Save Mount Diablo

CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

Chapter 1 – Introduction

The Save Mount Diablo Climate Action Plan (SMD CAP) describes a list of objectives, actions, and outcomes that SMD will achieve over a defined period of time that will significantly reduce the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions caused by SMD activities, increase our communities' awareness and actions on the climate crisis, increase our overall strategic response to the climate crisis, and increase the carbon storage and sequestration rate of lands owned and managed by SMD.

Although the SMD CAP has been prepared in response to the global existential threat of human-caused catastrophic climate change, it does not explain the phenomenon of climate change or the scientific consensus that GHG emissions and atmospheric carbon must be reduced to avert global disaster. Rather, the CAP is meant to be a brief, simple, easy-to-understand document that tells the reader how and by when SMD will achieve the following CAP vision: "Over time, utilize SMD's strengths to holistically transform into a fossil fuel–free organization and increase our already significant impact on the Diablo region's fight against catastrophic climate change."

To read more information on the mechanisms of climate change, its consequences, or the details of how some actions included in the SMD CAP will actually have a positive impact on the climate, visit the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) website (https://www.ipcc.ch/). The IPCC is one of the authoritative information sources in the world on the subject. There are thousands of other information sources online, but please ensure that you are getting your information from valid, credible sources.

The SMD CAP is organized by chapter, with each chapter corresponding to a major programmatic area or strategy by which SMD will achieve its CAP vision. Each chapter lists several outcome-oriented objectives, and each objective is associated with several actions that, when all completed, achieve the objective. There is a time frame associated with each action, indicating the period by which each action will be completed.

Each chapter also lists a set of potential outcomes that will result from achieving all objectives and actions outlined in the chapter. The specific strategy central to each chapter, as well as the SMD departments responsible for implementing each strategy, is included.

Chapters begin with a short narrative tying together why a given set of objectives and actions was chosen and how they will be implemented. Some actions are already being implemented by SMD, while some objectives will require a significant amount of time and resources to achieve.

The CAP also includes a timeline chapter that presents the time frame information contained in each chapter by fiscal year and allows the reader to easily identify when all proposed SMD CAP-related activities are expected to occur.

Please note that the CAP does not include SMD GHG emissions or quantitative carbon sequestration or storage values. Such an analysis was deemed too costly and time-consuming to prepare. Therefore, we do

not state any goals related to actual GHG emissions reduction targets. Instead, we state outcome-oriented objectives, as opposed to impact-oriented goals linked to GHG reduction targets.

The SMD CAP will be updated once at the end of each fiscal year. The period of implementation begins at the start of SMD fiscal year April 1st, 2021–March 31st, 2022.

Composition of SMD CAP Team

Ted Clement, Executive Director
Karen Ferriere, Development Director
Seth Adams, Land Conservation Director
Monica Oei, Finance & Administration Director
Sean Burke, Land Programs Director
Juan Pablo Galván, Senior Land Use Manager
Joanne McCluhan, Executive Assistant
Laura Kindsvater, Communications Manager
Roxana Lucero, Land Stewardship Manager
Denise Castro, Education & Outreach Associate

Overall Team Purpose

To complete and win Board approval by the end of FYE 21 of a CAP that includes feasible, achievable goals to address catastrophic climate change.

CAP Vision

Over time, utilize SMD's strengths to holistically transform into a fossil fuel–free organization and increase our already significant impact on the Diablo Region's fight against catastrophic climate change.

SMD CAP Strategies

A. Advocacy and Policy—advocate for climate-related legislation, policies, and benefits from local to federal levels.
B. Education—meaningfully and directly connect an informed and diverse constituency to nature and thereby help us better implement meaningful climate solutions.
C. Financial (Fundraising and Finance)—respectfully restructure our financial relationship with corporate sponsors, SMD investments, and employee retirement options to eventually achieve a fossil fuel–free portfolio while upholding our fiduciary and mission responsibilities to maintain and grow SMD's financial strength. That financial strength allows SMD to continue to sustain and further its perpetual land conservation mission.
D. Land Acquisition—secure natural carbon sinks, conserve habitat corridors for species migration, and help prevent greenhouse gas emission increases by in-fee and conservation easement land protection.
E. Organizational Carbon Footprint—reduce and eventually eliminate SMD's carbon footprint.
F. Stewardship—manage natural lands to mitigate the effects of climate change and enhance the resilience of natural and human communities.

Chapter 2 – Advocacy and Policy

Strategy

Advocate for climate-related legislation, policies, and benefits from local to federal levels.

Responsible Department

Advocacy & Land Use

Advocacy and Policy Narrative

SMD is the preeminent conservation organization operating at the local and regional level in Contra Costa County. Because of SMD's geographic focus and structure as a land trust, our advocacy remains centered around addressing physical threats to the integrity of the scenic and biodiverse lands in the Mount Diablo region. Therefore, we have typically addressed physical and policy threats and opportunities with respect to open space that have an effect at the local and regional level.

Climate change is different, in that it presents an existential threat to wildlife, habitats, open space, and protected lands from the local all the way to the global scale and cannot be characterized as a physical threat the same way a housing subdivision or proposed freeway can.

Alternative energy project proposals will proliferate in the coming years and SMD understands that we need many of these projects to reach emission targets. We will continue to evaluate projects as they are proposed, while promoting regional planning, less sensitive locations, and full mitigation of impacts.

