



# STARK MOUNTAIN FOUNDATION

*Steward ▲ Educate ▲ Play*

## Strategic Plan 2022-2025

Approved by the Board of Directors 15 February 2022

<p><b>Our Mission</b></p>	<p>To preserve and protect the environment and ecosystem of General Stark Mountain, including its recreational access and historic value, and to support programs and sustain that environment for the enjoyment of present and future generations.</p>
<p><b>Our Vision</b></p>	<p>Inspire the appreciation for and protection of the beauty and unique character of General Stark Mountain for generations to come.</p> <p>Stark Mountain Foundation (SMF) strives to ensure that the objectives “to preserve and protect” are achieved, and to demonstrate that a sustainable and successful model for outdoor recreation can be based on an environmental experience and challenge, rather than the homogenization of our ancient mountains.</p>
<p><b>Our Partners</b></p>	<p>SMF is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization that works with partner organizations such as, Open Road Ski Company, The Preservation Trust of Vermont, Trust for Public Land, Vermont Land Trust, the Green Mountain Club, and the Mad River Glen Cooperative, to preserve the unique and historic environment of Stark Mountain.</p>
<p><b>Our Programs</b></p>	<p>SMF accomplishes its mission 4 ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historic Preservation</li> <li>• Environmental Education</li> <li>• Environmental Protection</li> <li>• Outdoor Recreation</li> </ul>
<p><b>Our Goals: 2022-2025</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Foster passion and appreciation for Stark Mountain.</li> <li>2. Foster understanding and engagement with the features and history of Stark Mountain.</li> <li>3. Enhance the capacity and capability of the Stark Mountain Foundation.</li> </ol>

## Background and Context

Preserving and protecting the area between and including the spine of the Green Mountains to Route 17 between Sugarbush North and the Appalachian Gap is the primary focus of the Stark Mountain Foundation. SMF embarked on and completed an intensive strategic planning process in 2021. The SMF Board of Directors developed this strategic plan with the understanding that SMF would play a central role in the preservation of our beloved General Stark Mountain.

Stark Mountain Foundation understands that people and organizations treasure General Stark Mountain for its beauty, classic New England ski experience, snowshoeing, day-hiking, through-hiking on the Long Trail, and other forms of recreation. Further, people enjoy General Stark Mountain for its wildlife and environment, historical characteristics, and the educational experiences they obtain while visiting. SMF is committed to ensuring that those experiences continue for generations to come. Our support and projects preserve and protect this wonderful natural environment, as well as inform the public on how to contribute to this mission.

### SMF's organization competencies

#### ***Historic Preservation***

*SMF partnered with the Preservation Trust of Vermont to fund the \$1.7 million restoration of Mad River Glen's historic Single Chair. Other successful preservation projects have included providing funding to assist Mad River Glen with preparing for it's application for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places, restoration of the fireplace room at Mad River Glen's base lodge, and renovations to The Stark's Nest shelter on the Long Trail.*

#### ***Environmental Education***

*Through a generous grant from the Tauck Foundation, SMF created the Kent Thomas Nature Center (KTNC) from an abandoned lift shack. Through the generous support of the Taucks and other donors, in 2021, we refreshed the nature center with new interpretive displays, and new taxidermy to complement the geologic information and animal tracking guides. The nature center is open year-round and enjoyed by skiers, snowshoes, and hikers of all ages. SMF has sponsored environmental education programs and installed interpretive signs in the Birdland area.*

#### ***Four Season Recreation***

*As the fiscal sponsor of the Mad River Glen Preserve Our Paradise campaign, SMF helped raise more than \$5.9 million that dramatically improved skiing with snowmaking expansion and dewatering trails, replaced the ski patrol and ski school building, extensively repaired and renovated the Basebox, and funded need-based skiing and ski instruction for VT youths. SMF also established and provided signage and trail maps for a new network of summer hiking and snowshoeing trails on Stark Mountain. SMF partners with the Green Mountain Club to steward the Long Trail as it crosses Stark Mountain. Projects include maintaining the Stark's Nest Shelter, Glen Ellen Lodge, Theron Dean Shelter; trails and bridges, and protecting the natural vegetation.*

#### ***Financial Support for Environmental Preservation***

*Through grants from SMF, Mad River Glen and The Green Mountain Club have been able to complete several trail preservation, regeneration, and erosion control projects to help us fulfill our mission to preserve and protect the natural terrain of General Stark Mountain.*

This plan describes how Stark Mountain Foundation will provide information, resources and support to our partners, beneficiaries, and stakeholders necessary for SMF to fulfill its mission. While some elements of this

plan address immediate needs of the foundation, the overall plan is designed to ensure that Stark Mountain Foundation pursues its mission for many years to come.

## **Our Goals: 2022-2025**

### **Goal 1: Foster passion and appreciation for Stark Mountain.**

Stark Mountain Foundation aspires to create a virtuous cycle of increasing public appreciation and passion for the foundation that will lead to Stark Mountain Foundation becoming an organization on par with notable regional environmental and preservation organizations, such as the Vermont Land Trust, the Vermont Audubon Society, the Vermont Ski Museum, the Preservation Trust of Vermont, and Shelburne Farms.

#### **Goal 1 Strategies:**

- Engage all to appreciate Stark Mountain and all it has to offer and inspire them to help SMF achieve its mission.
- Create passion for our mission with our stakeholders.
- Use conventional and unconventional methods to increase the prominence of SMF's brand.
- Foster partnerships with complementary organizations.

