

# MOUNT ST. HELENS INSTITUTE STRATEGIC PLAN

2018 - 2022

2021 Progress Report



**MOUNT ST. HELENS**  
INSTITUTE



## **Mission**

The Mount St. Helens Institute advances understanding and stewardship of the Earth through science, education, and exploration of volcanic landscapes.

## **Vision – Our Story**

The Mount St. Helens Institute is widely recognized and valued for the opportunities and resources it provides for people of all ages and backgrounds to learn from, engage in, and be inspired by the science, cultural history, and unique landscapes of Mount St. Helens.

Our exceptional science and outdoor education programs help to create informed citizens and critical thinkers while providing meaningful experiences and career skills. We foster conservation and stewardship activities that invest in Mount St. Helens for the future. Unique facilities around the volcano provide a multitude of experiences that attract groups large and small, from near and far.

We are an integral part of our regional communities, with a large and diverse cadre of volunteers sustaining all that we do. Our staff, board, volunteers, and beneficiaries reflect the diversity of communities that we serve, helping in our work to remove barriers to experiencing and learning from the volcano. We provide an environment that values staff, ensuring they are compensated for and supported in their hard work and dedication.

As a strong stable and sustainable organization, we are able to adapt to change while fostering growth in relevance and impact in both the short and long-term.



## Values

We believe in the power of science to help solve problems, inspire critical thinking, and make the world a better place.

We believe that the natural world and public lands around us are an irreplaceable resource to be respected, loved, understood, and cared for.

We believe that everyone, regardless of their appearance, background, physical ability, or economic status, can learn from and be inspired by the volcano in our backyard.

We believe our organization, programs, and partnerships should be inclusive and reflective of the needs and interests of people of all backgrounds, cultures, and abilities.

Exposure to the transformative and inspiring landscape of Mount St. Helens should be open and accessible to all. At Mount St. Helens Institute, we advocate for that access. We value people from all backgrounds and honor the innumerable ways of learning and knowing, because diverse perspectives and cultural knowledge are integral to achieving a deeper understanding of this landscape and its history.



## Equity

We acknowledge sociocultural inequities—including, but not limited to, racism, sexism, and classism—limit certain communities' exposure to science, education, and exploration of the natural world. We grow based on who and how we serve, so to confront and work against these inequities, we strive to:

- Commit to making diversity, equity and inclusion evident in our organization's culture, policies, curriculum, programs, and partnerships
- Value, respect, and acknowledge the unique experiences, talents, and backgrounds of our staff, board, volunteers, partners, and program participants
- Build collaborative relationships, aware that it takes time and effort to develop authentic and deep connections
- Remain willing to learn from our mistakes, open to critique and dialogue, and continue to actively learn about diversity, equity and inclusion practices
- Establish a culture of respect, openness, integrity, and honesty in order to inspire each person's curiosity and joy

# The Process

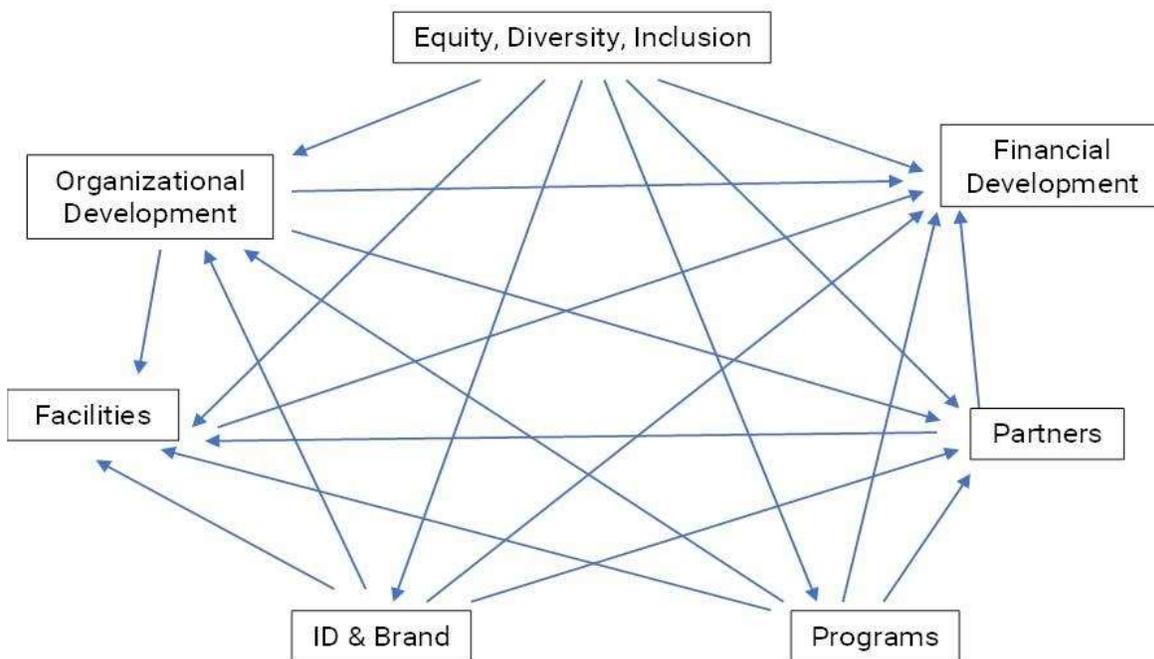
Strategic planning is most effective when organizations implement actions based on priorities and the plan is systematically reviewed and revised. MSHI has committed to establishing and engaging in a continuous process resulting in key strategic priorities and actions for the 54 year period from 2018-2023. The process results in immediate actionable items and will be reviewed and revised annually. Within this period MSHI will be able to create a culture of planning, implementation, and revision designed to reach its desired direction and mission.

