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Moderator: Carly Carroll
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Operator: Good afternoon, my name is (Kayla), and I will be your conference operator for today. At this time, I would like to welcome everyone to the Environmental Education Stakeholder Conference Call.

All lines have been placed on mute to prevent any background noise. After the speakers' remarks, there will be a question-and-answer session. If you would like to ask a question during this time, simply press star then the number one on your telephone keypad. If you would like to withdraw your question, press the pound key. Thank you.

Ms. Perry. you may begin your conference.

Dale Perry: Thank you very much, and thank you to everybody who is on the phone. We have about 24 people so far, but that number keeps going up, so we appreciate everybody participating and we are really glad that you have been able to join us today for what will hopefully be the first of many interesting conversations. As I was sitting here – this is Dale Perry by the way, Acting Deputy Director for the Office of Environmental Education here at EPA. And as I was sitting here, I realized this really – what we are trying to start is a national EE dialogue.

For this call, we have invited you, our key stakeholders, who were in attendance at our Environmental Education summit at the White House in April. And what we have asked today is for our authors to start a conversation. Our agenda today is for Dan and Charlie to talk. And we'll open it up for Q&A and discussion. And we'd like to spend the end of the call

really talking with you about these calls. We are the conveners. We are the organizers. We are interested in hearing what you have to say, but we want these calls to be a really useful and relevant dialogue, a national EE dialogue. So again, we are excited that you have been able to join us.

Today with us, we have Charlie Saylan, who is the Executive Director of the Ocean Conservation Society, who wrote with Dan Blumstein, the Chair of the Department Of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at UCLA, *The Failure of Environmental Education (And How We Can Fix It)*. Both participated in the White House summit, and both of them are very excited about continuing this conversation with you today.

And so Dan and Charlie, thank you for joining us, and I will turn it over to you.

Daniel Blumstein: Thank you for having us.

Charles Saylan: Great, thanks for having me. All right, this is Charlie Saylan. I think we will jump right into it. I think the intention here is to throw out some talking points and then get right to talking, so I will do that.

I think at the crux of what Dan and I think is that environmental education in many ways has a primary objective of creating and raising awareness about environmental issues in our communities. And I think we believe that awareness may not necessarily lead to action and measureable impact on environmental stressors. And as such, I think we wrote our book really to give some suggestions about how we might be self-critical as a community and how we might try to work more towards transitioning from simply creating awareness to creating responsible citizenry, which I think what we believe is necessary to mitigate or adapt to what we have coming down the pipe in terms of environmental degradation issues.

I think one of the things that we feel is a bit of an issue is the politicization of environmentalism. We think that perhaps environmental educators should focus exclusively – or not exclusively but expressly or emphatically on the depoliticization of this issue because I think what's important if we're to have real change is to reach the large sections of the populace that do not agree

with what we (aspire). I think that's something that we should really find specific action items to address. One of which may include downplaying the tag of environmental education because a lot of the people – I think it's – especially towards now in an election year, a lot of – half the population, you loose at the mention of the word environmental. So that's something that we may want to look at addressing.

Daniel Blumstein: One thing that we see which is kind of exciting is there is a diverse group of stakeholders involved in this that certainly involve government organization but a variety of non-government organizations. And each of these organizations and agencies has a series of action items or agenda things or goals that they want to accomplish. And the challenge we sort of see is how to create emergence, if you will, where this sort of symphony of actors all with their own specific agendas can figure out a way to work together and from this will emerge meaningful action by individuals, not just by agencies but by individuals.

So the Ocean Conservation Society may have a particular you know action item, Toyota may have a particular action item or agenda and Audubon Society has a particular action item or agenda, but how with this wonderfully diverse group of stakeholders can we lead to what we think has to be done, which is more action on the part of individuals and individuals wanting to do action. And for this, it really raises the question at the fore front, which is what we really want to discuss today, is evaluation and how we set those targets and evaluate what we are doing with respect to what we believe should be – and we would like to hear what you think about this – should be the goal of creating meaningful action, not simply awareness.

And with that, I think I – unless Charlie has nothing else to say, I think we can open it up.

Charles Saylan: Yes, a couple – just a couple of quick things that we might want to add to the talking point list. I think that maybe one of the ways that – I think in our neighborhood in Los Angeles, we have a mass of schools, public schools system, which doesn't really have any money and I think California is pretty short on funds and I think that's not – I think that's fairly common across the

nation right now. So I think everyone would agree that we need to get kids outside and we need to get kids in contact with nature, but I am not sure how practical that really is especially in our urban communities, which is probably where most of us live.

