



children & nature
NETWORK

— international —

LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

2018



Investing in Leaders,
Advancing the Movement



children & nature
NETWORK

Dear Children & Nature Champions,

I am pleased to share this report from our 2018 Leadership Summit, reflecting the collaborative work and collective expertise of children and nature leaders from around the world.

Social change takes time, but when we look back, I won't be surprised if this proves to be a pivotal moment for our movement. A time when changemakers from key sectors came together to set agendas and explore ways to evaluate progress—working together not as stars, but as a constellation. We move forward from the Summit with renewed energy and strategic action plans developed by leaders from across the movement.

To all those who participated in the inaugural Summit, thank you for taking part in this grand experiment. We learned a great deal and will incorporate your feedback in planning for the 2020 Summit. We look forward to supporting your work in communities around the world and to providing an ongoing platform for collaboration and lasting impact.



With best regards,



Sarah Milligan-Toffler
Executive Director
The Children & Nature Network

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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.

THE TRAILHEAD

Richard Louv’s 2005 book “Last Child in the Woods” and the subsequent co-founding of the Children & Nature Network helped coalesce a growing movement of activists working to reconnect children to nature. These leaders recognized the critical need to work across disciplines and scales to shift an indoor society back toward the natural world. The Children & Nature Network began organizing Grassroots Gatherings in 2007 as a platform for convening a broad range of nature connection advocates and by 2015, the annual Grassroots Gathering had grown into a formal conference focused on action. In 2017, nearly 900 people from 22 countries attended the Children & Nature Network International Conference in Vancouver, BC, making it the largest gathering of children and nature movement leaders in the world.

According to post-conference surveys, attendees found value and inspiration from our conferences, but also yearned for opportunities to dig deeper with like-minded partners to develop measurable, evidence-based action strategies. Conversations with key stakeholders and funders reinforced this need.

In response, C&NN launched a new conference model in 2018. On even years, we will host International Leadership Summits, designed to convene a smaller group of changemakers, thoughtfully invited to represent the diverse perspectives, people and disciplines of the children and nature movement. On odd years, we will host International Conferences, in the same location as the previous year’s Summit, making a two-year commitment to host cities that are actively working to increase equitable access to nature.

THE PATH FORWARD

Leadership Summits will be limited to approximately 400 people to facilitate productive working teams. Summit participants will work to develop shared goals, action agendas and methods for measuring progress in strategic areas identified as critical to increasing equitable nature access for children.

Action agendas developed at Summits will drive programmatic and policy work in communities around the world—and inform planning for International Conferences, open to all. Conferences will continue to engage a larger audience, advance big ideas, and identify strategies needing further development.

Through this evolution of our conference model, we hope to accelerate and sustain lasting change.

“We are inspired and encouraged by the thoughtful and creative thinking in all Summit action areas. The overall themes, strategic actions and provocative questions that emerged lay a strong foundation for the path forward.”

—Avery Cleary
Children & Nature Network
Conference Manager

2018-2019 HOST CITY: Oakland, CA

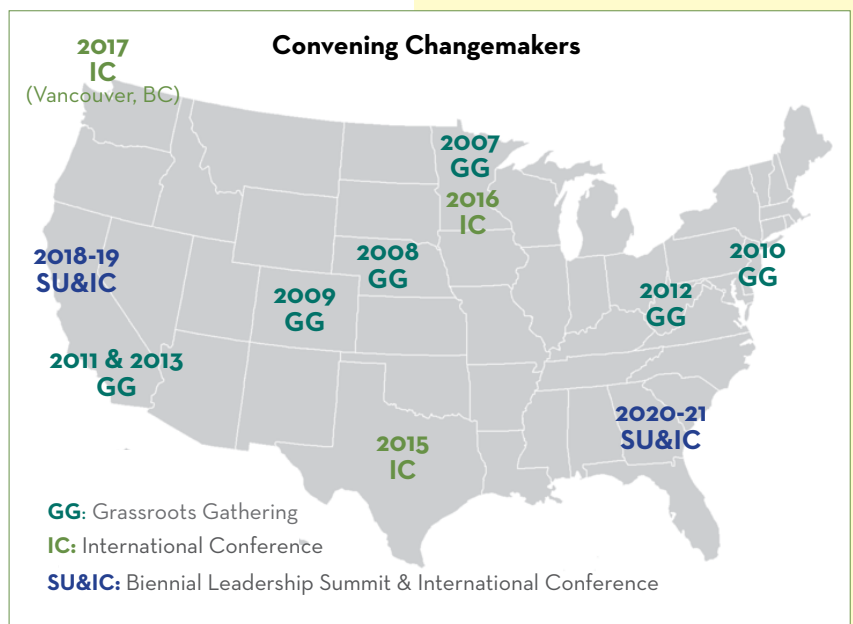
A special thank you to our host city of Oakland, CA and Bay Area partners. Over the next year, the Children & Nature Network will work to highlight local nature connection initiatives—returning to Oakland in 2019 for the Children & Nature Network International Conference.

The 2018 C&NN Leadership Summit was kicked off by the Mayor of Oakland:

“You are lifting up two of my favorite things: children and nature. You are advancing a vision of what it means to be a healthy, resilient city. We welcome you to Oakland this year and next, and officially declare a ‘yearlong love affair’ between the City of Oakland and the children & nature movement!”



—Mayor Libby Schaaf
Oakland, CA



SUMMIT OVERVIEW

From an overwhelmingly positive response to the Summit application process, **438 leaders from 10 countries** were selected to attend our inaugural Leadership Summit in Oakland, CA. For two days, these leaders worked to develop shared goals, action agendas and evaluation methods in six key areas:

City Government

Green Schoolyards

Nature-Based Learning Research

Grassroots Leadership

Next Generation Leadership

Health Professionals

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

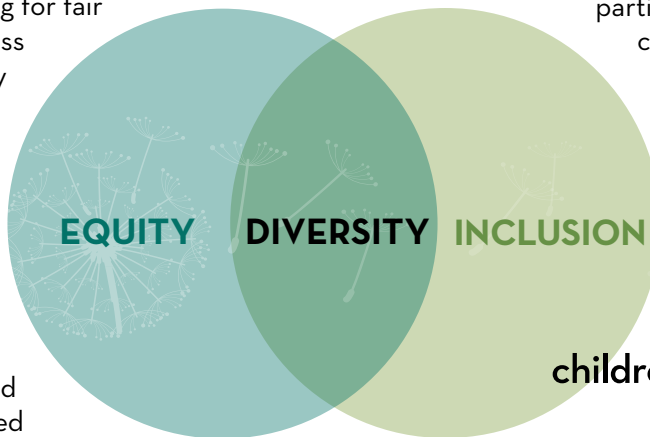
Collective work in all action areas was guided by core themes of diversity, equity and inclusion, defined to guide the Summit as follows:

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 to 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 any and all individuals.

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

"I invite us to radically imagine what our movement can be: Intentionally more equitable and inclusive. Let's recognize the relationships that all cultures have with the outdoors as a way to authentically increase nature connection for children with the least access."

*—Kim Moore Bailey, CEO
Youth Outside*



"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



SUMMIT PROGRAM

While a majority of the Summit was allocated to Action Area work sessions, daily plenaries brought all participants together for networking and keynote addresses:*



Removing Barriers to Nature Access

Kim Moore Bailey, CEO of Youth Outside and Children & Nature Network board member, emphasized the importance of addressing the barriers preventing young people, especially those not traditionally represented in the outdoors, from having meaningful experiences in nature.



Benefits of Nature

Stephen Lockhart, MD, PhD and CMO of Sutter Health, described the myriad benefits of nature including improved learning, behavior, mental and physical wellbeing.



PANEL: Building Networks to Grow a Movement

Jason Morris, Senior Program Officer, Pisces Foundation, moderated a panel including Jane Wei-Skillern from UC Berkeley, Kirk Anne Taylor from ChangeScale, Anupama Joshi from the National Farm to School Network, and Nancy Bales from the Gray Family Foundation. The group discussed the research underpinnings and practical applications of networks to help move the children and nature movement forward.



Tying it All Together & Taking Action

José González, Founder & Executive Director Emeritus of Latino Outdoors, shared key takeaways from Summit action areas and inspiration for keeping the momentum going.



Closing Keynote

Author and Children & Nature Network Co-founder Richard Louv talked about the importance of nature experiences for all children—and the crucial work ahead for the children and nature movement.

**Videos of keynote addresses are available at childrenandnature.org/cnc2018/*

ADDITIONAL PLENARY SPEAKERS:

Libby Schaaf

Mayor, City of Oakland

Debra M. Erickson, MA

Director of Marketing, Communications & Interpretation, San Diego Zoo Global

Carol Johnson

Asst. General Mgr. Public Affairs, East Bay Regional Park District

Sarah Milligan-Toffler

Executive Director
Children & Nature Network

Juan Martinez

VP Strategic Partnerships
Children & Nature Network

ACTION AREAS:

Nearly **50 experts** from the public health, conservation, education, urban planning, recreation and city government sectors also presented and/or led Action Area break-out sessions.

