“The Fierce Urgency of Now”
Liberating The Promise of Bioneers

Not only can we make history, we can change history...

“We are now faced with the fact that tomorrow is today. We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now. In this unfolding conundrum of life and history, there is such a thing as being too late. This is no time for apathy or complacency. This is a time for vigorous and positive action.

– Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
The Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation Signature Challenge Grant: A Game-Changing Opportunity

The Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation (LDF) is making a $1 million “Signature” challenge grant to Bioneers over a three-year period. Their challenge to donors: to leverage it with an additional $2 million or $3 million for the next three years. In other words, a 2X or 3X match.

After a decade of escalating support that climaxed with “doubling down” in 2014 with a $200,000 gift for Bioneers’ 25th birthday, LDF is upping the ante again – with a direct challenge to you, our top Bioneers supporters.

Why? As LDF Executive Director Justin Winters states, Bioneers is a unique movement-building force and a key influencer of this movement of movements that’s arising around the world. Bioneers is the only “big tent” that finds the common ground and collective creativity among diverse stakeholders and constituencies, catalyzing effective action.

The Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation emphasizes three primary goals:

- Leverage the Signature grant with existing and new donors to largely cover Bioneers’ annual budgetary “gap” number for the next 3 years, and thereby,
- Liberate the energy and attention of the Founders, Executive Director and key staff to dramatically increase Bioneers’ capacity, output and influence in these crucial coming years;
- Position Bioneers to grow in vitally important and timely strategic directions.

By embracing this historic opportunity to put Bioneers on firm financial footing and a path to fiscal sustainability and strategic growth, you’re leveraging this entire community of leadership to build the movement and power the global shift that can and must gain traction in this crucial window of time.

We invite your financial partnership to realize this opportunity.
Bioneers has created a remarkable legacy on which to build.
With your help right now, Bioneers’ greatest legacy is yet to come.
June 10th, 2015

Dear Kenny and Josh:

It has been an honor and pleasure for the Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation to support the crucial work of Bioneers for over a decade. In light of this pivotal moment in the world, and the renewed strength of Bioneers as an organization, the Foundation is seriously considering a multi-year grant for a total of $1 million, over a period of three to four years. We expect to be able to finalize the terms for this grant this fall.

This multi-year commitment and increase in our funding reflects our firm belief in the unique value of Bioneers. We see you as being among the most important movement-building forces in the world today, the rare “big tent” that brings together a genuinely diverse set of key players and influencers making real breakthrough change and innovation in the world. The Bioneers gathering is a place to convene and provide practical guidance on creating a sustainable world to a broad network of committed change-makers. So much happens because of Bioneers that otherwise might not.

We recognize your exceptional gift for spotting talent early and serving as a hatchery to bring countless key figures to far wider recognition and influence. The Foundation itself has benefitted directly with invaluable connections such as Chief Oren Lyons, Paul Stamets and Janine Benyus. As a connector, Bioneers is unparalleled, catalyzing important collaborations and novel new networks with remarkable diversity and creative power, which we are grateful exist today.

Our intention in making a Signature grant is to motivate and stimulate other funders to make similar multi-year commitments at the highest levels possible to secure Bioneers’ core annual budget in order to allow the organization to focus maximally on the work itself. We especially also want to liberate the talents of the Founders Kenny Ausubel and Nina Simons and excellent Executive Director Joshua Fouts to apply their unique gifts to advancing the work and to focus on funding for important new strategic growth areas where Bioneers can play a unique role.

Given both the grave state of the world today, and the innovative pathways Bioneers has paved, the Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation is excited to support your organization on a much deeper level. Please encourage any other potential funders who are considering expanded support to reach out to me directly to discuss their commitment. We would welcome the opportunity to build a strong network of funders to support you and your team because we believe Bioneers is going to be one of the game-changers in these fateful years ahead.

Sincerely,
Justin Winters, Executive Director, LDF

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What Your Investment in Bioneers Will Mean

Successfully matching the DiCaprio Foundation’s Signature challenge grant with an additional $2 million in new and increased funding pledged over the next three years will secure the great majority of Bioneers’ annual baseline budget for this period. It will radically liberate the energy and attention of our Founders, Executive Director and staff to focus maximally on the work and growth funding.

Tripling it with an additional $3 million will allow us to start growing again now by hiring key core staff needed to augment our capacity. That will change everything.

A 2X match means the LDF’s annual $333,333 will leverage an additional $667,667 annually. A 3X match will leverage an additional $1 million annually.

Like most nonprofits, each year Bioneers pursues our annual “gap” number: the amount we have to raise that’s uncommitted. It has historically ranged from $600,000-$900,000 a year. This annual contributed income comes from new sources and from prior but as yet uncommitted donors. (Many donors tend to give annually and often do not make multi-year pledges.)

You can hardly imagine how much time and energy this annual pursuit consumes. But perhaps you can imagine how challenging this chronic uncertainty makes it to plan, budget and implement effectively. Resolving this uncertainty will have radically cascading benefits.

