



Building Conditions for Enduring Conservation Outcomes

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A 5-Year Metric of Success for
The Hewlett Foundation's Western
Conservation Program

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Introduction

The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation has supported grantee efforts to conserve the North American West since 1966. The long-term goal of the Western Conservation grantmaking program is “Through the work of its grantees and partners, to conserve biodiversity and protect the ecological integrity of half of the North American West for wildlife and people.”

The program’s current grantmaking strategy (2018-2023) pursues three areas of focus:

- 1) Defend conservation protections,
- 2) Advance new conservation protections, and
- 3) Build the conditions for enduring conservation.

The Western Conservation grantmaking program has been using a variety of implementation markers to track annual progress made by grantee partners in each of these focal areas and, consistent with programs across the foundation, has a strategy for measuring impact toward the program’s long-term goal of ecological integrity. At the end of five years, success for the first two areas of focus is measured by the number of acres that maintained protections or were newly protected, and by the viability of indicator species such as salmon and mule deer.

The third area of focus for Hewlett’s Western Conservation grantmaking, Build the Conditions, was developed with input from grantees and is grounded in the theory that conservation outcomes such as new wildlife management areas, national monument designations, public funding for habitat stewardship on private lands, and sustainable land management policies are more enduring when they are co-created with the full range of people that live in, use, enjoy, and/or value the affected landscape and when those outcomes provide socioeconomic benefits. Accordingly, the Western Conservation program has been investing in research about relevant socioeconomic benefits related to conservation, as well as grantee capacity for enhanced communications, inclusive organizations, and collaboration with diverse communities to ensure more conservation campaigns are geared toward lasting outcomes.

In spring 2021, the Western Conservation grantmaking program launched an effort with grantees to co-create a 5-year metric of success for the Build the Conditions focal area, so that there is a shared metric for assessing if and when the field has built the conditions for conservation outcomes that can endure political and social change. This report summarizes the input provided by Hewlett grantees and partners during two virtual convenings and numerous one-on-one conversations. It includes the new 5-year metric; examples of potential economic, socio-economic, and social benefits of conservation outcomes; and a framework for implementing a community-led collaborative approach to conservation.

This new 5-year metric will be used to inform the Western Conservation program's efforts in the Build the Conditions focal area of grantmaking moving forward. It will be added to the Foundation's formal tracking documents and processes, and every five years, grantees will be consulted to inform the understanding of program staff of field-wide progress. This approach is consistent with all the implementation markers used by the Western Conservation grantmaking program.

Moreover, the Hewlett Foundation hopes that this metric will inform how other foundations and conservation advocates track progress made toward lasting outcomes. In so doing, we hope to aid in the continued transformation of conservation from a field of transactional campaigns and land deals to equity-centered, community-driven, collaborative outcomes that endure the winds of political and social change.



Photo Credit: Bureau of Land Management

Appendix A includes more information about how the Hewlett Foundation uses annual implementation markers as well examples of implementation markers used to-date by the Western Conservation grantmaking program. Appendix B includes a list of the Hewlett Foundation grantees and partners who contributed to developing this new 5-year metric. Appendix C has bios of the facilitating team.

Elements Needed to Build the Conditions for Enduring Conservation Outcomes

During a March 2021 virtual convening, Hewlett Foundation grantees and partners identified a wide range of elements needed to build the conditions for enduring conservation outcomes. Three themes arose during that discussion:

- **Conservation outcomes must have lasting benefits for people as well as the environment.** Conservation outcomes or policies that endure are those that deliver positive impacts for the range of communities impacted by the outcome. Efforts to build support for conservation outcomes should assess the potential economic and social benefits of those outcomes and measure whether those benefits are retained over time.
- **Conservation outcomes and related benefits must be determined through an inclusive process.** This inclusive process should create opportunities for new and diverse voices to lead the conversation and different ways of knowing to be honored and reflected. The social and economic benefits related to a conservation outcome – and the metrics for tracking those benefits – need to be identified in partnership with affected and otherwise involved communities. To be successful, the process must also allow for the time and space needed to build trust and develop relationships.
- **Enduring conservation outcomes must have broad support.** This support should be built at the grassroots level, including a wide range of impacted communities as well as every level of government from local to federal and tribal governments.



