



The Climate Toolkit
Symposium 2025

Essence as Compass

Guiding Climate Action with Regenerative Thinking

10.28.2025

Session Leaders



**Richard
Piacentini**

Phipps Conservatory
and Botanical
Gardens



**Sonja
Bochart**

Lens | Shepley
Bulfinch

Agenda

Welcome + Introduction

- Climate Toolkit Overview

Activities: Essence as Compass

- Organizational Essence
- Community Essence
- Climate Toolkit Focus Areas

Part 3: Synthesis

- Reflections



The Climate Toolkit

a collaborative opportunity for museums, gardens, zoos and other cultural institutions who want to share, mentor, and learn from each other on how to **aggressively address climate change** within their own organizations and inspire the communities they serve to follow their lead.

FREE to JOIN

Learn more and sign up:

www.climatetoolkit.org



In partnership with

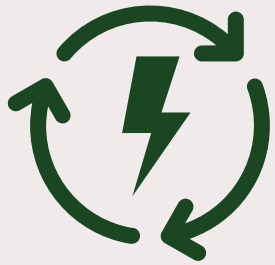


Organization of Biological Field Stations

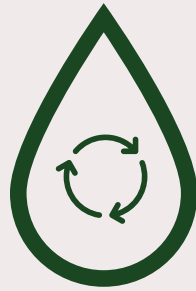
More than 240 institutions from **30** countries serving **120 million** annual visitors and counting

- Webinars to educate and engage
- Topically focused working groups
- Regenerative thinking workshops
- Online resources to achieve goals around buildings and energy, water, food service, transportation, waste, landscapes and horticulture, investments, research and engagement
- Youth Network for student groups
- Facilitated connection with peer institutions

Climate Toolkit: Nine Focus Areas



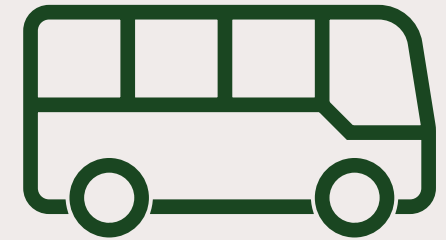
Buildings and Energy



Water



Food Service



Transportation



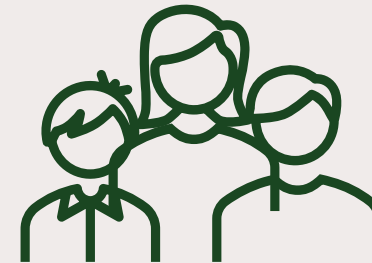
Waste



Landscapes and
Horticulture



Investments



Engagement



Research

Climate Toolkit: Focus Areas & Goals

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WATER

- Reduce municipal water use by at least 25%
- Reduce potable water for irrigation by at least 25%

FOOD SERVICE

- Ensure 40% of menu items are vegan or vegetarian
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TRANSPORTATION

- Offset carbon for all work-related staff travel
- Make 25% of vehicle fleet electric (excluding tractors)
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WASTE

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LANDSCAPES AND HORTICULTURE

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INVESTMENTS

- Divest from fossil fuel investments
- Invest in socially responsible investments

ENGAGEMENT

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- Teach facts and best practices to mitigate and reduce global climate change

RESEARCH

- Initiate region-specific research related to climate change

Add general member slide



Adkins Arboretum
Ridgely, Maryland



Anchorage Museum
Anchorage, Alaska



artsPlace
Alberta, Canada



Asheville Art Museum Association Inc
Asheville, North Carolina



Bernheim Arboretum and Research Forest
Clermont, Kentucky



Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum
Honolulu, Hawaii



Bok Tower Gardens
Lake Wales, Florida



California Botanic Garden
Claremont, California



California Indian Museum and Cultural Center
Santa Rosa, California



Cambridge University Botanic Garden
Cambridge, United Kingdom



Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania



Cedarhurst Center For the Arts
Mount Vernon, Illinois



Chanticleer Garden
Wayne, Pennsylvania



Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum
St. Michaels, Maryland



Cincinnati Art Museum
Cincinnati, Ohio



Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens
Boothbay, Maine



Cornell Botanic Gardens
Ithaca, New York



Denver Botanic Gardens
Denver, Colorado



Discovery Museum
Little Rock, Arkansas



Duke Farms
Hillsborough Township, New Jersey



Filoli Center
Woodside, California



Florida Aquarium
Tampa, FL



Folger Shakespeare Library
Washington, D.C.



