

Waterman Fund Strategic Plan - 2020 to 2025

Strengthening our Future Capacity

Build a sustainable foundation and increase our grant-giving capacity.

Maintaining good health is essential as organizations evolve. To remain relevant, the Waterman Fund must retain a firm financial foundation and continue to grow its steward network. To enhance financial success, consistent administrative support is imperative. Our friends and partners are telling us we can do more, and with greater financial assets and stream-lined organizational management, we are inspired and prepared to do so.

What we'll do

By 2025, we will build our financial and management capacity to better meet our mission, the needs of our partners, and sustain the long-term health of our organization.

How we will do it

- Hire part-time staff
- Build a diversified fundraising plan
- Pursue endowment opportunities

A Champion for Wildness

Promote and Defend the Spirit of Wildness.

It's easy to see how potential development within alpine areas can threaten and degrade the spirit and the substance of wildness. A less obvious challenge is the increasing numbers of people visiting our wild lands every year. The pressure placed on trails and ecosystem health is significant. We believe it is essential to inspire visitors to become stewards of the land and advocates for wild places.

For the Waterman Fund, stewardship consists of science, trail work, and visitor education. Scientific research and study leads to informed management, which can assist in the protection of ecological communities and the innate qualities of a given landscape. Trail work aids in this protection by mitigating impact and providing durable surfaces for travel. Education empowers

people to become stewards of the land, thereby cultivating advocates for wildness. We believe preserving the spirit of wildness is integral to stewardship.

What we'll do

By 2025, we will use our regional authority as defenders of wildness on public lands to actively promote the spirit of wildness throughout the region. Alpine areas are our highest priority.

How we will do it

- Establish and support wildness education programs with conservation partners and others
- Engage collaboratively with policy makers in public lands planning
- Support front-line advocates for wildness
- Engage like-minded partners in promoting wildness
- Link science, stewardship, and the spirit of wildness in our programs

Broadening our Community and Strengthening our Programs

The Waterman Fund is part of a larger community of alpine researchers and land managers across the Northeast. However, this community is small, relatively insular, and largely homogenous. We are aware that diversity is integral for organizational health, mission achievement, and maintaining relevance. We will continue to grow our network of donors and supporters through our grants program, essay contest, and the biennial alpine Gathering. To be more effective, though, we must cast a wider net and engage underrepresented constituents as we broaden the perspectives and individuals involved in the conservation community.

The Waterman Fund is a grant-giving organization. By setting a goal of greater financial support, we do so for the explicit purpose of awarding larger, more impactful grants. This will enable us to more effectively fund trail rehabilitation projects, which by their nature are costly. Additionally, we will continue to underwrite the alpine Gathering, in conjunction with our partners, since this remains a unique and important opportunity for sharing and invigorating the greater alpine community. Lastly, we will continue our essay contest for emerging writers, and explore the intersection of the written word and the lived experiences.

What we will do: By 2025, we will expand the circle of alpine enthusiasts and further secure our niche as the authoritative source supporting the alpine areas of northeastern North America by doubling our grant-giving capacity.

How we will do it

- Leverage organizational contacts to attract diverse individuals to the Board, and cultivate a vibrant leadership team that represents a multiplicity of perspectives and experiences.
- Evaluate and streamline our grants process
- Leverage grants with partners to increase their impact
- Issue proposal requests for trail work and for youth alpine education programs, especially in underserved and minority communities
- Continue to promote research, stewardship, and education grants within those communities
- Offer opportunities for education grants to individuals
- Ensure local and regional publicity for grants and awards