Whole Thinking Journal is an annual publication of the writing, themes, ideas and projects of the collective voices of the Center for Whole Communities—our staff, faculty and alumni. Center for Whole Communities was created in 2003 to build healthier communities through stronger, more enduring relationships to the land.

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Between the time these pages were written, in the summer and early fall of 2008, and the time I write this – snow thick outside the window – the world has turned just a little toward the light, and not just because we’ve passed the winter solstice. I believe it would be hard for anyone who witnessed the outpouring of goodwill, love, and generosity even among strangers on January 20, not to share this feeling. With Obama so passionately and eloquently inviting us all to participate in the resurrection of our deepest-held beliefs, we felt a lightness, a beam of restored faith in our own humanity and the humanity of all those around us.

During the same period, the world has slipped, too, a little more into the dark. There is scarcely a person who does not feel the effects of the global economic slide; those who already knew the taste of hunger and the grip of poverty are now hurting most. The social inequities grow larger across the globe, even as we in America chose a leader who is about unification, about healing. Hand in glove with these social concerns is the news that the warming effects of the climate are accelerating faster than anyone predicted. Perhaps the only thing that can put the economic meltdown in perspective is the larger specter of the global meltdown.

For us at Whole Communities, it is such tensions and dichotomies that have always defined our work. They have both fascinated and challenged us. For some time, we have felt we were walking up a steep and stony hill by talking about social justice and environmental issues in the same breath, or by making the case for mainstream environmental organizations to adopt broader social agendas. But this, too, has changed. There has been a shift in consciousness in many environmental groups across this country, and the new rhetoric from our nation’s leader of inclusion, service, and community comes at a time ripe for change. People and groups are making novel and unconventional alliances as never before. With funding sources in short supply, however, this shift that has begun to build momentum will find itself running on a lean diet for a time – for who knows how long.

My wish for all of us is that we embrace this work of healing our land, our citizens, ourselves, and our communities with conviction, with courage, and also with imperfection. We will all blunder, we will misread others, we will doubt ourselves. Let us not let that stop us from knowing that there is an urgency now, that requires us to quicken our step and embolden our efforts. We must not wait until we “have it right” to begin. As Janisse Ray writes in her essay on courage included in this journal, “we must hold up the light we have, especially in ordinary and necessary ways.”

What unites the range of essays included in this issue of the Whole Thinking Journal is this idea of transformation through relationship. In her essay on the work of the Eastern Shore Land Conservancy in Maryland, Shamina de Gonzaga tells the story of landscapes that were once places of suffering and now have a new life: land that was once worked by sharecroppers is now a community supported organic farm; a lot that was once an open-air drug market is now a community garden. In her essay on how relationship shapes our consciousness and sense of agency, including how we might understand and address climate change, Carolyn Finney writes, “we cannot create or expect different outcomes without changing our relationship to each other.” Peter Forbes writes at length about this same idea, which lies at the very center of our work at Whole Communities, and he examines how far we’ve come and how much farther we must evolve. In his essay from the heart of coastal Alaska, Hank Lentfer meditates on the meaning of the hunt, and on that ultimate transformation from life to death, from animal to sustenance. And finally, in the Food Justice manifesto – published here for the first time and in a bilingual format – we present one embodiment of what can emerge from this work of convening people of many different perspectives, backgrounds, and ideals. May we as a movement look at this document some few years from now and realize how far we’ve come to realizing its goals.

On the last page of this journal, you’ll see our calendar of workshops and retreats for 2009. We invite you to attend one of these, to join us and others who are doing this work in order to keep your courage and conviction strong. And in the meantime, may you all hold up the light you have, “in necessary and ordinary ways.”

Many blessings,
Helen Whybrow, Editor
Co-Founder, Center for Whole Communities
January, 2009
Knoll Farm, Fayston, Vermont
It was a quick train ride from New York City to Wilmington, Delaware, and a smooth one-hour drive from there to the Chesapeake Bay. Gala Narezo and I had come to learn about the work of the Eastern Shore Land Conservancy (ESLC), recognized for its efforts to incorporate social consciousness into its land conservation work.

The road to the town of Galena, Maryland, where ESLC is based, was flanked on either side by large tracts of land unfettered by development. The area, perhaps best known for its maritime activities, is also home to flat, fertile farmland that in many cases has belonged to the same families for generations.

When we arrived in the quaint town of Galena, it was dinner-time. At a restaurant with an outdoor terrace overlooking the water, families were enjoying the warm evening. As Gala and I walked about, curious locals, assuming we were foreigners, politely asked us where we were from. The scene presented a glimpse of homogeneous prosperity and ease, and I wondered what we might possibly document that would be of interest for an article addressing questions of diversity and social justice.

Uncertain of the story that would unfold, we made our way to Colchester Farm, a property conserved by ESLC. Although but a few minutes off the highway, the road leading to Colchester Farm, flanked by wide open fields, felt a world apart from the waterfront resort setting we had just encountered. Rob Etgen, Executive Director of ESLC, graciously welcomed us to the farmhouse, which was brightly lit with large windows and still bustling with people finishing up the day’s activities. We decided to meet the following morning to begin our work.

Over breakfast I asked Rob to tell me about the farm’s history, not realizing this would lead to a discussion on the broader, socio-historic context of the region, of which I had been unaware until then. Rob talked about the many arrowheads that have been found in the farm’s fields, dating back to different periods and indicating the continuous presence of Native Americans on that land. In the basement of the farmhouse are structural remnants of the Underground Railroad by which slaves had escaped to the Free states. Rob explained that slavery was part and parcel of the history of the Chesapeake Bay and that in Kent County the last attempted lynching had occurred in the 1930s. The peaceful image of people content with their quality of life, which I had witnessed on arriving to the area, was but one facet of a much more complex, unsettling, and violent reality.

It was in this context that, after establishing ESLC in 1990 as a stronghold for land preservation on the Eastern Shore and quickly earning the confidence and support of rural landowners in the region, Rob Etgen became equally committed to expanding ESLC’s services and outreach. Beyond helping to stem sprawl in a culturally and ecologically important area of the United States, ESLC’s work includes conserving farms for Community Supported Agriculture and partnering with others to design community-friendly, environmentally sound options for areas earmarked for development.

An alumnus of the Center for Whole Communities, Rob is currently in the process of testing the boundaries of ESLC and challenging the barriers that separate the communities that his organization serves. Recognizing the homogeneity of the current membership of ESLC, the organization’s leadership aims to expand its support base, by reaching out to constituencies of diverse race, culture, and economic means. Through direct dialogue and exchange, ESLC hopes to better understand the diverse communities that inhabit the Eastern Shore.
and to develop partnerships among them that will benefit land conservation and help create a more cohesive society.

Rob, an energetic man in mid-career, shared with me some of his vision for the organization: “In the early years, we just wanted to preserve as much land as possible. That was a good strategy and many people were donating conservation easements to preserve land on the Eastern Shore. But very early we began to recognize that there was an acreage race that we might not win, so we needed to work on improving policy. This brought us to work on transportation and environmental policy, to ensure we’re not putting our industrial uses in underprivileged areas. Currently, most of our land conservation transactions are in and around our towns, because we’ve won most of our battles in the rural areas, and have succeeded in getting a sound regulatory framework in place, so that we don’t have to buy every farm to keep it free from sprawl. Now we’re focusing on greenbelts, trail systems, community gardens, and preserving sacred spaces for different groups within our community.

“There are board members over the years who have left because they believed we should just stay in the rural areas. While we would still be a robust organization if we had stayed with that, we wouldn’t be advancing our mission, which is to sustain the Eastern Shore as a broad landscape and a broad community. Just doing rural land conservation wouldn’t have allowed us to achieve the policy gains and the success we’ve had in limiting sprawl, and our communities would be less healthy places to live.”

As Rob would go on to explain, there are varying levels of enthusiasm within his organization about the initiatives he was aiming to undertake; however, among the senior staff, he has staunch support. The following day I had the opportunity to explore these questions further with Meredith Lathbury, Director of Land Production for ESLC, at her home in the town of Cambridge. She too spoke candidly about the direction in which she was inspired to take the organization. Meredith is also an alumna of the Center for Whole Communities and had attended a workshop that was catalytic for her: “When I needed to think about where I would go next, going to [the] workshop in Denver helped me tap into the value of community and allow it to come through in a much more open way. I joined ESLC because it’s the largest land trust in Maryland and I’ve always known Rob Etgen to be a real visionary in land conservation. I also love the landscape here.

“In the short term we’re revisiting our conservation priorities and spending the next year listening to every aspect of the community, so that we can learn about people’s interests in land conservation and serve them better. We’re taking time to build relationships and creating an avenue where we’re not asking people to sign on to our agenda, but where we learn about their priorities.”

Could an organization dedicated to land conservation and genuinely interested in diversity become a neutral and unifying actor, a catalyst for social dialogue and change? A compelling coincidence was the fact that the weekend of our visit marked the annual Juneteenth celebration, a nationwide commemoration of June 19, 1865, the day when, two and a half years after President Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation, news of the end of slavery reached slaves in Texas. In Cambridge, Maryland, the celebration is an opportunity to pay tribute to the Eastern Shore’s African-American history, from legendary figures in the fight against slavery, such as Harriet Tubman, to contemporary leaders in the community.

Although not directly involved in the Juneteenth celebrations, one of the ways that ESLC is contributing is through collaboration with the African American Land Trust, to learn about the important sites for the Eastern Shore’s African-American population, and provide the African-American community with information on land conservation and management.

When asked how he would characterize the collaboration between ESLC and the African American Land Trust, Vince Leggett, who founded the African American Land Trust in 2002, described it as a mutual mentor-protégé relationship, based on the private-sector model of majority and minority business, but adapted to the specific needs of a nonprofit land conservancy. He explained: “We are a small volunteer-based organization and working with ESLC has enabled us to benefit from their experience as a land trust and their administrative support. On our side, we contribute ethnographic studies in over sixty communities throughout the region, the recognition of the African-American community, and relationships, providing access directly to the kitchen table, which is often where land transactions are discussed.

“African-Americans have owned property since the Civil War, however, like other minority groups, they have lacked wills, clear titles, and estate plans. These factors have made them ineligible for government programs to assist landowners, and have also prevented them from getting the best value for their property when they want to sell. The establishment of the African American Land Trust as a federally recognized 501 (c)3 nonprofit organization, represented by a prominent law firm, was significant for the African-American community. As a bona-fide land trust, we can be a full-fledged partner with majority land trusts, and hold conservation easements jointly, as well as independently. Often, having our name on the
easement can be a deal clincher for significant properties.”

Meredith concurred, “We were so happy to find the African American Land Trust, a group that had that focus, and that could help guide us in how to develop partnerships. And in return, we can help them by sharing expertise, since as a land trust they’re a relatively new organization.”

Both Rob and Meredith spoke of the immediate challenges they face in advancing this more inclusive, community-minded approach to their work. Rob put it this way: “As we aim to expand our outreach, we’ve talked about it to our members at varying levels. For some people we explain the practical rationale: ‘Here’s where we are, we have to get this much land preserved, and we need this many members. Here are the demographics of our membership, which is overwhelmingly white and over sixty-five. There’s a divergence between who we are and who we need to be. We need to make a bigger tent or there won’t be anyone under that tent, because the demographics of the Eastern Shore are shifting.’ But for me, the motivation is more of a moral issue. Once we address the question ‘Who should we be tailoring our programs to?’, how can we not be tailoring them to the people who are most in need, regardless of whether they’ll be members of a strategic political constituency or voting block at the grass roots, how can we not reach out to them?

“I’m encouraging my supervisors to take advantage of the people in the organization who are eager to do the outreach instead of forcing everybody, because some people are reluctant. I think we’re going to lose some staff members who feel like a fish out of water, but overall I have faith that the transition will be a positive one.”

Meredith agrees that ESLC has to look beyond its current membership to truly serve the community as a whole, though she admits that it isn’t easy: “Our board and staff are very interested in this approach; they want us to check in with the community. Some of our funders are also very supportive. Others are concerned that this might be distancing ourselves from our mission, or simply don’t understand how this process is going to help us reach our goals.”

The motivation to adapt ESLC’s priorities in order to meet the community’s needs may stem from a moral or values-based approach. However, the challenges facing the community are far from abstract.
While from a legal standpoint segregation belongs to the past, today the white and African-American populations of the Eastern Shore remain separated geographically and economically, with structural inequities that keep them that way. The socio-economic inequity is perhaps most visible on Pine Street in Cambridge, which was once a vibrant hub of African-American-owned businesses and community activity. Following its devastation by fire in the 1960s, Pine Street was never rebuilt and today holds but a series of houses interspersed with some abandoned lots. The situation of Pine Street contrasts sharply with that of Main Street, which also was burned but, as it had been dominated by white business-owners, was completely rebuilt. Despite the continued efforts of local community activists who formed the Pine Street Committee, there has been a glaring lack of interest on the part of government officials to help revitalize Pine Street and its surrounding area.

The Pine Street community garden is one example of ESLC’s endeavor to listen and respond to the community’s needs, by bringing some green space to Pine Street and providing an activity for young people in the neighborhood.

