



A Letter from Paul Brainerd, President

March 2008

This year brings long-awaited changes in our country and many new opportunities to advance our work. In the fourteen years since I began the Brainerd Foundation, I have been deeply grateful for the hard work and dedication of our grantees and the larger conservation community in the Northwest. Our combined efforts have resulted in remarkable achievements and there's much exciting work ahead.

When I started the Brainerd Foundation, I brought an entrepreneurial approach to our work. Our philosophy has been to deploy whatever resources, strategies, and tools are necessary to achieve our goals. Most foundations use a budgeting formula designed to preserve their endowments and ensure their operations in perpetuity. This has never been the case at the Brainerd Foundation, and our annual grantmaking has often exceeded the minimum required by law. I have urged my colleague grantmakers to do likewise.

Despite all that we have accomplished, the ecological challenges before us are as significant as humanity has ever faced. I believe we must each do whatever we can to protect the natural resources that sustain this planet because the need is nothing short of urgent. There are many ways to accomplish this, of course, and mine is to see that the foundation's entire endowment is spent in my lifetime. After much thought, I have decided to spend-out the foundation's assets over the next ten to twelve years and then pass the baton to a new generation of conservationists and philanthropists.

I have great aspirations for the investments we've made and those we will continue to make before our doors close. I hope together we will have successfully changed the landscape of environmental conservation throughout the Pacific Northwest; that people from all walks of life, all corners of the region, and all political persuasions will be united in a collective passion to protect this region's remarkable air, land, and water. When we reach the year 2020, the Brainerd Foundation will have completed nearly 25 years of grantmaking.

Many of you will be wondering what this means for our current programs and grantmaking strategies. I encourage you to read more about our organizational vision and values and the [sunset strategy](#) that will guide the foundation on this new course. We will keep you apprised of refinements we make in our programs or operations, and I will continue to do my part, remaining actively engaged in the Brainerd Foundation's grantmaking process throughout the decade ahead.

We are shaped powerfully by the landscapes of our childhood; I have yet to meet someone whose eyes did not light up when recalling the place that shaped their sense of self, community, and broader humanity. Diamond Lake, in southern Oregon, is that place for me and it will forever call to me. The beauty of nature, sense of place, and the richness of this earth have led me to create the Brainerd Foundation and to sustain its work over a quarter of a century.

I offer a sincere and humble invitation to each of you to join me in redoubling efforts toward the conservation and preservation of a better world. There is nothing quite like a vision and concrete timeframe to turn dreams into reality. My dream is that our 25 years of work together will leave a legacy of enduring respect and protection for our region's resources well into the next century.