Introduction and Participants

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The “Berkley Workshops” are an annual exploration into the future of land conservation. Convened by Yale University and the Land Trust Alliance, each workshop explores a particular topic that most land trusts have not had the time, energy, or relationships to address. It does so by bringing together experts with whom land trusts would not typically collaborate in their daily work.

In 2016, the workshop focused on “Land Conservation in a Changing Climate: Stewardship Science and Financing.” The purpose of this section is to introduce the topic, recognize the workshop participants, and describe the remainder of this background paper.

The traditional strengths of the land conservation community have been in science—understanding the structures and functions of natural systems—and in finance—accessing the resources necessary to acquire and steward natural areas. As noted in the most recent U.S. Climate Assessment (2014), it is time to ensure that these strengths are being used to help address our changing climate:

“Climate change, once considered an issue for a distant future, has moved firmly into the present. Corn producers in Iowa, oyster growers in Washington State, and maple syrup producers in Vermont are all observing climate-related changes that are outside of recent experience. So, too, are coastal planners in Florida, water managers in the arid Southwest, city dwellers from Phoenix to New York, and Native Peoples on tribal lands from Louisiana to Alaska. This National Climate Assessment concludes that the evidence of human-induced climate change continues to strengthen and that impacts are increasing across the country.”

While increasing amounts of work are being done on how climate change affects the selection of lands to be acquired, comparatively less attention has been paid to the implications

2 Such as the Open Space Institute’s “Resilient Landscapes Initiative,” see http://www.osiny.org/site/PageServer?pagename=Issues_Habitat
of a changing climate for the stewardship of already conserved lands—both in terms of the implications for the habitats and conservation values for which the lands were acquired, as well as how conserved lands might help address the likely impacts of climate change going forward.

In addition to what the science is telling us about our changing climate, now is also a good time to explore these stewardship opportunities given that:

• Governments from the municipal to national scales are allocating attention and resources to climate change more visibly and seriously than ever before.

• The science of climate change is becoming sophisticated enough that land managers can increasingly take concrete steps to address climate change impacts with a high degree of confidence.

• The land trust community is at two key points of transition, both of which interface directly with climate change:
  – The emergence of a new generation of conservation leaders, who have grown up in a world increasingly concerned with climate change, and
  – The continuing shift from acquisition-focused conservation to stewardship-focused conservation, which requires that land trusts think seriously about what it means to be responsible in perpetuity for land that will be subject to significant environmental shifts.

Taken together, these conditions create an environment where the land trust community has several fruitful opportunities to engage with climate change as an avenue of growth—and where the risks of not doing so are increasingly clear.

As such, the purpose of the 2016 Berkley Workshop was for the participants to explore some of the ways that land conservation groups might best help respond to our changing climate through their stewardship activities. The participants represent a wide range of perspectives, (see list below), and the structure for the workshop was designed to encourage creative interactions. At the end of the workshop, each participant was asked to identify specific action steps they may take (alone or in combination with others) and areas in need of further research. Yale will publish the workshop proceedings. The Land Trust Alliance will distribute the findings and areas for action to the land trust community via social media, including video interviews with workshop participants.
Participants

- Avery Anderson, Founder and Principal, Impairative, NM
- Judy Anderson, Founder and Principal, Community Consultants, NY
- Barbara Bedford, Professor, Cornell University, NY
- Forrest Berkley, Board Member, Maine Coast Heritage Trust, ME
- Eron Bloomgarden, Partner, Encourage Capital, NY
- Andrew Bowman, President, The Land Trust Alliance, DC
- Cody Desautel, Land and Property Director, Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, WA
- Kim Elliman, President, Open Space Institute, NY
- Jay Espy, President, Elmina B. Sewall Foundation, ME
- Robert Garcia, Founding Director and Counsel, The City Project, CA
- Brad Gentry, Associate Dean, Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies, CT
- Lara Hansen, Chief Scientist and Executive Director, EcoAdapt, WA
- Rick Huffines, Executive Director, Tennessee River Gorge Trust, TN
- Hilary Irby, Head of Investing With Impact, Morgan Stanley, NY
- Dylan Jenkins, Vice President of Portfolio Development, Finite Carbon, PA
- Chris Larson, President and Chief Executive Officer, New Island Capital, CA
- Tom Lautzenheiser, Central/West Regional Scientist, Mass Audubon, MA
- Darren Long, Program Director, Climate Adaptation Fund, Wildlife Conservation Society, MT
- Rue Mapp, Founder, Outdoor Afro, CA
- Jen Molnar, Managing Director and Lead Scientist, Center for Sustainability Science, The Nature Conservancy, VA
- Smita Rawoot, Associate Director, Service Implementation, 100 Resilient Cities, NY
- Mary Scoonover, Executive Vice President, Resources Legacy Fund, CA
- Marc Smiley, Principal, Solid Ground Consulting, OR (facilitator)
- Bruce Stein, Director, Climate Change Adaptation, National Wildlife Federation, DC
- Peter Stein, Managing Partner, The Lyme Timber Company, NH
- Jonathan Thompson, Senior Ecologist, Harvard Forest, MA
- Leigh Whelpton, Program Director, Conservation Finance Network at Island Press, DC
- Ethan Winter, New York Conservation Manager, The Land Trust Alliance, NY