My thanks to all of you; I am deeply grateful. And special thanks to Ben Starrett, Amy Rutledge, the entire staff and board of the Funders’ Network, and to my friend Amy Solomon and the selection committee. I am grateful for this recognition, especially given the deep respect that I hold for the Funders’ Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities. More so, I am most grateful to you for the work you do to support smart growth and promote livable communities. I also want to thank everyone here who has funded my work and made possible my very satisfying tenure at the Sonoran Institute.

I am honored to receive an award from the Funders’ Network that recognizes the extraordinary contributions that Nick Bollman made to this cause and to this planet. I also want to express my deep gratitude to my partner, Liz Storer, president and CEO of the George B. Storer Foundation, who is here today, for her work and for all that she means to me.

This recognition, coming at a time of personal transition, is particularly meaningful. After 21 years, I have left the organization I founded, the Sonoran Institute, but have not left this field. In fact, I have re-doubled my commitment to getting as much done as is feasible as an individual. It is highly rewarding and great fun to be back to managing conservation projects instead of budgets and staff. I remain deeply involved in smart growth and conservation as a member of the board of directors of the George B. Storer Foundation, involved with the Intermountain West Funder Network, and on the board of several other non-profit organizations working in conservation, water policy, and smart growth.

Since I have moved from non-profit leadership to consulting, board service, and freelance advocacy, several people have asked me about the role that fundraising plays in the burn-out that non-profit leaders often face, and if this was the case for me. Surprisingly to many, I have no complaints about fundraising. As George Hartzog, the great director of the National Park Service under Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall, noted, “the difference in conversation and conservation is money.” That remains true in the non-profit sector.
Instead of delivering a carefully-crafted lecture or articulating high-browed platitudes, I want to use this opportunity to offer up some suggestions, gleaned from my experience over the past 25 years, that have helped me to think about the work we do. Here’s my “top ten”:

1. **Fund smart growth. Work for smart growth. Live and breathe smart growth.** I have had the good fortune to work in a variety of areas that includes traditional advocacy for conservation of public lands, the land trust movement, water management and river restoration, and smart growth advocacy. Smart growth is the most overlooked, undervalued, and underfunded piece of the sustainability and conservation puzzle. Investing in community planning and land-use decisions can pay dividends for many years in many distinct fields: food security, clean and abundant water, clean energy, economic prosperity, vibrant downtowns, climate change mitigation and adaptation, wildlife conservation, public health; the list goes on.

2. **Think big and dream big. The moment of big progress will come. Be prepared.** *Punctuated equilibrium* theorizes that evolutionary change occurs over long periods of relatively little change followed by short bursts of dramatic change. This concept also describes how social and policy change occurs. We know that our society must fundamentally rethink the ways in which our cities and towns develop. Timing is everything. It is critically important to be well-prepared when opportunities for rapid change arise. The policy framework for conservation and community development in this country is generally 50 years old. It is time for change. The opening will come quickly and we need to have laid the foundation for effective change when it does.

3. **Lighten up on the metrics.** Too many funders fall over themselves to fund programs or activities that promise measurable outputs or outcomes, such as the number of acres put under conservation easement or designated as wilderness or national parks; acre-feet of water restored to a river; number of people who visit a website or attend a webinar. While these measures can be important, innovative and critical funding for smart growth is quite often not as easily or gainfully measurable as many other types of investments. **Let us not fund that which is measurable at the expense of that which is truly important.** There is a significant role for measuring outcomes and an equally important role for non-quantitative evaluation. Remember that the most important things in life cannot be measured.

4. **Make room for long-term general support.** From my perspective, it appears that the willingness of conservation and smart growth funders to provide organizations with general institutional support or to fund long-term relationships has dropped significantly over the
past 25 years. I have now seen this desire to fund specific projects with immediate gratification from both sides of the fence. Foundations and major donors continue to play a more active, more hands-on role in setting and carrying out the agenda and many non-profits increasingly are glorified contractors to funders; however, we should make room for providing general support and maintaining long-term funding relationships with selected organizations that are particularly innovative, that have dynamic leadership, and whose work does not necessarily fit neatly into specific boxes.

5. **Build a new generation of economic and fiscal arguments for smart growth.** Until 2007, we believed that we could afford our inefficient and sprawling patterns of development. Following the great recession and housing bust and cuts in federal support, we are beginning to recognize that we can no longer afford to provide public services to sprawling development from a financial perspective, to say nothing of the costs to our quality of life and environment. Sam Western and I are writing a book and launching an educational campaign to help local decision-makers understand that in the West their economic prosperity and fiscal well-being requires them to rethink their development patterns.

6. **Fund renewable energy and climate change.** Global warming is the defining, existential threat facing our society and communities and it should permeate all we do and all we fund. The shape and characteristics of our cities play a major role in mitigating the impact of climate change and adapting to its impacts. I am more sanguine about progress resulting from state and local action, innovative technology, modernizing state and local energy institutions such as private and public utilities than through a coherent federal program. We should not let the absence of a coherent effective federal framework for addressing climate change reduce our enthusiasm and support for innovative, effective, decentralized steps.

7. **Diversify our movement.** As Van Jones articulates, the more thoroughly we involve and engage the full spectrum and diversity of our society, the stronger and more effective we are as a cause.

8. **Tell our story.** Humans tell stories. We thrive on narratives about our heroes overcoming adversity. As Robin Rather emphasizes, we must not only fund good work, but we must tell our stories in a compelling manner. If we don’t, the Tea Party, the property rights movement, and the anti-Agenda 21 movement will do so for us.

9. **Have fun along the way.** We should take unscheduled holidays and encourage our colleagues and grantees to do so. We should take an occasional junket without guilt and invite grantees to join us. E. B. White is credited with a comment that is right on point and
guides my life: "I arise in the morning torn between a desire to save the world and a desire to savor the world. This makes it hard to plan the day."

10. **Honor and thank your grantees.** As you have honored me today, take the time to recognize both the challenges and successes that people and organizations undergo. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for your commitment to making our cities and towns a better place to live, work, and play. I am immeasurably grateful for this honor. Thank you.