

# FACILITATING COLLABORATIVE GROUPS

*a conversation with Laura Calandrella*



## WHAT WE'LL COVER TODAY

1. Career development
2. Learning and evolving your facilitation practice
3. Lessons learned and challenges



## WHAT IS FACILITATION?

Engaging others toward a goal



## WHAT IS A FACILITATOR?

A guide that engages the group in learning and a process to achieve their goals



## MY SECRET AGENDA AND KEY TAKEAWAY

You are a not just a facilitator,  
you are an artist



WHAT IS YOUR AGENDA?

Intention

Attention

Responsibility



The beginning of  
my journey

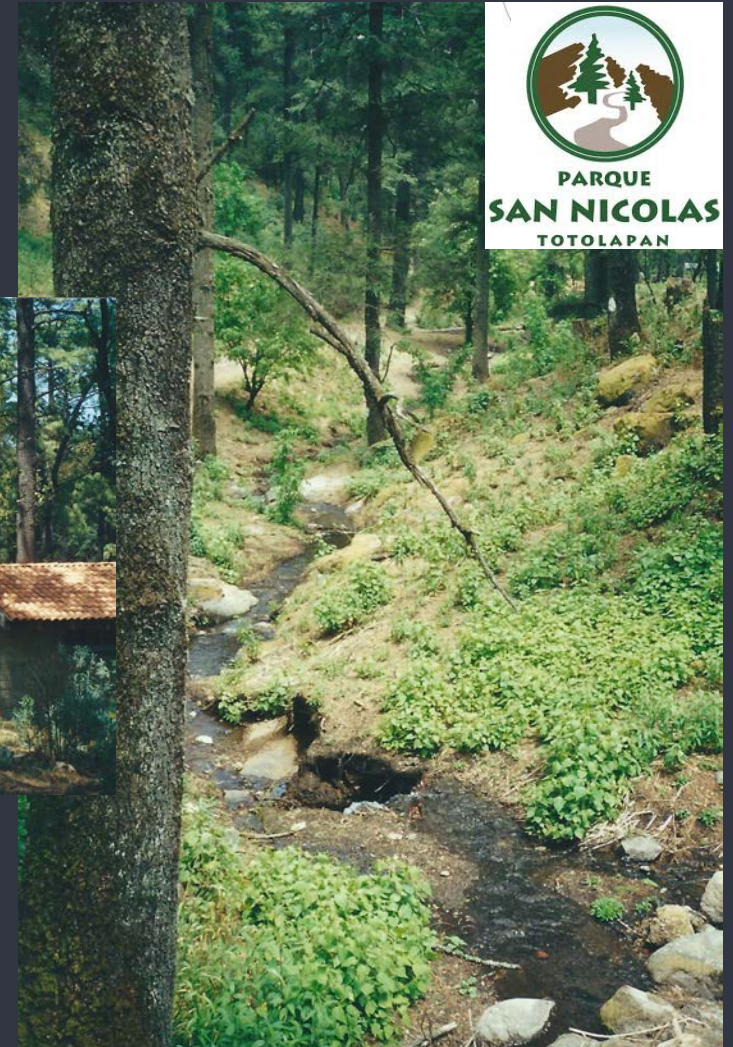
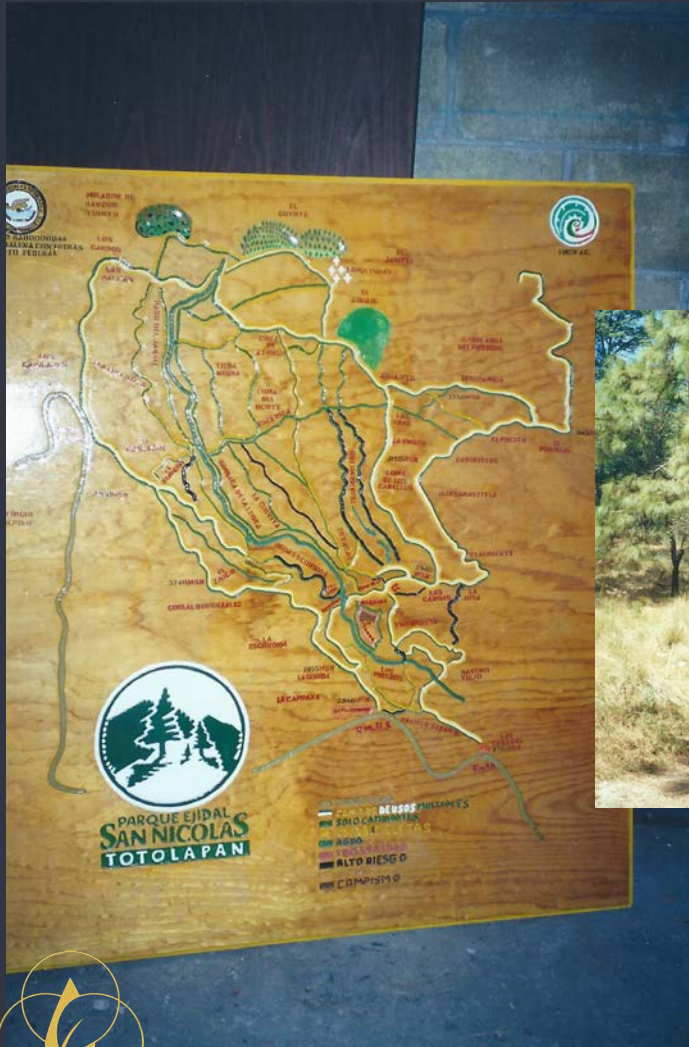












