



2020 VOTER ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT FOR THE FRIENDS GRASSROOTS NETWORK

Please use this toolkit as a guide for your organization's 2020 Get Out the Vote (GOTV) campaign efforts this election season.

This toolkit will contain everything you and your organization need to successfully and efficiently run a GOTV campaign; from background and context to voter engagement platform integration (Motivote) to knowing the in's and out's of 501(c)3 compliance.

Don't worry, it's all 100% 501(c)3 compliant!

If you have questions or concerns at any point along the way, please do not hesitate to reach out directly to Andrés at andres@conservationlands.org or any other CLF staff. We are more than happy to help answer your questions.

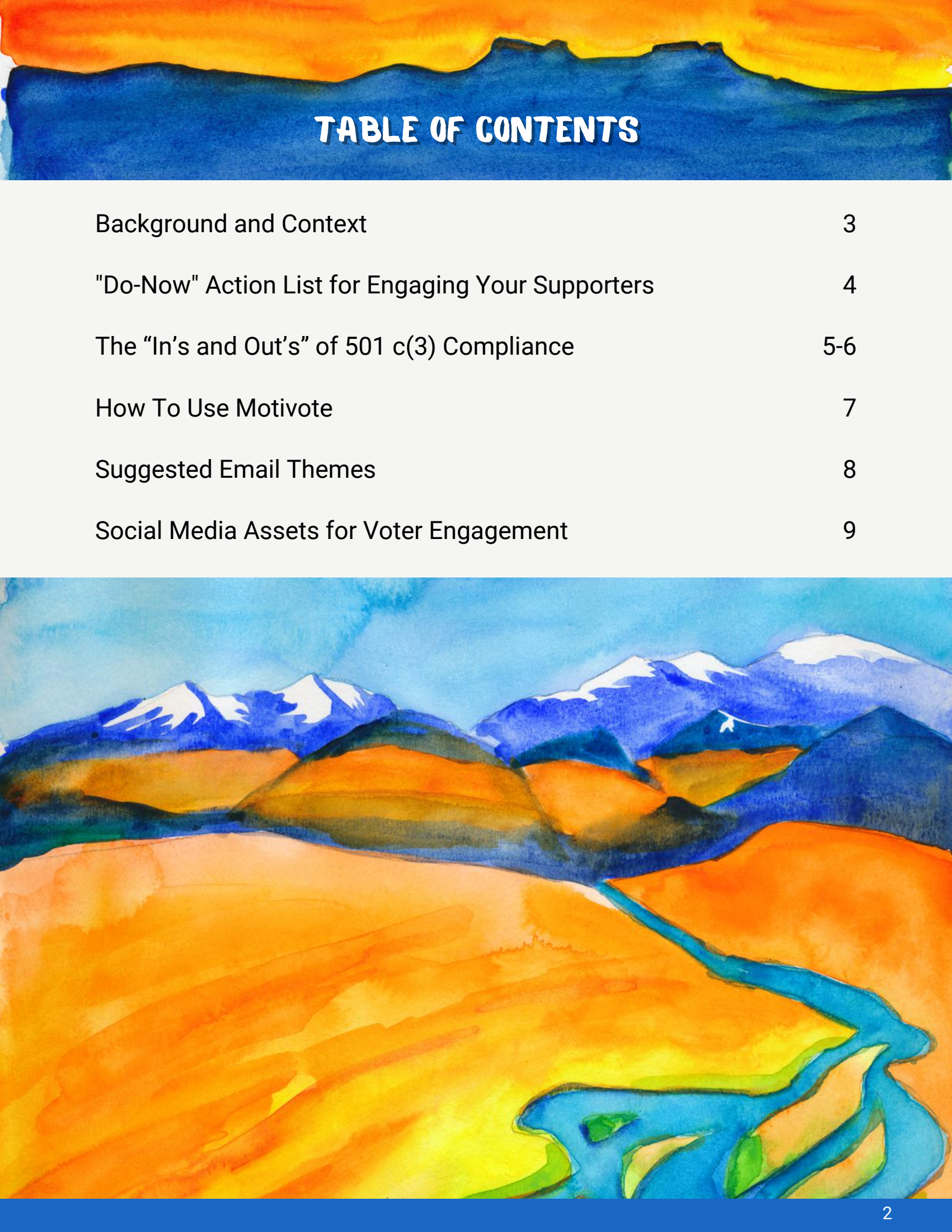


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BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

It comes as no surprise to anyone that voter participation in the United States is lower than other established democracies. As an example, the highest midterm turnout in our country was in 2018 at [49.6%](#). Excluding voter suppression efforts, the low participation can be attributed to a lack of trust that elections will have an actual impact on policy and ultimately people's day-to-day lives.