Green Bay Botanical Garden
Green Bay, Wisconsin



Hillwood Estate, Museum and Garden
Washington, D.C.



Holden Forests and Gardens
Kirtland, Ohio



Horniman Museum and Gardens
London, United Kingdom



Huntsville Botanical Garden
Huntsville, Alabama



Jacksonville Arboretum & Botanical Gardens
Jacksonville, Florida



Jardin botanique de Montréal, Espace pour la vie/ Montréal Botanical Gardens, Montréal Space for Life
Quebec, Canada



Key West Tropical Forest & Botanical Garden
Key West, Florida



Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center
Austin, Texas



Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden
Henrico, Virginia



Marie Selby Botanical Gardens
Sarasota, Florida



Marine Aquarium & Regional Centre, Zoological Survey of India
West Bengal, India



Meadowlark Botanical Gardens
Vienna, Virginia



Monterey Bay Aquarium
Monterey, California



Morris Arboretum
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



Morton Arboretum
Lisle, Illinois



Mount Auburn Cemetery
Cambridge, Massachusetts



Mt. Cuba Center
Hockessin, Delaware



Museum of Discovery and Science
Fort Lauderdale, Florida



National Nordic Museum
Seattle, Washington



Natural History Museum of Utah
Salt Lake City, Utah



New York Botanical Garden
Bronx, New York



Norfolk Botanical Garden
Norfolk, Virginia



North Carolina Botanical Garden
Chapel Hill, North Carolina



Oakland Zoo and Conservation Society of California
Oakland, California



Oxford Botanic Garden
Oxford, United Kingdom



Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania



Pittsburgh Zoo and Aquarium
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania



Quest Science Center
Livermore, CA



Red Butte Garden
Salt Lake City, Utah



Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh
Edinburgh, UK



Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew
England, UK



Sacramento History Museum
Sacramento, California



San Diego Botanic Garden
Encinitas, California



Santa Barbara Botanic Garden
Santa Barbara, California



Santa Fe Botanic Garden
Santa Fe, New Mexico



Sarah P. Duke Gardens at Duke University
Durham, North Carolina



Science Museum of Minnesota
Saint Paul, Minnesota



Science World
Vancouver, British Columbia



Smithsonian Gardens
Washington, D.C.



South Coast Botanic Garden
Palos Verdes Peninsula, California



Strawbery Banke Museum
Portsmouth, New Hampshire



The Jerusalem Botanical Gardens
Jerusalem, Israel



Tower Hill Botanic Garden
Boylston, Massachusetts



University of Washington Botanic Gardens
Seattle, Washington



Visual Arts Center of New Jersey
Summit, New Jersey



Watermen's Museum
Yorktown, Virginia

Wake-up:

Climate Toolkit Starting Point

Review the Climate Toolkit and identify your top 3 focus areas (*5 minutes*).

Take a moment to reflect....

Why did you select the way you did?

Share with a partner (*5 minutes*)



Climate Toolkit: Focus Areas & Goals

BUILDINGS AND ENERGY

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RESEARCH

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Four Paradigms for Interacting with the World

EXTRACTIVE	LESS BAD	DO GOOD	REGENERATIVE
- Exchange Value - About Me <i>Disconnected</i> - Fragments	- Less Bad - About Us <i>Interconnected</i> - Fragments <i>Stabilize them</i>	- Do Good - About Us <i>Reciprocity</i> - Fragments <i>Improve them</i>	- Evolve Capacity - About Us <i>Relationships</i> - Wholes

Adapted from Carol Sanford

Is your project, team, organization reaching its potential?



