EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
for the
PROJECT HEALING WATERS FLY FISHING
2017-2020 STRATEGIC PLAN

The Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing [PHWFF] Strategic Plan [Plan] represents an approach to achieve the organization’s mission and vision using specific strategic goals and objectives for the period 2017-2020. The PHWFF Board of Trustees, officers, staff, volunteers, partners and donors are the Plan’s audience. The Plan also informs and educates the public about our organizational mission, goals, and objectives to encourage them and other organizations to volunteer, donate, or partner with us. The Plan establishes a strategic direction to guide annual administrative, programmatic, budgetary, and operational priorities during the period of 2017-2020. This Plan represents the fourth revision of the Plan first established in 2013 covering the period 2013-2016. Successive Plan reviews and updates resulted in its ongoing relevance to current organizational priorities and activities across the nationwide nonprofit organization.

The organization’s mission and vision emphasize developing a high-quality fly fishing program to serve an expanding number of active duty military and disabled veterans - the Participants - across the nation. The nationwide program’s ultimate purpose is the Participants’ physical and emotional rehabilitation. The program is heavily dependent upon partner agencies and many volunteers who conduct the 211 programs throughout the country with the assistance of the PHWFF Headquarters Staff. The PHWFF Headquarters Staff is located in LaPlata, Maryland. The organization’s mission and vision also depends on an expanding and diversified development and fundraising program to provide the financial basis to expand high quality fly fishing programs to an increasing number of Participants. It also depends on the adoption of the best practices available in the nonprofit sector for its organizational systems - financial, administrative, and data management - as well as effective governance by its Board of Trustees.

The Plan establishes five Key Results Areas [KRAs] under which the organization develops specific goals and objectives. Those five KRAs are: 1] External - including relations with other organizations that may partner or support their activities; 2] People - who are the human resources essential to execute or otherwise support the organizational mission and vision; 3] Financial - involving the budgetary and the financial resources necessary to achieve the mission; 4] Internal – management, organization, and culture; and 5] Development - activities focused building relationships and on raising the necessary funds to support the programmatic activities.

EXTERNAL: ENVIRONMENT, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

PHWFF maintains very good relationships with its volunteers, participants, donors, and partners to provide a consistently high quality core fly fishing program that includes fly tying, rod building, fly fishing education, and outings to its more than 211 nationwide programs. It establishes good relationships with foundations and other charities that partner with them through specific grants and cooperative agreements. It lacks the ability to track its participants, both former and current, and this tracking is necessary to determine with some precision the impact of its programs and to more
effectively tell its story. In 2016, PHWFF utilized a very significant grant from the Veterans Administration to undertake a national educational and training program for our volunteer programmatic leadership. PHWFF still needs to improve its relationship with the Department of Defense (DOD) Warrior Transition Command which administers the Warrior Transition Unit of the DOD to expand its outreach to potential Participants who may be in the Transition program. While its donor software program - obtained in 2013 - improved its ability to track donors, PHWFF still needs to explore new donors and to improve outreach to find them. PHWFF’s media presence expanded very effectively as evidenced by its presence on many major television networks and throughout all major social media networks.

Goal 1: By December 31, 2020 PHWFF will increase the number of Participants served by 100% and the number of programs by 10% each year relative to 2016. PHWFF can achieve the increase in participants by expanding existing programs or creating new programs. PHWFF must accomplish these increases while it maintains the quality of its programs and the consistency of programmatic standards.

Goal 2: By December 31, 2020 PHWFF will increase partnerships with external agencies by establishing a baseline of relevant agencies for its mission.

Goal 3: By years end 2020 PHWFF will achieve a Charity Navigator four star status. Charity Navigator is a well-respected nonprofit rating agency. It provides the public with credible knowledge relating the capabilities and effectiveness of charitable organizations. A four star status is the highest level of recognition provided through Charity Navigator. PHWFF pursued this goal diligently over the past few years and 2020 will represent the culmination of that effort. PHWFF will immediately begin to incorporate Charity Navigator performance criteria into its management, budgetary, administrative, and Board of Trustee governance activities.

