



Building Community Relationships through Parks Engagement

10-Minute Walk Community of Practice

February 9, 2023

In your own words, **what makes you feel safe and that you belong** in your local parks?

<https://pollev.com/christinajan159>



Agenda

Welcome

How can parks mitigate polarization?

Speakers:

Dr. Linda Tropp - *UMass Amherst*

Daniel Valdez - *Welcoming America*

Grant announcement!

Breakout groups

Closing & next steps



Highlights from December '22 CoP

1. What works well for different community outreach approaches?
E.g. Compensate community members through nonprofit partners; translation; support existing events
2. What are barriers to reaching new communities?
E.g. Showing progress and maintaining momentum; nonrepresentative sample
3. How do you translate community feedback into action?
E.g. Update designs online





**How can parks
mitigate polarization?
And why should they?**

The US is polarizing faster than most democracies



Only **20% of Americans** trust the government to do what's right

Decreases in cross-class relationships are linked to **fewer acts of kindness, gratitude, and generosity**

33% of Americans believe most people can be trust

The social fabric of our communities is deteriorating

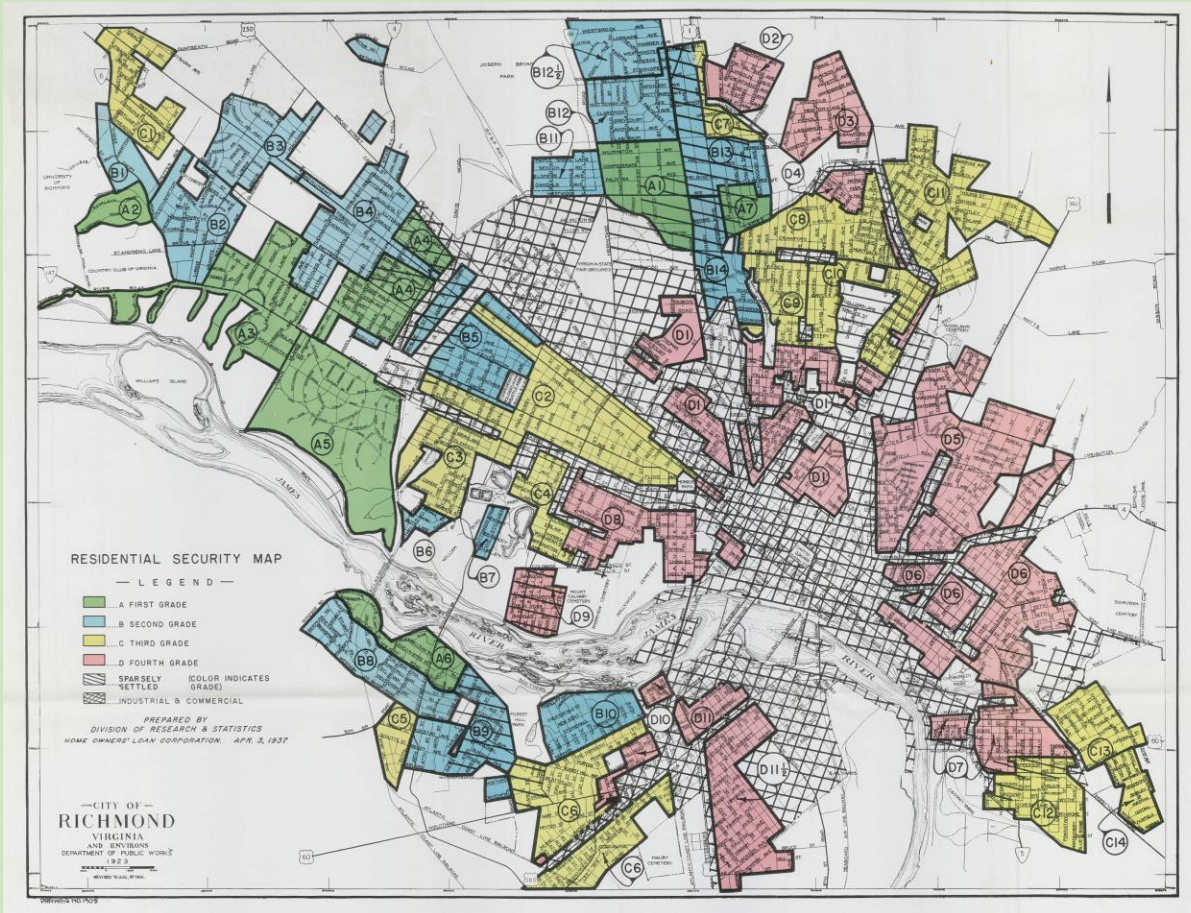


58% of Americans report feeling lonely some or all the time

We're experiencing **an all-time low** in social and civic group participation

Americans reporting **no close confidants** increased by three-fold between 1990 to 2010