SONJA BOCHART

IIDA, LEED AP BD&C, WELL AP, LFA

Director, Shepley Bulfinch

sbochart@shepleybulfinch.com

**SHEPLEY
BULFINCH**

Climate Action & Nested Systems



Organizational Essence

Within every individual, organization, and place exists an Essence — a living expression of its uniqueness and inner potential.



Rubbing with wax Crayon of Douglas Fir (Left)
Inked Fingerprint (Right)

Organizational Essence

Mission, Vision, Values:

- What you do
- What you aim to do
- How you behave

Essence:

Essence is the unique way an organization contributes life and value to the world when it's functioning at its highest potential.



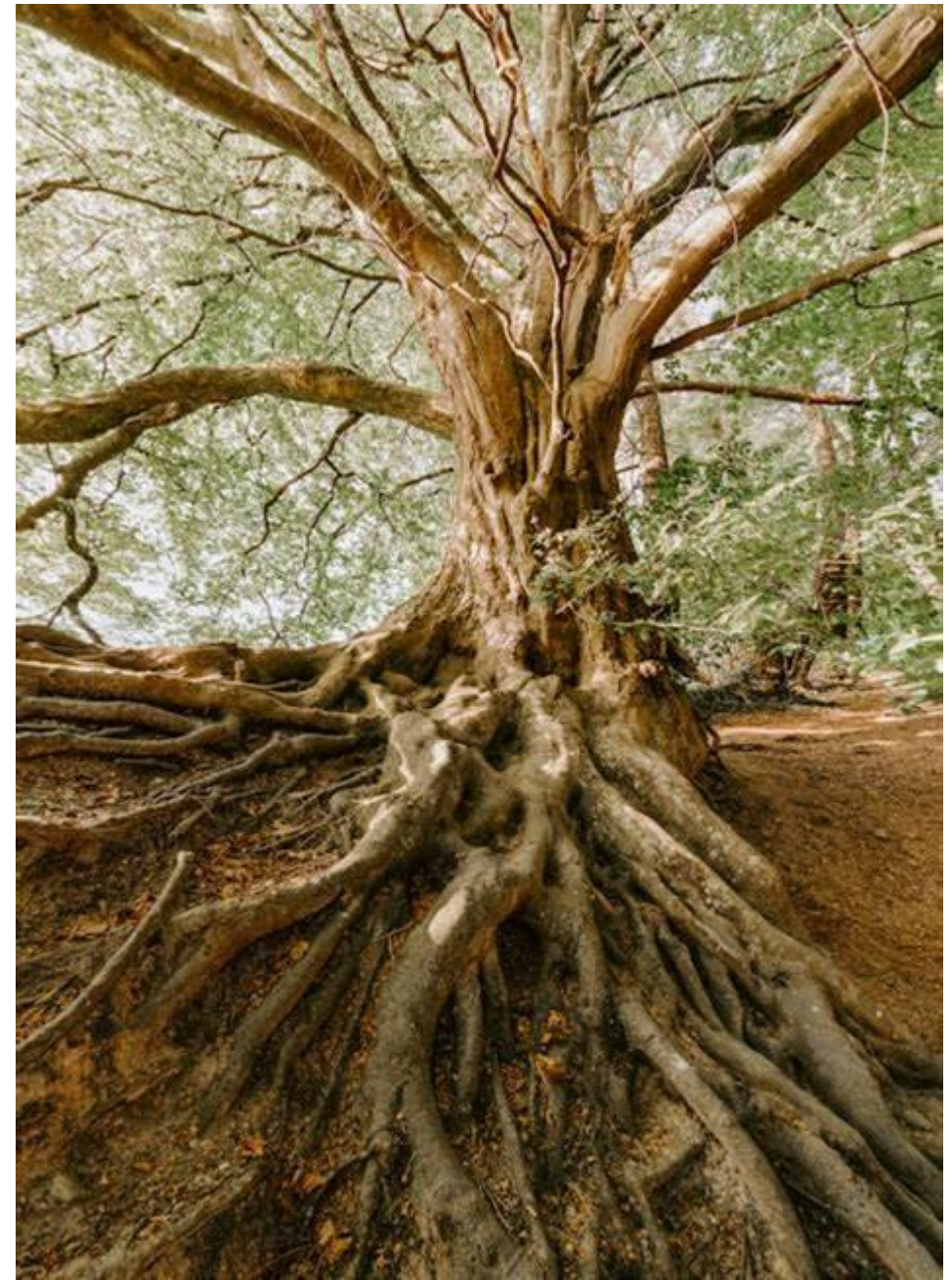
Organizational Essence

North Star

*It is not a fixed identity - but a potential
waiting to be fulfilled.*

*It is who an organization is at their
deepest level—and what they are called
to become.”*

— Pamela Mang, co-founder of Regenesys Group



Organizational Essence



Value of working from Essence:

Clarity and Alignment: Guides decision-making, keeps actions aligned with the organization's core purpose.

Authenticity: Builds trust with stakeholders by showing consistency between words and actions.

Differentiation: Sets the organization apart by staying true to what makes it unique.

Resilience: Helps the organization stay grounded and adaptive in times of change or crisis.

Inspiration: Motivates employees and attracts stakeholders who share the same values and purpose.

Organizational Essence



When we don't work from Essence:

- **Confusion** about why we exist in the first place – limiting stakeholder and community alignment.
- **“Do good” Mentality** - instead of building from our own strengths which limits us reaching our potential.
- **Misalignment** between our values and our actual behaviors.
- **Unrealized Potential** - missed opportunities for growth, service and innovation.



Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens

Mission:

To inspire and educate all with the beauty and importance of plants; to advance sustainability and promote human and environmental well-being through action and research; and to celebrate its historic glasshouse.

Essence Statement:

Phipps seeks to: illuminate the beauty and vitality of nature **in a way** that inspires us, individually and collectively, **so that** we embrace and nurture our relationship and responsibility to the Earth and all life.

Anchorage Museum

Mission:

To be a museum for people, place, planet, and potential, in service of a sustainable and equitable North, with creativity and imagination for what is possible.

Essence:

My organization seeks to: Seed caring and curiosity about place and culture **in a way** is collaborative, relational, inclusive & joyful **so that** our shared commitment to the complex identities, distinct environments and diverse perspectives contributes to a thriving North.



