



SHIFT 2020 Annual REPORT



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Executive Summary



Since its inception in 2013, SHIFT (Shaping How we Invest For Tomorrow) has evolved into **a convening space for natural allies** to address issues of common concern related to conservation. Topics we've explored include the outdoor recreation / conservation partnership ([2015](#)); the relationship between outdoor recreation and public lands ([2016](#)); the business case for public lands ([2017](#)); the connection between public lands and public health ([2018](#)); and the business case for nature as medicine ([2019](#)).

Making the business case for nature as medicine allowed us to highlight **one of conservation's greatest opportunities**. Public health as an ecosystem service is a nonpartisan issue that has the potential to revolutionize our appreciation for both public and planetary health. **By championing the importance of nature to health outcomes, we're able to make implicit demands for its protection.**

The future of medicine in the US will focus on changing patient behavior, which contributes up to 40% of health and wellness. **Social determinants of health** — conditions in the places where people live, learn, work, and play — are driv-

ers of a wide range of health risks and outcomes as well as levers for cost savings. **Nature is one of those drivers**, but its importance has yet to be fully realized.

Following the successful execution of The 2019 SHIFT Summit, in December 2019, The Center for Jackson Hole voted to **refocus our mission on the advancement and promotion of nature as a social determinant of health**. We did so because we believe an irrefutable case for the health benefits of nature represents the strongest argument we can make for nature itself—at a point when that argument needs to be made emphatically and unequivocally.

Then came March.

COVID-19 laid bare the vast systemic inequities of our country—inequities that extend from the environment to the foundations of our infrastructure to individual health outcomes. **#BlackLivesMatter** placed our institutionalized racism in stark relief. Never has it been so abundantly clear: **there is no separation between social justice, environmental justice and public health.**

The traumas of institutional racism are not new. **The events of the past year**, however, revealed their depth and breadth to all Americans, and **created an opportunity** to advance demands for equitable and inclusive access to nature's health benefits for all of us.

Over the past twelve months, we've used three main vehicles to do so:

- [The Health and Nature Webinar Series](#), which brought together the champions of the health-and-nature movement to deepen our understanding of the public health benefits of time spent outside
- [The Emerging Leaders Program](#), which prepared a diverse cross-section of early career leaders to help develop our work at SHIFT and in America
- [The SHIFT Summit](#), which focused on equity, access and the mental health benefits of time outside

The three pillars of our work are science, economics and storytelling. In 2020, we relied on them to:

- **Develop the Evidence Base:** Aggregate, support and promote the evidence for the health benefits of outdoor recreation in a manner that incentivizes both public and private entities to adopt nature as a health-care intervention strategy
- **Build the Business Case:** Develop economic arguments, tools and sustainable revenue models that will lead corporate, governmental and nonprofit industries to invest in nature-rich interventions

- **Create the Narrative:** Develop a unified narrative around the health benefits of time outside that empowers stakeholders across sectors to promote them using a similar language and lexicon

Over the past twelve months, our efforts fostered, incubated and launched a number of key initiatives in support of our mission. With all of our work, our goal has been to **create an incontrovertible argument for the importance of nature to health outcomes**, the imperative of equitable access to those benefits, and the connection between nature's healing powers and its protection.

Our efforts in 2020 allowed us to advance that goal. **In the midst of social upheaval and a global pandemic, we were able to champion both public and planetary health across all of our platforms.**

In the pages to come, **we highlight key accomplishments of 2020.** With your support, we look forward to continuing to build upon this foundation for years to come.

Christian Beckwith,
Executive Director, SHIFT

We Refined Our Mission

In **December 2019**, our organization, The Center for Jackson Hole, made a **strategic decision to shift its focus** to the advancement and promotion of nature as a social determinant of health.

We furthermore refined our vision: **to get 10% of Americans to take their doctor's recommendations for physical activity outside by 2025.**

Here's why.

We are in the midst of the sixth mass extinction in the planet's history. At the same time, technology has sparked the greatest mass migration in human history—a migration inside, behind screens.

This growing disconnect from nature is adding billions of dollars to health care costs as chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes and mental anxiety proliferate. It also undermines the value of nature in society at large: **If we do not interact with nature on a regular basis, we will not be invested in its outcome.**



“SHIFT is the point of the spear on a trans-disciplinary conversation. The goal is to make ‘nature as medicine’ common knowledge for those who need it most. That’s a world-changing recipe.”

—Wallace J Nichols, PhD,
author, *Blue Mind*

90% of the US’s \$3.3 trillion in annual health care expenditures are from chronic diseases and mental health. Six in ten Americans have a chronic disease. Four in ten have two or more.

