

2022 ANNUAL REPORT **THE PLANT INITIATIVE**



BUILDING A MOVEMENT TO
INCREASE RESPECT FOR PLANTS



2022 ANNUAL REPORT THE PLANT INITIATIVE

2022 saw continued progress for The Plant Initiative – our second full year! We are pleased to share our annual report with you and hope that you will find it of interest. With your support and encouragement, we have taken real steps toward our mission of building a movement to increase respect for plants. The Initiative seeks to accomplish this through advocacy, collaboration and partnerships, and education and outreach.

This year, we awarded \$5,500 in grants, produced our monthly e-newsletter which is received by hundreds of subscribers, held a special online event, responded to requests for speakers, strengthened our presence on social media, helped to build broader collaboration internationally in support of plants, and more!

As an all-volunteer organization with no paid staff, we aim to use all gifts and contributions effectively and appreciate every donation. Thank you again for your involvement with and support for The Plant Initiative over the past year. We look forward to more efforts on behalf of plants in 2023!

Paul Moss
Executive Director



2022 HIGHLIGHTS

The Initiative has really gotten in gear over the past year! Here are some highlights:

- Eight talented members are serving on the board of directors as of December 31, 2022, contributing their time and expertise as volunteers to advance The Plant Initiative's work.
- We received over \$8,800 in donations to support our work, including the Initiative's first grants, generously awarded by three foundations. We are also grateful for receiving proceeds for one year from the sale of Ken Brown's book *Call to Purpose* <https://calltopurpose.com>.
- We produced 12 informative monthly e-mail newsletters including resources, events, opportunities, and action steps to help increase respect for plants - with over 800 subscribers as of the end of 2022.
- The Plant Initiative sponsored a one hour online program "On Respecting Plants" on December 22, 2022 featuring animal behavior and conservation expert Dr. Marc Bekoff which attracted 234 registrants. A video recording of the event is posted on The Plant Initiative's YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/@theplantinitiative> and has been accessed by over 200 viewers.

2022 HIGHLIGHTS

- We awarded a total of \$5,500 in grants to 11 organizations working to increase respect for plants, encourage ethical behavior toward plants, and/or to support development of an effective movement toward these goals. Grants of \$500 each were provided to:
 - **Center for Biological Diversity (Tucson, AZ)** to support the Center's efforts on behalf of the endangered Huachuca water umbel which has been reduced to a handful of disconnected clumps in the Southwest US, including through protecting its habitat as well as continued monitoring, litigation, and advocacy on behalf of this plant and the desert riparian ecosystem where it lives.
 - **Center for Democratic and Environmental Rights (Spokane, WA)** to expand the Center's work with Tribal Bands of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe to protect the rights of manoomin [wild rice], with the grant supporting contracting with a Chippewa tribal attorney who worked as part of a team to conduct legal research and legislative drafting involving the White Earth Band and other Chippewa Tribal Bands.
 - **Dogwood Alliance (Asheville, NC)** to help support the Alliance's story-telling, forest-loving, justice-elevating initiative: Woods & Wilds: The Podcast, with the grant designated for producing podcast episodes in collaboration with a Black, female-led media group as well as to support online education to help improve editing, sound, and marketing for the podcast.
 - **Earth Law Center (Boulder, CO)** to support travel to the 2023 meeting in Argentina of the Conference of the Parties of the Escazu Agreement, an environmental and sustainable development treaty between governments in Latin America and the Caribbean which has been in force since 2021, to help secure formal support for advancing the Rights of Nature in the agreement, with Earth Law Center helping to ensure that plants, which are sometimes underrepresented in the Rights of Nature, will benefit from Rights of Nature support that is secured through the treaty.
 - **Friends of Animals (Darien, CT)** to support Friends of Animals' Pesticides Free campaign, as well as increasing the general public and FOA members' awareness, respect, and concern for plants as valuable beings for the environment, animals, and us all, including developing educational materials and digital publications distributed on social media.
 - **Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature (San Francisco, CA)** to support an amicus curiae (friend of the court brief) for a critical Rights of Nature case being heard by Ecuador's Constitutional Court on Intag Valley, a unique cloud forest ecosystem. [On March 29, 2023, the court ruled in favor of Rights of Nature and removed the environment license of a large copper mining company that was planning to extract in this valley, one of the world's most important cloud forests and home to several unique plant species, specifically endemic orchids.]

