

Shawangunk Ridge, NY

In partnership with Open Space Institute, we have protected more than 21,300 acres on and around the Shawangunk Ridge.

Photo by: Chris Bennett

Reimagining Rural Land Conservation & Outdoor Recreation Session 5

October 23, 2024



Connecting everyone to the outdoors™



Welcome!

In the chat, share:

- Your name
- Where you're joining from

Agenda

Roadmap to Maximizing Land Conservation and Outdoor Recreation

- Welcome
- Session 1-4 Recap
- Session 5 Overview
- Panel Discussion
- Q&A
- Reflection
- What Comes Next?





About the Community of Practice

What is it?

- Peer learning network
- Connect practitioners to resources, experts, & each other
- Skill & capacity-building
- Address field-wide questions and develop shared solutions

What are the goals?

- Advance key initiative & field priorities
- Cultivate a professional network of park equity champions
- Elevate and scale promising practices
- Learn from the field

Who is it for?

- Municipal agencies (Parks, Planning, Transportation, Housing, & more)
- Community organizations & advocates

Rural Community of Practice

Reimagining Rural Land Conservation & Outdoor Recreation

Why a rural track?

- Foster a national network of practitioners
- Identify field-wide questions and needs
- Engage new audiences

What did we cover?

1. Identifying Natural, Historical, & Cultural Assets
2. Economic Benefits of Conservation & Recreation
3. Community Engagement in Rural Contexts
4. Leveraging GIS & Data for Rural Planning

What have we accomplished so far?

- Engaged 50+ practitioners from 40+ municipalities
- Highlighted case studies from 10 organizations
- Elevated nationwide themes and challenges



Planning and Engagement



Funding and Policy



Leveraging Assets

Recap #1: Leveraging Natural, Historical, and Cultural Assets for Growth and Vitality

Strategies From the Field:

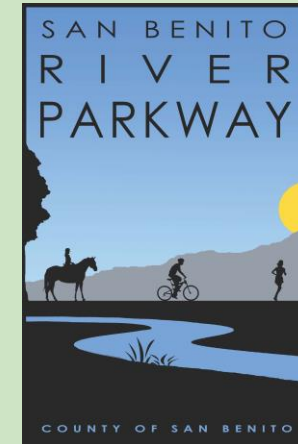
- Explore all the different roles a community can have within the long-term vision of a conservation project.
- Engage directly with residents and help facilitate conversations among different communities.
- Invest in strong relationships between organizations, communities, and agencies to advance shared goals and prevent territoriality.



Recap #1: Leveraging Natural, Historical, and Cultural Assets for Growth and Vitality

Challenges

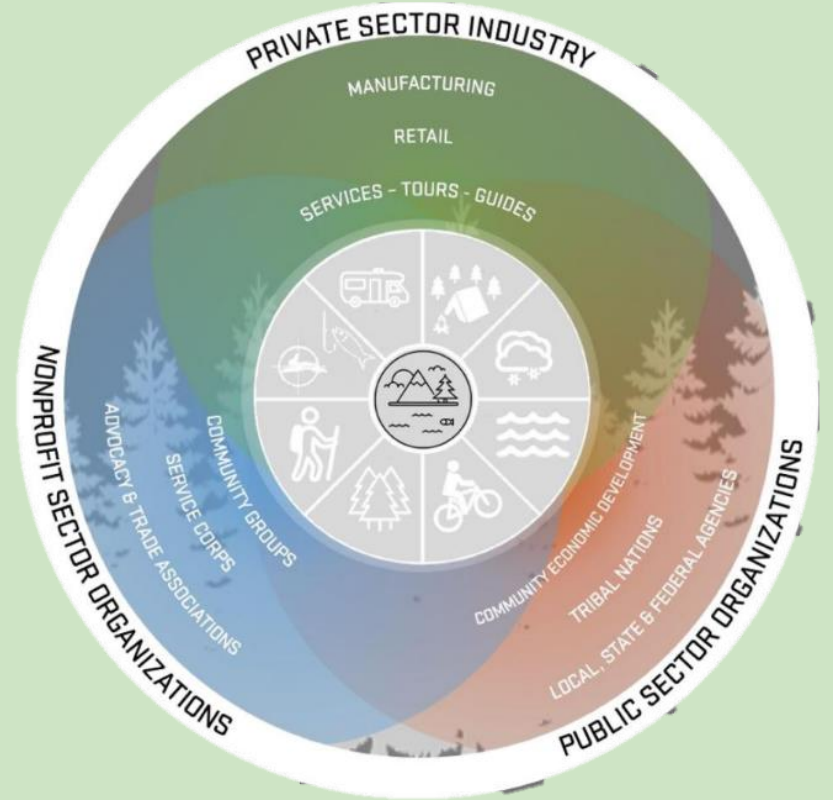
- Balancing public access AND ecological protection priorities is difficult.
- Working lands and rural communities often carry stereotypes and assumptions that could harm new initiatives.
- Messaging the benefits of parks and open space to decision-makers needs to be supported by data and facts supporting the return on any investments, which could be expensive and/or hard to obtain.