An important context is that we’ve successfully completed a complex four-year restructuring. We’ve made the transition from a “mom-and-pop” organization to one with distributed leadership including our first-rate Executive Director Joshua Fouts. Bioneers is cited as a model of healthy succession and an organization being built to last.

Here’s how you can participate in this watershed moment:

- Increase your current giving level and make a multi-year pledge;
- Sustain your current giving level and make a multi-year pledge;
- Make a one-time “heroic” stretch gift (go for it!);
- Help engage new donors to participate;
- Become a new donor!
We cannot overstate the importance of multi-year giving. Here’s why.

1. Increased net assets from future-promises-to-give register on Bioneers’ balance sheet and improve credit ratings while increasing confidence among new prospective donors.

2. Predictable contributed income for future fiscal years means a better basis for building budgets that support the optimal delivery of Bioneers’ mission in the world.

3. Pledges-to-give help lessen time pressures for our chief fundraisers. This returned time supports:
   - Developing new sources of funding, revenues and support;
   - Expanding program work that results in greater mission delivery.

**Double Down on Bioneers Now!**

The good news is that a number of you have already stepped up with major commitments for one, two and three years. Please contact Joshua Fouts at 415-660-9302 for a current copy of our “Dashboard” document, which summarizes the status of contributions toward our goal.

Together let’s realize the 3X match!

Not only can we make history, we can change history.

Please read on to see what you’ll be supporting. If you’d like an exciting summary about our breakthrough accomplishments in 2015, please link to bioneers.org/2015-breakthroughs.

We enthusiastically invite you to join with us to optimize our remarkable shared legacy. With your partnership, together, our greatest legacy is yet to come.

Thank you!!!

With Our Love, Respect and Gratitude –

Kenny Ausubel  
CEO & Co-Founder

Nina Simons  
President & Co-Founder

Joshua Fouts  
Executive Director
“The Fierce Urgency of Now”

The world is in the throes of epochal upheaval, revolution and transformation. At this once-in-a-civilization moment, the years between now and 2020 will be the critical and perhaps last window of time to set in motion a fundamental global paradigm shift before the harm is irreparable.

Bioneers has already played a deeply influential role in turning breakdown into breakthrough. We’ve acted as a seed head for genuinely breakthrough ideas, practices and models from the greatest visionary innovators and systems thinkers of our time. We’ve served as a trellis for a diverse community of leadership to grow and grow together in a co-evolutionary journey. This community literally did not exist 26 years ago, and it otherwise might not exist today to meet this epic moment.

We’ve served as a hatchery of innovation and collaboration, spawning countless fertile connections and cross-pollination across diverse issues, disciplines, cultures, nations and walks of life. We’ve leveraged the holistic forum of the Bioneers conference to provide a multi-media communications platform that is spreading these vital voices far and wide, engaging ever-expanding circles of people.

At heart, what we do is public education, movement building and leadership development. Now is the time to build on and leverage this powerful Bioneers network of networks and our diverse media and platforms to dramatically amplify both Bioneers’ Return on Influence and Return on Engagement.

Our immediate goals are:

• To help educate 7.2 billion people to respect our relationship with nature – now.
• To convert the actionable intelligence in the models and practices of the Bioneers networks into practical action, law, governance, culture and systemic change between now and 2020.
• To inspire a change of heart and a shift in human consciousness to honor our sacred interbeing with nature, each other and all creation.

To learn more about our programs and track record, please enjoy our 25th Anniversary Yearbook (2014) that chronicles the work of Bioneers over this past quarter century – contact Joshua Fouts at (415) 660-9302 if you’d like to receive a copy.

The Vision in Action
What You’re Supporting

In practical terms, what you’re supporting by meeting the DiCaprio Challenge Grant is to strengthen our core team with several key support and executive staff, while positioning us to raise more money for important strategic growth. A relatively modest and affordable increase in key staff will exponentially expand our mission delivery.

Following is a very brief update on what’s on deck for 2016.

Public Education & Media Outreach Program

Following an immense output of media products over the past 2 years, our top priority: Focus on expanding distribution and outreach of all our media products in diverse settings and platforms including conventional and digital media. This program also includes producing the annual conference along with cyclical media productions, including our award-winning annual radio series and Conference Keynote Collections.

Media Outreach:

• We will build on our digital presence on iTunes, YouTube, SoundCloud, the Stitcher radio app and the Roku channel. Imagine Bioneers media becoming readily accessible, commonly referenced and much more widely known.
• We will create a year-round dynamic presence on our web site that will tap into the Bioneers network of networks to bring year-round updates, news and views from the larger community – like the conference year-round. This “digital coral reef” will allow people to stay connected, informed and activated all year with multiple pathways for engagement.

• We will move into new areas, including podcasts and a 24-hour online Bioneers channel.

• We will gain wider media exposure for the people and projects in the Bioneers network (not for the organization per se), like a Bioneers Bureau. Imagine reading about and seeing bioneers in mainstream media, including as pundits in broadcast media.