Positioning nature as a social determinant of health has numerous benefits. One in five adults are obese, adding \$147 billion in annual health care costs. Diabetes affects 24 million people, and costs \$245 billion to our health care system. Heart disease and stroke: 810,000 deaths annually, \$190 billion in costs. Mental illness accounts for \$89 billion in healthcare spending and \$193 billion in lost earnings each year. **Outdoor recreation addresses all of these.**

The amount of time children are engaged in sedentary activities is positively correlated with their ever-growing health problems. Exposure to nature has been proven to help address this, and to improve their immune systems too.

The health care cost implications for outdoor recreation are greatly underutilized as well. To cite just one example, in 2018, the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department calculated that Oregonians' participation in outdoor recreation activities yielded \$1.4B/year in health care cost savings in the state.

Improving the health outcomes of Americans is one of the most pressing socio-economic issues of our time. Nature represents a low-cost, low-risk solution that's open 24/7, 365 days a year. Time outside is a clarion call in a world of too many screens, too much noise, and too little connection to that which conditioned our evolution in the first place. And **by championing the importance of nature to health outcomes, we can position ourselves to make implicit demands for its protection.**

As an American, **our zip codes are greater indicators of health outcomes than our genetic codes.** Health risks are greatest in under-resourced communities, where resources are often least available. **Health disparities and inequities**



are often correlated with factors such as limited access to and lower quality of available public spaces, as well as lesser degrees of representation and participation in the process of shaping and maintaining them.

Our efforts to help advance the economic and practical applications of nature as a social determinant of health thus take into consideration **issues related to equity and inclusion.** Just as we must invest in under-resourced communities to ensure access to nature is equitable, so too are we investing in our organization, our communities and ourselves in order to recalibrate our approach to planetary and human well-being.

We Changed Our Name



On June 25, 2020, The Center for Jackson Hole, the 501c3 that was formed to run The SHIFT Summit, The Emerging Leaders Program and related initiatives, **officially changed its name to SHIFT.**

The name change was made possible by a January 2020 decision by The Jackson Hole Travel and Tourism Board (“TTB”) to transfer the brand rights for the name SHIFT, which it owned, to The Center for Jackson Hole.

Final paperwork was submitted to the Wyoming Secretary of State in the spring. Approval of the name change was granted by the Wyoming Secretary of State in June.

The TTB had owned SHIFT since early in 2013, when it commissioned a conservation-themed event to help im-

prove visitation to the Jackson Hole area in October, traditionally a slow period.

In May 2013, the TTB hired The Venture Collective, a company run by Christian Beckwith, to create the event, which he proposed naming SHIFT.

In 2015, Beckwith established a non-for-profit 501c3 organization, The Center for Jackson Hole, to execute SHIFT and offer tax-deductibility to its supporters.

The generous transfer of the brand rights for SHIFT by the Jackson Hole Travel and Tourism Board allows us to continue to interpret the conservation legacy of Jackson Hole in dynamic and nationally relevant ways. **We will forever be indebted to the TTB for their support.**

We Continued Our DEI Work



Early in 2020, SHIFT approved **a quarterly discussion series to cover topics of equity and inclusion and the value of representation** in our organization. While the coronavirus pandemic complicated our efforts to hold all four discussions, we nonetheless were able to shift to a virtual platform that allowed us to execute two of the events.

The conversations, held in three-hour blocks, were open to board, staff and advisory council members. Our first discussion in June was hosted by board member **Mickey Fearn**, who shared his story of working in the national park system while championing diversity and inclusion efforts for the past 50 years.

Splitting into small groups, we then continued with guided discussions on **personal reflection, identity and how SHIFT can further embed principles of equity and inclusion** within our programming and working environment.

Our second discussion in August was led by board member **Suzanne Bartlet Hackenmiller, M.D.**, and **Morgan Green**,

M.D., Director of The Emerging Leaders Program. Suzanne and Morgan shared how representation, authentic storytelling and compassionate listening have helped them **work with people from various backgrounds** and how those concepts directly translate into genuine human interaction. Their presentations were followed by small-group discussions that added to our ongoing efforts to ensure every layer of contact between our community and our organization reflects our core values.

In these efforts we have deep appreciation for board members Mickey Fearn and **Julie Williams**, who provided their collective experience of decades in the field to the project, and **Dr. Green**, who organized both discussions. We are also deeply thankful to ELP Fellows **Natreifia Miller, Madison McCoy, Diquan Edmonds** and **Alexi McHugh** who volunteered time, resources and professional expertise to help Dr. Green execute the initiative. Teamwork is at the heart of how we remain successful and the key to stronger alignment between our intentions and our impact.

We Launched The Health and Nature Webinar Series



As part of our effort to develop a unified narrative around the health benefits of time outside, and to focus the research community on gaps and needs in the evidence base while promoting broader adoption of nature as a public health strategy, **we created [The Health and Nature Webinar Series](#)**.

