



Making the Case for Park Stewardship

June 26, 2025

Connecting everyone to the outdoors™

Welcome!

Introduce yourself in the chat:

- Your name and pronouns
- Your City
- Your Agency
- One thing you're looking forward to this summer



Agenda

- Session 3 Recap
- Current practices for data and story telling
- Identifying social outcomes of stewardship programs
- Defining outcomes for your stewardship program



Objectives

- Explore your agency's approach to case making, data and evaluation.
- Learn how to better connect your existing resources, activities and outputs to social outcomes.
- Identify your current approaches to park stewardship that help reach social outcomes.



Session 3 Recap

Creating Community Leadership

- Shared goals
- Collaborative work
- Capacity building
- Distributed leadership

Common Ground Framework Community Engagement Strategies



***What data do you
currently collect
for your park
stewardship
activities?***





What story does data tell?

Total Number of Volunteer Hours

- Stewardship group hosts 2 clean-ups per month, year-round with 5 volunteers at every 3-hour session
- 360 volunteer hours completed
- 360 hours * \$20/hour
- Stewardship group contributed **\$7,200** of labor to the park

What is the story? Who finds it compelling?

What story does our data tell?

Sense of Community

Stewardship group hosts 2 clean-ups per month, year-round with 5 volunteers at every 3-hour session

Short survey at the end of each session asks:

- I am more interested in getting involved in my community
- I feel more connected to other people in my community

At the end of the year, 95% of volunteers were interested in getting involved, 90% felt more connected to other people

What is the story? Who finds it compelling?



Assessing Social Outcomes

Breakout Activity

- Review the outcomes on page one
- In your group, respond to the reflection questions on page 2:
 - How are these outcomes different from what you're measuring now?
 - Which outcomes feel interesting or important to you?
 - If you measured one or two of these outcomes, how would that help you demonstrate the impact of your stewardship program?



Why Measure Social Outcomes?

- Funders want evidence of social value, not just participation numbers
- Belonging, trust, and cross-group connection predict public health, civic engagement, and resilience



How Social Measurement Builds Investment

- Demonstrates alignment with funder priorities (equity, cohesion, mental health)
- Builds funder confidence through evidence-based storytelling
- Strengthens long-term investment potential



Benefits Beyond Funding

- Helps improve programs in real time
- Elevates your agency as a civic leader
- Strengthens partnerships and co-design



Key Outcomes to Track

- Belonging and social/emotional connection
- Cross-group interaction
- Perceived agency and trust
- Interest in future civic engagement



QueensWay

245,000
people

living within a mile
of the site



60
years

since rail
corridor was
abandoned



6 neighborhoods

REGO PARK

FOREST HILLS

GLENDALE

FOREST PARK

RICHMOND HILL

WOODHAVEN

OZONE PARK



28 schools

7 subway
stops

35 bus
stops

within a
10-minute walk



3.5
miles



TRUST FOR
PUBLIC
LAND

Why the Foundation Funded the Project

- Clear theory of change rooted in civic trust
- Measurement tools to assess belonging, participation, agency
- Shared values: pluralism, public trust, democratic renewal

