beds by town her computer program was unable to retrieve the information on that basis and she didn't have permission from her superiors to do so. Once she understood that the community wanted to expedite opening the beds by taking their own measures more frequently than the state, she figured out how to get them the information they needed on a regular and timely basis. By changing the flow of information, the community became empowered to act in new ways that resulted in better information and better use of its natural resources.

KEY TERMS

Below are some of the key terms to understand when creating your measurement framework. It's important to be inclusive when deciding who should help develop the goals, indicators and measures of your community conservation work; be sure to invite community members and actual or potential partners into the conversation early.

Goal

Measurement starts with understanding the goal or goals of your program or project. A goal is a *condition* that you wish to *achieve*. Goals are usually broadly stated. Often we write goals as activities; however, this can be limiting. A goal is not an action — it is why you want to do the action. For example, recycling is an action; living in a community where waste is minimized is a goal.

In the example above, if you think you want to recycle, that's what you do. If we ask ourselves “Why do we want to recycle?” we might discover that we really want to minimize waste in our community. If our goal is to minimize waste, there are any number of possible activities that might get us to that goal, including recycling, reducing consumption, reusing, composting, etc.

Indicator

Once you have clarity around your goal(s), your next step is to think about what needs to change to achieve those goals. An indicator is *something that must change* to make progress toward a goal. In our example, we might use increased recycling, reduced consumption or more composting as indicators.

Since goals are generally quite broad, there are many possible indicators that could signal, or indicate, progress is being made toward achieving the goal. A discussion of indicators is a discussion of values — it reveals how different people interpret the goal. As you consider what has to change to arrive at your goal, different people might have legitimately different ideas from their different

perspectives and values. It is important for all of these perspectives to be considered so that an appropriate measure can be chosen.

Indicators are most powerful when created and agreed upon within the context of the community or organization(s) where they will have real meaning to participants.

Measure

A measure provides a way to actually *count or value the status of an indicator*. For example, things may be measured in terms of “number of,” “percent of,” “quality of,” “frequency of” or “rating of.” To track a measure over time, you must have a unit that defines what you are

counting — inches, people, quarts, hours, etc. — and a baseline that defines the value of the measure at some predetermined starting point in time.

In our example, one measure of one indicator (increased recycling) could be the number of residences that use recycle bins or even the percentage of residences in a municipality that use recycle bins.

Generally, measurement focuses on quantitative measures — outcomes that can be counted. However, quantitative data without a qualitative component do not tell the whole story. Funders especially seek a combination of expressive quantitative data with stories that bring a human face to community conservation.



Courtesy Bear Yuba Land Trust



Courtesy Legacy Land Conservancy

Here is a way to conceptualize the relationship between goals, indicators and measures:

What is the <i>condition</i> that you wish to <i>achieve</i> ?	What needs to change to achieve your goals?	How will you count or value the status of the indicator?
Goal	Indicator 1	Measure 1a
		Measure 1b
		Measure 1c
	Indicator 2	Measure 2a
		Measure 2b
		Measure 2c

Filling in this measurement framework using our example might look like this:

Goal	Indicators	Measures
We live in a community where waste is minimized.	Increased recycling	1a: # residences that use recycle bins
		1b: # lbs. (or tons) of household recycling/mo.
		1c: # lbs. (or tons) of business recycling/mo.
	Increased composting	2a: # residences that compost
		2b: # lbs. (or tons) of household composting/mo.
		2c: # lbs. (or tons) of business composting/mo.

Depending on your discussions with partners around recycling and the goal of living in a community with less waste, you might choose different indicators with different measures. You might also add either more indicators or more measures, or both, depending on your focus and strategies and your capacity to gather the information.

Fill in the matrix above: Can you think of another indicator and its corresponding measures for this goal?

MEASUREMENT WORKSHEET A: Developing Goals and Indicators

Once you have an understanding of the assets on which your community conservation work will focus the next step is to develop a goal related to your work to impact a particular asset. See the example below.

