



# VISION 2022

THE MOUNTAINEERS STRATEGIC PLAN 2017-2022



# ADVENTURE

## MISSION

The Mountaineers enriches lives and communities by helping people explore, conserve, learn about, and enjoy the lands and waters of the Pacific Northwest and beyond.

## CORE VALUES

### ADVENTURE

We are bold explorers—driven by imagination, outdoor challenge, and the spirit of discovery.



### EDUCATION

We share knowledge—empowering others to safely and responsibly pursue outdoor activities.



### VOLUNTEERISM

We foster connections—developing leaders who continue our legacy of outdoor education, integrity, and action.



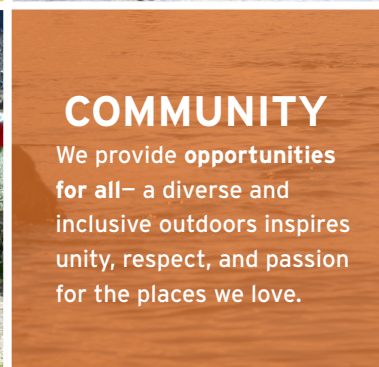
### ADVOCACY

We protect the outdoor experience—wild places depend on our powerful voice for conservation and responsible access.



### COMMUNITY

We provide opportunities for all— a diverse and inclusive outdoors inspires unity, respect, and passion for the places we love.



# WITH PURPOSE

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### INTENDED IMPACT

The Mountaineers is a community of passionate outdoor enthusiasts who welcome all people to share their deep connection to the outdoors. In order to achieve this goal, The Mountaineers will pursue three strategic priorities.

### STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



# INTRODUCTION

The Mountaineers is as iconic to the Pacific Northwest as the wild places we've explored and the peaks we've summited. Since our founding in 1906 we have pushed the boundaries of what's possible—not only here, in the wilds of our home, but around the world—with a culture of explorers undaunted by the challenges of the unknown. We are leaders, adventurers, educators, and conservationists committed not only to our individual pursuits, but to the collective power and strength of our community and its love for wild places.

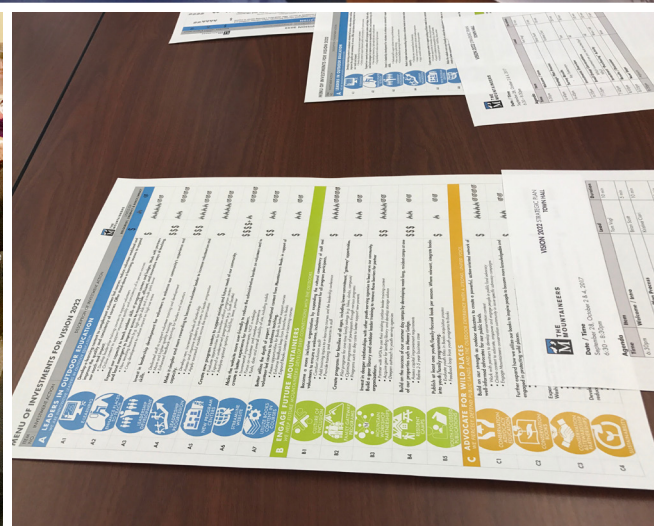
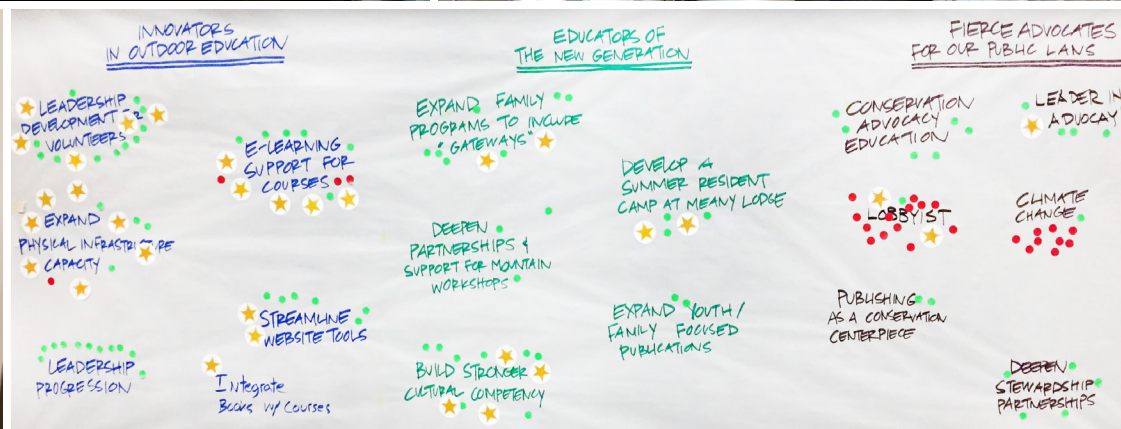
The first Mountaineers were daring. They braved impossible heights with little more than combined ingenuity and determination. They wore the first boots atop the Olympics and the first skis on Mount Rainier, but discovered far more than ranges to map and peaks to name—they discovered, and fell in love with, the power of wilderness itself. Through landmark publications like *Mountaineering: Freedom of the Hills*, which formed the basis for our publishing division, Mountaineers shared wisdom with others, both here in the Pacific Northwest and far beyond, establishing The Mountaineers as thought-leaders in outdoor recreation, education, and conservation. The transformative power of our experiences and the lifelong passion they inspire, paired with a determination to share our discoveries with others, set The Mountaineers, and our mission, apart: **we adventure with purpose.**

