

# Decriminalize Nature

## Organizer's Handbook

*Version 1.1*

*(September 20, 2020)*

If you want to get involved in the Decriminalize Nature efforts (as an organizer, volunteer, or donor), or if you have any questions, suggestions, or corrections please

contact: [decrimnature@gmail.com](mailto:decrimnature@gmail.com)

or visit us at [www.decriminalizenature.org](http://www.decriminalizenature.org).

Dear Reader,

Thank you for working in your communities to liberate our relationships with consciousness-healing plants and fungi. We at the DN National Board offer our resources and any support we can so you may be successful in educating your communities and transforming the awareness about these powerful entheogenic allies. Our role is to be present and available to support local efforts, and to steward the values and principles that underlie the core essence of the movement to decriminalize nature: Love, and its offspring's Compassion, Justice, and Cooperation.

This Handbook may be a great tool and guide for you, but when building a people-led movement, nothing can replace the experience of engaging in face-to-face discourse and engagement. So, please reach out once you've read the materials so we can discuss strategy, tactics, and goals together.

On June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019, more than 150 people showed up to tell their stories to the Oakland City Council about healing with these plant and fungi allies. Those who spoke fell into four camps: the Iboga/Ibogaine camp, the Ayahuasca/DMT camp, the psilocybin mushroom camp, and the mescaline cacti camp. Each person spoke about personal healing experiences that transpired as he or she engaged in symbiotic relationships with specific plant or fungi allies. At the same time, everyone was aware that he or she belonged to the same village: Nature. Everyone there, including the elected officials, seemed to recognize that a new movement was upon us -- a movement to heal our relationship with nature and each other through partnership with these entheogens.

We stand at a historical crossroad, a key transition point in our relationship with nature and each other. Our entheogenic allies enable us to heal, understand, and mature our relationships with ourselves, each other, and the planet that birthed us and to which we belong.

Join us in spreading awareness of these entheogenic plants and fungi. Join the movement to decriminalize our relationship with nature so we may shift the balance to rebuild a more cooperative, just, and caring world.

Thank you and look forward to hearing from you soon,  
Decriminalize Nature National Board

## **Preface**

The Organizer's Handbook is a living, evolving collection of organizing principles, guides, tools, and research. These documents have been created by the Decriminalize Nature National Board and local DN organizations, and act as a starting point for those who seek to organize their own communities, and contribute to and become part of the movement to re-establish our direct relationship to consciousness-healing plants and fungi.

We encourage you to share the truth about entheogenic plants and fungi, and to take action to make these plant medicines accessible to the masses by advocating for each individual's right to have a direct relationship with nature without interference from authorities or corporations.

Decriminalize Nature is rooted in love and compassion. Our processes are decentralized, collaborative, transparent, and open-source. We listen to your feedback on how we can improve and share this document to benefit more people. We want organizers from around the world to replicate the successes in Oakland, Santa Cruz, Seattle, Ann Arbor, Chicago, Washington DC, and other cities.

Each community has different needs. Therefore, do your research on local politics, discuss strategies with your core team, and utilize what works and discard what doesn't.

However, there is no need to reinvent the wheel. One of the most important aspects of organizing a successful campaign is to connect with and learn from mentors who have experience and skill in organizing for social and political change. Decriminalize Nature provides mentorship to local movements. To avoid making unnecessary mistakes or wasting energy, please consider reaching out to the national team when beginning your efforts.

## Dedication

The Organizer's Handbook is dedicated to the ancestors who, from the beginning, advocated for love as the supreme force. Perhaps it is because of them that the earth's biosphere, despite humanity's careless and harmful behaviors, generously and compassionately offers us the opportunity to learn from entheogenic teachers, live cooperatively with nature and each other, and redeem ourselves.

Let us act while there is still time.

May all beings be happy, peaceful, and free from suffering.



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## Decriminalize Nature Origin Story and History

Here is a condensed history of DN's founding:

On December 16, 2018 from noon to 1:30PM, the initial meeting which led to the launch of an effort to decriminalize entheogenic plants and fungi occurred at 3007 Telegraph (The Haven) in Oakland, CA. At this meeting, a group of about 12 people, all members of the Sacred Garden Community (SGC) of Oakland and the Entheogenic Research Integration and Education (ERIE), met with Carlos Plazola, the building owner, to tour the building as a potential community site for SGC.



*Decriminalize Nature Oakland meets with Oakland City Council May 2019*

Carlos Plazola mentioned during the introductions that he had worked with the Oakland City Council and could help the group pass a resolution, if desired. Gary Kono (retired surgeon who volunteers at a hospice) emphasized the idea of pushing for the decriminalization of sacred plants and fungi in Oakland. Everyone agreed to pursue this option. Subsequently, Bob Otis (biologist and curator at SGC) and Carlos Plazola communicated by email and decided to meet for lunch with Gary.

On December 20, from 11AM to 12:15PM, Carlos, Bob, and Gary met at a Thai restaurant on San Pablo and Berkeley and discussed intentions and forming a group. One formal decision was made: whatever happened from here, the group should always proceed from a place of love. Love would be the guiding force in all key decisions.

On December 21, Larry Norris (founder and executive director of ERIE), Bob, and Carlos met at the Seawolf Pub in Jack London Square at 4<sup>th</sup> and Webster to discuss next steps.

On January 2, Bob introduced Carlos and Nicolle Greenheart (Practice and Integration Facilitator and Community Steward for SGC) to each other at the Seawolf Pub.

In the first week of January, possibly Saturday January 5, the first meeting of the steering committee was held at Bob's home in west Oakland. The steering committee consisted of Larry Norris and Julie Megler (Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner) representing ERIE, Bob, Gary, Nicolle, and Carlos.

On January 7, Carlos, Bob, Nicolle, Larry, and Julie attended the inauguration of new Oakland City Councilmembers at the Asian Cultural Center to meet and greet the incoming elected officials.

On January 25, the second meeting of the Steering Committee met at Seawolf Pub. The Steering Committee chose the name Decriminalize Nature in January 2019, and was officially referred to as Decriminalize Nature Oakland (DNO) soon thereafter. In May, 2019, Decriminalize Nature was given state approval to form as a 501c4 social welfare organization.

In February, the DN Steering Committee and advisory group finalized their recommended language on Decriminalization of Entheogenic Plants and Fungi and presented it to the council.

In March, Councilmember Noel Gallo officially sponsored the resolution to bring it forth to council.



*Oakland City Council Member Noel Gallo sponsors the resolution to Decriminalize Nature interviews with KPIX Channel 5 following the unanimous decision*



*Oakland City Council Public Health Committee and line of supporters waiting to testify on May 28th, 2019*

On Tuesday May 28, the item came to the Public Safety Committee and received a vote of 3-0-1 (one abstention) to move forward to full council on June 4.

On June 4, the item came to the full City Council and received a unanimous vote of all present.

Before the item passed at council, the group began receiving requests for information from people throughout the US, including a council member from Berkeley.

Larry managed the national social media campaign and by December 2019, activists in over 100 cities throughout the US had requested and received the DN starter packet from Larry. Carlos and Larry held dozens of training workshops for the leaders.

In January 2020, Santa Cruz approved their DN resolution with unanimous support at Council.

By March 2020, six cities were slated to go before their respective councils for approval in 2020, including Berkeley, Portland, Chicago, DC, Minneapolis, and Ann Arbor. Unfortunately, COVID-19 has hampered most council efforts throughout the US.

In July 2020, the DN team in Oakland introduced the Oakland Community Healing Initiative (OCHI), an ordinance requiring the city attorney's office to protect community-based ceremony participants and facilitators who agree to and abide by safe practice guidelines and principles.



*Decriminalize Nature Oakland Community Health Initiative (OCHI) team Spring 2020*

## About the Decriminalize Nature National Board

The DN National Board exists to guide the national movement, offer advice and support to local groups and leaders, and to lead by example in its host city Oakland, CA. The Board adopted these five committees for 2020/2021, which represent the basic work areas of the board:

- a. Ceremonial Practice and Development Committee: this committee will help facilitate the development of ceremony culture in cooperation with our community. This is a very important committee that will help nurture relationships and alliances in community to ensure ceremonial culture is strong and safe. Eventually, they will be the lead committee working with the city of Oakland on developing practices and education in Oakland, which can serve as a model for the world—when ancient practice and modern science land in an urban community.
- b. Bridge Building and Alliance Building Committee: This committee will hold weekly community access meetings on Mondays at 4 PM which is the portal or bridge through which people walk to become engaged with DN Oakland and OCHI. It will also be responsible for building alliances with other organizations locally, regionally, and globally, and for dealing with challenges and opportunities that may arise.
- c. Political, Policy, and Law Committee: This committee will be responsible for development and final passage of OCHI, and passage of a statewide legislation to create and support pilot projects in Oakland and other cities.
- d. Sustainable Relationship Committee: This committee will be responsible for investigating, educating, and taking action to ensure our relationship with nature and nature-based cultures are sustainable and that we are helping advance the importance of living sustainably with entheogenic plants and fungi
- e. Media and Cultural Arts Committee: This committee will be responsible for overseeing all external communications via media and cultural arts

# Principles of Building a Social Transformation Movement

As a grassroots social transformation movement, Decriminalize Nature reimagines and redefines power and control. Our goals are to

- remind people of their own power;
- practice and encourage a bottom-up rather than a top-down approach to political, social, and economic change;
- enable self-agency and equitable access to entheogenic plant medicines;
- and promote preservation, conservation, and sustainability in alliance with our entheogenic allies and the traditional cultures that have built culture and knowledge around their use.

Many wonderful organizations within the psychedelics space focus on service and/or education -- DN focuses on direct political action. Other excellent organizations operate within existing medical and economic structures -- DN creates paradigm shifts to give power back to ordinary citizens. These differences are crucial to understand if you choose to embark on the journey to push DN in your area. Here are some ideas to be aware of:

- Social change movements seek to understand power and control at their very core and to challenge their expression through value systems.
- Being involved in cutting edge social change movements can be emotionally challenging. Many people won't understand what you're doing, and why you're so immovable from your values, and they may question your character, intentions, or abilities. Some will disagree with the goals of the social change movement, not understanding the position from a higher cause of changing values, and may perceive you as an adversary. Strong will, courage, and perseverance are necessary ingredients for leadership in these movements. And lots of grounding work.
- Social change movements seek to shift the values of a society. The goal of a social change movement is to transform societal structures at the root, the core, the essence, and from the bottom up. Permanent change occurs only when we change a society's

values. Social change movements do not conduct business as usual. They seek to shift power structures by transforming values.

- Creating a cultural cohesion movement, although noble in its intentions, is not the same as creating a social change movement. DN is one of the few social change movements within the psychedelic space that seeks to challenge and buck existing power and control structures instead of working with and/or within them.
- Public solidarity between leaders of a social change movement is vital. Perceived fissures in relationships between core team members will likely be exploited by those who don't agree with the cause of the movement. Internal struggles or differences between leaders must be kept confidential, and mediated and resolved as quickly as possible.
- As a social movement gains power and momentum, groups or organizations pushing for different core values will inevitably organize against it. This is a natural and inevitable part of social change. Core leaders should maintain vigilance in order to be aware of and prepare for increasing attempts to pressure, co-opt, or manipulate them or their organizations. Sophisticated tactics of resistance are necessary, though focus should always be kept on the goals and missions of the movement. Continuous forward momentum is key to resistance and success.
- As we grow as a movement, alliance-building is key. In analyzing alliances, analysis is best conducted at the values level, and not the personal emotional level. The question shouldn't be "is this person a good person to work with?" The question should be "Does this person or organization share DN's fundamental core values?" For example, some people may seem loving, kind, generous, and supportive, and they probably are. But their actions and goals may not be in alignment with the goals of DN. This does not mean they aren't wonderful people. It may be that they simply aren't philosophically ready for the fundamental changes we advocate in enabling accessibility to our plant allies.
- Actions emerge from underlying, often subconscious, value systems which inform intentions. So, when we are investigating potential partnerships or alliances, it's important to evaluate the impact of actions, and not solely the intentions behind these actions.

# Building Power to Give it Away...Why “Decriminalize Nature <Local Region>”?

The intention of Decriminalize Nature Oakland, which has become the 501c4 national organization “Decriminalize Nature” with an independent board, is to acquire power and give it to independent local groups that all coordinate and support each other via a mycelial network. The role of the national group is to enable and facilitate communication between groups, protect the values and principles of the movement, and channel power to local leaders and groups.

**Autonomy with Mutual-Support -- Basis of the Mycelial Network.** While local groups are autonomous, the national board’s role is to share national dynamics, struggles, strategies, and opportunities with local groups, and also to learn from local groups and share findings with the rest of the movement. In this way, our intention as a national board is to facilitate the growth of this mycelial network to enable groups to support each other both directly and indirectly.

**Protecting the Values and Principles.** DN was founded with the basic goal of advancing the values of love and compassion as revealed and demonstrated by our plant and fungi allies. We advocate for equitable access, non-commodification of the entheogenic plants and fungi, ceremony-based community containers, abundance and cooperation, decentralization, transparency, and open-source information. One of the national board’s most important roles has been to monitor the emergence of money and corporate power into the plant medicine conversation and to do all we can to mitigate the negative impacts of profiteering and commodification of our entheogenic allies.

**The Power is in the Name.** “Decriminalize Nature” is becoming synonymous with an decentralized, action-oriented peoples’ movement that advocates for equitable access to entheogenic plants and fungi for all people. Branding and agreement about a core set of principles are important to show unity and advance the cause. As local groups adopt the DN <Local Region> name, the DN movement becomes more resilient and powerful. As local movements absorb and utilize this power, everyone gains strength. Each local group exists in symbiotic relationships with the national board and other local groups.