So I think that our focus on community and projects that give people practical empowerment and teach people specific tools and methods to change issues or aspects of their community is important. And I think that we always – that we need to remain relevant and we need to be self-critical such that we are – we keep relevance in mind at the forefront because I think going to communities with general information that may be difficult to assimilate doesn't do us any good.

And I think with that, I am happy to turn this – open this up for discussion, if you are good with that, Dan.

Daniel Blumstein: Yes.

Operator: And at this time, to ask an audio question, please press star and then the number one on your telephone keypad. We will pause for just a moment to compile the Q&A roster.

Jennifer Bowman: Hi, everyone, this is the Jen Bowman from the Office of Environmental Education at the EPA. Before we continue with the discussion, I want to say first of all thank you to Charlie and Dan for opening the discussion up. And as a former teacher, I am going to remind everyone of some brief ground rules because we are talking about some pretty heavy material and there are a lot of really great experiences on the table to share and to offer. So I would like to request that when you speak that you please identify yourself and your organization or affiliation, that we respect each other's space and (difference) of opinion.

Please what we – interrupting each other really isn't possible with this format, but just something to keep in mind. And try not to make assumptions. We ask that folks try to participate fully, be an attentive listener, share the discussion space, try to be concise, ask questions and keep an open mind to the different things that are going to be discussed today and in the future.

We really appreciate your participation and time. So lets move into the discussion.

Operator: And again, please press star one on your telephone keypad to ask a question.

Daniel Blumstein: If I can just sort of sieve the discussion questions with a very concrete one, how do you envision and do you envision your role as an NGO or a government agency as having to think about creating action as opposed to a particular form of awareness? How do you – how does this idea or could this idea fit into your particular agency's agenda? And you can disagree with me.

Operator: You have a question for line of Teresa Ippolito with EPA.

Jennifer Bowman: Terry, are you there?

Dale Perry: Operator, can we just go ahead and open up the line instead of having people actually submit questions? I think we've laid out the ground rules asking people to respect the other speaker. We don't have to do it by queue.

Operator: All lines are open at this time.

Dale Perry: Thank you. So Terry, we don't know if you can hear us, but you ...

Teresa Ippolito: Yes, hi. I have been able to hear you. I am sorry you weren't able to hear me. Yes, my name is Terry Ippolito, I am from the EPA just for identification.

I have been working the environmental program in the EPA since its inception and just by way of curiosity, I'd like – can you elaborate just briefly, I hope, on your premise which is the failure of environmental education. I think I know that if you are looking at the habits of the citizenry in this country, we could certainly propose failure. But I am just curious about the nature of your determination that it has been a failure.

Charles Saylan: This is Charlie. I think for me, one of the biggest factors that I look at is public discourse. You know, we are in an election year right now. We have two candidates, two schools of thought going at each other with a vengeance

in the press. And the discussion of environmental issues of climate changes and the environmental degradation is essentially non-existent.

So I tend to look at that as a failure of my own organization and my own objective because we have failed to stimulate that discourse. We failed to – you know, people are – you hear a lot about jobs and the economy because that’s what people care about and so that’s what candidates respond to. And that is where legislation is created, but we don’t seem to have stimulated enough enthusiasm or passion about environmental issues, which one could argue far more critical in the long run than economy might be. We fail to enforce that discussion, I guess.

And so I don’t think that – Dan and I, we have been criticized a little bit on the title of the book, and I don’t think that we believe that individuals have failed. I think the environmental education community is really responsible for where we are today in a sense in a good way, and I think people are doing great stuff.

I just think that we look at failure as an overall failure to impact environmental degradation, climate change, things of that nature, and we are concerned about that because these issues have a ticking clock associated with them, so.

Judy Braus: Hi, this is Judy Braus. Could I say – could I ask a question?

Charles Saylan: Sure.

Judy Braus: And Dan and Charlie, I don’t know if you remember me. We served – I’m Judy Braus, the Executive Director from the North American Association for Environmental Education, and thanks for joining with Dale and EPA to talk about your book. I still remain really concerned about your premise that environmental ed is about awareness because I don’t think you get agreement on that from most of the environmental education community both across the country and around the world.