Recap #2: Economic Benefits of Conservation & Recreation

Strategies From the Field

- Outdoor recreation & conservation are sometimes seen as either/or priorities, rather than part of a holistic planning process alongside housing, economic development, recruitment/retention
- A cohesive community vision is a necessary starting place for recreation/conservation planning
- Impressive amount of data/tools to learn from and to be able to utilize right away without the need to reinvent the wheel.



Recap #2: Economic Benefits of Conservation & Recreation

Challenges

- Fear of change or perceived change to the community
- Increase of public lands may diminish property tax base
- Lack of consensus leading to inaction
- Resource and housing demands as recreation economy grows
- Priorities seen as competing rather than complementary (housing, substance abuse, etc.)
- Land speculation due to property value increases

Resources Needed

- Economic benefits beyond tourism & visitation
- Visitation data – collecting & establishing causality
- Tools for managing increasing property values

Outdoor recreation contributes to economic success in many ways.



Recap #3: Effective and Equitable Community Engagement

Strategies From the Field

- Draw community networks and clusters to see how communities connect with each other and be able to identify community champions.
- Be proactive in meeting new groups. Talking often about your project with anyone and everyone will facilitate breaking into new spaces.
- One-on-one invitations to stakeholders, a variety of different and accessible ways of communication, hiring community liaisons or facilitators.