**Emerging Leadership.** A movement survives and thrives by encouraging and enabling leadership to emerge in all geographic areas. A key strategy of DN is to support local leaders to become regional leaders and national leaders. This is already happening around the US.

*(This document was released publicly by DN in Fall of 2019 to express the importance of leading any legalization effort first with full decriminalization to protect the rights of the masses to establish their own direct relationship with entheogenic plants and fungi.)*

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## **Decriminalize Nature, First and Forever: Restoring Our Roots**

### **Decriminalize Nature:**

- DN believes entheogens refer to sacred natural ethnobotanicals, which are often erroneously labeled as “drugs” while, in fact, entheogens are distinct and unrelated to “drugs”.
- The Federal Government should immediately clarify that the Federal Schedule 1 list has no authority to regulate plants and fungi, as the human right to access these is inalienable. This includes proactively clarifying that any and all plants and fungi on the Schedule 1 list are effectively and immediately decriminalized or abrogated.
- DN believes all decriminalization and legalization measures must not prohibit personal growing, use, and trade outside of regulatory frameworks. In addition, no person or corporation shall patent any natural genetic material.
- DN believes the Local, State and Federal Governments should have no authority over the unalienable rights of humans to access natural plants and fungi, including entheogenic plants, for any use they choose, but especially for religious freedom, personal healing, and/or consciousness expansion.
- DN recognizes that the Controlled Substances Act creates a false dichotomy, requiring “medical value” to be rescheduled. Inherent to the process of rescheduling are clinical trials, which necessitate the production of expensive pharmaceutical grade synthetics or genetically modified “biologically-derived”

substances ready to go to market. The Controlled Substances Act should not control natural entheogenic ethnobotanicals, which cannot be rescheduled because there is little funding and few trials for whole plant medical research. Natural plants and fungi should not be scheduled.

- DN recognizes that for entheogenic plants and fungi to provide the healing experience that is desperately needed by humanity, one cannot separate the plant from the approach, which includes reverence and intention around the experience as sacred. As such, DN encourages activities that enhance the sacred experience with these plants and fungi.
- DN encourages that professional activities involving entheogens should operate through models like collectives, nonprofits, churches, sole proprietorships, accredited educational institutions, or open access research.
- DN supports and encourages knowledge exchange programs between traditional indigenous wisdom keepers and contemporary cultures on entheogenic practices.

### **Decriminalize First**

- DN believes that any and all policies that seek to decriminalize/legalize entheogenic plants or fungi for any use--including medical, research, or product development or testing--must include decriminalization language. This language must allow equitable access to the general public and must be included in any language proposed for any local, state, or federal decriminalization effort, whether through a legislative or ballot measure process.

### **Decriminalization Forever**

- The Federal Government should pass a constitutional amendment either clarifying that it has no right to intervene between the access of naturally occurring plants or fungi and human beings as these rights are inalienable, or explicitly protecting access to naturally occurring plants and fungi through the First Amendment of the Constitution.

- Decriminalization should never be repealed by following regulatory frameworks. Criminalization through regulation perpetuates the drug war for disenfranchised communities who cannot afford treatment. The medical and clinical framework should not use law enforcement and criminalization to require people to follow their regulations.
- DN recommends researching local flora and fauna to discover how to ethically source local and sustainable plants. We support bringing awareness to endangered entheogenic plants as well as co-creating new growing environments to proactively protect plants whose native land is endangered by mining and agricultural business.
- DN encourages any groups or individuals engaged in wild-harvesting a particular plant to have a robust replanting practice (if not invasive) to replace what was taken for future generations.
- DN encourages the conscientious and thoughtful deliberation of leadership at all levels of government to protect the equitable access to entheogenic plants and fungi by seeking to restrict any corporate activity that would clearly diminish accessibility, diversity, or supply of entheogenic plants and fungi to ensure entheogenic plants and fungi remain forever available to any and all humans. While Decriminalize Nature recognizes that many rich innovations have emerged from the for-profit corporation technology in the last century, we encourage all leaders to be aware of the potential impact that for-profit corporations can have on the sacred use of entheogens.



*Decriminalize Nature Oakland team June 1, 2019*

*(This document was created to inform Oakland's City Council about DN's Principles, Positions, and Commitments so DN's intentions were clear prior to the City Council vote of June 4, 2019.)*



**Decriminalize  
Nature  
Oakland**

## **Decriminalize Nature: Primary Principles, Positions, and Our Commitments to Council**

### **Our Primary Principles**

1. The wave of psychedelic legalization is inevitable in the US, driven by an overwhelming number of scientific studies demonstrating their benefits for health and wellness.
2. The choice by Oakland leaders will determine if legalization occurs in a way that allows equitable access for all people, or only those who can afford expensive clinical treatments.
3. The choice by Oakland leaders will determine if we strengthen our connection with nature at this critical moment, or continue to deconstruct this relationship, legalizing one compound at a time.
4. Entheogenic plants and fungi are sacred, and should not be commodified or taxed.

### **Our Primary Positions**

#### **Why should we decriminalize all entheogenic plants and fungi on Schedule 1?**

- They are not addictive. In fact, they can be helpful in addiction treatment. Attention to the appropriate set, setting, and dosage can greatly reduce potential risks and negative impacts; and can be beneficial in treating trauma, reducing intimate partner violence, and recidivism.

- Thousands of years of practices across the globe highlight the healing and spiritual potential of entheogens.
- Oakland is already an epicenter for psychedelics, home of the largest Psychedelic Science conference in the world, and hosts a robust underground of practicing communities. Yet those most in need lack access to these experiences due to their legal status.
- Humans should have the inalienable right to engage with naturally occurring plants and fungi in the manner they feel appropriate for themselves.
- These plants and fungi were placed on the Federal Schedule 1 without any scientific research, based on Nixon's intention to arrest leaders within the African-American civil rights movements and the leaders of the anti-war movements. We should correct this wrong.

### **Why should we ensure equitable access to all people?**

- The global drive to prioritize clinical and medical settings is inaccessible in both cost and ethos for those most in need, costing thousands of dollars for treatment to access material that occurs naturally in fungi/mushrooms.
- Basic human rights must include personal sovereignty, the capability to choose our own human experience.
- Adults are not children; with proper education can be empowered to make their own decisions, a potent first step toward healing.

### **Why should we support a decriminalization approach that reconnects our roots to nature?**

- While science, technology, and industrialization have expanded our capacity, they have also disconnected us from nature. How do we reconnect to nature now that we are at the crossroads of climate change?

### **Our Commitment as DNO to the Residents of the City of Oakland:**

We commit to working with Oakland civic and community leaders and residents to develop an educational framework and program to ensure all residents can receive information, provided in a culturally relevant way, about effective and proper use, practice, set, setting, dosage, risk, and benefits in a way that enables greater personal choice and agency in healing.

*(This document was created and submitted to the Oakland City Council prior to the council vote of June 4, 2019 to convey to the Council the seriousness with which we took safe practice and education. The document was shaped through discourse with dozens of facilitators in the SF Bay Area over several months.)*



**Decriminalize  
Nature  
Oakland**

## **The Oakland Equitable and Responsible Access Framework for Entheogenic Plant and Fungi Use in Urban Communities**

**Purpose of the Resolution is to support safe practices and decriminalize the use of entheogenic plants and fungi:**

Decriminalize Nature Oakland (DNO) seeks to decriminalize and make available education and information regarding responsible, safe, and meaningful access to entheogenic plants and fungi for those seeking these as a path toward

healing, exploration, or expansion of consciousness. Numerous studies have shown that these naturally occurring plants and fungi are very powerful tools for increasing neural plasticity and allowing the user to become aware of and identify internal causes of



*Decriminalize Nature Oakland rally with over 170 attendees, March 22, 2019*

mind-based ailments, and to create a new personal narrative which is more constructive and beneficial toward leading a healthy and happy life.

For these reasons, Decriminalize Nature Oakland feels it is critically important, particularly in a time of increasing disenfranchisement, social division, and poverty rates causing greater trauma in our disenfranchised communities to make information and education on these powerful tools available, in their natural forms, to members of the community in a way that enables choice and agency for the person in their relationship with the plants and fungi.

### **The Power of Choice and Personal Agency**

Decriminalize Nature Oakland believes it is imperative to give all people, regardless of economic capacity, the ability to access information and education on these powerful tools and empower them to make their own choice toward their use for personal healing and consciousness exploration. The fundamental power inherent in making the individual personal choice to heal, and to re-write or amend one's narrative for engaging with the world, is paramount in setting upon the path toward healing and personal growth. But the best choices are informed choices. To this end, DNO believes the most important first step, upon decriminalizing entheogenic plants and fungi in any urban setting is education. Below we provide a framework for empowering individuals in any community to engage in a powerful, meaningful, safe and responsible way with these materials.

### **The Seven Step Process of Building a Safe, Healthy, and Responsible Approach to Use in an Urban Community**

The following seven actions highlight a suggested framework that can occur in any community to most effectively enable safe and responsible use of these materials:

1. Information
2. Education
3. Preparation
4. Application
5. Integration

6. Implementation
7. Reciprocity

Through these seven actions, supported via a deliberate and intentional partnership between government, non-profits, the private sector, and community, an urban city can create the needed pathways and frameworks for safe, responsible, and healthy use. It is important to note that these activities already exist throughout Oakland, have existed for decades, and are happening daily, but they have been pushed underground as a result of misplaced federal laws. As a result, they have become largely inaccessible to the communities that need them most. Our intention through the decriminalization effort, is to lift the veil of these activities, allowing them to surface, and expand their availability to communities that can benefit from their services. However, because of concerns about federal law, some names and identifiers are presented generically to protect those many people doing the work.

1. **Information:** Before an education framework can be created and deployed, the community must start with understanding the resources available within its area. The following entities are good sources of information that can be assembled:
  - a. Non-profits, professional wellness centers, and community organizations that provide education on entheogenic plants and fungi:

Over the last 5 decades much of the research on the use of these materials has been carried by non-profit organizations or informal groups. Local community-based groups such as Entheogenic Research, Integration, and Education (ERIE), Oakland's Sacred Garden Community, San Francisco Psychedelic Society, Root Wisdom, Bloom Network, the 9/20 Coalition, and numerous underground educational programs, have assembled a tremendous amount of information and a great deal of knowledge about the use of these plants and fungi and the facilitation and integration of the materials in a way that allows positive transformation. Regional organizations such as Multidisciplinary Association of Psychedelic Studies (MAPS), California Institute of Integral Studies (CIIS), Institute of Noetic Sciences (IONS), Botanical Dimensions, Erowid, Chacruna, Women's Visionary Congress, Psychedelic Sangha, as well as national organizations such as Polaris, Being True to You, and international organizations such as

ICEERS, the Global Ibogaine Therapeutic Alliance, and Wasiwaska, while less integrated into the local community, have been assembling a vast amount of information and knowledge from throughout the world on effective preparation, use, and integration.

b. County public health departments:

A good vehicle for institutional support and information of these local efforts is a county's public health department, which has assembled a number of tools for community outreach, education, and engagement, and can serve as an information clearinghouse and develop analytical tools and metrics for evaluation and continuous improvement. In addition, similar to public health campaigns on obesity, there continues to be an increasing need for public health efforts to educate the public about mental health disorders. If individuals and communities better understand mental health issues, such as depression and PTSD, and how it may be impacting them, they can better understand how to access available resources to support them. General local and national efforts on mental health, will help individuals better understand how entheogens can be supportive for them.

c. City life enrichment or life enhancement departments or agencies: Most urban cities will have an agency or department that is tasked with supporting or enabling positive community outreach. These agencies have important information about communities, as well as information distribution networks.

2. **Education:** Educational approaches, concepts, and materials should be created to enable communities with little to no experience with these plants and fungi to become informed about their powerful effects, and their safe and responsible use. Creating a proper educational framework in an urban community must include culturally appropriate and sensitive delivery of content, provided by individuals who reflect that community. To this end, offering knowledge to community leaders who can inform their community, friends, and family, a "teach the leaders" program will be critical to ensure that the recipients of the

educational materials in any given community can personally identify with the presenter of the materials. The materials created should be culturally relatable, using language that resonates with the cultural language and norms of the recipients, and presented by people who look and speak like the recipients, allowing for the creation of a trustful setting from which to absorb the materials.

These leaders are also to be educated on the understanding of who should consult with a healthcare provider prior to entheogenic use, this includes, but is not limited to: cardiovascular disease, active suicidal ideation, psychotic symptoms, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia.

Education is key to making informed choices. We also understand people will make choices based on various degrees of information. However, there are five points of instruction we want to emphasize in our educational campaign to help safeguard responsible use of entheogens.

#### **Five memes to help safeguard the use of entheogenic plants and fungi:**

**First, entheogens are not for everyone.** Knowledgeable clinicians caution that some people should not take entheogenic plants or fungi, including people with a personal or family history of schizophrenia or bipolar disorder or who are taking certain medications.

**Second, if someone has a serious condition like major depression or PTSD, they would do well to get serious, professional help before using an entheogen** and to ask that caregiver's advice. [Some counselors and therapists are glad to work with a client before and after an entheogenic journey.]

