



STRATEGIC PLAN 2022 – 2025

VISION

Blue water, green spaces, clean air, for all, forever

MISSION

Protect and restore the St. Clair River watershed through community education, environmental monitoring, hands-on stewardship, and advocacy



STRATEGIC PLAN 2022 - 2025

Friends of the St. Clair River hired Blackbird Consulting For Nonprofits in October 2021 with a grant from the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy to guide our organization's strategic planning process, and vision and mission statement writing. The Board of Directors approved the Strategic Plan in July 2022.

2022 – 2025 Strategic Plan Pillars

1. Organizational Development

Strengthen board and staff capacity and expertise to sustain success

2. Fund Development

Ensure adequate financial stability through resources that are diverse, allied and proactive

3. Environmental Science Initiatives

Develop environmental science initiatives that lay the framework to deepen our work and advance our mission

4. Partnerships

Strengthen current strategic partnerships and develop new community alliances with diverse organizations and businesses to advance sustainable communities, land conservation, and environmental remediation

5. Marketing

Develop robust marketing and communications to build awareness and increase brand recognition to acquire new donors, supporters, and volunteers and to elevate the conversation about conservation in a way that is easy for the community to digest and understand

Pillar 1: Organizational Development

Goal: Strengthen board and staff capacity and expertise to sustain success

Objective 1: Hire an Executive Director by June 2023

Activities:

- 1) Approve hiring/benefits package
- 2) Establish an Executive Director annual evaluation process

Objective 2: Establish an Advocacy Committee to help make informed decisions about response to relevant, controversial, and emerging environmental issues by December 2023

Activities:

- 1) Create description of purpose for the Advocacy Committee. Include the Committee's mission and intent
- 2) Create meeting schedule for Advocacy Committee
- 3) Create position descriptions for Advocacy Committee members. Include roles & responsibilities of each member
- 4) Assign delegation of execution of plan
- 5) Create a two to three-year plan for the Advocacy Committee. May include ongoing advocacy efforts as well as room for unexpected events that arise
 - a. Include actions the Committee may take to advance advocacy concerns and methods – i.e. position paper development, social media campaigns, legislative action, etc.
 - b. Determine short- and long-term issues for the Advocacy Committee to focus on
 - c. Include audiences to engage (i.e. elected officials at local, state and federal levels)
 - d. Create a plan to engage regular communication with desired audiences

Objective 3: Increase the diversity of Board of Directors to include a total of 11-13 board members by July 2024.

Activities:

- 1) Governance Committee to identify skills, geography, assets, connections, etc. necessary to diversify Friends of the St. Clair River's Board of Directors
- 2) Governance Committee to review and update Board of Directors Position Announcement and Description to be inclusive, equitable and diverse
- 3) Create recruitment strategy to diversity Board of Directors – utilize events, diverse platforms frequented by diverse board member candidates, create strategies to build relationships and trust with diverse candidates

Objective 4: Build internal infrastructure with policies and procedures by December 2024.

Activities:

- 1) Create process for consistent and regular use of background checks for board, staff and volunteers
- 2) Create and approve whistleblower policy
- 3) Create and approve record retention policy
- 4) Create and approve Adult Supervision of Youth Policy
- 5) Create and approve Abuse & Inappropriate Contact Policy
- 6) Create and approve Incident Reporting Procedures

Objective 5: Enhance Volunteer Program to maintain a pipeline of active and engaged skilled individuals by July 2024.

Activities:

- 1) Create an ad hoc committee to develop a Volunteer Program Development Plan. Committee to include both staff and board members.
- 2) Ad hoc committee to create a Volunteer Program Development Plan to help attract, retain, train, evaluation, and recognize volunteers. Plan to include short- and long-term recommendations for gaining and retaining engaged and effective volunteers.
- 3) Assign delegation of execution, evaluation and supervision of plan

Pillar 2: Fund Development

Goal: Ensure adequate financial stability through resources that are diverse, allied and proactive

Objective 1: Increase the Board of Directors capacity to raise funds

Activities:

- 1) Hire a nonprofit fund development consultant to assist in building the capacity of the board to fundraise and reach fundraising goals
- 2) Identify the Chair for the Fundraising and Development Committee
- 3) Conduct fundraising training for the Committee and board by Dec 2024. Content may include, but not be limited to: The importance of 1:1 donor outreach, the Art of Making the Ask, how to build a case statement and gift table, engaging with contacts on behalf of Friends, etc.

Objective 2: Create/update a Fund Development Plan led by the Fundraising and Development Committee by December 2023.

Activities:

- 1) Determine Committee's annual fundraising goals
- 2) Create a gift table based on fundraising goals
- 3) Develop fundraising calendar
- 4) Create major donor prospect list

- 5) Create an appeals calendar – end of year, spring, etc.
- 6) Develop a donor communication and recognition plan
- 7) Assign delegation of execution, evaluation and supervision of plan

Objective 3: Explore initiating an endowment by December 2025.

Activity: Meet with the Community Foundation of St. Clair County to learn about requirements for starting and maintaining an endowment.

Objective 4: Create a sponsor guide that reaches a broad coalition of influencers from industry, business, and corporations by July 2023.

Activities:

- 1) Identify sponsorship levels and recognition and incentives
- 2) Develop a calendar of communication to existing and potential sponsors
- 3) Make available in various formats - electronic, web, hard copy, etc.