Panelists



Julie Renaud Evans
Northern Forest Center



Hedda Peterson
Crested Butte Nordic



Amanda Workman-Scott
West Virginia Community
Development Hub



Cary Simmons
Trust for Public Land

Recap #3: Effective and Equitable Community Engagement

Measuring Success

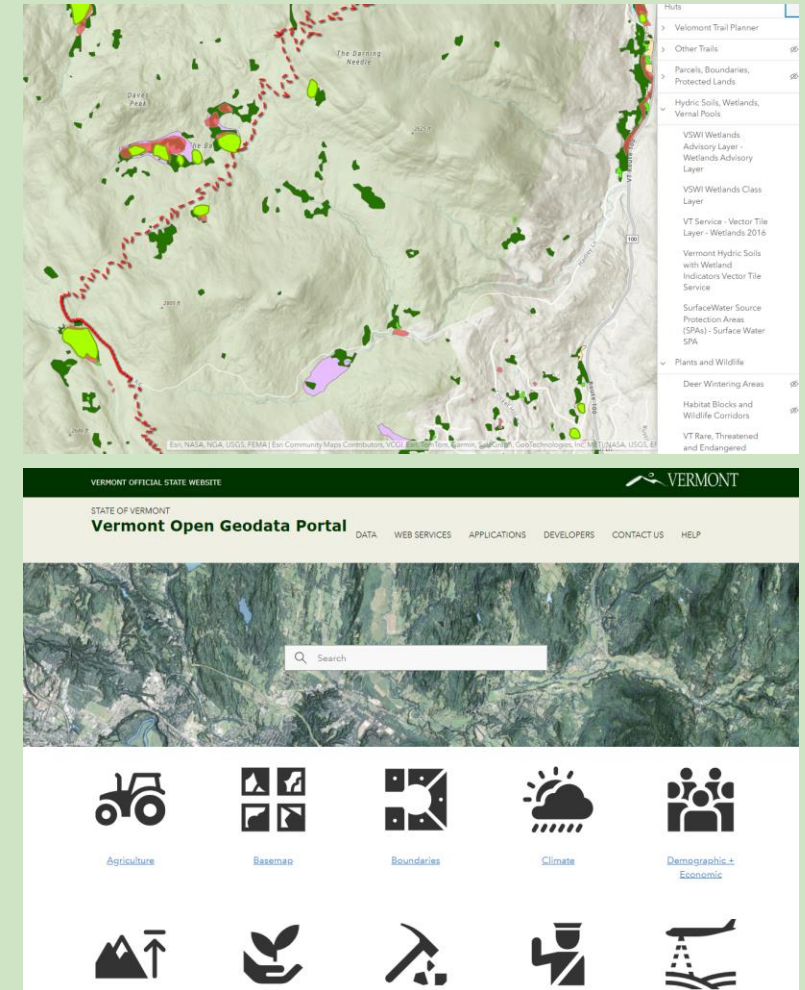
- It's important to identify naysayers before or early in the development of a project and explore what could a compromise look like.
- Understand, use, and commit to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) standards and frameworks in community engagement.
- Increased collaboration with other organizations to increase accountability and feedback.
- Although not hearing negative feedback is a good sign, think critically about each project's feedback process.



Recap #4: Leveraging GIS & Data for Rural Planning

Strategies From the Field

- A custom GIS-based web map created to assist project managers, land managers, and partners with trail planning and identifying priorities and needs.
- Economic benefits analysis can include in-depth statistics on participation in recreation and annual household spending on sports and recreation equipment, indices of market and spending potential, and a comparison of these results for the region with national averages.
- Drive time analyses to “Destination” Parks used as Access Metric for Rural Areas.



Recap #4: Leveraging GIS & Data for Rural Planning

What should you be considering if you want to do a conservation plan?

- What are community goals in relation to economic development, wildlife conservation, water quality needs, agricultural land protection?
- What factors that go into the “identity” of the community?
- Who the partners are in the area; Federal; State agencies, NGO, Private; etc.?





Session 5: Roadmap to Maximizing Land Conservation & Outdoor Recreation

- Identified vision of sustainable and healthy landscapes and connecting communities with nature.
- Building capacity and processes for short, medium and long run objectives.
- How to activate or implement?
- Case study: **Rio Grande Farm Park**