We're reckoning with a long history of racism & oppression



81% of major metro areas were more racially segregated in 2019 than they were in 1990

Hate crimes increased by 25% from 2010 to 2020

Parks are natural containers for organizing



working on a shared goal is one of the most **effective means of building social capital** across divides

Community engagement around park improvements has been shown to **organize communities against the tides of gentrification**

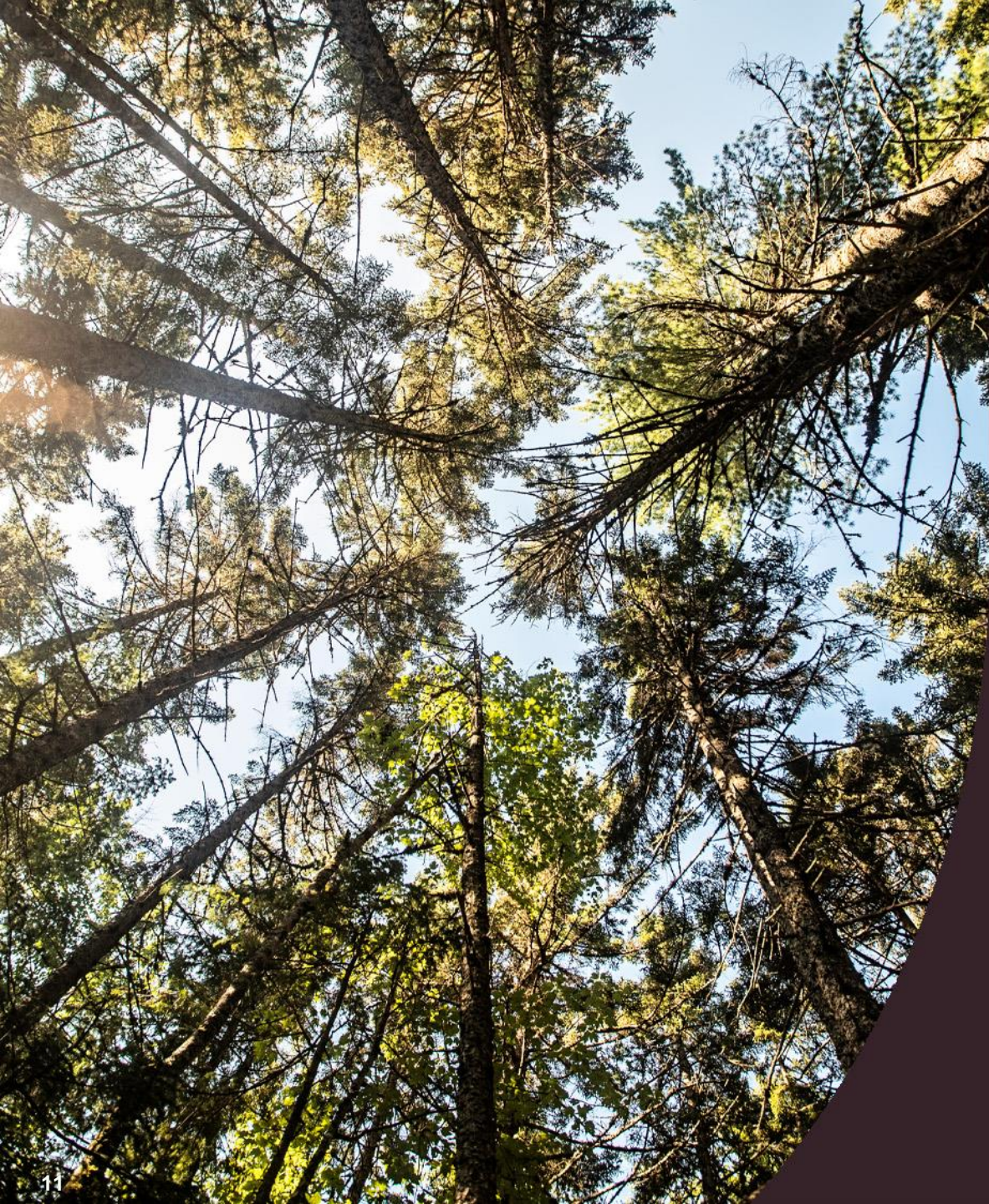
Parks are powerful and effective social infrastructure



Volunteering on environmental issues is proven to **increase engagement in civic actions** like attending town halls

Regular park users are shown to have **66% more social ties** than those who don't regularly visit parks

Park investments have also been shown to **boost trust in local government by 19%**



Introducing our speaker:

Dr. Linda Tropp



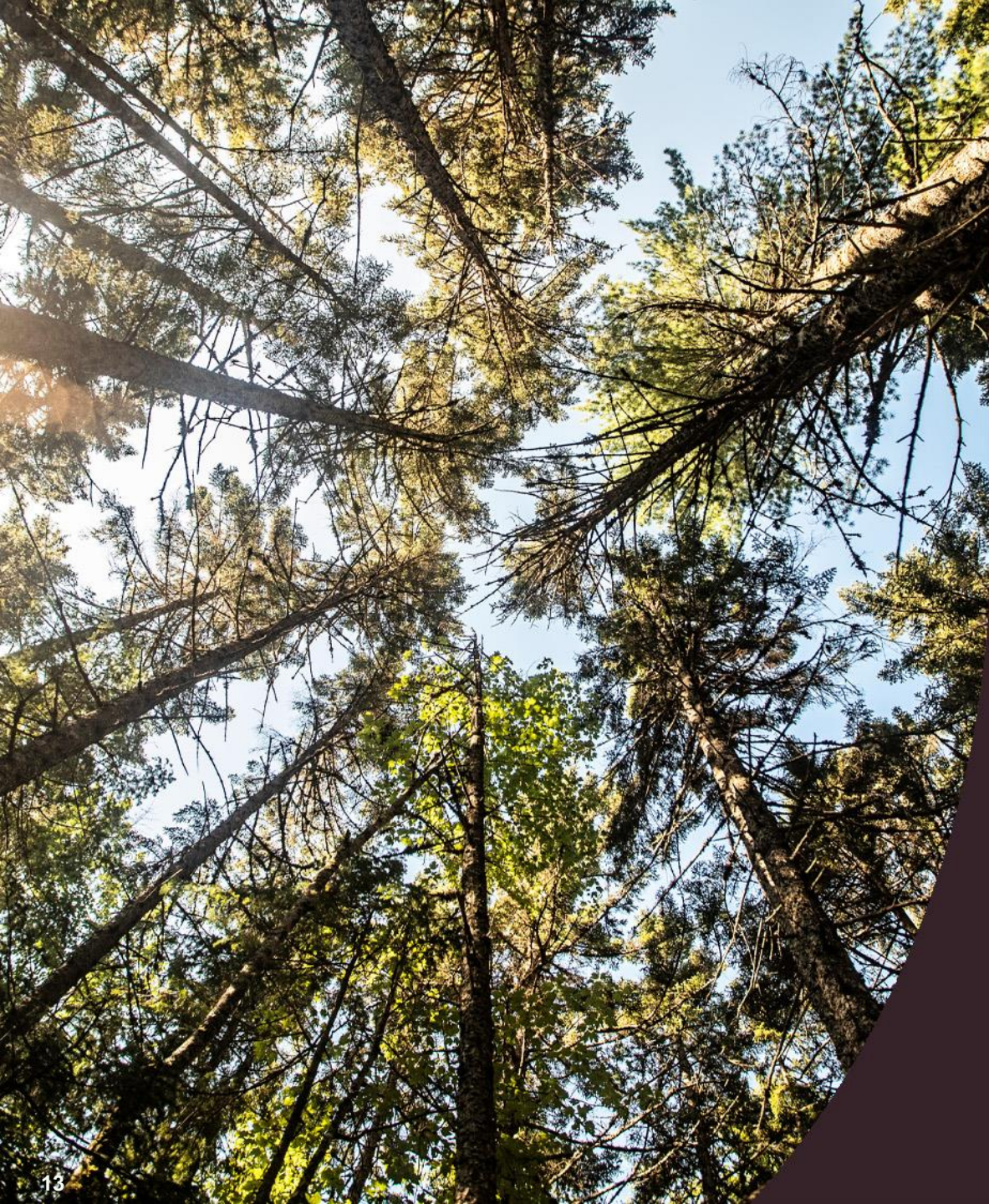
Social Contact Theory

Consistent, face-to-face interaction between members who represent two or more different social groups (such as racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, religious, linguistic, or national groups)

Active Engagement

- Making music together
- Putting on a play
- Creating an art installation
- Planning a fair or festival
- Building a community garden
- Organizing sports leagues
- Overseeing meal exchanges
- Arranging a park clean-up crew