**Third, Unless you have expert guidance, it's best to start with small amounts, using more only after you become familiar with the material and the terrain.**

**Fourth, don't go solo (with nontrivial doses).** Have at least one trusted friend (called a sitter, guide, or facilitator) be with you, sober during the entire journey, and commit in advance to honor that person's instructions if he or she tells you to not do something. Entheogens can amplify the whole range of human

emotions, including anxiety which can sometimes lead to panic. Having a sitter gives you a certain comfort and mental freedom, and can help keep things safe.

**Fifth, reverence reduces risks and can help lead to positive outcomes.** In cultures that have long use entheogenic substances beneficially, that use is approached with great respect, not haphazardly, and for life-enhancing purposes.

3. **Preparation:** Many organizations, both local and regional, have been working for decades to understand and teach effective ways to prepare the users for the experiences created by the entheogenic plants and fungi. Not to mention the millennia of historical use. While there is no “one-size fits all” there can be many effective methods for preparing oneself to have a meaningful and transformative experience with these materials. It is a principle tenet of DNO that every individual human being be given the right to make their own decisions about how to heal or expand their own consciousness. The very act of personally making these simple decisions of choosing how to prepare for the experience, is critical to the future ability of the individual to have personal agency and to understand their own power through the entheogenic experience, integration, and implementation process. There are many different ways of preparing for such an experience. And there exists a rich community of facilitators who have studied effective ways of assisting an individual in their preparation. Examples of approaches include:
  - a. Creating the deep and rich connection between the plants and fungi and their connection to the Earth, revealing a deeper relationship between the materials and the user’s experience with their own existence on the planet to create a deep and meaningful experience.
  - b. Setting an intention.
  - c. Using Yoga as an energy balancing tool prior to use.
  - d. Using meditation as a tool for understanding the dynamics of the mind and gaining self-control of the workings of the mind prior to engaging in the experience.
  - e. Understanding ethical considerations and risks such as informed consent, sexual misconduct, cultural sensitivities, safe set and setting, physical contact, vulnerability, and hypersuggestibility.

- f. Committing to not finalize any big decisions emerging from an experience until 2-4 weeks afterwards.
  - g. Implementing a diet of healthy food, reduced technology, and external distractions and crowds as best as possible.
  - h. Consulting with health care providers to understand contraindications of any pharmaceutical regimens they may be on and tapering off before having an experience.
  - i. Find a mentor or community of peers that will be available to connect after an experience whether to integrate or just check in
  - j. Using breathing techniques to create a similar experience to what will be experienced through the plant and fungi material but which can enable this initial experience using something very common and soothing to the individual: one's own breathing patterns.
  - k. Using sound and music to help soothe any emotional reaction.
  - l. Other practices by facilitators.
  - m. Many facilitators use a combination of these methods, and we're seeing an increasing number of facilitators transform these approaches into culturally relevant methods for diverse urban communities.
4. **Application:** Once the educational material and concepts have been made available and presented in a culturally relevant way, by a person who is relatable to the recipient of the information, and once the individual has chosen their path to preparation, among the many different methods and facilitators available, has been given the tools, the individual can then make an informed choice about the type of material they believe is best for them, and the most effective way for them to approach the material. In the current vernacular, the mind preparation work is known as Set, and the location and ambience of the location is known as the Setting. Equally important, and an important lesson learned from the process of decriminalizing cannabis is "dose". Subsequent to the decriminalization of cannabis, many providers of material created edibles that were very powerful. This led to the experience among many people of consuming too high a dose of cannabis in edible form, which threatened the future of the decriminalization effort. As a result, producers of edibles moved toward packaging edibles in micro-dose levels. This lesson is an important one for the entheogenic plant and fungi decriminalization effort: it is advised to start with small doses to enable the user

to ease their way into the experience and become comfortable with the materials before going into high dose experiences.

It is important to say a word here about “bad trips”, which may be better described as “challenging trips”. In the world of natural plants and fungi, challenging trips are possible. However, it is common knowledge among those who have experienced these materials as facilitators or as users themselves, that a “bad trip” is most often caused by the individual coming face-to-face with a personal issue that needs to be confronted to enable further personal growth. This may be unreconciled conflict with a loved one, feelings of guilt, a deep relationship with fear, anxiety, or trauma that must be untangled, feelings of personal failure or lack of self-worth, etc. From the perspective of personal growth, a bad trip is in the past, a bad memory; while a challenging trip means the individual is spending the time to reflect on the experience, and engage in a learning process about themselves and the challenges they faced. This is where the process of integration is critical and as much a part of the healing process as the actual use of the materials.

5. **Integration:** Integration refers to the process by which the material accessed and insights gained in an entheogenic experience are incorporated over time into one’s life in a way that benefits the individual and their community. The first step of integration is the meaning-making process around the entheogenic experience, and this can be aided by a community of peers to encourage discernment, reflections, discourse, and feedback. In the San Francisco Bay Area, there are at least 3-4 Integration circles happening in any given month and they are prepared to scale to support any increase in need. The methods of integration are as varied as the methods of the trained facilitators. The individual user should have access to an integration process that is culturally relevant for them as well. This is important because the issues that arise during the experience often have cultural meaning and an integration facilitator or integration group can be more supportive to the individual when they feel heard and understood. Nonprofits such as ERIE have been offering open access guidelines and mentorship to developing peer integration circles across the nation, and in addition, local organizations like San Francisco Psychedelic Society, the Psychedelic Sangha, and the Integration Circle will be able to participate in

offering integration circles, workshops, and seminars to provide the tool sets for further community development.

6. **Implementation:** Now that the individual has been given the tools to make choices for themselves on education, preparation, application, and integration, they may need support on relating their internal experience and transformed inner world view with the external world within which they find themselves on a daily basis. In other parts of the world, where the use of these materials is more common, there exist culturally based methods of supporting this type of transformation. However, in the US, especially in urban areas, no such support structures exist enabling an individual to gain support in transforming the way they associate with the world around them. Particularly in communities of trauma, it will become very important to create deep and rich structures and processes to support this transformation. For example, if a young man or woman that has been historically locked into a pattern of self-destructive behavior leading to violence, unemployment, or crime suddenly, after use of the materials, decides to live a more constructive life, the pathways must be made accessible to this individual to find their way to meaningful and constructive life choices. Here, the various city, county, and state programs become paramount and the public-private partnerships necessary to financially support these new life choices should be enhanced, with local corporate players contributing to the growth of these programs.
7. **Reciprocity:** The concept of reciprocity is a part of a long history of spiritual traditions and is widely accepted within psychedelic communities. Within these traditions there is a period of time where the student leaves the local community to go through a period of trials and tribulations that lead to psycho-spiritual healing and growth. As this period concludes, the student then returns home to provide information and community service as a means of showing gratitude for the knowledge and healing received. In this case, a fully integrative process including implementation involves reciprocity to the larger community.

## **Creation of a “Support Team” Process upon the Decriminalization of Entheogenic Plants and Fungi:**

We suggest creating a set of workshops consisting of members of the community, non-profits, and government representatives to discuss and develop support structures for the post-decriminalization process. The “Support Team” should include:

- Members of the Oakland’s non-profit community, including leaders from: San Francisco Psychedelic Society, ERIE, Sacred Garden Community, DNO, and Sage Integrative Health;
- Members from City of Oakland, including from Life Enrichment Agency (Mayor’s executive branch), Oakland City Council, and the Oakland Police Department;
- Members from Alameda County Public Health Department.
- A referral list for professionals to consult with if someone has a higher risk mental health disorder.

We suggest this Support Team convene around a series of workshops throughout 2019 and 2020. DNO, ERIE, SFPS and other community-based organizations will convene at these workshops and they will serve in an advisory role only and to provide guidance and support to the seven step process described above, serving as a resource for the community education, preparation, application, integration, and transformation process.

### **Schedule:**

Year one will be about education and preparation for Oakland’s diverse Community.

During the first year after decriminalization passes in Oakland, we will focus efforts on creating the Support Team, developing the inventory of resources and information, and developing culturally relevant education materials and presenters, and rolling these educational materials out in appropriate formats to the community.



*Decriminalize Nature Oakland March 22nd, 2019 rally organizing team and speakers*

### ***Referral Resource List***

The purpose of this referral and resource list is to provide individuals and communities of Oakland with organizations and licensed clinicians who specialize in supporting individuals needing professional level resources in conjunction with exploring psychedelic/entheogenic substances.

#### **East Bay Referrals**

1. Sage Integrative Health, Berkeley, CA: <http://sageintegrativehealth.org>
2. Entheogenic Research, Integration, & Education (ERIE): [erievision.org](http://erievision.org)
3. Five Flavors Herbs, Oakland, CA: <https://www.fiveflavorsherbs.com/>
4. Jason Butler, PhD: 430 40th Street, Oakland, 94609. (415) 689-1580
5. Valerie Rosenfield, LCSW: Orinda, CA. (510) 418-0414  
[Valerierosenfield-lcsw.com](http://Valerierosenfield-lcsw.com) OR [valerie.rosenfield@gmail.com](mailto:valerie.rosenfield@gmail.com)

#### **San Francisco Referrals**

1. Psychedelic Society San Francisco: <http://psychedelicsocietysf.org/>
2. Polaris Insight Center, 4257 18th St., San Francisco. (415) 800-7083

3. Eric Sienknecht, PsyD: 582 Market St., #1401, San Francisco. (510) 982-6276  
eric@polarisinsight.com
4. Mary McDermott MFT: 2325 Third St. San Francisco.  
[www.mcdermott-therapy@gmail.com](mailto:www.mcdermott-therapy@gmail.com) OR mcd.therapy@gmail.com
5. Jessica Katzman, Psy.D.  
<http://www.jessicakatzman.com/> OR <https://www.healingrealmscenter.com/>
6. Gregory Wells, PhD, Licensed Psychologist: 4257 18th St., San Francisco, 94114  
(415) 874-9226

### **National Referrals**

1. MAPS Integration providers list: <https://integration.maps.org/>
2. Psychedelic Support: <https://psychedelic.support/>
3. Being True to You: <https://beingtruetoyou.com>

*(This document was amended from the document above to accompany the OCHI Ordinance to legalize ceremonial-based community healing in order to show the council that the community was prepared to manage itself with safe practice principles and guidelines.)*

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## **Oakland Community Healing Initiative (OCHI): Safe Practice Guidelines And Principles**

The following seven actions describe Safe Practice Guidelines and Principles for participation in the OCHI Pilot Program. Entheogenic plants and fungi are powerful materials and should be treated with respect. These guidelines should be reviewed by the individual, facilitator, and participating community organization when deciding whether to have an entheogenic experience. Specific considerations and practices of these guidelines will be under regular review and discussion by the participating OCHI community organizations to develop best practices according to local community needs.

### **PHASE 1: Preparing for the Experience**

#### **1. Information:**

Before partaking in entheogenic healing, a review of information on the plant/fungi that you will be building a relationship with during this practice is essential. Each entheogen has different protocols, unique wisdom, varying durations, and pre/post care practices that should be considered when deciding which entheogen may best support the healing process.

#### **2. Education:**

Entheogens are not for everyone. Before partaking in an entheogenic experience, one should have a complete review of potential physical, psychological, or social risks that may be present. Individuals who are new to the type of medicine they will be experiencing should start with small amounts, using more only after becoming familiar with the material and the terrain. Entheogens can amplify the whole range of human emotions, and having a knowledgeable community of support can be beneficial. Creating a proper educational framework must include culturally appropriate and

sensitive delivery of content, provided by individuals who reflect that community.

### **3. Preparation:**

Intentional preparation for entheogens helps to bring focus to the experience. While personal agency in the healing process is essential, some commonly agreed-upon practices may help the preparation process. It is encouraged for each individual, facilitator, and community-based organization to plan preparation practices that are relevant to the participant. The development of individual preparation practices can provide examples to inform the regular review, and if necessary update, of the guidelines by the participating community-based organizations. One key example is setting an intention, which helps guide the purpose of the entheogenic experience. Other examples include meditation, yoga, breathing exercises, connecting to nature, eating a healthy diet, and reducing the use of technology. The amount of preparation time may vary depending on the individual and should be discussed between the individual, facilitator, and participating community-based organization.

### **4. Application and Peak Experience:**

While different entheogens require different attention, adhering to basic guidelines can support the experience. Some of these guidelines include attention to a safe set and setting. A safe set means that the individual took important steps to prepare for the experience, is informed about what the experience will entail, and feels ready to have the experience. A safe setting refers to the facilitation and location and aims to provide comfort and security to the participants. It is encouraged that the setting is informed by the needs of the participant as well as the facilitator. For example, setting agreements could include bringing sacred items for an altar, agreeing upon music, preparing the general ambiance, or how to engage during the experience. Research studies indicate these experiences are often reported as healing, profound, sacred, and deserving of respect, and can provide insights and reflections on deep emotions and past trauma to help heal the individual. These experiences may be difficult and one must be prepared to address any challenging reflections that may emerge.

## **PHASE 2: “The Work”**

### **5. Integration:**

“The Work” begins after the peak experience and refers to the choices one makes every

day on how to live a healthy and joyful life. While entheogens open up the mind to what is possible, it is “the Work” that makes the difference through integrating the peak experience for better living. Integration begins the process of meaning-making for an individual as they consider the reflections and insights of the entheogenic experience, and provides space before implementing any actions. The meaning-making process can be aided by a community of peers to encourage discernment, reflections, discourse, and constructive feedback. Different culturally-relevant community support systems can offer insight into the development of new models for integration. Additionally, peer integration circles are encouraged within and across participating community-based organizations. The integration process provides an opportunity to consider how the insights relate to one’s life before implementation. It is generally recommended to pause and reflect within one’s community support system before finalizing any major life decisions. Note of caution: Entheogenic experiences can expand one’s view of the world and it is important for the participant to be fully aware of the importance of personal grounding and the reduction of external stimulus and information which can overwhelm or sidetrack the intention of the experience. It is advisable to seek peaceful and nurturing activities especially during the first 48-72 hours after the experience, session, or ceremony.