BY THE NUMBERS

2 DAYS **438 Leaders** from
10 COUNTRIES
20+ Bay Area PARTNERS

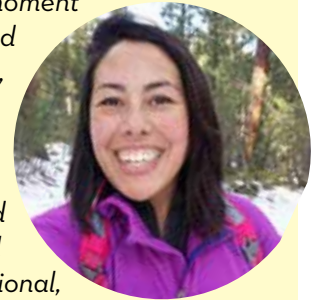
1 Great Host City
14 SPONSORS

53 Scholarships
6 ACTION AREAS

Action Area Participants:

- 77** City Government
- 105** Green Schoolyards
- 60** Next Generation Leadership
- 45** Grassroots Leadership
- 41** Health Professionals
- 77** Nature-Based Learning Research
- 33** Observers

"From the moment I arrived, and even before, I felt so welcomed. I left feeling inspired and encouraged as a professional, but also empowered as a mom. I want to thank you on behalf of the other parents who had infants with them. Because you created an environment that was truly inclusive, I was able to bring my whole self to the Summit and hope to return the favor to those whom I interact with in my community, encouraging them to include their whole selves in our work."



*—Victoria Faubion Serna, PhD
 Founder and Co-leader
 North Texas Kids Outside*

2018 LEADERSHIP SUMMIT REPORT

SUMMIT PARTICIPANT SURVEY

Survey Participation

34% of participants responded to our post-Summit survey

Summit Rating Overall

75% rated the event highly, with a 4 or 5 out of 5

90% would recommend future Summits to others



Plenaries and Action Areas

Response Scale:

● No Opinion ● Unsatisfactory ● Satisfactory ● Good ● Excellent

Overall quality of Plenaries:

90% excellent or good

9% satisfactory

Value of Plenaries to your work:

75% excellent or good

22% satisfactory

Increase in personal knowledge base:

65% excellent or good

29% satisfactory

Overall quality of Action Areas:

73% excellent or good

19% satisfactory

Value of Action Areas to your work:

60% excellent or good

32% satisfactory

Increase in personal knowledge base:

53% excellent or good

37% satisfactory

THINGS WE DID WELL

Participants shared:

"I really felt that I was able to take tangible things back to my work and build my network to continue the movement. Most times when I come back from a conference I am very overwhelmed, but this time, I was empowered."

"I appreciated the facilitators for leading networking opportunities; I have made new connections that will be beneficial in the development of future projects."

"I loved the opening plenaries on the first day; they were all engaging and inspiring and I loved that format, instead of one keynote."

THINGS WE CAN DO BETTER:

- > Provide more time and structure for **"cross pollination"** between action areas & better reporting during the Summit from each action area.
- > **Provide more time to dig into topics** more deeply.
- > **Improve facilitation** in action area working sessions.
- > Provide **more context** for how actions areas contribute to the overall movement.
- > Provide **more access to nature** for Summit participants during the Summit.
- > Consider hosting a **pre-Summit orientation** for those who are new to the children & nature movement and/or for people who want an overview of disciplines other than their own.

SUMMIT PARTICIPANTS COMMIT TO ACTION

Many Summit attendees shared specific actions that they plan to take following the Summit, including following up with fellow action area members to plan next steps. Here is a sampling of additional survey responses:

“On top of my list is continuing work on equity & inclusion at home.”

“Improve my approach to network weaving.”

“Implement living schoolyards in my school district and develop board policy and administrative regulations to support the work.”

“Convene a group of peers in the fall to work on ways to grow our work on a national scale.”

“Use, share and contribute to C&NN resource database.”

“Conduct training for doctors about nature prescriptions and the overall benefits of kids participating in nature.”

“Continue work on making Nature-Based Learning Research more public-friendly.”

“This conference for me was one of learning, engaging, creative thinking, and networking. The format was designed for a deep dive into big ideas and time to do that. Looking forward to next steps and continuing those conversations and the actions we identified in each of our tracks!”

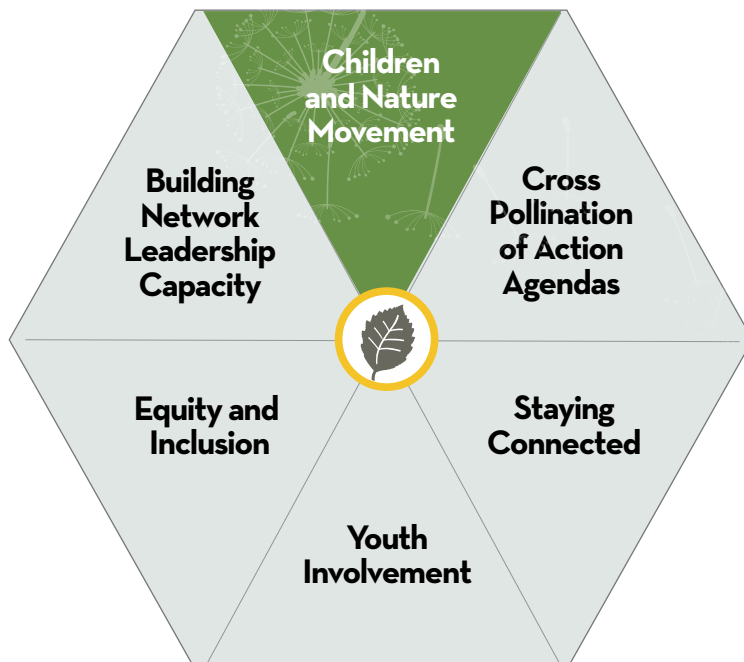


*—Marilyn Brink, Manager
Professional Development & Early
Childhood NatureStart Programs
Chicago Zoological Society/
Brookfield Zoo*

THEMES FOR MOVING FORWARD

Attendees representing all action areas and a wide variety of disciplines provided feedback during and after the Summit. **Five key themes** emerged, with application for both the planning of future Summits – and advancing the movement.

Key themes include:



THEMES FOR MOVING FORWARD

Building Network Leadership Capacity

Many attendees expressed interest in increasing the impact of their work and network capacity through access to movement building resources including reports on best practices, webinars, communications tools and ongoing access to C&NN's resource hubs and research library. Attendees talked about C&NN continuing its work to:

- > compile and share resources
- > provide a "shared workspace for continued conversation and resource sharing"
- > facilitate better connections across action areas, and,
- > provide a core communications platform/strategy for helping the movement gain momentum.

Cross Pollination of Action Agendas & Disciplines

Some of the most common and consistent feedback on the Summit reflected attendees' interest in having a better understanding of what other action areas (and sectors of the movement in general) were planning and discussing -- and where action agendas might intersect to better advance the movement. This highlights an opportunity to better facilitate "cross pollination" between strategic action areas and disciplines.

Staying Connected

Attendees also consistently expressed a strong desire to stay connected following the Summit, to both continue to build relationships and network capacity -- and to ensure that action agendas move forward. Attendees would like to have an online platform for peer learning and networking, as well as ongoing webinars, trainings, conference calls and a network map or directory of Summit leaders working in various action areas.

Equity & Inclusion

Many attendees reflected on the Summit's guiding principles of diversity, equity and inclusion, and would like more resources and support in bringing these themes into their own work and/or organizations. Attendees would like to see continued focus on these themes in future gatherings of the movement and expressed interest in additional resources and training opportunities.

Youth Involvement

Attendees from the Next Generation, Grassroots and Nature-Based Learning Research Action Areas expressed interest in incorporating or representing children's voices and/or having more youth involvement in future gatherings.

PARTICIPANT COMMENTS

"A lot of tangible action items were identified in our working groups and with national support from C&NN, there is great potential for traction moving forward."

"I am keen to see what the results are from the 6 areas, and how they turn into action."

"Let's grow and strengthen the online web started at this conference."

"We will definitely have follow-up discussions with those of us who came from Chicago. We are setting up a time to talk about how each of our areas can address diversity, equity and inclusion in all we do."

"I hope to link with the other convenors and make sure children's voices are present at the next conference."

:

HOW C&NN CAN SUPPORT THESE NETWORK NEEDS

Building Network Leadership Capacity

- > Continue to provide visioning, leadership thinking and programming designed to develop the leadership capacity of individuals, organizations and communities.
- > Support network leadership capacity and impact with a robust online platform that supports cross pollination of action areas, facilitates peer learning and provides access to high quality tools, resources, communications and training.
- > Develop evidence-based key messages and communications tools to help network leaders “make the case” and advance their work.

Cross Pollination of Action Agendas & Disciplines

- > Facilitate better cross pollination of action areas at Summits and Conferences and increased cross-sector collaboration in the field through ongoing webinars, communications strategies and the approach to our on-the-ground work.
- > Share stories of successful cross-sector collaborations.

Staying Connected

- > Support connectivity by convening the network at annual Summits and Conferences, as well as regular webinars, trainings, regional events and communications campaigns.
- > Develop and maintain a network directory and map to foster connectivity.

Equity & Inclusion

- > Continue to ensure that the values of diversity, equity and inclusion guide future Summits and Conferences—and continue to champion a more equitable and diverse movement overall.
- > Provide or facilitate access to Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) tools and resources.

Youth Involvement

- > Develop Summit and Conference RFPs that seek youth voices and meaningful roles—as well as presenters and speakers who represent the many perspectives and disciplines of the children and nature movement.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION AT FUTURE SUMMITS & CONFERENCES

- > Who isn't in the network that should be?
- > How can we amplify more voices, share more stories and build leadership capacity within the movement?
- > How can we create systemic change?
- > How can we accelerate the change process?
- > How can C&NN support the needs of smaller organizations and projects that might otherwise be marginalized?