With Vision 2022 we embark on a bold, strategic plan developed through a rigorous community engagement process. At the plan's core are three strategic priorities: **lead** innovation in outdoor education, **engage** future Mountaineers, and **advocate** for wild places. Our success will require determination and courage, and the consequences of inaction compel us to be bold and fearless. Grounded in our founding members' visionary legacy of adventure, education, and conservation, we are prepared to take on this challenge and put The Mountaineers on a path to thrive for generations to come.



Handwritten signature of Tom Vogl.

Tom Vogl, CEO  
January 2018



Photos: BDS Planning & Urban Design

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# PLANNING CONTEXT





# BACKGROUND

## PREVIOUS STRATEGIC PLANNING

Ambitious and highly successful, our last strategic plan, Vision 2017, provided important waypoints that guided our priorities and investments over the last five years. It resulted in better support for volunteer leaders, the launch of new youth programs, improvements to our teaching facilities, and innovations in education programs. And it inspired a growing membership, more satisfied volunteers, a rapid increase in youth experiences, and strong financial performance. It provided a solid foundation upon which we have built Vision 2022.

The last phase of our previous strategic plan included a project called Progressive Climbing Education (PCE). Our defined vision for PCE is “to be known for world-class, volunteer-led climbing education while developing safe climbers and good stewards, and creating a welcoming community.” The strong framework of PCE applies equally well across all of our activity areas, and is woven into several Vision 2022 priorities and actions.

A defining characteristic of Vision 2022 is the interconnectedness across strategic priorities and actions. For example, opening new program centers supports our efforts to lead innovation in outdoor education and to engage future Mountaineers by providing more instruction area for a growing community. Our goal of becoming a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive organization will help us engage future Mountaineers and grow our coalition to advocate for wild places, while working lead innovation in outdoor education through our eLearning platform. This interconnectedness gives Vision 2022 strength and resilience.