Asset	Goal: What is the condition you wish to achieve?	Indicators: What needs to change to reach the goal?
Built	Our outdoor trail network serves the needs and desired experiences of a variety of community users.	We understand clearly the actual and potential outdoor trail needs of a wide variety of community members.
		Our outdoor trails are designed, built and maintained in order to serve a wide variety of community members.
		Our communications about our trails are welcoming, clear and compelling.

Use the table below to choose an asset that is most important to your work and then develop a goal and indicators around that asset for your work moving forward. See Appendix A for examples of goals and indicators for each of the community asset types.

Asset	Goal: What is the condition you wish to achieve?	Indicators: What needs to change to reach the goal?

MEASUREMENT METHODS

Quantitative

Quantitative data are used to answer questions such as:

- How many?
- Who was involved?
- What were the outcomes?
- How much did it cost?

This data can be collected by surveys or questionnaires, observation or review of existing documents and databases. People can answer the questions by themselves or someone can ask them the questions; the surveys can be administered in person or by telephone, by mail or online. Analyzing quantitative data can involve everything from simple descriptions of the results to complex analyses.

Qualitative

Qualitative data answer questions such as:

- How did something change?
- Who was responsible?
- When did something happen?

Data collection approaches for qualitative research usually involve direct interaction with individuals either on a one-to-one basis or in a group setting. Analyzing qualitative data involves interpreting the results and identifying patterns or themes to make sense of what may seem like disparate information.

Qualitative data collection methods are time-consuming; this makes qualitative research more expensive. Therefore, data are usually collected from a smaller sample than would be the case for quantitative approaches. The benefit of the qualitative approach is that the information is richer and provides deeper insight.

The main methods for collecting qualitative data are:

1. Individual interviews — one-on-one conversations with possible beneficiaries of your work
2. Focus groups — small group meeting with a guided discussion
3. Observations — a systematic data collection approach which researchers use all of their senses to examine people in natural settings or naturally occurring situations
4. Action Research — a reflective process of problem-solving led by individuals working with others in teams or as part of a “community of practice” to improve the way they address issues and solve problems

Partners

Because community conservation usually involves partnering with other public and private organizations (such as schools, hospitals and social services organizations), it is essential to consider measurement and the most relevant measures with those partners. Understanding the data your partner organizations are already collecting will be a useful way to start this discussion. In addition, there may be ways to collaborate on data collection. For more information about engaging partners, see Appendix B.

Collection

Data collection methods are highly dependent on the type of data you’re collecting. Each measure implies a particular data source (e.g., survey, administrative data, interviews, etc.). Some data are readily available, but others will need to be collected by your land trust or your partners. Often, your resources, time and capacity will have a big impact on what information you can collect and what you ultimately decide to measure.

As you are determining what to measure, it is important to only pick indicators that are important to your land trust, that are meaningful and that are directly related to your goals. If you do not know how you will use the information, it may not make sense to collect the data. Data collection can be a time-intensive and challenging undertaking; it is extremely important to be sure you are collecting only needed data.

Time frame is another consideration for your measuring activities. Some measures will not move much in the short term (# new businesses, # jobs produced, % reduction in crime, etc.), while others might indicate progress right away (# children or families engaged, # people using a trail, etc.).

You will want to manage expectations about when you and others should see measurable outcomes. When picking indicators and measures, you'll want to select appropriate intervals for demonstrating progress toward short- (one year), medium- (two to three years) and long-term (three to five years or more) outcomes.

Shared Language

It is critical to have a shared language around your measurement framework. By explicitly defining the terms in your goal, indicator and measures statements, you'll be clear about your focus and exactly what you're measuring. This shared language helps your entire organization and partners unite around and move forward with measuring your work. Without it, misunderstandings can arise within your organization or with your partners about why or what you are doing and what data are being collected.



Courtesy Tuckernuck Land Trust



Courtesy Mainspring Conservation Trust

MEASUREMENT WORKSHEET B: Creating a Shared Language

Before you can create effective measures, it is critical to be clear about language. Developing a shared language is important for making sure everyone (your board, staff, stakeholders) is on the same page. You will want to define the terms in your goal and indicator; this will make it clearer what counts as progress. A shared language is a way of uniting everyone around your goals and strategies. It will also make a difference once it comes time to measure your outcomes.