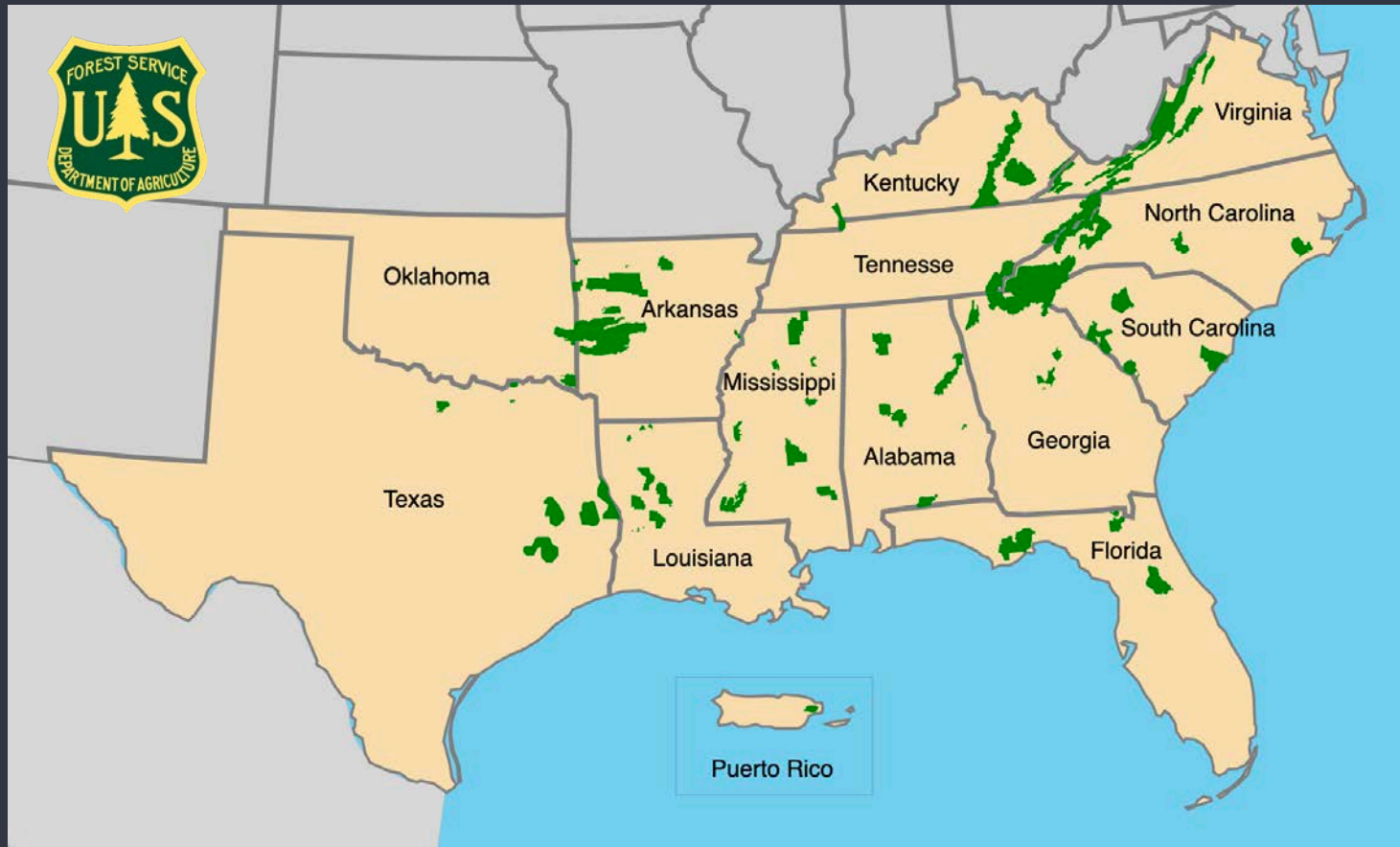


**RESTAURANT**  
"POTRERITOS"  
*TRUCHA ARCOIRIS Paraje Potreritos, Ejido Sn. Nicolas Totolapan*





## USDA FOREST SERVICE: REGION 8 MAP



## THE WAYS WE LEARN FACILITATION

1. Workshops or training
2. Shadowing or co-facilitating
3. Being a participant
4. Facilitating on the fly



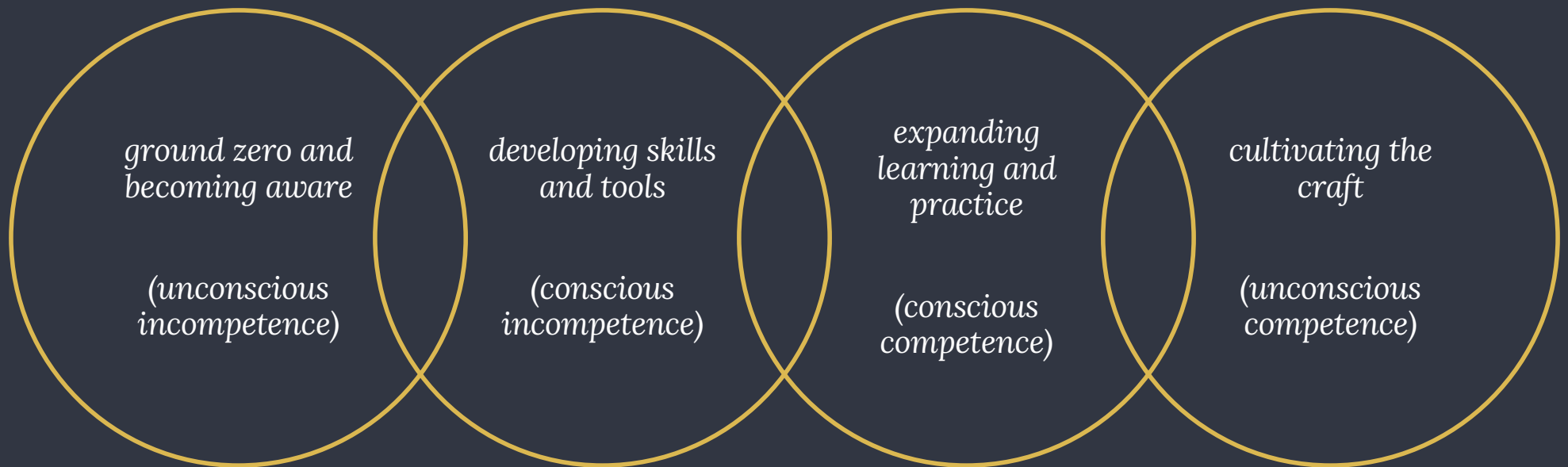



## UNDERSTANDING THE THREE DOMAINS OF COLLABORATION





## THE LEARNING JOURNEY WE ARE ALL ON



The background image shows a spacious, empty room with a high ceiling. Several modern, multi-bulb pendant lights hang from the ceiling. The room is filled with rows of blue, modern-style chairs with metal frames, arranged in a circular or semi-circular pattern. Large windows on the right side of the room offer a view of the outdoors. A dark circular overlay is centered in the image, containing white text.

Art is not what  
you see, but  
what you make  
others see.

*Edgar Degas,  
French impressionist*



# GROWING SOLUTIONS TO ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE IN ATLANTA

A group of stakeholders with deep roots in Atlanta's underserved communities come together to create America's largest urban food forest.