Octavene Saunders, Secretary and Treasurer of the Pine Street Committee, explained how the project began: “One morning last November, John Seward from ESLC and I started talking about the environment, and I told him how in 1969 we started a two-street cleanup in the neighborhood and a community garden, and that it was a success. So John asked me if I had thought about doing something like that again. I said, ‘Yes, if the other volunteers agree.’ The idea of the community garden with the Pine Street Committee is to give our children something to do this summer, and to help them learn about the importance of caring for the earth and taking fruits and vegetables back to their table. A lot of kids get a lot of food but not...
necessarily fruits and vegetables. The idea is that if they grow and harvest them, they'll be more likely to want to eat them.

“As a young woman, young mother, and young wife, I had so many experiences that made me get real mad with God, until I realized that I had a purpose in life. If it hadn’t been for some people along the way, I would have been a real messed-up young woman. Working with people like John who sees no sex, no color, just wants to work with people, gives me hope that his attitude will spread. For the last four years, Cambridge has been run by an elite group of people. If you’re not forceful and vocal, your areas will not be represented.”

The sentiment of dissatisfaction and low expectations of policy-makers is shared by other community members. Portia Ennels, a member of the Pine Street Committee, elaborated on the importance of civic engagement and holding politicians accountable. “I’m a sixty-one-year-old community activist and I feel that we’re taking steps backward instead of forward. I’m not asking the city of Cambridge for money, but after forty years they could have done something. They rebuilt Main Street but they didn’t rebuild Pine Street and that’s an injustice. The officials have to not be afraid to come into the different wards of Cambridge. There are five wards and they should come into all of them, and not in a patronizing way, to see what they can do to help.”

A sign of the absence of dialogue is the different vocabulary and contradictory accounts used to describe the same events. Was Pine Street devastated by riots or by fire? Who determines which history is the official one? This issue affects not only the status of places, but also the identity of people, as described by Chief Winterhawk of the Nanticoke Choptank Nause-Waiwash tribe. The principal Native American interlocutor for ESLC, which counts areas of historic significance to Native Americans among the lands it has protected, Chief Winterhawk is determined to preserve his people’s culture and ties to their ancestral lands.

We caught up with Chief Winterhawk while on break from a family event at a local auction. Leaning against his black pickup truck, Chief Winterhawk introduced himself: “I am the tribal chief of the Nanticoke Choptank Nause-Waiwash tribe that lived in this area forever. We are the remnants of the last active Indian reservation in the state of Maryland, which took it away from us illegally in 1802. It took them until 1870 to finish settling all of the land and by then most of us had been pushed south to the low, marshy, unpopulated areas where we couldn’t grow cotton or tobacco, which were the cash crops.”

Despite the ongoing attempts to erase the region’s tribal identity, Chief Winterhawk assumes his role with conviction and confidence. “I was sickly when I was born so I spent a lot of time in my grandmother’s kitchen and she would tell me the old stories. She told me you can’t know where you’re going if you don’t know where you come from and encouraged me to talk to people and record the oral history of our people. As I did this, I noticed children would listen to the stories with flames in their eyes and they would ask why their parents hadn’t told them. My grandmother thought that our culture would last only one more generation, but I believe my people will survive. I am from the Turtle Clan, this will always be my land, no one can break or change that connection.”

Having experienced firsthand the power of storytelling and mentorship between generations, Chief Winterhawk has undertaken efforts to educate children and fight discrimination, as well as initiatives to maintain his people’s physical ties to the land, including through the restoration of his tribe’s Longhouse half a mile from the Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge. The refuge was conserved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for its ecological importance (it contains one-third of Maryland’s tidal wetlands, and is home to over 250 species of birds, including the Bald Eagle) as well as its historic relevance to the Nause-Waiwash tribe, whose ancestral villages surrounded the refuge, and to African-Americans, as the refuge was considered to be a hiding place for escaped slaves traveling on the Underground Railroad.

“Generation after generation we try to hold onto our identity and protect what has always been ours. It has been a hard battle, but working with the ESLC has been a positive experience, unlike with many other groups we’ve interacted with over the years.”
An hour away from Cambridge, back at Colchester Farm, efforts are under way to honor the diverse identity of the Eastern Shore and to break the silence about discrimination and social tensions. Charlotte Staelin is the owner of Colchester Farm, the 340-acre property where ESLC holds a conservation easement, and where we had begun our journey.

We had the opportunity to speak with Charlotte about her approach to transforming her property into a valuable resource for both landowner and the broader community. Charlotte, whose family has owned Colchester Farm since the Civil War, was raised in different parts of the U.S. and has had an international career in academia and politics. Her multicultural experience led her to interact constantly with people of diverse race and background, in sharp contrast to the “polite” and strained racial relations that are the norm on the Eastern Shore.

Given her cosmopolitan interests and international career, it was a surprise to many, including herself, when Charlotte learned that she would inherit the farm—a fateful chance. Charlotte is determined to use the 340 acres, in an area bound up in American history, native history, and slavery, as a space for nourishment, healing, and coming together.

“This is not a place where I grew up. This was a farm that was purchased and run as a sharecropping farm by a distant grandfather of mine who at one point owned thirty-seven farms. It fell into my lap at a certain point where I’m the one who’s supposed to do something with it. I have some guilt, that totally by happenstance I wind up with a farm. It’s a gift and I take that responsibility very seriously, so we have to give it back and make it useful for all the people of Kent County.”

In collaboration with ESLC, Charlotte has already succeeded in transforming Colchester Farm from a family burden to a community-supported farm that offers a variety of resources, including youth summer camps, yoga classes, and silent meditation walks. The farm attracts people of all generations and backgrounds in search of healthy lifestyles and fresh food, community spirit, or opportunities to do volunteer work, and in many ways it serves as a bridge between the Eastern Shore and the outside world. Although I thought I had left my work at the United Nations miles away in New York, I found it in Colchester, in children’s drawings that depicted their vision of the farm’s future, whereby it would one day be recognized by the UN as a world peace site.

For the time being, one of the most popular aspects of Colchester Farm is the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), a program that allows people to become shareholders of the farm by purchasing subscriptions that contribute to the farm’s operational costs. In return these shareholders receive fresh, seasonal, locally grown food. Having started out with one-hundred-dollar donations from friends, the CSA, six years later, has become a year-round operation with 150 families subscribed, six interns, one full-time staff member, and many work shares.

Nuha, who helps in the gardens in exchange for her share at the CSA, explained why this work is important to her: “I’m originally from Sudan but have been living in the U.S. for the last ten years. I have a degree in electrical engineering but now...
I’m staying at home with my two little kids. I like the setting and I like to help support this organization and receive things in return. It’s ideal for me because I can bring my children, who play with the animals while I work.

“If I come in the morning, people might be out in the field picking lettuce or spinach. If they have enough people working out there, then I’ll help wash, rinse, weigh, and pack the vegetables. And then I leave with my bag of spinach. It’s very flexible. Anyone who is environmentally and health aware can choose to buy the right food at the store, but this is different. When I come here, I’m not buying something off the shelf, I’m actually helping to sustain locally grown food and support farmers in this area.”

The CSA presents something for everyone, from families like Nuha’s, looking for an economically viable way to bring organic, seasonal, locally grown food to the table, to people who are monitoring their health, like shareholder Francine Murphy, who commented, “We’ve been trying to eat organic food since I was diagnosed with cancer about thirteen years ago. I saw an article in the paper about the CSA and so we signed up for it. We want to know where our food comes from. People shouldn’t be getting sick from produce.”

For many young people, like volunteer Christina, working at the farm is a great way to spend a summer vacation that has a larger purpose: “I’m interning here this summer, and living with Charlotte. I found out about the opportunity online at Idealist. This is the first time I’ve worked on a real farm. I volunteer at the small organic farm we have at school. It’s a lot of hard work but it’s fun. The last five years or so, I’ve been aware of organic food. Some people don’t really care, but the younger generations are more willing to buy organic.”

Notwithstanding the success of the CSA, Charlotte described some of the challenges going forward: “Americans have gotten used to having the food they want when they want it. There will always be kiwis in February and long-distance bananas carted in from Mexico, as long as people are willing to pay for it, but I believe there will be an increasing role for seasonal availability of local foods. The trick is, with the pressure for land development, is it financially viable? We’re on our sixth year and we think we have a model that works, but we’re still figuring out how much money we need to earn. Do we need a grant? Is that a long-term solution? Fine-tuning the amount you pay is also a challenge, because workers have to be paid well, but not so much that you wind up becoming overly expensive for the people who want to buy the fruits and vegetables.”

As with the CSA, ESLC’s experience demonstrates that moving in the direction that will ultimately be most beneficial for the organization and the broader community is neither easy nor clear-cut. Reconciling one’s goals with outside realities can be long and tedious, demanding patience and the ability to reassess strategy and priorities. In that regard, the willingness to listen and learn is most essential.

That approach is at the heart of some of ESLC’s recent work in land use planning and advising on community-centric, sustainable approaches to development as a complement to rural land preservation. Morgan Ellis took on ESLC’s first effort to create a locally led public planning process seeking to broadly engage the whole community in making development decisions for a property in Chestertown, Maryland, which had been earmarked for development. ESLC purchased the option in order to enable the community to provide input on the development plans, before the development was under way. Morgan described the motivation for the project, “When you think of a land trust, you think of land preservation and I can’t agree more. However, in order to protect land, there has to be solid good planning as well. If we can do smart development inside towns, we can do preservation outside, but it requires educating and empowering the towns and counties to understand that dynamic relationship.”

To involve the community, ESLC distributed flyers throughout town inviting the public to a five-day charrette. Despite the broad outreach, Morgan explained that not all members of the community were ultimately represented. “Chestertown is diverse and the process was open to everyone, but the African-American and Hispanic populations were not represented in the process. I realize now that as the project manager, I didn’t have the connections to bring in members of all community groups and they also didn’t come to us. One of ESLC’s priorities, as well as my personal goal, is to reach out and build relationships with different people and organizations so that in the
future we can have more diverse constituencies involved in all of our projects.” It is ESLC’s sentiment that the best land use planning happens when the full spectrum of the community is engaged; the best answers to difficult development questions lie in the community, not in any one head or textbook.

While the scale of ESLC’s land use planning projects has grown over time, the organization’s interest in smart growth and community engagement is not completely new. Our last stop before returning to New York was a half hour away from Cambridge, in the town of Easton, at a community garden that had been one of ESLC’s first urban land acquisition projects. Although the garden was small in size, its positive impact on the community could not be underestimated.

Joyce DeLaurentis, an outgoing urban planner of Italian-American background who has lived in Easton for twenty-five years and who started Easton’s community garden with the help of Rob Etgen in 1992, emphasized the importance of that initiative. Formerly a center of drug sale and drug-related violence, the creation of the garden helped improve the neighborhood’s quality of life. “I live right across the street. There used to be fights and bullets flying. Where the garden is now, there was once an abandoned lot that served as a rampant open-air drug market. During a cleanup that I had helped organize, I saw the potential for a garden. I received help from a variety of people and organizations. At first, it was hard to get people to understand the value of this, because they didn’t feel they had the capacity to sustain it, but thanks to ESLC, we now have the garden permanently. This is about smart growth and creating quality of life and green space in urban areas, so that you can prevent farmland from getting developed. This garden has also become a major place for interaction between people of all backgrounds and economic groups. It has made the neighborhood safer and is helping to bust through some of the old attitudes and preconceptions that people hold about each other.”

“This garden has also become a major place for interaction between people of all backgrounds and economic groups. It has made the neighborhood safer and is helping to bust through some of the old attitudes and preconceptions that people hold about each other.”

To explain how land trusts can empower urban communities to take action and realize their potential, Amy Owsley, who lives in Easton and is responsible for land use planning at ESLC, shared her experience.

Like Rob and Meredith, Amy has also been impacted by the work of the Center for Whole Communities, which enabled her to shift and refine her advocacy strategies: “After grad school, I worked for the EPA and learned about smart growth and the concept of balance between development, people, and the environment. Once I had studied that from a national level, I wanted work with elected officials to make a difference with planning in their communities. Parts of the community feel disengaged, disempowered, or that they don’t have a voice, and I believe that the best decisions come in a community when everyone is speaking and has a role. The Center for Whole Communities helped me understand how to turn advocacy upside down, that it’s not about fighting, but about getting the dialogue started and giving people access to information. So today, rather than putting up our list of things we’re going to work for, we start from the roots up and talk to communities we haven’t spoken to in the past. Many people do feel disengaged and we need to be sensitive to that. We’re going to do some sincere listening, to understand what people want for their communities and what has been blocking them from achieving their goals, and we’ll integrate their priorities into our advocacy.”

As ESLC strengthens its capacity and experience in civic engagement and land use planning, it is introducing concepts of land conservation to nontraditional constituencies and fostering a sense of responsibility and empowerment among the broader public with regard to the environment and development, providing a platform for people to express their views.

More than taking a multi-stakeholder approach, ESLC is also promoting a values-based orientation, helping groups that have been marginalized to become engaged, and aiding groups that have been unaccustomed to sharing power to overcome prejudice through dialogue and the identification of shared goals.

In an area marked by its painful past, people have been reluctant to tell their stories and to allow themselves to envision a better future. However, with the dedicated leadership of a handful of organizations and people, the Eastern Shore has a chance to embrace its unique identity, come to peace with its history and ensure that the future belongs to everyone.

