

**SCHOOL OF LIVING
STRATEGIC PLAN
Approved 4/18/2010**

WHAT WE ARE: We are a nonprofit organization that is dedicated to educating people about the major problems of living and their solutions. What this means to us is articulated in our core values, mission, and vision.

A. Our Core Values: Our core values are basic principles that guide us in our work. In daily operation, School of Living shall conduct its affairs in constant accord with the following basic principles:

1. **Devotion to Education.** The School of Living is primarily devoted to education, a process which implies a definition of the basic problems of humankind, with study and experience designed to understand and address these problems and solutions in a context in which learners, members, and staff are continually engaged in mutual and self-education, without regard to credentials or other extrinsic rewards.
2. **Egalitarianism.** Titles and offices within the School indicate differentiation of function and responsibility, not of power of groups or individuals over one another. All activities and processes within the School shall be as widely participatory and consultative as possible, decentralizing authority and eliminating hierarchy.
3. **Consensus: A Process of Caring.** All decisions will be made by consensus, but that means much more than a limitation of action to occasions of total agreement. Rather, consensus is a process of reverence and caring for one another, with full respect for individual differences and the achievement of unity in decisions which reflect the relationships of individuals to one another and to the issue at hand.
4. **Methods of Humane Group Process.** To achieve consensus and egalitarianism, there shall be continual effort to maintain open and participatory communication by methods of humane group process, such as broadening the availability of essential information, guaranteeing that each individual has a right to be heard, and is respected, regardless of age, sex, position, race or temperament. Meetings shall be open, well-announced, realistic in scope and function, and provide ample opportunities for response and consideration of alternatives. Teams of individuals performing specific tasks shall seek a broad base of input and information and opinion and make their records and reports open and public. Personal blocks to communication and egalitarian participation such as aggressiveness and shyness shall be recognized and dealt with to facilitate group process, and all possible means explored to foster self and mutual respect in consensual action toward the School's stated objectives.
5. **Responsible Stewardship.** All resources of the School, including its accumulated talents and energies and possessions, but most specifically the land it holds in trust, are held by the School in responsible stewardship for public use and achievement of the purpose of the School. It is the intent of the School to remove such resources from the speculative marketplace, to keep them enduringly available and managed in such a way that will not limit their value for others in the future, will perpetuate the spirit of human stewardship of land and other resources, and contribute to educational goals and the general aims of a decentralized, ecologically-sound, participatively-governed and humane society.

B. Our Mission and Vision:

Our mission describes our purpose as an organization:

The School of Living is an educational organization dedicated to learning and teaching the philosophy, practices and principles of living that are self-empowering for individuals within the general aim of establishing locally based, ecologically-sound, self-governed and humane communities. All of its resources, but most specifically the land it holds in trust, are held in responsible stewardship for present and future generations.

Our vision statement describes what it would be like to fulfill our purpose:

School of Living will be recognized as a leader in creating a more sustainable world. Our communities will demonstrate regenerative design and model a joyful, abundant, and peaceful way of life. Our land trust and membership will be larger, and our communities will support each other on all levels. We will have paid staff whose work will extend our influence beyond existing SOL boundaries to educate and inspire the general public. Future generations will use and preserve our land and other resources.

C. WHERE WE ARE IN THE WORLD: There are many factors that affect School of Living over which we have little or no control. Our success depends on our ability to understand these opportunities and challenges, and respond wisely.

Environmental Trends:

- Peak oil and climate change.
- Declining quantity and quality of water and increasing corporate control of water supplies.
- Growth of sustainable agriculture.

Implications for School of Living:

School of Living needs to implement more sustainable systems and cultivate abundant land-based livelihoods on our land trust lands while expanding our sustainability education programs.

Economic Trends:

- Poverty and unequal access to land.
- Global financial crisis.
- Consumerism.

Implications for School of Living:

School of Living needs to acquire more land, support our communities in becoming more self-sufficient, and appreciate the non-material abundance that we have.

Social Trends:

- Racism, sexism, oppression, and polarization/fragmentation into groups.
- Fascism and terrorism.
- Growth of global population resulting in perceived struggle for land.
- Family disintegration and dysfunction.
- Growth of techno-centered culture.
- Changing definitions of family.
- Growth of spiritual awareness and earth-centered culture.

Implications for School of Living:

School of Living members need to practice cooperative living skills and alternative healing modalities while educating others, especially young people.

Educational Trends

- Growth of a new paradigm of learning.

Implications for School of Living:

School of Living needs to increase mutual support with AERO and develop expanded, financially self-sustaining education programs at the SOL communities.

D. OUR STRATEGY FOR SUCCESS: Our organization has a unique gift to offer the world. Our key distinguishing factors give us our “sustainable cooperative advantages.”

School of Living’s sustainable cooperative advantages are:

- Our track record of successfully operating for over 50 years as a primarily volunteer-run organization, with an active board and membership.
- Our community land trust, which has preserved over 600 acres and supports 6 communities which demonstrate sustainable lifestyles and provide experiential learning opportunities.
- Our 20-year partnership with AERO, a leading organization in the movement for alternative education.

E. THE GOALS THAT DEFINE OUR FUTURE SUCCESS: We have identified several overarching goals that are essential to our future success and will guide our investment of organizational resources:

1. **EDUCATION GOAL:** Design, implement, promote, and support transformative empowering educational programs using holistic experiential and hands-on methods for life-long learning, social justice, and a sustainable future.
 - A. Continue to develop partnership with AERO.
 - B. Create organizational structure to support education (ie. director, networking, funding)
 - C. Support the development of educational programs on SOL land.
 - D. Develop partnerships with colleges and universities.

2. **PERMACULTURE GOAL:** Implement and educate through regional centers demonstrating life supporting functionally-interconnected systems that empower people to live holistic lives that save resources, labor and time while creating abundance and joy.
 - A. Put together a team to create Permaculture plans for SOL CLT lands.
 - B. Implement the Permaculture plans.
 - C. Provide funding for consulting fees for the creation and implementation of Permaculture plans for SOL CLT lands.

3. **ABUNDANCE GOAL:** Expand the definition of abundance from the narrow view of money and material possessions to include heart centered dynamic spiritual interconnection with all our relations and the planet.
 - A. Organize educational programs focusing in abundance.
 - B. Continue individual healing work to increase connections between self and others.
 - C. Develop a barter system inter-community wide, including healing remedies, and put that information on the web.
 - D. Raise more food than we need to share with others.
 - E. Support the development of earth-centered culture through experience.

4. **LAND TRUST GOAL:** Promote the SOL CLT model through education, outreach, and expanding the School of Living Land Trust.
 - A. Educate the public about the SOL CLT model.
 - B. Expand acres in the SOL CLT.
 - C. Clean up old business of the land committee.

5. **DIVERSITY AND MEMBERSHIP GOAL:** Become more inclusive of a wider range of cultural diversity (racial, sexual, spiritual) through increased membership.
 - A. Improve our cultural competence.
 - B. Conduct outreach to underrepresented groups.

6. **DEVELOPMENT GOAL:** Engage in fundraising and make resources available for compensation for work done to accomplish the mission and take the organization to the next level.
 - A. Create position(s) (staff or consultants) with compensation by 2010 (ie. coordinator, grant writing, website)
 - B. Create process for oversight.
 - C. Create a fundraising and business plan.