## THE CHALLENGE

Not a defined reason to collaborate or a single problem to solve

Participants came into the project with vastly different needs

Highly sensitive cultural contexts

Opportunities were endless, but stakes were high

## THE OUTCOME

Clarifying the single project that they could rally behind

Revealing diversity biases that were addressed head-on

Deepened trust and rapport

The creation of the Brown's Mill Food Forest, the largest free Food Forest in the United States



*The Brown's Mill Food Forest simply wouldn't have existed without Laura. She was able to bring us together and commit to taking action on this very important project.*

Mario Cambardella,  
Former Urban Agriculture Director |  
City of Atlanta

## LESSONS LEARNED

- Cultural context matters
- Not every process will work every time
- Engage the convener early
- It's okay to make mistakes





## KEEPING FORESTS

Keeping Forests is a diverse coalition of partners from across multiple sectors working together to conserve the natural, economic, and cultural value of southern forests.

### THE CHALLENGE

23 million acres of southern forests will be lost by 2060

Threatened by increased population and urbanization

Eighty-six percent of the land is in the hands of private landowners, including families

Solutions required the engagement of diverse and prominent partners from all three sectors

Finding solutions at a landscape scale requires gaining the trust and commitment of partners to stay the course to achieve a 40 year goal

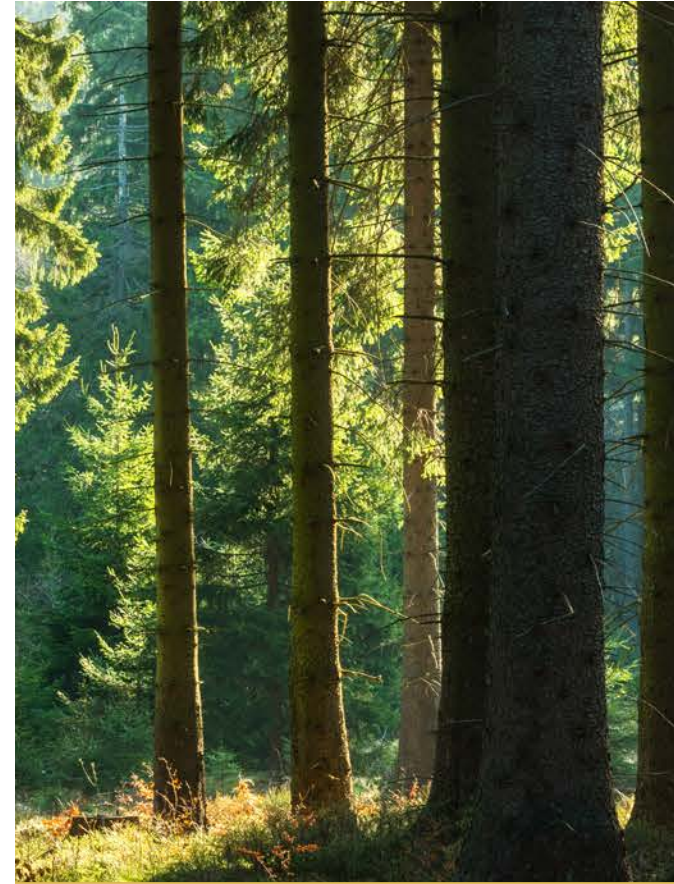
### THE OUTCOME

Celebrating the 5<sup>th</sup> year of the partnership

Building a culture of collaborative leadership and dialogue that has maintained engagement from a group of 40+ partners

Partners are now able to think at a systems-level without feeling a loss of their organizational missions or identity

Implementing strategies that are changing markets and building awareness of the importance of southern forests



*Laura understands what collaboration really means, how it has to be managed, and the power behind it if it's done right.*

