

Land Between the Lakes: Forward to the Future

UNDERSTANDING YOUR ROLE...YOUR IMPACT

① *What is this? What am I helping to shape?*

Forward to the Future is a strategic sustainability planning initiative that seeks to answer the QUESTION:



*In the next ten to fifteen years, how can Land Between the Lakes better **connect you** to the outdoors and **support your community** through sustainable, nature-based recreation and educational experiences?*

Forward to the Future has three overarching GOALS:



To develop a citizen-informed, sustainability-based vision that will guide Land Between the Lakes' recreation and environmental education programs for the next 10-15 years;

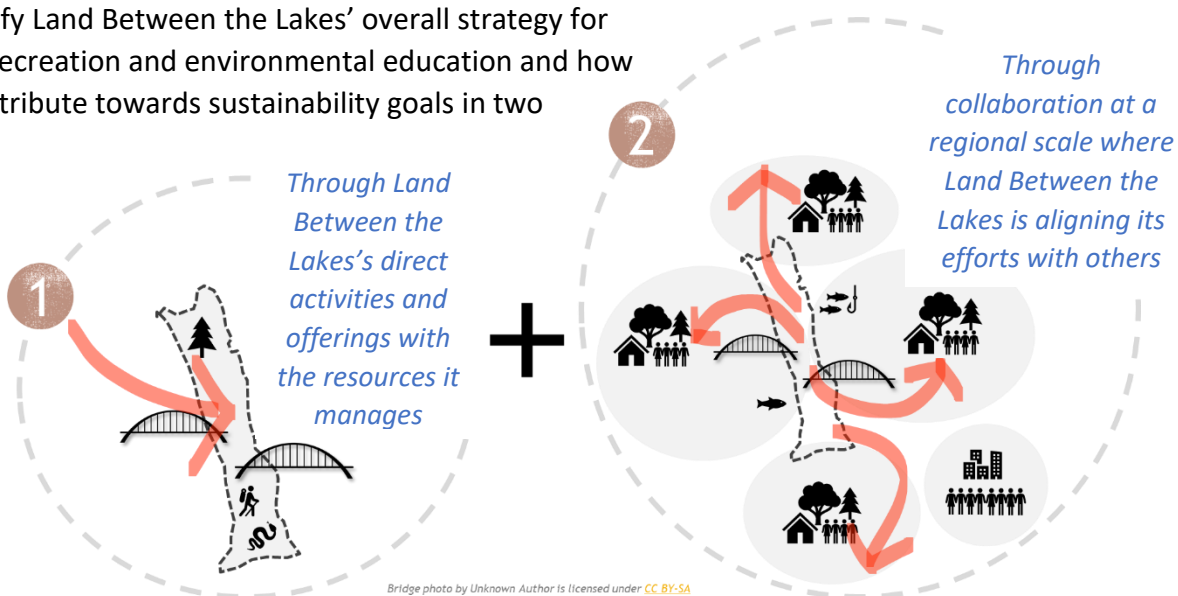


To develop sustainability strategies which will position Land Between the Lakes to be environmentally, socially and economically supportable in the long term; and



To align Land Between the Lakes' practices with broader initiatives that cultivate regional sustainability through collaborative actions.

The **RESULT** of **Forward to the Future** will be a long-range Strategic Sustainability Plan. The plan will identify Land Between the Lakes' overall strategy for outdoor recreation and environmental education and how it can contribute towards sustainability goals in two ways:



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② *Why is it important for me to get involved? Why should I care?*

Of course, the decision to participate is up to you! But here are four reasons we feel your participation is important.

1. **Your participation helps us understand the broad, diverse and changing perspectives of those we serve.** Let's face it. We're all different and we're constantly adapting to keep up with our rapidly changing world. Your voice is needed to represent the diverse public we serve so that we can weigh a variety of perspectives to help answer the questions: *Where do we want to be 10-15 years from now? What impact do we want to have on surrounding communities? How might we need to shift to serve a changing America?*



2. **Your participation helps us connect future generations to the outdoors.** Made widely known by Richard Louv's 2005 book, *Last Child in the Woods*, more and more research indicates direct exposure to natural outdoor settings is essential for healthy childhood development. However, time spent outdoors is on the decline. So, how do we keep kids connected to nature in a technological age? Your voice can help answer this question and inform: *How should Land Between the Lakes benefit the lives of our children? What experiences do we want to preserve for future enjoyment?*



