



INSIDE **OUT!**  
LEADERSHIP SUMMIT


2020 VIRTUAL SUMMIT // SEPTEMBER 21-23 AND 29-30, 2020



SUMMIT REPORT



INSIDEOUTSUMMIT.COM // #INSIDEOUT



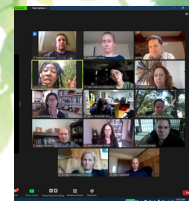
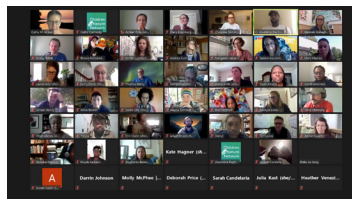
*The well-being of children and the wild places we love are inextricably linked. But today's kids are less connected to nature than at any time in history. We believe that children and the natural world need each other now more than ever.*

This is why we gather—as leaders, educators, practitioners and parents—to turn this trend *“inside-out”*.

**THANK YOU FOR JOINING US.**



# INSIDE OUT! LEADERSHIP SUMMIT



## DEAR CHILDREN & NATURE CHAMPIONS,

I am pleased to share this report from our 2020 Inside-Out Leadership Summit. In a year like no other, we pivoted, shifted, and learned together that virtual events would not only become our new normal, but would make even greater participation from our international peers possible.

The shifting contexts for our gathering wove across the programming and informed our discussions and action agenda making. The global pandemic we are facing has made the need for nearby nature clearer than ever. We are hearing more about how remote learning is causing children to spend less time outdoors and more hours per day on screens than before the pandemic.

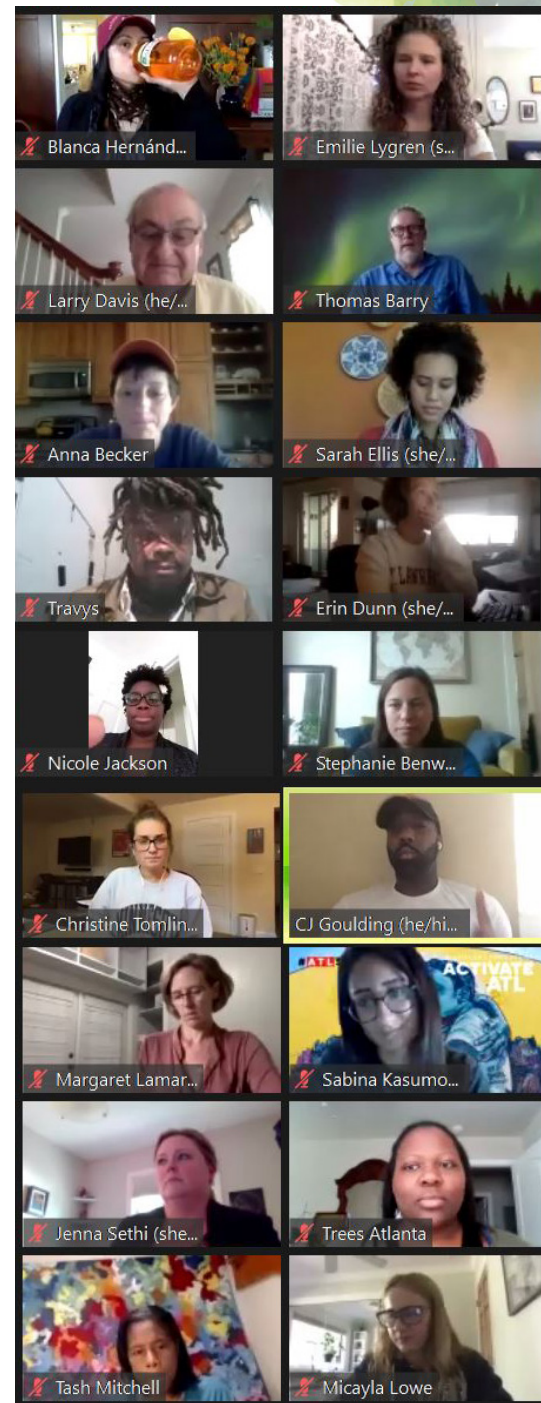
The grassroots movements for racial and social justice continue to be a stark awakening for many of us who are actively working to lead anti-racist organizations and support our communities. The dramatic backdrop for our collective work is a changing climate with wildfires, hurricanes, flooding, and the loss of wildlife habitat around the globe.

This is why we gather—as leaders, educators, activists, practitioners, and parents—to turn the trend of an indoor childhood back out to the benefits of nature, and to increase safe and equitable access to the natural world.

We thank all participants for joining us. We hope the Summit energized and inspired you, and provided opportunities to reconnect with colleagues and meet some new friends and allies.

With best regards,

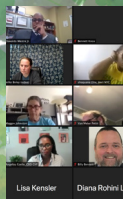
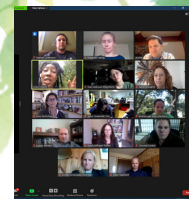
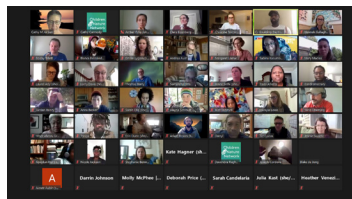
**Sarah Milligan-Toffler**  
Executive Director  
Children & Nature Network



## MISSION:

*The Children & Nature Network helps lead a global movement to increase equitable access to nature so that children—and natural places—can thrive. To do this, we build the capacity of leaders and communities by sharing evidence-based resources, scaling innovative solutions, and driving policy change.*

# INSIDE *OUT!* LEADERSHIP SUMMIT



## THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS:

### PRESENTING



### NETWORK BUILDER



Wilderness River  
Foundation

Marlys G. Barry  
Fund

### ADVOCATE



### SUMMIT TRACK



THE ARTHUR M. BLANK  
FAMILY FOUNDATION

### SCHOLARSHIP BENEFACTOR



### COMMUNITY CONNECTOR



### PARTNERS



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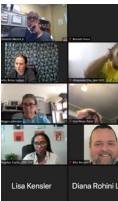
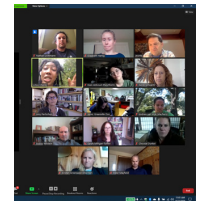
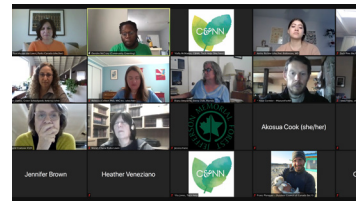
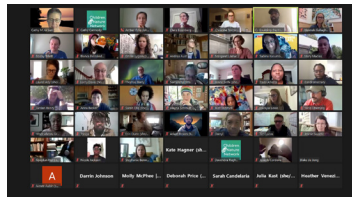
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# INSIDE *out!* LEADERSHIP SUMMIT



## SUMMIT OVERVIEW

The Inside-Out Leadership Summit is the Children & Nature Network’s biennial convening of children and nature movement leaders, designed to facilitate networking, the sharing of big ideas, and the advancement of action agendas in six strategic Action Areas. These cross-sector Action Areas were complemented by capacity-building workshops, keynote speakers, and peer-to-peer learning opportunities. Leadership Summit participants were selected to represent diverse perspectives, skills, voices, disciplines, and approaches to connecting children to nature.