The strategic planning workshop was designed to create direction and action for the five year period. The results of the pre-planning work conducted internally by MSHI staff and board culminated with a strategic planning & implementation workshop in June 2017, with continued development through the rest of 2017.

## Strategic Issues and Interrelationship Diagram

The Interrelationship Diagram is a tool used to determine which of our top priorities is the best place to start. If one of the top priorities is a driver it can influence the successful accomplishments of the others. During the process, a consensus was achieved which drew arrows from drivers to priorities that it influences.

We had developed seven key strategic issues which were affirmed in the creation of the vision story. The ID activity used those seven strategic issues to determine which one or more would be the best place to start developing strategies, and action for the five-year strategic plan.



## Strategic Priority #1 - Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Demonstrate a commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) through all aspects of the organization.

### 2018-2020 Accomplishments:

- Formed EDI committee
- Developed organizational equity statement
- Reviewed hiring and outreach practices with committee
- Participated in Intertwine Alliance's "Agents of Change" cohort training
- Made programmatic improvements including document language translations, scholarships for summer camps, gender inclusive language, and staff training

### 2021 Goals:

- Finalize and implement EDI plan
- Work with a consultant and Intertwine Equity cohort to guide the process and provide training
- Evaluate committee membership and recruit new members

## Strategic Priority #2 - Communications

Establish the Mount St. Helens Institute as the leading source of outdoor and educational opportunities at Mount St. Helens.

### 2018-2020 Accomplishments:

- Established strategic communications committee and developed communications toolkit
- Reorganize staffing to add capacity for communications
- Underwent rebranding effort
- Developed Mount St. Helens license plate concept
- Drafted communications plan

### 2021 Goals:

- Develop and strengthen Strategic Communications Committee
- Finalize and adopt branding and communications plans
- Improve targeted digital communications
- Pass Mount St. Helens license plate bill

## Strategic Priority #3 - Programming

Ensure inclusive, high-quality science, education, and exploration programs are responsive to community needs and reduce barriers.

### 2018-2020 Accomplishments:

- Developed program-specific logical frameworks and evaluations a
- Implemented staff reorganization
- Improved staff and volunteer training with a focus on DEI and developing staff capacity/leadership.
- Developed Education Committee
- Responded to pandemic by creating industry-leading virtual learning experiences

### 2021 Goals:

- Continue to adapt to future changes, implementing community needs assessment across program areas
- Invest in quality and sustainable programming
- Maintain community of staff, volunteers, partners, and supporters
- Work towards the development and implementation of a storytelling action plan

## Strategic Priority #4 - Organizational Development

Improve organizational capacity and function to support expanded programming and organizational sustainability

### 2018-2020 Accomplishments:

- Implemented new data and risk management systems
- Conducted organization-wide program evaluation using Cost/Impact Matrix to inform staff reorganization and focus programs
- Streamlined program processes to improve efficiency
- Reviewed and improved staff training based on evaluations and debriefs
- Developed Board recruitment strategies and have strategically grown the Board
- Developed Standard Operating Procedures for all program areas

### 2021 Goals:

- Identify and transition to new Customer Relations Management system
- Continue board recruitment
- Develop tool to share common staff/volunteer resources across program areas
- Implement branding systems and style guide

## Strategic Priority #5 - Partnerships

Embrace a diverse range of actively engaged partners who support & enrich our programs and share our values

### 2018-2020 Accomplishments:

- Developed partnership MOU template, guiding framework, and database
- Evaluated current partnerships
- Held strategic partnership meeting with US Forest Service and created Memorandum of Understanding

### 2021 Goals:

- Expand US Forest Service relationships Formalize USGS partnership
- Expand Washington Trails Association opportunities
- Continue to develop partnership with Cowlitz Indian Tribe

## Strategic Priority #6 - Facilities

Develop facilities that provide meaningful and inclusive experiences for our programs and communities

### 2018-2020 Accomplishments:

- Conducted internal needs assessment, hosted peer consult, and established board committee to identify opportunities and inform future direction
- Garnered support for future vision from US Forest Service and other community groups
- Received Innovative Finance on National Forests grant award and started work with Quantified Ventures
- Coordinate with US Forest Service on all project planning elements
- Developed business plan and financial model
- Developed master plan

### 2021 Goals:

- Finalize business plan and financial model
- Conduct fundraising and financing feasibility studies
- Plan for capital campaign
- Develop approach and permit details with US Forest Service

## Strategic Priority #7 – Fund Development

Establish sustainable funding streams informed by MSHI partnerships, programs, and operational platform to achieve developmental goals

### 2018-2020 Accomplishments:

- Established finance committee
- Contracted grant writer & developed grant structures
- Invested in board fundraising capacity
- Expanded fundraising capacity and skills
- Successfully fundraised to keep organization sustainable while completing master planning campaign during COVID

### 2021 Goals:

- Better develop donor communications and other fundraising systems
- Conduct feasibility studies for Coldwater vision
- Rethink fundraising events
- Invest in new CRM/donor management software



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