You are Transforming Land and Community

2017-2018 Annual Report
Letter from our Leadership

Dear Verde supporter,

Whether you are a community member, donor, funder, partner, or one of our project contractors, you have played a role in our trajectory and made a difference in the lives of many. Without you, we could not have achieved the success and growth we have experienced over the past 13 years. You are as much a part of this work as we are, and together, we can accomplish much more than we could on our own.

The past year has marked a significant turning point in Verde’s history—a time of transformation, of evolution. We have grown from a one-person shop housed at another nonprofit to a 30-person staff. We published the Living Cully Community Energy Plan, which serves as a blueprint for the future of our anti-displacement work. Our founder transitioned out of the executive director role on June 30. And we just completed our biggest, most public project—Cully Park.

In light of the current onslaught of hostility from the federal administration to the low-income and people-of-color communities we serve, it is more important than ever to ensure we perform at a high level and stretch to grow the organization to meet the increasing needs of our communities. Matching our entrepreneurial ethos with ever stronger internal systems and fundraising will be dual pathways of Verde’s growth to serve community. We count on your support as we work together towards this vision for the future.

Sincerely,

Tony DeFalco
Executive Director

13 Years of Service: Honoring Alan

This year, we celebrate Verde’s founder Alan Hipólito as he steps out of the executive director position after 13 years of service. At Verde, Alan created a vision of connecting low-income people and people-of-color to the economic benefits of the sustainability movement in Portland. Perhaps more important than the vision is his trademark characteristic: dogged determination to execute that vision into reality. Alan has a deep commitment to community. He grounds himself in representing low-income and people of color voices in civil rights, environment, good government and planning; for the last two decades those voices find increasingly prominent places in our civic dialogue because of Alan.

Alan is equally comfortable in front of city council as he is the kitchen of neighborhood residents and is able to speak truth to power and listen and empathize with our communities. This ability comes with a wry sense of humor, a commitment to making room for silenced voices and just being a good human being. Thank you, Alan, for your leadership, vision, and hard work! Alan is continuing at Verde as the Director of Special projects, focusing his attention on renewable energy policy and projects.
The Verde Team

Verde Staff
Leah Altman, Development Director
Carlina Arango, Verde Landscape Program Coordinator
Brenna Bailey, Community Organizer for Housing Stability
Rafael Bautisto, Temporary Landscape Crew Member
Raina Brot-Goldberg, Confluence AmeriCorp Member
Nestor Campos, Education Coordinator
Tony DeFalco, Executive Director
Jess Faunt, Communications and Development Assistant
Mateo Fletes, Landscape Crew Supervisor
Rosalia Flores, Landscape Crew Member
Anna Gordon, Community Programs Manager
Cameron Herrington, Anti-Displacement Coordinator
Alan Hipólitò, Director of Special Projects
Carolina Iraheta Gonzalez, Community Energy Advocate
Malin Jiménez, Community Organizer
Adrian Martinez, Operations Assistant
Samuel Martinez, Landscape Crew Member
Pedro Moreno, Outreach Worker
Ricardo Moreno, Landscape Program Manager
Karen Ortegon, Landscape Crew Member
Maricela Ortega Guzman, Development Admin Assistant
Melissa Palavecino, Operations Coordinator
Abel Perez, Verde Landscape Crew Member
Frederico Ramirez, Seasonal Landscape Crew Member
David Rodriguez, Temporary Landscape Crew Member
Antonio Rojas, Landscape Crew Lead
Roberto Sanchez, Temporary Landscape Crew Member
Vivian Satterfield, Director of Strategic Partnerships
Juan Carola Soreque-Balcazar, Temporary Landscape Crew Member
Stacie Walen, Verde Controller

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Roberto Jimenez
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Maggie Reilly

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leahaltman@verdenw.org

For information about contracting with our Social Enterprise Programs:
ricardomoreno@verdenw.org

For information about our outreach programs:
annagordon@livingcully.org

Photos by Naim Hasan Photography
Cully Park manifests a dream over 10 years in the making, celebrating years of hard work by the Let Us Build Cully Park! coalition, led by Verde. Thank you to the Cully community, Native community, Portland Parks & Recreation, city, regional and state government officials, corporate sponsors and non-profit stakeholders for your coalitional efforts. You transformed a former landfill into a 25-acre city park in the Cully neighborhood, one of the most diverse neighborhoods in Oregon! Over 400 people who previously did not have access to neighborhood park gained access to a park within a ½ mile of their house.