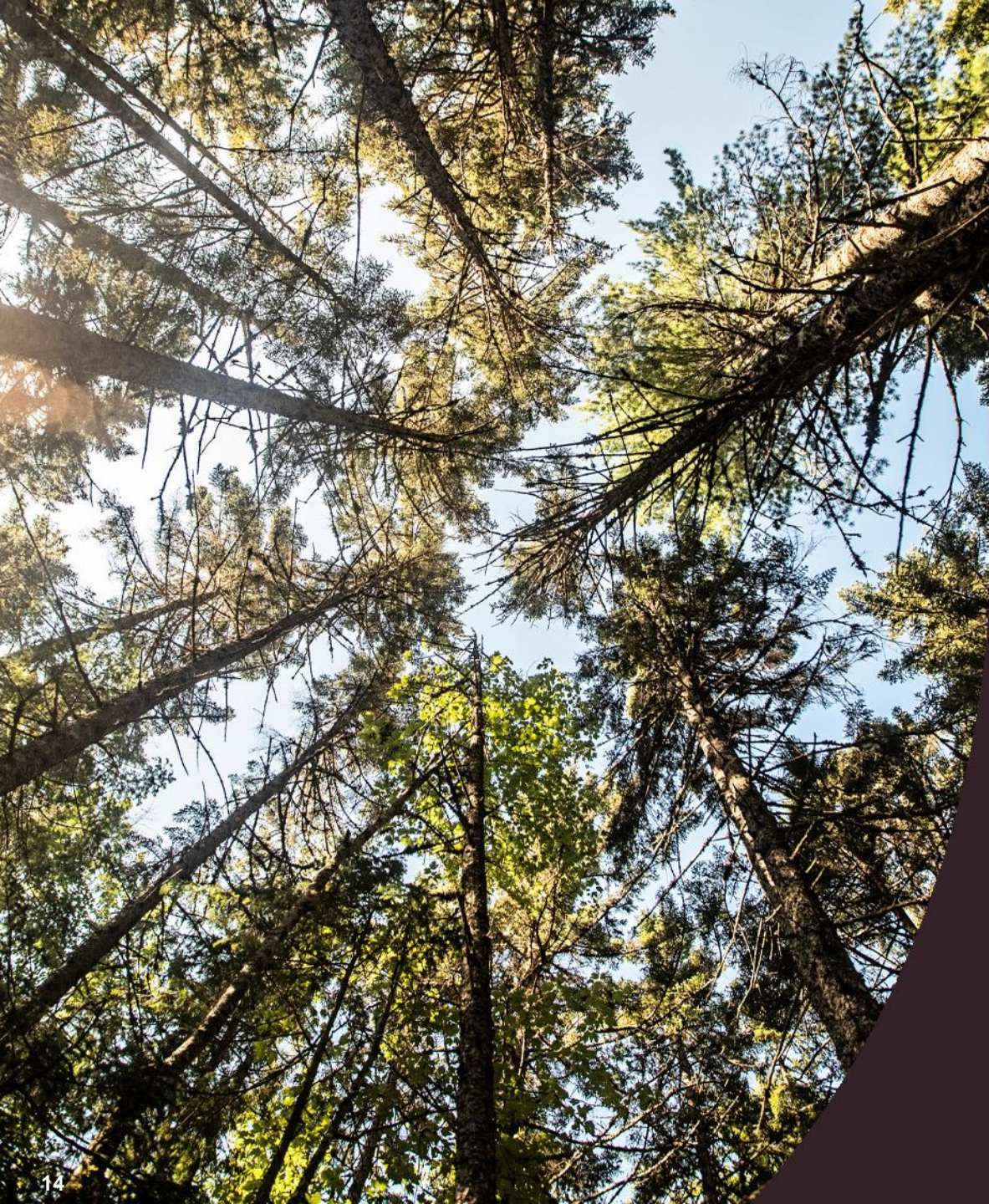
Structure activities to be **active and engaging** such as these, from the "Cultivating Contact Guide"



Introducing our speaker:

Daniel Valdez





Q&A with Panel



On Common Ground: TPL program launch!



Strengthen the evidence base that uplifts parks as delivery mechanisms for social impacts

Educate and activate America's park practitioners and community advocates

Advocate for policies, funding, and collaboration that scales the social impacts of America's parks

On Common Ground: Grant Opportunity!

Activity grants - overview

What: Pilot park-based events, activities, and programs that build social contact

When: May - October 2023

Who: 8 - 12 Community of Practice (you!)

How much: \$15 - 25K per grant for park-based programs & activities

Activity grants - application timeline

February 20: Application opens

February 23: Info session

March 10: Application closes

March 20: Awards announced

April 25-28: Kick-off for grantees at Welcoming America's "Welcoming Interactive" in San Jose

Breakout Groups (30 minutes)

Questions

1. Reflecting on today's presentations about "social contact," what resonated with you and how your department approaches community engagement?
2. Where could you see social contact infusing into your work? For example, are there events, programs, or activities that could apply some social contact principles?
3. Are there requirements/policies that could make it easier for your dept to apply social contact strategies? *For example, putting language in Master Plans, DEI policies, budgeting, staffing, or other policies that enable better community engagement?*



Upcoming

- **February 23- Info Session for *On Common Ground* Grant Program**
- April 13- Engaging with diverse community identities
- June 8- Building community capacity
- July 13- Closing session

Closing Poll

<https://pollev.com/christinajan159>



Exit Ticket

Please take 1 minute to share your thoughts on today's session!





Stay in touch!

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10-Minute Walk