Given SMD's strengths and scope as an organization, the most effective way we can address the threat of climate change through an advocacy and land use policy strategy at regional, state, and even broader scales is to formally ally with other local and regional organizations and coalitions that specialize and have more experience in climate change–related work. This approach adds strength to climate-change advocacy throughout the area without duplicating efforts or unduly expending SMD's resources. It also strengthens local climate advocacy in that, within SMD's geographic area of interest, other organizations can capitalize on SMD's knowledge and experience in the Diablo area.

SMD is the organization most likely to engage on specific development proposals in the Diablo area, and we are the most effective in the region at improving projects and increasing conservation gains. Therefore, SMD can effectively reduce the negative impacts of climate change by incorporating ways to reduce GHG emissions into our regular project-level environmental review. We are also the main popularizer of the Diablo Range as a conservation story, and one of the organizations most likely to respond to development proposals that could negatively impact conservation values further south in the Diablo Range. SMD has already started to gradually respond to proposals further south in the Diablo Range than we ever have before. As we slowly increase our coverage, and by incorporating GHG and carbon sequestration considerations into our project review, we will help increase protection of a large-scale north-south corridor that plants, wildlife, and whole habitats can use to shift their range or migrate in response to climate change.

Potential Outcomes

1. SMD increases number of coalition letter sign-ons and calls to action with respect to climate advocacy.

2. Attention to and urgency of policies and actions to avoid catastrophic climate change are increased, leading to higher likelihood of adoption and implementation of beneficial policies.

3. Local and regional agencies (especially cities in which SMD is active) and project applicants will increase attention and importance to project-level measures to reduce GHG emissions and increase carbon sequestration and storage.

4. Extending SMD advocacy to the south gradually increases the profile of and mitigation required for development projects, increasing conservation benefits for habitats and species.

Objectives and Actions

1. Take action as part of climate-change coalitions in the counties and cities within our geographic area of focus.
    a. Identify most effective organizations and coalitions.
        i. Time frame: first half of FYE 22
    b. Formally join coalitions.
        i. Time frame: second half of FYE 22
    c. Engage in local, regional, state, and national policy-making with coalition partners as appropriate – including advocating for counties and cities in our area of focus creating and having appropriate land conservation elements in their Climate Action Plans.
        i. Time frame: second half of FYE 22

2. Include air quality and GHG emissions as part of standard engagement on project-level formal environmental review.
    a. Learn GHG analysis and mitigation best practices.
        i. Time frame: first half of FYE 22
    b. Comment on and propose mitigation measures as projects arise.
        i. Time frame: first half of FYE 22

3. Gradually extend advocacy farther south into the Diablo Range to increase protection of this large-scale north-south habitat corridor.
    a. Engage with the public and other organizations as appropriate when they notify us of relevant projects.
        i. Time frame: already occurring.
    b. Determine which species and habitats the north-south corridor would benefit with respect to climate-induced migrations and range shifts.
        i. Time frame: second half of FYE 22

c. Advocate for potential wildlife crossings of significant roadways (e.g., I-580 and Highway 152).
    i. Time frame: second half of FYE 22 and on

Chapter 3 – Education

Strategy

Meaningfully and directly connect an informed and diverse constituency to nature and thereby help us better implement meaningful climate solutions.

Responsible Department

Land, with support from other departments as needed.

Education Narrative

The facts and science on climate change have been known and taught for decades—but we have yet to resolve this very serious threat despite having the knowledge how to do so.

What's behind this illogical place in which we find ourselves amidst the climate crisis?

In thinking about this, Peter Kareiva (Director of the Institute of the Environment and Sustainability at UCLA, as well as the Pritzker Distinguished Professor in Environment & Sustainability, and previously the Chief Scientist and Vice President of The Nature Conservancy) states that people are "increasingly disconnected from nature and as a result less likely to value nature," a dynamic that he warns "may well be the world's greatest environmental threat."

This modern disconnection from nature has been widely documented in various studies. According to a 2017 report, *The Path Ahead*, "Today, kids spend less time outside than prison inmates, with the average child playing freely outside for just four to seven minutes a day." This report, commissioned by the REI Co-op, notes that the average American now spends about 95 percent of their life indoors. It reports that we are becoming an "indoor species," which comes with consequences: "Our health and well-being may suffer. And the less we value our outdoor spaces, the less likely we are to protect them." The findings confirm Richard Louv's earlier groundbreaking documentation of "nature deficit disorder" in our young, wired generations.

We clearly need a change in direction and new educational approach for the climate crisis.

Thus, with our education program SMD takes a "Connect, Educate, and Serve" approach to the climate crisis while looking to diversify the organization and people served with these efforts, which builds our strength and resiliency. We will connect people to nature by providing direct, meaningful and fun experiences in nature (for example, special hikes and solos in nature – and eventually prolonged special experiences in nature that might include overnight camping). Such an experiential approach will help build the love of nature and will required to better take care of the natural world and climate crisis.

We then must educate our communities about the facts and science on climate change and the critical roles land conservation and individuals play in mitigating climate change impacts. Then we look to empower our communities with service projects and efforts where they can help directly address climate change (planting native trees, community advocacy efforts, etc.).

When we love something, then understand how it is threatened and can be helped and are provided ways to take action and serve—we are unstoppable!

