

2018 Annual Report

Year in Review

This past year was one of slow planning for Fertile Ground. We didn't embark on any major projects for most of the year. However, our work has continued apace. We have continued to organize, network, collaborate, and resist. And we do it all of this as volunteers: none of us are paid for our work. Our overhead is extremely low. We have no office, and our regular expenses amount to website hosting costs and a few other tools. Therefore, donations go directly to supporting our core work.

In April, we invited Suprabha Seshan to join our advisory board. Suprabha Seshan is director of the Gurukula Botanical Sanctuary (GBS) in the Western Ghat Mountains [one of the 8 most biodiverse spots on the planet] in India, where a small team of rural women employ skills that place them among the world's most advanced plant researchers and conservationists. She has lived and worked there for twenty-two years.

The Sanctuary is a center for plant conservation, habitat restoration and environmental education and also a community. In 2006, on behalf of the Sanctuary she won the Whitley Award, UK's top prize for nature conservation. She is an Ashoka Fellow. Her current focus is the restoration of one of India's most endangered ecosystems: the high elevation shola grasslands.

We first connected with Suprabha at Earth at Risk, and organized a speaking event for her in Oregon in 2016. We are very pleased to welcome her to Fertile Ground!

In May, we again sponsored the Sacred Water, Sacred Forests gathering with a small financial gift. This funding supported travel costs for attendees and helped provide food. This event, which was organized by Fertile Ground's Max Wilbert (among others) is a great example of building a land-based community of resistance.

Earth at Risk continues to have ripple effects (and we would love to hold another, if we could find funding to make it happen). At the 2014 EAR conference in San Francisco, we connected with the brilliant organizers with Asian Women for Equality (then known as Asian Women's Coalition Ending Prostitution), a Canadian group.

In October 2018, we began a collaboration with AWFE on a new project: Indigenous and Women of Color Rise. As of this writing (March 2019), that event has come to fruition and was a major success. We attracted an audience of more than 200 people to this event focused around the brutal intersections of racism and sexism for women of color and indigenous women, and to the resistance movement against this exploitation. Our board member Cherry Smiley was unable to attend, but the phenomenal poet Dominique Christina delivered a powerful performance.

This event also provided an opportunity for us to organize a meeting of feminist organizers before the event. Around 20 dedicated women gathered on Capitol Hill and spent a few hours sharing and connecting with one another. It is our

experience that gatherings such as this are a great way to sew the seeds of future projects—to create, for lack of a better term, Fertile Ground. We’re very glad to work with AWFE on this project.

Additionally, our fiscal sponsorships have continued as with last year. The Good Grief Group, based in Salt Lake City, “is a network of individuals and groups refusing to settle with the status quo. We work for social, political, and spiritual change. Good Grievors treasure critical thinking, nuanced dialogue, and coloring outside of the lines.” The second organization, the Mountains and Waters Alliance, is based on a small farm in Minnesota. Their mission is “to heal the mind of separation, the cause of our time’s unthinkable violence, and to ally with forces of nature to protect and restore the wholeness of life. Releasing human arrogance, with love and beyond conventional wisdom, we seek and follow guidance from those forces: land care, growing food, teaching, writing, retreats, and whatever is required. This is our intervention on climate catastrophe, while we prepare to offer hospice if needed.”

We provide these groups with support, accounting, and 501c3 fiscal status, and in return take a small portion of their income.

Outlook for 2019

In 2019, we plan to continue our base work, engaging with allies and partners engaged in grassroots organizing and resistance work. As mentioned above, our collaboration with Asian Women for Equality has played out successfully thus far, and we’re in discussions with them for additional projects. We also continue to plan and dream for our next Earth at Risk event, which remains un-funded for now.

Financial Summary

Income

- Donations: \$270.64
- Mountains and Water Alliance income: \$4,218.17

Total gross income: \$4,488.81

Expenses

- Mountains and Waters project expenses: \$5,136.65
- Sacred Water, Sacred Forests: \$300
- Filing Fees: \$90.00
- Administrative costs (website, PO box, etc.): \$185.16

Total expenses: \$5,711.81

Assets

Total end of year assets for Fertile Ground Institute: \$7,485.10