According to the Democracy Project, 80% of Americans are concerned about the health of our democracy. The lack of faith in our system is at the core of America's voter participation problem, and in order to enact the considerable changes needed in the years to come—meeting the goal of protecting 30% of U.S. lands and waters by 2030, as an example – we must do our part to restore some faith in our democracy while simultaneously increasing participation.

One way to meet this challenge, according to the Democracy Entrepreneurs, is to reframe the democracy conversation in locally-relevant ways. This reframe speaks closely to people's "why" and provides a more immediate impact to a community's quality of life. It's very similar to our Friends Grassroots Network model: everyone's "why" for engaging may be different—for example, keeping a favorite trail maintained or protecting Indigenous artifacts—yet those core values can be harnessed and translated into policy on the national level—into a federally-funded conservation corps, for example.

We believe adding voter engagement and mobilization efforts to our network's toolbox will give National Conservation Lands supporters another method for ensuring long-lasting protections. Our efforts will also contribute to the larger movement attempting to build a culture of voter participation.

Whether it's signing a petition, commenting on a Resource Management Plan, or voting; we're committed to modeling and fostering a strong participatory culture in our democracy so that pro-conservation leadership is supported at all levels of government.

We invite you to join us in this effort and have provided this Voter Registration and Mobilization Toolkit to guide you and your organization through the process. It includes assets for social media and email campaigns and is designed to increase pro-conservation voter turnout this November through the use of a digital platform—[Motivote](#)—that makes it fun and easy for your supporters to make a plan to vote for public lands and recruit their friends and family to join them.

"DO-NOW" ACTION LIST FOR ENGAGING YOUR SUPPORTERS

FIVE THINGS THE FRIENDS GRASSROOTS NETWORK CAN DO BETWEEN NOW AND ELECTION DAY. TO PREPARE FOR THE GENERAL ELECTION IN NOVEMBER WHEN WE WILL DECIDE OUR NEXT PRESIDENT ALONG WITH THE MAKEUP OF CONGRESS AND ELECT POLICYMAKERS AT THE STATE AND LOCAL LEVELS, THERE ARE FIVE ACTIONS WHERE MEMBERS OF THE FRIENDS GRASSROOTS NETWORK CAN ENGAGE THEIR SUPPORTERS TO ENSURE OUR VOICES ARE HEARD AND OUR VOTES ARE COUNTED:



SIGN UP FOR MOTIVOTE

We've partnered with Motivate, an innovative social platform, to design the Your Future. Your Vote. mobilization campaign that will help activate your grassroots networks to drive voter turnout. The platform is easy to use but we recommend someone on your staff/team be responsible for signing up your organization, your staff and generally keeping track and managing the suggested email and social media content described below.



SHARE IMPORTANT LINKS WITH YOUR MEMBERS

We recommend that you add this link (MyFutureMyVote.motivate.us) and a link to your Secretary of State's office or state agency responsible for elections to your website. Your state's election agency will give your supporters essential information including who can vote, where and how to vote, along with voting dates and deadlines. With COVID-19, voters need to know what options they have to vote early, vote by mail as well vote on November 3rd. This information is also built into the Motivate platform for those who sign up and you can see how Conservation Lands Foundation has set up its website Election Center at ConservationLands.org/election_center.



GET ORGANIZED

We've created a suggested list of email themes designed to inspire and empower your supporters about what's at stake in this election and the importance of getting their friends and family to cast their vote. Determine the right email cadence for your organization, draft them and get them scheduled!