Meredith Lathbury put this into her own words as we ended our time in the Bay area, saying, “People feel that it’s time for a new day. In land conservation you could go on just doing conservation easements on expensive properties, and those projects do have their role. But what’s so compelling is to connect with the community. Through my experience with Peter Forbes’ work and observing what’s happening in our society in general, I believe it’s possible to see things in a much more optimistic way and that’s driving us towards a more comprehensive and solution-oriented vision.”
There are many nights each year that the wind keeps me awake. It is powerful enough to push furniture off our porch and peel the skin from the mountain yurt. The wind is something to be taken seriously, and yet there’s little I can do but pay attention, be careful, and repair the damage the next day. The wind signals a change in conditions, and as I listen I lie in bed taking in all that I love and holding tightly.

A night of powerful wind can feel much like the experience of a retreat, being present to unleashed forces bigger than ourselves that create change. Change can be unleashed in more subtle ways, such as when a group asks itself the provocative question, What do we long for? Encouraged by new leadership, many of us have been asking this question about our country. Center for Whole Communities has been asking a similar question of ourselves and of our brothers and sisters working for change.

What are we for?

This is a transformational moment in our country and also in our work. John Haines, poet laureate of Alaska, wrote, “What does it take to make a journey? A place to start from . . . and something to leave behind.” All along this journey of creating Center for Whole Communities, we’ve grappled with how to create a safe harbor, here on the land, for different people to ask themselves the hard questions about what kind of world we want to live in and how we get there together. But who is “we” at Center for Whole Communities and what lengths are “we” willing to go to understand what “together” really means?

The most constant and, perhaps, important aspect of the journey has been our intuition that we must be willing to ask ourselves questions that challenge and expose us, and to allow ourselves to be changed by the answers. The journey has never been easy, never been completely successful, and yet we’ve never turned back. As a result, our relationships are more diverse, the quality of our work has improved immeasurably, and the lives of many with whom we have deeply collaborated—colleagues, faculty, alumni, board members—have changed.

Our early work was about reconnecting similar people with the sources of their activism around land. The edge that we pushed back then was around bringing together opposing
forces within the same world—loggers and wilderness advocates or conservationists and farmers, for example. We helped these leaders to look up from the deep grooves of their lives to see one another with more humility and to taste the possibility of moving from isolation and opposition toward something bigger and more powerful. That work was important and yet insufficient; we plowed forward with our alumni, many of whom later became our faculty and board members, in asking deeper questions. Who is missing from the table that we set? What separates people in this country and keeps larger movements from happening? What are the values of the movements in which we are part, and where is there contradiction between what is professed and what is lived out? Where is that contradiction within Center for Whole Communities? One alumnus from that era put it this way, “You can’t go along talking about bridging divides, talking about equity, talking about social justice when you’re sitting in a group where there is none.” Thus began our real work, of seeing how far we must go to meet our own dreams, and of knowing that if we can change and really see one another, there is something infinitely more transformative in the collective.

It has been our deep belief in humanity’s relationship to land, from cities to rural places like Vermont, that made it essential that we should grapple with race, class, power, and privilege as they play out around relationships to land, as well as in the culture of all movements for change. Many questions arose: How is it that those of us who care about people and those who care about the land have ended up divided from one another? Why does mainstream environmentalism in our country include so few people of color? What can be done to identify and heal these barriers and divides?

In 2006, our staff and board adopted an organizational statement on Land, Race, Power and Privilege (you can read this on our website). In 2007, we passed more of the responsibility for cocreating the curriculum to our increasingly multicultural, multiracial faculty. In 2008, we prepared a new edition of that curriculum born out of a four-day faculty retreat at the Highlander Center in Tennessee in which the guiding theme was multicultural approaches to teaching about relationship to land, from cities to rural places like Vermont, that made it essential that we should grapple with race, class, power, and privilege as they play out around relationships to land, as well as in the culture of all movements for change. Many questions arose: How is it that those of us who care about people and those who care about the land have ended up divided from one another? Why does mainstream environmentalism in our country include so few people of color? What can be done to identify and heal these barriers and divides?

Our 2008 season went further with these ideas and reached many more leaders than ever before. We awarded one hundred fellowships, convened eight retreats at Knoll Farm and six workshops around the country. With these leaders, we helped to define a national food justice movement; helped growers and conservationists in the mid-Atlantic; environmental educators in New England; and activists around the country working on climate change, water scarcity and privatization, and social justice. We helped these leaders see their work through the lens of whole thinking: the effort to see and act for and from the whole.

All of our participants felt stretched by this difficult and important season. For many, the experience ranked among the highs of their professional lives. Kim Coble of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, reflected, “the retreat stretched me, challenged me, taught me and encouraged me in ways I have not felt for a long time . . . The analogy that I’ve used to describe my experience is that I had become a well-worn rug that was lifted and shaken out and came back to life in brighter colors. There is not a day that goes by that I don’t think about my experience and what I learned.” Gratefully, our alumni believe in us enough to engage critically in evolving and deepening the body of work. In 2008 we heard alumni raise three primary questions about the retreats:

1) How do we talk deeply about racism and leave room for other forms of oppression to surface and be healed?
2) How do we most effectively balance the need to explore difference with our long-term goal of finding shared story? Some groups got “stuck” on exploring oppression and the overall retreat experience for some was unresolved.
3) While knowing the importance of these deep personal dialogues about oppression and healing, how do we move the conversation beyond the personal to movement-building?

These questions bring us to the heart of the matter. Each and every one of us—regardless of our race—needs to spend time in another’s seat if we are to be more whole. As one alumnus put it, “We each need to understand the difficulties of being a woman in a man’s world, or a lesbian in a straight world, or an older person in a world of youth, or a disabled person in a world of able people, or a person of color in a white world.”

We have always said that the primary objective of our programs is to create stronger movements for change by reweaving disparate sectors. Although there is no doubt that our retreats nurture personal well-being and creativity, and help people more fully realize their own path, we have never positioned ourselves as a retreat center for individuals, or even a leadership training center where the emphasis is on each single person. Our emphasis has always been on recognizing the power of the collective and reweaving the whole.

If our objective is to reweave the whole, then we must be
willing to delve into all issues of oppression that prevent that whole. We found this summer that the very real, too-seldom explored, and deeply rooted issues of racism, power, and privilege took center stage, sometimes at the exclusion of all else—issues of class, gender, politics, religion, etc. This is real, it needed to happen, but what is also real is that some participants left this summer feeling less than “whole,” and even confused about our curriculum and its purpose. Our goal is to surface and confront all the forms of oppression and difference that stand in the way of movement building, while keeping hold of the larger, collective reason of why we have come together in the first place—to see each other more whole, to see a new story, together. In the end, the goal is to see difference more clearly but to see it as a foreground, and to see way beyond it.

We continue to search for the most effective lens through which to view a dialogue on race, power, and privilege. Should exposing oppression of all types be the focus of the curriculum, or should we come at that only after putting well-being at the center, as Sayra Pinto-Wilson advocates in her work? Some of our alumni asked us, “Are we missing the mark if the only pain and hurt and privilege we explore are centered on the color of our skin?” It’s not enough to acknowledge one’s privilege and then become stuck in guilt, anger, or isolation. And Sayra Pinto-Wilson has repeatedly said that no one benefits from the “oppression Olympics” where one group of people insist that they are more deeply oppressed than another. How do we talk about oppression in terms of our longing? How do we talk about difference in terms of our own well-being and what we most want to conserve? Our goal is to better understand what we can achieve together with the pieces of our lives.

We must always make an equal invitation to everyone to speak about their longing and the conditions for their well-being. We learn best when we have a sense of well-being and belonging, and so we wish to cultivate this. Therein are the seeds of transformation for each of us, as well as a form of leadership that can transform others. This new brand of leadership includes listening, dismantling racism, adaptation and flexibility, making room for others, and cultivating a moral voice. The primary emphasis of all of our education programs must be on the new story, and to reach that new story we must explore our differences and our individual stories. Yet we can not end on those individual stories. In 2005, an alumnus asked of us, “We need to knock it up to the next level. Anybody can go on a retreat to get into themselves. I’ve benefitted from many retreats that have helped me get clear about my individual role, but I think Center for Whole Communities is much too valuable for that.” We must always attempt to find the collective story that we can create together.

We’ve seen that the best retreats can utterly transform people’s notions of one another and of their own capacities, and can show them how a deeper connection with life and others is possible. We judge our success by how well each group moves through discomfort to a real understanding of one another and
to a positive energy and palpable joy that comes from a very diverse group of people who are respecting one another and learning together. Can they also go beyond the personal to a full exploration of movement-building? How might we adapt our curriculum to meet all of these goals?

The Whole Communities map (shown below), which was inspired directly by the groundbreaking work of Van Jones, is helpful in describing the movement-building aspects of our work. It illustrates the isolation among sectors that plagues the entire movement, and it explains the role that privilege plays in creating divides and weaknesses in all movements for change.

Our work is to help leaders in different sections of this map to see and hear one another so that true, deep collaboration and innovation is possible.

Our movements for change in this country are as divided and fragmented as our culture. First, there is the divide between those who care about people and those who care about nature. This divide is worsened by the fracture between those who have privilege and those who do not. If you have financial resources and care about nature, you may be interested in wilderness protection, land conservation, and so on. If you have little privilege and care most about people, perhaps you are interested in public health, structural racism, democratic participation, and hunger. Our point is this: All of these concerns are critically important, and none will succeed without the other. Those who care about endangered species will not make enduring progress without those who care about Katrina. The complexity of today’s problems makes it impossible for any effort to succeed in isolation. To focus on a single issue today is both a privilege as well as a source of isolation. And focusing on a single issue can lead an organization to be overly competitive, more prone to exaggeration, and less adaptive and resilient. Most of our alumni come to quickly recognize some of these characteristics in their professional lives.

The map also shows a level of isolation and blindness on the part of leaders in all four quadrants. An individual leader must first acknowledge this isolation and blindness before it can be overcome, and that requires a great deal of personal self-awareness and humility. In order for a shift in relationships to happen, it is not sufficient, for example, to simply share information about water issues and expect that different leaders of different sectors will then become water advocates. The challenge is not information but transformation. We see transformation only when leaders first reach a complete understanding of what divides them from others and, then subsequently, when there has been sufficient dialogue together to understand that they cannot succeed alone. We aspire to reweave and strengthen the movement from the center.

With each question we ask have come more questions, and in our journey to answer them we see how our lives, and the success of our programs, expand and contract in direct proportion to our courage. Where have we shown courage in this work?

We have shown courage in confronting models of conservation and environmentalism that have forgotten people and community, and in confronting models of community development that have forgotten land and creatures. We’ve held the courage to reimagine the order of things, to point out that laws don’t save places, only people do. We’ve had the courage to stay on the long path of confronting the history of race, class, privilege, and power in our own lives and in all movements for change. We’ve shown the courage to reweave, repair, and reconnect people and movements in an era of individualism, isolation, and divides. We’ve shown the courage to learn from those who are willing to engage with us and point out to us where we need to do better. I remember this evaluation from 2004: “As it’s set up now, they are basically experiencing privilege within privilege. I trust [the people of the Center] are going in the right direction even if I find myself disagreeing with what they do to get there.”

Dr. King said, “We cannot walk alone,” and we’ve tried to understand, more than superficially, why this is true. We’ve tried to model what we teach by constantly asking ourselves how we must change to meet others where they are, to hear them and to know them. Our definition of “together” has broadened every week. What began seven years ago as a way to help conservationists reimagine the power of their work is now an arc of learning that strengthens diverse leaders from multiple disciplines by helping them to map their own strengths, to explore differences, to imagine their community whole, and to fully understand that their success is bound up in the success of others.

We are thankful for those who have stayed with us when we didn't get it right, for those who continue to believe in us enough to help us be more aware and more successful. No matter where we are, our vision arises from a love of people and a love of land, and from our belief that every being is entitled to live to their greatest potential. We hope our work will inform the lives of farm workers and college professors, philanthropists and the homeless, politicians and voters, conservationists and affordable housing advocates, businesspeople and biologists, you and me.
Taped to the inside of my 2002 journal are two newspaper stories, blond with age. One is from the *New York Times*: “India Jails Novelist for Criticizing a Court Ruling.” Arundhati Roy, arms akimbo, stares away from the camera, soldiers behind her.

“The prize-winning Indian novelist Arundhati Roy was sentenced today to a day in jail and a $42 fine,” the article reads. India’s Supreme Court had convicted Roy of criminal contempt because she had proposed that the court wanted to “silence criticism and muzzle dissent” of its approval of the Narmada River Dam. Funded in part by the World Bank, the hydroelectric project would displace tens of thousands of villagers.

Five years earlier, Roy’s novel, *The God of Small Things*, had won the Booker Prize, and she had used all her prize winnings—$30,000—in the campaign against the dam.

“As she was taken from the court to serve her sentence at Bihar Jail, India’s largest,” the story continues, “Ms. Roy said she stood by her criticism.”

The second article reports that Ingrid Betancourt, Colombian presidential candidate, has been kidnapped by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, and is being held hostage. Her memoir, *Until Death Do Us Part: My Struggle to Reclaim Colombia*, had detailed the drug trafficking, guerrilla warfare, and government corruption that she believes to be responsible for the chaos in her country.

Betancourt was no stranger to violence. Some years before she had been told that someone had a contract on her life. One evening as she was leaving work, her car was sprayed with bullets. Afterward, she had made the most painful decision of her life, to send her two children, then ages seven and ten, to live in France with their father. “I have been without my children for six years now,” she told the *Miami Herald* in 2002, “and there is not one day when I don’t feel the pain.”

Those two clippings reminded me not to be afraid. That year I was seeking courage. I wanted to learn it. I began to search for a place to go and learn it, so that I, when the time came, might find the wherewithal to stand up and do what needed to be done.