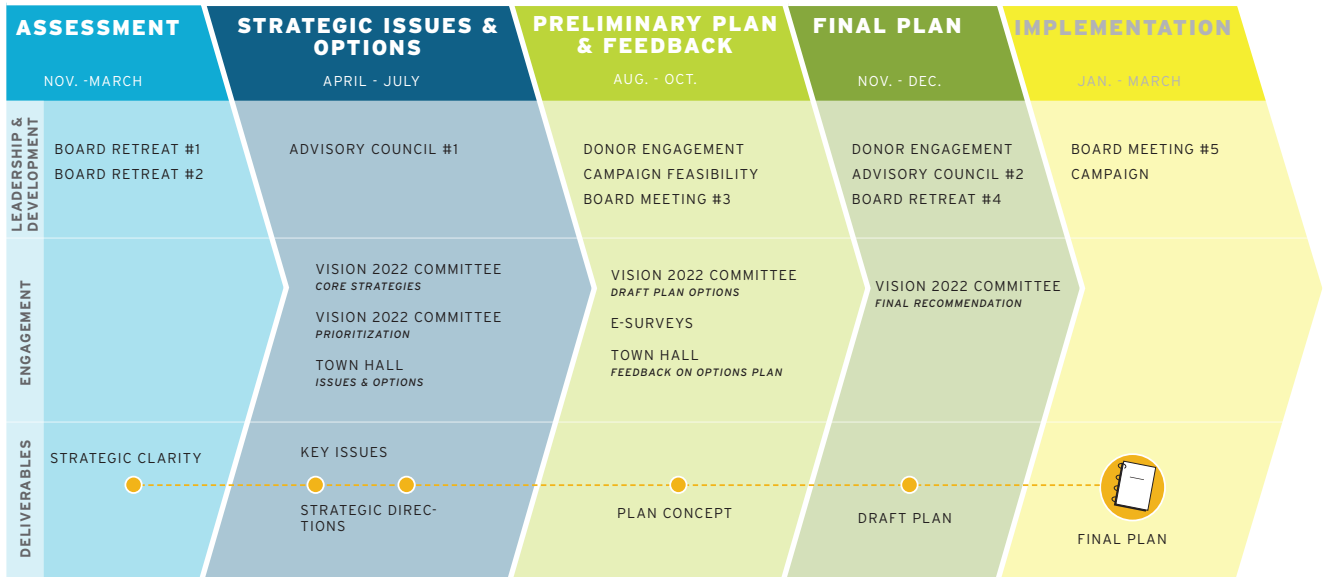
## WHY VISION 2022

Vision 2022 outlines the best ways we can carry forward our legacy of volunteer-led outdoor education and conservation advocacy. We teach people to love and care for our wild places, and in doing so we connect them with a community of lifelong adventure partners. For generations, we’ve passed along our outdoor skills and our passion for protecting wild places to future Mountaineers. Vision 2022 builds a bridge between the last 111 years, and the next.

# PROCESS

From the start, we believed it was critically important that Vision 2022 have broad buy-in from our community. Developing the plan itself was a lengthy process because we made a substantial effort to listen and deeply understand the perspectives of our volunteers, members, and the broader outdoor community, including non-members.

Over twelve months, Mountaineers throughout our organization and members of the greater community shaped this plan. We received important guidance from our Board of Directors, Advisory Council, and the Vision 2022 Steering Committee, and we solicited feedback from hundreds of individual Mountaineers and our staff. This is our plan and we believe it will serve us well.



# PROCESS



Photo: BDS Planning & Urban Design



## ENGAGEMENT AUDIENCES

The planning process followed three basic principles: build on the work of our past planning efforts, leverage the unique perspectives of as many voices as possible, and learn from areas where these voices disagreed.

Engagement took a variety of forms. The Vision 2022 Steering Committee met consistently throughout the planning process to offer counsel to Mountaineers staff. During each phase, the committee met to formulate strategic

questions, interpret findings, and vet draft priorities and actions for the plan. At two sets of Town Hall meetings in Seattle, Everett, and Tacoma (in June and October 2017), more than 125 volunteers and members helped improve the plan by offering input on the strategic priorities and draft actions. An online survey (conducted in August 2017) helped us reach an even broader swath of Mountaineers, collecting feedback from 950 individuals on the importance of a menu of strategic investment areas.



Photo: BDS Planning & Urban Design

# WHAT WE HEARD

## THEME: BEING A LEADER STARTS WITH DEVELOPING OUR OWN

Mountaineers continually asserted the importance of quality outdoor education as fundamental to the organization's mission and future viability. Our ability to offer more educational opportunities hinges on our ability to grow and support our coalition of volunteers. Throughout the planning process, almost all Mountaineers agreed that supporting and developing leaders from within the organization is a critical priority in delivering this piece of the mission.