Potential Outcomes

1. CONNECT. Grow people's love for nature through meaningful, fun, and direct experiences in nature, which SMD will provide, thereby helping build the love and will required to address the climate crisis while also building support for SMD.
2. EDUCATE. Better educate the communities in our area about the climate crisis and the important role land conservation and individuals can play in mitigating climate change impacts.
3. SERVE. Complete important community environmental service projects that directly help mitigate and address climate change.
4. Help diversify SMD and the types of people served (build greater ethnic diversity, connect with more types of outdoor user groups, build more offerings for different age groups like elementary school age students, etc.)—ultimately resulting in a stronger and more resilient organization with broad-based support.

Objectives and Actions

1. CONNECT. Align the heart and mind with nature—through direct, fun and contemplative experiences in nature to develop the love and will required to address the climate crisis.
    a. Develop contemplative offerings (yoga in nature, solos with journaling, meditation in nature, etc.) into our annual and expanded Discover Diablo program and make the program more accessible and inviting to different groups of people (bilingual hike offerings, offerings for different user groups, etc.).
        i. Time frame: Second half of FYE 22
    b. Continue the Nature Heals & Inspires Zoom series that includes speakers from diverse backgrounds, helping participants understand how they can connect, get inspired, and heal with nature.
        i. Time frame: FYE 22
    c. Expand the Conservation Collaboration Agreement (CCA) program and offer follow-up nature solo and journaling trips, on a special SMD property, to all CCA student graduates and their families.
        i. Time frame: FYE 22

2. EDUCATE. Educate communities on the importance of the climate crisis and the critical roles land conservation and individuals play in mitigating climate-change impacts.
    a. Engage communities by providing climate change–related workshops (such as invasive plant identification, citizen science opportunities, etc.).
        i. Time frame: Second half of FYE 22
    b. Create educational signage and supplemental online materials about climate change, local flora and fauna, and ecological restoration for the Mangini Ranch Educational Preserve.
        i. Time frame: First half of FYE 22 and onwards

c. Provide online materials on steps people can take (plantings they can do at home, ways to reduce their carbon footprints, etc.)—personal service projects—to address climate-change impacts and incorporate these materials in regular social media postings.
    i. Time frame: First half of FYE 22

3. SERVE. Provide support that inspires and empowers communities to address climate change and help mitigate its impacts through service.
    a. Explore partnerships with other organizations that work with diverse communities to expand our ability to implement environmental service projects.
        i. Time frame: Ongoing
    b. Help promote youth climate actions, climate protests, and other related advocacy.
        i. Time frame: Ongoing
    c. Work with schools in eastern Contra Costa County to increase their participation in the CCA program (with CCA students doing significant plantings of native trees and vegetation), Discover Diablo, DiRT days, and other events (for example, Coastal Cleanup Day). Ensure these programs incorporate important information about the climate crisis, including how land conservation helps mitigate climate change and what individuals can do to help. Also, when possible, look to build in volunteer student docent opportunities in our educational programs (e.g., high school students who have been through the CCA program serving as docents to support middle school or elementary school students newly going through the CCA program).
        i. Time frame: FYE 22

Chapter 4 – Financial

Strategy

Respectfully restructure our financial relationship with corporate sponsors, SMD investments, and employee retirement options to eventually achieve a fossil fuel-free portfolio while upholding our fiduciary and mission responsibilities to maintain and grow SMD's financial strength. That financial strength allows SMD to continue to sustain and further its perpetual land conservation mission.

Responsible Department

Development and Finance & Administration, with support from other departments as needed.

Financial Narrative

SMD stands out as a leader in several respects related to the management of its finances. It offers its employees a 403(b) matching program, has grown its financial reserves enough to fully fund half a year of operation in the event of an emergency, has quickly developed a sizeable Stewardship Endowment Fund, enjoys a growing and committed donor base, and regularly wins a variety of competitive grants from foundations and other institutions.

Because of SMD's geographic focus and structure as a land trust, much of the financial support we receive from individuals and organizations flows from the Contra Costa County and Diablo region. For many reasons, this area is home to, among other things, a number of fossil-fuel refineries and fossil fuel–company corporate headquarters.

Given the past high profitability of this industry, the relatively large workforce involved, and other factors, a significant portion of SMD's financial and organizational support has typically been related to the fossil-fuel industry in some way. With the current global imperative to reduce, avoid, and mitigate the negative effects of human-caused catastrophic climate change, this situation requires examination and change.

Over the past decade, calls for organizations of all kinds, including universities, hospitals, churches, and for-profit companies, to divest from fossil fuels in the face of catastrophic climate change have forced institutions to navigate a difficult space between the concerns and obvious peril of climate change and fiduciary duty to prudently manage finances.

The contradictions are all the more stark for environmental organizations devoted to protecting and restoring the natural world. This complicated issue involves SMD's relationship with individuals, institutions, its retirement plan options, and the makeup of its financial investments. Fortunately, research over time has provided increasingly clear guidance for decision makers.

Ending subsidies for fossil-fuel companies that continue business as usual; imposing carbon taxes; and banning new oil, coal, and natural gas projects are some of the most effective ways to stop future GHG emissions. Until this happens on a large scale, the divestment movement helps to put financial and social pressure on fossil-fuel companies unwilling to make widespread switches to renewable energy and fuels.

In other words, the global divestment campaign seeks to mitigate climate change by phasing out fossil fuels. Beyond affecting fossil fuel–companies' bottom lines, the divestment campaign stigmatizes them by highlighting their leading role in climate change and helps to level the playing field for renewable energy.