#### **Goal 1 Actions:**

- Work with MRG to create a new hiking trail map with the SMF logo. Include the hiking trail to the Kent Thomas Nature Center and the hiking distance. Include geographic features of Stark Mountain on the hiking and/or ski maps.
- Reach out to new shareholders and passholders to introduce our foundation annually and include them in future newsletter mailings.
- Ensure the SMF brand is visible whenever we contribute to a project.
- Increase recognition of the SMF Brand by:
  - Placing information regarding every SMF planned event in each of the channels on our list of media contacts including but not limited to Front Porch Forum and the Valley Reporter;
  - Putting our logo on pocket maps and on-mountain trail maps during 2021/2022 ski season;
  - Publishing relevant information (articles, press releases, etc.) in conventional and social media (guest authors and Board Members) once each calendar quarter;
  - Sponsoring the snow stake on Tweed Hill. Make it useful and include our logo by the 2023/2024 ski season;
  - Working with MRG to make SMF more visible and providing easier access to SMF's website through a link on the MRG website by the end of 2022.
- Make it easy for a person to join our mailing list from the SMF website – by the end of 2022.

### **Goal 2: Foster understanding and protection of the features and history of Stark Mountain.**

The Stark Mountain Foundation strives to enhance people's appreciation of and passion for the natural environment and the history that reside on Stark Mountain. We aspire to show long-time visitors different aspects of Stark Mountain and to attract new visitors with programs, activities, and facilities that engage them. Expanded engagement will engender greater passion and commitment to protecting Stark Mountain.

**Goal 2 Strategies:**

- Help people intimately know Stark Mountain and its natural features.
- More actively engage in the protection of the environment and ecosystem of General Stark Mountain.

**Goal 2 Actions:**

- Install interpretive signs on Stark Mountain and include interpretive information on the SMF website – One group of signs each fiscal year:
  - Interpretive signs for geologic features of Stark Mountain to give visitors a sense of geography and to cultivate a sense of place;
  - Interpretive signs related to ski lore (Slalom Hill Rope Tow, Moody's, Quacky and Eaton's Run);
  - Interpretive signs for trails named for native Vermont animals (e.g. Fox, Vixen, Chipmunk) similar in concept to that of the Birds of Birdland.
- Use the SMF website and social media to offer more information related to our mission, such as flora and fauna sightings, seen on Stark Mountain, as well as educational materials.
- Offer environmental education programs that fuel knowledge and passion for the environment of Stark Mountain, such as the StorySki and bird programs, at least two per year.
- Collaborate with MRG in the creation of regeneration zones on Stark Mountain and identify the regeneration zones with signs naming SMF as their sponsor.
- Update and ensure that exhibit information in the KTNC is current and in good condition at least annually.

**Goal 3: Enhance the capacity and capability of the Stark Mountain Foundation.**

SMF aspires to be an organization known for its mission to preserve and protect General Stark Mountain. Outdoor recreation on General Stark Mountain, Mad River Glen share and pass sales, and support for charitable organizations have all dramatically increased since 2020. By inspiring and fostering this growth, SMF will expand to operate, achieve its mission, and expand fundraising.

**Goal 3 Strategies:**

Make the Stark Mountain Foundation better equipped to fundraise through building:

- Organizational capacity;
- Financial growth.

**Goal 3 Actions:**

- The Board will approve a budget for each fiscal year before the fiscal year begins – starting September 30, 2022.
- Add a 'volunteer now button' to our website and include an item in each newsletter that asks if individuals would like to be involved in SMF and follow up promptly with everyone who responds – by the end of 2022.
- Put our SMF one-pager in a prominent place in the Basebox. Annually update content and add info to make it more of an active volunteer or donor request starting before the end of the 2022/2023 ski season.
- Seek sponsors for interpretive signage and include donor names on signs.
- Make SMF more capable by hiring paid staff – 2022.
- Increase the volunteer base.
- Each Board Member improves his/her fundraising abilities (example: attending one class, workshop, training session, or conference) – first round to be completed by July 2022.
- Increase the diversity of demographic, perspective, age, background, and capabilities of SMF's Board of Directors.

- SMF Board members and the Mad River Glen Cooperative can articulate what SMF stands for by July 2022.
- Create a concise statement that describes ‘what SMF stands for’ that we can use with the MRG community, the public, and other stakeholders – December 2022.
- Ensure that the financial management, collaboration, and communication technologies support SMF’s Board members, volunteers, and other stakeholders.
- Before each fiscal year, the Board reviews the strategic plan and selects and assigns to individual Board Members and committees specific actions to achieve during the next fiscal year – Starting prior to FY 2023

## **About SMF's Strategic Planning Process**

The Board initiated SMF's 2021 strategic planning process in March 2021. The Board brainstormed to pinpoint the foundation's strengths, the opportunities available to it; and the aspirations the Board had for transforming the foundation. Through its brainstorming process, the Board identified strategies that would help it achieve the aspirational transformation. Finally, to focus the efforts of the foundation, the Board selected metrics to help it track its results in achieving the transformation. The Board sought and included input from ad hoc members of the Fundraising and the Environmental Education Committees within this strategic planning process.

The Board voted unanimously to adopt the foregoing strategic plan on 15 February 2022.

### **Strategic Insights Provided By**

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### **Stark Mountain Foundation Board of Directors**

Jim Elkind, President  
Debbie Lesure, Vice President  
Xander Patterson, Treasurer  
Amory Hunnewell, Secretary  
Penny Parson  
Deb Steines  
Chris Stephenson