In fact, participants at all three June Town Halls identified leadership progression (through programs designed to increase "access, identification, recruitment, and development") as a top organizational priority. In the second round of Town Halls, leadership development and progression were the two most popular investments overall.

## THEME: BECOMING A MORE INCLUSIVE ORGANIZATION

The Mountaineers has always been a place to develop deep connections with others and the outdoors. When asked what they personally valued most about The Mountaineers, more than 30% of survey respondents mentioned a welcoming outdoor community. But many noted our community doesn't feel welcoming and inclusive to everyone. Throughout the planning process, many participants asserted that successfully engaging future Mountaineers would need to involve more than attracting young people. Planning participants expressed a desire to be explicit about the organization's intention to understand and address barriers preventing our membership from being more representative of the Pacific Northwest. One-quarter of survey respondents believe that "attracting people from diverse backgrounds" is the single most important goal our organization can achieve in the next three to five years.

*"I value the Mountaineers commitment to teaching more folks outdoor skills and developing leadership in those acquired skills."*



*"The Mountaineers needs to be an inclusive organization and work to reach communities that might not otherwise have access to the outdoors."*

# WHAT WE HEARD

## THEME: LEVERAGING OUR UNIQUE VOICE IN ADVOCACY

One of the key lessons of the strategic planning process was an appreciation for how central members feel that conservation and advocacy should be to The Mountaineers. Eighty-seven percent of survey respondents described advocating for our wild places as “extremely” or “very” important to the work of the organization. When asked about the single most important focus for The Mountaineers in the next three to five years, our members mentioned conservation and advocacy more than any other initiative (30% of all comments referred to these two issues).

Our advocacy works happens by educating and encouraging members to voice opinions about public policy in order to complement larger grassroots partnerships, including the Outdoor Advocacy Network, a new conservation and

advocacy eLearning platform. Through Braided River, the conservation imprint of Mountaineers Books, we create beautiful photography books to complement strategic conservation campaigns from the Pacific Northwest and beyond. This collective work helps us preserve public lands from Alaska to the Pacific Coast.

Even while voicing clear support for this strategic priority, many Mountaineers expressed a keen interest in how we approach advocacy work. We frequently heard that we must direct the scope of our advocacy work, based on our perspective as outdoor enthusiasts and our first-hand knowledge of the outdoors, with a non-political approach. As one Vision 2022 committee member put it, “Our focus should be policy, not politics—we’re radical centrists.”

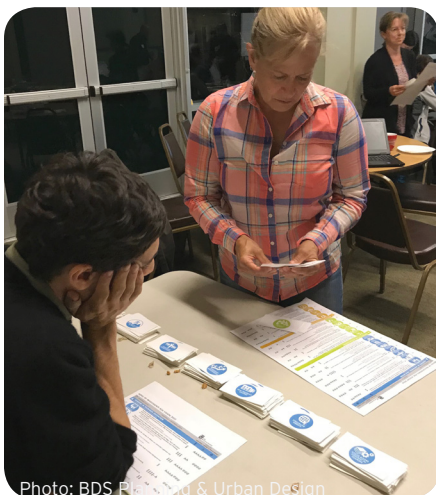


Photo: BDS Planning & Urban Design

*“The conservation and recreation advocacy of our group is stronger than me as an individual.”*