#### **6. Implementation and Community Integration:**

Following the integration process is implementation. The Implementation process aims to bring integrated insights into one’s daily life. Often these insights encourage a shift in habitual activities that no longer serve the individual and may require external support to thrive, such as eating a healthier diet, exercising more, meditating, healing personal relationships, and finding a supportive and nourishing community. It is advisable to find a trustworthy community based organization in which to immerse oneself before, during, and after the experience, session, or ceremonial practice. A healthy community can help with finding job opportunities, volunteering in the community, establishing beneficial practices, finding strong mentors and coaches with whom one feels safe to advise on life choices, and sustainable living, including self-sufficiency.

#### **7. Reciprocity and Community:**

The Implementation and Community Integration process may focus more on personal and spiritual growth, restoring one’s roots to nature, and finding a nourishing community in which to practice healthy living. Reciprocity is the act of reaffirming the

decision to live healthily through service. To be in service is to show gratitude and humility, two key ingredients for continued personal growth. This includes service to the natural environment with attention toward the sustainability and stewardship of entheogenic plants and fungi. A structured and ever-growing network of support and reciprocity can be formed to help individuals embody reciprocity and help Oakland communities thrive. Studies indicate that personal healing can positively affect the individual, family, community, local organizations, and institutions, creating a feedback loop that can restore the wellbeing of communities, cities, states, and the planet.



*Decriminalize Nature Oakland OCHI team Summer, 2020*

*(This chart was created in February 2020 to convey to the broader community DN's clear intentions and to define how Decriminalize Nature leadership saw its relationship to society.)*

## Decriminalize Nature Advocates New Approaches

	<u>DECriminalize Nature Approach</u>	<u>Current Societal Approach</u>
<b>The Ego</b>	Part of nature's ecosystem, integrated	Dominant over nature, above ecosystem
<b>Living</b>	In harmony with nature, ecosystem-based	Controlling of nature, reductionist-based
<b>Healing</b>	Community-based, local and bottom-up	Highly controlled & manipulated environment; detached from community
<b>Control</b>	Local agency	Relinquish agency, do what the experts say
<b>Role of Experts</b>	Advisory	Full control through hierarchical systems
<b>Power Structure</b>	Decentralized and bottom-up	Centralized, top-down
<b>Access to Information</b>	Transparent and open access/source	Highly Controlled; Intellectual Property for profit
<b>Consciousness</b>	Emergent, egalitarian, and a human right	Narrowing, stratified; a privilege
<b>Entheogens</b>	An inalienable human right	Illegal and stigmatized

*(This document is intended to support the political organizing efforts of leaders seeking to bring forth action and change in their own communities by explaining basic principles of legislating, and the costs and benefits of different approaches.)*

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## Political Organizing in the United States 101

### Breakdown of Legislative Approaches:

There are two primary tracks that one can take to change the law. They differ in the activists' and organizers' relationship with the elected officials. The two approaches are:

- 1) **direct voter initiatives**, and
- 2) **legislative change through elected officials**.

We describe these in more detail below.

### Changing Local Laws: Direct voter initiatives vs. legislative change through elected officials:

#### ***Local Resolution:***

A Local Resolution happens at the local (city or county) level. Cities and counties have the authority to make recommendations or voice their opinions on matters that are not within their jurisdiction, such as federal drug policy or foreign wars. They do this by majority vote of their voting body in support of a Resolution.

However, cities or counties may not pass Ordinances (or laws) on matters outside of their jurisdiction or they risk being sued by the higher (state or federal) governmental levels. For example, a city may not



*Local SF Bay Area news covers the DN proposal May 28th, 2019*

declare war on another nation because decisions involving the military are under federal jurisdiction. Likewise, drug policy is under federal jurisdiction.

Cities and counties may, however, allocate their own budgets however they please, so cities and counties do have authority to defund certain activities of their own staff, including their police force. For example, cities and counties can choose to defund local police enforcement of federal drug laws. The Decriminalize Nature resolutions of Oakland and Santa Cruz both expressed their opinions that entheogenic plants and fungi should not be criminalized, which in and of itself is a powerful statement. But more importantly, they deprioritized AND defunded police enforcement of personal grow, gather, gift, and share activities that involve entheogenic plants and fungi.

***Local Ordinance:***

A local Ordinance is a law, meaning it becomes part of the legal framework of the city or county codes. Ordinances can be challenged based on their appropriateness in terms of jurisdiction. When the federal, state, and local governments were founded, there was agreement about what issues would fall under jurisdiction of each level of government. For example, military defense is the jurisdiction of the federal government. Sidewalk maintenance is the jurisdiction of the local city or county.

So, when an Ordinance is passed, it must be consistent with the jurisdiction of the local government. A city can pass a law that supports mental health activities, but it can't legalize substances on the DEA Schedule I list. Technically, cannabis is still on the federal Schedule I list, so theoretically, the federal government can sue and enforce against all states that have enacted cannabis legalization laws. So, why doesn't it? POWER. There is a difference between Law and Power. We discuss this issue in a few paragraphs below.

***Local Voter Initiative:***

A Local Voter Initiative is the same as an Ordinance as described above except that it doesn't go through a council vote of elected officials. An Initiative bypasses the council and goes straight to voters for approval. This usually requires raising significant funds to collect signatures to make the ballot, and then engaging in a voter education campaign to pass the Initiative.

Many activists like this approach because of their distaste for elected officials, but there are two problems with Initiatives that are often overlooked. First, they're expensive and getting them funded usually means offering something to potential contributors, which

often requires compromising one's initial ethical positions. Second, it bypasses engagement with elected officials, which can often anger or frustrate the elected officials, which may create friction and obstacles when it comes time to implement the new law, even if it passes. More on this a few paragraphs below.

Nevertheless, pursuing the initiative route may ultimately be the best and perhaps only route available for citizens when a council proves itself to be closed to or unimpressed after discourse with the community. In the case of Decrim Nature DC, the city council was not open to the resolution route, and local activists showed their power to create change by pursuing an initiative campaign. The DN DC initiative effort sends an important message to elected officials that DN's preferred route is to work with them, but we also reserve the right to bypass them via an initiative if they are not open to working collaboratively.

### ***Statewide Legislation:***

Statewide Legislation is similar to an Ordinance as described above, but is far more complicated because of the sheer number of elected officials who need to vote on the subject matter, the numerous committees it must go through during the review process, and the distance between a local group and the state legislative body.

In a local effort, a small group can wield significant power relative to the voting population. In a statewide effort, the local group suddenly becomes comparatively insignificant relative to the size of the voting population. Under these circumstances, there are three options for the local group: first, to build its power to gain sufficient leverage to get the attention and the support of the elected body; or second, to hire a strong lobbying firm; or third, a combination of both of the above. A skilled lobbying firm can cost less than 1% of what a ballot Initiative costs; it's a cheaper approach and enables the local sponsoring group to retain greater control over their legislation. Think of hiring a lobbying firm as hiring a tour guide on an outback trip in the wilderness. They guide you through the process and help you strategize and create a road map to success.

### ***Statewide Voter Initiative:***

A Statewide Voter Initiative is like a Local Voter Initiative in that it bypasses the elected officials and goes straight to the voters. The cost of a statewide initiative in California, for example, is now up to \$30,000,000 to \$50,000,000 for a controversial issue (such as

drug law change) whereas the cost of a lobbying firm to pass legislation can cost less than \$200,000.

***Policy versus Implementation:***

To understand the best path to reform laws in your community (at the local or state level), it is important to keep in mind the difference between Policy and Implementation. When you decide, for example, that you want to plant a garden, the first major step is to design and plan it. Perhaps you sketch your garden out on paper, research the costs of irrigation and wood, measure the plot, and finalize it with a great plan. Now, about 20% of your work is done. The real work begins when you have to Implement the plan. You must buy the materials, expend the labor, till the soil, build the beds, run your irrigation, plant your plants, water them, and eventually you may harvest the fruits of your labor. This illustrates that the hard work is in implementation.

It's the same with new laws. Passing a law via Initiative or directly with elected officials is the beginning. A policy is only a plan. Whether you work to pass a law in cooperation with your elected officials or you go around them through an Initiative, once it is passed, the heavy work of Implementation begins. Implementing new laws in collaboration with your elected officials is far easier than implementing them after being seen as adversarial by going around these officials. Initiatives, because they bypass elected officials, may feel good to do, but once you reach the Implementation phase, if your elected officials are unhappy because you went around them, they can think of hundreds of ways to delay, obfuscate, complicate, or undermine the Implementation phase. Because of this, Implementation under a Voter Initiative can take years to happen, and when it does happen it may be extremely cumbersome, disjointed, and complicated, undermining the original intention of your Voter Initiative.

For these reasons, DN encourages our member organizations to do all they can to work in partnership with their local and state elected officials to create legislative change. By doing so, when it comes time to implement, the resolution, ordinance or law has not been severely compromised by the need to raise money, or by having an antagonistic relationship with elected officials. After all, elected officials are also part of your community.

## Your Community

We are conditioned to think of people in our community as either with us, or against us, on any given issue. In other words, we're trained to think in dichotomies — my group of friends, not my group of friends; my car, not my car; my food, not my food; my job, not my job. Over time, we're encouraged to invest in what is mine, and polarize against that which is against mine. In current American politics, the two parties have become so polarized on issues that everyone feels the need to pick a side rather than discuss, debate, and analyze the issues to understand their own positions and that of others.

This process, combined with a strategic effort by powerful corporate forces investing in voter disenfranchisement, has created a high level of cynicism toward elected officials.

But stripped from the cynicism, we see that our elected officials are powerful members of our community who represent hundreds or thousands of people. And when we make this connection, we realize that by educating and transforming our elected officials on any given issue, we're actually educating and transforming all the people they represent because they are voting on behalf of those people.



*A packed Oakland City Hall June 4th, 2020 waiting to hear the passage of the DN resolution*

So, when considering where to invest our time, we can either choose to stand on a street corner to educate and transform each voter, one at a time, which may take tens of thousands of hours in a large city, or we can choose to invest a few dozen hours in educating the person who represents those voters. With entheogenic plants and fungi, the science, research, and results of ancient traditional wisdom and practice are all on our side. So, the important task is to sit with and work through our own fear of elected officials, and speak to their higher consciousness about the truth. In many cases, the elected officials will be transformed.

Persistence is key. A person may stand on a street corner sharing information and get rejected or ignored by 20 people before one person stops to learn about the

information. For the activist, being rebuffed by 20 people makes little difference as long as he or she gets to the one person willing to listen. This is seen as victory. However, the same activist may enter the office of an elected leader, be rebuffed once by the leader's staff person, feel dejected and demoralized, and never return to that elected leader's office. The activist may reach the conclusion that the elected leader doesn't care about the people.

Why is this? Why do we accept rejection by 20 people on a street corner and keep working to find the one person who will listen, yet give up so easily with our elected leaders? Often, the answer lies in our perception of our own self-worth within a hierarchical system. Because we see people on a street corner as equal to ourselves, we do not feel dejected when they rebuff us. We understand they are busy, or too uninformed on the topic to pay attention. But when we are rebuffed by an elected official, it feels more personal, as if our dismissal means our work is unworthy of his or her attention. However, this is far from the truth.

Elected leaders are extremely busy. They are approached by countless people on many different topics, and find it difficult to give much attention to any one issue. Usually, matters that receive the most attention are ones that are pushed most incessantly. Hence, to gain the elected leader's attention, the activist must be persistent in returning to educate the elected leader without feeling dejected when it feels like the leader is ignoring, rebuffing, or rejecting him or her. The activist should see the elected leader as someone who desperately needs the information, but just doesn't know it. The activist's role is to provide the leader with an important message about something the community urgently needs. The activist must learn how to help the elected leader understand what the community desires. The role of the plant medicine activist is like an EMT service provider arriving at the site of an emergency to provide life-supporting measures to the unconscious.

### **A word about POWER and LAW**

Many people ask the question about Cannabis law: How did Cannabis become legal? Cannabis is not legal at



*DN Chair Carlos Plazola rallies the Oakland community before the June 4th, 2019 final vote*

the federal level. Many people, even lawyers, misunderstand the difference between Law and Power. Cannabis is still illegal at the federal level, which theoretically means that federal agents could mount a massive sweep of all cannabis facilities in the US and arrest and try thousands of people. So, why don't they? Power.

The cannabis movement started at the local level; groups built power around medical cannabis. Once the first cities proved the model, more cities joined the movement. Then, states joined. From 2000 to 2014, the federal government was fighting with cities and states to enforce their federal laws, but eventually, around 2014, enough cities and states had joined the movement to tip the power scales in favor of legalizing cannabis. How? Money. Prosecuting costs the federal government money, and its budget is limited. So, if every case they bring for prosecution costs them millions of dollars because of city, county, and state defense funds, eventually, the federal government has to acquiesce and recognize they lack the funds to pursue thousands of cases nationally.