Goal 4: By December 31, 2020, PHWFF will establish a software program to track participants. PHWFF will select a software program and develop criteria for appropriate participant data collection that will measure the overall programmatic impact and reduce the administrative burden on its volunteer force.

Goal 5: By years end 2020 PHWFF will establish a marketing plan to support programmatic activities and expand its already established positive media presence.

PEOPLE: ENVIRONMENT, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

People remain the most important resource to achieve the organization’s mission. PHWFF retains 3500 volunteers supplying many thousands of invaluable hours to achieve the mission serving on the Board of Trustees, as Regional Coordinators, Program Leads, instructors and volunteer staff. Recently PHWFF hired as new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) a retired member of the military who is an avid fly fisherman and former participant and volunteer in our program. The new CEO brings a broad range of skills
and a level of understanding important to the organization’s future progress. The organization now includes 16 (full-time, part-time and volunteer) staff that provides the programmatic, administrative, and financial assistance necessary to enable PHWFF’s effective operation. The donor population remains stable and loyal to the cause. However, the Board of Trustees, Development Committee and volunteers in the field seek to expand the donor base to ensure future success.

While the decentralized structure of the organization enables growth and creativity, it requires the establishment of program standards and effective training of volunteers in the field. Staff training is also necessary to assure that application of the best management practices. Training is especially important to enable volunteer and staff understanding of the nature of various disabilities which remain the common condition of all participants. Knowing the full potential as well as limitations of participant conditions is essential to the high quality of the PHWFF program. A related area of need is a volunteer and participant review process before acceptance in the program. PHWFF initiated training programs for volunteers and staff in the past two years and good models exist for nationwide expansion of all training activity.

Goal 1: Certify all volunteer leadership as competent for their roles through online training modules or workshops by December 31, 2020. Requirements for volunteer leadership certification shall be developed and a curriculum established utilizing them for application in workshops or on line training.

Goal 2: To assure standardized operations in all 211 programs, a single revised Memorandum of Agreement will be executed by all programs, existing and new, by January 31, 2018.

Goal 3: By December 31, 2018 volunteer leadership will be vetted fully using available low cost background checking programs.

Goal 4: All Headquarters staff will participate in an ongoing professional development program by December 31, 2018 and relevant development materials will be created by year’s end 2017.

FINANCIAL: ENVIRONMENT, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The financial condition of PHWFF provided a continuing asset for the organization since its inception. Net income produced each year since the organization’s incorporation in 2007. PHWFF’s fiscal accountability produced clean annual audits that auditors frequently accompany with commendations. Revenues continued to increase to the level of about $3.5 million in 2016. While revenues always exceeded expenses on an annual basis, recently the rate of increase in expenses exceeded the corresponding rise in the rate of revenue growth resulting in a dwindling cumulative cash balance. More and more funds are now raised in the field - which the organization encouraged - though it resulted in a large portion of restricted revenue to specific regional or local purposes. PHWFF requires more unrestricted donations and revenue to assure the organization can meet its ongoing fixed costs. A very positive aspect of its financials is the General and
Administrative expense ratio which has been about 16% of revenue for the past few years. 20% or less is viewed as a positive ratio and an industry standard of excellence.

PHWFF refined its financial goals over the past 10 years and the creation of the Development Committee resulted in development and fundraising goals and objectives that it manages rather than the Finance and Audit Committee.

Goal 1: By December 31, 2018 the year end unrestricted cash balance shall equal at least $450,000 which is almost twice the current cash balance. By the end of 2017 the cash balance shall be $300,000. A $450,000 cash balance will cover about 6 months of fixed expenses such as salaries, benefits and rent, a reasonable amount of balance according to non profit organization financial practices.