Photo Credit: Bureau of Land Management

Proposed New 5-Year Metric for Building the Conditions for Enduring Conservation Outcomes

Focus Area	5-Year Metric of Success	Timing of Metric Development
1 Defend conservation protections	Number of acres protected	<i>Metric informed by science about the biodiversity crisis & established in earlier versions of the Western Conservation grantmaking strategy</i>
2 Advance new conservation protections	10 million acres conserved in the US & successful migration of indicator species	<i>Metrics were refined in 2018 strategy refresh</i>
3 Build the conditions for enduring conservation	Policies retain desired conservation outcome(s) and related social and economic benefits	<i>New metric, co-created with grantees in Spring 2021</i>

The proposed new metric focuses on measuring the endurance of the ecological goal of a conservation outcome or policy, as well as its benefits: Policies retain the desired conservation outcome(s), and related social and economic benefits, after five years.

As an example, to assess if the conditions have been built for a new 100,000-acre park to endure, grantees would work with affected communities to assess if, after five years, that new park still exists and continues provides 100,000 acres of healthy critical sagebrush habitat, and if affected communities would agree that they have seen the expected economic, public education, and social benefits of that new park.

Grantees noted that achieving this metric will weave in the other two critical elements for building conditions for enduring conservation outcomes: using a more inclusive process in developing and executing conservation campaigns and building broad support for outcomes. It is important to note that each conservation outcome will impact a range of communities who will each have unique perspectives about the potential social, socio-economic and/or economic benefits that could occur as a result of that outcome. To be clear, the Hewlett Foundation's goal is not to be prescriptive about which communities should be involved in identifying conservation outcomes and/or which potential benefits should be prioritized as conservation goals and campaigns are developed. Instead, the Foundation's intention is to encourage the input and inclusion of a diverse set of communities who share geographies, values, cultural identities, a history of exclusion or discrimination, and other connections to the affected landscape in this process.

Potential Social, Socio-economic, and Economic Benefits Related to Conservation Outcomes

When outcomes have socioeconomic benefits for affected communities, and not just ecological benefits, they are more likely to be enduring. During a second virtual session in May 2021, convening participants developed the following list of potential social, economic, and socio-economic benefits that conservation advocates and impacted communities could consider prioritizing when co-developing conservation goals and campaigns.

There are a couple of important things to note about this list:

- **It is not an exhaustive list.** These suggestions were generated during the virtual convening and are intended to provide a starting place for conversations.
- **This list of potential benefits was generated by Hewlett grantees and partners, not by the Hewlett Foundation.** Inclusion on this list does not imply Hewlett endorsement, priority-setting, or funding support.
- **Potential benefits are organized into three separate charts, but those groupings are semi-artificial as each set of benefits does not happen in a vacuum.** For example, indigenous co-management of public lands may provide healing and other social benefits as well as public education and ecological outcomes, but also requires equitable access to economic opportunities and benefits for tribal communities.

Examples of Potential Social Benefits from Conservation Outcomes

Shared outcomes & connection	<p>Connection to lands: Shift in societal values to emphasize quality of life and connection to the outdoors. Recognition and support of the deep personal connections of people and land-based rural communities, including tribes, landowners, ranchers, farmers, foresters, and other stakeholders.</p> <p>Shared outcomes: Communities and affected stakeholders feel ownership of outcomes. Conservation brings people together rather than dividing them. Solutions have space to adapt and evolve as learning happens during implementation.</p> <p>Local benefits: Affected communities feel that they are benefitting from, and have agency in, decisions about the landscapes where they live.</p> <p>Shared identity: A shared cultural value among all stakeholders, including agricultural and recreation interests, centered on responsibility to nature.</p>
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Examples of Potential Social Benefits from Conservation Outcomes (cont.)