Investigations of the impact of divestment and the transition of the energy system on investment performance have found that divesting from fossil-fuel production does not have to result in financial harm to investors, even when fossil fuels continue to play a dominant role in the energy mix for some time. Indeed, one of the world's largest financial firms, BlackRock, this year announced it would make climate change central to its investment strategy by exiting investments with high environmental risks and launching new investment products that screen for fossil fuels.

Recent years have seen incredible growth in socially responsible investments (SRIs) and environmental, social, and governance investments (ESGs), many of which screen out things like fossil fuels. Some SRI and ESG funds outperform broader market indexes by significant margins.

By creating a phased strategy to respectfully restructure SMD's financial relationship with corporate sponsors in a manner that does not alienate many oil company employees and executives that volunteer and support us, SMD can do its part to support the large-scale fundamental economic changes necessary to avoid catastrophic climate change.

We can engage with companies developing alternative fuels or working toward more sustainable business practices while avoiding organizations that would use SMD for "greenwashing" just to improve their image. Though it will take several years to achieve, it is possible right now for SMD to take concrete steps to invest in, be funded by, and offer its employees clean, environmentally sound options. As one financial advisor recently said, "we can make more green by going green."

Potential Outcomes

1. SMD increases numbers of corporate and other donors that are carbon neutral or clean energy–related who want to help SMD address the climate crisis locally.
2. Social and financial pressure on fossil fuel–companies will be increased, thereby encouraging them to reform business models and transition out of fossil fuels.
3. Other organizations will be able to examine SMD's divestment actions and apply them themselves, increasing SMD's profile in the community and increasing sustainability gains.
4. Socially and environmentally responsible enterprises will see more investment, thereby strengthening the clean economy and increasing sustainability and equity.

Objectives and Actions

1. Look into replacing corporate sponsors with new sponsors who are more aligned with our mission and Climate Action Plan.
    a. Research and identify new, more mission aligned sponsors and funding partners for Moonlight on the Mountain (MoTM), Discover Diablo, and Diablo Range efforts.

i. Time frame: FYE 22

b. Secure relationships with new sponsors for MoTM, Discover Diablo, and Diablo Range.
   i. Time frame: FYE 23

[redacted]

   i. Time frame: FYE 23

d. Research corporate sponsors to help underwrite phased purchase of electric SMD fleet vehicles.
   i. Time frame: FYE 23

e. Research corporate sponsors to help underwrite phased purchase of solar panels at suitable SMD properties (such as Curry Canyon Ranch, Wright Canyon, etc.).
   i. Time frame: FYE 23

f. Going forward, when considering a potential new corporate sponsorship that is substantially questionable if mission aligned with SMD and its CAP, staff will work through the matter and seek input from the Development Committee (e.g., fossil fuel company with a new renewable energy division).

   i. Time frame: FYE 22 and ongoing

2. Expand organizational investments that will reduce or eliminate exposure to fossil fuels based on guidance from the Finance Committee and our investment advisor.
   a. Hire and have financial investment advisor manage the SMD Stewardship Endowment Fund to be free of fossil fuel company investments.
      i. Time frame: FYE 22 and on
   b. Explore whether we further engage our financial investment advisor to manage other SMD funds in a way that reduces or eliminates investments in fossil fuel companies.
      i. Time frame: FYE 23

3. Add a new retirement platform that includes SRI and ESG investments.
   a. Re-engage both brokers researched in early 2020 and obtain up-to-date proposals based on current portfolio amounts.
      i. Time frame: FYE 22
   b. If financially feasible, select a new retirement platform in conjunction with the existing platform and incorporate fees into new fiscal-year budget.
      i. Time frame: FYE 22
   c. Make new platform available to all current and new employees.
      i. Time frame: FYE 23
   d. Continue to work with broker on available investment pools for participants.
      i. Time frame: FYE 24

Chapter 5 – Land Acquisition

Strategy

Secure natural carbon sinks, conserve habitat corridors for species migration, and help prevent greenhouse gas emission increases by in-fee and conservation easement land protection.

Responsible Department

Land, with support from other departments as needed.

Land Acquisition Narrative

For nearly 50 years, SMD has been involved in land conservation and preservation to maintain, enhance, and protect habitat, wildlife, and watersheds on and around Mount Diablo. SMD, and its partners, have directly and indirectly protected more than 120,000 acres of open space in the Mount Diablo area – including many miles of streams, and watersheds – in perpetuity though land acquisition. All of this land serves to sequester carbon, and by virtue of being protected from development and other land conversion, prevents increasing GHG emissions.

For many years, Save Mount Diablo has strategically researched and identified high-priority lands for protections, often using watersheds and aquatic habitats as high-priority habitat features to focus acquisition efforts. In acquiring and protecting watersheds, Save Mount Diablo effectively expands and strengthens wildlife corridors and helps protect high water quality.

This approach, in turn, facilitates the continuation of natural ecological processes and creates a high-quality landscape for potential restoration projects, such as native tree plantings that increase carbon sequestration; biodiversity; habitat connectivity; and water, air, and soil quality. The expansion of SMD activities south into the Diablo Range will further positively affect efforts to maintain and improve the integrity of the large-scale north-south Diablo Range habitat and wildlife movement corridor.

The success of SMD's land acquisition efforts has already supported and will continue to support efforts against catastrophic human-caused climate change – and such ongoing acquisition efforts by SMD will be in support of Governor Newsom's executive order calling for 30% of the state's land area and near-shore marine habitat to be protected in the name of conservation and addressing the climate crisis by 2030.