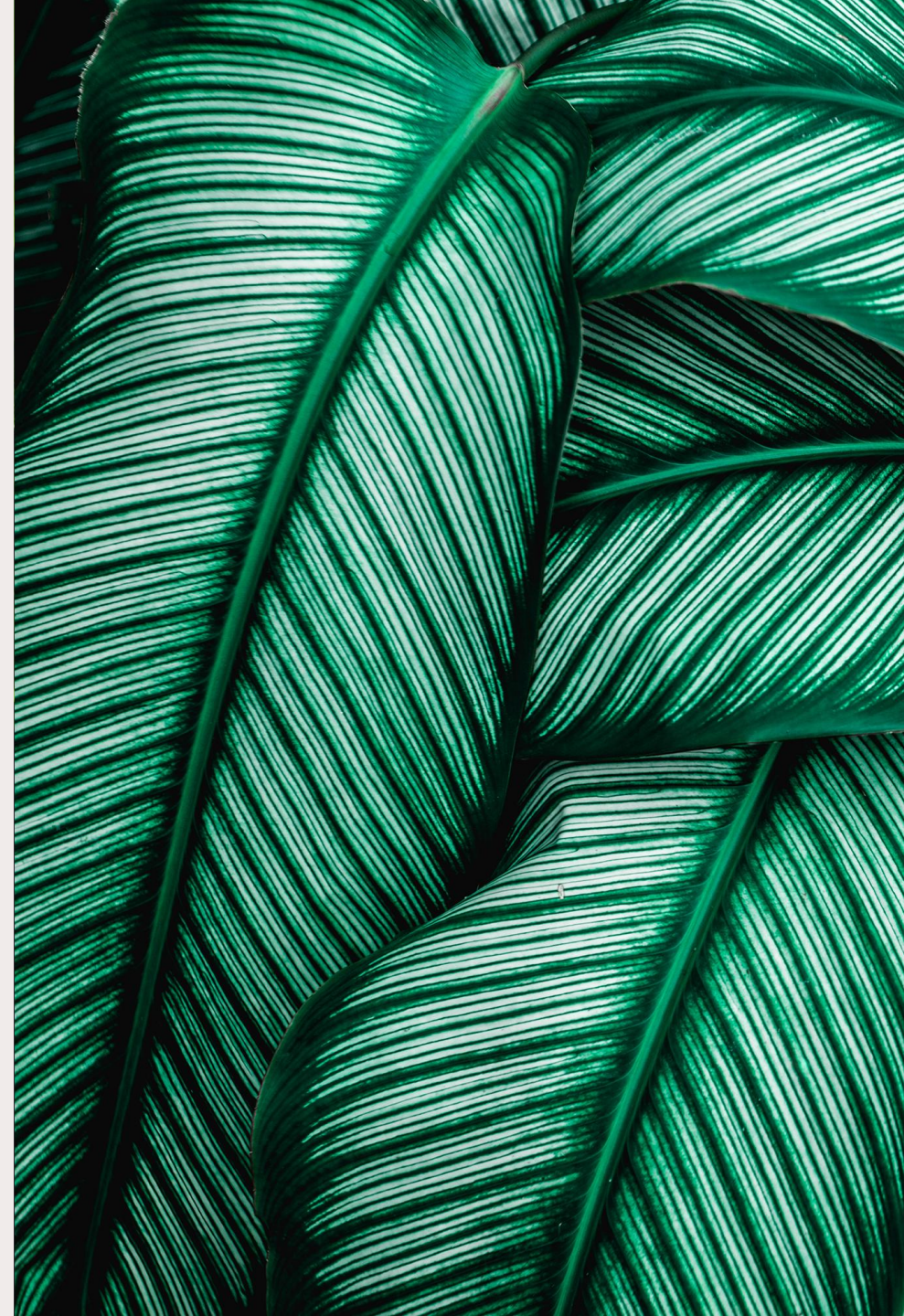
Organization Purpose Statement

Your organization's purpose statement is an expression of its essence that serves as a "north star" to keep you grounded as you explore new projects and ideas. It describes your purpose, process, and value.

My organization seeks to _____

In a way that _____

So that _____



Activity: Organizational Essence

Write a short
purpose statement
as a starting point
for your
Organizations
Essence (North
Star).

My organization seeks to:

In a way that:

So that:

Community Essence

Consider the five aspects of the Community Essence pentad one at a time.

*Identify them. What makes them unique?
What are their strengths?*

*What challenges do they and will they face in
the future?*

*What resonates with them? What do they
consider important?*

*Where do you see the greatest opportunity to
learn more? Where do knowledge gaps exist?*



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Phipps Community Essence Example

People (Social Systems & Communities)

- A historically working-class population shaped by steel and coal labor.
- Strong immigrant communities (e.g., Italian, Polish, Slovak, Irish) and a large Black population with deep roots in the Hill District.
- Leading Medical and University Research Institutions. Tech industry influx (e.g., CMU and Google) bringing in highly educated newcomers.
- Stark racial and economic disparities
- Resilient neighborhood-level organizing and community advocacy (e.g., Hazelwood Green redevelopment input).

Culture (Symbolic Systems & Meaning-Making)

- Local pride in dialect ("Pittsburghese"), sports teams (Steelers, Pirates, Penguins), and traditions.
- Rich artistic legacy: playwright August Wilson, Andy Warhol, and growing contemporary art scenes.
- Annual events like the Three Rivers Arts Festival or light-up night reflect public engagement and shared ritual.
- Deep musical and jazz history rooted in the Hill District.