In the examples below, with the same goal and indicator, you can see how different groups might define the same words differently, which leads to different measures.

Example A: Built Assets

Goal: Our outdoor trail network serves the needs and desired experiences of a variety of community members.

Indicator #1: A variety of community members are using our trails.

Definitions:

Outdoor trail network — the hiking trails managed by our land trust

Needs and desired experiences — what do you know about the needs and desired experiences of community members?

Community — the people/residents who live near our preserves

Variety of community members — People who differ by age

Measures:

of people living near our preserves who are using the hiking trails located there

of people in different age groups who are using the hiking trails located there

Example B: Built Assets

Goal: Our outdoor trail network serves the needs and desired experiences of a variety of community members.

Indicator #1: A variety of community members are using our trails.

Definitions:

Outdoor trail network — Paved or otherwise, a pathway, footpath, track, course or route on which people hike, walk, run, scoot, skate or ride

Needs and desired experiences — what do you know about the needs and desired experiences of community members?

Community — the county in which we operate

Variety of community members — people from diverse backgrounds (including ability, race, socioeconomic, culture, age, gender, etc.)

Measures:

of people in the county who use the variety of trails we operate

Diversity of people in the county who use the variety of trails we operate

Using your goal and indicators from Worksheet A, use this sheet to define the terms in them.

Asset: _____

Goal: _____

Indicator(s): _____

First, underline and define all the words that are nouns. Next, underline and define all the words that are verbs. It may be helpful to gather board, staff and partners to discuss what these words mean and create a shared language.

Definitions: _____

Guidelines for Measuring: What Can and Should be Measured?²

- Measure progress toward meeting goals. If your measure is not connected to the indicator or the indicator isn't connected to the goal, don't use it.
- Measure only those things that will give needed information. If you do not know how you will use it, do not collect it.
- Where direct measurement of important factors seems impossible or prohibitive, select proxy measures.
- Balance the need to know with the ability to find out.
- Measure those aspects of progress that will have the most impact on decision-making in relation to your goal.
- Measure "goods" rather than "bads," such as employment rather than unemployment, as much as possible.

Levels of Information in Measurement

Information exists at many levels in our society. This can make measurement more challenging, or it may actually make it easier. When you think about where to look for information, sometimes it is useful to go all the way to the end consumer. However, this is often the most expensive information to collect and the least reliable. Fortunately, often more reliable and cost-effective information is available from an intermediary that may already have access to the information you want and/or already have a reason to collect it.

For example, if your goal is:

"Children in our community have healthier diets."

One indicator could be:

"Children eat more fresh fruits and vegetables from the snack carts at their elementary school."

One measure could be:

"The number of portions of fresh fruits and vegetables consumed per week per student at each elementary school."

One way to collect this information would be to have a person monitor every snack cart in every elementary school and count the number of portions children select.

Another method might be to work with kitchen staff to count the number of portions provided and subtract the number returned to the kitchen. If the staff did this by type of snack, they would discover which snacks are most appealing. This information could be used to generate ideas among school staff, parents and even students on how to further increase the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables.

This quantitative data could be supplemented with qualitative data from interviews with randomly selected students about which snack they chose and why.

Yet another possible method may be to rise to the next level and work with the school district to collect this information for all schools in the community, all elementary schools in the entire district or all schools in the district. The latter two would provide a way to compare student fruit and vegetable consumption with other communities near you.

"Not everything that counts can be counted, and not everything that can be counted counts."

— Albert Einstein

² Adapted from *Self-Evaluation: Ideas for Participatory Evaluation of Rural Community Development Projects* by Jim Rugh, World Neighbors, 1992.