<p>Diversity</p>	<p>Diverse communities using or benefitting from the land (the relevant local context would consider specific communities).</p> <p>Time: Measurable increase in time spent outdoors among marginalized communities.</p> <p>Involvement: Growth of Black, Indigenous, and other people of color, LGBTQ+, women, and rural, low-income communities previously marginalized by the conservation movement as evidenced by the increased engagement and growth in the number of organizations and groups serving those communities, as well as the growth of these organizations themselves.</p>
<p>Quality of life</p>	<p>Balance: Quality of life for rural communities is balanced with tourism and other service-based industries.</p> <p>Outdoor enjoyment: A focus on what the outdoors looks, feels, smells, and tastes like to understand how nature affects people.</p> <p>Air and water pollution: Individuals have clean air and water.</p> <p>Neighborhood greening: Communities experience more trees, grass, community gardens in their neighborhoods. All communities live within a ten-minute walk to nature/the outdoors. Continuing education supports communities' efforts to develop green spaces and provide long-term stewardship of them. Food sovereignty and self-sufficiency occurs.</p> <p>Safe in the outdoors: Individuals feel safe in the outdoors.</p> <p>Community well-being and mental stability improves.</p> <p>Food: Access to healthy, locally grown food.</p>
<p>Justice</p>	<p>Social & environmental justice: Policies have been changed or evaluated for impact on marginalized communities. The conservation community is working to advance social and environmental justice issues in collaboration with local communities.</p> <p>Indigenous history, uses and/or treaty rights honored and preserved.</p> <p>Urban/rural collaboration: Increased collaborative conservation results in decreased litigation and increased bipartisanship on issues related to land use, access, and management.</p>
<p>Access</p>	<p>Improved access: Quantifiable increase in equitable access to the outdoors (supported by transportation where appropriate), neighborhood parks, and recreation equipment. People who have been excluded from living near nature or in desirable areas have equitable access to the outdoors and to live near the outdoors.</p>

Examples of Potential Socio-Economic Benefits from Conservation Outcomes

<p>Co-manage lands</p>	<p>Co-manage lands (Indigenous): Indigenous people and communities have autonomy and leadership to manage, co-manage, and access lands as desired. Indigenous communities are able to consistently access public funding for co-management of land & other socio-economic needs. Policies revised/ initiated to allow for Indigenous co-management.</p> <p>Co-manage lands (locals): Local individuals empowered to engage with ongoing decisions and management; local values integrated into management.</p>
<p>Reparations & equitable investment</p>	<p>Land reparations: Land reparations made by providing access and ownership back to Indigenous peoples and/or compensating previous landowners that were victims of discriminatory practices.</p> <p>Equitable investment: Investments in land conservation are commensurate with social investments. Increased investments in urban parks in lower income neighborhoods.</p>
<p>Multiple outcomes</p>	<p>Rural communities are better off in terms of economic prosperity, public health, and environmental health.</p> <p>Neighboring communities see an increase in access to and affordability of services (e.g., healthcare, food security, internet access, quality education).</p>
<p>Equitable / Distributed Benefits</p>	<p>Communities of color, Indigenous people, and disadvantaged communities have equitable opportunities to benefit economically from conservation efforts (for example, priority access to small business loans)</p> <p>Decreased costs and vehicles needed to access nature (e.g., development of free or low-cost public transportation options to green spaces or routes to access green spaces).</p>
<p>Recreation value</p>	<p>Recreation value of conservation recognized, including related businesses (outdoor recreation, hotels).</p>