This year’s Summit was delivered virtually on a robust event platform that featured interactive sessions, online networking receptions, and a community space that allowed attendees to set up chat groups, share resources, and connect between sessions.

#INSIDEOUT2020

*The Pisces Foundation was pleased to support C&NN’s Leadership Summit and work to include equity and inclusion as a foundation for the movement. It’s fully emblematic of the type of impact we seek, in large and small ways.*

*—Jason Morris, Senior Program Officer, Pisces Foundation*

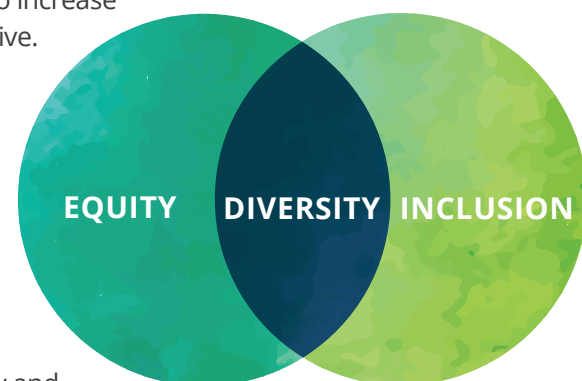
## GUIDING VALUES

The 2020 Leadership Summit and collective work in all Action Areas was guided by core themes of equity, inclusion, and diversity, defined for the Summit as follows:

**EQUITY** The Children & Nature Network is leading a global movement to increase equitable access to nature so that children—and natural places—can thrive. In pursuit of this, we define equity as striving for fair treatment, access and opportunity by seeking to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of historically underserved and underrepresented populations.

**INCLUSION** We are dedicated to creating environments in which all individuals and groups can be and feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued as they fully participate in the children & nature movement.

**DIVERSITY** results when equity and inclusion are practiced consistently and with intention. The Children & Nature Network is an organization that is striving to embrace and build an inclusive and global movement that honors the psychological, physical, and cultural differences that occur among individuals.



*\*adapted from the UC Berkeley Initiative for Equity, Inclusion & Diversity*

# SUMMIT STRUCTURE

## ACTION AREAS

The Summit was organized around six interdisciplinary Action Areas:



### CITIES AND NATURE



### GREEN SCHOOLYARDS



### NATURE CONNECTION FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



### HEALTH & NATURE FOR COMMUNITY WELL-BEING



### ADVANCING POLICY FOR EQUITABLE ACCESS TO THE OUTDOORS



### INTERNATIONAL ACTION: #NATUREFORALL

Cross-sector leaders were invited to participate in two days of Action Area programming during the first week of the Summit. They focused on developing strategies, expanding networks, and identifying shared action steps for collective impact. Details on each Action Area follow in this report.



# SUMMIT WORKSHOPS

Capacity-building workshops were offered during week two of the Summit. The following workshops, led by experts in the field, offered practical tools and resources and cross-sector networking:

## ACTIVATING RESEARCH TO MAKE THE CASE FOR EQUITABLE NATURE CONNECTION



**Cathy Jordan**  
Director of Research,  
Children & Nature Network

## BUILDING A DIVERSE, EQUITABLE, AND INCLUSIVE MOVEMENT



**Juan Martínez**  
Senior Advisor,  
Children & Nature Network

## STRATEGIC STORYTELLING FOR SOCIAL CHANGE: A RETHINK OUTSIDE NARRATIVE WORKSHOP

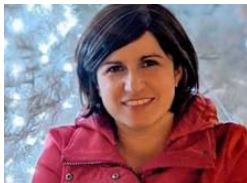


**Susan Pierson-Brown**  
Principal,  
Seven November, Inc.



**Stephanie Ellis-Smith**  
Principal Advisor/Owner,  
Phila Engaged Giving

## #NATUREFORALL TIPS AND TOOLS FOR OUTDOOR LEARNING IN A PANDEMIC WORLD



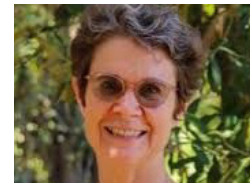
**Pascale Van Der Leest**  
Project Manager,  
#NatureForAll



**Yose Cormier**  
Program Advisor,  
Parks Canada

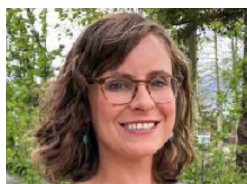


**Lais Fleury**  
Coordinator, Criança e  
Natureza Program,  
Alana Institute



**Ingrid Coetzee**  
Senior Programme  
Manager, ICLEI's Cities  
Biodiversity Centre

## ADVANCING POLICY FOR YOUTH OUTDOOR ENGAGEMENT (YOUTH OUTDOORS POLICY PLAYBOOK)



**Robyn Paulekas**  
Senior Mediator and  
Program Manager,  
Meridian Institute



**Jenny Mulholland-  
Beahrs**  
Founder,  
Inclusion Outdoors

## PHILANTHROPY AND THE OUTDOORS: INCREASING EQUITY THROUGH SYSTEMS CHANGE PRESENTED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH BLUE SKY FUNDERS FORUM



**Monica Lopez Magee**  
Director, Cities and Nature,  
Children & Nature Network



### PANELISTS:

**Jason Morris**, Senior Program Officer,  
Pisces Foundation

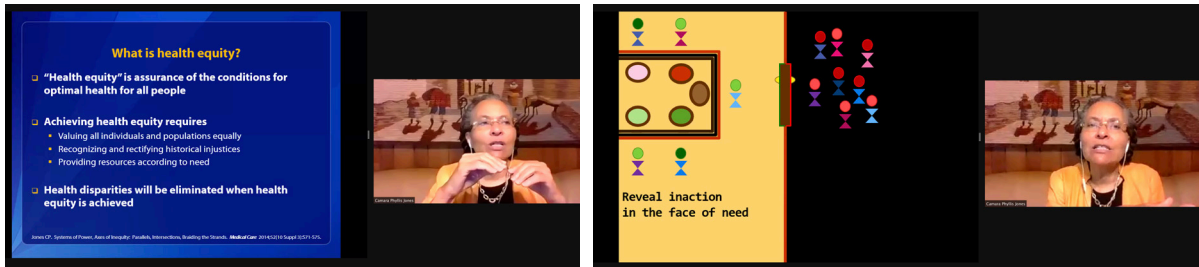
**Jennifer Patrick**, Senior Program Officer,  
The JPB Foundation

**Chris Smith**, Senior Program Officer,  
Colorado Health Foundation

**Erik Stegman**, Executive Director,  
Native Americans in Philanthropy

**Cynthia Weaver**, Senior Associate,  
Evidence-based Practice Group,  
Annie E. Casey Foundation

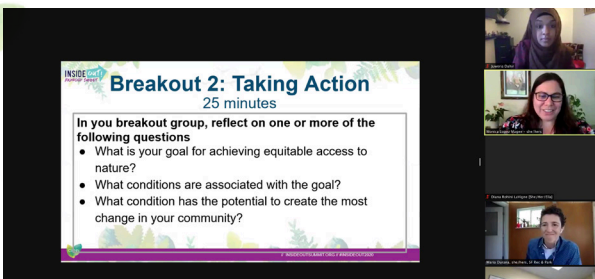
## KEYNOTE: DISMANTLING RACISM IN THE CHILDREN AND NATURE MOVEMENT: NAMING RACISM AND MOVING TO ACTION



**Camara Phyllis Jones, MD, MPH, PhD**

Dr. Jones kicked off the Inside-Out Leadership Summit with an inspiring keynote speech, using allegories to define and dismantle racism. She affirmed that that nature can be a powerful healing force for children and adults of all races and backgrounds, but only if those spaces are made fully accessible and welcoming to all communities. Her closing equipped and inspired listeners to go beyond naming racism to becoming actively anti-racist.