Ecology

- Forested hills and river valleys
- Urban biodiversity and green spaces
- River and watershed restoration
- Legacy industrial pollution challenges
- Expanding tree canopy coverage

Activity: Community Essence

Describe some of
your local, unique
community
essence.

Culture

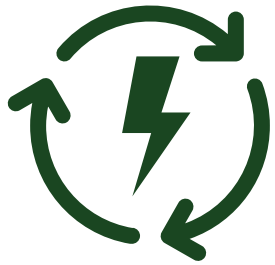
People

Ecology

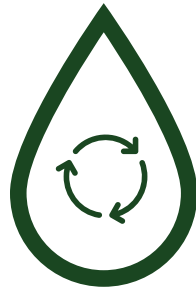
Unlocking Essence for Climate Impact



Climate Toolkit: Nine Focus Areas



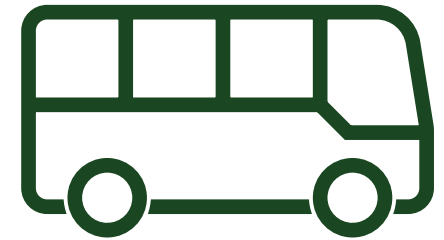
Buildings and Energy



Water



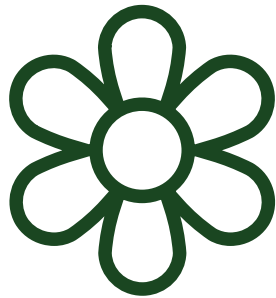
Food Service



Transportation



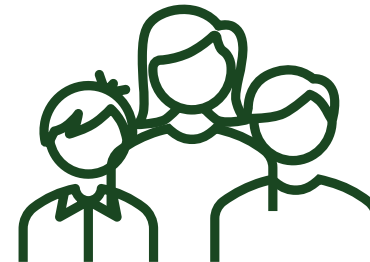
Waste



Landscapes and
Horticulture



Investments



Engagement



Research

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Activity: Unlocking Essence

*Consider your
Organizational and
Community Essence...*

Focus Areas:

Review/refine from
The Climate Toolkit 2-3
focus areas that your
organization is
uniquely positioned to
address.

Your Organizations Focus Areas:

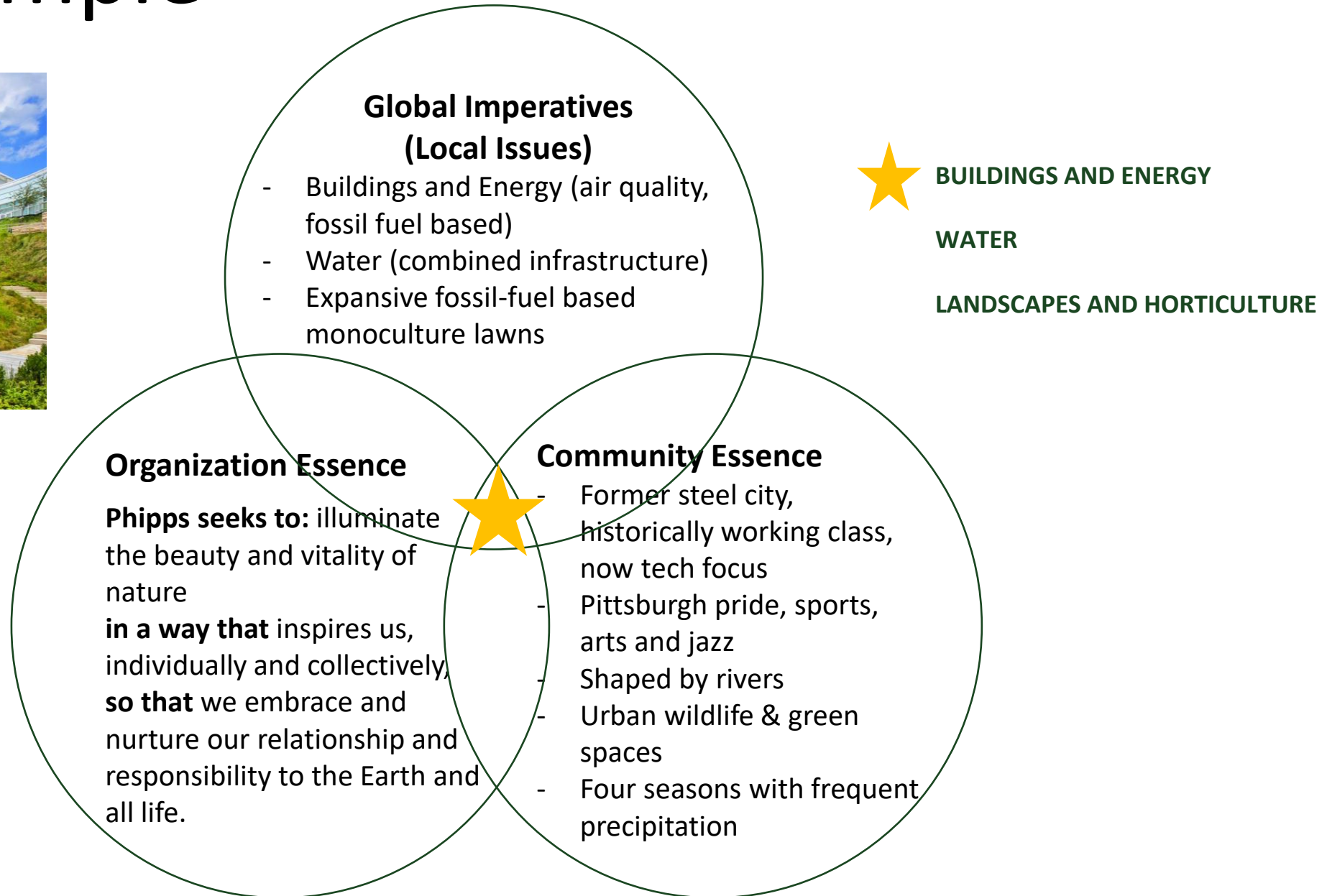
1.

2.

3.



Phipps Example



We're here to help with your continued work.

CONTACT

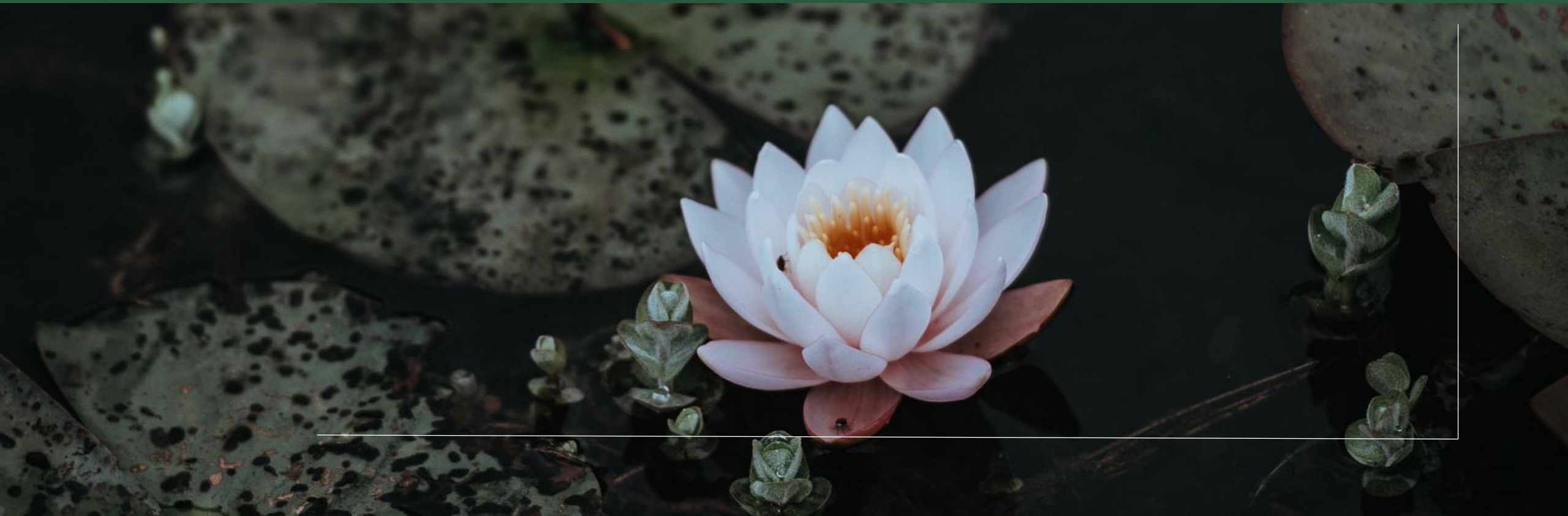
- Richard Piacentini: rpiacentini@phipps.conservatory.org
www.Phipps.conservatory.org
- Sonja Bochart: sbochart@shepleybulfinch.com
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FREE to JOIN

