



CENTER FOR WHOLE COMMUNITIES

Building stronger connections between people, land and community

Transcript: Video Clip from the Working Conference on “Measures of Health,” Penn Center, St. Helena Island, South Carolina

Measures of Health

00:00 Glenn Lamb, Columbia Land Trust: Columbia Land Trust is an organization, like many land trusts, I think, who have been fairly narrowly focused on conserving land for the lands sake. And “Measures of Health,” I think, will be a very important tool for us to broaden the way that we view land and the way we view our work.

00:22 Felcia Marcus, Trust for Public Land (from discussion): So there’s sort of two pieces to it. One is, how do you decide which benefits or criteria are important to you in your organization? There’s that piece of it that clearly needs to be adapted. And then within them you have whole discussions about the values and all of that, which are incredibly beneficial. Eventually, once you’ve come up with it, that has benefit that I’ve seen across the organization, as people have, they talk more about stewardship, they talk more about equity. That stuff is coming up in all of our strategic planning. The quality of the conversations we are having about other things is completely different than it was a couple of years ago.

00:59 Jaime Pinkham, Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (from discussion): With some of that communities that we work with, within the tribe, we just want to expand understanding. And I feel that the “Measures of Health” is trying to get people to take what their beliefs are and begin just to expand it a little.

01:14 Maya Wiley, Center for Social Inclusion: The value for having a measures of whole community tool is that it prompts us to both question how we are doing what we are doing and what our goal is in doing it. By thinking about that, and questioning that, it may take us to a whole set of strategies and relationships that are much more effective in the long run.

01:39 Jane Elder, Biodiversity Project (from discussion): But that is based on the way you frame the question. Because if you framed it from the folks in the café, you know, “Should the Native Americans have exclusive ability to prescribe the use for one month then no other groups have the ability to prescribe that use.” Then they’re going to see it from a different lens of justice and fairness.

01:58 Frank Peterman, Wilderness Society (continued from discussion): But that’s our challenge here, among others. This provokes the dialogue among us, and then we

have to try and reach some consistency. That's exactly what, we are having the dialogue now that should lead us to determine how we should rate that.

02:16 Michel Gelobter, Redefining Progress: I think the rubric system that "Measures of Health" uses is a real leap forward in practice, certainly for the movement of land conservation, but more generally for movement building purposes. Because, although it is ranked, the qualitative nature of it is really about promoting discussion about what are we aiming for and what is effectiveness. And those are both really central issues right now. When people say that the country is adrift, that we don't have good direction, they are saying that we haven't decided what we want to do, we haven't figured out whether we want to rebuild New Orleans for example. Then the question becomes, well how? And when you talk about a city like New Orleans you can't put it in numbers – you can't say it should be 38% greenspace, and 20% poor people, and, you know, 5% jazz music. You have to actually talk about what a high performance means for a city, what a great city it was, and how it could be a great city again. That's a qualitative discussion, that let's people have input, and encounter each other on it, and really rebuild something together.

03:19: Mikki Sager, Conservation Fund: Like who can say, "I don't believe in justice and fairness." But it's not going to be criteria for a lot of folks who have never gone there. Could you for instance, I know we did a whole thing with all of our grassroots groups, and we actually had land trusts at the table at the time and we had just a very quiet, we thought non-threatening, discussion, around power and privilege and class. We thought it was. And the minute we had that conversation, every single land trust left. And when we asked questions, we said well what was the problem? And they said, "We're very project oriented." But that's a reality.

04:03 Ernie Atencio, Taos Land Trust: Started looking around the community, and the real issues we were dealing with, the kind of inequity in terms of which land was being developed and which land-owners were being dispossessed, which landowners didn't have any other economic opportunities. On and on, food security issues and stuff like that. I was so happy to find out that somebody else was thinking about these bigger issues, when I first heard about this "Measures of Health." So I just latched on to it. I give it to new board members as part of the orientation package, just to say, "Here's kind of the bigger picture of how we look at land conservation."

04:42 End