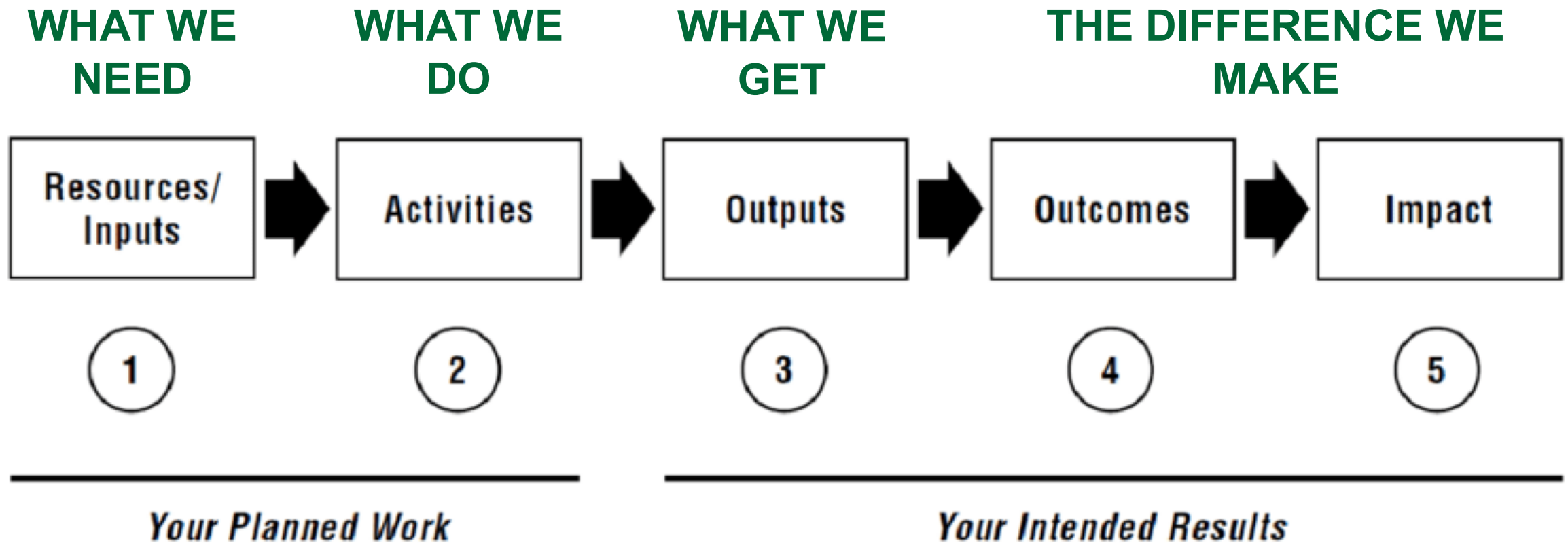


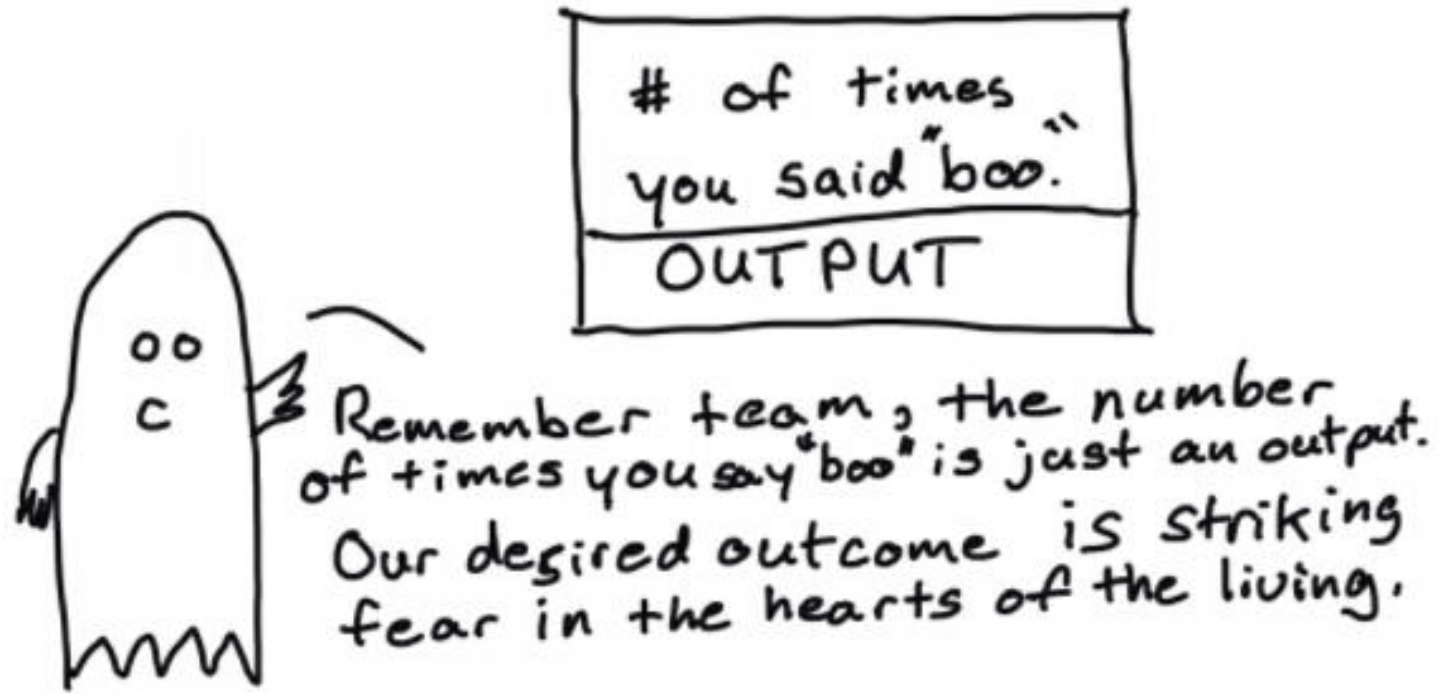
What We Gained From the Partnership

- > \$300K in grant funding
- Investment in community capacity, youth leadership, civic storytelling
- A model to replicate in other cities and TPL projects



Connecting the Dots: Social Outcomes in Your Programs





freshspectrum

Outputs

- # of repeat participants
- # of hours volunteers
- # of events hosted in the park
- # of maintenance projects completed

Outcomes

Short term:

- Stronger connections among volunteers
- Increase in park activations and maintenance activities

Long term:

- Group collectively advocates for the park's needs
- Increased civic engagement through stewardship groups

Impacts

- Safer parks
- Stronger relationships between residents and local government
- Sustained engagement from stewardship groups supports long-term park maintenance



Breakout Rooms

Outputs and Outcomes

- Define the outputs and social outcomes for your stewardship program
- Consider:
 - What story do these outcomes tell?
 - How could that story help you develop new partnerships or funding opportunities?



Since 1972, TPL has protected 4 million acres of public land; created 5,364 parks, trails, schoolyards, and iconic outdoor places; raised \$93 billion in public funding for parks and public lands; and connected nearly 9.4 million people to the outdoors.

To learn more, visit tpl.org.

Connecting everyone to the outdoors™

Christina Jang

christina.jang@tpl.org

Sophie Neuhaus

sophie.neuhaus@tpl.org

Kate Gannon

kate.gannon@tpl.org

Next Steps

- Submit your final evaluation
- Design Trust engagement
- Keep in touch with TPL!

Thank You!