I think that awareness was a big issue in the 70s if you are old enough to think back to that. I think that we have gone so far beyond that. There is an

enormous body of work and people, looking at how to get people to change their behaviors, how to think about change, the relationship between environmental education and social marketing. And just to give an example, a project I worked on at Audubon with Toyota, TogetherGreen, was all about how to engage people and how education and social marketing can lead the actual conservation results on the ground.

So I think the premise is not exactly right in terms of the lay of the land for environmental education. I think that if there is any failure, it is that we have not had enough support for the work we are doing, both in the work you do in conservation, the work that educators are doing in conservation and environmental quality. And what I hate to hear is, although I, of course, respect your opinion, that environmental education is about awareness because that is not the case in terms of where we are today.

And I just like to understand how you are sizing up the environmental community because I think you get a lot of pushback from people and probably had. And when I talked to you both at the summit, I was hoping we could have a follow-up call because I really like to see if we can really talk about how to increase the impact of what we are collectively doing like what you were talking about without kind of beating up on the field that has actually been some of the most progressive thinkers about diversity inclusion, action and creating change.

Charles Saylan: Yes, I think that we are not, you know, and I think I tried to make that point just now, we are not by any means beating up on the field. All I think that we are saying is that – and again, I go back to the example that I just outlined. Why is there no public discourse? And I understand that you're feeling is that we are all doing the right thing but we don't have enough support, but that's a failure in itself then. I mean, isn't it – if we are – if the idea of environmental education is to make the populace more participatory, more aware and supporting effective environmental stewards, you know, then action is necessary and legislation is probably necessary.

Daniel Blumstein: So I would like to just sort of interject that I think that, you know, there are a lot of action-oriented environmental education, but if – and the question is

how does one scale up? How does one create an emergent education experience, an emergent response? I mean, what we really want to do is we want people to want to behave right, and that's fine that people recycle, but we still fly.

That's fine the people recycle or clean up their local creek, but we still use things that create pollution here or elsewhere in other countries. You know, over consumption is a huge issue. And to me, and I think to us, these are big issues. These are hard gnarly issues. And the challenge that we want to sort of stimulate here is to discuss really how we work towards not really localized little answers, which may empower people to do things on a rather local scale – well, things have to be local, that's an important way to learn – but how we sort of create and catalyze the phase shift that we need to do on a national and ultimately international level. So I am going to just sort of throw that back and say, how do you do that with what you're doing with – and your collaborations that you're involved with?

Judy Braus: You know, it's really interesting because I truly agree that we all need to look at what we are doing and see how we can up the scale of what we are doing to be more effective. So if you were to look at the agenda for the coming conference, the NAAEE, we have speakers like Anne Leonard talking about the Story of Stuff and Consumption.

We have a speaker talking about behavior change and looking at social marketing and looking at some of the myths about what it is that makes people take action. And we also have gathered – we have a session at NAA that's by invitation only, we have gathered funders together from corporate government and foundations to talk about this very issue of how can we work more collaboratively to both increase the pool of funding for environmental ed but actually to have more collective impact, and are there some issues that we can (call a less) around.

Whether it's around communication and how we talk about the field because you are exactly right, there are certain words that are triggers or have baggage that make some people feel uncomfortable. But I guess my only point is, yes, of course we always need to look critically at what we are doing. I would

position it – and I am just giving you my feedback. I would position it in a way that makes the people that are working so hard on this issue to feel good about what they are doing and then how we can gather forces because we are not just focused on awareness in this field, and we haven't been for over 20 years. We are focused on how to get people to do something different. We are focused on civic engagement. We are focused on all the issues that you're talking about. And it just – I wish you could flip it on its head and instead of talking about the failure of EE, and I throw you guys into the whole environmental community into this.

We just haven't been able to crack through all the other issues like the economy, and it is a political agenda. And so I think we're doing some things really well. And I think we have to constantly look at how can – what's the breakthrough, what is environmental at 3.0 look like. Because I do think there are some amazing programs and people doing just what you're saying.

Daniel Blumstein: How do you envision getting agencies and corporations and NGOs with different agendas? You know, asking the bigger questions and not just talking but actually – I mean, what's the blueprint for that? I mean, I'm asking the question because I don't know. I have questions, I don't have answers and I'm hoping to learn from you here.

Judy Braus: And I don't want to – I don't want to halt the conversation so I'd like to open it up to others like ...

Dale Perry: Thank you, Judy. Yes, I was going to say, can we – I'd like to ask if there are other folks who would like to interject as well.