## EMBRACING A FRAMEWORK OF SYSTEMS CHANGE

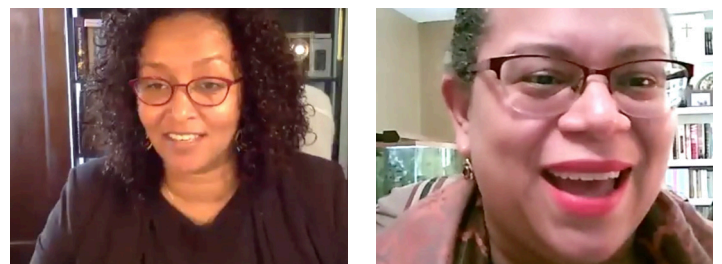


**Monica Lopez Magee**

Director, Cities and Community Engagement, Children & Nature Network

This training session was designed to introduce and increase understanding of systems level work. Ms. Lopez Magee shared a systems change framework built on six conditions of change. Participants worked in breakout groups to explore and identify ways to leverage their existing programs and practices to drive systems level change.

## VIRTUAL PARK BENCH CONVERSATION: NATURE FOR ALL STARTS INSIDE



**Hanaa Hamdi, PhD**

Director of Health Impact Investment and Strategic Partnerships, NJ Community Capital

**Odetta MacLeish-White**

Managing Director, TransFormation Alliance

Dr. Hamdi and Ms. MacLeish-White explored the importance of building trust and acknowledging racism in our movement, and shared proven strategies that center community voice in decision making and resource allocation to incorporate nature everywhere people live, learn, work, and play.



# SUMMIT HIGHLIGHTS

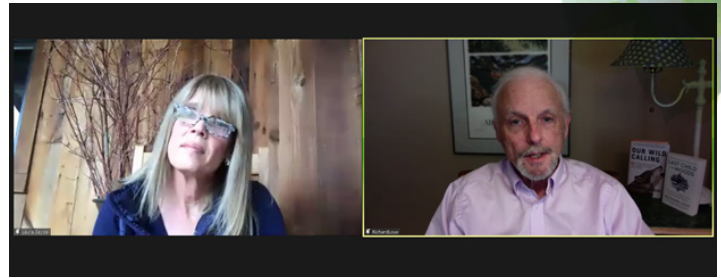
## LET'S DO THIS! INNOVATIVE, EQUITABLE OUTDOOR EDUCATION AND POLICY IN A TIME OF CHALLENGE



**Hilary Franz**  
Commissioner,  
Washington Public Lands

Commissioner Franz shared policies and partnerships aimed at increasing equitable access to nature in Seattle and across the state of Washington.

## VIRTUAL TRILSIDE CHAT WITH RICHARD LOUV AND LAURA TURNER SEYDEL

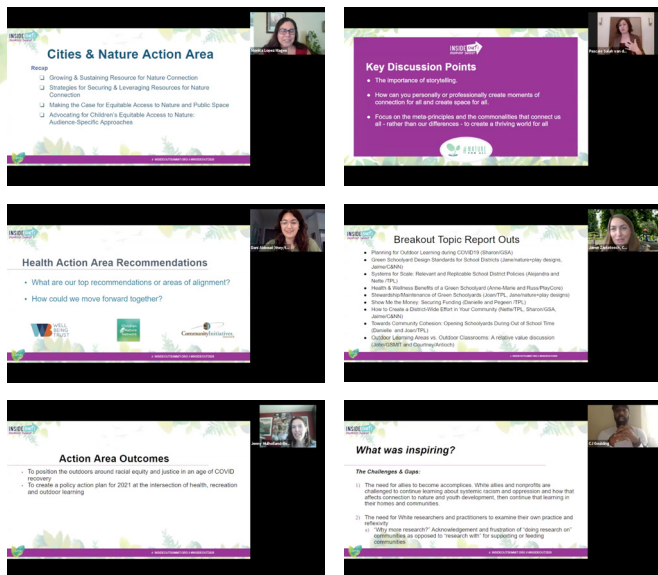


**Laura Turner Seydel**  
Children & Nature Network  
Board member, and Chair of  
the Captain Planet Foundation

**Richard Louv**  
Author and Co-Founder,  
Children & Nature Network

Rich and Laura explored how, in a time of great challenge, the children and nature movement can help the world move forward with hope and action.

## ACTION AREA REPORT OUT



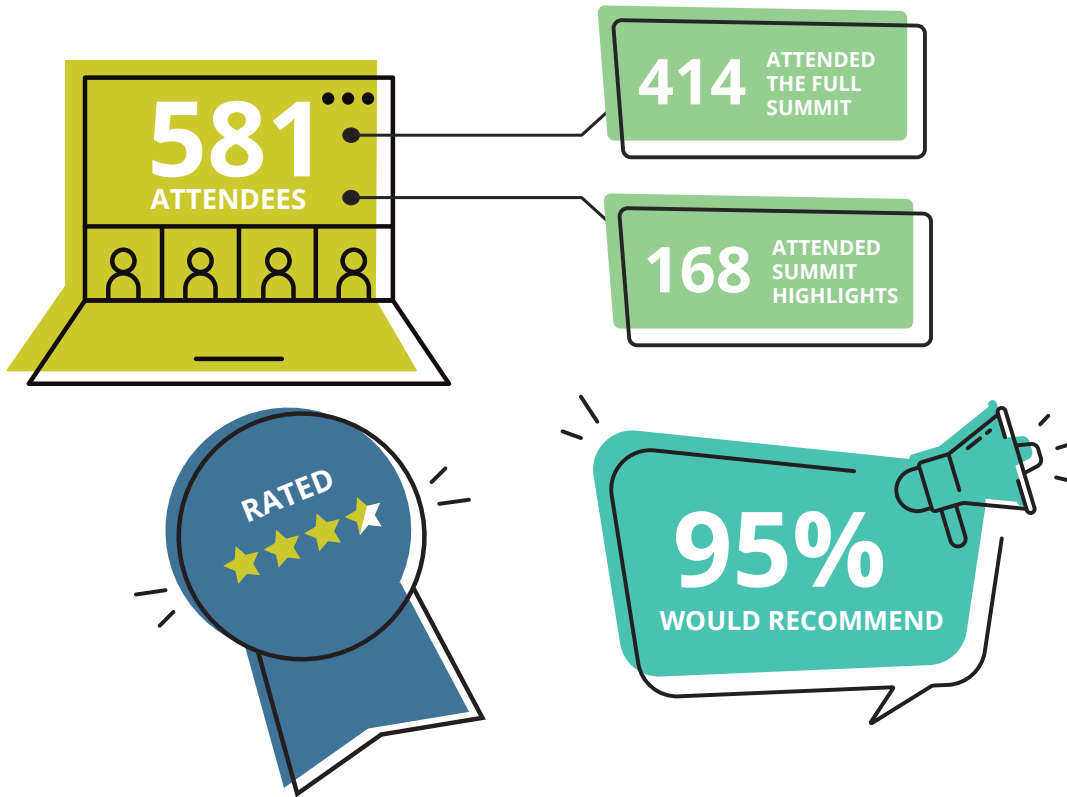
Leaders reported on the progress of each of the Summit's six Action Areas and shared plans and ideas for advancing the children and nature movement.