“We can build this movement and deepen its impact by continuing to expand our network. I challenge all of us to invite those not yet engaged to dive into this critical work—to help us secure a healthy future for our children and our planet,

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



CITY GOVERNMENT

Cities Connecting Children to Nature

OVERVIEW

The City Government Action Area brought together 77 city leaders interested in advancing efforts to connect children to nature through policy, nature-based programs, parks and natural infrastructure. Many participants were actively involved with the **Cities Connecting Children to Nature (CCCN)** initiative, a joint program of the Children & Nature Network and the National League of Cities.

PROCESS

1. City Government Action Area work began with an overview of the strategies cities currently employ to deliver equitable access to nature in their communities. These strategies fall into three domains of action:



Participants noted the interdependence of these three domains of action. **Infrastructure** and **Programs & Experiences** are mutually dependent, the “hardware” and “software” of the nature experience. Meanwhile, nature-smart **Policy** unlocks needed investment in and commitment to Infrastructure and Programs/Experience. Through its past work, CCCN has also found that a range of **Supporting Activities**—including municipal leadership engagement, communications, community engagement, and capacity for data collection and analysis—are essential to the successful development and deployment of children and nature strategies.



ACTION AREA GOALS:

The collaborative work of the City Government Action Area resulted in the following shared goals:

Ensure equitable access to nature by:

- > **Identifying and sharing lessons learned across cities**, including strategies to equitably connect children to nature and partnerships and policies for the successful implementation of those strategies.
- > **Developing an action framework for the coming year**, including:
 - > Continued development of local capacity, policy and programming;
 - > Next steps for measuring and assessing baselines and progress; and the roll-out of a peer learning network to support ongoing collaboration among the participants

"It is so important to foster relationships between people and nature close to home. By elevating the relevance and proximity of nature in cities to people, we can expand access and relevancy for everyone to connect with the natural world for better community health and enjoyment."

Rue Mapp
 Founder
 and CEO
 Outdoor Afro



PROCESS *continued*

2. Participants explored the three domains of action through peer-to-peer discussion of existing strategies and an “open space” session to identify potential new strategies.

>POLICY | Participants explored three existing policy strategies that have provided a framework for citywide and/or global promotion of children’s access to nature: the Our Children-Our Families Council collective impact model in San Francisco, CA; the Youth Leadership & Employment initiative in Madison, WI; and the Salzburg Global Session 574 Statement on nature and childhood in the city. Participants then developed potential new strategies to promote children’s access to nature: partnering communities with law enforcement, park prescriptions (ParkRx), and partnerships with equity offices and initiatives within city government. Participants identified opportunities to share existing citywide equity resources: San Francisco representatives developed an equity assessment tool to ground municipal planning processes, and representatives from the Twin Cities described equitable capital planning tools in use in their region. Additionally, participants identified opportunities for further collaboration within city administrations, such as pairing mobile recreation and/or literacy services with added nature programming.

>PROGRAMS and EXPERIENCES | Participants explored four existing program and experience strategies that have delivered nature programming and experiences within existing municipal infrastructure, carefully tailoring programs to their communities and participants: Community-Driven Programs and Experiences at the St. Paul, MN YMCA; Culturally-Relevant Park Activation with Outdoor Afro; Out of School Time and School Partnerships in Grand Rapids, MI; and regional Early Childhood Access to Nature programs in the Bay Area, CA. Participants also developed a new Placemaking strategy at the intersection of programs and infrastructure. This strategy seeks to bring additional activation to existing parks through a combination of park-based programs and investments, such as art and wayfinding. Participants emphasized the need to ground both events and investments in community vision and ensure that park systems serve a diversity of user needs and interests.

INFRASTRUCTURE | Participants explored three existing infrastructure >strategies that enhance equity in access to nature: the 10-Minute Walk campaign, the Safe Routes Partnership, and the C&NN Green Schoolyards initiative in Austin, TX.

>SUPPORTING ACTIVITIES | Participants explored tools to support more effective strategic planning and build sustaining capacity for equitable, nature-connected cities. We devoted particular attention to broad-based, equitable community engagement that includes children. This engagement process surfaces community needs, priorities, and opportunities to inform the more effective strategies for equitably connecting children and nature. Discussions turned to the benefits of employing “outside in” strategies for those outside government to advocate and partner with the city, as well as “inside out” strategies initiated within city government. Participants explored opportunities to build community capacity to engage city leadership and to develop community champions for nature experiences that hold cultural relevance. As one participant noted, developing community champions requires cultivating “nature swagger” that is unique and distinct to each community. These champions might be educators, young people, parents and grandparents, or others who can draw on their own connection with nature to continue nature traditions within their communities.

“Having participated as one of the initial CCCN cities and now being in the thick of implementing strategies developed through the peer-learning process, I found the Leadership Summit instructive as we strive to stay grounded in our work in Louisville, and stay connected to broader trends. It was critical to share experiences with other cities, as we are the proving ground for strategies that increase equity in access to nature, and it was equally instructive, as we look ahead, to examine our work through a national lens.”

*—Bennett Knox, MEM, CPRP
Parks Administrator
Louisville Parks & Recreation*



PROCESS *continued*

3. Participants identified two continuums of activity to pursue these strategies. Most strategies gravitated to one end of each continuum or the other, demonstrating the need for a layered approach to equitably connecting children and nature:

Human connection to nature as a means—a tool to better serve people and communities in addressing social, health and economic challenges—**and an ends, as a value unto itself.**

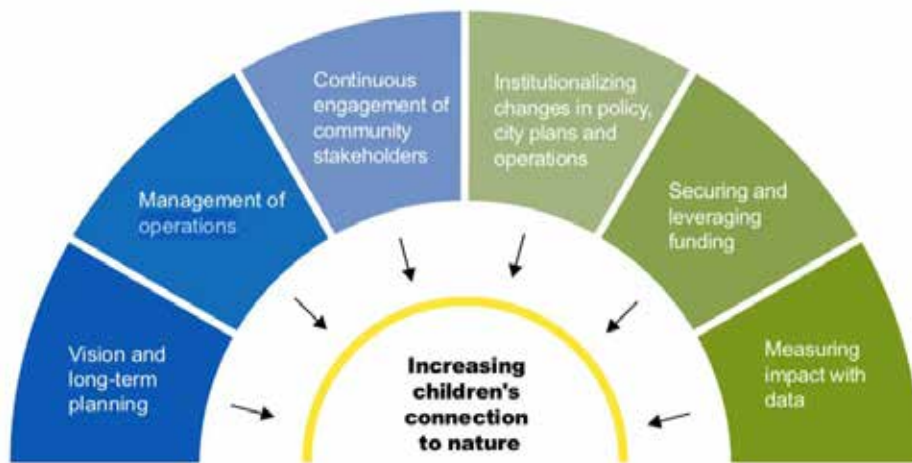
Acknowledging that most cities have inequitable access to nature today, bringing children to nature-rich places and bringing nature to low-income communities and communities of color are both important. Many participants noted the need to tailor investment in gentrifying communities to ensure that parks serve the existing residents. This may require coupling park improvements with community development policies like inclusionary housing.

4. **Exercises:** Each strategy requires a complex web of supporting partners and policies for successful implementation. Participants applied the six implementation tactics described in the **CCCN Municipal Action Guide** (shown below) through five implementation exercises exploring specific programs and opportunities.

Three common themes emerged from these discussions, building upon the implementation framework established in the **Municipal Action Guide**.

- > Pursue multi-organization and multi-departmental collaborations at the neighborhood scale to align opportunities for nature connection with a host of potential partners who can help deliver them.
- > Leverage the social, emotional, economic, and health benefits of nature to bring new stakeholders (and resources) to the table, including multiple public agencies, early childhood educators, and business/philanthropic leaders.
- > Find common ground with city leadership, often through a non-binding Outdoor Bill of Rights, that sets the stage for more tactical collaborations down the road. Participants saw strength in the grassroots and city leadership (“grass tops”) partnership established through CCCN as an opportunity to continue to support these actions.

SIX ELEMENTS TO SUSTAIN A CHILDREN & NATURE INITIATIVE



Cities Connecting
Children to Nature

NLC NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES

children & nature NETWORK

Action Area Facilitators:

Andrew Moore and Priya Cook,
National League of Cities
Institute for Youth, Education
and Families

Elissa Hoagland Izmailyan,
Children & Nature Network

Participant Survey Comment

“This was the first time I’ve participated in a C&NN event, and I didn’t know what to expect. I was impressed by the depth and breadth of the organization’s work, and am particularly interested in my city participating in the next CCCN cohort. It was a fantastic experience and I am honored to be part of the C&NN constellation.”

OUTCOMES: ACTION FRAMEWORK

The City Government Action Area developed the following action items for participants, their local partners, and CCCN and its collaborators in the international children and nature movement:

Local Capacity, Policy, and Programming

Bring the lessons learned from this leadership convening back to each community. As one participant noted, *“I arrived empty and am leaving full of things to do.”* This action item will be led primarily by the city representatives, but will be supported by the CCCN team through its technical assistance and peer learning programs.