3. **Your participation helps us sustain your social, economic and environmental well-being.** At the heart of our sustainability objective is a desire to expand social, economic, and environmental benefits to you and your community through nature-based experiences. Some examples of benefits include outdoor exercise, mental health and spiritual renewal, environmental education, quality habitats for hunting and fishing, and contributions to the economic vitality of local communities through tourism-related businesses and jobs. Your voice will help us understand and prioritize these benefits by answering the questions: *How can we help people improve their quality of life and live more sustainably? How can we positively contribute to the protection of natural and cultural resources, human health and enjoyment, and the financial well-being of our surrounding communities?*



4. **Your participation helps us turn commonalities into collaborations.** Through this effort we seek to identify areas of shared interest, both at an individual and organizational level. Our hope is to transfer fruitful exchange into volunteerism and strategic partnerships that work toward sustainability goals. Your participation can help identify opportunities for collaboration and spark long-lasting partnerships. Your voice will help us understand where to begin by answering the questions: *Where is there mutual interest and benefits? How can we align? What is better done together?*



③ What types of input do you want from me? What is being discussed?

Together, we want to discuss and examine five topics of conversation:

1. You, Your Community, and a Changing America;
2. The Essence of Land Between the Lakes (from your point of view);
3. Outdoor Recreation and Environmental Education Experiences;
4. Moving Towards a More Sustainable Future; and
5. Working Together.