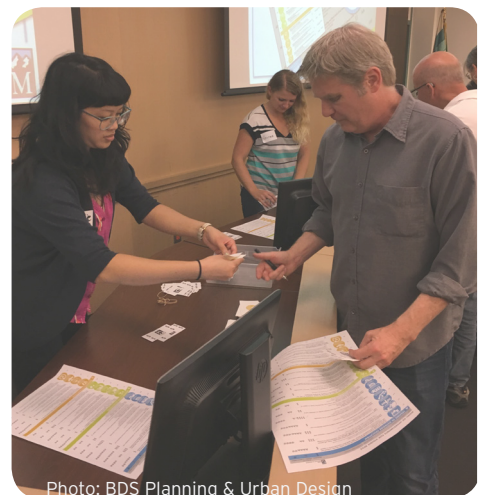


Photo: BDS Planning & Urban Design

# ADVENTURE

**LEADERSHIP  
DEVELOPMENT  
& PROGRESSION**

**TEACHING &  
GATHERING  
PLACES**

**YOUTH PR  
DIVERSIFIC  
& EXPAN**

**COURSE  
INNOVATION**



**LEAD**  
INNOVATION IN  
OUTDOOR EDUCATION

**ENGAGE**  
FUTURE M



**VISION 2022**

# WITH PURPOSE

**DIVERSITY,  
EQUITY &  
INCLUSION**

**CONSERVATION  
EDUCATION  
& ADVOCACY**

**PROGRAM  
ALIGNMENT**

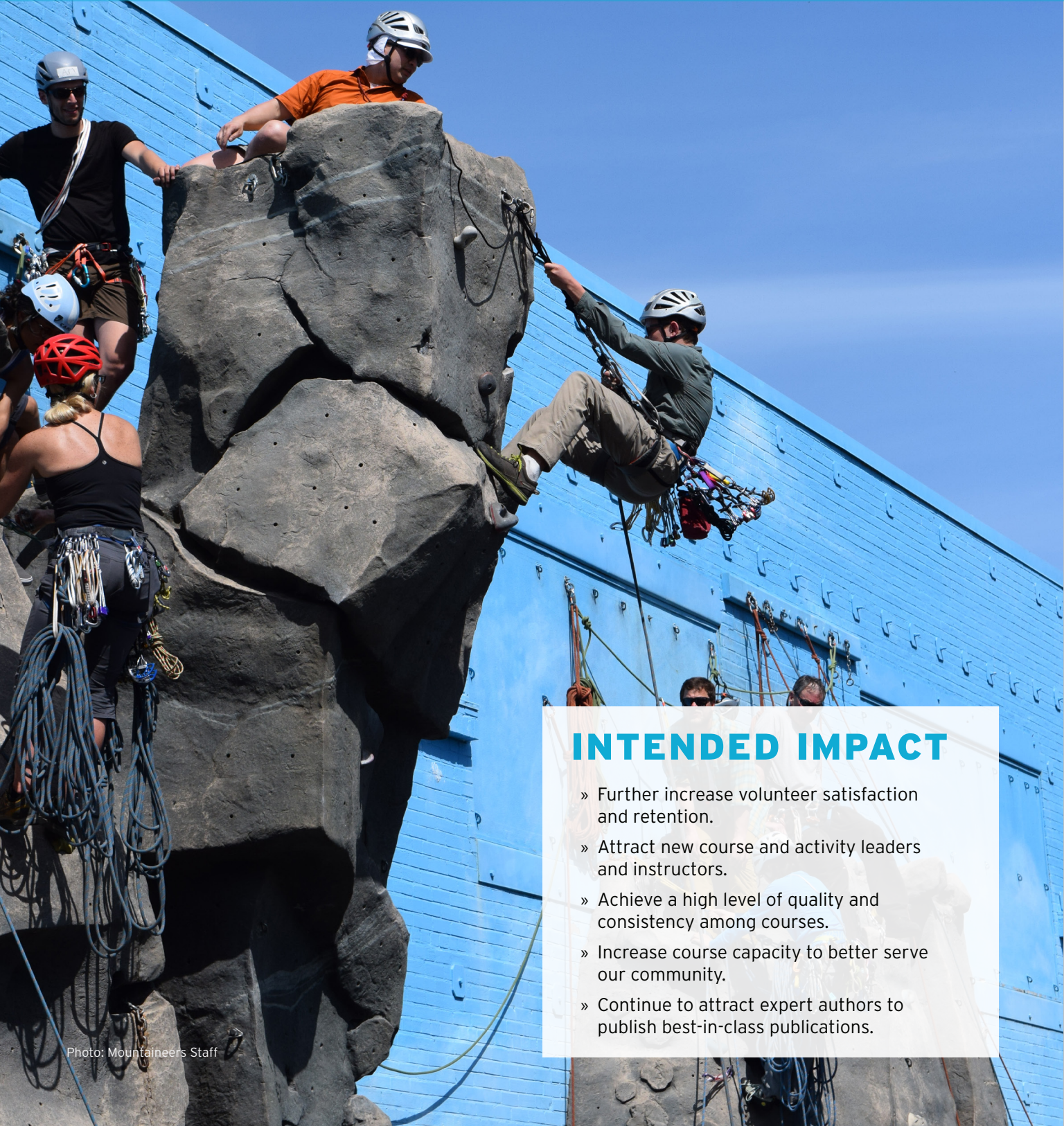
**CARBON  
FOOTPRINT  
REDUCTION**

**ENGAGE  
MOUNTAINEERS**

**ADVOCATE  
FOR WILD PLACES**

**STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

# LEAD



## INTENDED IMPACT

- » Further increase volunteer satisfaction and retention.
- » Attract new course and activity leaders and instructors.
- » Achieve a high level of quality and consistency among courses.
- » Increase course capacity to better serve our community.
- » Continue to attract expert authors to publish best-in-class publications.



# INNOVATION IN OUTDOOR EDUCATION

## BACKGROUND

Since 1906, The Mountaineers has endeavored to be on the forefront of outdoor education, through classes as well as skills-based publications by Mountaineers Books. The outdoors defines us. We are explorers, hikers, climbers, scramblers, paddlers, and skiers. We are inspired to share our adventures and wisdom with others.

Our volunteer-led courses and internationally recognized publications create opportunities for everyone to experience the outdoors, safely and responsibly. We celebrate famous Mountaineers such as Jim Whittaker, Tom Hornbein, Fred Beckey, and Mary Anderson, yet we're about much more than elite climbers and harrowing tales of adventure.

We are outdoor enthusiasts bound together by sharing our love of wild places. We welcome people as they are, serving all generations, ability levels, and activities.

We lead from the Pacific Northwest, but our impact extends far beyond the Cascade and Olympic mountains and the waters of Puget Sound. We have a rich history as innovative leaders in outdoor education and as one of the leading publishers of outdoor-related books on the planet. Today, we honor our heritage with bold objectives to expand our leadership position.