(Kathy McLaughlin): I have a question and a comment.

Dale Perry: Sure, go ahead.

(Kathy McLaughlin): This is (Kathy McLaughlin), and I work on foreign environmental education program that's been around since the early 70's that was all about creating an environmentally literate citizenry, which was not just in awareness level because that's really – I mean, Judy, and I would even disagree saying we haven't done in 20 years. I mean, when I started doing environmental

education, it was never just about awareness. So I think it's not fair to say that about what good EE is. Are there some EE programs that only focus on awareness? Sure. But that doesn't define the field or define everyone's work, so I support Judy on that, on trying to clarify that thinking.

What I'm concerned about is, we are an education program, not an advocacy program. And the field gets whole muddied when we start talking about environmental advocacy and getting people to make change and telling people what to think. You mentioned something about flying, you know, we might be recycling but we're still flying. Well, you know, the challenge for environmental education is to draw that line between education and advocacy. And so I almost wonder whether some of the criticism that you're raising about failure of environmental education is perhaps a little bit more the failure of environmental activism to make a difference in our society and to raise the issues.

Education is about teaching people how to think, not what to think. That's not the case with environmental advocacy. So yes, we're trying to get people to take responsible action, but we're not telling them what that action should be and we're not really – we're wanting people to make up their own minds and take responsible action. That's what education is.

Daniel Blumstein: So how do we – how do we ...

(Kathy McLaughlin): That's what education is. That's not advocacy.

Daniel Blumstein: So how do we catalyze a change that is necessary in an educational context.

This is something we struggle with all the time.

Robin Organ: To be honest, can I – can you hear me?

Dan Bernstein: Yes.

Robin Organ: This is Robin Organ from Green Schools. We were in a conversation at the summit. I remember Judy talking about a college, how they proposed a STEM certificate program and we really got into the program conversation, and our conversation was cut short. I mean, to me, this phone call is just the

start of it because on our local level or in your own state, it really depends on where the funds are and your – it's a competitive little space where other organizations are trying to do the same thing in – I don't know, I'd like to see more international collaboration and with all of us talking and creating more documents that can be rolled out on a national level. And the talk of collaboration wasn't necessary innovative, but everybody is there, everybody knows it needs to happen. There are so many people doing good work. If we could put our work out together in a more collaborative document video marketing resources, I think a lot of us already have a lot of these answers and have been working on these fields for years ...

Charlie Saylan: I would agree ...

Robin Organ: ... and some of the folks without the funding to be able to communicate that on a broader scale.

Charles Saylan: I would agree with that. This is Charlie Saylan again. I would agree with that wholeheartedly. I just – to go back, I guess, to our – in addressing the previous questions, talking about between advocacy and education, I guess, and I'm just going to speak for Dan so please, Dan, interrupt me if you don't agree. But I think that we don't see that clear distinction when it comes to environmental degradation. Addressing pollution issues, addressing climate change issues, these are issues that affect our ability to flourish with – these are not social issues, these are not political issues, these are issues of survival, I think. It's bio-diversity, all these things. I mean we all know that. And so I think our position then, and the reason that we use the word failure and I think there's a lot of resistance to that, I don't think we mean it the way that it's been taken.

Teresa Ippolito: You know, maybe – this is Terry, may be if you talked about this fragmentation of environmental education. Because in truth, there is some – there are amazing programs out there that are – you know, my vision that I have in my head is these really wonderful things going on in places. But people and the places are not forming part of an overall unit...

Charles Saylan: Right, it's ...

Teresa Ippolito: ... that seems to affect the kind of change we would like to see. Also, what we're dealing with is that we take baby steps in some cases with the education programs to move people towards behavior changes that can have positive impacts on the environments. But the impacts on the environment that we're trying to deal with are going – they're progressing faster and we can work up against them. And I've actually at this point come to think that one of the things that we may have to do is try and use not just social media but other media in order to get the initial message out that this is an – that these are important things that we have to learn more about and then offer people opportunities to learn. That takes money.

And I would just add one other thing, I work at the New York office. Every year, we offer the Environmental Education Grants Program. We would have at least 10 times –we just had so many more applications and request for funding than we were ever able to sell, so the expertise is out there. The willingness to do it is out there, but the support for doing it is just not in the situation that needs right now in order to move forward at the same rate, the changes that are taking place in the environment.