When I was a young woman, at the same time I was learning to write, I began a study of oppression.

I was lucky enough to fall in with people who worked for world change—these were the words they used, *world change*—people who were members of peace coalitions, banked at credit unions, marched for civil rights, came out of closets, quit shaving their legs, drummed with other men in circles on full moons, sent their children to alternative schools, didn’t pay war taxes.

So, in a time when I was struggling to find my voice as a writer, I was struggling to find my voice as a human living in the twentieth century in the United States of America, a country founded philosophically on the ideals of freedom and democratic rights—but built ironically and tragically on subjugation and extermination of entire groups of living beings.

I was raised to be godly and quiet, to be good and good-looking, a Southern girl in a subset of uneducated, dirty-finger-nailed, whip-you-if-you-don’t-sit-there-and-act-right, working-class people. That I fell in with radicals made sense, but I have been a shock to my people.

My love of nature funneled me toward a life of activism: How could I not defend the wild places where I learned so much and found such hope and comfort? I became an environmentalist because I could not stand idly by and watch the destruction of nature. If silence was consent, I would not be silent.

The more I learned, the more I comprehended that environmental destruction is intrinsically and logically connected to every brand of oppression on the planet, one of many forms of violence against this glorious experiment called life.
classism, control over young people, genocide—parallels the exploitation of nature.

I learned that the only true opposition to domination is refusal to participate in it, which means reimagining a life with equality at its axis and attempting to live that life. Likely, opposition will mean dissent. I came to understand that what I stood to lose by being quiet and complacent was greater than what I stood to lose by protesting.

Even now there are things that make me shake.
Even now I am often afraid. The higher the stakes, the more afraid.

This life, for me, has been a search for my own power and my own voice. I want to be careful not to cause damage with it, but also not to pander or pretend or accept or turn my head and ignore.

Here is what I have learned:

I.
To learn courage is possible. Rosa Parks proved that. For twelve years before her famous, law-defying act of refusing to move to the back of the bus, she had been a member of the local NAACP chapter. The summer before her civil disobedience she attended a ten-day activist training workshop at the Highlander Folk School in Tennessee. She heard Myles Horton, Highlander’s founder, say, “The way to use this information is not to say that we have learned a lot, and isn’t it wonderful and great to have been at Highlander... You’re here to act on it. This is education for action. Now, how are you going to act on this? Let’s just plan what you’re going to do when you go back.”

II.
I would like to prove as well that courage is learnable. Martin Luther King, Jr., said, “Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.”

III.
Courage requires action.

IV.
One kind of action is anonymous. Anonymous courage is a hand-lettered sign tied to a tree, on the campus of North Georgia College, where I was a first-year student: ‘Woodman, Spare This Tree.’ Anonymous action is the unsigned letter, the late-night rigging. Sometimes the repercussions of being identified are too great. Sometimes there is more to lose by speaking out than to be gained.

V.
A greater courage identifies the possessor.

VI.

VII.
Finally, fear—the emotion that stops most of us in our tracks, that debilitates us, muffles us, surfaces. Of fears, there are multitudes. We give our lives away to fear. We give our lives away to inaction and silence.

VIII.
Wangari Maathai on fear, from personal correspondence with her filmmaker Lisa Merton and from transcripts of interviews: “If you have fear, it has to be there in you and you have to discover it in you. It has to influence your thoughts. You have to see danger. If you don’t see danger, you’ll do anything. And
I have never been in a position where I see danger. I guess that’s what makes it possible for me to keep going because I do not visualize danger. . . . Fear comes from imagining—you foresee what is likely to happen to you. But if you do not foresee the damage that is likely to happen to you and you only see the good that you are likely to do, then you can go through wars and people wonder where you get the energy. . . . I don’t know what courage is. Whatever it is, I don’t see it as courage. I see it as pursuing what I know is possible.”

IX.
Let’s talk first about fear of death. Our survival instinct sometimes works against us. In our fear of dying we are thus made weak. First the weakest succumb. To be courageous is to survive.

X.
And then there is the fear of not making a difference, being only one. Except this is not fear. It’s powerlessness. It’s a little voice that whispers, You can’t do this. Courage requires self-awareness and self-esteem, and it requires turning off the naysayers, even if you yourself are one of them.

XI.
Most of us are continually told, by ourselves and everyone around us, exactly what we are incapable of doing. We have to learn the correct answers.

No, you can’t stop drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.
Yes I can.

No, you can’t do anything about racism.
Yes I can.

No, you can’t get the U.S. out of Iraq.
Yes I can.

No, you can’t lead the life of your dreams.

XII.
Yes, you can.

XIII.
Scared people are like addicts in that they fabricate really good, usually believable and often irrefutable, excuses.

XIV.
Collectively our actions matter. Individually they matter too.

Because when many people do small things, the impact is big. Sometimes it’s big when even one person does a small thing.

XV.
In order to talk about courage, we have to talk about power. There are two kinds, and one is power over others, which is dangerous, and the other is personal power, which believes in the potential of yourself and others. I’ve heard it said that there are two groups, those who are afraid and those who make others afraid. But there is another group, those who are not afraid and who are also not feared.

XVI.
To have courage is not simply to trade places with the oppressor. “Leadership,” said Charlie Kreiner, leader in ending oppression, “is not a role or holding a position but an activity that frees other people. To lead others, one must be able to lead oneself. To lead oneself, one must heal from the ways one has been hurt.”

XVII.
We hear: “Speak truth to power.” “Say no to power.” What about: Dismantle the system of power.

XVIII.
Concerning the young, I ask you: How are we going to rear our children so that they are not oppressed and so that they do not internalize oppression, even during the years they need guidance? How are we going to end the devaluation of youth and youthful passion and youthful energy and youthful ideas?

XIX.
Lack of action is knotted to, badly tangled with, the ways we have been hurt.

Each one of us is born powerful. We are born good—meaning loving, cooperative, zestful, trusting, flexible, and capable, with immense capacities for courage. Then we get hurt. Sometimes we’re not welcomed into the world. Sometimes we
have to fight for food or attention or love. Sometimes we don’t have the support or information we need.

Two things happen when we’re hurt: either we act compulsively, often irrationally, or we don’t act at all. Empty places remain inside our hearts and we will go to all ends to protect or ignore those places. We will abandon our love for all of life in an attempt to feel wanted and cared for and protected and eternal.

Sometimes a hurt is so big we can never completely heal. However, any one of us can get to a point that we don’t make decisions in our lives based on hurt.

Our mission should be to live a life based not on distress but on trust and cooperation, kindness and love. On a vision of peace, justice, balance. To help others remember our inherent reality, that we were all born completely good, every one of us, and wholly interconnected.

XX.

Once you are beyond the fears that leave you facedown on your bed, there lies another portfolio of fears. I, for example, am afraid that every last old-growth tree will be laid to the ground. Instead, what if I say, What about a world in which we honor old growth as sacred, in which our children run among ancient trees?

To organize around painful emotion—in this case, fear—is less than ideal. Mostly it doesn’t work. As you organize, look at the worst possible scenarios and tremble with your fears. Weep over the bad things that could happen. Because when you get past your fears, you are able to focus on the reality of possibility and creativity. You get much better at building alliances and community, and creating alternatives.

XXI.

Assess your life: What am I doing that I don’t want to be doing? What am I not doing that I want to be doing? Take some time to actually think about these things.

XXII.

What holds you back? What happened? To you? To your voice? If you knew beyond a doubt that you would not fail, today, what would you do?

XXIII.

What is keeping you from loving every person on the planet?

XXIV.

Wangari Maathai writes on consciousness: “It is important to raise your consciousness, because if your consciousness is not at a certain level, then of course you will succumb, you will give up. But if your consciousness is at such a level you feel you must do the right thing because it is the only thing to do.”

XXV.

The Buddha said, “Make of yourself a light.” Each of us needs
to be a light, within our power, within our ability to love and to think well. We must hold up the light we have, especially in ordinary and necessary ways.

I am haunted by eyes. I remember most the eyes of a seal, stranded on the beach of the Oregon coast. On book tour, my husband along, we had veered to see the ocean—we had been passing logging trucks loaded with trees so big only four or five fit. Raven and I walked along the wide, wide beach, listening to surf and looking at bird tracks in the sand. Far from water, we came across what first appeared to be a log, but with eyes and rasping breath. How out of place the seal looked in the ghastly hot sun. How his eye turned to me, half defiant, half begging for mercy. That dark, beseeching, already dying eye.

Or the eyes of the cow manatee, when I was snorkeling, who came and put her face right up to my mask, while her calf rolled and tumbled about—animal without knowledge of vengeance, without ability to attack. I saw where the calf nursed, a tiny teat just below her flipper. Help us, the mother manatee said to me.

Once in Alaska, a friend took us in his little boat to St. Lazaria, where the murres nest. On the back side of the island was a huge cavern, and on ledges of rock cliffs around it hundreds of penguin-like birds stood. We cut the engine, but even from hundreds of yards away we spooked the birds and they came pouring from the cavern. Thousands of wings resounded off the cliff as they took flight. There was no jostling, no panic; I don’t think any two of them ever touched wing tips. Each murre leaped off into space and flew out to sea, in formation. They flew as quickly back, circling into the cave mouth. They reminded me of an audience I heard in a darkened concert hall, singing “Amazing Grace” as one. They reminded me of a group of us at an intersection, standing together, holding signs: U.S. Out of Iraq.

How much life. How many hearts. All together, oceans of blood and others of sap. Continents of bones. I love this world.

Why should I be afraid to speak? Why should I allow anyone to hush me? Why shouldn’t I make sure the patrol dispatcher finds someone to rescue the seal? Why should I be embarrassed that my husband, a Vietnam-era veteran, goes about town waving an antiwar sign? Why would I not ask, of everything: Does this uphold life or does this annihilate it?

In almost every audience someone asks me how I stay hopeful. If I stay hopeful. How do I find hope? Do I have hope? And I think, Hope? Who needs hope to keep going? Do you feed your daughter because you have hope she’ll turn out okay? You find out she has asthma, so you quit?

What about love? What about love as motivation? So the question, “How do you stay hopeful?” should be: How do you stay love-filled?

I wake every morning and listen to the wrens and great-crested flycatchers, and watch that fat old orange sun, always full, rising over the pasture.

It’s not hope that keeps me going. It’s fight, life force. I may not have a lot of hope, but I have plenty of love and I have plenty of fight.

We are sitting so high in the sand dunes we can see the ocean, where pelicans skim over the clear, blue-green water of the choppy bay. Five or six dolphins are corralling fish—we hear the blues are running. We have never seen this circling from above. We are among sea oats. To our left, a couple of nighthawks have been hunting over a miniature forest of scrub pine. To our right, a canyon through sand dunes leads out to a wide strip of beach.

“This reminds me that life’s worth fighting for,” I say.

We are a nation of entrepreneurs. Scholars, cooperators, and inventors. We believe in progress, we know how to change. We have a long history of educating ourselves and of banding together to fight injustices—taxation without representation, slavery, the oppression of women. We have often risen to the challenge of serving humanity rather than our own desires.

Every right we have won as human beings, every inch we have moved toward peace and justice and equality, every move we’ve made to protect those beings who have no voice, has been accompanied by courage, by imagination, by struggle, by someone holding out a vision so that people could walk toward it—and that vision is the rebuilding of our lives, so that they make sense, and the restoration of our communities, both human and wild.

What are you going to do?
In the twenty-first century, we still attach value and meaning to one's skin color and cultural background (often above all else), and we police difference by regulating those meanings through our policies, media, and educational systems. The impacts of these meanings are made visible by the way in which major debates are shaped and informed by the privileged few. What are the consequences of this limited exchange of knowledge and lack of engagement across cultures and races? When I consider the environmental conversations we're having, particularly around climate change, I am worried. We cannot afford to rely solely upon the same old constructs, frameworks, and knowledge to address our present situation. What we face is not only about changing our relationship with the earth; we cannot create or expect different outcomes without changing our relationship to each other.

But let me back up for a minute. My interest in the process of addressing race—the questions we ask, the meanings we attach, the actions we take—stems partially from professional concerns. I have been trained as a geographer to understand how cultural differences shape our relationships to people and place. But my primary motivation is personal. Recently, I attended a meeting for the Second Century National Parks Commission, a group of powerful and experienced individuals (including Sandra Day O'Connor, Peter Senge, and E. O. Wilson) who were invited to participate in a yearlong process to reconsider the role of national parks as a public education tool. I was also asked to join the commission, and I accepted the invitation with both excitement and trepidation. There would be so much knowledge, wisdom, and experience at the table; would there be room for new vision? At our first meeting in the Santa Monica Mountains, we were asked to introduce ourselves and talk about why we had come. I listened as many people talked about how their work grew out of an understanding and a relationship to national parks which had been fostered by family and friends during childhood. When the question came to me, I spoke about how this experience was also personal for me, but in a less expected way. After returning from the Korean War, my father believed he could not get a job with the park service because he was a black man living in the segregated South. Now, fifty years later, I've been invited to develop ideas that will affect the way the national parks engage a diverse public. This was a change worth acknowledging. The privilege of having a college education, of having a good job at a well-respected university, and of having been born at a time in history when my skin color is less of a barrier than it was in my father's day opened doors for me in ways that my parents barely could have imagined. We've come a long way, baby. But this begs the question, What does race mean today? What does race—in either its earlier incarnation or its most recent manifestations—have to do with the environment?