On Saturday, June 30th, over 2,000 community members gathered at Cully Park to celebrate its grand opening event. The event featured Native American and Aztec dancers, other Latinx performers, Native American drummers and storytellers, opening remarks by elected officials, music, food donated by Northwest Natural, local food carts, a scavenger hunt, nature and education activities with Columbia Slough Watershed Council, a youth soccer clinic, a plant giveaway, tours, and a viewing party for the Portland Timbers vs. Seattle Sounders match on a big screen in the park. The party continued well into the evening, with many community members returning in days following.

Our Children Made Cully Park!
Verde engaged over 100 youth to design the overall park, including the Nature Play Area. One of the most unique features that they designed includes a large dirt mound with plants, boulders, two large slides, a climbing wall, and other fun features inspired by natural elements. Thanks to our funder and partner A Miracle Foundation—an organization that prioritizes bringing ADA-accessible play equipment to parks—we also installed equipment accessible to children with special needs, making play more equitable for all of our community’s children. Our youth are playing at the Nature Play area everyday! Come see it for yourself!
Our Community Made Cully Park

Wendy loves Cully Park. As a leader in the Cully community, Wendy Yah-Canul was involved in the park development from the early stages. In 2011, Wendy helped test the soil at the landfill where Cully Park now sits, helping us determine if the park was safe for building a park.

Now, Wendy looks forward to working in the community garden she helped build, as her kids play nearby in the youth play area at Cully Park.

"Thank you to the whole community. For me, it was a beautiful experience to be involved from the beginning."
– Wendy Yah-Canul, Cully Community Member

Reclaiming Land: Portland Park’s First Urban Native Gathering Garden

The Native Gathering Garden (NGG) provides the unifying design theme for the entire park. Beginning in 2010, a committed core group of Native and non-Native community leaders turned to our Portland urban Indian community to define an indigenous garden design feature, the first of its kind in a City of Portland park. Initially sized at 20,000 square feet, the Native Gathering Garden at Cully Park has grown to over 36,000 square feet. The design of the NGG is place-based, with a strong emphasis on the Native American relational worldview, incorporating design elements with cultural significance to the Chinookan people and other tribes represented in the Cully neighborhood. Verde played an important role in engaging, advocating for, and supporting the Native community in the design of the park, from initial designs to volunteer plantings and feedback sessions.

Thanks and Recognition for Native Gathering Garden design and direction goes to the Portland Youth and Elders Council, Native American Youth & Family Center, Native American Community Advisory Council to Portland Parks, and attendees of community conversations hosted at PSU’s Native American Student and Community Center. Thanks and recognition for the unending commitment of the project’s core group: Judy Bluehorse Skelton, Donita Sue-Fry, David Hall, Ridhi D’Cruz, Isabel LaCourse, Cary Watters, and Shawna Zierdt.
Cully is going solar!

There are growing resources for renewable energy projects in Portland and across the United States. Verde’s Community Energy Advocate Carolina Iraheta Gonzales has spent the last year bringing those resources to the Cully neighborhood in order to reduce energy burdens and ensure climate resilience for Cully’s low-income neighborhood.

Verde published the Living Cully Community Energy Plan in March 2018. The Plan creates a blueprint for how we can prevent displacement through increased investments in the energy sector by outlining six Cully-based pilot projects.

Our first project is underway: a 78kW solar PV installation at St. Charles Church. The solar panels will supply a high percentage of the building’s electricity needs, increasing the organizations capacity to invest in programming activities and support services for the community. St. Charles Borromeo is home to a diverse congregation of 350 families, and many programs use St. Charles’ facilities on an annual basis to serve hundreds of people.

The project also includes inverters and solar storage connected to key outlets, the wireless Internet connection and refrigerators. As a recognized community institution that can serve as a gathering place and resource for families in the aftermath of an extreme climate or weather event, the solar storage will provide a place for community members to charge their phones and computers; communicate with friends, loved ones, and first responders; and store food and medicine.

Verde Builds—Verde’s general contracting social enterprise—serves as the project manager and worked with Neil Kelly Soar to permit and construct the project. Thanks also to our partners at St. Charles Church, and our funders Pacificorps BlueSky.

“We want to ensure that low-income communities and communities of color like Cully have access to the green energy revolution.”

– Carolina Iraheta Gonzalez, Community Energy Advocate
Cully residents organize to protect 3,000 mobile homes from displacement

Mobile home residents are losing their home all over the country due to redevelopment, including Portland. August 22nd, the residents and allies a part of Verde’s Cully Mobile Home Program achieved an groundbreaking win for affordable housing in Portland. Portland City Council voted 5-0 to adopt the Manufactured Housing Park zoning ordinance, protecting 56 mobile home parks and 3,000 homes from redevelopment.

Cully residents are all too familiar with the pressure of park closure. In 2016, our neighborhood almost lost 30 affordable homes when Oak Leaf Mobile Home Park was threatened with closure and redevelopment. The Oak Leaf was preserved thanks to the tenacious organizing of its residents and neighbors. Now, the Manufactured Dwelling Park Project will help ensure that all of Cully’s mobile home parks—and 56 parks citywide—are preserved for current and future residents.