## WILD & SCENIC FILM FESTIVAL PRESENTS "WILD CHILD"



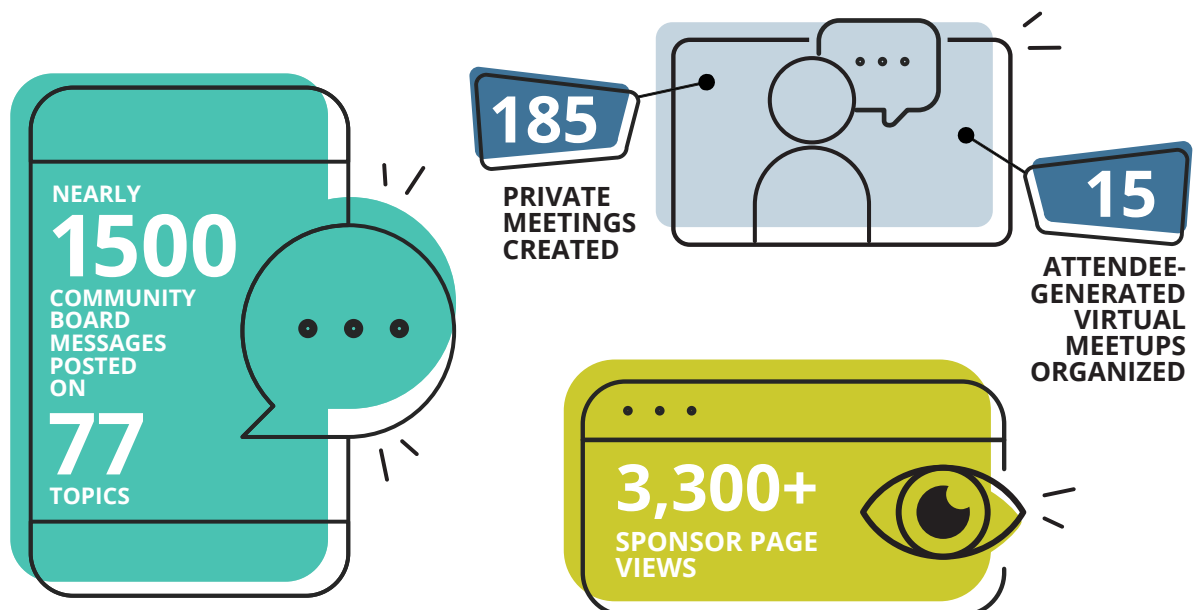
Wild & Scenic Film Festival once again joined Children & Nature Network to present Wild Child, a family-friendly selection of short films, streamed directly to Summit attendees at home.

# BY THE NUMBERS



*I've attended several multi-day virtual convening over the past six months and this was definitely one of the best and most useful. I thought the content shared was incredibly useful and the quality of the presenters excellent.*

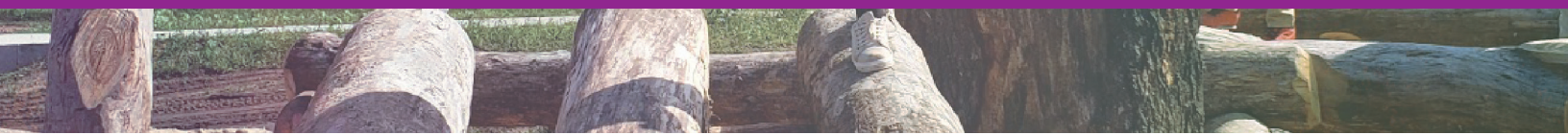
—Summit Attendee







## ACTION AREA: CITIES AND NATURE



### ORGANIZERS:



**Monica Lopez Magee**  
Director, Cities and Nature,  
Children & Nature Network



**Joshua Falk**  
Manager CCCN,  
National League of Cities



**Andrew Moore**  
Director, Youth and Young  
Adult Connections,  
National League of Cities

### BRIEF HISTORY AND CURRENT CAPACITY FOR WORK IN THE ACTION AREA

For the past six years, Children & Nature Network has led the Cities Connecting Children to Nature initiative (CCCN) in partnership with the National League of Cities. Through CCCN, we support municipal leaders and their community partners in shifting planning, policies, and programs to connect children to the benefits of nature more often and more equitably. The CCCN network has grown to include 18 cities. In addition, several partner agencies, including Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), Outdoor Foundation, National Park Foundation, National Recreation and Park Association, City Parks Alliance, and Reimagining the Civic Commons are assisting cities in developing citywide strategies for enabling more children and families to access parks and green spaces.

# ACTION AREA REPORTS

## NEEDS AND CHALLENGES FACING ORGANIZATIONS AND LEADERS

City leaders have noted that they are experiencing an increase in the use of parks, trails, and public spaces as a result of COVID-19 yet at the same time face significant budget cuts, which directly affect dedicated funding for parks and greenspaces.

## 2020 SUMMIT ACTION AREA GOALS

- Exchange strategies and practices for securing resources for increased public space and children's access to nature
- Build public demand for city efforts to increase children's equitable connection to nature and related fields such as sustainability, resilience, and health and wellness
- Strengthen site linkages to national and geographical experts and resources

## 2020 SUMMIT ACTION AREA SUMMARY

Cities and Nature convened representatives from 37 cities to discuss how to grow and sustain financial resources and public demand for nature-based installations and initiatives.

Summit sessions were co-designed with partner agencies: National League of Cities, Reimagining the Civic Commons, City Parks Alliance, and New City Parks, which grounded us in a national perspective and a bigger picture of the movement and brought new expertise and facilitation to the Action Area.

## SESSION ACTIVITIES

- National Recreation and Parks Association shared national data on Park & Rec agency budgets, citing that as of June 2020, 66% of agencies have reduced operations budgets, 57% of agencies have cut capital spending, and many have hiring freezes or have laid off or furloughed part-time and seasonal staff.