I think race has to do with possibility—what we are able to imagine, to see, to construct; what we believe we can become; and how we conceptualize this possibility are all informed by our life experience. My first understandings of race and how it shaped my imagination and identity are grounded in my childhood. I grew up outside of New York City in a gardener's cottage where my parents were the caretakers. The land on which my family lived, where my brothers and I played, was filled with flowers, fruit trees, large rocks for climbing, and a fish-filled pond. We made solid use of this “natural” space. Our games incorporated the rocks and trees as active participants in the landscape of our imagination. But off the property, I did not feel so free or welcome. We were the sole black family in a wealthy, white neighborhood that police patrolled with regularity. As I was developing an active appreciation for the natural environment, I was also learning that my presence in certain places and spaces was not expected, welcome, or “natural.” Years later, when my parents had to leave the estate, I began to question the ideas of ownership, stewardship, and power. My parents had been chauffeur, housekeeper, and land stewards for nearly fifty years; but, despite their knowledge, experience, and commitment to the land, they were never able to claim ownership in any way that counted.

My personal experience led me to further explore issues of identity, power, and place at the national and international scale. So, what has race got to do with the environment? And
why should we care? Brian Williams on NBC Nightly News once spoke about the need to address collectively the issues of “race, class, petroleum, and environment.” While America’s relationship with petroleum has been part of a national conversation for some time, hearing a popular news anchor challenge Americans to engage in a similar discussion about race, class, and environment was both timely and radical. Williams is not only suggesting that a tangible relationship exists among race, class, and the environment, one which can mean the difference between life and death (as so illustrated by Hurricane Katrina), but he is also asking us to look beyond the devastating effects of Katrina to consider how this interrelationship is constructed and what we might do to change that relationship for the better.

So, how is this relationship between the environment and race constructed? Who, for example, might you think about if I were to ask the question, “Who is the face of the Climate Change debate?” The editors of Vanity Fair gave one answer in their first annual Green Issue that came out in May of 2006. Following Al Gore’s outline on the global warming “crisis” were twenty-eight pages of people and organizations considered proactive in combating the world’s environmental crises. But of the sixty-three people pictured, only four were people of color. In addition, most of the people were from Europe or the U.S. This speaks volumes about who we actually imagine cares about and actively participates in environmental management and who has something to offer concerning the widespread environmental changes taking place. In addition, how the environmental narrative is portrayed is an indicator of who is being actively sought or engaged in the larger debate. Can we really afford to limit our notion of who may have a workable strategy to engage the widespread changes taking place?

Let’s try coming to this question from a different angle. Hurricane Katrina was an environmental and human disaster of immense proportions. The words and images of black people portrayed as “refugees” instead of “citizens,” “looting” and “shooting” during this desperate time, were recorded and shown worldwide, providing an explicit image with an implicit meaning. The idea that there is an essential and fixed quality to blackness (read criminality and poverty) is indicated as natural and normative by simply showing images of black people and applying labels that carry certain meanings. The power that images and words have in stigmatizing a people or community can have far-reaching psychological and material consequences. How one’s identity is constructed through representations calls into question both the social realities that are sustained by such representations as well as who in particular benefits from the perpetuation of these depictions.\(^1\) Equally disturbing is how one perspective of an experience, a person or a place—in this case, African-Americans or the Ninth Ward—can become so embedded in our consciousness through such representational acts that we cannot imagine, and therefore do not act on, other possibilities.

Let’s make it even more specific. Tupac Shakur was a black rapper and poet. As a twenty-five-year-old top-selling recording artist, songwriter, and social activist, he explored the themes of racism and life living in the ghetto. He died a violent death by gunshot, a crime that is yet unsolved as I write this piece. He was a charismatic individual, although the gangsta image he projected outwardly belied a deeper complexity often expressed in his lyrics. Our ability to see people as one-dimensional, partially grounded in the stories and images the media feeds us, stunts our capacity to see multiple layers of possibility in a person or a place. If we know Tupac only through what the media tells us, we are unaware of the organic community garden that his grandmother cares for—fifty-six acres of land in Lumberton, North Carolina, where she raises animals and grows organic vegetables that Tupac’s mother says is also part of Tupac’s legacy. This tells me he had a sense of community, of family, of the meaning of food grown and raised by his own hand. This tells me he had something else to say, something more to say. How do we think differently about each other in relation to the environment? How does race “color” who and what we see when we imagine the “environment”? Aren’t we all complex people with many possibilities? Can we only see Tupac holding a microphone or a gun, or can we imagine him next to his grandmother with his hands in the earth? Take a moment to really see that. Does anything shift in you? Imagine how this can shift our vision—how we see and what we are able to see for ourselves, for others, for the earth.

To make any leap in consciousness, I believe we have to start where we are, which means we have to fully acknowledge where we are—the good, the bad, and the ugly. We need to name it, claim it, and be willing to reframe it. Which means deeply questioning our present beliefs and being willing to see how they might cloud our vision(s) for the future. Beliefs can become facts or truths at once static, unchanging, and powerful, which then become the foundation for action. I am not saying one should throw their beliefs overboard. Instead, I invite you to consider how beliefs, like thoughts, are never static, and are perhaps dangerous when thought to be so. They are as much affected by life as is the land on which we live and depend. But we often take our beliefs and attitudes for granted and fail to recognize how at the root they may be rotten or dead and no longer serving us.

Sveva Gallman is a white Kenyan who cares for the Ol Ari...
Nyiro Conservancy in Kenya, 98,000 acres of private land where wildlife and humanity interact. Gallman focuses on supporting a more balanced relationship between humans and nature. Specifically, she founded the Four Generations Project that works to preserve the cultural heritage of local tribespeople in Kenya. While visionary in her ability to see people more fully, I believe she also falls victim to longstanding beliefs that get in her way of seeing another possibility. In an interview for a national magazine, she makes the statement all too often heard from those who have “found” and acknowledged the importance of the environment in the lives of those indigenous, marginalized communities that exist throughout the world. She says, “In the West, we have no idea where our food and water really come from, no connection to nature. It’s spiritual, that connection, and we’ve lost it.” While Gallman’s statement isn’t entirely off the mark, particularly when looking at the broad picture and the subsequent impacts of Western development and focus on economic growth, she unwittingly makes invisible scores of individuals and communities in the West whose “connection” to the environment is palpable in their daily lives. The mainstream environmental movement, along with environmental education in the U.S., does not include in its definitions of environmentalists those persons like my parents who have worked someone else’s land for forty-five years. Or urban gardeners who manage to coax life out of a patch of grass surrounded by cement and the gritty realities of urban living. The “connection” that Gallman imagines as being lost is very much there for these individuals, but it’s not described or defined in the writings of the Sierra Club or the Wilderness Act or Vanity Fair’s Green Issue. The result is a static understanding of what an environmental and/or spiritual connection looks like, and those whose experience of such relationships is different are often left on the margins or just not counted.

Think about how the climate change debate is getting shaped and by whom. “Other” stories become addendums to the primary experience that has been defined by a privileged group. These stories are tacked on and often used to provoke emotion—anger, grief, and compassion—in order to stir up some action, be it writing a check or doing some volunteer work. And while these actions have value—by any means necessary—they are limited.

First, there is an unspoken assumption that those who determine the choice of stories to tell and the framework in which
the debate is shaped don't need as much “help” as those on the margins. Mainstream institutions and environmental organizations already have some “expertise” and skills that they've identified as being essential to the strategizing process. I would suggest that this privileged group is also in danger of being left on the sidelines of change. By privileging one way of approaching and speaking about the issue at hand (you know they say that insanity is when you keep doing the same thing over and over and expect different results) these instigators of action have jeopardized their ability to think differently. Well-established institutions and organizations keep asking the same questions, using the same strategies and tactics because they never really change their fundamental approach to the problem and appear to dismiss the idea that there is something they need to learn that can alter their very experience of thinking about the problem. Consequently, these institutions and organizations (the media, academia, and mainstream environmental groups) can't really imagine that someone “different” might have something really substantial to offer, beyond being the object of conversation used to illustrate the problem.

Secondly, there’s the question of privilege and power—the power to “invite” “Others” to the table and what that means about both the relationship between everyone at the table and the relationship between the people at the table and the subject itself. If I invite you to the table, there are some assumptions that we implicitly agree upon. We go by my rules, my definitions, my frameworks, and often, my goals. These become the filters through which we have our dialogue. You become the “added value,” but nothing fundamentally changes about the process or the outcomes. 4 But what would it mean to create a space at the table that attracts you and to which you bring your gifts and knowledge and experience, actively changing the process at its core? How might that affect everyone and the outcomes?

Yes, race still matters. Yes, there are complex processes in place, many of which are institutionalized or systemic. Yes, there are still times when I walk down the street or into a store or stand in front of an audience and people are going to make judgments about me because of the color of my skin. But even those who were the most militant among us on the question of race can rise above it. On this score, I am most moved and motivated by the words of Malcolm X. This was a man whom some saw as the harbinger of hate, as the living expression of the anger and hurt experienced by so many black people. But near the end of his life, his thinking had evolved, his consciousness had been raised. He said, “I've had enough of other people's propaganda. I'm for truth, no matter who tells it. I'm for justice, no matter who it is for or against. I'm a human being first and foremost, and as such I'm for whoever and whatsoever benefits humanity as a whole.” 5 I wonder what Malcolm would have to say about the environmental changes taking place now.

In a scene from the comic strip “Angry Little Girls,” a little white girl skips merrily along to a rainbow she sees in the distance. When she arrives at the end of the rainbow, she sees a little black girl with a leprechaun hat on, sitting next to a pot of gold. The white girl says, “I've never heard of a black leprechaun.” The black girl says, “Me neither, but I don't believe in limitations.” Most importantly, I believe, “We are all doomed to live what we cannot imagine.” If we can’t imagine Tupac with his hands in the earth. If we can’t imagine an environmental justice activist having something to offer to Al Gore. If we can’t imagine brown faces on the cover of the next Vanity Fair Green Issue. If we can’t imagine Malcolm X giving his life for humanity. If I can only see myself as “other” and marginalized and not imagine that I can be the center. What if we could imagine ourselves differently, more fully? Or imagine that I can invite you to join me, not just the other way around. That I am We.

Imagine . . .

Carolyn Finney, with Kaylynn Sullivan TwoTrees, will be leading a workshop on this topic at Knoll Farm in summer 2009. For more information, go to the calendar on page 40, or register on our home page: www.wholecommunities.org.

3 Ibid. p. 224.
When asked to name her favorite food, my daughter answers, without hesitation, “deer heart.” In her four short years, Linnea hasn’t had a lot of the sweet, tender meat. We eat it fresh, mostly in the fall, when the rut makes the usually wary deer easier to find in the dark rain forest of southeast Alaska. We do most of our hunting on an island an hour boat ride from home. The short autumn days make for long cozy evenings in the island cabin. There are no meetings to attend, no messages to return, no phones to answer. My family, along with the tight circle of friends drawn together by the hunt, are pushed by tide, daylight, rain, and our common obsession with deer. I usually awake first and stoke the woodstove and brew the coffee in the predawn dark. As the sky lightens and the cabin warms, people slowly awake and greet each other in whispers.

As trees take shape against the grey sky, I pack a large lunch, slip into layers of wool, lift my rifle from the rack, and leave the cabin’s warmth. Hunting is the last and most potent of the fall chores. The cohos are smoked and canned. The carrots, beets, and spuds are dug and stacked in the root cellar. The berries are cooked into jam or frozen in pie-sized portions. I often start a day of hunting with a walk along the familiar path to the graveyard. Anya and I chose the spot years ago; each fall we carry the head and hide of deer we kill to the same shallow mossy bowl formed by the curving roots of two towering spruce trees. The depression is covered with a green mosaic of the deer’s winter food: bunchberry, five-leaf bramble, and fine-leaf gold-thread. It’s easy to imagine a deer bedding down here, curling up against the rain or watching the softly falling snow.

Three weeks ago, Anya, Linnea, and I carefully laid the remains of two deer between the trees, purposefully arranging each hide and pushing a sprig of bunchberry into each lifeless mouth. We sat together and gave thanks for the island, the deer, each other, for hunters no longer on the island and hunters yet to arrive. The annual ritual is for our benefit. The ritual helps me make sense of the violence of the hunt, helps me wrap my mind around the power in a tiny piece of lead hurled through the forest with lung-tearing, bone-shattering precision.

Today I am in the graveyard alone. The hides are twisted together, white undersides turned and exposed by the scraping and pecking of raven and eagle. The wind drifting between the trees carries the subtle odor of rotted flesh. Tufts of hair lie in a hatched pattern round the rumpled skins. The skulls are worked clean, the bone pierced, the brains eaten. The only flesh remaining is the rough, ridged lining of the roof of the mouth and bits of gray gums around the teeth. One of the lower jaws is pulled free of the skull and lies ten feet away. The low mossy bowl formed by the curving roots of two towering spruce trees. The depression is covered with a green mosaic of the deer’s winter food: bunchberry, five-leaf bramble, and fine-leaf gold-thread. It’s easy to imagine a deer bedding down here, curling up against the rain or watching the softly falling snow.

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jaw on the other skull is attached but pried wide in a tongueless, hideous grin.

It takes closed eyes and a good bit of concentration to pull back an image of the deer’s beauty: delicate whiskers off the chin, long sweeping eyelashes, curved funnel ears, black convolutions of nose. All that remain of last year’s bones are the smooth arc of an antler and the sharp angle of an overturned jaw biting strongly into the moss. There is no sign of the bones from the year before that.