Next Steps for Measuring Baselines and Progress

As part of the convening, we began a broader effort to develop shared metrics for our work. The metrics team was directed to begin with a broad research process, drawing on parallel efforts where possible, and to devote particular focus to metrics relating to non-binary topics such as equity and nature quality. Participants also noted that resources alone aren't always enough, and that support and training from peer organizations, community partners, and CCCN staff may be required for successful measurement and assessment.

Peer Learning Network

Participants were in unanimous support of a robust peer learning network that enables CCCN partners to support one another outside of formal convenings. Participants recommended a web-based forum for discussion and resource sharing across many groups: city to city, across regions and CCCN cohorts; department to department and across departments; and with other organizations and action areas within the Children and Nature Movement. Participants also requested resources to support the day-to-day activities of cities and their partners, and were keenly interested in a policy bank with particular focus on equity policies (this may be delivered through peer sharing, above). Participants also sought additional information and metrics to communicate the value of children and nature strategies to a range of urban priorities.



SPECIAL THANKS TO:

A robust hosting delegation from the **City of Oakland** and its partner organizations.

Representatives of **CCCN pilot cities**, which completed CCCN plans in 2016:

San Francisco, CA | Austin, TX
 St. Paul, MN | Madison, WI
 Grand Rapids, MI | Louisville, KY
 Providence, RI

Representatives of **six current CCCN** cities receiving technical assistance in 2018-2020:

St. Louis, MO | Houston, TX
 Baltimore, MD | Gary, IN
 San Antonio, TX | Atlanta, GA

Representatives of five additional cities participating in the **CCCN Peer Learning Network** in 2018:

Minneapolis, MN | Rochester, NY
 Seattle, WA | Albuquerque, NM
 Cincinnati, OH

Representatives of **additional cities** selected to participate in this Leadership Summit through a competitive application process:

Salt Lake City, UT | Chicago, IL
 Philadelphia, PA | New York City, NY
 Palo Alto, CA | Reno, NV
 Denver, CO | Melbourne, Australia

International thought leaders from 16 nonprofit and landscape design organizations

JPB Foundation, which generously supports our CCCN work

CCCN program staff from the National League of Cities and the Children & Nature Network

GREEN SCHOOLYARDS

OVERVIEW

The Green Schoolyards Action Area brought together more than 100 experts and advocates from the US and international green schoolyards field, representing education, non-profits, land trusts, Zoos, parks departments, research, landscape architecture, health, communications and more.

PROCESS

The primary focus of the group's work was to refine and adopt a **Green Schoolyards Action Agenda** that was drafted with input from:

- > Leaders at the 2015 National Green Schoolyards Summit,
- > Conversations with communities and experts in the field, and,
- > Reports such as "Green Schoolyards: A Growing Movement Supporting Health, Education and Connection with Nature," authored by the Healthy Schools Campaign and Openlands.

The vision of the agenda is to ensure that:

All U.S. communities offer access to green schoolyards by 2050 to enhance children's healthy development, community wellbeing and positive environmental impacts.

The agenda outlines five goals and supporting actions that will help realize the 2050 goal, addressing the funding, policy, communications and awareness building needed to move city- or school district-wide green schoolyard programs to scale across the U.S. – with an emphasis on low-income communities and communities of color. The agenda was sent to Summit participants in advance, allowing them to evaluate and identify specific agenda items they could carry forward in their communities and/or organizations. During the Leadership Summit, participants officially "signed on" to the agenda, identified or confirmed what actions they would/could move forward, and then spent time working in self-selected groups to develop work plans to move actions forward.

Participants had varied prior experiences with green schoolyards, both as a concept and/or in supporting their implementation. An emphasis was placed on getting to know group members and creating a welcoming venue for all, no matter their experience level.



ACTION AREA GOALS:

1. Deepen the collective understanding of the Green Schoolyards Action Agenda, including catching up those who are new to the group.
2. Encourage participants to sign up for specific action items, and begin to develop a plan to move these items forward.
3. Deepen connections between participants, and encourage folks to work together on specific actions.

green schoolyards
ACTION AGENDA

"I am happy to sign on to help move the green schoolyards agenda forward. Louisville is rich in natural resources and rich in ways to connect with nature. With these resources, comes responsibility. According to recent data released by the Louisville Metro Health Department's Center for Health Equity, there are some zip codes in the city where life expectancy is up to 10 years less than other zip codes. This is the place to start, with ensuring that barriers to getting outside are removed for the kids in these zip codes."



Lacey McNary, MSW
Founder and Principal
McNary Group

OUTCOMES

Individuals signed up to support and activate the **Green Schoolyards Agenda**, excerpted and featured on pages 16-19, and have continued to do so post-Summit.

**green
schoolyards**
ACTION AGENDA

Increasing equitable access to nature's benefits in schoolyards across the U.S.



our vision
All U.S. communities offer access to green schoolyards by 2050 to enhance children's healthy development, community wellbeing and positive environmental impacts.

A growing body of evidence shows that time spent learning and playing in nature helps children reach their full academic and social-emotional potential. Regular access to high quality green space 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.

**“Imagine...
how our communities would look and feel if all schoolyards were green schoolyards, where children and families learn and grow with nature in their daily lives.”**

Teresa Weatherall Neal,
Superintendent of Schools,
Grand Rapids Public Schools



SPECIAL THANKS TO:

- Green Schoolyards Speakers:**
- Rachel Newman Greene**
City of Providence, RI
 - Alejandra Chiesa**
The Trust for Public Land
 - Karen Knight**
City of Austin, TX
 - John Helmholdt**
Grand Rapids Public Schools, MI
 - Lourdes Rodriguez**
University of Texas at Austin
Dell Medical School
 - Anne-Marie Spencer**
PlayCore
 - Hanaa Hamdi**
The Trust for Public Land
 - Holly Hunt,**
Centers for Disease Control
 - Alex Mays**
Healthy Schools Campaign
 - Jeff Vincent**
Center for Cities and Schools

- Facilitators:**
- Sophie Sarkar**
The Avarna Group and Children & Nature Network Board of Directors
 - Jaime Zaplatosch and Mollie Jean Thompson**
Children & Nature Network

Additional opportunities for action were identified and activated:

- > Sign on to the Build America's School Infrastructure Coalition (BASIC) campaign to support schools as essential infrastructure in the U.S.
- > Join Hanaa Hamdi and Trust for Public Land in their work to modify the IRS tax code to allow for green space as a Community Benefits expenditure.
- > Sign the International School Grounds Alliance's Beneficial Risk statement.
- > Participate in The Children & Nature Network's follow-up green schoolyards webinar.*
**Note: C&NN's "Educating in the Outdoors" webinar was attended by more than 300 people on June 6.*

Participant Survey Comment

"Thank you to the Summit team! I started working with schools and greening campuses 20 years ago...it is amazing the progress we've made!"

green schoolyards

ACTION AGENDA

Increasing equitable access to nature's benefits in schoolyards across the U.S.

our vision

All U.S. communities offer access to green schoolyards by 2050 to enhance children's healthy development, community wellbeing and positive environmental impacts.

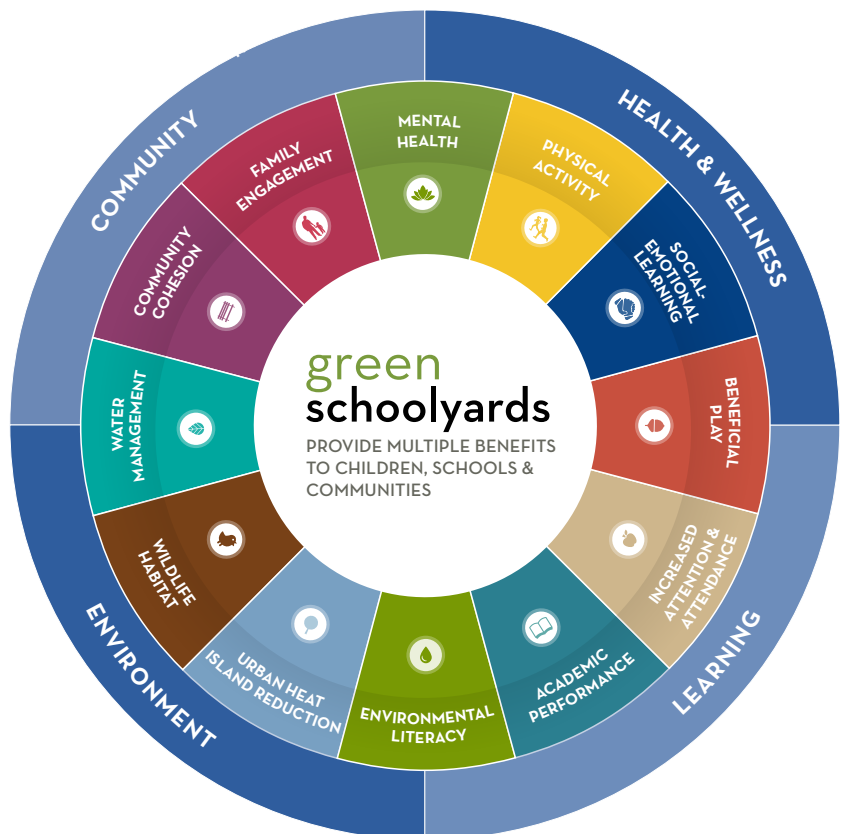
A growing body of evidence shows that time spent learning and playing in nature helps children reach their full academic and social-emotional potential. Regular access to high quality green space improves mental and physical health—and inspires strong connections to the natural world.