Dale Perry: Terry, thank you for bring that back to talking about better aligning those goal. I think that one of the questions that was asked earlier was, what are we doing really well considering we are facing some difficult challenges? Money is tight all around. Can we kind of take that and spin it around and say, “OK, well, we've always, EE always seems to operate on a really tight budget and we seem to do pretty amazing things with it.” And it's one of the challenges that we think it's about making a bigger impact, but how do we better align the goals that we have as a collective group? I mean we're many part of one whole. Everybody is working towards a similar goal, and that the question about the fact that we are facing some environmental issues that are very time-sensitive. What can we do to create, or we need to create a collective approach?

How do we take those things that are working and make them flourish more? What is missing that we need more of – that actually moves us forward, sideways, that we're making – it's not just progress for the sake of a progress,

that we're having an impact, that we're having a positive impact. I would just like to put that out there.

Charles Saylan: This is Charlie again. One of the things I think in this, in the (references) we're hearing in the current election effort. You've got a big piece of a population that is now believing that regulation is a (pinched one) on the free market. And in regards to who wins, it's a big piece of the population, that's 40 plus percent, you know. I think people would think that way. So we know that that's out there.

And I think that one concrete thing that the EE community might start to discuss or might focus on would be how exactly, what, how do you change the message, how do you change the approach so that you can get through the vast group of people because we need everybody to make a change. How do we get – how do we get that group of people and how do we – how do we find a way in, a relative way in that they're going to buy? Depoliticize this issue and get people thinking about (different trip) of community or sustaining our place on the planet so that we can have these other arguments about social issues in the future. That's something that we might want to look at.

Josetta Hawthorne: Can I interject a comment on that?

Dale Perry: Sure.

Josetta Hawthorne: This is Josetta Hawthorne. I'm with the Council for Environmental Education, and we run Project WILD and it, too, is a program that we started back in the 1980s and we reach out to those formal and non-formal educators. But one thing it seems that we need effective success indicators and how we know when we get there. So I haven't read your book, but what would you define – I mean, if you had to bring three points together and say, "This is what like you consider environmental education of success versus a failure," so that we know when we're there and then we chart and map the course to reach those objectives, that without the success indicators and its bleed over into environmental activism versus education. I think it's kind of like chasing our tails.

Daniel Blumstein: Well, I mean, you know – so we sort of developed an argument about sort of the ethics and the moral responsibility of taking care of the earth. And if the answer, you know, gets defined as activism, it is what it is. But I mean I would say that ultimately, somehow, we have to think about ways to bring the projects we're doing that make a concrete effort to change on a large scale our citizens' behavior so that we suddenly don't say, you know, why is someone disincentivising petroleum usage or disincentivising coal usage, that we as a society recognize that we can't continue business as usual, that we as a society – I mean, much as in the 1970s, I mean '72 is a brilliant year for the success of environmental education. Major laws and acts in the early 70s were written up, EPA, formation of the EPA, the Endangered Species Act, et cetera, Clean Water Act, all of those things ...

Josetta Hawthorne: But right there, you're bleeding over. That is not major success in environmental education, the passing of the Clean Water Act. I mean, that's where you bleed over. And like your book could have easily been the failure of environmental activism like my colleague, (Kathy McLaughlin), mentioned because you're giving credit for that to environmental education.

Charles Saylan: I mean, aren't we all on the same page? I mean, isn't this ...

Josetta Hawthorne: No, no, no.

Judy Braus: This is Judy again, if I could say one thing. I think there's a continuum in terms of how people think about the action issue. There are some issues that in peer education is designed to teach people how to think, not what to think. Environmental education has always had an action component from day one even though it was more awareness building when people weren't even aware of environmental issues. But action has always been an important part and you can try and mobilize people that care and don't have the value to support a certain action that you can do in education in our formal school setting like recycling, or doing some things that everybody in the community thinks is really good for the community. You can have an action component.

There are other issues where people will consider it advocacy and that you are brainwashing children that aren't old enough to think about this issue. But

then there's also the continuum from environmental education, which is not designed to specifically tell people which action is to empower them to take action and decide. But then it's transferred into organizations that are more on the conservation or environmental side that have a specific environmental goals where you are using education tools and you're using social marketing to help get people to take specific actions. And there are a lot of people who would consider themselves environmental educators that are using education to try and accomplish some specific goals. But you have to be really, really careful because if people look at education as the same as advocacy especially in the formal school system and especially with young people, then it can create problems when you're really trying to help people learn to be critical thinker and that you're not trying to brainwash.