Several years ago, in the yurt on top of Knoll Farm, I introduced myself as a hunter, among other things. I can’t remember my exact words, but I’m sure my sentiments circled around gratitude for the web of connections woven by the deer. A few days later, over an outdoor lunch of fresh corn and other local fare, Olivia, a fellow participant, asked if we could talk more about hunting. Olivia explained that, as a Buddhist practitioner, she’d often reflected on the precept of “Do no harm.” “I carry spiders out of the house,” Olivia told me. “I try not to kill mosquitoes, and because of my great love of deer, killing one with a gun feels viscerally painful to me, as though I too am being killed.”

I swallowed a mouthful of garden tomatoes and described a scene I’d recently watched on a beach near my home: A merganser, sunning itself on rock, noticed, just a moment too late, the wide wings and descended talons. The eagle held the struggling bird beneath one foot, glanced around, then opened the soft belly with its curved beak. The merganser flapped its wing in a futile effort to escape as the eagle lifted entrails from the duck’s body. “Does the merganser’s suffering make the eagle any less beautiful?” I asked.

Olivia set down her corn. “Buddhism teaches that the person who embraces death as part of life learns how to live even more fully.”

“Tell me more.”

“Death and love are inextricably connected,” Olivia offered. “Both are acts of surrender. In being afraid of our death we remain fearful of love. We can’t open to one and not the other.” We chewed in silence for a while, soaking in the September sun.

“Is hunting hard for you?” Olivia asked.

“Yes and no. Hunting is the highlight of my year, but I am always glad when the killing is done and the rifle oiled and put away. We could eat beans, tofu, lentils, or other bits of bloodless protein and avoid the killing. But the venison is more about connections than calories.” I went on to describe the people who have gathered around our makeshift graveyard over the years. I told of my dad helping to carry the hide and head of deer through the woods. We arranged them atop the previous year’s bones. We stood in the rain and talked for over
I hunt alone. I move slowly enough to keep my heart calm, to focus on the still, silent lives of deer. In solitude, the relationships to place and people shine bright. I know, alone in the quiet rain forest, that I am defined, supported, created, not by anything I do but through the richness of relationships running through my days. After pulling the trigger, I relish the privacy to let my emotions go where they will. In the lone act of witnessing death I feel great intimacy with a long lineage of hunters. While gutting a deer time expands forward and back. It's like slipping a key into a lock whirled and polished by a million years of evolution.

While gutting a deer in my family workshop, I might be given the lover's gift of a deer heart. The love. The life. The death. The tenderness of the cervine heart and the strong trunk the heart is in. I am given the gift of life while teaching the lessons of death. Deer are blind to national boundaries, political parties, religion, gender, race, income, or any of the other ways we divide ourselves. Through the window of death we glimpse our common unity, the root of community. We cannot build a fence around a whole community, cannot exclude or include anybody, cannot create one. All we can do is work together, one lunch at a time, to see more clearly the whole community to which we have always belonged.

My daughter's fondness for deer heart has, I believe, little to do with the taste of flesh on her tongue. The same flavor, packaged and sold from a vending machine, would be disgusting. Linnea's affection for that once-a-year meal has more to do with the taste of flesh on her tongue. The same flavor, the same experience, the abstract notion of connection is made tangible. Deer draw in common unity. Linnea's affection for that once-a-year meal has more to do with the hunger we all feel to live with the awareness of our place every year. I set my rifle down and listen. Sometimes wind in the spruce trees. Always, if I wait long enough, a raven.

I don't want to be cremated. I want my whole body buried. No casket or clothes. Just cold skin against the wet earth. I want the grave to be shallow. I want roots of small plants to bite into my thigh, to wrap tiny living threads around dying bone. I want to be pulled back into daylight and spun back through the deer. Knowing where I'll be buried makes me less fearful of life's brevity. Sharing a deer heart with my daughter makes me grateful she knows the taste of a whole community.
Prayer for a wooden bowl

Here's a prayer for days that sing,
for ancient throaty songs,
songs that move across the hill
linger on the milkweed blossoms,
songs that open and open and open
your heart and the sky and the shape of each tree.

Here's a prayer for this song, this one,
this evening's rain-washed song,
the way the sunlight unfolds in the tall grasses,
how the movement of the clouds releases language.
Here's to the shape of this hill, its bedrock,
its dirt-bone sorrow, its song-high joy.

Here's a prayer for evening,
for this evening and its scent,
for the sweep of this valley, this one,
and the lights flashing yellow
breathing home into the darkness.

Here's a prayer for hands.
Here's to slicing an onion
thin and sweet and silver.
Here's to yeast and flour kneaded into bread,
bread that sustains, bread that sings.
Here's a prayer for stillness: in bread, in wind
in the deep well of our hearts,
the clear heart-water spilling down the hill.

Here's a prayer for a meal.
Dirt and sunlight,
swallows in the eaves,
the round mouth of one wooden bowl
full of golden beets, deep greens,
one red tomato,
a harvest made sacred by the wonder
with which we eat.

Here's a prayer for what can fill a wooden bowl,
for what I can hold with my two hands:

a handful of dirt,
the red weight of one apple,
a tapering zucchini,
a cottonwood leaf.
A wooden bowl will only hold so
many carrots and peppers,
so much deep purple eggplant
and steaming broth.

But it will hold as much wonder as you have,
as much hard, sun-toughened gratitude as you're
willing to give.
You can fill a wooden bowl to infinity with
forgiveness, with memory,
with song and silence and story.

So here is a prayer for what we can touch
with our hands
for what we choose to put into our bowls.
Here's a prayer for solid things that hold
us to this earth:
onions, apples, tears.
A wooden bowl, filled with our own specific love,
with our awe and exhaustion, our breath,
our thanks as well as our grief, our joy, our memory.
A wooden bowl filled with this day's song.
A bowl of sustenance.

Laura Olive Sackton
Food Justice: A People’s Movement
Whose Time Is Now

The following “manifesto” grew out of a six-day Good Food retreat held in August 2008 at Knoll Farm, convened by Center for Whole Communities. We present this document as a tool to invite dialogue about principles that may unite us. It does not represent perfect consensus. Rather, it is a living document challenging us to find common values on which our work around disparate and related food-system issues can rest. We hesitated to publish this statement, fearing that doing so would set it in stone and imply a false level of unanimity. We agree to publish because we are striving to view ourselves in new ways and we hope these words will help us do that. We strive to see ourselves as part of a broad social movement, one more inclusive than either the sustainable agriculture, organic, family farm, farmland preservation, urban agriculture, community food security, indigenous sovereignty, farmworker, and labor movements. Food Justice is not intended to replace or subsume these vital movements. It is meant to serve as a unifying set of principles tying them all together into a powerful meta-movement with justice at its core. This movement is rooted in historical struggle and builds upon social movements of the past and present.

Our group hails from eleven states and sovereign Native lands. Our identities are multicultural, including Navajo, Anishenaabeg, Choctow, African-American, Loma, Persian, Indian-American, Sri Lankan, Lebanese, Jewish, Euro-American (of the Azores, Italy, Germany, Eastern Europe, Switzerland, Ireland, Denmark, Norway, and Scotland), Puerto Rican, Chicano, Hispanic, Latino, and Mexican. We are women and men who grew up in the suburbs, in cities and in rural areas. Some of us are the first in our families to attend college. Others are from families where higher education is a legacy. We know poverty and affluence. We represent different aspects of the food system, including farmworkers, philanthropists, traditional growers, wild harvesters, restaurant workers,
government agency representatives, educators and researchers, food-processing plant workers, community activists, local food-system entrepreneurs and founders of food cooperatives, as well as those influencing corporate actors in the food system. Together at Knoll Farm in Vermont we drank wild coca tea ripened in the summer sun of northern New Mexico, savored wild rice hand-harvested from Minnesota lakes, meditated on fresh-picked blueberries, and welcomed Shabbat with nourishment from freshly baked, multi-grain challah. These foods sustained our bodies, soothed our souls during the hard work of bridging differences, and connected us to the land and each other.

We believe that this movement’s identity rests in each of us, and will expand when we enable others to see themselves within this story. The term Food Justice can help us to build identity, solidarity, and convergence with those who share belief in principles of justice. We offer this framework to support the continued development of a Food Justice Movement. We offer it as a living document that we hope will be improved, refined, and deepened by others.

We are committed to the following principles of Food Justice

➤ Every human being has a fundamental right to healthy food, and we have a moral imperative to address the root causes of hunger and starvation;

➤ We must stop the exploitation of all people who labor in the food system, including family farmers, those who work in the fields cultivating and harvesting, as well as those who process, prepare, and serve our food;

➤ People have the right to migrate without criminalization and oppression and our food system is dependent on migrant and immigrant labor;

➤ Food-system workers, including noncitizens, deserve fair working conditions, and if they are undocumented they deserve a path toward legalizing their status;

➤ All forms of oppression, including racism, sexism, and capitalist exploitation, must be opposed as we work toward the liberation of all people;

➤ In order for people to feed themselves, communities must protect their land and water; and the rights of people to sustainably grow food, use water, graze animals, hunt, and gather, need to be considered when assigning value to land and approving land uses;

➤ Food is sacred, and cultural and spiritual traditions related to food need to be honored by respecting indigenous knowledge and the rights of indigenous and land-based peoples to continue farming, ranching, fishing, hunting, and gathering;

➤ Some technologies, including genetic modification of plants and animals, violate the values of many peoples and cultures; raise unanswered questions around biodiversity, health, and safety; and involve patenting and intellectual property relationships which need to be more carefully scrutinized before they are applied in our food system in ways that result in oppression and exploitation;

➤ The valuation of life forms and ecosystems solely as commodities diminishes their importance, hides their vital interconnectedness with other living systems, and encourages shortsighted profiteering;

➤ All forms of violence, including violence against people, domestic animals, and nature, must be ended;

➤ Agricultural systems free of pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers toxic or harmful to farmworkers, consumers, and the environment are more just; and a transition away from toxic, chemical-based agriculture toward sustainable practices must be promoted by public policy;

➤ Ethical business practices along all points in the food system need to be promoted with incentives and rewards through public policy and the marketplace;

➤ Unethical business practices should be sanctioned through consumer campaigns and a better-enforced regulatory framework;

➤ A people-centered movement can embody these principles while upholding human dignity and equity.
We are committed to building a Food Justice movement that does not require activists to sacrifice their economic well-being, health care, or personal safety for the greater good, recognizing that we are the greater good. We know that working together in a movement is challenging and requires commitment and continuous learning. Therefore, we also put forth the following approaches for movement building:

This is a people's movement and should not be dominated by any single organization or group of organizations. We work through collaboration based on trust, respect, appreciation, and dialogue that is reciprocal. We work through collective leadership that brings together people working in all aspects of the food system. We aspire to nurture leadership that represents all oppressed people, whoever they may be, and commit to bringing forward a new generation of politicized leaders of color and other underprivileged people. At the same time, we welcome those with power and privilege to join with us in transforming the food system into a just food system.

Our movement analyzes structures of exploitation and oppression to avoid reproducing them and to dismantle them. We work to transform relations of power and privilege to become relations of equality, and we commit to modeling this ourselves. This movement creates and supports models of ethical enterprises and organizations, piloting what equity looks like so we can feel, see, and taste it. We agree to summon the courage to speak critically of all systems that oppress, including capitalism.

We value and draw upon all forms of knowledge to increase our understanding of a just food system, building on the long history of social movements, in order to understand what they accomplished and how, and who was left behind. Movements to consider include the antislavery, anticolonialism, civil rights, and farmworkers movements. We acknowledge that the foundation of modern agriculture in this country was built by the oppressed—through removal, displacement, slavery, appropriation of the commons, and exploitation. That foundation has left lasting legacies of inequity.

We understand that policy plays a major role in the food system. Therefore we seek political power to bring about policy change and to hold those in power accountable to our social-change agenda.

We are committed to self-awareness and to recognizing our own capacity to reproduce the very problems we oppose. We recognize the importance of maintaining balance when it comes to our own mind, body, and spirit, and we support each other in maintaining that balance. We agree to deepen our dialogue with mutual acknowledgement of and respect for diversity, and in this spirit we welcome your feedback and input.

Please visit http://foodjustice.wikispaces.com to add your voice to this conversation and invite others to do the same.

In solidarity for food justice,

Tirso Moreno
Jeanette Abi-Nader
Sarah Christiansen
Paula Garcia
Bama Athreya
Leone Bicchieri
Kolu Zigbi
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LaDonna Redmond

Nuestras historias representan y reflejan la historia de la inequidad y la opresión caracterizadas por la colonización, globalización y marginalización de nuestros pueblos y comunidades. Nuestras historias afirman el poder del pueblo y representan la variedad y fortaleza de las prácticas espirituales, las culturas agrarias y las tradiciones alimentarias reconocidas como fuentes de sabiduría, inspiración y son la base en la cual construimos un sistema alimentario socialmente justo e igualitario.

Juntos tomamos Te de Cota, madurado bajo el sol de verano del Norte de Nuevo México, gustamos del arroz salvaje cosechado a mano en los lagos de Minesota, meditamos saboreando los arándanos recogidos en Knoll Farm, localizada en un promontorio del Mad River Valley en Vermont, y dimos la bienvenida a Shabbat con el alimento del recién horneado, multi grano Challah. Estos alimentos sustentaron nuestros cuerpos, dieron descanso a nuestras almas en medio del duro esfuerzo de traspasar nuestras diferencias, y conectarnos a la tierra y unos y otros.

