MT. ADAMS INSTITUTE

STRATEGIC PLAN
2019–2022

Education | Service Learning | Career Development | Research
Dear Partners, Supporters, and Friends,

We are thrilled to share with you our 4-year strategic plan for 2019 - 2022. The development of this plan was spearheaded by key board members and staff throughout the summer and fall of 2018. After hours of planning, discussion, research, and more discussion, what emerged is a new vision for Mt Adams Institute - one that builds on our past successes, and looks ahead to an exciting future in which MAI serves as a regional and national model for connecting youth, adults, and families in meaningful ways to the natural world. The planning process solidified (and validated) our belief that connection to the natural world makes us happier, healthier human beings. Research shows that nature connectedness also informs our beliefs and actions, and predicts our participation in conservation and protection of the natural world around us. To that end, MAI connects people with the natural world in order to nurture a lifelong conservation ethic and active environmental stewardship, in all people.

This plan doubles down on our guiding principles by keeping relationships at the core of the work we do. We're building on lasting and proven partnerships to grow our AmeriCorps programming - providing diverse participants, including military veterans, with life-changing career development opportunities in the natural resource and recreation management sectors across the United States. At the same time, our AmeriCorps members support the efforts of public land management agencies and the communities where they're located.

We're also looking to grow our youth education programs by continuing to strengthen our network of local partners. In this way, we're able to offer truly unique opportunities for kids of all backgrounds to connect with the natural world - whether it's at a Trout Lake farm, a local spiritual center, or romping in the river at the base of Mt Adams.

Throughout this plan, we're committed to seeking out, testing, and incorporating proven methods for increasing nature connectedness. We want to go beyond just guessing that time spent in nature is good for us (though we certainly believe that it is). We seek to create intentional, research-based opportunities to strengthen relationships between program participants, MAI staff, and the natural world every chance we get. What's more, we're committed to making sure that these opportunities are available to people of all backgrounds and from all walks of life. We recognize that outdoor recreation has been historically less accessible for people of color and those from lower income communities. Through this plan, we're taking steps to make sure that kids from all backgrounds have access to our programming - through scholarships and targeted school outreach efforts. We're also working to make sure that our programming invites and supports participants from diverse backgrounds to discover their own meaningful connection to the natural world.

To achieve all this, we recognize that we need to invest in the talent, capacity, and systems to support rapid growth in the coming years. As well, we'll need facility improvements to support new educational programming, expanded cohorts of AmeriCorps volunteers, and a larger administrative team. We're looking to double our team over the next four years, and we're committed to maintaining the authentic, passionate, and supportive culture that makes MAI great.

We hope you’ll join us in this exciting effort to grow MAI, its programs, and the impact that, together, we can have.

Very best,

Elizabeth Holmes-Gaar, President
Amanda Lawrence, Vice President
Tom Wooding, Treasurer
Frances Finney, Secretary
Jeanne Bennett

Heather Weisfield
Josh Lemieux
Aaron Sarver
Julie Beeler
David Wickwire, Ex-Officio
OUR MISSION
The mission of Mt Adams Institute is to strengthen the connection between people and the natural world through education, service learning, career development and research.

WHO WE SERVE
MAI serves youth, young adults, adults and families because we believe that a strong connection with nature benefits people of all ages and walks of life. We also seek out opportunities to connect individuals with the natural world who are historically underrepresented in outdoor recreation and natural resource career areas.

OUR IMPACT
MAI creates opportunities for people to connect meaningfully with the natural world in order to:

- Improve personal health and wellbeing
- Increase ecological literacy and a sense of interconnectedness
- Promote lifelong environmental stewardship and action
- Enhance civic and community engagement
- Facilitate career opportunities in the fields of natural resource management, conservation, and education

OUR VALUES
Supporting the development of strong and lasting relationships with each other and the natural world.

- **Accountability** - we show up for each other, and for the people we work with.
- **Authenticity** - we commit to living as true whole people, and encourage the people we work with to find what makes them whole.
- **Adaptability** - we change in response to the dynamic world around us, and seek out opportunities for constant improvement.
- **Passion** - we recognize the power of stoke, and support each other and the people we work with to find what gives them meaning and purpose.
- **Interconnectedness** - we believe that we are all connected, to each other and to the natural world.
**STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

1. **Supported Staff**
   Staff enjoy high levels of work life balance and job satisfaction, and have the facilities and resources they need to do their jobs well.

2. **Effective Programs**
   Programs employ evidence-based curriculum and approaches, are widely known for quality, and operate at full capacity.

3. **Diverse Participation**
   Growth in Mt. Adams Institute's programs includes increased participation by youth and adults from low-income communities and communities of color.