Some questions to consider when determining the right level of information to collect include:

1. Who is the end user whose behavior you're trying to change?
2. Who collects the kind of information about the end user that you want to know?
3. Who collects information from whom?
4. What is the highest level of aggregation of information that will be helpful to you in making better decisions?
5. What goals do you share with the collectors of the information?
6. How can you approach the "information intermediaries" to elicit their cooperation and willingness to share information with you in a form that will be useful to you without compromising their needs or restrictions (e.g., confidentiality)?

Outputs vs. Outcomes

An important distinction to make in any discussion of measurement is the difference between outputs and outcomes. Outputs relate to "what we do." Outcomes refer to "what difference we are making."

In community conservation work, it is important to measure what we do, but it is also critical to measure what difference it makes in the world and how people's behaviors and quality of life are changing as a result. It is important to quantify results, such as the number of dollars, acres, partners, etc., but it is also vital to measure what has happened as a result of raising money, preserving land and engaging partners.

Measuring this kind of social impact requires telling the story of the changes we bring to people's lives and organizations. It also requires us to think creatively about indicators and measures that capture that impact and augment the stories.

One issue with focusing on outcomes is that it may be challenging for your land trust to directly attribute true outcomes to your work. The issue of attribution vs. contribution is a prevalent one in measurement. It is important when measuring the outcomes of your community conservation work to be clear about how your work contributed to the outcomes.

Usually, true outcomes result from a combination of drivers and a variety of partners. You can legitimately claim responsibility for outcomes that you contributed to as long as you make the linkage clear between what you did, what else happened and the result.

"Impacts are what we hope for, but outcomes are what we work for."

— Robert Penna, The Nonprofit Outcomes Toolbox

MEASUREMENT WORKSHEET C: Putting It All Together — Using a Measurement Matrix

In this tool, we have worked step by step through the process of moving from goals to indicators to definitions to measures. This worksheet is meant to put it all together. Once you understand your goal and indicator, you may want to consider what action or strategy you'll take to show progress. This could come before or after developing the measure.

Asset	Goal	Indicator	Measure	How would you measure?
Built	Our outdoor trail network serves the needs and desired experiences of a variety of community members.	A variety of community members are using our outdoor trails.	Number of people in the county who use the variety of outdoor trails we operate.	Use a motion-activated wildlife camera (or simple counter) to count the number of people passing through on the trail. (This gets at numbers but not diversity.)
			Diversity of people in the county who use the variety of outdoor trails we operate.	Have a sign-up sheet at the trail head supplemented with in-person surveys administered by volunteers. (You could include a column for diversity characteristics.)

A measurement plan is important to understand how you'll collect this data. Some questions you might want to ask about how you'll measure include:

Measurement Plan Questions	
Where will you get the information you need? (If you don't know for sure, be sure to consider several options.)	
How will you get the information you need?	
Who will collect the information? What measuring partners do you need?	
How much time do you expect it to take and/or what will it cost to collect the information?	
When and how often will the information be collected?	
Who will analyze the information?	
Who will prepare it for use and be responsible for its use?	
How will it be used, by whom and when?	

See Appendix A for examples of goals, indicators and measures for each asset type.

Measurement Is a Creative Process

You will find some ideas of possible measures in Appendix A.

Measurement is a creative process, so you can use these as is or use the sample measures as a springboard to create your own. When determining the best way to measure your community conservation work you should first assess your impact on community assets. Your first step in measuring your impact should be reviewing the companion tool *Assessing and Planning Your Community Conservation Impact*. Key questions to ask in assessing, planning and measuring community conservation impact include:

- What are the most important assets to your land trust's community conservation work?
- What behaviors are you attempting to change through your community conservation work?
- How would you know if you were successful?



Courtesy Piedmont Land Conservancy



Courtesy New Mexico Land Conservancy

EXAMPLES

For each of the community conservation stories below, you will find a paragraph about a project or program, a draft goal and indicator, and sample measures. These are examples we created to show how you might measure a variety of programs. The land trusts were not involved in developing these example goals, indicators and measures, and (to our knowledge) they are not being used by them.

Review these to get an idea of how you might develop a measures framework, and then use the worksheets provided to create your own in collaboration with your partners.