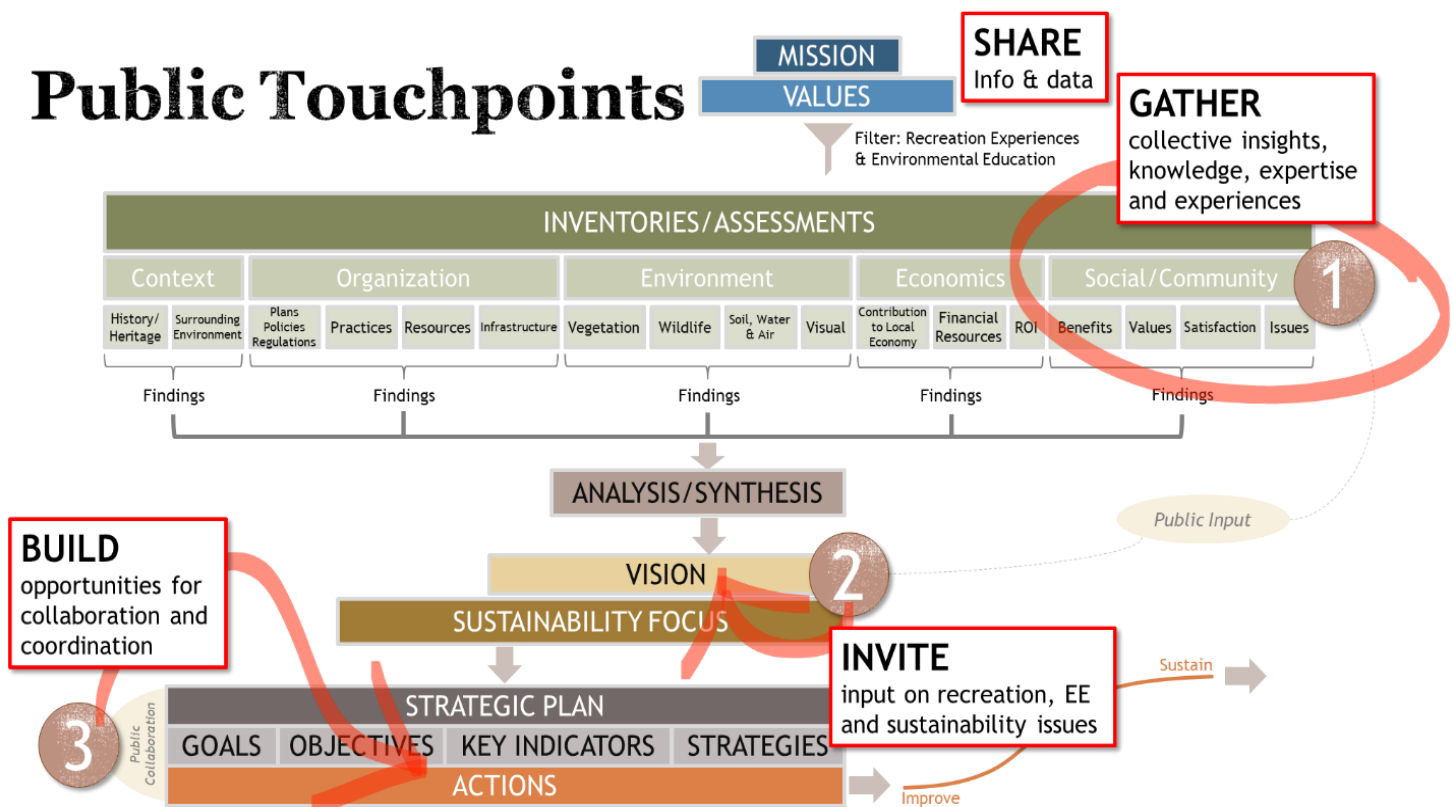


If you want to know more, see question #5 for details regarding the types of questions being asked as part of these topics of conversation.

④ What opportunities are there to be involved? How can I be a part of the conversation?

There are three opportunities to be a part of the conversation in moving **Forward to the Future**. The first is during the Assessment Stage. The second is during the Visioning Stage. And the third is during the Strategic Development Stage. They are depicted in the following flow chart and summarized in the table, below.