Conservation land acquisition helps by allowing natural carbon sequestration processes to continue and provide opportunities for restoration projects that increase carbon sequestration. Such acquisition also secures wildlife and habitat corridors that can accommodate species and habitat range shifts caused by climate change. These efforts prevent the conversion of natural lands to uses that would reduce carbon sequestration and increase GHG emissions, such as residential development.

Potential Outcomes

1. More land is preserved by SMD and in collaboration with public and private entities, which maintains the land's carbon sequestration potential and prevents its conversion to other uses that exacerbate the negative impacts of climate change.
2. Acquisition provides opportunities for restoration and stewardship projects that increase the effectiveness of carbon sinks and provide healthier air, healthier soils, and cleaner water.
3. SMD-acquired lands become places where the public can learn about climate change and become inspired to actively engage in land preservation, both physically and financially, to fight climate change and support a healthy environment.

Objectives and Actions

1. Create a map of high-priority lands whose conversion would increase GHG emissions and reduce carbon sequestration and ecosystem resiliency – and use this map to guide acquisition efforts.
    a. Identify high-priority lands using connectivity, conversion risk, and other metrics.
        a. Time frame: already occurring
    b. Collaborate with public agencies and private stakeholders to acquire suitable lands through in-fee purchase and conservation easements.
        a. Time frame: already occurring

2. Use land-acquisition funding campaigns to increase awareness of how preservation serves to reduce, avoid, and mitigate the negative impacts of catastrophic human-caused climate change.
    a. Include themes of carbon sequestration, preventing land conversion to uses that increase GHG emissions, and securing movement and range-shift corridors at various scales into SMD communications that highlight acquisitions.
        a. Time frame: already occurring
    b. Incorporate above themes into grant applications for land-acquisition projects.
        a. Time frame: already occurring

3. Highlight the Diablo Range as a vitally important large-scale north-south corridor necessary for wildlife movement and species and habitat range shifts in the face of climate change. Make the case that the Diablo Range deserves greater land-preservation acquisition efforts.
    a. Identify high-priority lands for acquisition south of I-580 in the Diablo Range and any possible lands that might help support safe wildlife crossings of significant roads (e.g., I-580 and Highway 152) thereby helping improve and protect this critical north-south mountain range corridor.

    a. Time frame: FYE 22
b. Collaborate with public agencies, landowners, and other private stakeholders located farther south in the Diablo Range to increase land-acquisition efforts in the region and educate them on its importance in the context of climate change.
    a. Time frame: FYE 22 and beyond

Chapter 6 – Organizational Carbon Footprint

Strategy

Reduce and eventually eliminate SMD's carbon footprint.

Responsible Department

Finance & Administration and Land, with support as needed from other departments.

Organizational Carbon Footprint Narrative

SMD has an opportunity to adopt a Climate Action Plan (CAP) that aligns with our mission statement as well as adapts to a changing world. Climate change is caused by increasing amounts of greenhouse gases (GHGs), such as carbon dioxide (CO2) and methane (CH4), in the atmosphere. These gases trap heat and shift the Earth's temperature and climate.

Creating a CAP to mitigate the effects of GHG emissions involves creatively constructing a diverse set of mitigation actions. Some actions are clearly linked to fossil fuels, while others are less obvious or well-known (for example, driving a gas-powered car to the office is more obvious and well-known as contributing to climate change than serving beef from a factory farm).

A gas-powered car emits carbon dioxide into the air, whereas the factory farm that produces the beef emits methane into the air. Producing beef also uses a huge amount more energy and water per pound of protein than producing other forms of protein does. Methane is roughly 34 times more potent than carbon dioxide in its capacity to trap heat. Both carbon dioxide and methane must be reduced (production of greenhouse gases must be reduced, and existing carbon in these gases [CO2 and CH4] in the atmosphere must be sequestered) to avoid catastrophic climate change.

Substantially reducing SMD's GHG emissions will be a high-profile and publicly impactful action to reduce the threat of catastrophic climate change, but it will involve an investment of time and resources. We already have a Green Business certification and seek to further our "Green" status with a LEED certification, which has stricter requirements. During the pandemic, we have been forced to test and pilot our "working-from-home" protocol, which has proved successful and will continue with modifications even as the state reopens. Other objectives are attainable with more funding from grant sources, like switching to solar at our facilities.

Other objectives are ambitious but reflect the hope and ultimate reality of our future. Governor Newsom recently signed an order that will ban the sale of new gas-powered vehicles by 2035. SMD currently owns an SUV and a truck that have a city range of 15 miles per gallon (mpg) and 19 mpg, respectively. With time and fundraising efforts, SMD seeks to ultimately replace one or both vehicles with electric options, starting with the SUV. Additionally, SMD will investigate how to install electric vehicle charging stations at our office space and at one or more of our facilities.

The future is coming. SMD can prepare for it gradually over several years so it does not take a burdensome financial toll in the future. As the climate crisis has made abundantly clear, refusing to do

the work and meet challenges that will yield long-term gain because of short-term costs can have disastrous consequences.

Potential Outcomes

1. Traffic in the Bay Area would lighten and GHG emissions would decrease, in part due to SMD's actions and the example it sets to other organizations and people.

2. Demand for factory farm cattle products would be reduced, along with associated GHG emissions from production, transport, and other sources.

3. California's recently passed fossil fuels plan for 2035, which prohibits the sale of gas-powered vehicles in the future, would be supported. This plan also has the potential to speed up electric vehicle adoption across the United States.