# ACTION AREA REPORTS

- City Parks Alliance shared funding best practices including:
  1. Federal funding is an important source for pro-equity projects;
  2. Strategic partnerships can help tap new funding sources, share costs, and reallocate resources; and
  3. Engage existing residents to meet their needs and mitigate displacement.
- Reimagining Civic Commons also shared their expertise on how best to create an active city that includes civic engagement, socioeconomic diversity, environment sustainability, and greater economic value. Their resources help cities work effectively, measure social impact, and learn what outcomes have worked for other leaders.
- The CCCN team devised and shared a funding discussion tool to help cities evaluate and enhance their funding strategies.

## NEXT STEPS

City and community leaders are primed to engage new stakeholders. Organizers will follow up with attendees on shared initiatives and interests, work on securing funding and diversifying revenue streams that support grant-based nature coalitions, and improving how this work is shared regarding the need for equitable access to nature, specifically as it relates to improving diversity in the environmental field.

Partner agencies, including CCCN, NRPA, CPA, and RCC, are available to continue providing support and technical assistance for cities who are pursuing nature-based solutions. CCCN's goal is to double the number of cities served from 18 to 36 by 2024 and to launch a new topical cohort in early 2021.

*This is my first time participating in a virtual conference; I'm really enjoying it. I like the set up and opportunity to engage. I really like the conversations around equity and inclusion. Thank you for that.*

*— Shirley Gonzalez, San Antonio Council Member*



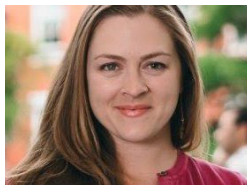


## ACTION AREA: GREEN SCHOOLYARDS

### ORGANIZERS:



**Alejandra Chiesa**  
Bay Area Program Director,  
The Trust for Public Land



**Nette Compton**  
AVP, Director of Strategy,  
The Trust for Public Land



**Sharon Danks**  
Founder and CEO,  
Green Schoolyards America



**Danielle Denk**  
Program Director,  
The Trust for Public Land



**Joan Keener**  
Deputy Director,  
NYC Playgrounds,  
The Trust for Public Lands



**Anne-Marie Spencer**  
Corporate VP of Marketing,  
PlayCore



**Jane Tesner Kleiner**  
Owner, Principal,  
nature+play designs



**Jaime Zaplatosch**  
Director,  
Green Schoolyards for  
Healthy Communities,  
Children & Nature Network

# ACTION AREA REPORTS

## BRIEF HISTORY AND CURRENT CAPACITY FOR WORK IN THE ACTION AREA

A growing body of evidence shows that time spent learning and playing in nature helps children to reach their full academic and social-emotional potential. Regular access to high-quality greenspace improves mental and physical health and inspires strong connections to the natural world. While only a small percentage of U.S. schools currently offer nature-filled outdoor spaces, many communities are exploring green schoolyards as a strategy for increasing educational and health equity, and enhancing quality of life. The number of green schoolyards is growing as communities mobilize to transform asphalt and turf grass into enriching outdoor areas where children and families can learn, play, and grow both during and outside of school time.

In 2018, we held our first Leadership Summit in Oakland, CA. There, we signed the [Green Schoolyards Action Agenda \(GSAA\)](#), with a vision to offer access to green schoolyards to all U.S. communities by 2050 to enhance children's healthy development, community well-being and positive environmental impacts.

In the five months leading into the 2018 Summit, a group of more than 100 people, spanning many organizations, helped to revise the agenda that was drafted from a series of meetings and reports. To date, there are 120 endorsements on the GSAA. Implementation of the GSAA has been organic; partners are using it for advocacy, to focus their own work on the field's agreed-upon needs, and to advance components of the GSAA. In response to a survey asking what those attendees have done to advance the agenda since 2018, participants reported:

- Increasing city staff to advance components of agenda
- Local educator and childcare director trainings
- Engaging new stakeholders
- Creating a research agenda
- National policy advocacy and advancement

## NEEDS AND CHALLENGES FACING ORGANIZATIONS AND LEADERS

Currently, COVID-19 is stalling discussions for new green schoolyard efforts, but helping to fuel existing or even nascent efforts through outdoor learning." After years of advocacy, school districts and allies have a new entry point as a result of the pandemic and not being able to



# ACTION AREA REPORTS

continue with traditional in-person education. Especially of note, is that distance learning is widening the learning gap. Bringing students back to in-person schooling using their schoolyard for safe learning space that meets CDC recommendations and ensures equitable access to education.

## 2020 SUMMIT ACTION AREA GOALS

This Action Area addressed two main goals:

1. Activating the 2050 Green Schoolyards action agenda and the movement overall
2. Supporting the development of a national network

## 2020 SUMMIT ACTION AREA SUMMARY

Attendees kicked off the session with discussions led by Sharon Danks, Executive Director of Green Schoolyards America, about the COVID-19 Outdoor Learning Initiative that she helped co-found, and some additional pandemic perspective on the green schoolyards movement.

The remainder of the sessions was spent in breakouts on a variety of topics:

- Planning for Outdoor Learning during COVID-19
- Green Schoolyard Design Standards for School Districts
- Systems for Scale: Relevant and Replicable School District Policies
- Health & Wellness Benefits of a Green Schoolyard
- Stewardship/Maintenance of Green Schoolyards
- Show Me the Money: Securing Funding
- How to Create a District-Wide Effort in Your Community
- Towards Community Cohesion: Opening Schoolyards During Out of School Time
- Outdoor Learning Areas vs. Outdoor Classrooms: A relative value Discussion



# ACTION AREA REPORTS

## NEXT STEPS

Green Schoolyards Action Area identified many next steps including:

- Expanding the number of organizations and individuals signed on to the Green Schoolyards Action Agenda (GSAA) to 400 by 2023;
- Group and local advocacy for policy change to ensure big levers are pulled to make green schoolyards a reality in all communities, including district-level design guidelines that include green schoolyard features and ADA policy changes;
- Integrating child-focused design understanding into cross-sector professional networks training, like the Water Environment Federation/American Society for Civil Engineers, American Institute of Architects and American Society of Landscape Architects;
- Increasing availability of case-making tools, like GIS mapping; and
- Creating a shared understanding of common definitions, such as outdoor classrooms and learning in the outdoors.



## ACTION AREA: NATURE CONNECTION FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

### ORGANIZERS:



**CJ Goulding,**  
Manager, Community  
Leadership Development  
Children & Nature Network



**Cathy Jordan,**  
Director of Research,  
Children & Nature Network

### BRIEF HISTORY AND CURRENT CAPACITY FOR WORK IN THE ACTION AREA

Youth development and nature programming contribute to a common goal of creating young people who are prepared to reach their full potential as humans and as earth stewards. Children & Nature Network, in partnership with Outdoor Foundation, Search Institute, and Fresh Tracks, and with funding from the S.D. Bechtel Jr. Foundation, set out to better understand this intersection through a literature review and learning from community-based organizations. A scan of the current research at the intersection of the two fields revealed best practices and interweaving strategies that incorporate social-emotional learning into nature-based programming and the context/benefit of including nature in youth development programming.

# ACTION AREA REPORTS

In monthly conversations with thirteen organizations over the course of a year, Children & Nature Network discovered that programming in the outdoors supports the social emotional development of youth. Opportunity exists for programs to be more intentional and to provide better support for professionals to enhance programs and practice.