Example: Kennebunkport Conservation Trust, Maine

The Kennebunkport Conservation Trust in Maine had been partnering with local schools, bringing elementary school students to their preserves for years. The alternative education program at Kennebunk High School provides hands-on learning opportunities to those students who aren't thriving in mainstream classrooms, perhaps for lack of a support system, adequate housing or food. A partnership between Kennebunk High School and the Kennebunkport Conservation Trust has led to increased hands-on opportunities for these youth in nature. On the preserve, one project created a one-mile loop trail with interpretive signs called the Learning Trail. The students learned science as they got to know the forest. They learned math by measuring wood for boardwalks and bridges. They learned research and writing as they prepared interpretive signs. They learned history as they came across fire scars or a forgotten graveyard. And they learned to connect with each other. The project gave the students confidence and a sense that they had roles as members of the community.

Goal: *Kennebunk High School alternative education students' lives are improved through a greater connection to the land.*

Indicator: *More Kennebunk High School alternative education students are thriving and completing high school.*

Potential measures:

- *# of youth participating in the Learning Trail program*
- *Percentage of Learning Trail youth who graduate from high school compared to other alternative education youth not in the program*
- *Percentage of Learning Trail youth who go on to attend college, join the military or get a rewarding job compared to other alternative education youth not in the program*



Courtesy Kennebunkport Conservation Trust

Example: Freshwater Land Trust, Alabama

The Freshwater Land Trust in Birmingham, Alabama, worked with the Jefferson County Department of Health to develop a greenway with bike and pedestrian paths and trails to improve the environmental, economic and social well-being of the community while promoting healthy lifestyles. The Freshwater Land Trust is also exploring the health benefits of green space by joining with the YMCA of Greater Birmingham, the University of Alabama at Birmingham, the Jefferson County Department of Health and many other partners to develop a local Parks Prescription Program. The program will create opportunities for medical professionals to introduce patients to healthy recreational spaces in their community.

Goal: *Birmingham-area communities are healthier.*

Indicator: *More Birmingham residents are using the greenway's bike and pedestrian trails.*

Potential measures:

- # of prescriptions written by area physicians
- # of residents using the greenway
- # times residents use the greenway per week
- Changes in health indicators for those receiving park prescriptions



Courtesy Freshwater Land Trust



Courtesy Freshwater Land Trust

Example: Triangle Land Conservancy, North Carolina

The Triangle Land Conservancy (TLC) in North Carolina started the Irvin Farm and Nature Preserve, which was planted and is tended by 25 families from Myanmar, many of whom are political refugees. The preserve was bequeathed to the land trust in 2007, around the time when an estimated 400 Myanmar refugees began to resettle in the Chapel Hill area. Grants allowed TLC to create community gardens on the preserve and form a partnership with the Orange County Partnership for Young Children, which operates the Transplanting Traditions Community Farm to help refugees grow their own food to improve their health and make money through a small community supported agriculture (CSA) program.



Courtesy Triangle Land Conservancy

Goal: *Refugees are integrated into the community.*

Indicator: *More refugees are growing their own food and earning money from their CSAs.*

Potential measures:

- *# of families growing their own food*
- *Pounds of food grown at the preserve*
- *Average pounds of food grown per family*
- *Dollars earned from CSA per family*
- *Survey results show decreased levels of stress in Myanmar community*



Courtesy Triangle Land Conservancy

CONCLUSION

Land trusts are engaging their communities in a variety of ways, partnering with other nonprofit organizations, the private sector and government to impact community assets and engage people from different walks of life. Funders and supporters of community conservation programs want to see the results of how land trusts are impacting a variety of community assets. This guide can set you on

a path to better quantifying your community conservation outcomes. As you demonstrate more and better outcomes, more land trusts may be interested in embarking on community conservation projects and programming. Ultimately, more communities nationwide will be better places to live, work and raise a family.



Courtesy Monadnock Conservancy



Courtesy Land Trust Alliance

APPENDIX A: SAMPLE MEASURES

There are many assets of a community that land conservation work and programs can impact.