So it's a very – it's a bit murky as (Kathy) and Josetta said, but I think there's a continuum. So at Audubon or World Wildlife Fund or any at EPA, there's some specific conservation goals and there are a number of ways that education can play into helping people understand those issues and think about what is the best type of action that I can take and then you've got policy folk and others who can jump on the we need to support HR 233 because it's really going to get to where we want to go. And if you've done your work, then people would join that effort.

So I just want to say, it's not crystal clear of the division but we have to be really careful that we don't hurt the environmental ed apart, the education part of what we do, by pushing a specific political agenda just like you said, depoliticizing it. At the same time, education tools, social marketing can be extremely powerful and a part of our conservation toolbox.

Charles Saylan: Got it.

Nette Pletcher: This is Nette. Can I jump in?

Charles Saylan: Go ahead.

Nette Pletcher: This is Nette Pletcher, I'm representing the Association of Zoos and Aquariums today. My supervisor Paul Boyle, who is part of the original summit couldn't be on the call, so thanks for allowing me to be here. I'm the

Director of Conservation Education for the AZA, and we have faced not just the challenge of education versus advocacy in our facilities, which is a big one but the more immediate challenge we have is education versus entertainment. People don't expect when they come to a zoo or aquarium with their family to be faced with education, much less advocacy issues.

And one of the things we're finding is in the field of zoo education. Certainly, we use to believe that basic knowledge would lead to action. And as we've talked about already on the call, that's not how it works. And so one other way that's we're trying to address that is to change the approach from this idea a bit, that if we get people to care about the environmental or about wildlife that they're going to change their behavior and sort of flipping that on its head and getting people involved first. Forget if they care or not, basically, bring them into some kind of a program that provides them with the positive experience with wildlife or nature, whether it's a bit of a science program or something like that. And what we've discovered is that simply being involved, doing it for the sake of doing it ultimately leads to the caring that we were hoping for in the first place.

That's why if you think about hunters and anglers being the major group within conservation education, they're conserving for all sorts of different reasons than maybe the bulk of folks that can (stir) as environmental educators. But those folks are incredibly important and a big group. And if you talk about trying to, I guess, expand the player that you're talking to, that's an important group that we need to involve.

And the last thing that I'll throw out there is that, since we have pretty much in every major urban area in this country, at least ones who are aquarium, these are facilities that are one of the really important ways to – going back to a point made earlier, that we can help connect people to nature when they are so integrated into urban environments right now. Thank you.

(Sophia Seeman): This is (Sophia Seeman), may I ...

Dale Perry: Go ahead, (Sophia).

(Sophia Seeman): This is (Sophia Seeman) from the US Forest Service. The feds haven't talked too much, but I agree with Judy and (Kathy) when we talk about environmental education or conservation education. It's really – it is a continuum. That's how we view it in a federal, in the forest service. It's a continuum that starts with awareness. It can inspire people to learn and develop skills that will take them into skills and dig into the action and say we definitely, as a federal agency, we cannot get into any advocacy elements of this. So we hope that by education, they can understand why certain actions are being done, why do we want to protect and sustain the natural resources we have, why we need to – where their water come and what is the importance of forestry, for instance, from our perspective for the lives and their water and their air. So that's how we perceive as environment acquisition conservation education.

And there have been great successes in the environmental education. Just the fact that we are talking together today, we have – you know, 10 years ago, (there was a) report that was champion by (me). And there – there was a state of environmental education that hasn't changed since that, and there is a great number of collaborations and a great number of partnerships that have taken place since then between government with the NGO and event community activities, community groups at the local level as well as the national level.

And that has been a great success because if you take one example, the Green Schools, you find in every school district or in every state you find there is an adaption of Green Schools. These are the youth, the generation that's coming after us that are really campaigning these programs, and they are really making a difference at the local level. Granted I agree we have not made a huge or you know like a big impact yet. It's just we need to start some place and I think the movement has started and is working very well in many areas.

I'd like to close it as a question now. What would it – what does it look like? What is success? What's success in your eyes that you will – then you will say, "Wow, it's successful, people." We see success everyday in our line of work because we look at those small steps that collectively will make a big difference because there is quite a bit of that going. And I'm sure other federal – the federal family they all feel we cannot get into an advocacy. And

we hope that by education and having the skills to take action and to know critical thinkers that we can start making difference in the political agenda.

Charles Saylan: Can I – can I mention something?

(Sophia Seeman): Yes.