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.



“Imagine...
how our communities would look and feel if all schoolyards were green schoolyards, where children and families learn and grow with nature in their daily lives.”

Teresa Weatherall Neal,
Superintendent of Schools,
Grand Rapids Public Schools



green
schoolyards
ACTION AGENDA

Increasing equitable access to nature's benefits in schoolyards across the U.S.



what are green schoolyards?

The Children & Nature Network defines green schoolyards as multi-functional school grounds, designed by and for the entire school community, that include places for students, teachers, parents and community members to play, learn, explore and grow. During out of school time, these schoolyards are ideally for community use.

Green schoolyards can include:

- outdoor classrooms
- native and pollinator gardens
- stormwater capture
- traditional play equipment
- nature play areas
- edible gardens
- trails
- trees and shrubs

building on
community
strengths

Safe, nature-filled green spaces are not equally accessible to low-income communities and communities of color. The combination of limited access to green space, economic stress and other community challenges can inhibit healthy development for children.

Green schoolyards build on community strengths and when equitably distributed, can help all children thrive. Creating access to nature in schoolyards in every community would have a lasting impact on children's health and well-being, and particularly, for the most vulnerable children.

green schoolyards | ACTION AGENDA GOALS



Cross-sector leaders and partners support green schoolyards for the benefit of children, families and communities.



Communities value and promote green schoolyards as essential assets and infrastructure.



A robust evidence base demonstrates the many benefits of green schoolyards.



Sustainable funding supports development, stewardship and maintenance of green schoolyards.



Federal, state, local and school district policies support the equitable distribution, implementation and use of green schoolyards.

green schoolyards

ACTION AGENDA GOALS

Goals are not listed in sequential order but identify what partners believe is necessary to advance our vision. Actions may advance simultaneously.



Cross-sector leaders and partners support green schoolyards for the benefit of children, families and communities.

ACTIONS:

1. Increase awareness of green schoolyard components and benefits with elected officials, decision makers, and advocates across sectors and within communities.
2. Distribute green schoolyard materials and information widely via cross-sector and community partners, at conferences, convenings, and other dissemination venues.
3. Perform an assessment of cross-sector partner organizations' goals in order to identify the connections to and opportunities for green schoolyards, as well as a relational assessment of organizations already in this space.
4. Identify new partners who have a stake in green space access and can accomplish their goals through green schoolyards, and target outreach efforts with those partners.



Communities value and promote green schoolyards as essential assets and infrastructure.

ACTIONS:

1. Develop and adopt government and school district policies to promote shared use, liability and risk assessment, and open community access to schoolyards.
2. Include green schoolyards in comprehensive municipal and community plans as spaces that can achieve outcomes in health, sustainability, the environment, community cohesion, and park access.
3. Establish planning processes where children, community members, parents, school staff and organizations are valued as leaders and decision-makers in order to achieve culturally appropriate design, use, programming and stewardship of green schoolyards. Provide trainings to support facilitators, planners and designers to do this.
4. Formal and informal educators are trained and feel comfortable to use their entire schoolyard as an outdoor classroom during and out-of-school time.



A robust evidence base demonstrates the many benefits of green schoolyards.

ACTIONS:

1. In order to advance the field, synthesize and disseminate published research on the benefits of green schoolyards; share ongoing and future research and evaluation; conduct vigorous, collaborative, multidisciplinary research; and, create a reporting platform to monitor progress of new and existing green schoolyard initiatives on a variety of indicators in order to aggregate data that can impact understanding of potential outcomes.
2. Assess the economic benefit, value and return on investment of green schoolyards for municipalities, school districts, communities and society.
3. Create case-making toolkits demonstrating the evidence and success stories for key audiences such as local and national policymakers, educators, community members and funders.
4. Collect baseline evidence to demonstrate the equity landscape of green schoolyards to create urgency and focus on low income communities and communities of color.
5. Establish a multidisciplinary research agenda for green schoolyards based on an analysis of current knowledge and gaps in the literature.



Sustainable funding supports development, stewardship and maintenance of green schoolyards.

ACTIONS:

1. Advocate for changes in federal, state and local public investment in green schoolyards by supporting school facilities and education funding, grants and reimbursements.
2. Promote the use of private investments such as accelerator grants, innovation grants, social impact bonds and CRAs (Community Reinvestment Act) to serve as catalysts for program capacity, movement building and long-term stewardship and maintenance of green schoolyards.
3. Advocate for decision-makers to prioritize funding distribution to low-income communities and communities of color for greatest equity impact.
4. Use and further develop successful public funding models and mechanisms to support green schoolyards, such as local and state capital funds; urban utility agencies; community benefits programs; allocation of school infrastructure bonds and capital improvement funds.
5. Work with municipal and state government advocates to identify new dynamic funding sources for green schoolyards, such as taxes on soda, marijuana, and development.



Federal, state, local and school district policies support the equitable distribution, implementation and use of green schoolyards.

ACTIONS | General Policy:

1. Advocate for the use of green schoolyards as sites for targeted health interventions.
2. Work with national organizations to integrate green schoolyards in to existing or emerging equity-focused policy agendas, such as those addressing social justice, racial equity, sustainability, social/emotional learning, play, and violence prevention.
3. Create policy case-making documents for decision makers at local, state and national levels.
4. Engage with existing networks to advance the green schoolyards agenda.

ACTIONS | State or Local/District Level Policy:

1. Integrate outdoor learning requirements into state and local school district Environmental Literacy Plans.
2. Expand existing state, municipal or district shared use and open use policies to include green schoolyard spaces, and leverage those policies to reduce school district liability for green schoolyards.
3. Advocate for including equity assessments of school ground environments as part of district capital planning.
4. Expand School Health & Wellness policies to include use of green schoolyards for outdoor play and learning as part of the school day.
5. Create policy to implement green schoolyard design guidelines at state or school district levels, integrating these into overall school design guidelines.
6. Work with hospitals to integrate green schoolyards into their Community Health Needs Assessments in order to increase individual or group funding for schoolyard programs.
7. Include green schoolyards in Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) report cards and implementation.

ACTIONS | National Policy:

1. Include green schoolyards in the next federal assessment of school facilities.
2. Add Green Schoolyards to the Collaborative for High Performing Schools, U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools, USGBC Green Schools, and LEED for Schools criteria.
3. Create a menu of green schoolyard elements that can aid municipalities in meeting Clean Water Act permitting requirements for stormwater and combined sewer systems run by the States and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.
4. Expand use of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to include green schoolyards for green space development.
5. Include quality and quantity of green schoolyards in the Office of Civil Rights (Department of Education) school report card in order to collect accurate data on inequities in green schoolyard distribution.
6. Align green schoolyards with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and ASDC “Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child” model.
7. Broaden definition at Internal Revenue Service of “community benefit” for addressing Community Health Needs Assessments.
8. Pilot a Health Impact Project where green schoolyards have been identified as an intervention and included in a Health Impact Assessment.
9. Advocate for new language for technical specifications that address ADA compliance in outdoor learning and play environments on school grounds.

NATURE-BASED LEARNING RESEARCH

OVERVIEW

The Nature-Based Learning Research (NBLR) action area was inspired by the efforts of the National Science Foundation-funded project, *“The Science of Nature-Based Learning Collaborative Research Network.”* The Network’s goals are to develop a research agenda for the field of nature-based learning, conduct an exploratory research project on nature-based science learning, catalyze research questions and collaborations, and disseminate research-based information.

The 23 academic and practitioner members of this Network hoped, from the beginning, that a bigger and broader effort could emerge once grant deliverables were met. In that spirit, we developed the Nature-Based Learning Research (NBLR) action area for the 2018 C&NN Summit. Nearly 80 individuals attended, including 12 members of the original NSF-funded Network, and nearly 70 others who applied or were invited to attend. They represent a broad range of sectors, from higher education, k-12 education, and early childhood education, to non-formal learning settings, as well as functions, such as academic researcher, program evaluator, teacher, educational administrator, nonprofit leader, philanthropist, student, and more.

PROCESS

After initial context setting, review of agreements to guide our interaction during the Summit, a lively and fun getting-to-know-you activity, and discussion of equity and inclusion emphases of the Summit, we organized the bulk of our time together around a modified [Open Space Technology](#) (OST). In OST, the agenda for the meeting, in the form of content for small group discussions and working groups, is determined by the attendees. Facilitators set the stage for that work by providing a scaffold to support idea generation, setting time limits, ensuring appropriate documentation, and facilitating large group conversations to synthesize insights and understand the connections and big ideas emerging from the process.

Facilitators posed the following question to participants:

“What actions can we take here at the Summit, or make plans to take after the Summit, to generate and apply research to support equitable access to effective nature-based learning?”