Below, you will find each asset type along with a draft goal, one or more draft indicators of progress (what needs to change to move toward the goal) and several draft measures. Many of these measures are measuring outputs; a few are measuring outcomes. The key to measurement is to combine quantitative data with qualitative descriptions so there is a compelling story behind the numbers.

The following is one set of ideas for how you might think of measuring a specific goal under each asset. You can work with your team to review these and develop your own goals, indicators and measures that work for your organization, your projects and programs, and your community.



NATURAL ASSETS

Goal: Land, water, and other natural resources and working lands are conserved, appreciated and stewarded by community members and provide interactive experiences relevant to community needs.

Indicator #1: More community members actively steward land and water, conserve their land, use or enjoy publicly accessible land and water, and help shape land trust work.

Possible Measures:

- # of sites where land, water and other natural resources are conserved, appreciated and/or stewarded by community members
- # of sites where land, water and other natural resources provide interactive experiences relevant to community needs
- Degree of community engagement and “ownership” of keeping public space maintained and vibrant
 - > # of volunteers (or type, age, duration) engaged in the project or program
 - > # of people using the land

Indicator #2: A variety of land- and water-based projects serve the diverse needs of the community(s) throughout the land trust’s service area and connect people to the benefits of outdoor space and nature — close to home³.

Possible Measures:

- # of diverse projects within the land trust’s service area
- Degree of understanding of community needs addressed by the land trust
 - > # of community needs addressed by the land trust
 - > # of people engaged in the projects or programs/usage

³ Examples of land- and water-based projects include community gardens, ambassador landscapes, pocket parks, dog parks, farmers markets, school gardens, working farms and forests that include community interaction in some way, playing fields, urban forests, trails and overlooks.



FINANCIAL ASSETS

Goal: The economic health of a community or the communities within the land trust's service area is improved.

Indicator #1: Measurable economic benefits for communities result from conservation projects or programs.

Possible Measures:

- % increase in amount of recreation and tourism revenues
- % increase in number of visitors
- % increase in the number of area corporations/businesses that support/promote/engage with the land trust

Indicator #2: Community conservation projects leverage investments by others in the community/service area.

Possible Measures:

- Relative amount (i.e., at a level commensurate with area income levels or compared to other charitable causes) of investment in land conservation projects and programs
- # of different sources (or types) of investment (ways that people and institutions are investing)



BUILT ASSETS

Goal: Buildings or infrastructure, including trails, serve the needs and desired experiences of a variety of community users and/or promote and foster a greater appreciation for land/water and their related assets, while also minimizing human impacts to more sensitive natural areas and valuable working landscapes.

Indicator #1: Context-sensitive buildings or infrastructure enhance and promote interaction between people and the outdoors and nature — including those with a range of physical and cognitive capacities (youth, older people, differently mobile).

Possible Measures:

- # of people or % of population served by built infrastructure that promotes or preserves sensitive and unique natural and working landscapes while connecting people to these resources in some sustained manner
- Diversity of people served by built infrastructure that promotes or preserves sensitive and unique natural and working landscapes while connecting people to these resources in some sustained manner
- Amount of built infrastructure that leads to better or more efficient management of the lands in a way that serves to connect people to the land or each other

Indicator #2: There is more support for sustainable communities, including “green infrastructure” through strategically planned and managed network of natural lands, working landscapes and other open spaces that conserve ecosystem values and function to provide associated benefits to human populations.

Possible Measures:

- # of projects or programs that connect people to existing protected areas
- # of projects or programs that allow people to pass from one protected area to another



EQUITY & ACCESS ASSETS

Goal: Conservation programs and projects are shaped by, relevant to and offer equitable access, experiences and/or benefits to people from different walks of life in communities within a land trust service area.

Equity and access are essential considerations for the other eight community assets and a key component of successful community conservation projects and programs. (This is a cross-cutting resource.)

Indicator 1: Land trusts conserve land and/or build connections to land in underserved areas in ways that engage underserved populations.