GET SOCIAL

Based on those themes, we've created a series of social media posts and assets to build excitement as the campaigns heat up and people want to weigh in on what matters to them in this election. We'll be updating and adding content over the weeks ahead. Customize this content in a way that works best for your organization.



MAKE IT YOUR OWN

We encourage you to ask your supporters to create and contribute their own social content to your channels including videos and photos that articulate why the future of public lands are on the ballot in this election.

THE “IN’S AND OUT’S” OF 501 C(3) COMPLIANCE

First and foremost, thank you for taking part in this inaugural Get Out the Vote (GOTV) campaign for the Friends Grassroots Network (FGN) and the broader conservation community. All of the activities in this campaign are 501(c)(3) permissible, so if you are following along with this toolkit and the recommended social media guidance, rest assured you are not in violation of any regulations.

As a 501(c)(3) non-profit, there are a some election year activities you need to be aware of. Here is some general guidance on what you **MAY** or **MAY NOT** do:

WITH CERTAIN RESTRICTIONS, A 501(C)(3) MAY DO THE FOLLOWING:

- engage in limited lobbying, including work on ballot measures
- continue to advocate for the organization’s issues during an election year
- educate all of the candidates on public interest issues within the purview of the organization
- criticize sitting elected officials, especially if the organization has a history of doing so
- publish legislative scorecards
- conduct nonpartisan public education and training sessions about participation in the political process
- prepare candidate questionnaires and create voter guides
- rent, at fair market value, mailing lists and facilities to other organizations, legislators, and candidates if an on-going activity and not arranged only for a particular candidate or party
- **conduct nonpartisan get-out-the-vote and voter registration drives**
- canvass the public on issues
- sponsor candidate debates
- work with all political parties to get its positions included on the party’s platform
- distribute communications in close proximity to the election that do not expressly advocate for the election or defeat of the candidate, but refer to a candidate (often described as “electioneering communications”)
- conduct voter protection activities
- establish an affiliated 501(c)(4) organization, which can engage in partisan electoral activity as a secondary activity

The IRS considers ballot measure advocacy to be lobbying, not election activity. A 501(c)(3) public charity can support or oppose ballot measures (and should count the cost against its lobbying limits), but should avoid tying its ballot measure messages to candidates or political parties.

THE "IN'S AND OUT'S" OF 501 C(3) COMPLIANCE

WHAT 501(C)(3)S MAY NOT DO:

- While there are a number of activities 501(c)(3) public charities can do, there are a few activities they cannot do. 501(c)(3)s are prohibited from:
 - endorsing candidates for public office
 - making any campaign contributions (whether monetary or in-kind)
 - making expenditures on behalf of candidates
 - restricting rental of their mailing lists and facilities to certain candidates or engaging in such business transactions for the first time with candidates
 - asking candidates to sign pledges on any issue (for instance, ask candidates if they promise to support the DREAM Act if elected)
 - increasing the volume or amount of criticism of sitting officials who are also candidates, as election time approaches
 - publishing or communicating anything that explicitly or implicitly favors or opposes a candidate
 - highlighting the differences between candidates for public office on a high-profile issue on which the candidates in an election have diverging views
 - making a positive or critical reference to someone in his or her status as a candidate
 - engaging in issue advocacy when your organization cannot articulate a clear non-electoral purpose for the activity or communication
 - criticizing sitting legislators or other elected officials by attacking their personal characteristics or attacking them in their status as a candidate, rather than focusing on the substance of a policy issue

THIS LIST WAS TAKEN FROM THE ELECTION CHECKLIST FOR 501(C)(3) PUBLIC CHARITIES

crafted by [Bolder Advocacy](#).

If you need more information or want to do some additional research for yourself or your organization, please see the links below. These links are for three important resources related to how 501 c(3)'s like yourselves are regulated in their advocacy activity. If the links do not work for you, please email Andrés Esparza (andres@conservationlands.org) for access to these resources.

- [Advocacy and Lobbying for 501\(c\)3](#)
- [Encouraging Voter Registration and Participation](#)
- [Engaging Candidates as a Conservation Non-Profit](#)

HOW TO USE MOTIVOTE

WHAT IS MOTIVOTE?