This new zoning designation preserves over 3,000 affordable homes in Portland by establishing a “manufactured dwelling park” as the only allowed land use on 56 properties where such parks currently operate. Resident organizers worked with public officials for over a two years in support of this new ordinance.

Thank you to the residents who showed up at city council meetings to testify and show their supports, as well as our ally organizations who submitted testimony. Thank you to Metro Housing Advocacy and Engagement, NW Area Foundation, Surdna Foundation, Concordia Foundation, Meyer Memorial Trust, and a growing list of individual donors for supporting Verde’s anti-displacement programming, including the Cully Mobile Home Program.
Increasing minority- and women-owned business presence in the green economy

Cully Park is a model example of tying together the social, economic, and environmental elements of sustainability—known as the triple bottom line. In the process of designing and building Cully Park (environment) in a majority low-income and people-of-color neighborhood (social), Verde Builds ensured that a majority of the contracts went to people who represent our communities (economic).

Cully Park was developed via a public–private partnership between Verde and the City of Portland, allowing Verde to set ambitious target business contracting goals. Verde Builds contracted over 75% women- and minority-owned businesses to construct Cully Park. Verde Builds—a licensed Commercial General Contractor Level 2—creates contract opportunities for target businesses that are often left out of Portland’s green economy. Thank you to the target business contractors that worked on Cully Park, including Colas Construction, NW Infrastructure, O’Neill, Faison, Fulcrum, Summit Woodworking, Interloken, Verde Landscape, and NWR Construction.

From Cully Park to 30 parks across Portland: Expanding Verde Builds

Nike and the Portland Trail Blazers are teaming up to refresh up to 100 basketball courts across 30 Portland Parks & Recreation parks, and they chose Verde to manage their generous grant donations. Verde Builds will serve as the general contractor for the project. You can expect to see:

• new paint and a new design featuring the name of the park on the courts, along with the Trail Blazer pinwheel and Nike swoosh logos
• redesigned backboards with the name of the park’s quadrant
• surface repairs and backboard and hoop replacements

We look forward to your first game-winning three-point shot on the reconditioned court!
Offering greener wages for low-income people-of-color

As contracts in the green economy are increasing in Portland, our Verde Landscape social enterprise accesses those wages for communities traditionally left out of the sustainability movement. Verde’s Landscape Training Program connects low-income people-of-color with access to good jobs in the green economy, while also investing in their long-term career development within the sustainability sector. Verde Landscape offers higher-value, higher-skilled services in and outside the Cully neighborhood, including natural area restoration services, stormwater management installation services, landscape maintenance, and more.

Verde Landscape crew members receive classroom and on-the-job training, growing the skills needed to perform the specialized services we offer. Regular crew members earn a competitive wage, receive Verde-paid medical and dental insurance, and participate in on-the-job training and classroom training. Our long-term goal is that each crew member is placed with a destination employer with greater opportunities for wage and career growth, transitions to owning his/her own landscape business, or advances to be a Verde Landscape crew leader.

“Verde Landscape is a really unique program that not only includes the educational and training component, but also the paid job aspect.”
– Rosa Flores, Verde Landscape Crew Member

Helping crew members reach their potential: celebrating 10 years of leadership

Ricardo Moreno has spent 10 years working as the Verde Landscape Program Manager, supporting crew members as they develop green workforce skills. This winter, we celebrate as Ricardo grows in his own career path, to take on a new position within the organization as the Program Manager of Verde Builds.

“The lives of many individuals have been impacted by our social enterprise model, which has helped our crew members reach their true capacity,” says Ricardo.

Ricardo’s career path speaks to his deep knowledge of the Cully community and urban landscaping. Ricardo started working at Verde in 2006 managing street tree planting for two years before stepping into his current role. Before Verde, Ricardo worked for Hacienda in property management for low-income housing developments and community outreach, as well as for a local landscaping firm. In 2012, the mayor appointed Ricardo to serve on the City of Portland’s Urban Forestry Commission.

In Ricardo’s new role, he hopes to continue growing the Verde Builds enterprise through new projects and contracting opportunities. He is especially inspired by Verde Builds’ increasing focus on renewable energy, and is eager to learn about a new field that maintains direct benefits to community.
Getting to Cully’s new parks with

**Now that Cully has parks, how are we going to travel there?**

Active transportation includes walking, biking, or rolling to your destination, and Verde makes those modes of transportation more accessible to Cully residents. Last year, Nestor Campos and our partner Raquel Stewart at OMSI taught over 100 Cully youth how to use and advocate for active transportation in their neighborhood.