Using the Liberating Structures 1-2-4-ALL approach, participants generated possible small group topics and “tried them on” with each other. The OST “marketplace” was then opened and about a dozen individuals offered topics. Several of these topics were preplanned, and proposed by members of the NSF-funded Network with the hope of moving forward in concrete ways several ideas raised by Network members over the last year. A large early childhood-focused group was also planned for ahead of time. Three participants also offered specific topics related to early childhood, which formed the initial set of topics for a large subgroup that moved to a different room for the remainder of the action area (the rich discussion and resulting actions of the Early Childhood subgroup are documented in a companion report).

During lunch, facilitators examined the overlap between remaining proposals, did some combining of ideas, and prepared a Research Generation, Research Translation, and Research Implementation framework to ground and help to prioritize the bulk of the remaining small group discussions.

ACTION AREA GOALS:

The goals of the NBLR Action Area at the Summit were to:

- > **Catalyze actions to generate and activate research** to support equitable access to effective nature-based learning for all students.
- > **Inspire and inform** the broad children and nature movement and the field of environmental education through evidence-based communications and actions.

“By participating in the leadership summit, I was able to get feedback on several research projects related to teaching children in outdoor learning environments. One of our working groups focused on increasing student voices in research, which pushed me to formalize a process for using student writing as a data source in a study on the use of school gardens at an elementary school. Discussions on what research is needed in the field was helpful in conceptualizing a study I am developing on gender and risky play. In sum, I found the time spent with other participants to be extremely valuable to my own work.”



Scott Morrison
Assistant Professor of Education
Elon University

SIGNIFICANT COMPONENTS | KEY INGREDIENTS

First and foremost, the diverse perspectives and innovative thinking of participants contributed significantly to the success of the Action Area. The flexible and creative nature of OST was also a factor. Based on comments from several participants and a few observers, the natural light and panoramic view from the Skyline Room also contributed to our group’s happiness and productivity. One observer noted that, compared to groups that had spent several hours in a windowless room, NBLR action area participants appeared less fatigued and there was a “different energy” in the room, which he attributed to the conducive work space.

Though many participants appreciated, and made productive use of, the opportunity to generate the content of the small group work, the “messiness” of the OST participatory process didn’t work for others.

Pre-readings were important to provide context, but we found they could not be relied on to adequately prepare everyone.

OUTCOMES

Facilitators charged small groups with the task of placing an equity and inclusion lens on their discussions and inquired in large group discussion times about how equity and inclusion “showed up” in their discussions or their plans for action. Participants’ responses offered the following insights:

- > Conduct research on inequities.
- > Challenge the system; change up who asks the research questions, who does the research, who is researched, who has access to the research findings, who benefits from the research.
- > Publish in open access journals.
- > Reflect multiple voices in research.
- > Create flatness between researchers and practitioners (balance power).
- > Increase value placed on lay publications to create more access to research.
- > Increase accessibility (in language) to research through common language.
- > Integrate typically absent voices—children and indigenous peoples.

Through use of OST, attendees participated in five hours of participant-determined and -facilitated small group collaborative work that resulted in a set of research generation, translation and implementation ideas, enthusiasm for the launch of a new researcher/practitioner network and a call for a coordinating structure to support these efforts.



SPECIAL THANKS TO:

NBLR Action Area Facilitators:*

Cathy Jordan and Cheryl Charles
Children & Nature Network

Sheila Williams Ridge

Shirley G. Moore Lab School,
University of Minnesota

*Our facilitators also serve as coordinators or members of the NSF-funded Network.



SPECIFIC IDEAS FOR ACTON

Research Generation Support Structure:

- > Create a robust researcher/practitioner network to catalyze research ideas and collaborations.
- > Build and promote an online “matching” tool to help potential researcher, formal and informal learning practitioner, and funder collaborators across the world find and connect to each other.
- > Develop and promote “Advisor-In-A-Box,” an online tool to advise graduate student, post-doctoral fellows and early investigators on critical NBL research questions and rigorous methods that are feasible for their stage of training or career.
- > Develop a research agenda specifically about early childhood nature-based learning.

Research Translation Support Structure:

- > Develop research syntheses of existing research, publish for academic audiences, and translate into well-designed reports for formal and non-formal educators and lay audiences.
- > Develop a suite of social media-ready images and messages for Twitter and Facebook, develop blog content for partner dissemination, support an evidence-based webinar series.

Research Implementation Support Structure:

- > Support the integration of youth and community voices in all phases of research through building the capacity of researchers, researchers in training and others to use the participatory research and indigenous knowledge expertise within the network to build the capacity of research teams.

NEXT STEPS

Each of the eleven actions and the teams willing to move these ideas forward is documented in the companion list [“NBLR Actions and Champions.”](#)

The last discussion of our action area time focused on how we might move this body of work forward and create a network amongst the action area participants moving forward. The following ideas represent the primary insights:

- > How can this fit into participants’ current work?
- > Are the right people assembled? Who is here and who is not?
- > Explore potential alliances within the action areas and beyond.
- > What resources do we already have in our current members?
- > Social network analysis of this group could be a tool to understand alliances, resources, etc.
- > Research implementation could be part of all action areas; what tools are needed; where is there overlap?
- > Look for ways to leverage /collaborate – eePro, eeWorks, eeResearch.
- > Synthesis and cohesion should be provided by C&NN.
- > A coordinator of the action champions is needed (hire a staff person).
- > Distribute leadership, balanced with clear facilitation.
- > Bridge different networks (Note: Funders such as NSF like this).
- > Could get an NSF planning grant (50K). Talk to program officer.

What can C&NN provide?

At the 2019 conference:

- > Researcher and practitioner networking.
- > Reconvene the action area for check-in and moving forward.
- > Offer intro/background/“101” versions for new attendees and a more advanced track for previously involved attendees.
- > Offer a grad student interest area within the research track.

Ongoing:

- > Bridging, synergy, cohesion.
- > Assistance in securing funds.
- > Webinar/conference calls as a way to reconvene the group over time.
- > Visioning & big picture thinking.

Participant Survey Comment

“I will make important changes to the research projects that I am developing based on conversations from the Summit.”

EARLY CHILDHOOD

OVERVIEW

The Nature Based Learning Action Area also facilitated a discussion on the role of Early Childhood in increasing nature connection. The process used for this break-out group started with brief introductions and a sharing of a concern or interest area that brought participants to the group. Areas of interest and concern were grouped into four categories:

- > **Wellbeing and ecological identity**
- > **Teacher preparation**
- > **Professional development**
- > **"Making the case" for nature connection in early childhood**

These four categories then became the topics for small group discussions focused on actions needed to move the field forward. Key ideas emerging from the four small-group discussions included:

- > The need to understand teacher goals and expectations when connecting children with nature.
- > The need to examine how teachers view their own relationship with nature and their comfort level with nature engagement.
- > The need for teacher preparation to include experiences fostering deeper engagement with nature. Related research could examine the impact this has on their work with children.
- > The possible need for teacher preparation to include more emphasis on stewardship/kinship with nature.

Some of the issues to be addressed in **professional development for teachers and early childhood professionals** include:

- > Risk assessment and safety concerns.
- > Raising the comfort level of teachers, children and families.
- > Translating research and theory into practice.
- > Using nature and nature-based learning as a "lens versus a silo".
- > Securing greater support by "making the case" with diverse audiences (*community leaders, funders, practitioners, policy makers, academic institutions, and health care providers*).
- > Ensuring access to nature-based learning for all young children.
- > Consistent communication of core messages about the importance of early childhood across all action networks.

ACTION STRATEGIES

From this discussion, possible action areas were identified:

- > Develop accessible research-based core messages to build stakeholder excitement about connecting young children with nature.
- > Develop a research agenda to address gaps in the research about practices connecting young children with nature and related benefits.
- > Develop an inclusive and equity-focused mission statement to honor, guide, and support early childhood in all action areas in the movement to connect children with nature.

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Early Childhood Facilitators:
Ruth Wilson, Children & Nature Network and **Emilian Geczi**, NAAEE

early
 childhood
 INTEREST AREAS



GRASSROOTS LEADERSHIP

OVERVIEW

Forty-five leaders and activists gathered as a community of experts to participate in the Grassroots Action Area, representing a wide variety of perspectives and expertise as educators, students, family nature club leaders, local, state and regional grassroots leaders, and those in leadership roles within zoos, museums, nonprofit organizations, park districts and government agencies. Their unique perspectives, enthusiasm and ideas generated rich discussions and compelling action recommendations.

Participants came from 33 US cities across 12 states, along with representatives from Canada, Portugal, Colombia, Ecuador, India, and Australia. There were participants of all ages, from the youngest member, 10 year-old Robbie Bond, founder of Kids Speak For Parks, to elders in their seventies.