Learn more and sign up:
www.climatetoolkit.org



Thank You



Global Imperatives (Local Issues)

- Water supply/stress (not currently an issue)
- Transportation
- Buildings and Energy (heat waves, urban heat island)
- Growing too fast/cost of living - Climate refugees (from the west)
- Heat island
- Storm intensity
- Tree canopy (grow and preserve)

Institutional Essence

My organization seeks to: connect people to nature and create life-enhancing experiences.

In a way that: fosters care, and multitude of and meaningful engagement in the community

So that: open up people to new experiences – change their outlook, shift mindset ... help transform peoples' lives and their relationship with the planet.

Community Essence

- pre-glacier history, rivers ecosystem
- manufacturing / immigration history (working class)
- highly-educated, statistics, uptick in Tech, Community and volunteerism
- Church, vibrant music/arts,
- Agriculture is a mainstay
- Community pride/care for ecosystem
- Engagement as a core focus area

What are the points of intersection with the greatest potential? 

Current focus areas: engage and teach. more important thing.

Work with community partners – Ohio state, Columbus community action plan

+Food – accessibility, utilization, healthy food, water, affordability?

+Waste: single use plastic, compost, recycling,

+Landscape

+Energy: electrical vehicles and equipment, No Mow areas

Action steps for 1-5 years - current

Continue to be a place where community can see things in action. - replicate at home. demonstration, learning, -

Becoming more intentional

Global Imperatives

- Buildings and Energy
- Landscapes and Horticulture
- Electrification
- Waste (specifically wood)

Institutional Essence

My organization seeks to
connect people to nature and science

In a way that
fosters awareness, understanding,
appreciation, curiosity and care

So that
people and trees thrive and endure
together

Community Essence

- People have a sense of ownership of the arboretum
- Forest-prairie interface is a unique and valuable asset
- Strong desire for wood products and nature engagement
- City feels disconnected from the arboretum, especially underserved communities

1. Wood Waste and Carbon Storage



What happens now:

- Dead or sick or invasive trees are chipped, dumped, turned into mulch, quick to decompose, carbon goes to atmosphere
- Forests are worse – chopped and often burnt – immediate carbon-to-atmosphere

What could happen instead:

Biochar could stay in soil for centuries, very stable for carbon sequestration

Community:

What's in it for the community -- doing it **the right way (biochar must be done carefully and safely)** and making available to the community as an amendment (charitably, or perhaps as a sort of CSA model)

2. Green Electricity in Homes

Arboreta can present a baseline understanding of what your options are for green electric and how you can do better

Harnessing Arbnet is a possible network-based multiplier (arboreta worldwide sharing this information with their communities)

Visuals to **"help the trees combat climate change"** (EPA greenhouse gas equiv calculator math)