Three Opportunities for Engagement



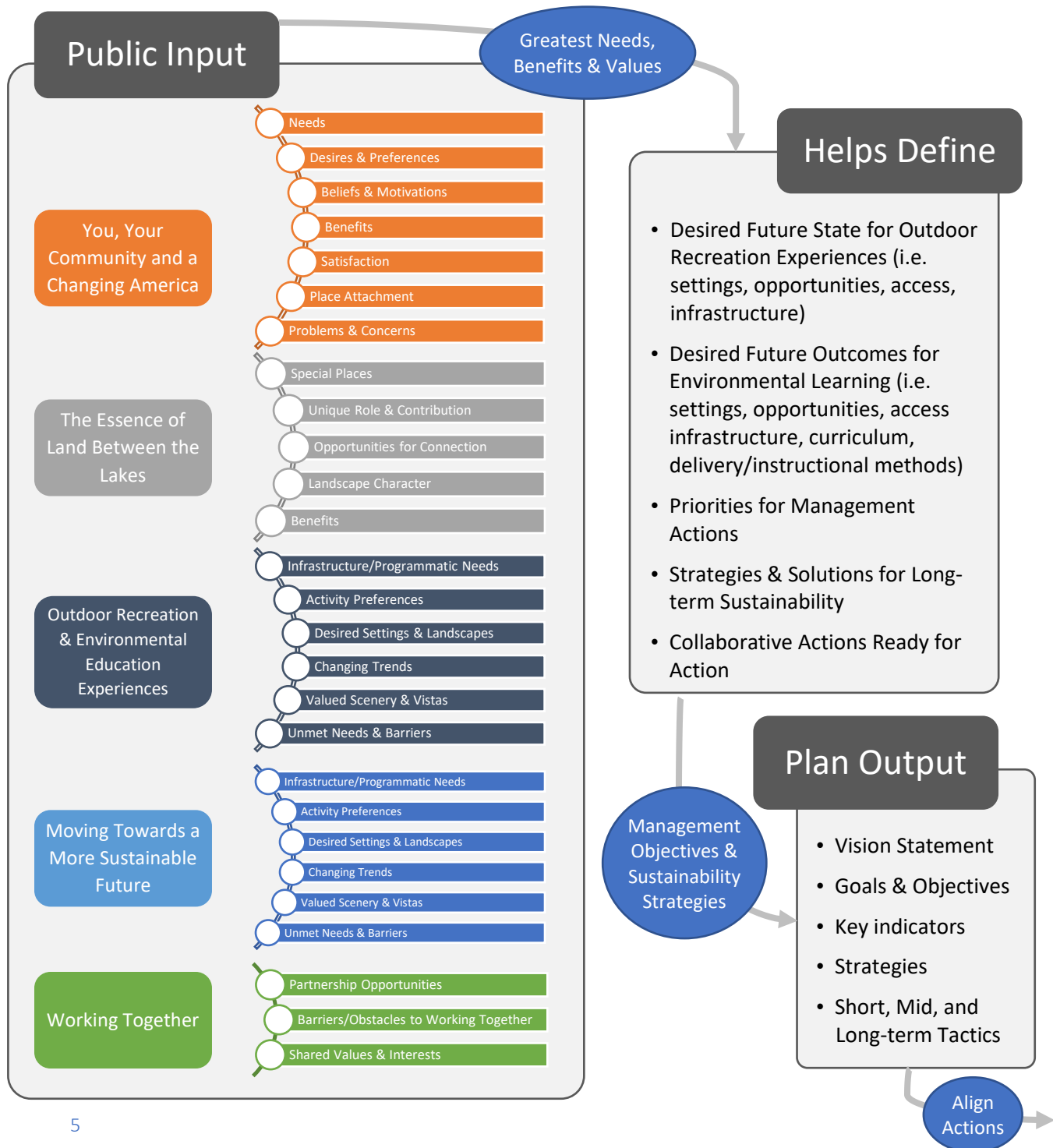
Engagement Opportunities Summarized

Stage	Public Engagement Focus	Engagement Summary	Goal(s) for Engagement	Primary Engagement Methods
Assessment	Gather	<i>Public engagement focuses on collecting information from the broad public to better understand stakeholders' perspectives, needs and desires</i>	1. To collect information which will help Land Between the Lakes to understand current priorities, needs & desires of customers, stakeholders & local communities regarding outdoor recreation and environmental education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online engagement platform (MindMixer) • Open Houses • 1-on-1 meetings • Participation in community events & activities • Staff surveys
Visioning	Invite	<i>Public engagement focuses on working directly with smaller groups of interested stakeholders to craft a shared vision for delivery of recreation and environmental education services</i>	1. To work directly with interested stakeholders and groups to develop a shared vision for Land Between the Lakes' delivery of recreation and environmental education 2. To have meaningful dialogue and exchange with specific groups about sustainability issues which impact their quality of life, surrounding environments, and financial well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus group sessions • Online engagement platform (MindMixer) • Go-to/1-on-1 meetings • Field trip/on site discussions
Strategic Development	Build	<i>This stage focuses on building relationships based on common goals for sustainability and formalizing partnerships for lasting change</i>	1. To collaborate on sustainability initiatives where there is mutual interest and responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration with Communities, Coalitions, Industry Partners, etc. • Collaborative Workspaces with External Stakeholders • Committee/Workgroup Participation

Specific details on how to participate in **Forward to the Future** can be found by visiting <http://landbetweenthelakes.mindmixer.com/about-this-site>.

⑤ *How will my ideas be used? How will they be incorporated into the strategic plan?*

Public input will be used to help define four key aspects of the strategic plan: 1) the desired outcomes, or desired future condition, for outdoor recreation and environmental education, 2) priorities for management actions, and 3) strategies to achieve greater sustainability, including new and innovative solutions, and 4) collaborative actions. Ultimately, public input will help shape the key components of the strategic plan, including the Vision Statement, Goals & Objectives, Key Indicators, Strategies, and list of probable short-, mid-, and long-term Tactics.



The Assessment Stage of **Forward to the Future** offers the greatest opportunity to provide input. During this stage, specific questions have been identified to guide discussions that will be the foundation for moving forward.

The following chart summarizes the discussion questions and the learning objectives for each.

Topic	Discussion Questions	Helps Identify
You, Your Community, and a Changing America	<i>Tell us about what first brought you, how you came to know, or your first meaningful experience at Land Between the Lakes.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Communities of interest -How people are connected to Land Between the Lakes -Activities, cultural events & values of local communities -Opportunities to foster greater connection between people and nature -Public needs, desires, motivations and preferences
	<i>How do you and your community benefit from Land Between the Lakes?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -How people benefit from Land Between the Lakes' services and offerings (i.e. physically, mentally, spiritually, socially, economically)
	<i>What are the social, environmental, and economic issues most relevant and significant to you and your community? How can Land Between the Lakes help address these issues and improve your quality of life?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Opportunities and threats in the areas of economy, society and environment -Opportunities to expand public benefits
	<i>Being as specific as possible, how must Land Between the Lakes adapt to a changing America to better serve future generations?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Changing human health, economic and sociocultural aspects of communities -Changing needs related to Land Between the Lakes' offerings and services
The Essence of Land Between the Lakes	<i>If you could take only one picture of Land Between the Lakes, what would it be of? Provide a brief description as to why you selected this scene or subject.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visual preferences -Valued scenery conditions, travel ways & vistas -Special places and places of socio-cultural or ecological attachment -Places that inspire the soul
	<i>In your opinion, what is most unique about Land Between the Lakes? Why is this particular feature outstanding or exceptional?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Overall value of Land Between the Lakes -Iconic places -Natural/cultural features that help define Land Between the Lakes' sense of place
	<i>Please finish this statement. Land Between the Lakes is the only place I can go to..._____.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Land Between the Lakes' role and contribution to provide recreation and environmental education at a regional scale -Qualities that cannot be found elsewhere (unique niche)
	<i>Looking ahead 15 years from now, what is your vision for Land Between the Lakes?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Areas needing change -Gap between existing and desired conditions