PROCESS

Participants were invited to discuss and generate actions and next steps to grow the children and nature movement and increase equitable access to nature for all children. As a grounding activity, the group considered equity and inclusion with the facilitators posing the question:

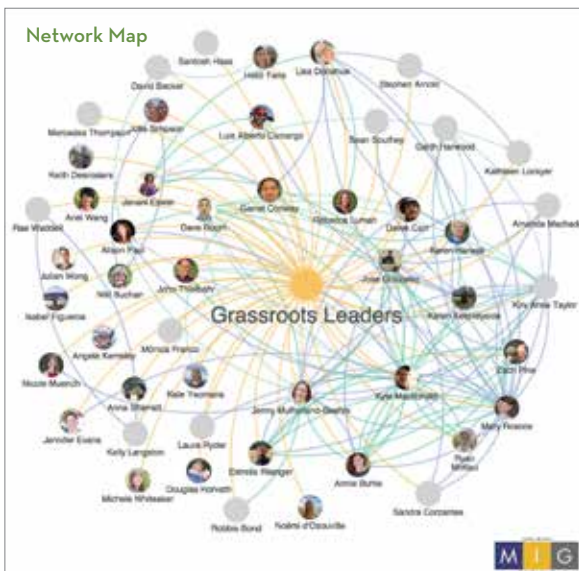
[**What would a liberated outdoors look like?**]

The question provided a way to filter conversations to ensure that equity and inclusion were part of both the process and outcome of the summit.

The wide range of perspectives and experiences of action area participants created the need to balance group activities to incorporate both larger themes for visionary and future-oriented thinkers with practical steps for boots on the ground, action-oriented leaders.

'Network Weaving' strategies and 'Liberating Structures' were used to develop generative small group conversations and ideas into three proposed actions supported by the larger group to grow the children & nature movement.

Before the Summit, maps of the Grassroots Action Area were created to help visualize existing connections between participants, indicating relationships and collaborations, areas of work, geography and interest in engagement. The maps helped create new connections and highlight the knowledge, expertise and experience of the participants in the action area.



On the maps, the profiles of leaders reflected strong interest in the essential connection between people (and all living beings) and connection modeling. The profiles reflected a focus on equity and inclusion, cultural regeneration and sustainability, cultural narratives and representation, and sense of place. Leaders were engaged in community capacity building and connections across sectors. Other themes related to children's play, safety, beneficial risk and adult fear.

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Grassroots Leadership Action Area Facilitators:

José González

Latino Outdoors

Amanda Machado

Brown Environmentalist

Mary Roscoe

Bay Area Children in Nature Collaborative



"The biggest take-away I had from the C&NN Leadership Summit is how essential certain non-traditional/unexpected partners are to truly creating a liberated outdoors, where everyone is safe, welcome and included. As a result, the California Outdoor Engagement Coalition is working to expand our membership base to include new sectors, such as criminal justice organizations that work to stop racial profiling and police violence and workers' rights organizations that fight for paid time off and family leave. No one should have to choose between protecting lives or putting food on the table and spending time outdoors with their kids."

—Jenny Mulholland-Beahrs
Director, California Outdoor Engagement Coalition



OUTCOMES

Three **Primary Action Recommendations** from the Grassroots Action Area include:

DEVELOP MAPS as visual representations of leaders (organizations and networks) that create potential for collaboration, partnerships and action. Mentorship and working across the movement as peers creates diverse leadership and access to resources. Mapping gives diverse community of leaders “a place at the table”. The development of peer relationships offers the potential for creating an incubation track that includes sharing resources, partnerships, successes, and technology used within the movement.

CREATE A TOOLKIT to pull together ways to organize and share tools/tactics for year-round learning and provide the following:

- > Common ways to learn through humility, reservoirs of wisdom, relationship, interconnectedness and spaces in between.
- > Concrete tools and tactics to share multilingual/multicultural resources and to express language and shifting narratives through voices and stories.
- > Support for cross culture leadership and equitable access.
- > Ways to empower local leaders each step of the way.
- > De-centering whiteness in the field to “bring the wall down”; when, where, does this happen?

DEVELOP A SURVEY centered on community and parent engagement. A survey will provide an opportunity to engage and elevate community leaders and obtain feedback from the community in order to assess and work with the following ideas/themes/concepts:

- > Are we perpetuating dis-empowerment by *doing for others vs. doing with others*?
- > How do we engage different culturally-based visions and goals/methods of nature connection and nature-based programming to make our efforts relevant and uplifting (not colonizing) to the communities we seek to serve?
- > Hold cross-sector conversations to identify and develop strategies; conversations could be regional and/or issue-based.
- > Equity: Liberation needs to inform the creation of tools and strategies.
- > Solve immediate (social) problems using nature.
- > Develop new language for nature-based, transformational education.
- > Include community members who were not part of 2018 Summit conversations in future Summits.



ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

to inform the 2019 C&NN International Conference:

- > Who isn't in the network?
- > How are we centering our focus on the voices, stories and leadership of those who are marginalized?
- > How does the Children & Nature Network help create a systemic shift as a movement?
- > How can we speed up the change process?
- > How can C&NN support the needs of smaller organizations with connections and resources to amplify voices/projects that are otherwise marginalized?



NEXT STEPS

The Children & Nature Network supports leadership through convening, trainings, research and resources. As a Summit follow-up, C&NN will provide the following opportunities to connect:

- > **September 2018:** Grassroots Action Area conference call for peer sharing of themes and Summit recommendations.
- > **January 2019:** Video conference for grassroots leaders for sharing action related to Summit themes and work in progress.
- > **RFP:** An opportunity to submit a presentation or workshop proposal for the C&NN International Conference in Oakland, May 16-19, 2019.

NEXT GENERATION LEADERSHIP

OVERVIEW

The Next Generation Leadership Action Area was led for and by young leaders, with more than 60 participants contributing unique perspectives. Participants included more than 20 leaders ranging in age from 20 to 30 years old; representation from nonprofit organizations and government agencies at the city, state and national level; and occupations ranging from students, K-12 and environmental educators to outdoor recreation and landscape architecture professionals. Attendees came from 45 US cities across 28 states, with international representation from 2 additional countries.

Over two days of interactive workshops and discussions, young leaders guided conversations and activities to:

- > **Convene & engage** a diverse group of leaders in a conversation around the opportunities to support the current and next generation of young leaders.
- > **Discover & determine** alignment of participant work as it relates to supporting young leaders in nature connection and leadership development.
- > **Identify strategies** for increasing the leadership and diversity of young people benefiting from and contributing to meaningful connections to nature, outdoor activities and outdoor-related career opportunities – and ways to empower diverse young leaders to become community advocates for nature connection.
- > **Build a set of collective action items** in support of young leaders and their nature-based activation.
- > **Define mechanisms** for ongoing engagement of the individual participants and our collective action items.

PROCESS

The Next Gen Action Area began with identifying who was in the room and establishing guidelines for engagement, including a community agreement and a commitment to prioritize diversity, equity and inclusion as the lens through which we would generate ideas. Conversations were rooted in four barriers encountered by Next Generation Leaders. A network, organizational and personal lens was applied for establishing actions and goals. With these perspectives, the team proceeded to:

- > Explore our collective networks to understand where work aligns and intersects.
- > Better understand common barriers and opportunities that factor into Next Generation leadership.
- > Identify solutions for addressing the common barriers and opportunities, and discern and prioritize shared goals among the solutions generated.
- > Apply organizational and individual actions for activation.
- > Explore and articulate opportunities to collaborate for increased impact.

Lessons Learned

- > By originating conversations in the barriers encountered by young leaders, we were able to prioritize considerations for equity and inclusion.
- > The first day was facilitated outside at Temescal Beach House, which provided opportunities for nature connection—as well as modeling how to facilitate outdoor workshops and reflecting shared missions and values.
- > Next Generation and Grassroots Leadership Action Areas were combined at various times, providing opportunities for networking and alignment.
- > Conversations about Next Gen Leadership were not exclusive to this Action Area, highlighting opportunities for integrating young leaders into other Action Areas and presentations at Summits and Conferences, as well as the overall movement.
- > Facilitation by Natural Leaders was powerful and inspiring. As young leaders assume roles as facilitators, it is incumbent upon us all to not only step aside but to provide training and preparation for them to be successful in their leadership roles.

ACTION AREA GOALS:

The collaborative work of the Next Generation Leadership Action Area resulting in the following shared goals:

1. Establish a culture of community-based, relevant communications in support of diverse young leaders
2. Invest in pathways for employment and advancement of young leaders in the outdoors
3. Build collaborative capacity, training and mentorship in support of young leaders
4. Value and honor the skills and leadership young leaders bring to outdoor fields and industries

"We would like to acknowledge that in our effort to define our work, the reference to 'next generation leaders' misses the reality that young leaders are not only the next generation of leaders but the leaders of today."