*As a more rural and nature-based site, during these times we've learned the importance of building equitable relationships and true partnerships with youth-serving organizations. If this means serving as an additional resource to what they're providing, we're learning to be okay with that and not using the partnership to center our site and goals.*

— Margaret Lamar, Executive Director, Cibolo Nature Center and Farm

## NEEDS AND CHALLENGES FACING ORGANIZATIONS AND LEADERS

Leaders in Youth Development identified a need to shift the focus of our work to emphasize using nature-based programming as a tool for holistic youth development with equity at its roots. Allies need to become accomplices—white allies and nonprofits must commit to learning about systemic racism and oppression and how it affects connection to nature and youth development. White researchers and practitioners in the field must continue to examine their own practice and reflexivity. A shift toward participatory action research will address ongoing frustration felt in communities where researchers are “doing research on” communities as opposed to “doing research with” them.

## 2020 SUMMIT ACTION AREA GOALS

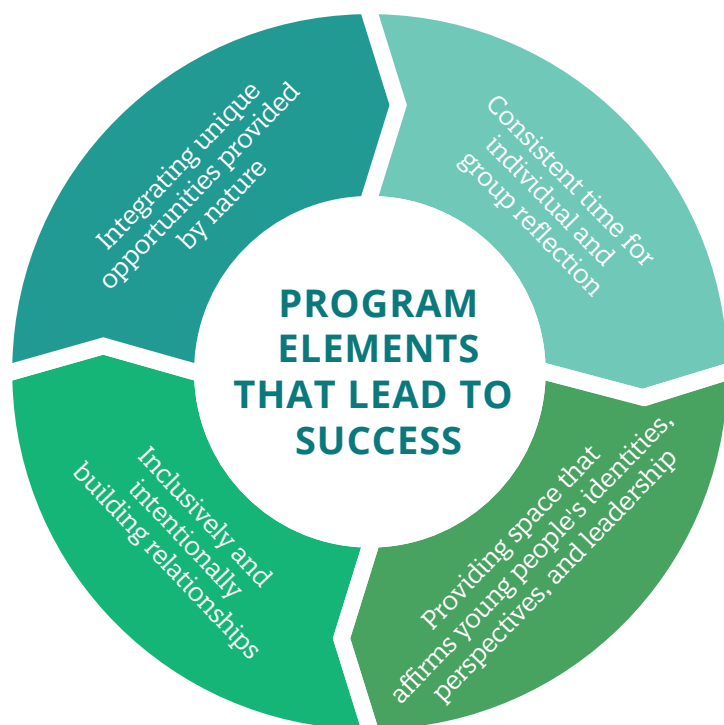
Action Area leaders aimed to examine the impacts of, and to encourage promising strategies toward, the intentional integration of positive youth development and nature connection practices and principles. This work at the Summit involved testing and refining a framework that illustrates the intersection of youth development and nature (YD&N), applying the YD&N Framework to map progress towards outcomes, defining good practices at the intersection of YD&N, and prompting action by participants to realize their YD&N goals.



# ACTION AREA REPORTS

## 2020 SUMMIT ACTION AREA SUMMARY

During the Summit, organizers posed the framing question: “What happens when youth development and nature-connection practices and principles are intentionally integrated?” Activities and discussion followed, including an overview of the YD&N Framework and how organizations can use the YD&N Framework to map their journey to intentional youth development and nature connection.



Organizers led discussions about defining good practices at the intersection of youth development and nature, setting goals, and identifying actions that will move participant organizations toward intentional integration.

## NEXT STEPS

The Youth Development Action Area plans to continue updating and adding to the framework, with a 6-month check on action steps and a 12-month check on the status of intentional integration goals.

*I appreciate this framework because it gives me the language to discuss the work that I have been doing for a couple of years. This framework will help clarify strategies and metrics, and support us in prioritizing our intention and efforts moving forward.*

— Blanca Hernández, YES Neighborhoods to Nature



## ACTION AREA: HEALTH & NATURE FOR COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

### ORGANIZERS:



**Monte Roulier**  
President,  
Community Initiatives



**Elizabeth Hartig**  
Associate,  
Community Initiatives

### BRIEF HISTORY AND CURRENT CAPACITY FOR WORK IN THE ACTION AREA

The Health & Community Well-Being Action Area relaunched at the 2020 Inside-Out Leadership Summit. Action Area attendees and presenters intentionally shifted from an approach rooted in healthcare to an inclusive, holistic way of understanding how a thriving natural world impacts all aspects of our lives.

### NEEDS AND CHALLENGES FACING ORGANIZATIONS AND LEADERS

Organizations and leaders need to make the case, using both data and stories, that our connection to nature leads to physical and mental health and is a pathway for leadership development and community engagement. We must continue to engage youth, people with lived experiences of inequity, decision-makers, and stakeholders from across sectors to advance solutions that benefit all people and places.

*We're not lacking in solutions—we're lacking political and public will to enact those solutions.*

— Bobby Milstein, Director, ReThink Health



# ACTION AREA REPORTS

## 2020 SUMMIT ACTION AREA GOALS

This Action Area sought to refocus Children & Nature Network's approach to health-related topics to engage attendees across a broader theme of wellness and particularly the importance of nature connection to our health and well-being.

## 2020 SUMMIT ACTION AREA SUMMARY

With facilitation by staff of the [Community Initiatives Network](#), this Action Area rooted its storytelling, presentations, and conversations in the Thriving Together framework. The recently released report [Thriving Together: A Springboard for Equitable Recovery and Resilience in Communities Across America](#) centers transformative change around three key concepts: legacies, vital conditions, and stewardship.

### Legacies

We inherit vital conditions from our predecessors—their legacies are the starting points for our lives. However, we possess enormous capacities to transform current and future conditions, for better or for worse. When deciding which policies, practices, services, and investments to continue and which to leave in the past, a basic question for every person and organization is whether our own legacies will affirm dignity and inclusion for all people or inflict trauma and exclusion.

Legacies that honor human dignity strengthen a mutual sense of belonging and civic muscle. Each step toward full and fair inclusion expands the circle of those who feel that they belong and can contribute to shaping our common world.

Legacies that favor some, while inflicting trauma and exclusion on others, do the opposite. They increase the number of people and places that are struggling and suffering, and intensify the adversity spiral that harms us all.

### Vital Conditions

Our freedom to thrive depends on having a consistent set of vital conditions, such as clean air, fair pay, humane housing, early education, routine health care, and other pragmatic necessities. Personal experiences may rise and fall from birth to death, however, vital conditions persist over generations. They shape the exposures,



# ACTION AREA REPORTS

choices, opportunities, and adversities that we each encounter throughout our lives. Each vital condition is distinct and indispensable. Together, they form an interdependent system that shapes opportunities for people and places to thrive.

## Stewards

Stewards of well-being and justice are people and organizations who share responsibility for working across differences to expand the vital conditions all people and places need to thrive.