## FOCUS AREAS

With exceptional support for volunteer instructors and innovations in curricula, publishing, and eLearning, we will expand our teaching capacity and solidify our position on the forefront of outdoor education. We will also make complementary investments in new teaching and gathering places to expand our high-quality courses with greater access, to more people. Investments in volunteers, courses, and places, will ensure that both students and teachers have high-quality educational experiences. We will also become a more accessible organization with online courses and more localized gathering places.

**Leadership Development and Progression:** We will provide exceptional leadership development and make leadership progression easier to understand. This support for volunteers allows students to receive top-quality outdoor education. Specific actions include:

- Leadership and advanced skills training, continuing education, and personal growth opportunities.
- Expand Progressive Climbing Education (PCE) to all activity areas, including systematizing leader progression and developing clear onramps to volunteerism.

**Course Innovation:** We will standardize curricula across courses and branches, sharing resources and wisdom. Drawing from the content expertise of Mountaineers Books, we will continue to publish skills-based books, as well as develop modular, eLearning courses that will improve the quality and consistency of educational offerings while reducing the volunteer teaching burden and in-classroom time. These efforts will help us expand our capacity, relevancy, approachability, and reach, especially for those with transportation challenges.

**Teaching & Gathering Places:** We will create new, more accessible gathering places, reducing our environmental footprint on public lands, and improving our relationships with the broader climbing community. The Mountaineers' micro-communities can be supported in several ways:

- New program centers beyond Tacoma and Seattle.
- A climbing ranch and/or group campsite in Leavenworth.
- New teaching features at existing properties (e.g., high-angle friction slab, multi-pitch tower).
- Co-develop teaching crags with partner organizations, such as Washington Climbers Coalition and Access Fund.