Alamosa, CO

Community Snapshot

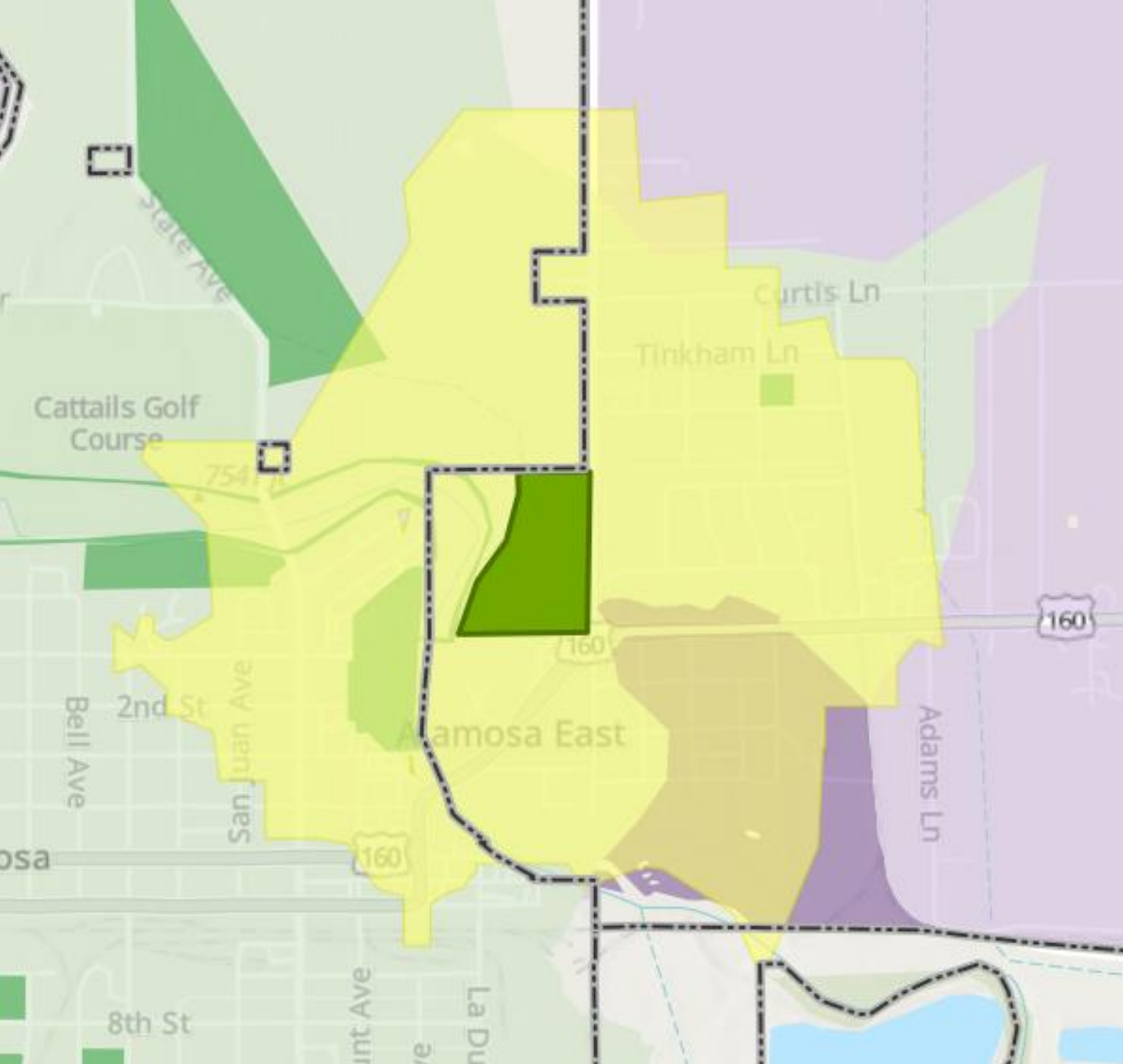
- 90% 10-minute walk access
- 5,872 residents with 10-minute walk access
- 502 park acres
- 10-minute walk access: Race & Ethnicity
 - 60% Native American
 - 59% Hispanic
 - 54% Asian
 - 55% Black
 - 58% White
 - 50% Pacific islander
 - 59% 2+ races
- 10-minute walk access: Income
 - 58% High-Income
 - 61% Medium-Income
 - 61% Low-Income



Alamosa East, CO

Community Snapshot

- 37% 10-minute walk access
- 486 residents with 10-minute walk access
- 4 park acres
- 10-minute walk access: Race & Ethnicity
 - 50% Native American
 - 40% Hispanic
 - 40% Asian
 - 25% Black
 - 33% White
 - 45% 2+ races
- 10-minute walk access: Income
 - 39% High-Income
 - 32% Medium-Income
 - 39% Low-Income



Alamosa East, CO

Community Snapshot (+ RGFP)

- 50% 10-minute walk access (+13%)
- 655 residents with 10-minute walk access (+169)
 - 57% Hispanic
 - 14% Low Income
- 42 park acres (+10x)

Panelists



Liza Marron
Saguache County
Commissioner



Wade Shelton
The Trust for Public Land



Q&A

Drop your questions in the chat!



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Group Poll & Reflection

10 minutes

Share your feedback!



What comes next?

- Take the survey!
- Recordings & resources available online at:
10minutewalk.org
- Series summary, case studies, & more
- Community Forest deep-dive trainings – Spring 2025
- New tracks announcement coming soon...



Thank you!



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