Goal 2: The total cash balance of restricted and unrestricted funds shall be sufficient to support at least 6 months of total expenses excluding expenses which are explicitly conditional on revenue being raised to cover the expense and in kind expenses since those expenses are always budget neutral. Currently our total cash balance of restricted and unrestricted funds covers about 4 months of total expenses.

INTERNAL: ENVIRONMENT, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Internal KRA involves the organization and structure the organization uses to carry out its mission. In 2008, its first full year of operation; PHWFF established 10 regions with 50 total programs and a budget of $392,000. By 2016, PHWFF expanded to 21 regions, 211 programs and $3,500,000 in revenue. In the five years since 2011, which reflected four full developmental years, PHWFF doubled the organization’s revenue and size. The organization uses a decentralized administrative and organizational management system with programs executed locally by volunteers. Presently PHWFF Headquarters employs 16 total (full time, part time and volunteer) staff though it had two in 2007 - its year of incorporation. The organization’s rapid programmatic growth resulted in stress on the system and a demand for greater operational standardization and additional Headquarters Staff support to the programs. To respond to the rapid growth and general concerns for high quality in all programs, the organization established a Field Advisory Council to assist the CEO, as well as a Program Committee of the Board of Trustees to advise the Board and staff on programmatic policies. In 2016, the organization also held a Regional Rendezvous for regional volunteer leadership and a National Program Rendezvous for regional and local program leaders to stimulate the exchange of programmatic ideas and best practices for its programs.

Goal 1: The organization will continue implementing state of the art practices for nonprofit organizations in its management activity and Board of Trustee governance. To achieve that goal it will conduct a mock Charity Navigator rating in 2017 to prepare the Board of Trustees, staff and volunteers for full implementation of Charity Navigator criteria. A professional development plan for staff will be undertaken in 2017 as well as a new process for managing its National Trips. The organization will also establish a management system for all PHWFF inventories of equipment, supplies and other material - long advocated by the Finance and Audit Committee.
Goal 2: By December 31, 2020, the organization will incorporate standards associated with exceptional nonprofit Boards. To assist in achieving this goal, a Founders Circle to advise the Board of Trustees on strategic direction will be established in 2017 and a Board of Trustee self-evaluation will be undertaken at the December 2016 board meeting.

DEVELOPMENT: ENVIRONMENT, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Development KRA is a new area. The development function of the Plan in prior years fell under the Finance KRA. The demands of increasing revenue to meet growing expenses and more participants required establishing both a Development Committee and a Development KRA in the Plan for 2017-2020. The revenues of the organization annually exceeded expenses but recently the rate of expense growth exceeded the rate of revenue growth requiring a strategy for expanding revenues. Individual donations represent the largest fundraising source, followed by special events including tournaments and grants, which increased significantly in the last year. The latter two sources each represent about 20%-25% of total revenues. Our approach to development is to build a larger pool of donors and to emphasize expansion of regional and local development and fundraising.

Goal 1: Grant applications and letters of intent to apply to foundations, charities and the government will increase by 10% over 2016.

Goal 2: By December 31, 2019, regional and local fund raising will increase by 50% over 2016.

Goal 3: By June 17, 2017 PHWFF will determine its organizational capacity to create development specific job descriptions after having assessed by March 31, 2017 existing development responsibilities and the benefit of applying additional development resources.

Goal 4: By December 2019, the Board of Trustees will be accountable for raising funds representing at least 25% of the operating estimated budget of that year. To reach this goal, the Development Committee will establish a template for fund raising events within the region of each Trustee and a policy for giving or getting specific targets will be established.

Goal 5: An endowment vehicle will be established and secure funding of $3 million will be raised by December 31, 2020. To achieve this goal, at least $1 million will be secured for the endowment by September 9, 2018.

PHWFF hopes those who read its Strategic Plan or this Executive Summary will better understand its mission and its strategy for achieving the organization mission and vision. Questions about PHWFF and its Strategic Plan are encouraged and should be directed to its Chief Executive Officer at: todd@projecthealingwaters.org.