A series of six classes, the “Promoting Active Transportation and Health” (PATH) curriculum covers topics like mapping, wayfinding, identifying barriers, and more.

“One of the main things [my students] enjoy is that [PATH] revolves around their neighborhood. When they look at the maps they get excited because they know the places on the maps,” said Evelyn Coca, a 5th grade immersion teacher at Scott School.

Nestor and Raquel adapted the curriculum for a variety of classroom settings. They taught two groups of afterschool students at Hacienda CDC’s Expresiones program, high school students attending the Early College Academy at the Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA), and over 60 5th-grade students at Scott School.

Looking forward, Nestor will be shifting his education focus to climate change and renewable energy. In October, he rolled out a new solar curriculum that provides low-income youth and youth-of-color exposure to STEM education and green workforce opportunities.
Getting to Cully’s new parks with active transportation!

Wayfinding: Community guides the way to Cully parks

Have you visited all Cully’s green spaces: Sacajawea Park, Cully Park, Colwood Golf Course, Whitaker Ponds, and Khunamokwst Park?

Wayfinding systems are sets of informational signs that guide walkers and bikers to green spaces in the neighborhood. This winter, watch for a community-designed wayfinding system to pop up along Cully streets!

The vision for a Cully wayfinding system grew out of a community-identified need for better pedestrian signage. For two years, Verde and more than 300 community members came together for Living Cully Walks events, named after the Living Cully collaborative that Verde participates in. At each event, participants identified transportation barriers along routes to parks or green spaces in Cully. One key barrier identified was a lack of signage and information about how to access parks!

With funding from Metro’s Regional Transportation Options grant, Verde set out to create a community-designed system of wayfinding signs. Now, after engaging over 150 community members in the design, we are on our way to installation!

Thank you to our supporters! This phase of Verde’s Wayfinding Project is funded by Metro, the Regional Arts & Culture Council, PBOT, and Safe Routes to Parks.

The Cully Wayfinding Project Includes:

- 28 eight-foot signs that include maps featuring highlighted walking and biking routes to Cully’s green spaces, and the time and distance to each park
- 10 four-foot mile markers that include health facts about active transportation in English and Spanish
- 4 informational kiosks with community artwork
- 150+ community members involved in designing the Wayfinding signs
- 130 youth involved in the artwork

Community artists Patricia Vazquez, Alex Vallé, and Rudy Serna are tying Cully’s wayfinding system together by engaging with Cully youth to design artwork that will wrap around four informational kiosks.

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Supporter Spotlights

Bringing All Neighbors to the Table in Emergency Preparation

Annette is passionate about working with her neighbors to prepare for emergencies. As a trained Neighborhood Emergency Team member, she helps to prepare the Cully community for climate disasters or emergencies like the Killingsworth scrap yard fire. Annette volunteered at the Cully Park Grand Opening at the Portland Bureau of Emergency Management table. She connected her neighbors to Public Alert resources in their preferred language. Additionally, she shared resources for upcoming culturally informed disaster preparation trainings that Annette, Verde, and PBEM worked together to provide.

“I see myself as a conduit of resources and information. How can I remove barriers to help other people feel prepared?”
- Annette Pronk, Volunteer and Cully Neighbor

By the Community, For the Community:

“Whether it’s partnering to bring social impact finance workshops to social justice leaders or celebrating the opening of new community assets like Cully Park, we’re thrilled to support Verde’s work to build resilient prosperity for Portlanders through environmental investments that are by the community and for the community. Partnering with Verde is rewarding because their theory of change aligns with our own – build a new more inclusive economy through social enterprise and advocacy that gives ownership to those with the least bargaining power.”

Beneficial State Bank is a social enterprise bank founded in 2007 with a triple-bottom-line focus of social justice, environmental resilience, and economic sustainability.
- Kate Rood, Beneficial State Bank

Living and Breathing the Collective Impact Model

“Everything Verde does is about what I believe is next century innovation. Leading with justice and sustainability, Verde finds practical solutions to meet the challenges of climate change and inequity that threaten our communities daily.

I joined the board because I wanted to be a part of an organization that isn’t afraid to get its hands dirty. The change Verde creates starts with people and elevates to transforming communities. We are advancing the needs of people and the environment through redefining community based economy.”

- Desireé Williams-Rajee, Verde Board Co-Chair
2017-18 Financial Report

REVENUE

Government Grants: $3,412,024
Foundation Grants: $1,400,829
Individual & Business Contributions: $120,815
Other Income: $85,300
Fee for Service $1,591,240

EXPENDITURES

Verde Landscape: $1,252,349
Verde Builds: $602,265
Let Us Build Cully Park: $3,986,954
Administration: $433,004
Outreach Programs: $812,662
Development: $35,975
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