The series, which we **launched in early March**, brought together innovators, opinion-leaders and researchers at the forefront of the health-and-nature movement **to help advance our understanding of the public health benefits of time spent outside**.

Over the course of **18 episodes**, we invited subject-matter experts to share their perspectives and needs regarding investments in nature as a health-care intervention strategy.

The first chapter of the series defined the overarching scope of the Health and Nature space, **providing overall context for nature as a public health intervention strategy**.



The subsequent four chapters provided **deeper exploration of the topic** from the perspective of SHIFT’s stakeholder communities in **Public Health, Land Management, Conservation** and **Outdoor Recreation**.

The chapters were complemented by **special episodes** dedicated to issues such as the role of nature in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic.

High interaction among attendees was supported by:

- **Moderator and presenter interaction** for questions, dialogue and conversation
- “Chat” feature that **fostered sidebar conversations** during each webinar
- **Moderated questions** from the audience for panelists
- **Facilitated discussion** after speakers finished their presentations

Interaction was continued after each webinar by:

SHIFT health & nature
webinar series

The Mental Health Benefits of Outdoor Recreation

Tuesday, August 25th 10-11am MST
To Register: <https://bit.ly/36aAAHD>



Elyse Rylander
Founder,
OUT There Adventures

Alyssa Solis
Field Instructor & Educator
Outward Bound Adventures

Kristen Walter, PhD
Clinical Research Psychologist
Naval Health Research Center

- Posting of episodes to [SHIFT's YouTube channel](#)
- **Publication of episode slide decks** to [Figshare](#), which researchers can use to reference each webinar
- **Sharing of episodes on SHIFT's Slack channel** at [shift-naturehealth](#)


The series generated more than 49,000 impressions overall. The [Sept. 22 webinar](#), which highlighted SHIFT's [Outdoor Rec and Nature-Based Programming for Vets study](#), was expanded into a half-day workshop that also allowed us to beta test technology for The 2020 SHIFT Summit.

Overall, the series **stimulated cross-sectoral learning, contributed to the transdisciplinary advancement** of the field, and **promoted broader mainstream adoption** of the health benefits of contact with the natural world.

The 2020 Health and Nature Webinar Series was **made possible by The National Park Service and AllTrails. We are indebted to them for their support.**



We Incubated Key Projects



Every year, the networking and conversations that take place at SHIFT result in new ideas, partnerships and collaborations. **In 2020, we focused on incubating a number of projects** that arose out of the 2019 SHIFT Summit, convening and coordinating meetings in support of their development.

Key projects developed in 2020 include the following:

Research Knowledge Network

While the evidence base for the health benefits of time outside is growing, it remains insufficient for health care providers, payers, employers and the military to invest in nature as a health care intervention strategy. Researchers around the world are working on the topic, but **there is no unified hub that would aggregate data, provide a common agenda, facilitate networking opportunities or allow for the sharing of best practices.**

At The 2018 SHIFT Festival, a [Researchers' Meeting](#) discussed

the state of the research by exploring the seven research domains identified in the 2017 Frumkin et al research agenda. **Researchers convened again during The 2019 SHIFT Festival**, participating in workshops and sharing their work in a [poster session](#) developed by a subcommittee born out of the previous year's meeting.

In a [meeting](#) at the Festival's conclusion, **participants agreed to establish a [knowledge network](#)** that would allow them to connect, network, share information on grants and develop a common agenda for the advancement of nature as a social determinant of health. As part of this agenda, **they agreed to develop a [position paper on the evidence for the health benefits of time outside](#)**. A [Slack channel](#) was also established post-SHIFT to facilitate communication among the research community.

SHIFT convened researchers via a series of coordinated meetings throughout 2020. **The meetings laid the groundwork for [The Health and Nature Webinar Series](#)**; determined the position paper's framework and content; and developed the research poster session for [The 2020 SHIFT Summit](#).

Grants funding is being sought to underwrite publication of the research paper.

Principals:

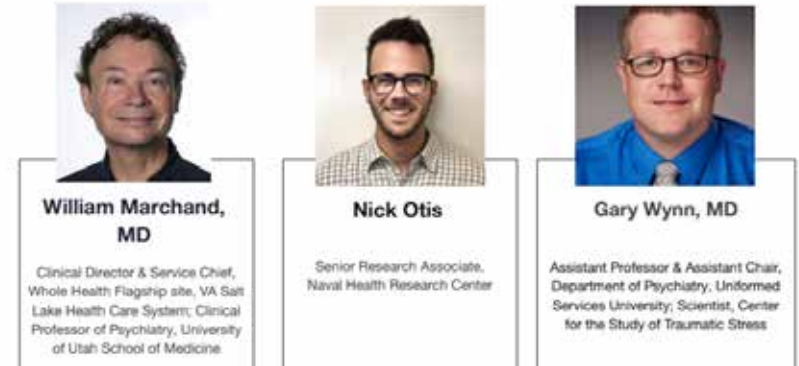
- **Aruni Bhatnagar**, PhD, FAHA, Director, Christina Lee Brown Envirome Institute
- **Terry Horton**, PhD, Associate Professor, Northwestern University
- **Ashby Leavell**, PhD Candidate, University of Colorado Boulder
- **Courtney Schultz**, PhD, Executive Director of Health & Technology Partners
- **Nadav Sprague**, MPH, Founding CEO & President, Gateway to the Great Outdoors