When contemplating the decriminalization of entheogenic plants and fungi, we must understand that we are building power, city by city, state by state, until federal laws are changed. Any local or statewide law seeking to legalize or decriminalize entheogenic plants and fungi will still be illegal under federal law, just like with cannabis. Therefore, don't get confused by the idea of decriminalization vs. legalization. The only difference between the two is that legalization seeks to create a special class of permit holders for those who wish to grow and distribute the plants and fungi, whereas decriminalization laws seek to make these medicines accessible to all.

## **The DN suggested path to maintain strong ethics**

### ***The Choice to do the work:***

You emerge from your powerful journey. You understand now. You have work to do to heal from some trauma. Now, that the plant medicine journey is over, the personal work begins. You may spend the next weeks or months evaluating your relationships, habits, work, and community to make sure they are healthy for you.

You make great progress on your internal journey to make changes, but then you realize your community is still unhealthy. You live in a world that prioritizes fear over love, profits over people, recreation over ritual, and commodification over compassion. At the same time, you realize if you can change yourself, you can also change your

community, and live in a healthier ecosystem. You've made the ultimate connection. You understand how the inner world is connected to your outer world. And you must work on both to be on the healing path. And now the work to transform your community begins.

***Transforming your community:***

You've come to understand the power of plant medicines to reboot, enhance, and expand your neural network, and to re-envision the world in which you live. You now understand your power to change the world. You look around and realize your community includes your elected officials, and your elected officials each represent thousands of people. What a wonderful and fast way to transform your community—to educate your elected officials about the power of plant medicines. By educating a few people about what you've learned, you can transform your entire city's relationship to entheogenic plants and fungi.

So you call a few friends, and they call a few friends, and the next thing you know, a few short weeks later, you have 20 friends and allies who know the benefits of plant medicines.

You're approached by a person with a lot of money who sees what you've done and says: *"I can sponsor an initiative for you and all you have to do is sign off and then your work is done."* But you understand that your own healing is tied to the work of educating your community. And you also know that initiatives are very expensive and by agreeing to it, you will need to compromise on your ethics. You decline the person's offer. Instead you do the work.

So, you reach out to the Decriminalize Nature headquarters because you've heard they offer organizing support for people willing to do the work. Now you're ready to transform your community in the way of the plants and fungi — from a place of love and compassion.

# ***Guardians of Nature***



**@DECRIMINALIZENATURE**

*Decriminalize Nature Board of Directors virtual meeting, Summer 2020*

*(The following document is a template for your first DN (local city) organizing meeting. DN created this document to help local leaders kick off their organizing efforts as the most difficult step is often the first step, and the hardest meeting is also often the first one. DN headquarters is available to attend the first meeting by video conference in support, if so desired.)*

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## **Letter to New Organizers and Local Decriminalize Nature Movements**

Dear Decriminalize Nature Organizers and Activists,

Congratulations on joining the Decriminalize Nature Campaign and on taking the big step in organizing your city to become one of what we hope will be many cities across the US to decriminalize entheogenic plants and fungi. We understand the first step is the hardest and so we're here to help. In order to be successful, it's vital to build an organization of dedicated volunteers. Here is a suggested agenda for your first official DN kickoff meeting:

### **1. Introductions and intentions for being here.**

Take a minute to share who you are and why you're doing this.

Is it for personal healing? Professional growth? Community service? Networking?

Whatever your intention may be, we hope you'll join us to make the Decriminalize Nature movement one rooted in and centered around love and compassion for nature and humanity. We hope you'll set aside any intention for personal gain, other than the satisfaction in knowing that once you decriminalize entheogens in your city, countless people, including those from the most disenfranchised communities, will hear about the healing power of these plants and fungi. Many of them will, for the first time, consider using these entheogens for healing purposes.

What you're doing will help others heal as word-of-mouth travels and your city leaders give their blessings to this important cause.

**2. Has the group received the info packet and communication channels from DN already?**

If not, please email [decrimnature@gmail.com](mailto:decrimnature@gmail.com).

**3. Decide on core values: here are DN's core values. Do you agree with them?**

These core values spoke to the Oakland City Council and enabled a unanimous vote. These values then spoke to tens of thousands of people in the US who have embraced them and created their own local movements. But they're worth discussing in your own community. As you bring forth your highest self, for this highest of causes, what values do you hope humanity can gain from this movement?

Core values

1. Love for humanity and nature
2. It is an unalienable right to develop our own relationship with nature
3. Decentralization: grassroots, local voices, supporting each other
4. Organizing diverse communities that represent the local city's population
5. Non-commodification, non-regulation, avoid models of scarcity
6. Equitable access: Grow, Gather, Gift
7. Decriminalize Nature first and forever
8. Open source/access: we freely offer all of our material (e.g. resolutions, frameworks, processes, stances, name, graphics, logo)
9. Transparency: Budget, discussions, dialogues, etc. are openly shared to keep everyone informed
10. Honor the sacred

**4. Roll out strategy. Start with a small group and then expand strategically.**

Consider the concept of concentric circle organizing.

Start with a small group of dedicated activists and organizers (3-7 people) to agree on core values, which creates the heart of your movement. Any other members who join should accept these values. In doing so, you are ensuring continued solidarity.

Then expand the circle (5-10 people) to develop the final draft language for your resolution and to create an execution game plan, create committees, develop a master task list and assign leaders, elect chairs and co-chairs, etc.

The final outer ring of the concentric circle would be the full community of supporters who you will invite to gatherings, celebrations, council hearings, etc. Be open to new leaders and contributors emerging as word spreads.

### **5. Resolution vs. initiative? When do you choose which? Make some key decisions.**

Decide which approach is right for your community. Once you study your council members, see if you have some potential key allies based on their politics. We encourage groups to first try for 2-3 months to get a sponsor at council to pass a resolution before opting to go the heavier and harder route of passing an initiative.

An initiative bypasses the elected officials and, if they feel like you have slighted them, they may be resistant to help your group implement your ideas if and when the initiative passes. You may imagine a resolution as a carrot and an initiative as a stick. In order to effectively implement a policy, it's important to befriend elected officials and create allies instead of enemies. Elected officials are included in DN's vision of inclusivity, and organizers should do everything in their power to build solid relationships with their city council members.

Be persistent and patient with your elected officials. It may take some time and significant effort to rally them to your cause, as most officials are busy. For example, the Oakland Decriminalize Nature group met with various council members about 30 times, and roughly half of these instances occurred in the lobby to ask for a formal meeting. Working with government officials is a process of lobbying, educating, and winning hearts and votes. However, if you feel you have exhausted all options to work with your officials, you may consider changing your strategy.

## **6. Social media and media management approach.**

How will you get word out?

Which social media channel(s) will you use?

What will be your core messaging?

Why are you doing this?

Will you have one lead media person?

When will you be ready for national media?

Choose messages around mental health, science, healing for veterans, people with trauma, sacred relationship to nature, ancient practice, etc. Make it your own but see what's working nationally.

The key is to be intentional about each step so you control your own message rather than give this power away to the media.

## **7. "Should we start a 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(4) in order to begin?"**

501(c)(3) is for long-term educational and charitable purposes; the (c)(3) could be beneficial for those who want to build long-term education and integration support structures, but the application and approval process to get (c)(3) status can be time-consuming.

501(c)(4) is to lobby for policy changes, but in the short term there is no need to have a (c)(4) to propose to council.

A 501(c)(3) organization can take tax-exempt donations, but a 501(c)(4) organization cannot. However, a 501(c)(4) group has more freedom to engage in lobbying, while a 501(c)(3)'s lobbying has to be "insubstantial" compared to the money it spends on its primary mission.

If your organization starts growing and receiving substantial funds, it may be time to consider incorporating as a non-profit organization.

To explore more in-depth about this topic, visit [upcounsel](#) or [nonprofit law blog](#).

## 8. Next steps:

- Develop group structure and processes
- Elect chairs or co-chairs
- Develop committees
- Study city council members and choose your sponsor
- Develop your messaging aligned with core values
- Create different messages to different interests on council
- Develop a strategy for in-group conflict resolution, social media — stay focused on the positive and on the message
- Decide how to handle media



*Decriminalize Nature Oakland presents at the Oakland City Council Public Safety Committee meeting May 28th, 2019*

*(The following set of documents were created by the leadership in Ann Arbor to support their community's organizing efforts and is a great guide for other organizers' initiatives.)*

## DNA2's (DN Ann Arbor) Tips and Guidelines for How to Reach Out To City Council

1. Familiarize yourself with our resolution before speaking with council people. You can find the resolution on our website [dna2.org](http://dna2.org) and go to "Resolution." Feel free to reach out to us if you don't understand something.

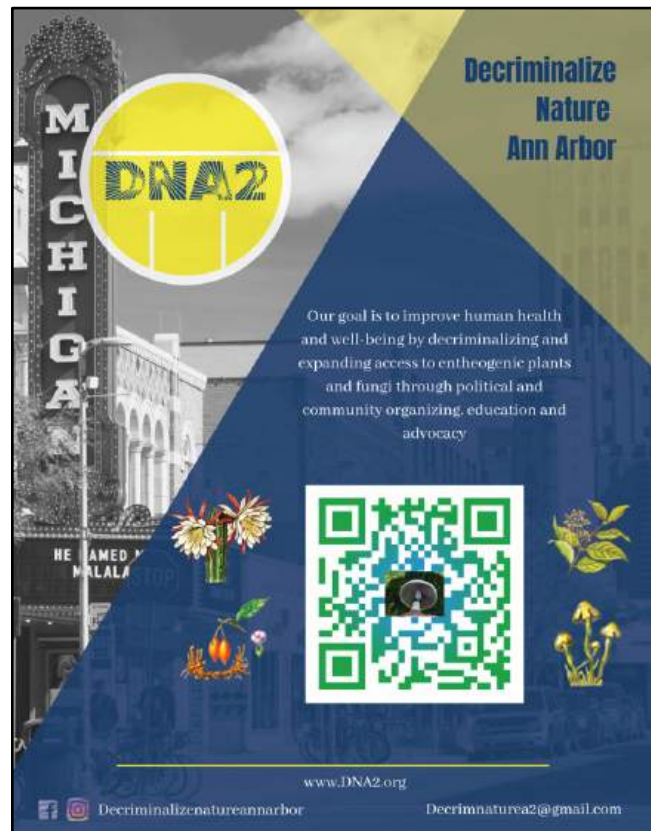
2. Familiarize yourself with DNA2's 10 talking points. This will help you highlight the important parts of the resolution. <https://dna2.org/index.php/whydecrim/>

3. [Click here to get the contact info for A2 city council.](#)

4. [Click here to find which ward you live in.](#)

5. Do some research on the council member(s) that you will speak to so that you know what issues are important to them. Then you can highlight these points when speaking to them.

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1TCbv\\_vQ4Zi2daPsyIOVacOv3j\\_qdsC-9LVNvgEws9PM/edit#gid=0](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1TCbv_vQ4Zi2daPsyIOVacOv3j_qdsC-9LVNvgEws9PM/edit#gid=0)



6. If you are comfortable doing so, share a personal story (or story of someone you know) that describes the benefits of psychedelics and why it is so important to you and our city.

7. If you live in the city of Ann Arbor, please reach out to your council member(s) in person. Eye-to-eye is the best way to make this contact. Feel free to bring someone else with you, maybe another DNA2 supporter in your ward, maybe another DNA2 community member or committee member. We can definitely help you find the others in your ward and/or find someone to go with you if you prefer not to go alone. Email us for help with this [decrimnaturea2@gmail.com](mailto:decrimnaturea2@gmail.com). If you are completely unable to go in person, send a letter. Next best would be to send an email and 3rd best is a phone call.

8. If you do not live in the city of Ann Arbor, send a letter or an email.

## Email/Letter Template to Voice Your Support

### EMAIL/LETTER TEMPLATE TO VOICE YOUR SUPPORT

Dear Councilmember < name>:

Thank you for hearing the matter of the resolution to decriminalize entheogenic plants and fungi.<Describe who you are and state affiliation with Oakland if any (resident, business owner, employer, frequent visitor)>

I am asking for your support for this resolution and to support the matter to go to council for a final affirmative vote.

I am a supporter of entheogenic plants and fungi and this resolution because <state your own personal reasons for wanting the resolution to pass>

Sincerely,  
<Name>

# City Council Educational Emails

## *Email 1*

**Did you know that a May 2018 study by UC Davis researchers and scientists found that natural “magic mushrooms” inspire strong neural growth?**

The study shows increases in Dendrite growth, the number of Dendrites per neuron, and a widening of the Axon, all critical to the flow of information in the human brain. This enables plasticity in neural patterns, allowing for one of the most successful forms of treatment for depression, PTSD, and end-of-life anxiety.

Below, find links to scientific and news articles, including the groundbreaking UC Davis study, to learn more about one of nature’s greatest medicines that co-evolved with humans, mammals, and life on Earth for hundreds of millions of years.

