The Research Library and Research Digest have received generous support from the Pisces Foundation and we are pleased to provide recent information about our constituents’ opinions about these resources. This report provides a summary of an evaluation of the Library and Digest conducted in September 2018. A survey link was sent to 1,500 registered users of the C&NN constituents. The 177 individuals who responded included urban planners, educators from early childhood through higher education, educational administrators, teacher educators, environmental or nonformal educators, communications staff, writers/publishers/journalists, researchers, students/trainees, health care providers, evaluators and consultants, government personnel, conservation organization leaders, librarians, advocates, community leaders, and parents. Respondents provided valuable feedback about the value of C&NN’s research translation mechanisms and several actionable ideas for improvement.

Over 92% of respondents rated the Library and the Digest as “useful,” “very useful,” or “extremely useful,” with the most common response being “very useful” for the Research Library and “extremely useful” for the Digest.

We learned that C&NN constituents are using the Library and the Digest for purposes we anticipated, such as for finding evidence to help make their case to funders, advocate for their programs or issues of concern, and to improve their programs. We were surprised to see the number of constituents who also use our research as the basis for curriculum development in high school and college courses; as the basis for their literature reviews for their dissertations and theses, journal manuscripts and presentations; as the “source” for journalistic reporting and for social media posts and blogging; and as inspiration for actions they can take to connect their own children to nature. The number of people who noted that they forward research summaries or Digest issues to colleagues, their students’ parents, their children’s teachers, workshop participants and funders was impressive. Common themes are represented in the select quotes below:

“No one else compiles information the way C&NN does.”

“The wide range of resources is absolutely wonderful. I particularly like the focus on social justice!”

“It is the best place to find the most up-to-date research in the field.”
“The research digest is one of the only emails that I still subscribe to because of how incredibly valuable it is, without the asks for donations getting in the way. It’s purely content, and that content is specific to my areas of interest and work!”

“Love having the digest come right to my inbox as it’s a reminder of this resource on a regular basis. I always skim the whole thing, usually read one or two articles in depth, and normally forward an article or two to a colleague in this field, or to the local school principal or teachers where my children go to school.”

“The digest puts things in my inbox that I may not have been looking out for. It reminds me that the research library is there!”

For some respondents, the fact that we do not link to the original journal manuscript (unless it is open access) is a source of frustration that, for some, they do not understand the rationale for.

Several respondents offered helpful suggestions for improvement to the Research Library and Digest, some of which we may be able to respond to, though some will take additional funds to develop. The idea of creating an option to email a friend a research summary directly from the website (much like emailing a New York Times story to a friend) was suggested a few times, as was the possibility of having social media links for each summary for easy sharing through Twitter and Facebook. Search functionality upgrade requests included searching by country and being able to further limit a search (narrowing a list of search results by another tag such as publication year or type of study design). With regard to the Research Digest, suggestions were offered to increase readability for enhanced accessibility for readers with visual impairment and providing the DOI identifier in the Digest entry for open access articles to allow the reader to access the original article directly. Many readers liked the Digest layout, some others found it too busy. Some would prefer receiving the Digest at a different time while others appreciated our strategic timing, which is backed by communications research.

In summary, respondents to our September survey are overwhelmingly enthusiastic about the value, content, efficiency and functionality of the Research Library and Research Digest, describing these resources as best-in-class and C&NN as the go-to place for access to the evidence base. We are inspired by the frequent calls to “just please keep up adding to it to keep it current,” “Keep it up!” and “Keep up the great work.”