Charles Saylan: I think that what Dan alluded to at the outset of this is the evaluation, you know, what are the objectives, I guess, and how do we evaluate? We hear a lot that these efforts are working, these efforts are working. And I keep going back to what I said at the beginning, if we don't have an open source of social discourse, if we don't have people from both sides of the aisle, pressing their presidential candidate for environmental protective legislation saying, "Hey, we need to protect our land. We need to protect where we live because we need a place to live. This is not political. This is survival."

If that's not in the forefront, then I guess to me – a couple of people have asked what would be a success. That to me would be a big success. If we saw people putting pressure on their legislators from whatever political affiliation they might have, Republican or Democrat, to invoke or write or pass environmental legislation, protective legislation, things of that nature, I think that's a success. And in the event – in the absence of that, I think that's a failure.

And I guess from my perspective, I don't know about Dan, but when I say failure of environmental education, that's right at the forefront of what I'm thinking, is if we're not stimulating that energy that bring this to a forefront in the public and make things change because we have to change. I mean, if you look at the signs, which is where both Dan and I come from ...

Daniel Blumstein: What I'm learning from the discussion, if I could just interject because we're running out of time, is that there are agencies – because I'm trying to figure out how all this wonderful tapestry of actors can begin to work together to achieve the change that I would like to see. And there are some agencies that have to draw a line very far to the left of that continuum and really focus on awareness and maybe the challenges for those agencies to affiliate themselves with other organizations that can move to the right towards action, towards the

advocacy word. Although the whole advocacy word, if you truly internalize what I think Charlie and I believe, it's not advocacy, it's citizenship.

So whether you agree with that or not, maybe the challenge is to create partnerships that allow a more of a seamless integration towards something bigger. I mean, we all believe that creating critical thinkers is essential, period, end of statement, and that education will lead to citizens that ultimately will want to take care of our earth.

Dale Perry:

And this is – this is Dale from EPA. I have to jump in because this was supposed to be a one hour call and we promise that we would spend the end of this call talking with all of you about what we should discuss on our next call as the conveners of this dialogue. We do have some ideas here. Obviously, we heard a lot from you at the summit. We've covered a lot of grounds today, the best laid plans, where to talk about, how do you evaluate success. And Charlie and Dan I appreciate you accepting this role today because you are always certain to bring the conversation. So I appreciate that.

But I've asked Jen to perform an auditory needs assessment, or which is, I guess, a fancy way of saying we'd like to talk with you about what we do on our next call, and based on our conversation today, some ideas for what you think would be useful.

So Jen, if you would like to lead us in that.

Jennifer Bowman: Yes. Thank you all so much for participating thus far in the conversation. We've hit on a lot really challenging topics. We've hit on a lot of really positive things. I think we have a lot of room to continue this discussion. I appreciate the connection between the literacy, the education, the advocacy, all this different aspect that we're struggling with is community because it's a both end. So bearing that in mind, we are building connection. We have some common goal that we are trying to help create stewards. We are trying to – from the top, down and the bottom, up at the same time because we have to go at it from both approaches.

So bearing some of the discussion in mind today, what are some of the things that you feel would be good to continue on the next call or several calls?

Obviously, we're going to have to limit our discussions to try to focus on a couple of key points for each of the calls that we can flush out some action points and see if we can go with this dialogue. So if you want to – go ahead.

Dale Perry: And this is Dale, I'd just like to jump in just real fast. We did receive questions about whether or not you should forward this email and invite other people to the call. We started with summit participants as our key stakeholders. We're not against opening up these calls to a larger audience but we wanted to talk with all of you first to get your ideas and structure. We were thinking maybe in January, we could open up the calls to a larger audience, but we could it up next month to a larger audience depending on your feedback. So I did just want to put that out there.

Robin Organ: I would like to see if there is – this is Robin from Green Schools, if there is a way for – I mean, is there an email where we could centrally send questions and start the communication to sort of frame it out before bringing in larger groups of individuals and organizations? And is there a tool framework list of some sort – I mean, on the state level.

We're working on that in Massachusetts and we've mapped down because of Green Ribbon Schools, which I think was very helpful to sort of identify departments, stakeholders who is really good in different pillars. But the trouble with Green Ribbon Schools is only putting up four schools and I'm afraid that that's not going to be taken seriously as it should. So to – maybe there needs to be a different program to sensitize this whole, in our mind, organization called Green Schools, The Green Schools Movement. What is the pieces of that? What does it look like in all schools, not just in a school that gets an award, and to identify for future conversations some of the tools that could be developed as well as the role of students in this piece?