## NEXT STEPS

Representatives from the Action Area focused on needed action in three key areas:

- Harness the existing research and invest in additional research to make the connection between nature and well-being
- Share and create more stories that show connection between youth development, nature, and well-being
- Build on the foundation set by the Thriving Together report to explore how local communities or institutions (e.g. schools, colleges) could catalyze action

*First, we acknowledged a need for easy-to-share data about the benefits of nature connection, while also underscoring an even greater need for more storytelling. In just two sessions on the Health and Well-being track of the Summit, we heard compelling stories from youth leaders who shared how spending time outdoors changed their lives. Storytelling also showed up in practice throughout the Summit, through Land Acknowledgements and sharing about our ancestors, the places where we grew up, and where we live now.*

— Sarah Moore, Communications Manager, Healthy Places by Design



**ACTION AREA:**

**ADVANCING POLICY FOR EQUITABLE ACCESS TO THE OUTDOORS**



**ORGANIZERS:**



**Martin LeBlanc**  
Principal,  
LBC Action



**Robyn Paulekas**  
Senior Mediator and  
Program Manager,  
Meridian Institute



**Jenny Mulholland-  
Beahrs**  
Founder,  
Inclusion Outdoors



**Dylan McDowell**  
Deputy Director,  
National Caucus of  
Environmental Legislators



**Jayni Rasmussen**  
Senior Campaign  
Representative,  
Outdoors Alliance for  
Kids & Youth - Sierra Club



**Sarah Bodor**  
Director of Policy & Affiliate  
Relations, North American  
Assoc. for Environmental  
Educators (NAAEE)



## BRIEF HISTORY AND CURRENT CAPACITY FOR WORK IN THE ACTION AREA

Despite significant data regarding the value of youth learning about and spending time in nature, momentum to catalyze and support beneficial activities and policies that support outdoor engagement and education in general (including environmental education programs and activities) at the federal level has stalled. While great opportunities exist to advance critical outcomes associated with environmental education and outdoor engagement at the state level, state legislators often have little understanding of associated benefits or simply do not prioritize these policies.

Likewise, grassroots leaders often operate in a vacuum, without knowledge of successful efforts that have been launched in other states to advance policies and programs that create opportunities for more (and more equitable) outdoor engagement and environmental education. Even where collaboration and strong champions for these efforts exist, stakeholders may lack the tools, skills, confidence, and common language to launch a successful cross-sector advocacy campaign. The result is missed opportunities for engaging a broad and powerful grassroots base to support and encourage policy changes to connect people of all ages, ethnicities, and economic circumstances to the many benefits of spending time in nature.

In 2019, a coalition of national organizations was formed to catalyze state-level policies that connect people to nature. Partners include: the Meridian Institute, the National Caucus of Environmental Legislators (NCEL), the Children & Nature Network (C&NN), Outdoors Alliance for Kids (OAK), and the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE). They are working to develop environmental education programs by:

- Building an online [Policy Playbook](#) (which, to our knowledge, is the only central source of information for legislators and grassroots leaders who are promoting outdoor engagement) to highlight successful bipartisan policy initiatives and to provide resources to support new statewide efforts; and
- Leveraging the connections to other related sectors (e.g., outdoor recreation, outdoor programming, therapeutic outdoor programming for special needs groups) with whom the environmental education community shares an interest in outdoor engagement generally.

# ACTION AREA REPORTS

Many states have successful policies that have gained attention and are ripe for replication. They have established outdoor schools for children, created state recreation offices, established graduation requirements that include environmental education, supported initiatives to ensure “no child is left inside”, passed legislation to develop comprehensive strategic plans to get kids outdoors and promote environmental literacy, and created funding mechanisms to ensure that resources will be available into the future for these kinds of programs. These efforts have not only galvanized those interested in the environment, but those working on education and early learning, public health, livability, veterans’ issues, and economic development. There is a growing interest from legislators in other states to learn how to take better advantage of the opportunities and benefits that can be derived from legislation and policies that support these kinds of priorities.

Working with state legislators and grassroots leaders to identify unique approaches based on local issues and needs, numerous states will have major opportunities and significant political capital to dramatically increase equitable access to high-quality environmental education, outdoor recreation, and therapeutic outdoor programming opportunities.

## NEEDS AND CHALLENGES FACING ORGANIZATIONS AND LEADERS

The opportunity moving forward is to create a more coordinated national effort not only to get information into the hands of those who need it, but to undertake the critical follow-up work needed to translate the information into support for those taking action at the state level—and to make sure that the benefits are equitably distributed. Promoting policies that enable their constituents to engage in the outdoors, by connecting with nature, taking advantage of high quality environmental educational and outdoor recreation opportunities, or by having access to therapeutic outdoor programs for veterans and others, are truly bi-partisan issues.

## 2020 SUMMIT ACTION AREA GOALS

Action Area organizers explored ways in which policies provide opportunities for breaking down silos between the sectors of recreation, outdoor learning, and health. They were intentional in positioning access to the outdoors around racial equity and justice in an age of COVID recovery.

A major goal of this work is to create a policy action plan for 2021 at the intersection of health, recreation, and outdoor learning.



## 2020 SUMMIT ACTION AREA SUMMARY

### State Legislator Panel



**Assemblymember Eduardo Garcia**  
California State Assembly



**Representative Jamie Becker-Finn**  
Minnesota House of Representatives



**Senator Sheikh Rahman**  
Georgia State Senate



Advancing Policy for Equitable Outdoor Access

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Three state legislators joined the session for an engaging panel discussion:

- **[Representative Jamie Becker-Finn \(Minnesota\)](#)** shared information about the [No Child Left Inside grant program](#) in Minnesota.
- **[Assemblymember Eduardo Garcia \(California\)](#)** was a joint author of Proposition 68, the \$4.1 billion bond “California’s Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection and [Outdoor Access for All Act of 2018](#),” which included \$725 million to enhance recreational opportunities in park-poor neighborhoods
- **[Senator Sheikh Rahman \(Georgia\)](#)** spoke about how important this issue is to him and his diverse constituents and how excited he is to bring these policies to Georgia. While this panel took place on the first day of the Action Areas, Senator Rahman joined for the full second day of the Action Areas as well as for one of the policy workshops the following week, to learn from the other presenters about policies he can work on in Georgia! It was incredibly inspiring to have his ongoing engagement throughout the two days together.

During the panel, a theme that arose was the need for meaningful community engagement in all policies, to make sure that the voices of the people most affected by the policies are being heard and that their needs are being met.

# ACTION AREA REPORTS

The session also included lightning round presentations on the following topics:

- **Recreate Responsibly/Outdoor Offices of Recreation**, presented by Marc Berejka, Director, Community & Government Affairs, REI and Danica Carey, Director, Marketing Operations, Seirus Innovative Accessories
- **Outdoor Learning State Policy**, presented by Sarah Bodor, Director of Policy and Affiliate Relations, North American Association for Environmental Education
- **New Mexico Outdoor Equity Fund**, presented by [Representative Angelica Rubio \(New Mexico\)](#)

Critical themes emerged during session discussions, including:

- Community engagement and greening without gentrification
- Bipartisan support and interagency collaboration
- Potential funding sources for states, including federal grant programs and public/private partnerships
- Collecting data and measuring impact to make the case that we're getting the results we need to continue accessing public funding
- How to continue to collaborate, share resources and tools on different policy ideas, and coordinate with one another

## NEXT STEPS

Participants drafted 2021 state policy action ideas to be used as inspiration when creating policies to expand equitable outdoor access.