### Psilocybe Mushrooms

- Respected as safe and sacred medicine for millennia throughout the world
- Beneficial for depression, anxiety, addictions, and recidivism
- Encourages openness, creativity, neuroplasticity, and spiritual growth
- Johns Hopkins study: 80% considered their psilocybin experience as one of the top 5 most meaningful experiences in their lives
- UCLA and NYU are studying psilocybin as treatment for end-of-life anxiety
- Canadian federal government has recently granted medical exemptions for four end-of-life patients to be able to use psilocybin

### Research Studies:

1. [Psychedelics Promote Structural and Functional Neural Plasticity](#)
2. [Palliative Nursing and Sacred Medicine: A Holistic Stance on Entheogens, Healing, and Spiritual Care](#)
3. [Single Dose of Hallucinogenic Drug Psilocybin Relieves Anxiety & Depression in Patients with Advanced Cancer](#)
4. [Mystical Experiences Occasioned by the Hallucinogen Psilocybin Lead to Increases in the Personality Domain of Openness](#)

5. [Psilocybin produces substantial and sustained decreases in depression and anxiety in patients with life-threatening cancer: A randomized double-blind trial](#)

News Articles:

1. [Decades after psychedelic drugs were outlawed, Johns Hopkins trials are revealing their dramatic therapeutic potential.](#)
2. [Psychedelic Medicine 101: Psilocybin and the magic of mushrooms](#)
3. [Treating Cluster Headaches With Psychedelic Drugs](#)
4. [FDA Puts 'Magic Mushroom' Ingredient on Fast Track for Depression Treatment](#)
5. [Benefits of 'magic mushroom' therapy long lasting](#)

**Add your local DN logo to the email**

**Purpose:** To decriminalize entheogenic plants, restore our root connection to nature, and improve human health and well-being.

~

**Vision:** To contribute to happier, healthier individuals and communities through the decriminalization of entheogenic plants, and through education about their traditions and practices.

~

**Mission:** To restore respectful understanding for entheogenic plants and their recognized benefits within traditional and modern practices, to help realize these benefits through the decriminalization of these plants, and to restore our inalienable rights to engage in a direct, personal relationship with nature and to our own cognitive liberty.

Website: <https://decriminalizenature.org>

Email: [decrimnature@gmail.com](mailto:decrimnature@gmail.com)

## ***Email 2***

### **Did you know ayahuasca, a plant mixture from the Amazonian basin, benefits physical and psychological wellness and can encourage adult neurogenesis in vitro?**

Traditional cultures consider ayahuasca a “plant that gives knowledge” and recent Western studies suggest ayahuasca could revolutionize mental health and our understanding of consciousness. The transformative potential of ayahuasca has become a successful medicine for treating PTSD among American war veterans, in Brazilian prison populations to reduce recidivism, and with world business executives for experiencing spiritual awakenings.

Below, find links to scientific research and news articles describing the incredible potential of ayahuasca to heal body, mind, spirit, and community.

#### Ayahuasca (containing DMT)

- Over 75 indigenous groups in the Amazonian basin respect ayahuasca as a sacred “Plant teacher”
- Beneficial for depression, addiction, anxiety, diabetes, neurogenesis, and PTSD
- Ayahuasca treatment in Brazilian prison population reduces recidivism and encourages spiritual growth
- Benefits in creativity and positive personal transformation

#### Research Studies:

1. [The alkaloids of Banisteriopsis caapi, the plant source of the Amazonian hallucinogen Ayahuasca, stimulate adult neurogenesis in vitro](#)
2. [Banisteriopsis caapi, a unique combination of MAO inhibitory and antioxidative constituents for the activities relevant to neurodegenerative disorders and Parkinson’s disease](#)
3. [Rapid antidepressant effects of the psychedelic ayahuasca in treatment-resistant depression: a randomized placebo-controlled trial](#)
4. [The Therapeutic Potentials of Ayahuasca: Possible Effects against Various Diseases of Civilization](#)

5. [Four Weekly Ayahuasca Sessions Lead to Increases in “Acceptance” Capacities: A Comparison Study With a Standard 8-Week Mindfulness Training Program](#)

News Articles:

1. [In Brazil, Some Inmates Get Therapy With Hallucinogenic Tea](#)
2. [Plant Hallucinogen Holds Hope for Diabetes Treatment](#)
3. [Psychedelic ayahuasca works against severe depression, study finds](#)
4. [I had an 11-year addiction to heroin — and I beat it with ayahuasca](#)
5. [Assessment of Alcohol and Tobacco Use Disorders Among Religious Users of Ayahuasca](#)

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### ***Email 3***

#### **Did you know that the root of an iboga shrub in Gabon, Africa is showing incredible benefits in treating opioid and methamphetamine addiction?**

Iboga has been recognized by the Bwiti for centuries as essential to their initiatory rites of passage and deep ancestral connections. Studies show iboga/ine is also an “addiction interrupter” significantly reducing cravings and withdrawals from most participants providing an opportunity for those dependent on heroin to have a second chance. One of the biggest policy issues in the United States today is opioid dependency. According to the SF Chronicle “The White House Commission on Combating Drug Addiction and the Opioid Crisis recommends increasing funding on developing and testing “innovative medications,” including “drugs used for detoxification.”

Decriminalizing iboga provides an opportunity for Oakland to lead the way in addiction recovery and reduce the harms of addiction and dependency on our communities.

#### Iboga and Ibogaine

- From Central Africa through Gabon, iboga is revered for initiatory rites of passage involving encounters with ancestors in the spirit realm
- Beneficial for treatment-resistant opiate and methamphetamine addictions
- Anecdotal reports for treating addiction emerging from work-related PTSD from first responders such as EMT, Police, Fire, and Military.
- In 2010 ibogaine was gazetted in New Zealand as a non-approved prescription medicine for opioid dependence by the government’s Medsafe Medicines Classification Committee, under the Medicines Act

#### Research Articles:

1. [Ibogaine Detoxification Transitions Opioid and Cocaine Abusers Between Dependence and Abstinence: Clinical Observations and Treatment Outcomes](#)
2. [Ibogaine treatment outcomes for opioid dependence from a twelve-month](#)

## Studies showing the Anti Addictive Effects of Ibogaine

*Table 1. Open-label case series and clinical trials describing the antiaddictive effects of ibogaine*

References	Design/setting	Subjects	Dose	Main results	Safety
Sheppard (1994) <sup>a</sup>	Open-label Non-medical Amsterdam, The Netherlands	7 (heroin, methadone, codeine, and ethanol) 5 men, mean age 29.28 years	Single doses 11.7, 25 mg/kg	Absence of withdrawal symptoms after 24-38 hr for all subjects, two relapsed within 48 hr, two after several weeks, one reverted to intermittent heroin use, and three remained drug-free >14 weeks	No medical screening or monitoring No serious adverse reactions
Luciano (1998)	Open-label Setting (?)	3 (cocaine, opiates/ opioids, and ethanol) Gender, age (?)	Single doses 20-25 mg/kg	Absence of withdrawal and craving symptoms after 24 hr for all subjects Abstinence (?)	Medical screening and monitoring No serious adverse reactions
Alper et al. (1999) <sup>a</sup>	Open-label Non-medical United States and The Netherlands	33 (heroin, methadone, and cocaine) 22 men, mean age 27.3 years	Single doses 6-29 mg/kg	Absence of withdrawal symptoms and drug use for 25 (76%) subjects after 72 hr, four did not report symptoms but used drugs in <72 hr, two reported attenuated symptoms and no drug use in <72 hr, and one reported absence of effects	Medical screening and monitoring one fatality, probably caused by concomitant heroin use
Mash et al. (2000) <sup>b</sup>	Open-label Private clinic St. Kitts, West Indies	27 (heroin, methadone [?] and cocaine) 23 men, mean age 34.6 (opiates/opioids) and 37.5 (cocaine) years	Single doses 500, 600, and 800 mg	Significant ( $p < .005$ ) reductions in all HCQN-29 subscales <sup>c</sup> and in two CCQN-45 subscales <sup>d</sup> after 36 hr and 14 days, and significant ( $p < .0005$ ) reductions in BDI scores after one month Abstinence (?)	Medical screening and monitoring No serious adverse reactions
Mash et al. (2001) <sup>b</sup>	Open-label Private clinic St. Kitts, West Indies	32 (heroin and methadone) 23 men, mean age 33.6 years	Single dose 800 mg	Significant ( $p < .05$ ) reductions in OOWS scores after 12-24 hr and in OP-SCL scores after <72 hr and 6-9 days, and months of abstinence in many subjects (although data were not presented)	Medical screening and monitoring No serious adverse reactions
Alper (2001) <sup>a</sup>	Open-label Non-medical United States and The Netherlands	41 (heroin, methadone, cocaine, sedatives, ethanol) Gender, age (?)	Single doses 6-29 mg/kg	15 (29%) subjects reported abstinence for <2 months, 15 (29%) for ≥2 months <6 months, 7 (13%) for ≥6 months <1 year, 10 (19%) for ≥1 year, and 5 (10%) the outcomes could not be determined	Medical screening and monitoring No serious adverse reactions
Schenberg et al. (2014)	Open-label Private hospital Santa Cruz do Rio Pardo, Brazil	75 (ethanol, cannabis, cocaine, and crack-cocaine) 67 men and 8 women, mean age 34.16 (men) and 29.50 (women) years	Single and multiple doses; mean number of sessions 3.83 (men) and 5.40 (women) 17-20 mg/kg	Significant ( $p < .001$ ) increases in abstinence duration, and 61% of subjects were abstinent after single (median 5.5 months) and multiple (median 8.4 months) doses	Medical screening and monitoring No serious adverse reactions
Glue, Cape, Tunicliff, Lockhart, Lam, Gray, et al. (2016)	Randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled, single ascending-dose clinical trial Research unit Dunedin, New Zealand	27 (methadone) 21 men, mean age 41.2 years	Single doses (noribogaine) 60, 120, and 180 mg	Non-significant effects on SOWS, OOWS, COWS, and time to resumption of MST	Medical screening and monitoring No serious adverse reactions Significant QT interval prolongation

*Note.* BDI, Beck Depression Inventory; CCQN-45, Cocaine Craving Questionnaire; COWS, Clinical Opioid Withdrawal Scale; HCQN-29, Heroin Craving Questionnaire; OOWS, Objective Opiate Withdrawal Scale; OP-SCL, Opiate-Symptom Checklist; MST, methadone substitution treatment; SOWS, Subjective Opioid Withdrawal Scale. Interrogation: not informed.

<sup>a</sup>Included subjects from the same sample.  
<sup>b</sup>Included subjects from the same sample.  
<sup>c</sup>Desire to Use, Intention to Use, Anticipation of Positive Outcomes, Relief of Negative States, and Lack of Control.  
<sup>d</sup>Relief of Negative States and Lack of Control.

Journal of Psychiatric Studies (11), pp. 20-28 (2017), 23

antiaddictive effects of ibogaine

### News Articles

1. [New hope for opioid addicts with innovative ibogaine treatment](#)
2. [Can a mind-altering drug cure heroin addiction?](#)
3. [150 years into the opioid epidemic, many are resorting to ibogaine treatment](#)
4. [Many ex-opioid addicts credit 'ibogaine' with cure, but it's illegal in US](#)

## Add your local DN logo to the email

**Purpose:** To decriminalize entheogenic plants, restore our root connection to nature, and improve human health and well-being.

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## ***Email 4***

**Did you know mescaline-containing cacti have been respected as sacred plants for over 5,000 years here in the Americas?**

Cacti is considered both a medicine and a sacrament by many traditions throughout the Americas. In addition, studies show cacti can be beneficial in the treatment of alcoholism. Yet mescaline-containing cacti are illegal to cultivate and ingest outside of religious contexts. Why are plants with so many physical, psychological, and spiritual benefits considered illegal? What are the advantages of using valuable financial resources to stop Oakland residents from having access to plants that can help them heal?

- Honored as a sacred plant for thousands of years throughout the Americas
- Central to traditional religious and healing practices
- Beneficial for the treatment of alcoholism

Learn More:

1. [Traditional medicine applied by the Saraguro \*yachakkuna\*: a preliminary approach to the use of sacred and psychoactive plant species in the southern region of Ecuador](#)
2. [Cacti and Hallucinogenic Plants -- A Golden Guide](#)
3. [San Pedro Basic Info \(ICEERS\)](#)

**\*Add Additional papers you may find\***

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*(The following document was created by Oakland and revised by Berkeley activists to educate their community and city council leaders.)*



# **Decriminalize Nature Berkeley**

## **Decriminalize Nature Berkeley Fact Sheet**

We suffer from misinformation about traditional entheogenic plants. These are traditional healing plants, respectfully used for religious and healing purposes for millennia, around the world. Although currently illegal outside of limited clinical and religious contexts, these plants aren't addicting, socially destabilizing drugs.

"Entheogenic plants" are different from, for example, amphetamine, cocaine, heroin, alcohol, and tobacco. Contrary to political messaging, the science shows these plants are not addictive - in fact, they help alleviate addiction, depression, and, when used with respect and care, can be deeply healing to individuals and communities. Here are a few facts about these plants, with their scientific references listed at the bottom of the page.

Entheogenic plants and fungi have co-evolved with humans for millennia, first used, possibly, to enhance hunting ability through heightened sensory awareness allowing greater success during hunting and gathering. From there, the plants and fungi began their co-evolution with humans, creating a unique synergistic relationship between these entheogens and human communities via shamanic integration.

Eventually, the sensory and consciousness benefits, including the social cohesion and expansion of consciousness, were brought into the villages and communities. From there, the relationship between the entheogens and humans grew and are thought to be the genesis of the mystical experiences that led to growth of religion, and to expanded capacity of humans to contextualize themselves within the greater cosmos

and understand their surroundings as a fully integrated ecosystem and to create a workable narrative of their own existence within this ecosystem.

These plants and fungi have been revered throughout the world, but have become limited to humanity by millennia of colonization, authoritarianism, industrialization, and the disenfranchisement of humans from their ecological roots.

In addition, countless indigenous groups throughout the world, including Native Americans, the Olmec, Zapotec, Maya, and Aztec used psilocybe mushrooms. Mushroom stones and art date back to 3000 BC in the Americas and as far back as 11,000 BC in northern Africa. The Aztecs would drink chocolate and eat mushrooms called "Teonanácatl" in Nahuatl (literally "god mushroom"—compound of the words teo(tl) (god) and nanácatl (mushroom)) with honey. The act of ingesting the mushroom sacrament is known as monanacahua (to mushroom oneself).