4. **Strong Partnerships**
   Mt. Adams Institute's programs grow through strong strategic partnerships with donors, funders, host organizations, recruitment partners, and local allies.

5. **Improved Facilities**
   Mt. Adams Institute's facilities support organizational growth and meet programmatic requirements.
### PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT VISION

**2019 - 2022+**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Youth Education</th>
<th>Community Education</th>
<th>Career Development</th>
<th>Service Learning</th>
<th>Research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summer Camps</td>
<td>Adult Outdoor Education</td>
<td>VetsWork Environment</td>
<td>Wilderness Stewards Training</td>
<td>Nature Connectedness Research &amp; Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Workshops</td>
<td>VetsWork GreenCorps</td>
<td>Public Lands Stewards</td>
<td>Volunteer Coordination for Forest Service</td>
<td>Facilitate Research on Public Lands</td>
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<tr>
<td>Facility Rental</td>
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</tbody>
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**Non-AmeriCorps**

- Adult Outdoor Education
- Community Workshops
- Facility Rental
- VetsWork GreenCorps
- Public Lands Stewards
- Wilderness Stewards Training
- Volunteer Coordination for Forest Service

**KEY**

- **Existing Program - Maintain**
- **Existing Program - Expand**
- **New Program**
- **New Concept**

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![Image of a group of people jumping in the air with a mountain in the background](image-url)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Development</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2022</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Submit AmeriCorps (AC) expansion grant; expand youth programming; pilot volunteer coordination</td>
<td>Implement AC expansion; continued expansion of youth programming</td>
<td>Maintain expanded AC and youth programming; add non-AC positions; expand viable pilot programs</td>
<td>Stabilize/maintain expanded levels across programs</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Impact</td>
<td>Establish impact baseline for nature connectedness; secure evaluation partner</td>
<td>Test new interventions</td>
<td>Conduct study of MAI’s approach(es)</td>
<td>Continue to measure, refine approach to maximize impact across programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partners/Participants</td>
<td>Establish baseline; scan for/correct exclusionary practices; recruit for Board diversity</td>
<td>Set targets for participant diversity; recruit for staff diversity</td>
<td>Adjust outreach and program design as needed; strengthen partnerships; continue board and staff recruitment efforts</td>
<td>Refine programs and practices; continue to strengthen partnerships; continue board and staff recruitment efforts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization Capacity</td>
<td>Add HR Director, Communications Coordinator, Administrative Assistant, and Program Coordinators. Initiate annual employee satisfaction survey; Board development and training</td>
<td>Add additional staff in line with program expansion targets; continue Risk Management efforts; engage brand consultant.</td>
<td>Maintain expanded staff in line with program expansion; add operations and recruitment support; add Marketing Coordinator position; bring financial function in house (CFO or bookkeeper); continue Risk Management efforts</td>
<td>Maintain expanded staff in line with program expansion; continue Risk Management efforts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development/ Fundraising</td>
<td>Implement Development Plan, add Development Coordinator position; select &amp; implement CRM database; research &amp; apply for capacity building grant; plan &amp; launch capital campaign</td>
<td>Implement Development Plan; capital campaign; maintain CRM system</td>
<td>Implement Development Plan; hire Development Director with initial grant funding; maintain CRM</td>
<td>Implement Development Plan; sustain Development Director role; maintain CRM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facility</td>
<td>Conduct facility needs assessment; upgrade to meet urgent needs; develop facility plan and budget; plan for staff expansion</td>
<td>Implement facility plan (including capital campaign as needed); address office space requirements for expanded staff</td>
<td>Implement facility plan, including capital campaign as needed</td>
<td>Major facility investment supported by successful capital campaign</td>
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Strategic Approach

To be successful, MAI will prioritize the following tactics:

**Strategic Partnership Development**
We recognize that we cannot do this alone. Our ambitious goals related to program development, expansion, and effectively serving diverse populations will require us to pursue and invest in strategic partnerships throughout our work.

**Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**
We acknowledge that we are a stronger organization, community, and nation when we include and effectively support everyone. We will work actively to recognize our own blind spots and strengthen our practices related to diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout our organization and programs.

**Data Driven Decision Making**
We know that this plan is not static. Throughout its implementation we will continue to research, learn, and test our thinking. We agree to shift course and evolve the plan as needed and in line with new learning.

**Rapid Cycle Testing**
Many program development and impact measurement elements of this plan will require rigorous piloting of new concepts and approaches. To this end, we commit to embracing the idea of rapid cycle testing and improvement throughout our work and organizational culture.
JOIN US!

As a nonprofit organization, we depend upon the community’s support to provide our services to those who need it most. Contact us to see how you can join our efforts.

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Learn more at www.mtadamsinstitute.org