

Protecting Resiliency



KENT MASON

The Open Space Institute has identified the Potomac headwaters region as a climate change-resilient landscape.

The New York-based Open Space Institute's Resilient Landscapes Initiative is working with land trusts and public agencies from Maine to West Virginia to integrate climate change considerations into conservation priorities and to identify and protect resilient landscapes. The initiative works with partners to educate communities and inform conservation efforts in the face of climate change.

OSI is also funding land protection in four landscapes it has identified to be strongly positioned to adapt to climate change: the southern New Hampshire and Maine forested region, the Middle Connecticut River region in Massachusetts and Vermont, the Potomac Headwaters of Virginia and West Virginia, and the Highlands and Kittatinny Ridge of New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

The landscapes were identified using a method developed by The Nature Conservancy, based on research findings that sustaining species diversity across the landscape is a function of two key elements: the number of geology types below ground and the complexity of associated landforms above ground. The more complex the site, the more species will be able to take advantage of the micro-climates available among the slopes, cliffs, valleys, ravines, caves and lowlands of that complex landscape. Also, an absence of buildings, roads and other infrastructure is important to give species access across the landscape.

OSI requires land trusts to be accredited, in the process or to have their board approve the intention to become accredited at the time of their application.

See www.osiny.org/ResilientLandscape.

History Through Hip Hop

How do you capture the interest of today's multicultural youth? Frank Barrows, chief of interpretation and education at the New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park, has wrestled with this question, as have many national parks and local and regional preserves. "We really want our visitation to reflect the communities we live in as a whole," he says.

New Bedford, Massachusetts, was once awash in whale-hunting wealth, but its current tepid economy is reflected by the city's struggling youth. The vast majority qualifies for free or reduced school lunches, and less than 60% graduate from high school.

In 2010, the national park partnered with 3rd Eye, a local nonprofit that mentors young people by engaging them in hip hop music and other artistic endeavors, to create a Youth Ambassador Program (YAP) for the park. YAP is a group of five high school students who research and write hip hop songs about history, environmental sustainability and the benefits of getting outside. Through partnerships with other national parks and supporters, they have traveled to research and/or perform at numerous national parks and community events. In 2013, they camped, kayaked and performed as they traced the paths of Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass in Washington, D.C., and Maryland.

"It's a small number of kids that we have invested heavily in, and we've seen what the care and feeding of the soul can do," says Park Ranger Karissa DeCarlo, explaining that the ambassadors have been inspired by mentors along the way and have strengthened themselves through new experiences and ambitions.

Their videos and performances have rippled into the community and nation. A video of their song "Get Outside and Move" was featured on First Lady Michelle Obama's "Let's Move" website, and others have become a teaching tool in schools. The young ambassadors sparked the idea for the national park's annual Great Outdoors Day to connect New Bedford's urbanites to nature. View YAP videos at www.nps.gov/nebe/forkids/yap.htm.



NEW BEDFORD WHALING NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

Back row, left to right: Ben Gilbarg (former executive director of 3rd Eye), Derek, Jared and Frank Barrows; front row: Jasmine and Dakota

Messaging to Millennials

What are young adults looking for in a nonprofit organization? For starters, they probably aren't looking. Winning the hearts of Millennials—those born in the 1980s and 1990s and coming of age in the new millennium—involves connecting over an issue they care about and positioning your organization as an expert, according to the “2013 Millennial Impact Report” by Achieve. Some of the report's key findings:

- This generation gets its information on the run, so tailor messaging for the smartphone screen and keep it brief. Use social media outlets like Facebook and Twitter frequently. Make sure websites are regularly updated and have responsive design to adapt to varying screen sizes.
- Social media provides quick feedback on your messaging. If Millennials like it, they will share or retweet it. Images are most often shared.
- While few in this generation have deep pockets, Millennials do like to give. They are best motivated by a clear explanation of how their donation will make a difference on the ground. More than half of survey respondents expressed interest in monthly giving plans, and many enjoy social giving that involves family and friends.
- Millennials like to volunteer, especially if they can connect socially with like-minded peers and they feel their efforts will have tangible results.

In addition to the report, the Millennial Impact website (www.themillennialimpact.com/2013research) features videos of Millennials critiquing websites, Facebook pages, Twitter campaigns, email solicitations and more. •

Emotion's Effect on Giving

Charitable giving is fundamentally an emotional response, say two articles citing recent studies.

The Nonprofit Times article tells of a University of Oregon study comparing three fundraising appeals. The first group of research subjects read an appeal about hunger in Africa. The second group's appeal was the story of a 17-year-old girl in Mali, and the third had the story of the girl with statistics about hunger in Mali. The story of the girl by itself got the strongest response.

Other research has tracked the brain activity of people donating their own money, reports the *Wall Street Journal*. Though researchers say this varies by person, they were surprised to find that the brain's pleasure center lit up in most instances. So, for many people, giving truly is its own reward.

See “Giving is Literally a Chemical Reaction,” *The NonProfit Times*, 5/29/13: <http://tinyurl.com/lhgp5sk>; “Hard-Wired for Giving,” *Wall Street Journal*, 8/31/13: <http://tinyurl.com/kuhao4r>. •



Solano Land Trust intern Paige Cauffield trains volunteers on gathering phenological data.

TOM MUEHLESEN

Volunteers Track Nature's Cycles

When volunteers delved into an animated discussion over whether an oak bud was breaking, Solano Land Trust Project Manager Sue Wickham knew they were hooked on phenology, the study of life cycles in plants and animals in relation to climate, season and weather.

Over the summer of 2013, intern Paige Cauffield trained volunteers to visit the California land trust's preserves and record phenological observations. They use Nature's Notebook (www.usanpn.org/natures_notebook), a Web tool developed by the National Phenology Network to encourage residents around the country to record data to help scientists determine trends in climate, its effects on specific species and even when certain pollens will be prevalent.

With the goal of creating a self-sustaining volunteer group that requires minimal staff time, Cauffield registered Solano Land Trust preserves on Nature's Notebook, and wrote a training manual and tutorial on how to record their data.

Other land trusts have established groups on Nature's Notebook as well. Sycamore Land Trust in Indiana provides a detailed website (sycamorelandtrust.org/phenology) for those who want to record their own observations, and it has also listed preserves as shared sites on Nature's Notebook. “It's a way to get people out on the land and observing nature, and a way to assist the phenology project to gather climate data,” Wickham says. “It's really wonderful to see volunteers looking at things in such great detail.” 🍃