

## Vitality Summit Questionnaire

**Organization:** Fishtrap

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### **Mission and purpose in Wallowa County:**

Fishtrap's mission is to promote clear thinking and good writing in and about the West. Locally we strive to stimulate lively discussions of literature and culture, inspire reading and discussion of great books, create opportunities for youth and adults to increase their enjoyment of writing and help them cultivate their creative voice.

### **Key metrics/outcomes/impact for the past year:**

We facilitated the creation of writing in and about the west through our Summer Fishtrap Gathering of Writers, a weeklong conference on creative writing at the Methodist Church camp at Wallowa Lake, as well as an Outpost nature-writing workshop on the Zumwalt Prairie. We offered free evening readings, and concluded with a keynote speech by novelist David James Duncan. 180 attendees came from 34 different states. In addition, 32 writers each spent a week at our Imnaha Writers' Retreat.

Fishtrap encouraged reading through a winter celebration of *A River Runs Through it* by Norman Maclean. We gave over 300 books to students at three Wallowa County schools. We held a number of events to increase connect to the book – from interesting speakers, to classes on how to tie a fly, to a “Battle of the Books” finale quiz-show competition on the book details, with ten teams participating.

We brought a teaching artist to live, write and teach in the county for four months, this created an in-depth connection with the area for him, and helped over 400 students (2<sup>nd</sup> grade through 10<sup>th</sup> grade, as well as an adult class) develop their creative abilities.

### **Current top 3 priorities/focus areas:**

Continue to cultivate clear thinking and good writing in and about the West through conferences, retreats, classes, and lectures. Our top programs next year will be:

- The Summer Fishtrap Gathering of Writers
- The Big Read
- Wallowa County Writer-in-Residence/Fishtrap College

In addition, Fishtrap is in the midst of a three-year Capacity Enhancement Project working to stabilize our organizational foundation – we are working to upgrade our technology, communication & marketing, fundraising and development program, and expand and strengthen our board of directors.

**Challenges that you most need help with, either from another organization or the community at large:**

Getting the word out about Summer Fishtrap. Advertising, underwriting, attending, donating to our auction. Getting the word out about scholarships and free readings for the local community. Finding ways for the local community to connect and participate.

Reviving Fishtrap College – we will need help getting the word out about this opportunity and arranging some scholarship money so that no one is turned away for lack of financial resources.

The Big Read always needs more people on our Big Read committee to help pull off the array of events.

Building our board of directors. We are looking for new board members who want to help take Fishtrap into the future.

A discussion of non-profit business models and different ways to sustain and build a mid-sized non-profit would be interesting.

**Top 3 opportunities you see for the coming year:**

Enlivening our core programs with more local involvement - Summer Fishtrap and The Big Read.

Reviving Fishtrap College.

Developing Fishtrap's next three year plan, setting new goals – could involve an expanded youth program, a writing in the wilderness program, a "lunch and learn" program of lectures/discussion, or a revival of Winter Fishtrap or some other iteration of the "clear thinking" side of Fishtrap.

**# of current active/serious collaborators:**

It's hard to put a number on it – the schools, the libraries, and many local non-profits from AAUW to Soroptimists and of course NEOEDD. We now have a formal relationship with Oregon State University.

**Who would you like to collaborate with more?**

Anyone interested in stimulating more writing, reading, thinking and talking about literature, culture, and the West. Anyone involved in youth programs who wants to bring in more creative writing. Anyone involved in wilderness adventure/appreciation.