Nature Exposure for Veterans: A Randomized Controlled Trial

At the 2019 SHIFT Festival, a workshop on [Military Readiness](#) examined **the therapeutic effects of nature on our wounded and non-wounded active duty service members**, including how it could help reduce levels of stress, depression, burnout and concomittant economic costs to the military healthcare system.

The 2019 workshop catalyzed a project to develop a study on hiking as a mental- and emotional-health intervention for veterans with Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and Major Depressive Disorder. Such a trial would provide the military with a novel mechanism for a prioritized issue that has

Nature Exposure for Veterans: A Randomized Controlled Trial



broader implications for civilian populations that experience stress, including first responders, police officers and intensive care unit health care providers.

SHIFT coordinated a series of meetings throughout the year that resulted in the development of [A Randomized Controlled Trial \(RCT\) of Nature Exposure for Veterans with Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and Major Depressive Disorder](#). The RCT's objectives are to:

- Develop a manualized nature exposure via hiking intervention (NEH)
- Evaluate the safety and feasibility of utilizing a manualized NEH intervention for Veterans with PTSD & MDD
- Evaluate the short-term impact of NEH on PTSD and depressive symptoms, psychological flexibility, quality of life and the use of inpatient and emergency services for these conditions

The project, which will be conducted at Whole Health Flagship site at the VA Salt Lake Health Care System in Salt Lake City, is **currently awaiting Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval.**

Principals:

- **William R. Marchand, MD**, Clinical Director and Service Chief of the Whole Health Flagship site at the VA Salt Lake Health Care System; Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Utah School of Medicine
- **Nick Otis**, Senior Research Associate / Project Coordinator, Leidos; Senior Research Associate, Naval Health Research Center

A webinar on the project may be found [here](#).

Outdoor Rec and Nature-Based Programming for Vets Study

The Nature Exposure RCT identified a lack of consistency in outdoor recreation-based interventions for military veterans. Accordingly, SHIFT led a project to document the current landscape of outdoor recreation programming and nature-based therapeutic interventions for military veterans; develop a baseline assessment of current practices within the field; and use it to establish best practices for such programming.

Beginning in July, **SHIFT researched and catalogued [more than 300 outdoor recreation and nature-based therapeutic programs](#)** for military veterans, then [surveyed them](#) to determine the state of their practices and programs.



SHIFT then coordinated a series of meetings with researchers from the University of New Hampshire, Clemson and the Leidos Research Center that discussed the development of standardized practices.

[A September 22 webinar](#)—part of the Health and Nature Webinar Series—was expanded into a half-day workshop that invited survey respondents and program providers to discuss **the development of standardized practices** with the research team.

The workshop laid the groundwork for [a half-day workshop at the SHIFT Summit](#) that further explored next steps in the implementation of the Sept. 22 workshop's findings.

Principals:

- **Semra Aytur**, PhD, Associate Professor, Health Management and Policy, University of New Hampshire
- **Jessie Bennett**, PhD, Assistant Professor, Recreation Management and Policy, University of New Hampshire
- **Colonel Sally Coulthard**, Founder, Nature & Health Foundation
- **Nick Otis**, Senior Research Associate / Project Coordinator, Leidos; Senior Research Associate, Naval Health Research Center

- **Jasmine Townsend**, PhD, Associate Professor, Recreational Therapy, Clemson University
- **Deborah Tysor**, PhD, Lecturer of Recreational Therapy, Clemson University

The Trails Calculator

A workshop at the 2019 SHIFT Summit entitled “[Quantifying the Health Care Cost Savings of Outdoor Recreation](#)” highlighted two SHIFT Award Official Selections that quantified the averted medical costs of physical activity.

[The Oregon Outdoor Recreation Health Estimator Tool](#) was used to calculate that Oregonians’ participation in outdoor recreation activities saves the state **\$1.4 billion annually in health care costs.**

The City of Brownsville (TX)’s Lower Rio Grande Valley Active Transportation and Active Tourism Plan (aka The Caracara Trails) estimated **annual health care cost savings**

of \$5.9-\$12.3 million from increased physical activity on 291 miles of multi-use trails.