Policy ideas were presented during the panel and lightning round presentations and shared by participants during the Action Area in the policy workshop, including novel ideas, new implementations of existing policies, and resources and examples of successful policies. Policy ideas included:

- Outdoor learning state policies, including policies concerning outdoor learning during COVID-19 and ways to access nearby nature
- Equity Funds and other grant programs that encourage collaboration



# ACTION AREA REPORTS

between departments, organizations, and agencies

- Recreation-focused policies that increase equitable access to both nearby and faraway nature recreation opportunities
- Health-focused policies that leverage known positive links between health and time spent outdoors
- Transportation policies that support free and low-cost access to parks and increase safe infrastructure to access natural spaces

*As someone who was born and raised along the border, I have a deep connection and relationship to the land and its people, a place where I have personally found peace and healing, especially on my bike, which has become an extension of my body. In 2019, I co-sponsored legislation to create the New Mexico Outdoor Recreation Division, within the New Mexico Economic Development Department. The most innovative piece of the legislation was the vision around the Outdoor Equity Fund, and just last week (I was really excited about it and may have cried a lot), we were able to announce the inaugural award recipients. The Outdoor Equity Fund was created to allow all youth equitable access to the outdoors. The grant will support transformative outdoor experiences that foster stewardship and respect for New Mexico's land, water and cultural heritage, which is really important to me and why I supported the creation of the Division of Outdoor Recreation, because I felt that we needed, here in New Mexico, to do it differently.*

*— Representative Angelica Rubio, New Mexico State Legislature*



**ACTION AREA:**

# INTERNATIONAL ACTION: #NATUREFORALL



## ORGANIZERS:



**Pascale Van Der Leest**  
Project Manager,  
#NatureForAll



**Luis Camargo**  
Founder & Director,  
OpEPA



**Janani Eswar**  
Founder,  
Growing in Nature (GRIN)



**Lais Fleury**  
Coordinator,  
Criança e Natureza  
program, Alana Institute



**Nathan Creighton-Kelly**  
Digital Engagement  
Coordinator, Canadian  
Commission for UNESCO

*It only takes one moment, one connection, to an item, to a person, to spark a lifetime of love for the outdoors*

*— Nathan Creighton-Kelly, Digital Engagement Coordinator,  
Canadian Commission for UNESCO*



# ACTION AREA REPORTS

## BRIEF HISTORY AND CURRENT CAPACITY FOR WORK IN THE ACTION AREA

In recent years, there have been international meetings and events for children and nature, but leaders felt that there was still a need and an interest in a more intentional effort to foster an international community for children and nature, similar to what Children & Nature Network has been able to do so successfully in the United States. The International Action Area is part of [#NatureForAll](#), a global movement to inspire love of nature. #NatureForAll is led by a network of 450+ organizations, including Children & Nature Network.

## NEEDS AND CHALLENGES FACING ORGANIZATIONS AND LEADERS

With a diverse group of international stakeholders working in a wide variety of contexts, the needs and challenges of this Action Area are many. Leaders are focused on equity in reaching children with services and programs, succeeding beyond language and technology barriers, building collaborative linkages between educators and children globally, overcoming local challenges that result from city planning, extreme weather conditions, and obtaining more reliable funding.

## 2020 SUMMIT ACTION AREA GOALS

For the Inside-Out Leadership Summit, the #NatureForAll International Action Area was developed to explore the most promising opportunities to connect children with nature at a global scale and to share this knowledge in ways that are meaningful and practical to effect local change.

## 2020 SUMMIT ACTION AREA SUMMARY

The Action Area focused on community, creativity, and commitment. With a mix of guest speakers and breakout sessions, the sessions covered three key discussion points:

- The role of storytelling in connecting people and nature globally
- Our responsibilities, personally or professionally, to create moments of connection and create space for all
- The importance of focusing on the meta-principles and commonalities that connect us all—rather than our differences—to create a thriving world for all

# ACTION AREA REPORTS

With #NatureForAll, the International Action Area is connected to a growing global community: 39 participants from 12 countries across North America, Europe, Asia, Africa, South America, Oceania, the Middle East, and Central America.

## NEXT STEPS

Looking ahead, the International Action Area leaders plan to compile internationally-relevant successful practices, policies and resources for connecting children with nature. They will identify strategic audiences and partners with whom to collaborate so that all children, from all walks of life, can experience the immeasurable benefits that nature provides. Leaders will develop an action plan to increase the impact and influence of our collective work, particularly within the spheres of nature conservation, health and well-being, cities, childhood development, and international policy. Leaders also discussed the importance of promoting the inclusion of all voices in the children and nature global discourse and advocating for equitable access to nature so that children—and natural places—can thrive worldwide.

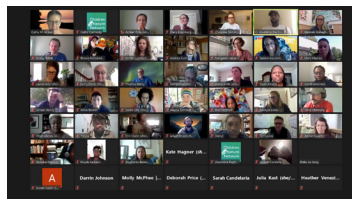
Specific needs to be addressed in the near future include: development of an accessible platform or space for virtual connections, diversifying #NatureForAll/Children & Nature Network regional engagement, and identifying groups who are “missing from the table” in strategic planning and collaboration.





# INSIDE OUT!

LEADERSHIP SUMMIT



## LOOKING AHEAD, 2021 AND BEYOND

Across six interdisciplinary Action Areas, we have seen incredible leadership, momentum, and enthusiasm for making bold moves—at schools, in communities, and in programs and policies. Leaders in our movement are committed to confronting racism, privilege, and power, and to learning how we can be agents of positive change. This work must be ongoing. The Children & Nature Network is striving to integrate equity and inclusion principles across all programs, operations, and network engagement, and we are so inspired to see leaders embrace new practices to create a more equitable and inclusive movement and a more just and sustainable world.

In 2021, Children & Nature Network will be shifting the way we gather. To maximize impact while minimizing the risks around an uncertain pandemic recovery timeline, we will develop and offer virtual programs including an ongoing capacity-building workshop series, Action Area check-ins, and networking opportunities. Having re-launched our [Children & Nature Network website](#), we are excited to develop new online network engagement tools that will support our communities and create new ways to share, connect, and collaborate across our wide network of children and nature champions.

We will reconvene in person in Atlanta in Spring 2022. This event will be our first-ever combination Leadership Summit and International Conference. We anticipate producing a pre-conference day of Summit meetings (by invitation) followed by a full general conference, including two and a half days of inspiring keynotes, plenaries, concurrent workshops, an exhibit hall, poster sessions, field trips, and networking. Portions of this event (keynotes and select sessions) will be available virtually to increase participation and accessibility. A call for proposals will open in Summer 2021.

Many thanks again to our partners, sponsors, collaborators, and Summit attendees for making the 2020 virtual Inside-Out Leadership Summit a success. We look forward to staying connected and keeping the momentum going to increase equitable access to nature for children.

JOIN US