Nos juntamos desde el amor al pueblo y la creencia de que todo ser humano tiene el derecho a vivir a su mayor potencial. Representamos diferentes sectores del sistema alimentario incluyendo a trabajadores agrícolas, filántropos, agricultores tradicionales, cosechadores de alimentos silvestres, trabajadores de restaurantes, representantes de agencias de gobierno, académicos, trabajadores de plantas de procesamiento de alimentos, activistas comunitarios, empresarios de alimentos locales y fundadores de cooperativas de alimentos, al igual que aquellos quienes influencian a las corporaciones del sistema alimentario.

Nos juntamos para dialogar, a partir de nuestras diferencias, para compartir y acercarnos en nuestras historias con el propósito de lograr una mayor comprensión del sistema alimentario en su totalidad y así poder tener una mejor visión de lo que queremos lograr.

Reconocemos en nuestro propio sentido de identidad la importancia de desarrollar nuestra capacidad de sensibilidad multi-cultural de modo que nuestra propia opresión interna, el racismo y el estado de privilegio blanco sean activamente resistidos y no fragmenten ni debiliten nuestro movimiento. Estamos comprometidos como grupo multi-cultural a protegernos y apoyarnos mutuamente para hacer lo mejor que podamos.

Creemos que la identidad de los movimientos descansa en nosotros mismos, y se expandirá cuando otros se vean a sí mismos en nuestras historias. El concepto del Movimiento de Justicia Alimentaria puede ayudarnos a crear la identidad, solidez y convergencia con quienes comparten la creencia en los principios de justicia.

Ofrecemos este documento como un marco para apoyar el desarrollo continuo del Movimiento de Justicia Alimentaria. Lo ofrecemos como un documento vivo con la esperanza de mejorararlo, refinarlo y añadirle mientras es leído por otros.

Estamos Comprometidos Con Los Siguientes Principios

➣ Somos parte de la historia y debemos conocer las lecciones del pasado. Este movimiento tiene sus raíces en las luchas históricas y se construye en base de los movimientos sociales del pasado y del presente.

➣ Cada ser humano tiene el derecho fundamental a una alimentación saludable y tenemos el imperativo moral de corregir las causas del hambre e inanición.

➣ Debemos parar la explotación de todas las personas quienes trabajan dentro del sistema alimentario, incluyendo a los pequeños agricultores, a los trabajadores agrícolas y a los que procesan, preparan y sirven nuestra comida.

➣ Los pueblos tienen el derecho de emigrar sin ser criminalizados y oprimidos. Reconocemos que
nuestro sistema alimentario depende del trabajo de los inmigrantes. Todos los trabajadores del sistema alimentario, incluyendo los no ciudadanos, merecen condiciones adecuadas de trabajo, y si son indocumentados merecen un mecanismo para permanecer y obtener su permanencia.

- Debemos oponernos a todas las formas de opresión, incluyendo el racismo, el sexismo y la explotación, en la medida que trabajamos para la liberación de todos los seres humanos.

- Para lograr la seguridad alimentaria, las comunidades deben proteger su tierra y agua. Reconocemos el derecho de los pueblos a sembrar en forma sustentable, a usar el agua, cazar y cosechar. Estas necesidades deben ser consideradas cuando se le asigna un valor a la tierra para obtener la aprobación de los permisos de manejo de la tierra.

- La comida es sagrada, y las tradiciones culturales y espirituales relacionadas con el alimento deben ser honradas. Esto quiere decir respetar las tradiciones alimentarias y agrícolas y el conocimiento indígena implícito en esas tradiciones; reconocer el derecho de los pueblos indígenas y el de los que tienen como base su tierra a continuar sembrando y a practicar la ganadería, la pesca, la caza y cosecha.

- Algunas tecnologías, como la modificación genética de plantas y animales, violan los valores de muchos pueblos y sus culturas y dan lugar a preguntas sin contestar en relación a la biodiversidad, la salud y la seguridad; se relaciona también con la propiedad intelectual y las patentes, elementos que deben ser cuidadosamente examinados antes de ser aplicados en nuestro sistema alimentario bajo formas que resulten en opresión y explotación.

- Un sistema alimentario justo debe resistir y prevenir el que los seres vivientes sean considerados solamente como mercancía. La valorización de la tierra, el agua y los recursos alimentarios como mercancía reduce su importancia, esconde su inter-conectividad vital con otros sistemas vivos y promueve el lucro desmedido.
Creemos que todas las formas de violencia, incluyendo la violencia a los pueblos, a los animales domésticos y a la naturaleza deben ser detenidos.

Los sistemas agrícolas libres de plaguicidas, herbicidas y fertilizantes tóxicos o dañinos para los trabajadores agrícolas, consumidores y el ambiente son más sustentables. La transición de un sistema tóxico, basado en el uso de sustancias químicas a un sistema sustentable debe ser promovida como política pública.

Las prácticas de negocio éticas en todos los niveles del sistema alimentario deben ser promovidas con incentivos y recompensadas por medio de la política pública y el comercio. Y las prácticas antiéticas de negocios deben ser penalizadas por medio de campañas de consumidores y un marco reglamentario de mayor cumplimiento.

Un movimiento cuyo centro es el pueblo puede apoyar estos principios afirmando la justicia humana y la igualdad. Estamos comprometidos a ser un movimiento social que no exige a sus activistas sacrificar su bienestar económico, su salud, o su seguridad personal por el bien común. Somos el bien común.

Trabajar juntos en un movimiento es un desafío y requiere el compromiso y la disposición de continuar aprendiendo. El concepto de Justicia Alimentaria es lo que nos une. Nuestro trabajo es apoyarnos y protegernos unos a otros para lograr lo mejor que podamos al trabajar por la justicia alimentaria. Es un movimiento del pueblo que no tiene ninguna organización en su centro. Trabajamos por medio de la colaboración basada en la confianza, el respeto, la apreciación y el diálogo recíproco. Trabajamos en forma de liderazgo colectivo que atrae a toda una diversidad de personas del sistema alimentario. Aspiramos a crear una forma de liderazgo que refleje a todos los pueblos.
Necesitamos aumentar nuestro entendimiento de los sistemas que queremos cambiar por medio del análisis, compartiendo conocimiento, nuestras historias y las acciones comunes. Entendemos que la política juega un papel primordial en el sistema alimentario. Por eso buscaremos poder político para cambiar la política y hacer responsables a aquellos que están en el poder de nuestra agenda de cambio social.

Somos conscientes de la posibilidad de reproducir los mismos problemas a los que nos oponemos. Buscaremos crear relaciones de igualdad en nuestro trabajo, haciendo lo posible por no reproducir las relaciones de opresión y explotación. Estamos de acuerdo a nunca negar a un individuo la participación y el derecho de hablar, especialmente a aquellos más afectados por la injusticia. Acordamos no hacer preconceptos de las personas y respetar la diversidad de perspectivas. Reconocemos la importancia de mantener un equilibrio con respecto a nuestro espíritu, cuerpo y mente y apoyarnos unos a otros para mantener ese equilibrio.

Le damos la bienvenida en nuestro movimiento a todos aquellos con poder y privilegios que estén dispuestos a trabajar por la justicia alimentaria según lo hemos descrito en este documento. Acordamos profundizar nuestro diálogo en mutuo reconocimiento y respeto por la diversidad.
Alumni Field Trip 2008
In September, nine CWC alumni traveled to Furman, Alabama, to the home of Ms. Ellen Byrd, founder of the Black Freedmen’s Living Historical Farm for Children. Whole Communities’ alumna Euneika Rogers Sipp has been working with the organization to establish their sustainable agriculture and architectural systems. Our alumni field program combined helping to clear the farm’s nature trail and planting the newly established community gardens, with dialogue, meditation, sessions with community elders, and forays to neighborhood churches, a plantation, and Snow Hill Institute, a school founded in 1893 for the descendents of African slaves.

The purpose of our Alumni Field Program is to experiment with elements of Whole Communities’ retreats in a completely different setting; and in the process to open new possibilities for inclusion, expression, inspiration, and learning. The other goal is to go places where alumni can provide real service and support to someone who invites that from us. In these ways the time in Alabama was a huge success.

CWC faculty member, Steve Glazer, who helped organize and facilitate the field trip, spoke to this: “Trying to practice Whole Communities work outside of the retreat setting and immersed in rural Alabama pushed us: Being in Wilcox County was a huge teaching about place and process—especially regarding race, power, and privilege in the U.S. today.” At the same time that alumni received this gift, they also gave one by showing up and taking in Ms. Bryd’s vision for her place. Steve remarked, “She was thrilled to share her vision with people who would care enough to want to know and do more in sustaining it. I have a sense that what’s going to manifest there is going to be different than if we hadn’t gone and done this.”

Euneika expressed her view of it this way: “My desire was to first provide an outlet, to offer the gift of skills and wisdom—to practice authentic sharing. When I participated in the first Whole Communities Retreat in 2007, I felt a deeper longing for the work of Center for Whole Communities to be expressed in a community such as Furman. We had the opportunity to shift the practice of Center for Whole Communities by addressing the deep-seated oppression and internalized oppression that is poignantly expressed here. The African-American experience in the South has a lot of important things to say about how we’ve come to be in this country, but that significant discourse between Black and mainstream America is often hidden and unacknowledged. I believe we’ve really succeeded in hosting a CWC field program that gives a home to this kind of discourse. I like the practice of broadening the relationships among the alumni into the real-time experiences of their day-to-day work. The support from the Whole Communities network is important and I’m grateful to have them by my side as we grow and move forward; it’s what partnerships are about.”

We are grateful to Euneika and to Ms. Byrd and appreciate all they are doing to preserve and build the unique story of their place. To learn more about the Black Freedmen’s Living Historical Farm for Children and how to support their work, mail inquiries to P.O. Box 106, Furman, Alabama 36741, or e-mail BFLHFC@hotmail.com.

Our Barn-to-Office Renovation and Energy Conversion
As soon as the retreat season ended at Knoll Farm we began to renovate the tool barn, starting by jacking it up, excavating underneath the entire structure, replacing rotten or non-existent foundation walls, and creating a whole new level for wood storage and additional office space. What was long ago a chicken coop with dirt floor is now a beautiful lighted space with a heated concrete slab. The chimney is in and the
gasifying wood-burning tarm is soon to follow. The next steps will be to super-insulate the building with recycled materials and to add energy-recovery ventilations and triple-pane windows. We are putting the final plans together for the solar panels and the installation of a test wind tower to move forward with our renewable energy goals for the farm and nonprofit.

The newly designed office space, on track to finish by spring, will give us plenty of room for our staff and for visitors; will be light, airy, and modern in function; highly energy efficient; and yet still reflect the character of this historic farm. With our heat from wood and electricity from the sun, we will dramatically reduce the carbon footprint of all our operations and housing, and it will be a model of affordable yet sustainable methods, systems, and technologies. Perhaps the most satisfying part of this project so far has been seeing how truly deteriorated the old structure had become and knowing that we are giving it new life for another 200 years.

We are grateful to the team who are working so hard on this project: Taz Squire, Jeff Schoellkopf, Andy Shapiro, Peter Jamison, Ben Gould, William Bozack, Mark DiMario, David Frank, and Claude Druhen.

The new office will be dedicated to the memory of Alan Ashley Day, beloved son of Ann and the late Frank Day and of this land. He died on February 6, 2008. Gifts to the renovation project may be made in his name, and all donors will be listed on a plaque in the new building.

Whole Measures: How are leaders using it?

Whole Measures is a program evaluation tool for linking environmental goals with a broader social justice agenda. These are a few examples of how leaders around the country are using Whole Measures to advance the goals and understanding of their work. If you are using Whole Measures, we’d love to hear. Please send your story!

Leadership NJ is using Whole Measures to help a yearlong leadership training program assess and select a project to implement.

Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources uses Whole Measures to help evaluate new policy ideas concerning Pennsylvania’s Greenway Program. Women in Safe Homes will use it for community planning and evaluation activities, looking to possible adaptation to the context of safe and healthy communities.

Marine Resources Committee in Snohomish County is using Whole Measures to evaluate projects and also to inform into their strategic plan.

Northern Forest Alliance/UVM Community Biomass Project in the Mad River Valley of Vermont will use Whole Measures as indicators of success in a project that explores options for producing and using energy from local forest biomass.