The workshop was predicated on the assumption that **planners, policy makers and elected officials**

alike need economic arguments to advance investments in health-related infrastructure and programs. Panelists reviewed existing tools and economic data to create stronger economic framing and arguments for different types of applications.

The workshop identified that generating economic information about the cost/benefit ratio of investments in trails and trail systems are typically expensive and inaccessible propositions that are not readily available to park planners, agencies, elected officials or others who would be in the best position to use the resulting information.

Following the workshop, SHIFT convened a series of meetings to develop the “[Trails Calculator](#),” **an open-source, online calculator that could be used to make the economic case for trail development** by estimating the health care value and benefits as it relates to the cost required to plan, design and build it.

By providing information regarding the averted medical costs of a trail, the Trails Calculator will provide people with a useful, simple, accessible tool they can apply to estimate cost/benefit ratios for their projects. In so doing, **the Calculator will provide a cost-effective and consistent way to elevate motivations for trail investments at various scales.**

The Calculator will be piloted to benefit an extension of the Brownsville (TX) Historic Battlefield Trail, a safe 9-mile hike and bike path that runs south to north directly through the middle of the city. The resulting economic data will be used to create economic justification for the trail system, serving

SHFT health & nature
webinar series

The Trails Calculator Project

Tuesday, July 28th 10-11am MST
To Register: <https://bit.ly/2WwyaQ6>

Attila Baloty
Outdoor Recreation Planner,
National Park Service

Torsha Bhattacharya
Director of Research,
Rails-to-Trails
Conservancy

Henry "Shelton" Brown
Associate Professor,
University of Texas School
of Public Health

Eva Garcia
Caracara Trails Project
Manager,
Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

as a pilot project for national rollout of the Calculator.

Principals:

- **Dr. Henry “Shelton” Brown**, Associate Professor of Management, Policy & Community Health at the University of Texas School of Public Health
- **Attila Bality**, Outdoor Recreation Planner, National Park Service Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program

A webinar on the project may be found [here](#).

The project has been awarded \$20,000 from the NPS Challenge Cost Share Award Program to develop its initial phase.

The Health Estimator Tool

Dr. Randy Rosenberger oversaw development of **The Oregon Outdoor Recreation Health Estimator Tool**, which was honored by SHIFT with a 2019 SHIFT Award and featured in the 2019 SHIFT Summit workshop, “Quantifying the Health Care Cost Savings of Outdoor Recreation.”

Using the development of the Trails Calculator as a template, SHIFT has begun working with Dr. Rosenberger on development of [The Health Estimator Tool](#), a free, open-source tool that quantifies the health care cost savings of outdoor recreation at the state and county level and provides an estimate of the cost of illness savings (a.k.a. health benefits)



of physical activity in the outdoors. The resulting tool, which will be in the public domain, will be available to states for use as part of their Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), which each state must produce in order to secure Land and Water Conservation Fund funding.

It will also be beneficial to elected officials, school districts, health care providers and land and recreation managers to secure additional funding for investments in green infrastructure, nature-rich programming and access to nature around the country. The Tennessee Department of Health and Tennessee State Parks are currently working to adapt the Oregon Outdoor Recreation Health Impacts Estimator Tool to their state. This effort represents an opportunity to replicate the original tool and identify basic information and expertise needed to modify it that could serve as a guide to other states interested in a similar adoption.

Principals:

- **Dr. Randy Rosenberger**, Professor and the Associate Dean at Oregon State University's College of Forestry

Webinars on the project may be found [here](#) and [here](#).

We Conducted the Seventh Annual SHIFT Awards

One of SHIFT's core objectives is to help scale work we know to be effective. [The SHIFT Awards](#), which recognize individuals, initiatives, or organizations that make innovative, impactful and replicable contributions to the advancement of the health benefits of time outside, are key to this objective.

Since 2014, SHIFT researchers have identified individuals, organizations and initiatives from around the United States that leverage outdoor rec for conservation gains. In 2018, we expanded our research to include initiatives that **advanced or promoted the health benefits of outdoor recreation**. In 2020, we further refined the Awards to take into consideration initiatives' impact on **equitable access to nature**.

Once we identify relevant work, we evaluate it using three criteria: **Impact, Innovation and Replicability**. A description of this criteria may be found [here](#).

The work determined to be most impactful, innovative and

replicable is then nominated for one of seven categories in **our annual SHIFT Awards**.

We then build the programming of The SHIFT Summit around the SHIFT Award winners by

including them as workshop moderators, panelists and keynote presenters. This in turn facilitates the dissemination of their work via ideas, partnerships and collaborations.

In 2020, **we identified more than 200 initiatives**, then conducted deeper evaluations of more than 50 initiatives before selecting our 2020 Award winners.

For 2020 SHIFT Award recipients, click [here](#).