• We will begin to bring Bioneers media and our new Study & Discussion Guides into schools and community education settings. We’ll seek funding for ongoing production of new Guides. Imagine Bioneers media widely used in schools.

• We will begin to distribute our unique Indigenous Knowledge Media Collections and Study & Discussion Guide(s) into educational institutions (both mainstream and in Indian Country), Indigenous communities and public education settings. A circle of Indigenous educators is advising on the products and process. Imagine spreading top-quality Indigenous knowledge, wisdom and actionable issues into diverse educational settings.

• We will gain wider exposure for our Women’s Leadership media through partnerships with women’s networks and organizations to bring the inspiring models of diverse women in leadership to women and girls widely. These media are an antidote to what Gloria Steinem describes: “If you can’t see it, you can’t be it.” Imagine liberating the potential of women and girls through Bioneers role models!

The Bioneers Conference:

We are adapting the conference to focus on very specific action areas, keyed to influencing systemic change in policy, law, governance and culture between now and 2020. In 2016, we will produce several meta-programs designed to advance several specific priority areas.

• The Biomimicry Institute, in partnership with the Ray C. Anderson Foundation, will announce the winner of their new $100,000 Biomimicry Grand Challenge Prize – this year for biomimetic food systems. Eight competing teams, including a high school youth team, will participate. The meta-program will include a
keynote and a raft of Biomimicry programming related both to food systems and other essential applications. Our shared goal is for biomimicry to become the default position for design and industry.

- We will produce a keynote on Rights For Nature and help coalesce and galvanize this growing global movement toward creating law and policy that recognize rights for nature, a game-changer. The program will include a close link to Biomimicry, biodiversity conservation, intelligence in nature and animal intelligence.

- We’ll feature a meta-program related to advancing women’s leadership, gender equity and gender reconciliation that will also engage men to participate in deconstructing the patriarchy. It will include specific prescriptions for policy, law and culture change from top visionary innovators in the fields.

Everywoman’s Leadership Program

- The 2016 Bioneers conference will feature a meta-program related to advancing women’s leadership, gender equity and gender reconciliation (as above).

- With a Director of Partnerships, Networks and Media Outreach, we will disseminate our related media far more widely. We will help wire and cross-pollinate strategic national and global networks, and engage in long-term strategic partnerships.

- Our ongoing Cultivating Women’s Leadership (CWL) Trainings will expand place-based and issue-based trainings to strengthen local and regional networks of diverse women leaders.

Indigenous Knowledge Program

- We will partner to produce the first-ever Intertribal Bioneers at the request of multiple tribes represented by the Grand Canyon Trust and other Native-led groups and nations, sanctioned by the elders. It is tentatively planned to take place near Hopi in Arizona in the sacred Four Corners region in November 2016.

- We will work closely with a circle of professional Native educators to bring Bioneers Indigenous Knowledge media into schools, classrooms and community settings in Indian Country and in mainstream educational and community settings.
Youth Leadership Program

- We will meet the strong demand from youth for a year-round program and online communication, as well as the year-round extension of the highly successful Youth Mentorship project that builds co-mentoring relationships among Bioneers youth and experienced leaders and elders.

The Resilient Communities Network

- We’ll continue to explore and promote the California Climate Leadership model and to connect “sub-national” resilience networks to build “resilience from the ground up.” According to the UNDP, between 50-80 percent of the solutions to climate change are implemented at local and regional levels.
- We’re actively exploring Bioneers Global events in coming years, such as the highly successful prior event we produced in Holland.

Why Networks?

The world’s current organizational forms are archaic, largely incapable of meeting the magnitude and complexity of today’s “wicked problems.” Networks are nature’s primary form of organization, and “Global Action Networks” are emerging as an innovation that holds the potential for effective and accelerated social transformation.

In complex systems, there is no command-and-control. Rather it’s about influencing the system — Return on Influence. Media and communications also play a key role in providing educational and organizing tools to share successes and failures, and to spread more pebbles in more ponds.

Since our inception, Bioneers has focused on connecting and building diverse networks. This work is ongoing and expanding.

Steve Waddell, author of Global Action Networks and founder of Networking Action, suggests:

“Responding to the 21st century’s enormous global challenges and realizing its unsurpassed opportunities require new ways of acting and organizing. Common good global action has never broken down: Only with globalization do we understand the need to build it up.

Global Action Networks (GANs) are emerging as meta-networks, catching in their webs the vast variety of organizations that exist, including governments, corporations and NGOs. They are an organizational innovation that will undoubtedly become increasingly important. They’re incredibly efficient, operating with miniscule budgets in comparison to the challenges they’ve taken on. They’re realizing big achievements in an incredibly short period of time. They’re bringing together stakeholders often seen as adversarial, and combining their resources and differences to create badly needed innovation and scale. A major innovation is the way GANs do their work through a global inter-organizational networking strategy. This is a strategy fit for the 21st century’s scale of issues, opportunities and communications technologies. The 21st century is the century of networks that create resilience, flow and common good amongst the leviathans.”