4. SMD greatly reduces, and potentially eliminates, its vehicle and facilities-related GHG emissions.

5. SMD's food waste decreases significantly.

Objectives and Actions

1. Gradually move away from, and eventually eliminate, using fossil fuels–based transportation to the SMD office, events, and activities.
    a. Design and implement a plan for staff to work remotely to the greatest extent possible, while making sure there remains an emphasis on meaningful team interactions and team building, to greatly reduce SMD-caused transportation-related GHG emissions.
        i. Time frame: ongoing and design FYE 22, implement FYE 23
    b. Design and implement a plan to encourage the use of public transportation as well as low and zero-GHG emission vehicles in everyday office activities and SMD events, including public transportation reimbursements.
        i. Time frame: ongoing and design FYE 22, implement FYE 23
    c. Develop and implement a plan to electrify the SMD vehicle fleet.
        i. Time frame: research costs FYE 22, replace one or both vehicles FYE 24
    d. Determine feasibility of installing electric vehicle (EV) charging stations at appropriate locations and implement if feasible.
        i. Time frame: research cost (including energy rebates) FYE 22, discuss with current office building owner FYE 22, apply for relevant permits and rebates FYE 23
    e. Develop and implement a plan for SMD's possible next office location and downsizing as appropriate with more potential emphasis on remote work (for example, consider a central meeting place for donors, the cost savings of a smaller office space in Walnut Creek, using an SMD property as a rotating office, etc.)

i. Time frame: discuss possible next office space location and specifications (location, lease vs. own, LEED certification of building, EV stations, etc.) FYE 23, downsize office as appropriate FYE 24

2. Continue to reduce, and eventually eliminate, organizational waste.
    a. Identify and use local vendors with sustainable menus for internal and external events (that is, locally shipped and responsibly sourced) where food is served.
        i. Time frame: already occurring and FYE 22, update list continually
    b. Continue to offer at least one vegetarian option for internal and external events and avoid offering beef except for high-profile and donor-sensitive events.
        i. Time frame: already occurring and FYE 22
    c. Develop and implement a plan to go paperless and substantially reduce, and eventually eliminate, use of single-use plastics.
        i. Time frame: develop plan FYE 22, implement FYE 23
    d. Continue and enhance low-energy options for purchases (for example, “smart” power strips, energy-efficient LED lighting, energy-efficient equipment and appliances, etc.)
        i. Time frame: already occurring and FYE 22

3. Explore maximizing use of clean energy and energy efficiency of buildings SMD frequently uses.
    a. Enroll SMD offices (depends on building owner for current office) and properties in MCE’s Deep Green program (100 percent clean-energy sources) wherever possible.
        i. Time frame: research and enroll in MCE Deep Green (if possible) FYE 22
    b. Research LEED certification and initiate necessary changes at SMD offices and properties if feasible and in consideration of long-term SMD office plans.
        i. Time frame: research LEED certification FYE 22, gauge interest of current building management FYE 22, develop plan to upgrade appropriate SMD properties to LEED certification FYE 23, upgrade SMD properties FYE 24 or beyond
    c. Investigate feasibility of using solar panels and wind energy on SMD properties and implement an installation plan if feasible.
        i. Time frame: research potential for solar and wind on SMD properties FYE 22, design a plan (potentially with consultants) and research application and funding programs (such as MCE, county, PG&E, etc.) FYE 23, initiate permit process FYE 24, install in subsequent years

Chapter 7 – Stewardship

Strategy

Manage natural lands to mitigate the effects of climate change and enhance the resilience of natural and human communities.

Responsible Department

Land, with support as needed from other departments.

Stewardship Narrative

In the last hundred years, a combination of burning fossil fuels, deforestation, habitat conversion, catastrophic wildfires, and other factors have drastically increased atmospheric greenhouse gases (GHGs). Carbon already emitted into the atmosphere can be captured and sequestered into more stable forms via terrestrial carbon sequestration.

In the immediate future, the sequestration of carbon through natural processes presents a viable, cost-effective, and ready-to-implement option. Other climate change–mitigation methods include eliminating and reducing the use of fossil fuels and restoring habitat.

We incorporate a variety of programs into our land management that already do or can facilitate carbon sequestration, including habitat restoration, invasive plant removal, grazing, fire abatement, and trash removal. Each program can be updated with current conservation science to increase carbon sequestration capacity.

For example, as a result of several years of catastrophic mega wildfires resulting in back-to-back record-breaking fire seasons in California, the issues of prescribed burning, natural fire regimes, and fire suppression have garnered increased public interest. There is an opportunity to support large-scale, long-term fire management policy changes that could prevent massive GHG emissions from catastrophic wildfires by placing ecological principles at the center of fire management rather than blanket suppression. SMD does not own any land suitable for large-scale prescribed fires because of our properties' proximity to neighbors, however, we can support prescribed burning as an organization by joining coalitions or groups that advocate for prescribed burnings.

Another mitigation tactic involves reducing our use of gas-powered equipment. Nearly all stewardship-related vehicles and tools run on gasoline and emit GHGs, which means doing fire abatement work and getting to habitat restoration sites exacerbates the climate conditions that would cause the fires we are trying to protect against. We can feasibly change this situation.

This section of the Climate Action Plan (CAP) explains how SMD can reduce GHG emissions and increase carbon sequestration to positively address the climate crisis by continuing and improving our land management techniques and stewardship practices.