We Supported the Work of ELP Fellow Ciarra Greene

Over the past five years, the Emerging Leaders Program alumni network has grown to encompass grassroots leaders from multiple sectors. Hunters, social justice activists, climbers, community organizers, anglers, hikers, and Diversity, Equity and Inclusivity specialists have all come together during ELP to develop a cross-sectoral approach to protecting our public and planetary health.

With the assistance of Patagonia, we developed [The SHIFTx Fellowship Fund](#) to support ELP Fellows in their efforts to address issues of importance to their communities.

The SHIFTx Fellowship Fund augments existing support mechanisms for past Fellows of The Emerging Leaders Program by providing them with financial support for initiatives of their own design.

The 2018 Fund recipients, 2017 ELP alumni Mateen Hessami and Jess Johnson, received \$10,000 for their Hunting and



[Fishing Mentorship Program.](#)

In 2019, Ciarra Greene (ELP '16) received the \$10,000 grant for her proposal to [promote the restoration and conservation of her Nez Perce environment.](#)

In both cases, **SHIFT passed along the full amount of Patagonia's grant**, absorbing the organizational overhead necessary to distribute the grant.

The SHIFTx Fellowship Fund represents our desire to share our collective-impact model nationally while simultaneously contributing to the professional development of ELP Fellows. The Fund supports our goal of making the ELP the engine of our efforts. It develops intersectionality between outdoor rec, conservation, land management and public health, highlighting the role outdoor recreation can play in the protection of our natural world.

We Brought The 2020 ELP Virtual



The Emerging Leaders Program (ELP) trains early career leaders to help develop our work at SHIFT and in America.

The program's vision is to build a diverse coalition of advocates who can champion the health benefits of nature and fight for a more sustainable future for the planet.

By developing tools and strategies for reconnection with our natural world, **the program provides leadership training through a framework that empowers participants to address problems facing public health, conservation, advocacy, structures of oppression and community engagement.**

Each ELP is comprised of two distinct components. The first half of the program helps build community amongst the cohort, lays the groundwork for group discussions during ELP and prepares cohort members for their roles at SHIFT.

The second half of the experience is The SHIFT Summit itself. Cohort Fellows are invited to participate as panelists, speakers, hosts and moderators throughout the Summit, working alongside veterans in the space to ensure their priorities and perspectives are included in conversations of

national importance.

With conflicting health advisories and increasingly polarized national reception to health recommendations, **a completely virtual platform was determined to be the safest option for this year's ELP.**

Led by Program Director Dr. Morgan Green, a pediatrician and 2018 ELP Fellow, **the 2020 ELP curriculum incorporated feedback from past ELP Fellows** in order to honor topics surrounding equity, inclusion and structures of oppression. This in turn allowed the program to more deeply consider the intersections of health and nature, innovation in conservation, stewardship, outdoor recreation and advocacy, and how such discussions impact participants' diverse lived experiences while also harnessing the ingenuity and creativity that makes the program innovative.

The 2020 ELP was developed, facilitated and led entirely by program Fellows and SHIFT board and staff. **Shonto Greyeyes, Jess Saba** and **Jose Gonzalez** returned from their 2019 facilitator roles to help bring their skill sets to our virtual cohort. They

were joined by 2018 Fellows and ELP Advisory Council members **Eva Garcia** and **Dylan McDowell**, who brought policy and public health perspectives to the curriculum.

Once evaluations were complete, **22 energized, dynamic leaders from the candidate pool were selected to take part in the program.** Participants' skill sets and how best to present them at SHIFT were ascertained via a survey to ensure that participants helped determine how they wanted to be seen professionally, even before programming was solidified for SHIFT.

The 2020 ELP featured nine four-hour virtual sessions spread out over three months. Two sessions were dedicated to group presentations, where small groups were assigned topics that fit their skill set and presented to the cohort at large. Five sessions were content-oriented and spoke to different facilitators' skill sets. The remaining three sessions were social, providing a moment to enjoy one other's company in a low-stress environment that fostered friendship and camaraderie.

Discussions focused on public health, policy, and the value of ancestral knowledge in land protection. Others provided lessons on diversity, equity, inclusion and healing in a racially charged period of our country as well as how the relationships built in the cohort could help foster resiliency in the workforce.

Cohort members who were selected to participate in

SHIFT were then invited to join conference calls with national leaders who served as their peers on panels and in workshops, ensuring ELP participants were recognized as equal contributors during the idea-tion process.