2022 HIGHLIGHTS

- **The Land Institute (Salina, KS)** to support the Institute's foundational work in perennial grain crop research and education as it builds learning communities that help society cross the threshold into regenerative, diverse, perennial grain agriculture, with the grant helping to bring more people in to the creative, healing work of learning and acting together with our plant communities toward a future that is more just and perennial, where all members of our ecosphere receive the respect and care they deserve.
- **Old-Growth Forest Network (Easton, MD)** to help cover the costs of sending copies of Joan Maloof's newly revised book *Nature's Temples: A Natural History of Old Growth Forests* to specific influential faculty members at 40 US forestry schools, with the goal of increasing the appreciation of forests where trees are allowed to live out their natural life cycles and grow to their full ecological potential, with the book potentially increasing awareness of the value of old-growth forests, being selected for class reading lists, and influencing how university-owned forests are managed.
- **Re:wild (Austin, TX)** to advance the recovery of the Saint Lucian pencil cedar, a critically endangered conifer living on the Caribbean island of Saint Lucia with fewer than 100 mature individuals remaining today which are threatened by wildfires and invasive species, with the grant used to complete and disseminate a short video about local botanist Melvin Smith's propagation and reforestation efforts for this tree, which was disseminated on social media and national television to communicate this project to children and adults throughout Saint Lucia and to raise awareness and support for protecting these trees.
- **Trees Forever (Marion, IA)** to support Trees Forever's annual Our Woodland Legacy Symposium that took place on December 15, 2022 in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, which emphasized the intrinsic value of trees through the selection of speakers and topics, and which urged property owners and developers to respect, steward and protect plants and trees, with the grant helping to provide overnight lodging for speakers at the symposium venue.
- **WildEarth Guardians (Santa Fe, NM)** to support the development of a new National Environmental Policy Act comment template that highlights the importance of mycorrhizal fungi and shared networks and demonstrates the urgent need for the US Forest Service to identify and preserve those biological pathways, their network hubs (mother trees), and their adapted progeny (seedlings/saplings favored by mycorrhizal fungi), with the template to be used by WildEarth Guardians and its partners to help advance a shift in agency practices toward incorporation of forest wisdom into agency action and planning.



2022 HIGHLIGHTS

- Our Twitter page grew to over 1,500 followers and our presence on Facebook continues to gain interest.
- The Initiative has been actively collaborating with and supporting Networking with Plants in the Anthropocene <https://networkingwithplants.org>, an international collaborative network that seeks to advance outreach and education to the general public on our relationship with plants. This is part of our ongoing work to increase collaboration among those working for a future that is more respectful of plants.
- Executive director Paul Moss engaged with the public to help raise awareness about The Plant Initiative and its work through the following:
 - American Society of Agronomy International Annual Meeting, November 2022. "Plant Health and Well-Being As an Organizing Principle for Crop Agriculture" (virtual presentation)
 - Networking with Plants in the Anthropocene Podcast, October 20, 2022. Interviewed by Kate Brelje.
 - The Association of Buddhist Care and Counseling 2022 Virtual Conference, August 13, 2022. "Plants as Sentient Beings" (presentation)
 - 2022 International Multispecies Methods Research Symposium: Shifting Paradigms in Human-Animal Relations, May 25, 2022. "Exploring the connection between Intuitive Interspecies Communication (IIC) with animals and IIC with plants, stones, and other beings" (breakout session with Sue Fager and Sarah Abbott)
 - Minnesota Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship Men's Group, May 12, 2022. "Are Plants Sentient Beings?" (presentation)
 - Story and Ritual Podcast, April 22, 2022. "Plant Ethics" Interviewed by Loretta Maps Bolt



Board members as of 12/22

Giovanni Aloi
Sue Fager
Walter Furness
Mya Hummel
Craig Miller, Treasurer
Paul Moss, Chair & Executive Director
Laura Pustarfi, Secretary
August Stolba, Vice Chair

2022 Financial summary

Income

Income from grants and corporate giving \$2,857.37
Income from individual donors \$5,975.16
Total income \$8,832.53

Expenses

Bank charges \$31.36
Grants \$5,500.00
Internet and online services \$350.46
Minnesota Charitable Registration \$25.54
Post Office Box \$106.00
Total expenses \$6,013.36

Assets

Total cash balance 12/31/22 - \$6,196.48

2022 Donors

Names of Individual Donors

Individual names omitted for online version

Foundations & Corporate Donors

On Shore Foundation
The PAJWELL Foundation
PayPal Giving Fund
Transformation Key LLC
Whole Systems Foundation

We are grateful to Betsey Crawford of The Soul of the Earth (<https://thesouloftheearth.com/>) for generously allowing us to use her photographs in this report

Cover photo - Monkshood (*Aconitum depauperatum*) Wynn Nature Center, Homer, Alaska

Page 1 photo - Tall purple fleabane (*Erigeron peregrinus*) Waterton Lakes National Park, Alberta, Canada

Page 2 photo - Giant allium seedheads (*Allium giganteum*) Botanical Garden, Bronx, New York

Page 5 photo - Swamp milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*) Golden City, Missouri

Page 6 photo - Lead plant (*Amorpha canescens*) Konza Prairie Biological Station, Flint Hills, Kansas

Page 7 photo - False yellow foxglove (*Aureolaria grandiflora*) Osceola, Missouri

Design Donated by Mya Hummel

The Plant Initiative

P.O. Box 10803

White Bear Lake, MN 55110

www.plantinitiative.org

info@plantinitiative.org

7