Possible Measures:

- # of new users of land/water areas
- Frequency that new users access land and water resources
- # of program hours serving people who have traditionally not worked with or partnered with conservation groups
- % increase in the ratio of park or public open space acres per capita
- # of new partnerships between the land trust and other community organizations, schools, etc. that historically have not been involved with the land trust or another conservation group

Indicator 2: Local capacity and community well-being are strengthened and empowered by partnering with the land trust.

Possible Measures:

- # of community members involved in the planning and decision-making of what projects to conserve and what to do on those conserved parcels
- % of community members who understand how conserved land benefits them

Indicator 3: Land trusts generate innovative and creative ways to address historical injustices in land ownership and stewardship.

- Increased identification and awareness of gaps and inequities in various aspects of conservation (land ownership, programming, park preservation)
- Increased policies and practices are put in place to remove barriers for new users to benefit from conserved land
- Increased diversity of conservation professionals reflects the diversity of the community

Possible Measures:

- Inventory of gaps and inequities in various aspects of conservation
- % reduction in barriers to land access for communities that have previously been inhibited from such
- % reduction in barriers to land ownership for communities that have previously been inhibited from such
- Diversity of conservation professionals compared to the diversity of the community



POLITICAL ASSETS

Goal: The importance of land, water and natural resources to everyone in the community is recognized by institutions and political entities (on a local, regional, state and/or national level).

Indicator 1: Increased civic engagement and empowerment of community members as local ambassadors for conservation efforts.

- Increased engagement of community members in the political processes (attending hearings, on the city council, etc.)
- The language of policies and practices is understandable (e.g., use plain words) and reflects the interests and needs of the community

Possible Measures:

- # of new people the land trust is engaging/motivating to actively participate in town meetings and other political processes
- # of community members engaged in the political process on behalf of conservation
- Proportion of policies and practices that are written in language that the average person can understand

Indicator 2: More positive recognition by local, regional or national political representatives for work community conservation advocates do.

- Increasing number of policies that are passed that are favorable to the environment.
- Increase in public funding toward community conservation efforts and environmental stewardship
- Bipartisan support for community conservation
- Inclusive conservation interests are represented in decision-making

Possible Measures:

- # of public dollars invested in community conservation efforts and environmental stewardship

(continued)

Indicator 3: More private and public entities coordinate their efforts to implement and support conservation programs with each other.

- Increased communication and cohesion among an array of community efforts
- Increased alliances and partnerships among an array of community efforts
- More organizations that see conservation as a benefit (e.g., health, social services, education) are active partners with the land conservation community to improve community well-being
- Related organizations (e.g., health, social services, education, etc.) see improvement in their benchmarks of success due to access to land or associated programs
- More community groups (including different types of groups that serve or consist of different types of community members) are collaborating with land trusts on community conservation efforts

Possible Measures:

- # of community groups collaborating with land trusts on community conservation efforts



SOCIAL ASSETS

Goal: The overall community appreciates the special landscapes and outdoor spaces that make it a quality place to live, work and raise a family.

Indicator 1: Community conservation partnerships include community groups, institutions and organizations with diverse interests in the benefits of land and water.

Possible Measures:

- # of people coming together from throughout the community in appreciation of nature, outdoor places and natural resources (e.g., programs, events, community celebrations, etc.)
- #, strength and length of local partnerships, both formal organizations and informal associations
- Diversity of types of local community groups engaged through the land
- # of collaborative projects

Indicator 2: More conserved places (and places where land trusts have programs) are used more often by more people as formal and informal community gathering places.

Possible Measures:

- # of events/programs at conserved places, both organized by land trust and/or by others
- # of people, groups/families using publicly conserved places (or through invitation by landowners)

Indicator 3: The work of the land trust results in more positive cross-cultural and/or cross-generational interactions.

Possible Measures:

- Increased use by differing populations in the community of land trust-owned land or projects
- Increased access to a diversity of types of community groups through programming or management/improvements to the land

- Number of cross-cultural interactions on conserved land/land trust-involved places

(continued)

Indicator 4: The work of the land trust results in a stronger social fabric.