At SHIFT, cohort members led workshops, facilitated a social hour with AllTrails and provided keynote presentations to close the Summit. Their engagement throughout the Summit gave it one of its signature elements: the inclusion of youth and diversity in conversations that typically are reserved for "veterans" in the space. **The resulting discussions grounded the Summit in a relevance that was as rich as it was rewarding for all participants.**

As one of the 2020 Fellows put it, **"The best experiences to me are the ones that shape the way I think about the world. ELP was absolutely one of those experiences."**

The 2020 ELP was made possible by **AllTrails, Christy Walton, The National Park Service, Clif Bar Family Foundation** and **Julie Williams**. We are indebted to them for their support.

"ELP gave me the community and knowledge I needed to proceed in my career as an advocate for nature as an evidence-based physical and mental health intervention. In doing so, ELP has altered the course of my medical trajectory."

—**ELLE NEWCOME**,
2020 ELP Fellow;
MD Candidate
2021, University of
Minnesota Medical
School

We Made The 2020 SHIFT Summit Healthy By Nature



Equity, Access and The Mental
Health Benefits of Time Outside

Bowing to the realities of a global pandemic, we broadcast [The 2020 SHIFT Summit](#) virtually from Jackson Hole, Wyoming, from October 14-16. Entitled “Healthy by Nature,” the Summit focused on **the mental health benefits of time outside, with a specific focus on **health equity and access to nature**.**

Within the virtual format, we strove to retain SHIFT's signature elements as much possible. The 2020 Summit thus had three main goals:

- **Facilitate networking** and transdisciplinary collaboration among participants
- **Showcase best practices**, i.e., work that is impactful, innovative and replicable
- **Translate the evidence** for the mental health benefits of nature contact into both practice and policy

As we've done historically, we built the 2020 program to highlight two elements integral to these objectives:



- [The 2020 SHIFT Award winners](#)—the most innovative, impactful and replicable work in the space
- **Fellows of The 2020 Emerging Leaders Program (ELP)**, which brought youth and diversity to discussions about public health, conservation, advocacy, structures of oppression and community engagement

We developed the three days of the Summit around three main themes.

- **Research:** Day 1 focused on the evidence for the mental health benefits of nature contact.
- **Practice:** Day 2 highlighted the work of organizations and initiatives around the country, including that of SHIFT Award winners and ELP Fellows, that are translating the evidence into practice.
- **Policy:** Day 3 focused on moving practice into policy at the community, municipal, state and federal levels.

Within each of the three days, we divided the programming into three tracks.

- **Next Generation:** Track 1 focused on the mental health benefits of nature contact for children, teens and young adults.
- **Psychological Resiliency:** Track 2 focused on nature contact as a mechanism for enhancing psychological resiliency and ameliorating the effects of trauma, particularly as it relates to COVID-19.
- **Resource Management:** Track 3 focused on the ways natural resource managers can position our parks, forests and waters as mental health care delivery systems, removing barriers to access for vulnerable populations.



The program adhered closely to the structure of in-person SHIFTs. One-hour panel discussions with subject-matter experts, including SHIFT Award winners and ELP Fellows, were followed by two 30-minute rounds of World Cafe-style breakout discussions that allowed participants to continue discussing panel topics in more intimate groups. Each workshop concluded with a one-hour plenary session that highlighted key takeaways from the small-group discussions, followed by a summary of next steps.

Overall, more than 380 registrants participated in the event. Engagement throughout the course of the event was strong as well: participants sent more than 4,000 messages on Slack during the Summit.

Following the Summit, Workshops and keynote presentations were posted on our YouTube channel [here](#).

While the virtual platform understandably lacked some of the chemistry and spontaneity of in-person SHIFTs, it nonetheless retained a number of the elements that have emerged as **SHIFT's defining characteristics**.

- **Intentional programming** of workshops with representatives from the outdoor recreation, public health, conservation, land management and research communities **fostered cross-sectoral and transdisciplinary collaborations** that are key to advancement in the space.
- **Inclusion of Fellows of the 2020 Emerging Leaders Program** ensured the program was relevant to the priorities and perspectives of the next generation of leaders.
- By **building the program around SHIFT Award winners**, the Summit highlighted the most **innovative, impactful and replicable work** in the health and nature movement, sparking new ideas and catalyzing new partnerships among participants.
- **The lower barrier to entry of a virtual event**, coupled with the lower pricing, helped make the 2020 SHIFT Summit **the most accessible yet**—an accessibility enhanced by the post-Summit publication of workshops and keynote presentations on [SHIFT's YouTube channel](#).

A review of the Summit was included in [the December 2020 issue](#) of Outdoor Retailer Magazine.

See [here](#) for a schedule of events. An overview of the programming is as follows.

October 14, 2020

Next Generation: The Effects of Nature Contact on the Mental Health of Children, Teens and Early Adults



Louise Chawla, PhD
University of Colorado Boulder



Christine Ekenga, PhD
Washington University in St. Louis



Donald Rakow, PhD
Cornell College



Nadav Sprague
Gateways to the Great Outdoors



David Berrigan, PhD
National Institute of Health



WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 14: THE EVIDENCE

Day 1 of The SHIFT Summit featured three workshops that looked at the evidence for the mental health benefits of nature contact with some of the leading researchers in the field.