It seems there is negative connotation with politics. And the other thing, you know, our students are doing real work. They are changing policies. They are doing hands-on STEM-based environmental education, and they are looking to go to private sector or college, having left from some of these programs. So it'd be nice to talk about student pathways, what opportunities exist for students and to look at the role of the student in school because again, you're

reaching thousands and thousands of students who are impacting or have the ability to bring a message home in a very positive way and they also have a positive way of bringing in a community because people want to support our students first, be told what to do and have a political agenda tied to it.

Jennifer Bowman: Thank you. So I want to clarify. I have written down that we are – specifically, you’re talking about Green Schools but more broadly that we would be considering having a discussion about the role of students in schools and more formal education or non-formal education because not all students are learning in a formal way under a formal setting, I should say. But we are looking at, like you said, student pathways and opportunities. So that is one topic of discussion you are proposing?

Robin Organ: That’s one.

Judy Braus: I was just going to say since we are running out of time. This is Judy. I am so sorry to jump in, but I really think that maybe people on this call could adjust to few other people that should be on the call and just didn’t happen to be at the summit. And the second thing could be some way to really connect these calls, which are great to have open discussion about different topics, to have this group send in some ideas since not everybody will get a chance to talk and to recognize that there are a number of different forums out there that are talking about a number of these issues and to maybe be able to get the right teams to help, you know, lead the discussion like on Green Schools.

There are so many to efforts or connecting kids to nature or on the action piece. So I just would suggest that maybe we could all suggest names of really wonderful people who should be open to be able to be on these calls and maybe have people to be able to say a few things about upcoming topics.

Dale Perry: Absolutely, education@epa.gov is the best way to reach us all collectively. So if you have other names for invitees, if there are folks today who haven’t had the chance to talk who want to send us topic ideas, who want to volunteer lead the calls as Charlie and Dan did today, we are absolutely opened to that, Judy. So thank you.

Jennifer Bowman: And you can also send in if there are some outstanding ideas and thoughts that you have that you really – we want to make sure that everyone feels heard.

Judy Braus: Thanks, Dale, that's great. Thank you.

Dale Perry: Any other ideas for future calls?

Female: Maybe ask specific point before we came down, we were asked three questions. And I think in the workshop, we really only got to one. So maybe revisit the questions our organizations were asked and one was on the national level and the other was what can you organization do. And maybe to have a conversation with all the orgs and say, "Hey, what is your piece of the puzzle and what can you bring to the table?"

Dale Perry: OK.

(Sophia Seeman): We did – this is (Sophia), sorry to jump in. We did have the evaluation of this topic today. And I think Dan or Charlie made the point that we collectively – maybe we are unable to speak of the impact of the conservation education at large. Maybe there is something we can take action and do some collective thinking about where do we go with this. There are – I am aware there are some national and international evaluation efforts but I think maybe we can use what's been done and then go see what needs to be done, and maybe we can carry that or we can talk about what do we want evaluation to look like.

Dale Perry: That's great. Is it helpful to have things sent out as far as – not just an agenda with a question, but is it helpful to have things sent out in more detail, have something a little more organized sent out to everyone so that you can look at it ahead of time and kind of prepare yourself?

(Sophia Seeman): It's always good.

Female: I think that's a great idea.

Dale Perry: I really like to ask the obvious, I'm sorry.

Jennifer Bowman: Yes, and thank you all so much for being willing to work with today's call because we that we were going to cover a lot of ground. We weren't really

sure how exactly it would all go. But I think that we've had a really good start of conversation today. And I really want to say thank you and express appreciation. I'm going to turn it over to Dale.

Dale Perry: Yes, I can only just echo those things. Thank you again, Dan and Charlie, for leading us in our conversation today. Again, education@epa.gov is the best way to get in touch with us. So certainly feel free to reach out to me directly, perry.dale@epa.gov.

We appreciate everyone participating, and we're looking forward to continuing the dialogue. So thank you.

Jennifer Bowman: Thank you so much.

Female: Thank you.

Female: Thank you.

Daniel Blumstein: Thank you.

Charles Saylan: Thank you all.

Dale Perry: (We'll talk about it on the) next call.

Jennifer Bowman: Thank you.

Operator: This does conclude today's conference. You may now disconnect.

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