# ENGAGE



## INTENDED IMPACT

- » Become a more diverse, inclusive, and equitable organization.
- » Reflect our values in our publications -- in the Pacific Northwest and beyond.
- » Serve more youth and families with a progression of meaningful outdoor experiences.
- » Increase the number of volunteers involved with our youth programs.
- » Expand existing partnerships and develop new partnerships with other youth-serving organizations.



# FUTURE MOUNTAINEERS

## BACKGROUND

Every Mountaineer walks in the footsteps of the generations who came before, but we haven't always reflected the rich diversity of our community. We must ensure that, a century from now, future generations will recognize themselves in The Mountaineers and follow in our footsteps.

Growing diversity in the Pacific Northwest means that we must become a more inclusive and welcoming community. Our programs, publications, teaching, and leadership must make outdoor adventure and conservation relevant to a broader swath of people. A more diverse and inclusive outdoors will inspire unity, respect, and passion for the places we love.

We will invest in diversity, equity & inclusion, while offering fun and informative programs for young people, families of all ages, and those discovering the outdoors for the first time. This will kindle a love of the outdoors that lasts a lifetime.

We can introduce young people to the transformative power of the outdoor experience, and by making the wonders of the natural world available to all, we ensure our future as adventurers. Youth and family programs must be as strong as those aimed at adults.

## FOCUS AREAS

Everyone has a right to experience the outdoors, and future outdoor enthusiasts will be more diverse than our current membership. Our programs will reduce barriers to participation, including access to comfortable and protective outdoor gear, transportation, a safe and responsible outdoor community, and information on destinations and family-friendly adventures.

We will ensure that our community is open and welcoming by expanding diversity, equity, and inclusion training for volunteers and staff, growing youth programming, investing in facilities to build reduce transportation barriers, and building more capacity for youth camps.

**Diversity, Equity & Inclusion:** We will inspire a unifying passion for wild spaces for all, but we cannot become a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive organization overnight. It will require a long-term commitment, sense of humility, and desire to learn and improve. Action steps in the coming years include:

- Inclusion and bias audit to develop training programs to improve cultural awareness and humility.
- Broader diversity of candidates for staff, board, and volunteer leadership roles.
- Collaborations with partner organizations that work with diverse communities.

**Youth Program Diversification & Expansion:** Building on the success of recent youth-focused programs, we will introduce new programs designed to engage youth and their families in outdoor adventure. Specific actions and programs include:

- Family and gateway programs to support parents with younger children through shorter-format experiences, such as weekend outdoor classes.
- Gear lending library at the Seattle Program Center in partnership with an existing program in South Seattle, operated by Washington Trails Association.
- Resident camp at Meany Lodge to offer summer and weekend programs, expanding on our popular day camps at program centers.
- Youth programming outside Seattle, including Kitsap Peninsula, Olympia, and East King County.
- Seek authors and publish books to inform and inspire - in the Pacific Northwest and beyond.

# ADVOCATE

## INTENDED IMPACT

- » Educate people about public lands policy so that they advocate for these places and the valuable experiences they provide.
- » Inspire people to care for treasured wild landscapes, ecosystems, and wildlife.
- » Advocate for access to our public lands to recreate responsibly and teach outdoor skills .
- » Partner with like-minded grassroots organizations to leverage resources and complement our strategic goals.
- » Reduce the impact of Mountaineers' activities on our environment.

# FOR WILD PLACES

## BACKGROUND

Outdoor education goes beyond navigation and tying knots. Generations of Mountaineers have played significant roles in protecting treasured places and crafting conservation policies such as Alpine Lakes Wilderness, Olympic, and North Cascades National Parks, and the Wilderness Act. The Mountaineers have always been fierce defenders of beloved wild places. We will extend this legacy, using the inspiration of our publications, the influence of our policy expertise, and the powerful voice of our growing community of outdoor enthusiasts.

We approach public lands advocacy with a diverse, unified, and non-partisan voice. We inspire the outdoor community with our Braided River conservation books, and partner with grassroots efforts to preserve public lands. We mobilize action through eLearning programs and outreach campaigns. We steward the places we explore and maintain access by influencing public lands policy. We fiercely protect the last remaining wild places in western North America, and also do our part in global sustainability and climate change through the content of our publications and by using low-carbon options for printing and distribution.