Entheogenic plants and fungi are known to increase an individual's respect for the earth and the ecosystem and to heighten human awareness of their own condition within society, a fact that may have led to these plants and fungi being placed on the Federal Schedule 1 list of banned substances.

A top Nixon aide, John Ehrlichman, admitted: "You want to know what this was really all about. The Nixon campaign in 1968, and the Nixon White House after that, had two enemies: the antiwar left and black people. You understand what I'm saying. We knew we couldn't make it illegal to be either against the war or black, but by getting the public to associate the hippies with marijuana and blacks with heroin, and then criminalizing both heavily, we could disrupt those communities. We could arrest their leaders, raid their homes, break up their meetings, and vilify them night after night on the evening news. Did we know we were lying about the drugs? Of course we did."

Wall Street investors are already investing in psilocybin companies which are developing synthetic versions of nature that will cost \$7,000- \$10,000 a gram and potentially reduce access for our community, rather than increase access.

Individual and community empowerment comes from being able to know where our entheogens come from, from our garden, or from our community. We should not have to rely upon synthetically made substances from the pharmaceutical industry that distances us from our relationship to Earth.



(art by EW Smith)

## **Ayahuasca**

- **Substance use disorder and alcohol dependence**

Winkelman, M. (2014). Psychedelics as Medicines for Substance Abuse Rehabilitation: Evaluating Treatments with LSD, Peyote, Ibogaine and Ayahuasca. *Current Drug Abuse Reviews* 7, pp. 101-116.

*Winkelman (2014) describes a successful addiction treatment center called Takiwasi. “For more than 20 years, Jacques Mabit and the Takiwasi center in Peru has been a pioneer in the use of ayahuasca treatments for addiction. The Takiwasi program incorporates ayahuasca in ritual treatments for addicts in remote settings in the Peruvian Amazon. The Takiwasi program is known for its work with cocaine and cocaine paste addicts, as well as a variety of polysubstance users.*

Loizaga-Velder, A. and R. Verres (2014). Therapeutic effects of ritual ayahuasca use in the treatment of substance dependence--qualitative results. *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs* 46(1), pp. 63-72.

*Loizaga-Velder and Verres (2014) qualitative research findings indicate that ayahuasca can serve as a valuable therapeutic tool that, in carefully structured settings, can catalyze neurobiological and psychological processes that support recovery from substance dependencies and the prevention of relapse.*

- **Treatment-resistant depression**

Palhano-Fontes, F., Barreto, D., Onias, H., Andrade, K., Novaes, M., Pessoa, J., . . . Araújo, D. (2019). Rapid antidepressant effects of the psychedelic ayahuasca in treatment-resistant depression: A randomized placebo-controlled trial. *Psychological Medicine*, 49(4), 655-663. doi:10.1017/S0033291718001356

*Palhano-Fontes et al. (2019) randomized placebo controlled trial found significant decreased depression severity, which persisted two and seven days after the trial. For example, on Day 7 the Hamilton Depression Rating scale remission rate was 43% in ayahuasca versus 13% in placebo, and the MADRS remission rate showed 36% ayahuasca and 7% placebo.*

- **Recurrent depression**

de L. Osório, F., et al. (2015). Antidepressant effects of a single dose of ayahuasca in patients with recurrent depression: a preliminary report. *Revista Brasileira de Psiquiatria* 37(1), pp. 13-20.

*de L. Osório, F. et al. (2015) preliminary report on the antidepressant effects of a single dose of ayahuasca suggest fast-acting anxiolytic and antidepressant effects in patients with a depressive disorder.*

- **Grief**

González, D., et al. (2017). Potential Use of Ayahuasca in Grief Therapy. *OMEGA—Journal of Death and Dying*, pp. 1-26.

*Gonzalez et al. (2017) comparison between 6 (avg.) ayahuasca experiences compared to 12 months of peer support found 83.3% (25/30) believed their ayahuasca-drinking experience had a very positive influence on their grieving process 16.7% (5/30) felt it had a positive influence.*

- **Neuroprotective and Parkinson's**

Samoylenko, V., et al. (2010). Banisteriopsis caapi, a unique combination of MAO inhibitory and antioxidative constituents for the activities relevant to neurodegenerative disorders and Parkinson's disease. *Journal of Ethnopharmacology*, 127 (2), pp. 357–367. doi:10.1016/j.jep.2009.10.030.

*University of Mississippi: Samoylenko et al. (2010) study shows inhibition of MAO-B activity by  $\beta$ -carbolines harmine (7) and harmaline (6), in addition to potent MAO-A inhibition responsible for antidepressant activity, provide protection against neurodegeneration, and has a potential therapeutic value for the treatment of Parkinson's diseases.*

Djamshidian, A. , Bernschneider-Reif, S. , Poewe, W. and Lees, A. J. (2016), *Banisteriopsis caapi*, a Forgotten Potential Therapy for Parkinson's Disease?. *Mov Disord Clin Pract*, 3: 19-26. doi:[10.1002/mdc3.12242](https://doi.org/10.1002/mdc3.12242)

*Djamshidian's (2015) research proposes that harmine should be reconsidered as a potential rapidly acting anti-Parkinsonian agent.*

- **Evidence of health and safety**

*Halpern et al. (2008) study shows physical exam and test scores revealed healthy subjects. Members claimed psychological and physical benefits from ayahuasca. 19 subjects met lifetime criteria for a psychiatric disorder, with 6 in partial remission, 13 in full remission, and 8 reporting induction of remission through Church participation. 24 subjects had drug or alcohol abuse or dependence histories with 22 in full remission, and all 5 with prior alcohol dependence describing ayahuasca-based church participation as the turning point in their recovery.*

Harris, R., and Gurel, L. (2012). A Study of Ayahuasca Use in North America. *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs* 44(3): 209-215.

*Harris and Gurel (2012) qualitative study reveals that ayahuasca users reduced their alcohol intake, ate healthier diets, enjoyed improved mood and greater self-acceptance and felt more loving and compassionate in their relationships.*

- **Diabetes**

Wang, P. et al., (2015). A high-throughput chemical screen reveals that harmine-mediated inhibition of DYRK1A increases human pancreatic beta cell replication. *Nature Medicine* 21, pp. 383–388.

*Wang et al. (2015) study using three different mouse and human islet in vivo-based models, we show that harmine is able to induce beta cell proliferation, increase islet mass and improve glycemic control. These observations suggest that harmine analogs may have unique therapeutic promise for human diabetes therapy.*

- **Recidivism**

*In 2013, volunteer therapists working with Acuda, a prisoner's rights group based in Port Velho, Brazil, began integrating yoga, reiki, and ayahuasca ceremonies as part of a wide-scale rehabilitation effort to help the half-million-plus inmates scattered across the nation.*



(art by EW Smith)

## Iboga

Table 1. Open-label case series and clinical trials describing the antiaddictive effects of ibogaine

References	Design/setting	Subjects	Dose	Main results	Safety
Sheppard (1994) <sup>a</sup>	Open-label Non-medical Amsterdam, The Netherlands	7 (heroin, methadone, codeine, and ethanol) 5 men, mean age 29.28 years	Single doses 11.7 25 mg/kg	Absence of withdrawal symptoms after 24-38 hr for all subjects, two relapsed within 48 hr, two after several weeks, one reverted to intermittent heroin use, and three remained drug-free >14 weeks	No medical screening or monitoring No serious adverse reactions
Luciano (1998)	Open-label Setting (?)	3 (cocaine, opiates/opioids, and ethanol) Gender, age (?)	Single doses 20 25 mg/kg	Absence of withdrawal and craving symptoms after 24 hr for all subjects Abstinence (?)	Medical screening and monitoring No serious adverse reactions
Alper et al. (1999) <sup>a</sup>	Open-label Non-medical United States and The Netherlands	33 (heroin, methadone, and cocaine) 22 men, mean age 27.3 years	Single doses 6 29 mg/kg	Absence of withdrawal symptoms and drug use for 25 (76%) subjects after 72 hr, four did not report symptoms but used drugs in <72 hr, two reported attenuated symptoms and no drug use in <72 hr, and one reported absence of effects	Medical screening and monitoring one fatality, probably caused by concomitant heroin use
Mash et al. (2000) <sup>b</sup>	Open-label Private clinic St. Kitts, West Indies	27 (heroin, methadone [?] and cocaine) 23 men, mean age 34.6 (opiates/opioids) and 37.5 (cocaine) years	Single doses 500, 600, and 800 mg	Significant ( $p < .005$ ) reductions in all HCQN-29 subscales <sup>c</sup> and in two CCQN-45 subscales <sup>d</sup> after 36 hr and 14 days, and significant ( $p < .0005$ ) reductions in BDI scores after one month Abstinence (?)	Medical screening and monitoring No serious adverse reactions
Mash et al. (2001) <sup>b</sup>	Open-label Private clinic St. Kitts, West Indies	32 (heroin and methadone) 23 men, mean age 33.6 years	Single dose 800 mg	Significant ( $p < .05$ ) reductions in OOWS scores after 12-24 hr and in OP-SCL scores after <72 hr and 6-9 days, and months of abstinence in many subjects (although data were not presented)	Medical screening and monitoring No serious adverse reactions
Alper (2001) <sup>a</sup>	Open-label Non-medical United States and The Netherlands	41 (heroin, methadone, cocaine, sedatives, ethanol) Gender, age (?)	Single doses 6 29 mg/kg	15 (29%) subjects reported abstinence for <2 months, 15 (29%) for $\geq 2$ months <6 months, 7 (13%) for $\geq 6$ months <1 year, 10 (19%) for >1 year, and 5 (10%) the outcomes could not be determined	Medical screening and monitoring No serious adverse reactions
Schenberg et al. (2014)	Open-label Private hospital Santa Cruz do Rio Pardo, Brazil	75 (ethanol, cannabis, cocaine, and crack-cocaine) 67 men and 8 women, mean age 34.16 (men) and 29.50 (women) years	Single and multiple doses; mean number of sessions 3.83 (men) and 5.40 (women) 17 20 mg/kg	Significant ( $p < .001$ ) increases in abstinence duration, and 61% of subjects were abstinent after single (median 5.5 months) and multiple (median 8.4 months) doses	Medical screening and monitoring No serious adverse reactions
Glue, Cape, Tunnickliff, Lockhart, Lam, Gray, et al. (2016)	Randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled, single ascending-dose clinical trial Research unit Dunedin, New Zealand	27 (methadone) 21 men, mean age 41.2 years	Single doses (noribogaine) 60, 120, and 180 mg	Non-significant effects on SOWS, OOWS, COWS, and time to resumption of MST	Medical screening and monitoring No serious adverse reactions Significant QT interval prolongation

Note. BDI, Beck Depression Inventory; CCQN-45, Cocaine Craving Questionnaire; COWS, Clinical Opioid Withdrawal Scale; HCQN-29, Heroin Craving Questionnaire; OOWS, Objective Opiate Withdrawal Scale; OP-SCL, Opiate-Symptom Checklist; MST, methadone substitution treatment; SOWS, Subjective Opioid Withdrawal Scale. Interrogation: not informed.

<sup>a</sup>Included subjects from the same sample.

<sup>b</sup>Included subjects from the same sample.

<sup>c</sup>Desire to Use, Intention to Use, Anticipation of Positive Outcomes, Relief of Negative States, and Lack of Control.

<sup>d</sup>Relief of Negative States and Lack of Control.



(art by EW Smith)

### **Psilocybin from Psilocybe mushrooms**

- **Smoking Cessation**

Johnson, M. et al. (2017). An online survey of tobacco smoking cessation associated with naturalistic psychedelic use. *Journal of Psychopharmacology* 31 (7), pp. 841-850.

*Johnson et al. (2014) open-label, proof of concept study found the clinical outcome of successful smoking cessation in 80% of the sample (12/15 participants), with biologically verified abstinence 6 months after each participant's planned quit date. 73% of participants rated at least one of their sessions as among the top five most spiritually significant experiences of their lives.*

- **Alcohol dependence**

Bogenschutz, M., et al. (2015). Psilocybin-assisted treatment for alcohol dependence: A proof-of-concept study. *Journal of Psychopharmacology* 29(3), pp. 289-299.

*Bogenschutz et al. (2015) proof of concept study found patients in the study exhibited a significant improvement in drinking after their first psilocybin session and scores on ratings of psilocybin-occasioned mystical experience correlated strongly with change in drinking behavior.*

- **Treatment resistant depression**

Lyons, T. and Carhart-Harris, R. (2018). Increased nature relatedness and decreased authoritarian political views after psilocybin for treatment-resistant depression. *Journal of Psychopharmacology*, 32(7), pp. 811–819.

*Centre for Psychiatry, Department of Medicine, Imperial College London: Lyon et al (2018) study on depressive symptoms: One week after psilocybin treatment, depressive symptoms were significantly reduced to levels more comparable with controls. The patients' depressive symptoms remained significantly reduced at the 7–12-months follow-up.*

- **End-of-life anxiety**

Ross, S., et al. (2016). Rapid and sustained symptom reduction following psilocybin treatment for anxiety and depression in patients with life-threatening cancer: a randomized controlled trial. *Journal of Psychopharmacology*, 30(12), pp. 1165-1180.