Pillar 3: Environmental Science Initiatives

Goal: Develop environmental science initiatives that lay the framework to deepen our work and advance our mission

Objective 1: Develop comprehensive programming that builds awareness on the effect of issues such as, but not limited to: drinking water and stormwater infrastructure; trails; emerging contaminants; climate resiliency; water quality improvements related to land use; and green infrastructure.

Activities:

- 1) Assess capacity of current staff and board to develop educational programs on these topics; determine needs to increase capacity
- 2) Assess existing educational programs focused on these topics by similar nonprofits in the region/state
- 3) Make recommendations for the program based on assessment
- 4) Determine the logistics of each program (ie. multi-week, In-person, virtual, target audience, age, number of people to reach, fee)
- 5) Evaluate the program (increase in capacity; awareness of issue)

Objective 2: Host events, such as a symposium, training, or workshop, to deepen community buy-in and awareness on environmental issues with the goal of long-term transformational change.

Activities:

- 1) Define transformational change in a way that is relevant and meaningful to our organization.
- 2) Schedule an event to be completed by December 2025.
- 3) Create an ad hoc committee and recruit volunteers to assist.

- 4) Determine the theme, title, and logistics (ie. half day/full, In-person, virtual, target audience, number of people to reach, speaker stipends, registration fee, location)
- 5) Create budget, agenda, and marketing
- 6) Evaluate event's success and collect feedback (Increase in knowledge of participants; satisfaction with the speakers and content shared)

Objective 3: Recognize and promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and environmental justice by targeting diverse audiences with programs and events.

Activities:

- 1) Define Environmental Justice in a way that is meaningful and relevant to our organization
- 2) Evaluate and establish baseline understanding of diversity, equity, inclusion and environmental justice among board members, staff and volunteers. If baseline is not acceptable, create a plan to build board and staff capacity.
- 3) Review DEI position statement; determine if an update is needed.
- 4) Create a plan to fill gaps (ie. conduct listening sessions/implement surveys/host a town hall with diverse audiences to learn about current gaps and begin building relationships and trust)
- 5) Build relationships with businesses/nonprofits that have a successful history of promoting diversity, equity, inclusion as well as reaching diverse audiences with their programs and events to learn strategies that led to this success

Objective 4: Enhance a suite of community science monitoring protocols or programs that collect ecological data that measure a variety of different parameters, such as, but not limited to: macroinvertebrates, butterflies, water quality, soils, and invasive species.

Activities:

- 1) Develop a centralized record keeping database to contain environmental monitoring work that will inform advocacy
- 2) Improve dissemination of scientific data through creative tools and custom outreach outlets (i.e. infographics, graphs, videos, social media platforms)
- 3) Revisit and collect feedback, and assess annually

Pillar 4: Partnerships

Goal: Strengthen current strategic partnerships and develop new community alliances with diverse organizations or businesses to advance sustainable communities, land conservation, and environmental remediation

Objective 1: Conduct a needs assessment of partnerships to identify current successful partnerships as well as gaps, with a focus on collaborating with diverse allied organizations, businesses and corporations by December 2023.

Activities:

- 1) Create a definition of what a successful partnership is to guide strategies on building and sustaining strategic partnerships (ie. programs, sponsorships)
- 2) Determine who will conduct the needs assessment (ie. board, staff, ad hoc committee)
- 3) Develop strategy to collect information
- 4) Develop needs assessment questions
- 5) Analyze data collected
- 6) Create a needs assessment report to include recommendations. Report to include inventory of current and missing partnerships as well as thorough contact information
- 7) Develop an action plan that will include strategies to develop relationships with partners identified as missing or needing to be strengthened in report. Outcome may include a Business Conservation Partner Program.

Objective 2: Engage with young and emerging professionals and entrepreneurs to create a sustainable pipeline of future environmental influencers.

Activities:

- 1) Offer a training or a meeting on building in-depth knowledge of how to influence environmental change in the community by helping add one member to a local planning commission.
- 2) Add one young professional to the Board of Directors or a Board Committee
- 3) Conduct outreach and engagement about environmental career exploration through the Community College, high school clubs, and environmental science classes.

Pillar 5: Marketing

Goal: Develop robust marketing and communications to build awareness and increase brand recognition to acquire new donors, supporters, and volunteers and to elevate the conversation about conservation in a way that is easy for the community to digest and understand.

Objective 1: Define & clarify Friends brand and branding guidelines so that they are cohesive by December 2025.

Activities:

- 1) Hire a branding consultant to help with a needs assessment and public survey
- 2) Create a needs assessment report to include recommendations
- 3) Develop an action plan that will include strategies and a timeline for rebranding

Objective 2: Create a Marketing and Communications Plan to be updated annually.

Activities:

- 1) Raise funds to hire a Communications Consultant to assist with this objective and activities
- 2) Create a marketing/communication plan to be updated annually, including a social media policy
- 3) Develop a media kit
- 4) Assign delegation of execution, supervision and evaluation of the plan

Objective 3: Reinstate the Marketing Committee to include a minimum of three members and begin to hold meetings by December 2024.

Activities:

- 1) Create description of purpose for the Marketing Committee. May include the committee's mission and intent.
- 2) Review and update Committee member responsibilities.

St. Clair County Watersheds