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Los Angeles & San Gabriel Rivers Watershed Council will use Whole Measures to assist building goals and objectives for a Watershed Assessment Framework. Ammonoosuc Conservation Trust is using Whole Measures to prepare for a regional gathering focused on land use, conservation, economic development, and culture. Marlboro College uses Whole Measures to train MBA students in constructive societal change. Scenic Hudson is finding it useful for new park selection criteria in their region. Oakland County Planning/Environmental Stewardship is in the process of using Whole Measures to evaluate the progress/achievements of a five-year, multi-partner project to steward an urban river corridor in Oakland County, Michigan. South Florida LISC has adopted Whole Measures to enhance their community development work in an urban, low-wealth neighborhood in south Florida. Community Food Security Coalition has launched a program that includes using Whole Measures as a training tool for community food project grantees to learn new ways of evaluation. They are looking at it as a template for the creation of a community food security “whole measures” document. Community Training and Assistance Center in Boston is using Whole Measures on a multitiered project on Long Island, where they are working with funders and community organizations to identify how best to support and build capacity within several communities that are severely underserved.
Jeanette Abi-Nader, Community Food Security
Brahm Ahmadi, People’s Grocery
Patricia Allen, Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems
ShaKing Alston, Metro New York Initiatives
Rob Anderegg, Four Winds Nature Institute
Susan Arnold, Appalachian Mountain Club
Bama Athreya, International Labor Rights Fund
Dianne Bady, Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition
Betty T. Bailey, Rural Advancement Foundation International
Taylor Barnhill, Southwings
Suzanne Bearrs, Bay Area Open Space Council
Leone Jose Bicchieri, Center for New Community
Emily Boedecker, The Nature Conservancy
Marcelo Bonta, Center for Diversity & the Environment
Jon Bouton, Windsor County Forests
Marc Bouvier, Northeast Organic Farmer’s Association of NJ
Ryan Branciforte, Bay Area Open Space Council
Tiffany Brown, YES!
Tom Burack, NH Dept. of Environmental Services
Rev. Roger Burkhart, NH Conference of United Church of Christ
Del Cabarga, Arizona Community Foundation, University of Arizona
Ruth Caplan, Alliance for Democracy
Nelson Carrasquillo, Comite de Apoyo a los Trabajadores Agricolas
John Carroll, University of NH
Mohamad Chakaki, Baraka Consulting, LLC
Steve Chase, Antioch University New England
Sarah Christiansen, Solidago Foundation
Daniel Clausen, Santa Fe Conservation Trust
Avery Cleary, Hooked on Nature
Kim Coble, Chesapeake Bay Foundation
Richard Cochran, Western Reserve Land Conservancy
Susanna Colloredo
Hal Colston, Neighborkeepers
Leslie Connolly, Ray Elementary School
Lindsay Cornelius, Columbia Land Trust
Teresa Crane, Town Creek Foundation
Janice Crawford, Mt. Washington Valley Chamber of Commerce
Ed Cronin, Innovative Community Systems
Barbara Daniello, Alexandria Township Environmental Commission
Cliff David, Heritage Conservancy
Neal Desai, National Parks Conservation Association
Samir Doshi, University of Vermont
Robin Dougherty, Greater Newark Conservancy
Karen Douville, Hartford Conservation Commission
Donna Drewes, Municipal Land Use Center at The College of NJ
Thomas Drewes, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
Sherry Dudal, Honey Brook Organic Farm
Maria Echevarria, Center for Whole Communities
Karín Edwards, Neighborhood Parks Council
Sarah Edwards, Vermont State Representative
Cindy Ehrenclou, Upper Raritan Watershed Association
David Epstein, NJ Highlands Coalition
Gerard Farias, Institute for Sustainable Enterprise
Pamela Freeman, Playback for Social Change/Spirit in Action
Catherine Freece, Sharon Elementary School
Paola Garcia, New Mexico Acequia Association
Brad Gentry, Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies
Todd Graham, Aeroscene Land Logic
Ben Grant, Act Now!
John Grant, Hartford Memorial Middle School
Kim Greenwood, Vermont Natural Resources Council
Jackie Guzman
Andrea Hanks, White Earth Land Recovery Project
Amy Hansen, NJ Conservation Foundation
David Hansen
Kate Hartnett, Consultant
Judy Harvey, Bernice A. Ray Elementary School
Judy Hatcher, Environmental Support Center
Brooke Hecht, Center for Humans and Nature
Pete Helm, Upper Valley Land Trust
Oran Hesterman, Fair Food Foundation
Minner Hobbs, South Hero Land Trust
Carol Hoffmann, Alexandria Township
Kim Hood, Musconetcong Watershed Association
Bruce Hooke, Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council
Jada S. Jackson, Green Acres Program
Trina Jackson, consultant
Saru Jayaraman, Restaurant Opportunities Center of New York (ROC-NY)
Rev. Katherine Jesch, Unitarian Universalist Ministry for Earth
J. Allen Johnson, Esq., Institute for Cultural & Environmental Understanding
Roy Kady, Dine’ be iina’ Inc.
Janet Keating, Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition
Mary Kerwin, Healthy Systems, LLC
William Kibler, South Branch Watershed Association
Donna Kirkland, Trust for Public Land
Michelle Knapik, Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation
Carey Knecht, Greenbelt Alliance
Christa Koehler, Clean Air Cool Planet
Lenny Kohm, Appalachian Voices
Sylvia Kovacs
David Lamarre-Vincent, NH Council of Churches
Chris Landry, Sustainable Food Laboratory
Meredith Lathbury, Eastern Shore Land Conservancy
Doug Levin, NOAA Chesapeake Bay
Angelo Logan, East Yards Communities for Environmental Justice
Cinny MacGonagle, Musconetcong Watershed Association
Noelle MacKay, Vermont Forum on Sprawl
Tobias Marquette, Rockingham/Strafford Energy Committee Alliance
Jennifer Marshall, Center for Progressive Reform
Jay Martin, Provident Organic Farm
Molly May, Everlands
Jim McCracken, Bradford Elementary School
Patty McIntosh, Georgia Conservancy
Roxan McKinnon, City Life/Vida Urbana
Deborah Meehan, Leadership Learning Community
Ann Mills, American Rivers, Inc.
Teresa Mitchell, Vermont Institute of Natural Science
Raoul Momo, Terra Momo Restaurant Group
Tirso Moreno, Farmworker Association of Florida
John Morley, Vermont State Representative
Eleanor Morris, The Nature Conservancy
Bruce Morton, West Atlanta Watershed Alliance
Cathy Moyer, VoCal
Edie Muehlberger, Earth Share of Texas
Melissa Nelson, Cultural Conservancy
Zena Nelson, South Bronx Food Cooperative
Marla O’Byrne, Friends of Acadia
Stephanie Kaza
Matt Kolan
Melissa Nelson
Kavitha Rao
Enrique Salmon
Scott Russell Sanders
Santikaro
Deborah Schoenbaum
Mistinguette Smith
Kaylynn Sullivan TwoTrees
Sayra Pinto-Wilson
Tom Wessels
Helen Whybrow
Larry Yang

Greg Rackin, Wild & Scenic Lower Delaware River
Adan Ramirez, Idaho Community Action Network
Kavitha Rao, Common Fire Foundation
Sudeep Rao, Beautiful Communities
LaDonna Redmond, Chicago State University
Noelle Reeve, PlanSmart NJ
Barbara Rice, National Parks Service Rivers and Trails
Magdalena Ridley, LandPaths
Bettina Ring, Bay Area Open Space Council
Mark Robertson, The Nature Conservancy
Mimi Robinson
Kerry Rosenthal, Wellborn Network Coordination
Matt Royer, Chesapeake Bay Foundation
Susanna Scallion, National Audubon Society
Lynn Schumann

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Toby Lynn Hertlach
Wendy Johnson
Cynthia Jurs
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Sayra Pinto-Wilson
Tom Wessels
Helen Whybrow
Larry Yang
Energy, Climate and Civic Leadership, June 26-July 2
Peter Forbes, Mistinquette Smith and Santikaro
A retreat for business, environmental, political, education and public health leaders in New Hampshire to find common ground, common purpose and common courage in tackling one of the major issues of our day. Sponsored by the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, by invitation.

Whole Thinking Workshop, July 7-9
Peter Forbes and Stephanie Kaza
An intensive workshop designed to help diverse leaders create new coalitions and new approaches in order to address broad-level environmental and social change. We will practice transformational leadership that includes listening, cultural competency, adaptation and flexibility, making room for others and cultivating a moral voice.

Valley Futures Network Weekend, July 10-11
Leaders TBA
In this ongoing program to support the future health and resilience of our community, citizens of the Mad River Valley come together to voice a shared vision, build skills, and deepen leadership.

Whole Thinking Retreat 1, July 15-21
Peter Forbes, Deb Schoenbaum and Larry Yang
Whole Thinking Retreats bring together diverse leaders from multiple disciplines. We bring them together to ask questions of themselves and each other, and through that process help them see their work and potential in a new light. What emerges from our work is stronger leadership, bolder visioning and more systemic change. This is a fellowship-based retreat, by invitation.

Climate Change, Privilege and Consciousness, July 25-27
Carolyn Finney, Steve Glazer, and Kaylynn Sullivan TwoTrees
This workshop will explore how our relationships – with each other, the world around us and with our own sense of possibility – are shaped and formed. Our workshop leaders have long careers exploring how relationship is shaped by perception, identity and landscape. Their unique style of facilitation will powerfully reorient our thinking about relationship and help us navigate a response to a rapidly changing climate and world.

Whole Funding Workshop, July 28-31
Peter Forbes and Kaylynn Sullivan TwoTrees
In these difficult economic times, philanthropists are having to examine more than ever their focus and approach in order to carry out their mission. Come to this workshop to explore what “transformational grantmaking” – seeing and addressing the whole – could look like today.

Whole Thinking Retreat 2, August 4-10
Toby Herzlich, Wendy Johnson and Enrique Salmon
See Whole Thinking Retreat 1 description. This is a fellowship-based retreat, by invitation.

Finding the Story Workshop, August 12-14
Anushka Fernandopulle and Peter Forbes
This workshop will help us support one another to find our voice, to use shared language and to harness the power of story, not only in our lives but in our leadership. We’ll look at what it means to lead through story, through our deepest values.

Whole Thinking Retreat 3, August 14-20
Anushka Fernandopulle, Steve Glazer and Melissa Nelson
See Whole Thinking Retreat 1 description. This is a fellowship-based retreat, by invitation.

Next Generation Retreat, August 29-Sept 4
Adrienne Maree Brown, Kavitha Rao and Jesse Maceo Vega-Frey
A Whole Thinking Retreat for young leaders in the environmental and social justice fields. This is a fellowship-based retreat, by invitation.

Many of our workshops are open enrollment, and we are able to keep tuition reasonable through the generous support of our funders. All programs are held at Knoll Farm in Vermont unless otherwise noted. For more information on curriculum, faculty, accommodations, fees and registration, go to www.wholecommunities.org, or call 802.496.5690.
Entering this Land: A History of Knoll Farm
By Jill Hindle Kiedaisch
Taking us from ancient geologic time through the history of settlement of this mountain valley first by plants, then animals, and then humans; and finally along its 200-year journey as farmstead and refuge, Jill Hindle tells the story of Knoll Farm. It is a story whose threads are both common and unusual, familiar and singular; it is the story of one place as a record and hope for our time. Illustrated with beautiful historical and contemporary photographs. $20 cloth

Refuge: Images of Knoll Farm
This notecard set collects some of Peter Forbes’ most beautiful full-color images of Knoll Farm and the people who gather here. The boxed sets include 12 5x7 cards and envelopes, and the cards are blank on the inside. Makes a wonderful gift! $16 per boxed set.

What is a Whole Community: A Letter to Those Who Care for and Restore the Land
by Peter Forbes
In this essay, author Peter Forbes asks the conservation movement to rise to today’s challenges with new approaches, new tools, and a new vision for success, and to look at these challenges as opportunities to see beyond the way things are; as a chance for re-invention. $12.95 paperback

Coming to Land in a Troubled World
Essays by Peter Forbes, Kathleen Dean Moore and Scott Russell Sanders (c) 2003
Through its deep examination of the value of land to our culture and our souls, Coming to Land gives us new approaches and new hope to work to heal the great divisions and losses we see around us each day. $16.95 paperback

The Story Handbook: Language and Storytelling for Conservationists
Edited by Helen Whybrow © 2002
In The Story Handbook, contributors Tim Ahern, William Cronon, John Elder, Peter Forbes, Barry Lopez, and Scott Russell Sanders help us think about the power of stories of people and place, and how those stories can advance the work of land conservation toward creating meaningful change in our culture. $14.95 paperback

The Great Remembering: Further Thoughts on Land, Soul, and Society
By Peter Forbes © 2001
The Great Remembering is an activist’s exploration of what land means to our culture. In three chapters, “The Extinction of Experience,” “Dissent and Defiance,” and “Building a New Commons,” the author traces the roots of our disconnection from place and from meaningful stories about our lives. $14.95 paperback

Our Land, Ourselves: Readings on People and Place
By Peter Forbes © 1999
Our Land, Ourselves is a collection of diverse readings on the many themes of people and place—themes such as the protection of wilderness and the idea of the wild, the nature of home, the purpose of work, and the meaning of community. These voices suggest a new way of viewing land conservation as the process of building values and positively shaping human lives. $16.95 paperback

Whole Measures: Program Guide and DVD
A values-based, community-oriented tool, Whole Measures helps organizations rethink the role that they play in fostering healthy, whole communities. This evolving document and interactive website, which we have been evolving over several years and is in use by many organizations and communities across the country, is now available in its newest form, with an introductory DVD on how to use it and why it is important. For more information, see page 21.

The Yurt Talks: Rethinking the Promise of Land Conservation (CD)
These recordings feature Peter Forbes, Torri Estrada and Danyelle O’Hara in discussion around the need to understand the power of land to us as individuals as a step toward understanding the power of land to our culture. This is closest thing we have to reproducing the dialogues that happen in the mountain yurt during our Whole Thinking Retreats. $10.00 2-CD set

To order any of the items above, please go to our website: http://www.wholecommunities.org/pubs.html, where you can order by credit card. You can also order by email: libby@wholecommunities.org. Or reach us by mail by sending in your order and a check to 700 Bragg Hill Road, Fayston, VT 05673. Thank you!