Introduction

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The United States spends more per capita on health care than any other country – and the amount keeps increasing. Access to natural areas offers considerable benefits to human health, as well as possible risks. Capturing these benefits while mitigating any risks is critical to both controlling health care costs, as well as to stewarding (and acquiring) conserved land over time. As a result, more efforts are underway to use conservation to deliver better health results and to manage any risks that might accompany those efforts.

The purposes of the 2013 Berkley Workshop were to:

• Review what is known about the connections between land conservation and public health;
• Describe some of the examples where land conservation efforts are being used to help deliver improved health outcomes; and
• Explore new ways to generate even more such efforts across the U.S.

Since considerable attention is already being given to topics such as exercise and obesity or access to healthy, local food, this workshop focused primarily on the following topics:

• The opportunities to improve the mental and physical health of adults (including veterans or others facing high stress situations) by expanding their access to natural areas
• The impact on children’s cognitive development of access to greenspace, as well as its implications for educational programs
• The benefits and risks to human health that may be posed by more natural, recently restored or more fragmented landscapes, particularly in the face of climate change
• The possibility of offering improved access to health care as an incentive for more sustainable management of working lands

Participants were drawn from a range of backgrounds across the U.S., including conservation leaders, researchers, health professionals and others (see list below). Background materials
were developed by Yale graduate researchers in collaboration with participants. The workshop offered opportunities for both facilitated exchanges of experiences and ideas, as well as free time for informal discussions exploring possible new ways forward. The results of the workshop are published by the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies as part of the on-going Berkley Workshop series at http://environment.yale.edu/publication-series/land_use_and_environmental_planning/. The workshop was made possible by the generous support of donors to the Berkley Program on Strategies for the Future of Conservation. As is the case with all materials resulting from meetings held at The Pocantico Center, the views expressed in this report are not necessarily those of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, its trustees, or its staff.

**Participants in the 2013 Berkley Workshop**

*Judy Anderson,* Principal, Community Consultants, NY  
*Len Bartel,* Program Officer, Maine Health Access Foundation  
*Forrest Berkley,* Board Member, Maine Coast Heritage Trust, ME  
*William Bird,* CEO, Intelligent Health, UK  
*Bobby Cochran,* Executive Director, Willamette Partnership, OR  
*Kim Elliman,* CEO, Open Space Institute, NY  
*Jay Espy,* Executive Director, Sewall Foundation, ME  
*Howard Frumkin,* Dean, School of Public Health, University of Washington, WA  
*Brad Gentry,* Professor in the Practice, Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies, CT  
*Howard Ginsberg,* Research Ecologist/Field Station Leader, USGS, RI*  
*Jeannette Ickovics,* Professor, School of Public Health, Yale University, CT  
*Ming Kuo,* Director, Landscape and Human Health Laboratory, University of Illinois at Urban-Champaign, IL  
*Shannon LaDeau,* Community Ecologist, Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies, NY  
*Gil Livingston,* President, Vermont Land Trust, VT  
*Rich Louv,* Author, CA*  
*Rue Mapp,* Founder, Outdoor Afro, CA  
*Catherine Mater,* Senior Fellow, Pinchot Institute, OR  
*Dee Merriam,* Community Planner, Center for Disease Control, GA  
*Robert Ogilvie,* VP for Strategic Engagement, ChangeLab Solutions, CA  
*Sharon Roerty,* Senior Program Officer, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, NJ
Marc Smiley, Partner, Solid Ground Consulting (facilitator), OR
Melissa Spear, Executive Director, Common Ground School/Urban Farm, CT
Peter Stein, Managing Director, Lyme Timber Company, NH
Eileen Swan, former Executive Director, New Jersey Highlands Council, NJ
Rand Wentworth, President, Land Trust Alliance, DC
David Wong, Chief of the Epidemiology Branch, National Park Service, NM
Anita Yap, Office of Equity and Inclusion, Oregon Health Authority, OR