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JANUARY 2019

The Cynthia and George Mitchell Foundation's (CGMF) funding priorities focus on sustainability issues in the state of Texas, issues that require actionable solutions driven by knowledge, creativity, and rationality—elements that formed the pragmatic yet innovative approach of our benefactors, Cynthia and George Mitchell.

2018 was a year in which CGMF continued on a path focused on seeking solutions and putting them into motion. Regardless of one's political affiliation, the tremendous forces at work in 2018 (in terms of their rapidity and depth) were breathtaking—alarming for some and exciting for others.

Importantly, the challenges we face and take on are not necessarily unique to Texas.

Across the U.S. and throughout the world, community leaders, planners, activists, and policymakers are wrestling with how best to manage our natural resources in order to maximize resultant economic and social welfare in an equitable manner without compromising the sustainability of vital ecosystems.

In 2018, CGMF invested in 80 grants related to our Sustainability Program, asking grantees for answers and actionable solutions to challenges related to improving the human condition while protecting Texas's natural resources. We are inspired by the integrity, tenacity, and value of their work—whether it be scientific research on water issues, nonprofit environmental newsgathering, or efforts to help mitigate energy sprawl—and the value they bring in helping to solve highly complex issues.

Here are a few highlights from 2018:

- **Advancing One Water.** Texas's watering holes, rivers, and creeks are in jeopardy as population growth, overuse, and climate change stretch precious water resources thin and complicate water management. CGMF commissioned a report, "Advancing One Water," to learn how advocates can advance a viable shift in the state's water practices and provide clear recommendations for advancing a One Water approach. Release of the report garnered headline attention from news organizations ranging from *U.S. News & World Report* to *The Dallas Morning News*.
- **Initiative for Responsible Energy Development.** The Nature Conservancy states that the largest loss of open space is now caused by energy sprawl—the unmitigated use of land resources for the production of energy from both fossil and renewable resources. Nowhere is this phenomenon more apparent than the western hemisphere's most biodiverse and one of the world's most energy-intense areas, the greater Trans-Pecos area. In 2018, we continued the development of a long-term initiative to compile, analyze, and share a rich array of scientifically-informed data to help create a vision for conserving this region of far West Texas's unique resources while encouraging responsible energy development and protecting local communities. The initiative includes a diverse group of landowners, community leaders, energy leaders, environmentalists, scientists, and other stakeholders from the area.



2018 Interactive Timeline



Founders



Leadership

- **A Heightened Profile of the Issues.** A number of CGMF-funded issues, initiatives, and grantees were in the news during the course of 2018, with stories and opinions published in *The New York Times*, *The Dallas Morning News*, *Texas Monthly*, and *U.S. News & World Report*. CGMF also published 27 blog posts with guest editors ranging from Environmental Defense Fund, the National Wildlife Federation, and Boston University's Institute for Sustainable Energy to The Nature Conservancy, Office of the Mayor for the City of Austin, and the Bureau of Economic Geology at the University of Texas at Austin. I invite you to peruse select stories here.
- **A Vision for Galveston.** CGMF continued to collaborate with funders active in Galveston who have been working toward building a collective impact model, whereby everyone invested in Galveston's future can create a shared vision for the island. Vision Galveston, a nine-month community-driven visioning process, was initiated during the summer of 2018 with the goal of mobilizing optimism and including the voices of those who have not historically been included in city-wide planning processes. The results of this visioning process will help form the basis for the revisions to the City of Galveston's Comprehensive Plan. CGMF also plans to use the outcomes of this planning process in the development of our Galveston Program strategy, which also embraces a collective impact approach.

As we move forward in 2019, a solid foundation of science, analysis, and "contrary" thinking will continue to inform and guide our funding decisions. Our primary focus will continue to be on initiatives that address critical sustainability-related issues in the state of Texas—many of which impact other regions of the U.S. and the world. We pledge to stay the course with our collaborators, partners, and grantees.

In May 2019, we will celebrate the 100th anniversary of George Mitchell's birth. He was fond of asking, "If you can't make the world work with six billion people, how are you going to make it work with 10 billion people?" That interplay of environmental protection, social equity, and economic vibrancy was of utmost importance to him. How the planet can sustain economic development continues to drive our mission and purpose.

Sincerely,

Katherine Lorenz