Since 1972, The Trust for Public Land has protected over 3 million acres of parks and open space for future generations to enjoy. The Conservation Vision & GIS team at TPL delivers innovative mapping and design services to help communities plan and follow through on conservation initiatives. As the team’s project workload grew, so did the need for a project management system that could connect multiple people and offices across the country without the manual effort of spreadsheets and email. The team found its solution in a project management application built on Intuit QuickBase. The app has streamlined workflows and allowed the team to focus less on the nuts and bolts of project management and more on protecting green spaces for everyone.

“The QuickBase allowed us to easily set up a customized project management system that has saved us money and streamlined our workflows. We could not have the nationwide conservation impact we have without this system.”

Breece Robertson
National GIS Director
The Trust for Public Land
About The Trust for Public Land

The Trust for Public Land is a national nonprofit organization that helps create parks and protect public land by working with communities to research and plan, raise money, and acquire land for preservation. In the past 40 years, the organization has successfully completed more than 5,200 projects.

The Challenge

- Projects differing in scope, duration, and requirements too difficult to track with spreadsheets and email
- No central source of data for widely distributed teams and consultants
- No way to map time and hours to project activities
- Lack of realtime visibility into project progress made it difficult to allocate resources efficiently

The Solution

- Intuit QuickBase app for project management customized to suit the team’s needs
- Tasks and deadlines assigned from central application
- Billing activity codes for associating time and hours to projects
- Time card system for logging hours by project
- Shared calendar for easy tracking of other team members
- Automated notifications when budget hits 50% or 75% of allocation

The Results

- Faster project delivery
- Better visibility into project progress and status reports
- Improved predictability into task durations
- Granular reporting on time and hours required for each project or task
The Trust for Public Land has created or preserved millions of acres of parks and open space by helping communities to plan, design, and secure funding for preservation projects. The TPL Conservation Vision & GIS team — which delivers cutting-edge GIS mapping and design expertise — needed a better way to plan and manage projects with a wide range of complexity. Paper, email, and spreadsheets were not powerful enough to do the job. Workflows were too manual, and the team had too little transparency and predictability in project progress.

TPL found its answer in a project management application built on Intuit QuickBase. The app was built to meet TPL’s exact needs, and offers the right flexibility to adapt to changing conditions.

“We needed an online solution to help us scope, track and manage conservation projects nationwide,” says Breece Robertson, national GIS director for The Trust for Public Land. “QuickBase allowed us to easily set up a customized project management system that has saved us money and streamlined our workflows.”

**How TPL Preserves America**

The mission of The Trust for Public Land is to create and protect “land for people, ensuring healthy, livable communities for generations to come.” TPL accomplishes this by helping communities raise money, research and plan projects, design or renovate parks and playgrounds, and purchase land for protection.

From Walden Woods to South Central Los Angeles, TPL has completed more than 5,200 conservation projects of varying size and complexity. Smaller projects might only require a week and a few staffers to complete. Larger projects might require 2 years of effort from a wide range of staffers and consultants from among TPL’s 40 different office locations.

Managing dozens of concurrent projects across a widely distributed team proved an immense challenge for the Conservation Vision & GIS team. The team struggled to track and manage project progress, and had little visibility into the time spent on each task. Project information was stored in locally saved spreadsheets, preventing the team from collaborating effectively.

“It became apparent that our project teams, which include staff and outside partners, needed a platform we could access remotely to track projects,” says Robertson.

**Why Intuit QuickBase Was the Answer**

After evaluating several options, TPL turned to a project management application built on Intuit QuickBase. Robertson says QuickBase was selected because it was the easiest way to customize an application to meet its specific needs.

The app allows the organization to manage all projects from a central location, including assigning tasks and reporting on project progress. The app includes a shared calendar,
so consultants on the road can see in realtime where their colleagues are. TPL also archives completed projects for statistics and impact analysis.

The organization also needed to track time and hours dedicated to each project, so it built in a time-tracking system that allows consultants to log the time spent on each activity. The cost of each activity can then be monitored in realtime, enabling leadership to reallocate resources as necessary.

**Real Results That Benefit All of Us**

Since adopting Intuit QuickBase, The Trust for Public Land can manage projects more efficiently. Robertson can click a few buttons to find out a project’s status — a process that used to take a full week. Project teams can now communicate more effectively via built-in fields and workflows, and management can slice and dice data via QuickBase’s easy-to-use reporting and dashboards.

Most importantly, TPL is able to plan for projects with more accuracy and confidence thanks to the historical data already in the system. Everything from consulting hours to permitting fees is tracked in QuickBase, giving the organization the insight it needs to do the important work of preserving usable outdoor space for everybody.

“We could not have the nationwide conservation impact we have without this system. It’s an indispensable tool for us,” says Robertson.

80% of Americans live in or near a city. The Trust for Public Land works to ensure everyone has access to parks, playgrounds, and open space.