Examples of Potential Economic Benefits from Conservation Outcomes	
Green jobs	<p>Conservation and green jobs for people of color: Clear conservation career pathways for Black, Indigenous, and other people of color</p> <p>Transitioning to a new green economy: New green jobs, quality jobs, well-paying jobs. Helping communities with roots in traditional extractive-based economies transition to and embrace newer, sustainable, inclusive models (including considering a just transition). As possible, address the wealth gap, which is unsustainable from an ecological and societal standpoint.</p>
Agriculture	<p>Private and working lands remain intact, healthy, and economically viable.</p> <p>Agriculture benefits provide increased local food security and supports rural livelihoods and economies.</p> <p>Equitable conservation of working lands: Conservation investments to farmers and ranchers benefit all workers not just the owners of the conservation lands.</p>
Development	Limited and sustainable development continue to provide associated economic benefits.
Tourism	Select tourism continues to provide associated economic benefits.
Transition to sustainable economy	<p>Environmental full cost accounting: Externalized costs (to nature and people) of producing and delivering services in our economies are properly accounted for and internalized by the appropriate actors. This could include the environmental costs of recreation and tourism.</p> <p>Nature-based economies: New economies, such as nature-based solutions and natural infrastructure, are recognized as critical components of the economy.</p> <p>Avoided costs versus business as usual (e.g., avoided costs if a species were listed as endangered)</p>
Conservation accounted for in economy	<p>Ecosystem services: Ecological stewardship is recognized and embedded in our economic system.</p> <p>Federal funds for conservation: Better and innovative ways for the federal government to economically reward local conservation actions.</p>

Framework for Community-Led Collaborative Conservation

The following four-step framework can be used by advocates to engage a diverse set of affected communities in identifying the potential social, socio-economic, and economic benefits that could result from conservation goals and campaigns. It is shared here at the request of convening participants.

Some important things to note about this framework:

- **The framework is designed to support an iterative process.** This non-linear, inclusive way of approaching conservation and ultimately, progress is incredibly important. It may be challenging – but critical – to adopt a way of doing things that isn't rigid and prescriptive.
- **This framework supports a forward-looking process.** This effort is not meant to fit into a prescriptive timeline; but in some cases, it takes a year or longer for advocates and affected communities to identify and agree on conservation goals and to prioritize related socio-economic benefits they'll work collaboratively to achieve.
- **Metrics used to track priority social and economic benefits related to conservation outcomes might be qualitative and/or quantitative.** Grantees may need to bring in experts to understand how to measure some of these kinds of benefits – and how to understand baseline data as applicable to a specific community.
- **This is a starting place for sparking broader change across the conservation movement.** No one organization can do this work on their own. No one funder can support the scope and scale of work needed to truly change how the environmental movement approaches community-based collaborative conservation.



Step 1: Pre-Work

Questions to Ask	Proposed Process
<p>Awareness of local thinking/priorities</p>	<p>Evaluate what the current priorities are for affected communities. What is the current thinking about conservation efforts?</p> <p>Evaluate potential barriers that might stop affected communities from engaging and develop a plan based on this knowledge. Barriers might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different geographic realities or cultural norms regarding communication that exist for different groups. For example, not all groups have access to reliable internet, and even if there is access, meeting in an online format may not be a comfortable setting for engaging on conservation issues. • Different western communities (both geographic and identity-based) may face periodic constraints on their time that should be respected by other on-the-ground partners and funders. For example, these constraints could include wildfires, significant health challenges, and ceremonial and religious calendars.

Step 2: Define Potential Benefits

Questions to Ask	Proposed Process
<p>Which SOCIAL, ECONOMIC and/or SOCIO-ECONOMIC BENEFITS are most important to the affected communities?</p> <p>Use examples in the Benefits charts as a starting place for this step.</p>	<p>Establish a list of potential people and/or organizations to provide input about important benefits. Consider what communities can potentially benefit from or are connected to the affected landscape. Consider groups who may have not been involved in the past and who face multiple barriers to inclusion such as racism or economic inequality. Examples include Indigenous tribes, recreation groups, county & local governments, businesses, ranchers, faith leaders, and others.</p> <p>Establish a process reflecting on what has worked in the past with these communities plus lessons learned on how to be more inclusive. Consider a process that solicits input in an open-ended manner and provides potential ideas for consideration. The process will likely be iterative.</p> <p>Identify a venue that will be comfortable for all communities involved.</p>