Possible Measures:

- Reduced crime rates around conserved areas
- # of community gatherings at projects and programs

Indicator 5: More community members and increased diversity of community members are involved in identifying and designing natural and outdoor spaces to be conserved.

Possible Measures:

- # of various geographic sub-communities of the service area represented in community open space planning efforts
 - # of sources of input for community open space planning efforts beyond non-conservation communities, including faith-based groups, cultural organizations, neighborhood associations, fraternal associations, service groups, etc.
-



INTELLECTUAL/ SPIRITUAL/EMOTIONAL ASSETS

Goal: Land and water provide an emotional and/or spiritual connection to people from different walks of life in the community and enrich their cognitive, mental and physical health.

Indicator 1: More projects or programs use the land/water as a tool to inspire people.

Possible Measures:

- Proportion of people engaging with the land trust at a deeper level
- Proportion of people returning to your programs or land/water resources



SKILLS AND HEALTH ASSETS

Goal: Land and water provide opportunities to enhance or develop individual skills through programming and direct experiences.

Indicator 1: More community members build skills through land trust programs.

Possible Measures:

- # of training programs
- # of different types of training programs
- # of participants trained



CULTURAL ASSETS

Goal: Conservation projects give voice to cultures and people, reflecting our shared connections to the land/water and the cultures that make up our communities and their specific history and evolution.

Indicator 1: More interpretive programs are accessible to diverse audiences, which illuminate current culture as well as past culture and history.

Possible Measures:

- # of interpretive programs accessible to diverse audiences that illuminate current culture as well as past culture and history
- # of or increased diversity of cultural stories and traditions represented in land conservation projects and programs
- Degree to which different communities feel their culture is represented in land conservation projects and programs

Indicator 2: Forums are provided for more voices, different perspectives and different stories to be shared.

Possible Measures:

- # of print/web stories or materials written or contributed about non-traditional perspectives
- # of diverse people contributing the stories that represent land conservation projects and programs

Indicator 3: More conservation projects and interpretive programs are focused on historically marginalized groups.

Possible Measures:

- # of projects/programs focused on historically marginalized groups
- # of new participants from historically marginalized groups engaged in the program
- % to which groups targeted feel engaged and represented

APPENDIX B: ENGAGING PARTNERS

Community conservation work does not happen in a vacuum. Land trusts need community partners to accomplish community conservation outcomes. Finding the right partners is critical. Once you identify the populations in need in your community that you hope to impact through community conservation projects and programming, you will want to better understand the ecosystem of organizations working with that population.

For example, if you hope to work with at-risk children, you might want to connect with the school system as well as any social service organizations working with these children. If you hope to work with the hungry, you will want to connect with social service agencies, hunger organizations (such as food pantries) and possibly local farm operations.

Traditional partners are those organizations and individuals you know about and have worked with to some extent. You are familiar with them and how they work, you're comfortable interacting with them, and you might have a shared history. Non-traditional partners are those organizations and individuals you may have heard of, or know that they exist, but you haven't worked with them. You may not know much about what they do, who their leaders are or how and where they work. You may or may not be comfortable interacting with them.

For more on identifying partners, see the Land Trust Alliance's Stakeholder Analysis Tool for a guide to understanding more about your community, the people in it and what they care about.

Here is a worksheet to help you think through traditional and non-traditional partners and how you do or could work with them.

****Used with permission from Judy Anderson, Community Consultants****

Traditional Partners, Those You Serve/Could Serve

Partner/potential partner	What community problem are we/could we work(ing) on?	Who directly benefits or could benefit?	How do/could we add value to the partnership?	How do/could the partner/potential partner add value to the partnership?

Non-traditional Partners, Those You Serve/Could Serve

Non-traditional Partner/potential partner	What community problem are we/could we work(ing) on?	Who directly benefits or could benefit?	How do/could we add value to the partnership?	How do/could the partner/potential partner add value to the partnership?