Following an opening keynote by [Dr. Lisa Fitzpatrick](#), the Medical Director of Medicaid from 2015-18, the morning was developed around three panel discussions:

- Track 1—[The Effects of Nature Contact on the Mental Health of Children, Teens and Early Adults](#)—explored some of the deep challenges in research and implementation related to the role of nature contact on mental health of youth.
- Track 2—[Nature Contact and Psychological Resiliency in](#)

the Time of COVID—explored the evidence for nature as a means to enhance psychological resiliency, as well as the barriers to this low-risk, low-cost mental health intervention.

- Track 3—**Blue Space, Green Space**—highlighted what we know about the evidence for parks, forests and waters as mental health interventions, as well as who we need to target, why we need to target them and what the evidence indicates we should be “prescribing.”

In the afternoon, **SHIFT’s second annual Poster Session** featured findings from a series of new studies in oral lightning rounds. Presenters had four minutes each to discuss their research, followed by four minutes of Q&A from the audience.

Following the oral lightning rounds, other researchers presented their work in smaller breakout groups with virtual poster sessions.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15: PRACTICE

The second day of The 2020 SHIFT Summit focused on **the real-world application of the evidence** for the mental health benefits of time outside.

Following presentations by **winners of The 2020 SHIFT Awards**, three separate workshops were developed around the Summit’s three tracks of Next Gen, Psychological Resiliency and Resource Management.

- Track 1—**Delivering the Mental Health Benefits of Nature Contact to Our Children**—featured a discussion



among 2020 SHIFT Award winners and 2020 Fellows of The Emerging Leaders Program about how they’re delivering the mental health benefits of nature to children, teens and early adults in innovative, impactful and replicable ways.

- Track 2—**Best Practices for Outdoor Recreation and Nature-Based Programming for Veterans**—looked at the preliminary findings of SHIFT’s Outdoor Rec and Nature-Based Programming for Vets study, which is designed to document the current landscape of outdoor recreation programming and nature-based interventions for military veterans.
- Track 3—**Resource Managers as Mental Health Providers**—looked at how innovative resource managers are engaging community members in the process of creating natural spaces to deliver mental health benefits to the public, and in the process amplifying the connection between the health of community, individual health and the health of the natural world.



FRIDAY, OCTOBER 16: POLICY

The third and final day of the 2020 SHIFT Summit focused on “making it real:” **the ways we can institutionalize nature as a mental-health intervention within policy at the community, municipal, state and federal levels.**

Following a keynote address by SHIFT Award winner [Atiya Wells](#), three workshops took place.

- Track 1—[The Children’s Bill of Rights](#)—explored ways to effectively and equitably engage kids in parks, green space and nature in the current and post-COVID world.
- Track 2—[Distributing Nature’s Therapeutic Effects Equitably in the Midst of the Pandemic](#)—looked at ways we can institutionalize nature’s healing effects to help address trauma, particularly among vulnerable communities, amid the convergence of multiple crises.
- Track 3—[A Stronger Argument for Nature Itself](#)—explored the mental health benefits of nature contact, barriers that are preventing those who would benefit

the most from accessing our natural spaces, and the ways resource managers can make users feel safe and welcome.

The [closing keynote presentation](#) of this year's program featured two Fellows of The 2020 ELP, **Alysa Delgado** and **Caroline Lindquist**, and **Tyler Norris**, the Chief Executive of Well Being Trust, in a synthesization of the Summit's proceedings and a discussion of the ways we can harness the incredible opportunity created by COVID-19 and the social justice movement to center nature as a mental health care delivery system nationwide.

The 2020 SHIFT Summit was made possible by the support of [AllTrails](#), [The Esther and Otto Seligmann Foundation](#), [The VF Foundation](#), [Well Being Trust](#), [1908 Brands](#) and [Boulder Clean](#), [The Lora L. and Martin N. Kelley Family Foundation](#), [Marcia Kunstel](#), [Frederick Reimers](#), [Gerben Scherpbier](#), [Sandy Schultz Hessler](#), [Dr. Suzanne Bartlett Hackenmiller](#), [Julie Williams](#) and [Rivanna Designs](#). We look forward to applying the lessons of 2020's unprecedented virtual reality to an in-person event in 2021.



2020 SHIFT Summit Closing Keynote

Thank You, Sponsors



The events, programs and initiatives of 2020 were made possible by these generous sponsors. We are indebted to them for making our programming possible.

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OUR PEOPLE....”

Post-ELP survey
response from 2020
Emerging Leader
Andrea Foster

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