Step 3: Make Choices about Relevant Benefits

Questions to Ask	Proposed Process
<p>Which benefits are MOST TIED to the communities' conservation outcomes?</p> <p>Which benefits are BEYOND THE SCOPE of this work? Would bringing in select partners help?</p> <p>What are the TOP benefits for the communities?</p>	<p>Consider a process that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brings together social and economic stakeholders • Offers space and time to listen • Is long enough to show and build trust and relationships among all. Be willing to make mistakes, apologize, and move on to build relationships • Understands the most important issues to the community • Recognizes that maps and other data used to guide decision-making must be selected with care • Establishes a process on how to select the top benefits • Creates a zone of agreement on the top shared benefits • Brings in expert support to engage different viewpoints and help recognize and address conflict and areas for compromise • Establishes a way to share the selected benefits and progress over time • Offers the opportunity for communities to decline to engage

Step 4: Track Chosen Benefits

Questions to Ask
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What METRICS can be used to measure progress toward the top few benefits identified by the community? • What are appropriate TARGETS to aim for? • Does the TIMEFRAME need to be adjusted to reflect the need to build trust and co-create? • Does the community and the organization have the necessary FUNDS and does the organization and the community both have the necessary to measure progress toward the top few benefits over time? • How can we best TRACK and SHARE progress? • How do we create and maintain the conditions needed to FAIL and LEARN together?

Appendix A: Implementation Markers

The Hewlett Foundation practices [outcome-focused philanthropy](#), which emphasizes being rigorous, flexible, and adaptive while staying focused on results and actively learning throughout the strategy lifecycle. Because its goals take years to achieve, Hewlett sets five-year goals and uses [implementation markers](#) (a catch-all term referring to particular internal and external activities, developments, or events) identified by program staff to help track progress made by grantees and partners.

In the Western Conservation program, five-year goals and implementation markers track progress in each of the grantmaking program's three focal areas. These markers were developed initially in 2018 with guidance from Dr. Hahrie Han, Inaugural Director of the [SNF Agora Institute](#), the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Professor of Political Science, and Faculty Director of the P3 Research Lab at Johns Hopkins University. She specializes in the study of organizing, movements, civic engagement, and democracy. Additional insight was gleaned from the 2011 report, [Transactions – Transformations – Translations: Metrics That Matter for Building, Scaling, and Funding Social Movements](#) by Dr. Manuel Pastor, Jennifer Ito, and Rachel Rosner of the USC Program for Environmental and Regional Equity, with support from the Ford Foundation.

As a sampling, the following Five-Year Outcomes and 2021-2022 implementation markers were crafted with input from Hewlett grantees of the Western Conservation grantmaking program and aim to reflect their hard work toward our shared strategic goals.

Five-year outcome: Conservation measures to protect core landscapes and connectivity for fish and wildlife are applied across 10 million acres of public and private land and rivers across the American West. This may include land-use planning, new protections for fish and wildlife corridors, incentives for private land stewardship, reconnecting rivers, and other strategies.

Five-year outcome: After five years, policies retain desired conservation outcomes and related social and economic benefits.

- a. Implementation marker: Over the next 12 months, reflecting the strategic value of inclusive coalitions, and as a demonstration of trust built, new national and state tables are organized -- or existing tables restructured to be more inclusive -- to facilitate collaboration between Big Green groups, Tribes, and regional and frontline organizations around 30x30 and other conservation opportunities. (Grantee Activity)
- b. Implementation marker: Annual public polling by Colorado College's State of the Rockies program demonstrates sustained or increased public support for conservation outcomes in three to five states in the Western U.S. (Trip Wire)
- c. Implementation marker: Building on progress over the past year, state and local policymakers in three priority geographies make investments over the next two years in protecting public lands as a component of their economic development strategies. This would demonstrate that grantees have effectively built public will for conservation by leveraging its impact on local economies. (Short-Term Outcome)
- d. Implementation marker: Building on progress over the past few years, federal, state and local policymakers in three priority geographies make investments over the next 24 months in expanding public access to public lands, including among underserved communities. This would demonstrate that grantees have effectively built public will for the social benefits of conservation, including equitable access to nature. (Short-Term Outcome)