## FOCUS AREAS

When people get outside, they create a lifelong connection to place. By educating our community on public lands and recreation policy, we mobilize passionate outdoor enthusiasts to fiercely advocate for the places they know and love. We also bring America's public lands to life in a visceral way by publishing books about wild places that people may never visit. Additionally, we will partner with other outdoor organizations to maximize our impact and reduce the carbon footprint of our existing facilities.

**Conservation Education & Advocacy:** We will educate our community on public lands and recreation management and policy, so we can speak with a unified and powerful voice on the issues and opportunities that further our mission. Specific actions and programs include:

- Maximize our conservation education impact by implementing a public lands advocacy eLearning program (Outdoor Advocates Network).
- Partnerships with other outdoor organizations to improve access, stewardship, and advocacy, maximizing our impact in recreation and conservation.
- Inspire and engage people on issues and opportunities to preserve ecosystems, landscapes, and wildlife through our Braided River publications and related campaigns.
- Empower adventurers from all communities to feel the impact of their voice by reporting on collective results.

**Carbon Footprint Reduction:** The Mountaineers will reduce our own carbon footprint and exemplify sustainable practices. We will utilize publishing and education to raise awareness of the environmental impacts of carbon emissions and the ways that individuals and organizations can reduce their footprint. Action steps in the coming years include:

- Measure our current impact and identify opportunities for improvement.
- Program center upgrades to reduce our carbon impact.
- Adjust program delivery methods to minimize our transportation footprint.
- Publishing projects to increase awareness about why and how to reduce carbon emissions.
- Sustainable publishing through recycled (Forest Stewardship Council-certified) materials and other forest-friendly measures.

# SUCCESS MEASURES

## GOAL

## BASELINE (2018)

## MEASURES (BY 2022)

### COMMUNITY

A healthy, growing Mountaineers community that better reflects the demographics of the communities we serve and with strong relationships with partner organizations.

- » 12,500 active members, with 10.5% from communities of color
- » Publishing sales = \$3.89 mil.

- » 7% growth/year and 17,500 active members, 16% from communities of color
- » Grow Publishing reach and impact by 20%, delivering \$4.5 mil in total sales

### VOLUNTEERS

Satisfied volunteers and members who can easily grow their skills within The Mountaineers, no matter where they begin.

- » 2,300 active volunteers, with 12% from communities of color and 38% women

- » 12% growth/year and 4,200 active volunteers with 20% from communities of color, 50% women

### YOUTH & FAMILIES

An increase in youth and family members, contributing to higher retention and longer lengths of membership.

- » 8,000 youth experiences/year

- » 10% growth/year and 12,900 youth experiences

### ADVOCACY

An educated, active, advocacy-minded conservation community ready to spring to action when the opportunity arises.

- » 240,000 points of conservation engagement

- » 306,000 points of conservation engagement, a 28% increase, as measured by:  
Advocacy actions taken:
  - » Currents subscribers
  - » Outdoor Advocate Network participants
  - » Conservation books purchased

### IMPACT ON PLANET

A reduced impact on the planet to do our part and reflect our ethos as responsible recreationists.

- » To be measured in Carbon Footprint Audit
- » Baseline % = 75% of publications are produced with recycled or FSC certified materials

- » Reduce our carbon footprint by at least 20%
- » 100% of publications are produced with recycled or FSC certified materials

Vision 2022 is a bold plan and we expect big results from our actions and investments. These success measures will help us focus on the right priorities and ensure our efforts are driving meaningful impact and sustainable financial results.

## RELATED PRIORITIES

**LEADERSHIP  
DEVELOPMENT &  
PROGRESSION**

**COURSE  
INNOVATION**

**TEACHING &  
GATHERING  
PLACES**

**YOUTH PROGRAM  
DIVERSIFICATION  
& EXPANSION**

**DIVERSITY,  
EQUITY &  
INCLUSION**

**CARBON  
FOOTPRINT  
REDUCTION**

**CONSERVATION  
EDUCATION &  
ADVOCACY**





Cover photo: Luke Helgeson