Potential Outcomes

1. Increase habitat coverage on and around water, open space, and areas needing water sources in an increasingly dry climate.

2. Reduce GHG emissions from SMD stewardship activities.

3. Sequester more carbon through increased planting, protection, and survival of native tree species.

4. Sequester more carbon through sustainable grazing and land management and increase benefits to grasslands.

Objectives and Actions

1. Implement ecological grazing, native vegetation planting, and carbon-negative land management on all SMD-managed properties and support policies that encourage these practices to increase carbon sequestration.
    a. Support a "prescribed burning and ecological fire management" stance on land management issues by identifying and joining relevant coalitions.
        i. Time frame: FYE 22
    b. Use the latest best practices and grazing standards as a template and incorporate SMD's own eco-friendly practices as needed. Carry these through in planning for other grazing regimes (goats, horses, etc.) that are incorporated into fuels management and grazing leases.
        i. Time frame: research grazing standards (for example, EBRPD standards) and regimes FYE 22, update grazing leases as they renew to align with best practices FYE 23
    c. Develop and implement a restoration plan to protect or plant 10,000 trees or plants in the next 10 years (student service in the CCA program and other volunteers will be key in meeting this goal), incorporating tree caging, invasive plant removal, planting new trees from seed or certified nurseries, and partnerships with native plant organizations.
        i. Time frame: bunchgrass seeding and organize partnerships to begin FYE 23, all other associated planning and actions to begin FYE 22

2. Replace gas-powered land management tools and equipment (chainsaws, vehicles, etc.) with electric whenever possible to reduce GHG emissions.
    a. Work with other departments to identify opportunities, design a budget to replace frequently used gas-powered equipment with electric versions, and make purchases.
        i. Time frame: research and develop budget FYE 22, replace tools and equipment as appropriate FYE 23
    b. Require that all future purchases for tools and equipment be electric or fuel-efficient whenever possible.
        i. Time frame: FYE 23

3. Utilize Leave No Trace (LNT) ethics and good waste management techniques to keep lands clean and less prone to fire to improve habitat resiliency.
    a. Incorporate LNT into recreation and stewardship activities.
        i. Time frame: FYE 22
    b. Develop and implement a plan to reduce waste production in stewardship activities and partner with other agencies on trash removal projects (including Coastal Cleanup Day).
        i. Time frame: develop plan FYE 22, partner on trash removal FYE 23

Ch. 8 – Timeline of CAP Actions

Already Occurring or Ongoing

Advocacy & Policy

- Engage with the public and other organizations as appropriate when they notify us of relevant projects.

Education

- Explore partnerships with other organizations that work with diverse communities to expand our ability to implement environmental service projects.
- Help promote youth climate actions, climate protests, and other related advocacy.

Land Acquisition

- Identify high-priority lands using connectivity, conversion risk, and other metrics.
- Collaborate with public agencies and private stakeholders to acquire suitable lands through in-fee purchase and conservation easements.
- Include themes of carbon sequestration, preventing land conversion to uses that increase GHG emissions, and securing movement and range-shift corridors at various scales into SMD communications that highlight acquisitions.
- Incorporate above themes into grant applications for land acquisition projects.

Organizational Carbon Footprint

- Continue and enhance low-energy options for purchases (such as “smart” power strips for events, energy efficient lighting, equipment, and appliances, etc.)

FYE 22 (April 1st, 2021–March 31st, 2022)

Advocacy & Policy

- Identify most effective organizations and coalitions.
- Formally join coalitions.
- Engage in local, regional, state, and national policymaking with coalition partners as appropriate – including advocating for counties and cities in our area of focus creating and having appropriate land conservation elements in their Climate Action Plans.
- Learn GHG analysis and mitigation best practices.
- Comment on and propose mitigation measures as projects arise.
- Determine which species and habitats the north-south corridor would benefit with respect to climate-induced migrations and range shifts.
- Advocate for potential wildlife crossings of significant roadways

Education

- Develop fun and contemplative offerings (yoga in nature, solos with journaling, meditation in nature, etc.) into our annual and expanded Discover Diablo program and make the program more accessible and inviting to different groups of people (bilingual hike offerings, offerings for different user groups, offerings for different age groups, etc.).
- Continue the Nature Heals & Inspires Zoom series that includes speakers from diverse backgrounds, helping participants understand how they can connect, get inspired by, and heal with nature.
- Expand the Conservation Collaboration Agreement (CCA) program and offer follow-up nature solo and journaling trips, on a special SMD property, to all CCA student graduates and their families.
- Engage communities by providing climate change-related workshops (such as invasive plant identification, citizen science opportunities, etc.).
- Create educational signage and supplemental online materials about climate change, local flora and fauna, and ecological restoration for the Mangini Ranch Educational Preserve.
- Provide online materials on steps people can take (plantings they can do at home, ways to reduce their carbon footprints, personal service projects, etc.) to address climate change impacts and incorporate these materials in regular social media postings.
- Work with schools in eastern Contra Costa County to increase their participation in the CCA program (students planting trees, etc.), Discover Diablo, DiRT days, and other events (such as Coastal Cleanup Day). Ensure these programs include important information about the climate crisis, including how land conservation helps mitigate climate change and what individuals can do to help. Also, look to create volunteer student docent opportunities in our programs.