Appendix B: Participants

Thank you to the following Hewlett Foundation grantees and partners who participated in this process of exploring and co-creating a new metric for measuring the success of grantee efforts toward building the conditions for enduring conservation outcomes.

American Rivers

Backcountry Hunters and Anglers

Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition

Center for Large Landscape Conservation

Center for Western Priorities

Conservation Lands Foundation

Continental Divide Trail Coalition

Ecoflight

Greater Yellowstone Coalition

H.E.C.H.O.

Heart of the Rockies

Hispanic Access Foundation

Justice Outside

Latino Outdoors

Native American Rights Fund

Nature Canada

Public Land Solutions

Resources Legacy Fund

Northwest Tribal Salmon Alliance

The Water Foundation

The Wilderness Society

Theodore Roosevelt Conservation
Partnership

Water Funder Initiative

Western Energy Project

Western Landowners Alliance

Wild Montana

Yurok Tribe Fisheries Department



Photo Credit: Bureau of Land Management

Appendix C: Facilitation Team

Hovland Consulting

[Hovland Consulting](#) helps foundations and non-profits improve the world's environment and communities, specializing in conservation of land, water, and air; clean transportation; and climate change abatement. Using data-driven insights derived from strong analytics, research, modeling, expert input, and geographic information, we help clients make informed decisions; tell stories with compelling visuals and maps; track and improve performance; invest wisely; increase justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion; and facilitate growth. **Val Hovland** is the Founder and Principal of Hovland Consulting. She has worked with the Hewlett Foundation for 14 years on western conservation, including support on strategies, evaluations, tracking performance, understanding [Best Practices for Enduring Conservation](#), and exploring diversity, equity, and inclusion. Val has 17 years of experience in social sector consulting, grounded her career in clean transportation, and holds a Master of Science and Bachelor of Science from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Val lives in Boulder, Colorado, with her two young sons.



The Codevilla Group

The Codevilla Group helps foundations and non-profits use strategic communications to achieve their goals. We put together teams of senior communications professionals tailored to each of our clients who provide a variety of services, including producing communications plans and messaging, writing and editing materials, facilitating trainings and workshops, conducting media outreach, and developing branding and organizational positioning. **Beach Codevilla**, President of The Codevilla Group, brings a wide range of political and nonprofit communication experience to her clients. She has developed and implemented communications strategies around many different conservation issues, including the ban on uranium mining around the Grand Canyon, stricter requirements around oil shale development, and support for the Antiquities Act and the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Before starting The Codevilla Group, Beach spent seven years as a senior vice president at Spitfire Strategies and ran the Colorado office of Fenton Communications. She has an M.A. in professional communication from Clemson University and a B.A. in English from Vanderbilt University.



Lacy Consulting

Using applied social science and robust relationship building to better understand stakeholders. [Lacy Consulting Services](#) is committed to helping environmental organizations and sustainability-focused businesses reach their community and conservation goals using social science techniques and diversity, equity, and inclusion principles. **Leander Lacy** is the founder of Lacy Consulting Services. His staff has been using applied social science to engage stakeholders in order to tackle some of the world's largest environmental problems. Past projects include helping neighborhood community groups assess how to best serve the ecological and social needs of those they serve; incorporating justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion to on-the-ground conservation work; and connecting with rural communities to ensure their values were incorporated into conservation efforts that impacted their lives. Learn more on [JEDI in conservation](#) with The Nature Conservancy and Leander's [Green Mind Podcast](#).