To help increase pro-conservation voter turnout this November, CLF has partnered with Motivate — a one-of-its-kind, peer-to-peer platform that combines gamification, social accountability and real-life rewards to engage supporters.

Motivate walks supporters through bite-sized "actions" that get them ready to vote and keep them on track to follow through, like making a voting plan and looking at a ballot guide. Along the way, supporters compete to earn points and prizes from mission-aligned brand partners. Come election day, Motivate asks supporters to verify they voted with a selfie in real-time.

HOW CAN YOUR ORGANIZATION USE MOTIVOTE?

OPTION 1: JUST SHARE THE LINK!

Simply drive supporters to sign up at <http://myfuturemyvote.motivate.us/>



Once signed up, supporters will get access to their own personal Motivate dashboard that will guide them through bite-sized actions to help them get ready to vote. They will also receive regular communications from Motivate such as reminders of key election dates, weekly progress reports, and more.

OPTION 2: CREATE A MOTIVOTE TEAM, AND RECRUIT SUPPORTERS TO JOIN YOUR TEAM

One of Motivate's features is the ability for users to create "Voting teams", and we encourage you to set one up for your organization. **By creating a voting team, we can track who you're recruiting and share their contact information with your organization.**

To create a team:

1. Have someone from your organization sign up at <http://myfuturemyvote.motivate.us/>
2. Once you're signed up and logged in to your Motivate dashboard, click the "Create a Team" button. Follow the prompts to give your team a name (we suggest using your organization's name), uploading your logo, etc.
3. Share your team's recruiting link to get supporters to join



SUGGESTED EMAIL THEMES

NOVEMBER'S ELECTION WILL BE A WATERSHED MOMENT FOR PUBLIC LANDS AND WE NEED A RECORD NUMBER OF PRO-PUBLIC LANDS VOTERS TO SHOW UP. WE WANT TO REMIND SUPPORTERS OF WHAT HAS HAPPENED, WHY THEY LOVE THESE LANDS AND INSPIRE THEM TO MOBILIZE THEIR NETWORK TO VOTE FOR THEM.

INSPIRE EMAILS (AUG 18 - SEPT 30) = 4 EMAILS

1. **August 18: 78 Days** - Kick off email - summarize public land attacks to date
2. **September 1: It's Personal and Patriotic** – each of us has a personal connection to lands; damage done on public lands during COVID: environmental equity social justice
3. **September 15: Your Communities, Your Lands, Your Vote**– community-based action works. Example - Great American Outdoors Act
4. **September 22: National Voter Registration Day Sept 22** - How people have fought to get the right to vote and plan your activity for Public Lands Day September 26

MOTIVATE EMAILS (OCT 6 - NOV 3) = 5 EMAILS - WEEKLY ON TUESDAYS

1. **October 6: Mine. Yours. Ours.** – we are among millions who love these lands, turn it into action and power
2. **October 13: Vote for the Lands You Love** – love = action; and encourage your community to vote for these special places; ask your supporters to share photos and videos of which places they're voting to protect
3. **October 20: Debate Watch** – Top 5 Questions for Candidates
4. **October 27: How Do You Plan to Vote?** – ask your supporters to share photos and videos of how they plan to vote
5. **November 3: America Can't Afford the Cost of Inaction—And Neither Can the Planet** –Together we'll send the message that Americans want to stop the damage and reset the agenda for taking care of wildlife habitats and harnessing the power of public lands to combat climate change and repair environmental injustices.

SOCIAL MEDIA ASSETS FOR VOTER ENGAGEMENT

MY FUTURE, MY VOTE SOCIAL GUIDANCE

SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS:

Facebook: @conservationlands

Twitter: @ConservationLF

Instagram: @conservationlands

TAGLINE:

My Future, My Vote

HASHTAGS:

#MyFutureMyVote #VotePublicLands #PublicLands #KeepItPublic

#NationalConservationArea #NationalConservationLands

#ConservationLands #FriendsGrassrootsNetwork #Protect30x30

SOCIAL MEDIA VISUAL ASSETS:

Click on the link to find the My Future, My Vote logo, watercolor National Conservation Lands art, and other customizable visual assets.

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDANCE AND GRAPHICS:

Click on the link to find this information and sample social media posts in a word document format.