Scott Davis,  
Executive Director | Keeping Forests

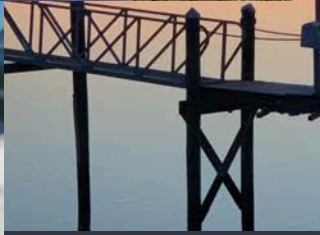
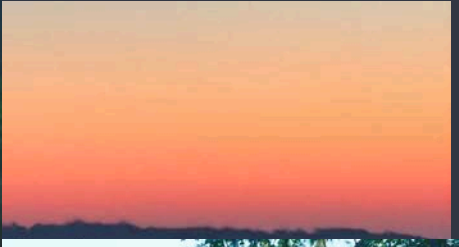
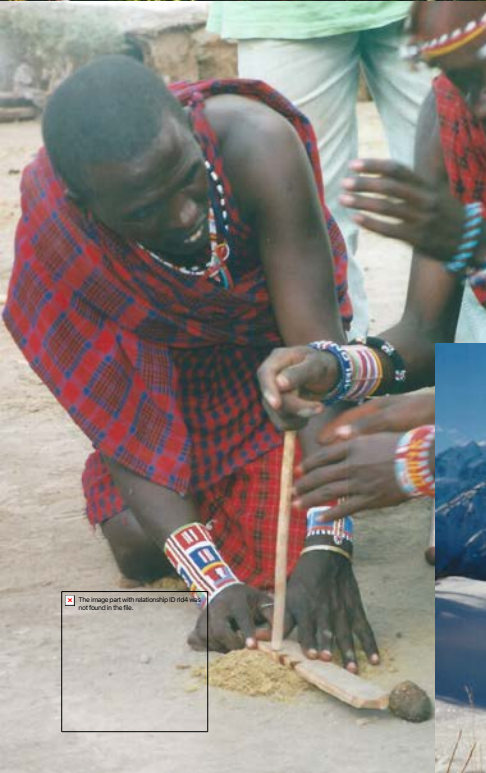
## LESSONS LEARNED

- Transformational change requires transformational thinking
- Milestones create momentum, momentum sustains engagement
- Facilitators shouldn't always be neutral
- Relationship matters above all else











## THREE NEXT STEPS

SUBSCRIBE TO MY  
NEWSLETTER

text **COLLABORATE** to  
1-833-815-5434

OR VISIT

[www.lauracalandrella.com/newsletter](http://www.lauracalandrella.com/newsletter)



HOW WILL  
LEADERSHIP  
CHANGE IN A  
POST-  
PANDEMIC  
ERA?

Hint: the definition is  
the same, but our  
commitment is more  
important than ever

## THREE NEXT STEPS

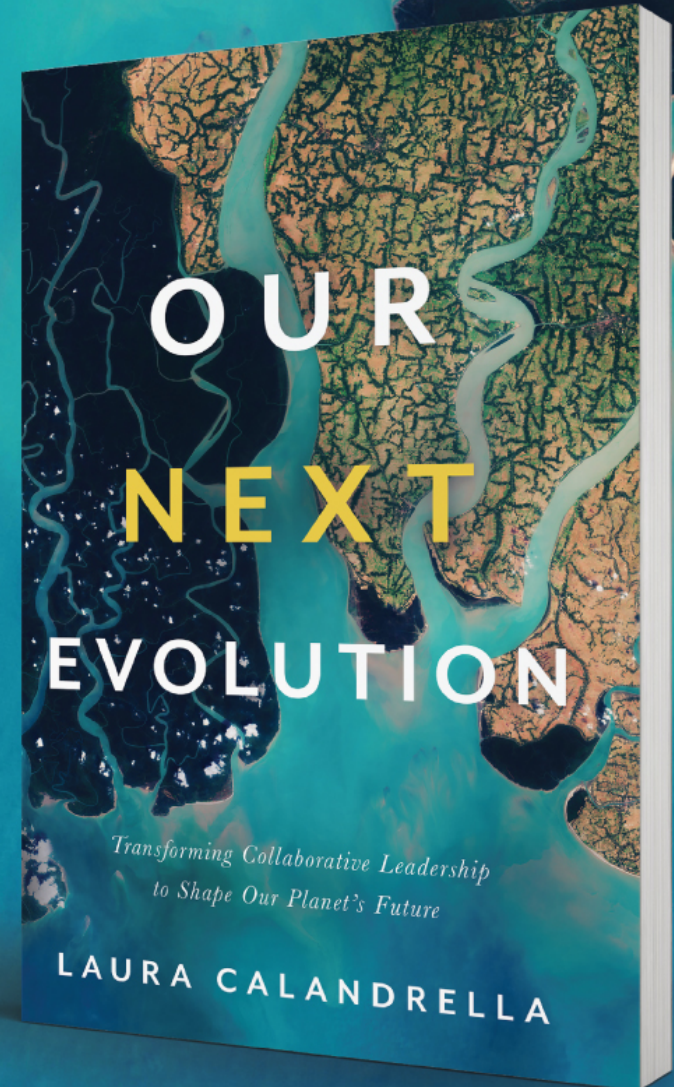
TAKE YOUR  
LEARNING  
DEEPER



#1  
Amazon  
Best Seller



AVAILABLE NOW



## THREE NEXT STEPS

Intention

Attention

Responsibility





# WITH GRATITUDE

*Laura*

