

MOUNT SHASTA ECOLOGY

STRATEGIC PLAN 2016

April 10, 2016

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Heading into 2016, a committee of Mount Shasta Ecology (Program Director Phoenix Lawhon Isler, Administrative Director Courtney Laverty, and Board Treasurer Andy Fusso) conducted a brief yet comprehensive strategic planning process to calibrate and set a clear, updated direction for the organization.

This strategic planning document is the result of their work and the review of others within and outside what we are now calling **Mount Shasta Ecology** (shortened from our legal name, which remains “The Mount Shasta Bioregional Ecology Center”).

It includes updated mission and vision statements, and a sharper focus on core strategies to support the important work of our longstanding (founded in 1988) grassroots environmental organization, existing today due only to the dedicated efforts of many individuals. We began this year with a strong, experienced staff and board, and seek others to join with us as volunteers and supporters. We are actively recruiting new board members, excited about our purpose and our future.

Some programs we’ll take on in 2016 are longstanding efforts that nevertheless continue (the legal battles for Medicine Lake Highlands, and the H.O.M.E. program working with the USFS to assist visitors and protect Panther Meadows high on Mount Shasta).

In other activities, we return to our foundational purpose as advocates. We have plans to reinstate and further develop programs to monitor timber harvests, and are sponsoring a ballot initiative to strengthen the county Water Ordinance. Throughout the year we maintain our focus on community activism and education. And we are here, encouraging locals and visitors alike to connect with nature - remembering to have fun and enjoy our unique mountain environment!

We accomplish program goals through generous grassroots support – from local residents and businesses – and through foundation grants for activities in alignment with mutual goals shared by our funders. In 2016, we will reach out to further engage visitors from around the world, and those who value their occasional revitalizing journeys to Mount Shasta from urban centers and other places in California and Oregon.

We are growing as a professional, funded organization while maintaining our longtime focus. In the last two years, we’ve moved to an affordable new office, strengthened financial accounting systems and launched a new website. For 2016 we will continue to spread our message online through social media, garner greater press coverage and continually reassess our planning and evaluation efforts, setting a renewed focus on managing, measuring and setting priorities.

In short, for 2016 we’re stabilizing Mount Shasta Ecology, to serve the land and its citizens, establishing clear goals and making them happen. To do this we need additional support, expanding further to address the most important current and unmet environmental needs now and in the future.

MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS

MISSION:

We are a community of people inspired to preserve, protect and restore our world-renowned mountain environment.

We advocate strong, enforceable protections for our mountain, for clean air and water, for healthy forests and wildlife habitat. We support a community informed and engaged with the issues and ready to act. We expect leaders and decision makers to learn, understand and act appropriately for citizens and the land, above the influence of outside and exploitive interests.

Collaborating with like-minded groups within and beyond our area, we support the best science-based practices for managing resources. We tell the compelling natural and cultural story of our mountain, as we invite and activate people to appreciate and explore it.

VISION:

We recognize the Mount Shasta area as a special place. Our work respects its land and water, and as responsible citizens we believe its managers must acknowledge the unique and irreplaceable contribution the region makes to the state of California and the world.

Through this common vision, we continue to succeed and ensure Mount Shasta's outstanding environment will always thrive, attracting visitors from all over the world to explore, enjoy, connect, and recharge. Local citizens, engaged and informed, each day are committed to stewardship. All people may appreciate our **interdependent** relationship with the living and non-living aspects of the natural environment. Local leaders, understanding the intrinsic value of this place, will not consider incompatible uses and shortsighted resource extraction as options. Together, we preserve our forests, watersheds, pristine waters and majestic landscapes for future generations to enjoy and appreciate.

ORGANIZATION HISTORY AND PROFILE

Mount Shasta Ecology works through public education, science-based public policy and advocacy, restoration, watershed monitoring, forest stewardship - and legal challenges when needed. We engage the local community and its leaders to connect with and protect our bioregion.

Our accomplishments since 1988 include:

- a ten-year campaign to stop a planned ski development on Mount Shasta that threatened to commercialize large tracts, including pristine meadows and springs sacred to Native Americans;
- working for nearly 20 years with the Stanford Environmental Law Clinic, the Pit River Tribe and an alliance of environmental groups to protect the Medicine Lake Highlands from devastating geothermal

development that involves hydraulic fracking through a pristine aquifer that recharges the largest spring system in California;

- stewardship activities on Mount Shasta in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service and the Winnemem Wintu Tribe since 1996
- since the late 80s, our forest and watershed watch programs have prevented or modified the worst forest practices and water extraction;
- supporting local concerned citizens in grassroots causes including preventing the closure of Castle Crags State Park, fighting unsustainable industrial water bottling by Nestle in McCloud, protecting air quality in the city of Weed and helping to launch W.A.T.E.R., a local group campaigning for an Environmental Impact Review of the Crystal Geyser beverage bottling plant in Mount Shasta;
- during 2014-15, completion of a major climate adaptation study and plan - our current plans and activities build on the issues listed and researched during plan preparation.

Funding comes from local donors, fundraising events, and foundation grants. We have persevered for nearly 30 years through the dedicated efforts of numerous volunteers, staff, and board members and the support of the local community and foundations who believe in our cause.

We are rooted in the local community and take action through our own campaigns and by supporting citizens' groups through fiscal sponsorship. We are unafraid to take on the big battles and we're in it for the long haul.

SUMMARY OF CORE STRATEGIES

Our team identified and selected core strategies during our recent planning process. These provide the strongest foundation from which our organization can thrive, grow, and succeed in achieving our mission. We have chosen four such strategies on which to focus, over the next 3-5 years.

1. Prioritize and emphasize mission-focused activities with measureable outcomes and tangible results

2. Engage with the greater community, including local citizens and visitors to Mount Shasta, group alliances, elected and agency leaders and decision makers, gaining the support of an expanding roster of volunteers and donors

3. Focus on fundraising by both Board and staff (grants, contributions and donor events) – get results!

4. Increase Board effectiveness, improving governance and engaging in strategic board recruitment, to gain and gather additional skills, knowledge and resources

OPERATIONAL PLAN

The following is an outline of our operational plan, which is primarily an internal document but can be made available on request. Additional information regarding each program is posted in more detail on our website at mountshastaecology.org:

PROGRAM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

CURRENT & ONGOING PROGRAMS

- Save Medicine Highlands
- Honoring Our Mountain Environment (H.O.M.E.)
- Community Eco-Forums and Conference
- Fiscal Sponsorships and Community Activism
- Groundwater Ordinance
- Policy Advocacy

PROGRAMS UNDER DEVELOPMENT

- Forest and Watershed Watch
- Eco-EdVentures
- Forest Fuels to Firewood
- Brainstorming and Wish List

FINANCIAL, ADMINISTRATIVE AND GOVERNANCE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- Staffing and Benefits
- Fundraising and Resource Development
- Board of Directors
- Public Relations and Communication
- Infrastructure and Technology

FINANCIAL MODEL AND BUDGET

- Budget Summary
- Staffing
- Special Events