—Monica Lopez Magee
Director, Community
Leadership Development
Children & Nature Network

OUTCOMES

Goals and Action Steps from the Next Generation Action Area include:

GOAL 1: Establish a culture of community-based and relevant communications in support of diverse young leaders

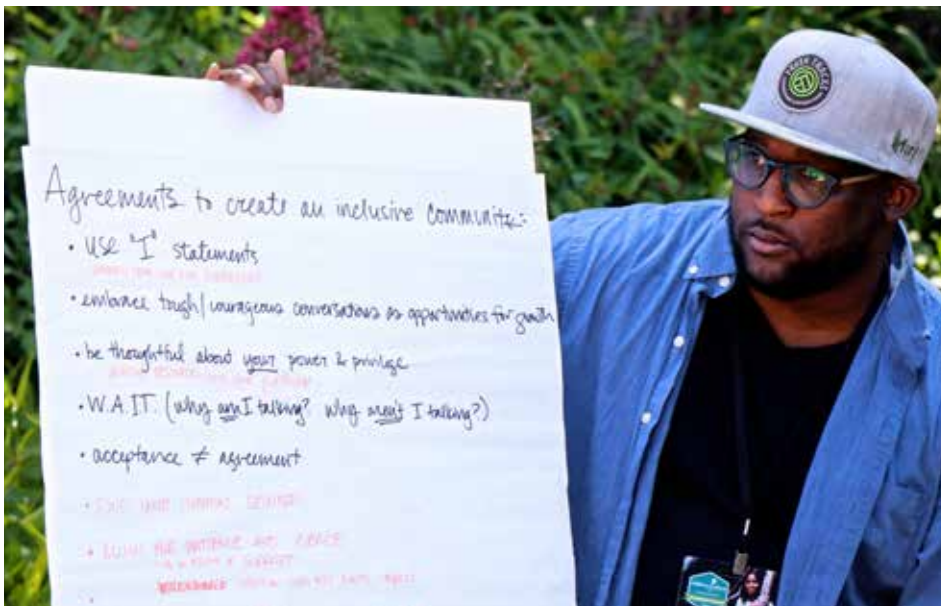
- > Adopt audience accessible, relevant external language.
- > Create culturally sensitive, relevant organization culture.
- > Acknowledge the diversity of languages in our work.
- > Value the diversity of languages and literacy levels in our communities.
- > Place youth voice at the center of program design and communications.
- > Create equitable systems of communication where voices have equal input.

GOAL 2: Invest in pathways for employment and advancement of diverse young leaders in the outdoors

- > Make working in the nature field a fair-wage career.
- > Develop & adopt hiring practices that are more inclusive to diverse young leaders.
- > Provide training & resources to develop skills & leadership in diverse young leaders.

GOAL 3: Build collaborative capacity, training and mentorship in support of diverse young leaders

- > Develop a shared action agenda with common metrics.
- > Encourage shared leadership & servant leadership that places youth voice at the center of network design and organizational objectives.
- > Build awareness, capacity, and opportunities for peer and intergenerational mentorship.
- > Be intentional and deliberate about the structure of the network in support of young leaders.
- > Create a space for collaboration that helps to reduce duplication of work and increase sharing among organizations and young leaders.



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 Nicole Jackson Victoria Serna
 Ashley Mocorro Powell

Next Gen Action Area Facilitators:
 CJ Goulding and Monica Lopez Magee, Children & Nature Network

OUTCOMES continued

GOAL 4: Value and honor the skills and leadership young leaders bring to outdoor fields and industries

- > Establish an organizational culture of honoring the unique attributes of diverse young leaders.
- > Identify accountability measures, policies, and standards that increase advancement, compensation, and hiring of diverse young leaders.
- > Develop tools and resources for facilitating the dismantling of power structures within organizations.
- > Provide professional development opportunities for diverse young leaders to grow their leadership skills.

Participant Comment

"I feel that I am growing and developing as a leader, and finding my voice. I gained some good ideas and big inspiration at the Summit for encouraging the other young leaders that I work with."

NEXT STEPS

Next steps were prioritized in three key areas:

- 1) Staying connected,**
- 2) Sharing and collecting resources** for identifying best practices, and,
- 3) Formalizing the ideas generated into a draft action agenda** to be presented at the 2019 Children & Nature Network International Conference, for adoption by Next Generation Action Area participants and the community at large.



HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

OVERVIEW

The Health Professionals Action Area brought together leaders in health-related fields who are interested in advancing nature-based solutions for children's and community health—and health equity. Over the course of two days, more than 40 leaders representing health care, public health, research and non-profit organizations came together to inform a **Health Professional Action Agenda** to promote children's outdoor time in nature.

PROCESS

The convening was organized around three key areas of inquiry:

- >**CLINICAL ENVIRONMENT:** How can health professionals integrate nature connection into the clinical setting through programs, patient education, and the clinical environment?
- >**PUBLIC HEALTH:** How can healthcare providers and public health professionals become leading voices in advocacy for equitable access to nature?
- >**COMMUNICATIONS:** How can health professionals make the research case and significantly grow awareness of the benefits of nature within health professional networks?

As the action items below were articulated, there was a strong emphasis on creating inclusivity among a variety of professionals who affect children's health and with the language we choose to use as we communicate about a wide spectrum of nature and experiences. Clinical healthcare opportunities were considered in the context of broader public health and environmental health issues related to disparities in access to nature, the effects of climate change, and other equity-based considerations.

The participants inspired new thinking and cohesive energy toward engaging new professionals across disciplines to advocate for the importance of nature-based experiences as opportunities for well-being, health and healing.

OUTCOMES

The health professionals identified seven domains of action:

1. Promote high quality research on the effects of nature contact on children's health and well-being.

Participants suggested that in order to advance the field, a synthesis of the existing research will be necessary and should:

- > Include an emphasis on targeted health outcomes of population health significance.
- > Be transparent about the state of the research, including weaknesses in methodology and rigor.
- > Include research related to physiological health, mental health, behavior and development, health disparities and equity issues related to access.
- > Identify the research gaps that exist that prevent fully making the case.

Participants also felt that it is important to promote research into practice and support development of valid and reliable tools and methods for measuring nature contact for clinical settings and research.

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Health Action Area Presenters:

- Dr. Stephen Pont**
Texas Dept. of State Health Services
- Dr. Abhay Dandekar**
Kaiser Permanente
- Dr. Nooshin Razani**
UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital
- Dr. Pooja Tandon**
University of Washington
- John Henderson**
Park Rx America
- Dr. Curtis Chan**
San Francisco Dept. of Public Health
- Betty Sun**
Institute at the Golden Gate

Health Action Area Facilitators:

- Nancy Herron**, Children & Nature
Network Board of Directors
- Margaret Lamar**
Children & Nature Network

"I worked as a doctor with a pediatric infectious disease specialty. I 'saw the nature light' in 2008 because I feel this issue is core to childhood. I am heartened to see so many doctors and health professionals in this movement and inspired by the programs I heard about at the Summit. As a field, we have a lot to contribute to the fight for access to nature as an integral part of childhood, whether we do that through public health or clinical medicine, or members of our local communities. The Summit helped us to connect with each other, and highlighted the ways we can support each other, including through research, in bringing legitimacy to nature's value in health."



—Nooshin Razani, MD
Director, Center for Nature and Health, UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital, Oakland

OUTCOMES continued**2. Communicate the evidence linking nature to providers.**

Participants felt strongly throughout the convening that it is key to leverage the existing research to educate, advocate and increase funding. They identified a need to cultivate well-respected leaders in the field as nature champions that could build credibility and penetrate into target audiences. There were many recommendations for communications techniques to address these audiences that included packaging what we know into slide decks, podcasts, toolkits, op-ed templates, videos, webinars, newsletters, and other forms of consumable media.

3. Integrate nature into healthcare screenings.

Participants discussed existing and new models and recommend implementing simple, automated screening systems that address both nature-based experiences and access to nature. Potential models exist in some Park Rx programs and in other areas, such as food insecurity and other social determinants of health.

4. Grow capacity for nature-based research & practice within the health field.

Participants recommended that a priority action to grow the field is to increase the number of champions and practitioners by building systems to:

- > Educate and train healthcare providers and support staff (with CMEs and CEUs),
- > Engage and secure buy-in by healthcare system leadership, and
- > Integrate nature-based prevention and interventions into funding opportunities.

5. Integrate the nature/health connection into clinical environments and parks.

Participants suggested that clinical environments can sometimes be rich natural spaces that can be simulated to have nature throughout and can offer nature information and inspiration through clinical signage. Recommendations emerged to also include pop-up health clinics in parks to incentivize park participation and to build awareness about parks.

6. Influence healthcare and public health professional organizations.

Participants felt that investment in policy and communications through professional organizations could yield impact in the field. Priority organizations, such as American Academy of Pediatrics, were named as opportunities to engage in presentations, workshops and committee-level work. Recommendations also included engaging in organizational leadership cultivation to advance policy statements while engaging in local chapter awareness and actions to allow for growth both from the grassroots and grass tops.

7. Build opportunities for connectivity within a network of health professionals.

Participants expressed a strong desire to stay connected as a community of practice and to grow the ability to form a peer learning network for sharing ideas, best practices and mutual support. The idea was considered to create and identify working groups to achieve the action agenda items from the meeting. Participants identified the 2019 Children & Nature Network International Conference as an opportunity to generate more interest and engagement by health professionals, and they suggest that C&NN form an advisory committee.

Participant Comments

"We shouldn't have to prescribe nature, it should be over the counter."

"We have to grow awareness among health professionals across disciplines, among decision-makers who can create equitable access to nature, and among families who are the ultimate agents of change for children."

NEXT STEPS

- > Connect with partners, champions, researchers and leaders who were not in attendance to further refine a Health & Nature Action Agenda.
- > Form a health professional advisory group to guide the strategy and implementation of the Action Agenda, including other organizations who might take ownership over some components.
- > Finalize and disseminate the Health & Nature Action Agenda, which will be a living document open to new innovation and progress.
- > Form an advisory group to inform the 2019 C&NN International Conference.
- > Develop a preliminary method for participants to connect with one another in a peer learning network.
- > Seek strategic partnerships and funding to advance the Health & Nature Action Agenda.

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