Financial

- Research and identify new, more mission aligned sponsors and funding partners for Moonlight on the Mountain (MoTM), Discover Diablo, and Diablo Range efforts.
- Going forward, when considering a potential new corporate sponsor that is substantially questionable if mission aligned with SMD and its CAP, staff will work through the matter and seek input from the Development Committee
- Expand organizational investments that will reduce or eliminate exposure to fossil fuels based on guidance from the Finance Committee and our investment advisor.
- Hire and have financial investment advisor manage the SMD Stewardship Endowment Fund to be free of fossil fuel company investments.

- If financially feasible, select a new retirement platform in conjunction with existing platform and incorporate fees into new fiscal year budget.

Land Acquisition

- Identify high-priority lands for land acquisition south of I-580 in the Diablo Range and any possible lands that might help support safe wildlife crossings of significant roads thereby helping improve and protect this critical north-south mountain range corridor.
- Collaborate with public agencies, landowners, and other private stakeholders located farther south in the Diablo Range to increase land acquisition efforts in the region and educate them on its importance in the context of climate change.

Organizational Carbon Footprint

- Design a plan for staff to work remotely to the greatest extent possible, while making sure there remains an emphasis on meaningful team interactions and team building, to greatly reduce SMD-caused transportation-related GHG emissions.
- Design a plan to encourage the use of public transportation as well as low and zero-GHG emission vehicles in everyday office activities and SMD events, including public transportation reimbursements.
- Research costs and develop a plan to electrify the SMD vehicle fleet.
- Research cost (including rebates) of installing electric vehicle (EV) charging stations at appropriate locations and discuss with building owner.
- Identify and use local vendors with sustainable menus for internal and external events (that is, locally shipped and responsibly sourced) where food is served.
- Continue to offer at least one vegetarian option for internal and external events and avoid offering beef except for high-profile and donor-sensitive events.
- Develop a plan to go paperless and substantially reduce, and eventually eliminate, use of single-use plastics.
- Enroll SMD offices (depends on building owner for current office) and properties in MCE's Deep Green program (100 percent clean-energy sources) wherever possible.
- Research LEED certification and gauge interest of current office building management.
- Research potential for solar and wind on SMD properties.

Stewardship

- Support a "prescribed burning and ecological fire management" stance on land management issues by identifying and joining relevant coalitions.
- Research grazing standards (for example, EBRPD standards) and regimes.
- Develop and implement a plan to protect or plant 10,000 trees or plants in the next 10 years, incorporating tree caging, invasive plant removal, planting new trees from seed or certified nurseries, and partnerships with native plant organizations.
- Research and develop budget to replace gas-powered land management tools and equipment (chainsaws, vehicles, etc.) with electric whenever possible to reduce GHG emissions.
- Incorporate Leave No Trace principles into recreation and stewardship activities.
- Develop a plan to reduce waste production in stewardship activities and partner with other agencies on trash removal projects (including Coastal Cleanup Day).

FYE 23 (April 1st, 2022–March 31st, 2023)

Financial

- Secure relationships with new, more mission aligned sponsors for MoTM, Discover Diablo, and Diablo Range.

[redacted]

- Research corporate sponsors to help underwrite phased purchase of electric SMD fleet vehicles.

- Research corporate sponsors to help underwrite phased purchase of solar panels at suitable SMD properties (such as Curry Canyon Ranch, Wright Canyon, etc.).
- Going forward, when considering a potential new corporate sponsorship that is substantially questionable if mission aligned with SMD and its CAP, staff will work through the matter and seek input from the Development Committee.
- Explore whether we further engage our financial investment advisor to manage other SMD funds in a way that reduces or eliminates investments in fossil fuel companies.
- Make new retirement plan platform available to all current and new employees.

Organizational Carbon Footprint

- Implement a plan for staff to work remotely to the greatest extent possible, while making sure there remains an emphasis on meaningful team interactions and team building, to greatly reduce SMD-caused transportation-related GHG emissions.
- Implement a plan to encourage the use of public transportation as well as low and zero-GHG emission vehicles in everyday office activities and SMD events, including public transportation reimbursements.
- Apply for relevant permits and rebates to install electric vehicle (EV) charging stations at appropriate locations.
- Discuss next office space location and specifications (location, lease vs. own, LEED certification, EV charging stations, etc.).
- Implement a plan to go paperless and substantially reduce, and eventually eliminate, use of single-use plastics.
- Develop plan to upgrade appropriate SMD properties to LEED efficiency.
- Design a plan (potentially with consultants) for solar and wind on SMD properties and research application and funding programs (such as MCE, County, PG&E, etc.).

Stewardship

- Update grazing leases as they renew to align with best practices.
- Do bunchgrass seeding and create partnerships associated with 10,000-tree plan.
- Replace gas-powered land management tools and equipment (chainsaws, vehicles, etc.) with electric whenever possible to reduce GHG emissions.
- Require that all future purchases for tools and equipment be electric or fuel-efficient whenever possible.
- Implement plan to reduce waste production in stewardship activities and partner with other agencies on trash removal projects (including Coastal Cleanup Day).

FYE 24 (April 1st, 2023–March 31st, 2024)

Financial

- Explore whether we further engage our financial investment advisor to manage other SMD funds in a way that reduces or eliminates investments in fossil fuel companies .
- Continue to work with broker on available investment pools for participants.

Organizational Carbon Footprint

- Replace one or both SMD vehicles with electric versions.
- Downsize office space location as appropriate.
- Upgrade SMD properties to LEED efficiency (this or subsequent fiscal years).
- Initiate permit process for solar and wind on SMD properties (installation in subsequent years).