Outdoor Recreation and Environmental Education Experiences	<p><i>Identify the places you typically recreate on the map and indicate the types of activities that you engage in while at these locations.</i></p> <p><i>What topics do you most enjoy learning about at Land Between the Lakes? (historical, cultural, animals/habitats, etc.) Are there other topics of interest that would benefit you, your family, or your organization?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Places valued for certain types of recreation activities or goals -Educational topics of interest -Opportunities to highlight specific educational, historic or cultural learning objectives not already delivered
	<p><i>Take the survey so we can better understand your satisfaction with <u>outdoor recreation services and amenities/environmental education programs</u> at Land Between the Lakes.</i></p> <p><i>i. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the outdoor recreation experiences offered at Land Between the Lakes?</i></p> <p><i>ii. To what extent do the services, facilities and offerings at Land Between the Lakes meet your needs?</i></p> <p><i>iii. Overall, how would you rate your level of enjoyment while visiting Land Between the Lakes?</i></p> <p><i>iv. How likely are you to recommend Land Between the Lakes as a recreational destination to your friends and family?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Ways to better connect people with Land Between the Lakes -Changes needed in management & offerings -Compatibility or incompatibility of different offerings & activities -General satisfaction levels
	<p><i>What is the single most important thing that Land Between the Lakes could do to help you more meaningfully participate in outdoor recreation/environmental education programs?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Unmet needs for outdoor recreation and environmental education -Barriers preventing people from engaging in recreation/environmental education programs
	<p><i>What are your ideas for engaging youth in the outdoors?</i></p> <p><i>How can Land Between the Lakes help facilitate local young people to participate in outdoor recreational activities?</i></p> <p><i>How can Land Between the Lakes better engage local young people through environmental education offerings?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Existing points of connection between youth and the outdoors -Motivations/Reasons for youth to spend time outdoors -Potential “stepping stones” for youth engagement -Community needs as related to youth

Moving Towards a More Sustainable Future	<i>What does 'sustainability' or 'sustainable living' mean to you and why is it important?</i>	-Overall interest level in sustainability
	<i>Are you, or family members, currently involved in any activities that you feel contribute to the sustainability of your community, whether individually or through projects/partnerships/organizations? What can we learn from your experience?</i>	-New, innovative solutions and strategies -Best practices in sustainability -Opportunities to join/align with an existing effort -Areas of public interest
	<i>What are your ideas on how Land Between the Lakes can practice sustainability?</i>	-New, innovative solutions and strategies -Ways to improve sustainability performance
	<i>How can Land Between the Lakes help you to lead a more sustainable life?</i>	-Land Between the Lakes' social, environmental, and economic impacts on individuals -Ways in which Land Between the Lakes can contribute to greater sustainability -Better understanding of the cause-effect relationship
Working Together	<i>Have you ever partnered with Land Between the Lakes? If so, what was the best and worst part of this experience?</i>	-Relational obstacles/benefits -Areas for improvement/Best practices
	<i>How should Land Between the Lakes engage citizens to continue participating in Land Between the Lakes' sustainability efforts?</i>	-Desired methods for engagement -Ways to build/maintain relationships
	<i>Do you currently volunteer in support of public lands? If not, what is deterring you from doing so?</i>	-Obstacles to working together -Areas of interest for volunteering
	<i>Is there anything else we should consider as we develop this sustainable strategy for Land Between the Lakes?</i>	-Other areas of public importance not specifically discussed

If you would like to be a part of this conversation, visit <http://landbetweenthelakes.mindmixer.com/>.

6 *How will I know that my ideas have been heard?*

You will be kept informed throughout the process.

At any time during the process, users of MindMixer can read all ideas and comments that have been made via MindMixer.

When the initial public input period ends, a report of all ideas and comments from MindMixer and from the open houses will be posted on the Land Between the Lakes website and the MindMixer site.

Information and documents that may be created from the Visioning and Strategic Development stages of the planning process will be posted on the Land Between the Lakes website and the MindMixer site.