*New York University: Ross et al. (2016) double-blind, placebo-controlled, crossover trial, on 29 patients with cancer-related anxiety and depression found "immediate, substantial, and sustained improvements in anxiety and depression and led to decreases in cancer-related demoralization and hopelessness, improved spiritual well being, and increased quality of life." At the 6.5-month follow-up "approximately 60–80% of participants continued with clinically significant reductions in depression or anxiety."*

- **Openness**

MacLean, K., et al. (2011). Mystical experiences occasioned by the hallucinogen psilocybin lead to increases in the personality domain of openness. *Journal of Psychopharmacology*, 25(11) 1453–1461.

*Johns Hopkins Medical School: MacLean et al. (2011) combined two double blind studies with 52 participants to show significant increases in Openness after a high dose psilocybin session with mystical experiences that were larger in magnitude than changes in personality typically observed in healthy adults over decades of life experience. Openness remained significantly higher than baseline more than 1 year after the session.*

- **Nature-Relatedness**

Lyons, T. and Carhart-Harris, R. (2018). Increased nature relatedness and decreased authoritarian political views after psilocybin for treatment-resistant depression. *Journal of Psychopharmacology*, 32(7), pp. 811–819.

*Centre for Psychiatry, Department of Medicine, Imperial College London: Lyons et al. (2018) open-label pilot study with a mixed-model design on treatment resistant depression found patients reported being significantly more connected to nature 1 week and 7–12 months after psilocybin treatment compared with baseline.*

- **Decreased Authoritarian**

Lyons, T. and Carhart-Harris, R. (2018). Increased nature relatedness and decreased authoritarian political views after psilocybin for treatment-resistant depression. *Journal of Psychopharmacology*, 32(7), pp. 811–819.

*Centre for Psychiatry, Department of Medicine, Imperial College London: Lyons and colleagues (2018) open-label pilot study with a mixed-model design on treatment resistant depression found patients were significantly less authoritarian 1 week after psilocybin treatment and a trend-level decrease was found at 7–12 months compared with baseline.*

- **Most Meaningful**

Griffiths, R., Richards, W., Johnson, M., McCann, U., & Jesse, R. (2008). Mystical-type experiences occasioned by psilocybin mediate the attribution of personal meaning and spiritual significance 14 months later. *Journal of psychopharmacology (Oxford, England)*, 22(6), 621–632. doi:10.1177/0269881108094300

*Johns Hopkins Medical School: Griffiths et al. (2006, 2008) 67% of the volunteers rated the experience with psilocybin to be either the single most meaningful experience of his or her life or among the top five most meaningful experiences of his or her life, which continued at the 14-month follow-up. 79% of the volunteers rated that the psilocybin experience increased their current sense of personal well-being or life satisfaction “moderately” (50%) or “very much” (29%) Lifetime mystical experience and spiritual transcendence scores were significantly higher in the group that received psilocybin. These results were relatively the same after a 14-month follow-up.*

- **Mystical experiences**

Griffiths, R., Richards, W., Johnson, M., McCann, U., & Jesse, R. (2008). Mystical-type experiences occasioned by psilocybin mediate the attribution of personal meaning and spiritual significance 14 months later. *Journal of psychopharmacology (Oxford, England)*, 22(6), 621–632. doi:10.1177/0269881108094300

*Johns Hopkins Medical School: Griffiths et al. (2006, 2008) 22 of the total group of 36 volunteers had a “complete” mystical experience after psilocybin, staying relatively the same after a 14-month follow-up.*

### **General Benefits of Indoleamine Compounds**

- **Reduced suicidality**

Hendricks, P., et al. (2015). Psilocybin, psychological distress, and suicidality. *Journal of Psychopharmacology*, 29(9), pp. 1041–1043.

*Hendricks et al. (2015) found that having ever used any classic psychedelic substance—namely, dimethyltryptamine (DMT), ayahuasca... mescaline, peyote or San Pedro, or psilocybin—was associated with a significantly reduced likelihood of past month psychological distress, past year suicidal thinking, past year suicidal planning, and past year suicide attempt in the United States adult population.*

- **Cluster Headaches**

Schindler, E. et al., (2015) Indoleamine Hallucinogens in Cluster Headache: Results of the Clusterbusters Medication Use Survey, *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs*, 47(5), pp. 372-381. DOI:10.1080/02791072.2015.1107664

*Schindler et al. (2015) survey from Cluster Buster Headaches 496 respondents with diagnosis of cluster headache verified by a neurologist or headache specialist. “Psilocybin... along with another hallucinogen, DMT, were used daily to weekly for abortive purposes (n = 23). For prevention, they were used every few weeks to twice yearly (n = 80). The word “single” or “once” to indicate one dose of psilocybin or LSD was clearly written by eight responders. In contrast to these conventional medications, the current study shows that psilocybin and LSD provided over 70% of those who tried them with at least moderate protection from attacks. Complete preventive efficacy was about 40% for each drug, which is greater than that reported for any other conventional medication.”*

- **Intimate Partner Violence & Recidivism**

Walsh, Z. , et al. (2016). Hallucinogen use and intimate partner violence: Prospective evidence consistent with protective effects among men with histories of problematic substance use. *Journal of Psychopharmacology*, pp. 1-7. DOI:10.1177/0269881116642538.

*Walsh et al. (2016 ) study of 302 inmates at a US county jail found that any lifetime use of hallucinogens was associated with lower rates of Intimate Partner Violence; 26.79% of the hallucinogen-use group were arrested for later IPV (mean survival time=62.76 months) compared with 41.79% of the group that reported no hallucinogen use (mean survival time=54.85 months). 13.64% of the lifetime hallucinogen-use disorder group were arrested for IPV (mean survival time=68.82 months) compared with 35% of the group that reported no lifetime hallucinogen use disorder (mean survival time=58.50 months).*

- **Recidivism**

Hendricks, P. S., Clark, C. B., Johnson, M. W., Fontaine, K. R., & Cropsey, K. L. (2014). Hallucinogen use predicts reduced recidivism among substance-involved offenders under community corrections supervision. *Journal of Psychopharmacology*, 28(1), 62–66. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0269881113513851>

*University of Alabama Observational Study: Hendricks (2014) collected data from 25,622 individuals charged with a felony and under community corrections supervision for individuals with a history of substance involvement. Hallucinogen use disorder was associated with a decreased probability of supervision failure. This stands in contrast to any cannabis, cocaine, alcohol, opiate, and amphetamine use disorder, each of which was associated with an increased probability of supervision failure. Any hallucinogen use disorder was the third strongest predictor of supervision outcome among all predictors, trailing only any cocaine use disorder and any cannabis use disorder (both predicting failure).*

**Additional Resources:**

- Mushrooms: <https://www.iceers.org/psilocybin-mushrooms-basic-info/>
- Cacti containing mescaline: <https://www.iceers.org/san-pedro-basic-info/>
- Ayahuasca: <https://www.iceers.org/ayahuasca-basic-info/>
- Iboga: <https://www.iceers.org/iboga-basic-info/>

# Press Release Template Example

Try to keep this limited to a single page remove or replace *red italicized* sections:

*Your Logo Goes Here in email letterhead*

*Address or contact info*

## Press Release

**Month day, year**

**For Immediate Release:**

***(Title of Press Release... an example from DN Oakland OCHI: Bold 14pt)* Decriminalize Nature submits Draft “Emergency Mental Health” Ordinance to Council to Legalize Community-Based Healing with Entheogens**

*(Short catchy statement on why this important and why they should cover the story: Italics 12pt)*  
*Ordinance would create first ever regulatory framework for healing the most vulnerable with plant medicine ceremony within community-containers.*

Month Day, 2020— *(Intro, include brief when, what, who type info: Normal 12pt)* On July 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Decriminalize Nature Core Team submitted their final draft of the Oakland Community Healing Initiative Ordinance to Councilmember Noel Gallo, who sponsored and unanimously passed the Resolution to decriminalize entheogens on June 4<sup>th</sup> 2019.

*(Brief synopsis of what is happening)* The draft ordinance submitted on July 18<sup>th</sup> would effectively create a regulatory framework enabling practitioners and facilitators to receive legal protections under a community-based healing ordinance in exchange for agreeing to abide by safe practice guidelines and principles developed by leaders and experts in plant based healing ceremony. The program would be largely managed by community-based organizations by ensuring participants and facilitators participating in the ceremonies have been sponsored by leaders of long-standing respected community-based organizations providing services to the formerly incarcerated, victims of violence, trauma, and domestic abuse, the unhoused, those recovering from addiction, and communities impacted by the war on drugs.

*(Quote 1 from your team)* “People have been healing from plant-based group ceremony for centuries. The unique, and history-making, approach we’re offering the city is to bring the ancient wisdom and practices that have enabled communities to heal, together with modern science and harm reduction techniques to enable people from the most marginalized communities who are ready to make life changes to find healing in a community-container”, said Carlos Plazola, Chair of Decriminalize Nature.

*(Quote 2 from your team)* Sizwe Andrews Abakah adds, “people in our most challenged communities struggle with deep trauma yet their lives are as precious as yours and mine. Many looking for help out of their destructive thought patterns are already participating in community-containers that offer them support. By introducing plant-medicine in a safe manner, we bring just one more tool, albeit a powerful tool, to “reboot” the system and enable new life choices promoting wellness to emerge”.

*(Expected Timeline keep flexible unless confirmed on dates i.e. hopeful/projects/expects/etc)*  
The DN group is hoping for final approval of the ordinance by October, 2020

***For more information, Contact **Your name**, Chair of Decriminalize Nature (city) at your phone number or your email (Bold italics 12pt)***

*If room a photo of your team or logo or action place here*

*(This document is the initial resolution proposed by Noel Gallo and Decriminalize Nature Oakland. Local organizers are free to use this document as a guide for their resolutions.)*

*To organizers: Subsequent to the passing of this resolution, members of the Native American Church who are part of the Indigenous Peyote Conservation Initiative contacted DN representatives and requested that DN remove any mention of the word 'Peyote' or 'Native American Church' from future Resolutions. Since this request in September 2019, DN has encouraged its member cities to remove these words from their own local Resolutions.)*

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## **Decriminalize Nature Oakland Resolution (5/15/19)**



## *Agenda Report*

**DATE:** 5/15/19

**TO:** City Councilmembers and Members of the Public Safety Committee

**FROM:** Councilmember Noel Gallo

**SUBJECT:** Decriminalizing Entheogenic Plants

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### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Councilmember Noel Gallo recommends that the City Council adopt:

**RESOLUTION SUPPORTING ENTHEOGENIC PLANT PRACTICES AND DECLARING THAT THE INVESTIGATION AND ARREST OF INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED WITH THE ADULT USE**

## **OF ENTHEOGENIC PLANTS ON THE FEDERAL SCHEDULE 1 LIST<sup>1</sup> BE AMONGST THE LOWEST PRIORITY FOR THE CITY OF OAKLAND**

### **SUMMARY:**

This legislation would decriminalize entheogenic plants and fungi such as mushrooms, cacti, iboga containing plants and /or extracted combinations of plants similar to Ayahuasca; and limited to those containing the following types of compounds: indole amines, tryptamines, phenethylamines, by restricting any city funds or resources to assist in the enforcement of laws imposing criminal penalties for the use and possession of Entheogenic Plants by adults.

### **BACKGROUND/ LEGISLATIVE HISTORY:**

While the United States generally prohibits entheogenic plants and fungi, the official position from the UN is “No plants are currently controlled under the Conventions. Preparations made from plants containing those active ingredients are also not under international control... Examples of such plants or plant material include ayahuasca, a preparation made from plants indigenous to the Amazon basin of South America, mainly a jungle vine (*Banisteriopsis caapi*) and another tryptamine-rich plant (*Psychotria viridis*) containing a number of psychoactive alkaloids, including DMT; the peyote cactus (*Lophophora williamsii*), containing mescaline; *Psilocybe* mushrooms, which contain psilocybin and psilocin; and iboga (*Tabernanthe iboga*), a plant that contains ibogaine and is native to the western part of Central Africa.” However, the UN position is not recognized throughout the world, and the prohibition of entheogens differs for many different countries causing confusion and restricting those who could benefit simply due to the legal status of where they live.

Internationally, some mushrooms containing psilocybin are legal or decriminalized in Brazil, Jamaica, Netherlands, and Portugal. Within the United States, Denver voters recently approved of Initiative 301 to decriminalize mushrooms containing psilocybin. The official statement from Denver Mayor Hancock and the Denver City Attorney’s

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<sup>1</sup> Refers to plants and natural sources (as defined herein), such as mushrooms, cacti, iboga containing plants and/or extracted combinations of plants similar to Ayahuasca; and limited to those containing the following types of compounds: indole amines, tryptamines, phenethylamines.

office following the vote is that they will “respect the decision of the voters and the Denver Police Department will enforce the law accordingly.” In New Mexico, the status of mushrooms containing psilocybin are in a grey area. In 2005, the Court of Appeals of New Mexico (*State v Pratt*) concluded “acts of cultivating or growing mushrooms, even if by artificial means, are not prohibited.” In 2000, the Coordination Centre for the Assessment and Monitoring of new drugs (CAM) carried out a risk assessment on mushrooms containing psilocybin and concluded the risk to the health of the individual, the public health, and the public order was judged to be low.

Internationally, iboga is not prohibited in Gabon, and in fact, is considered a national treasure. In New Zealand, Brazil, and South Africa, ibogaine is available through prescription or license. Iboga/ine is unregulated in Mexico and not specifically prohibited in the Netherlands, where many ibogaine treatment centers exist for treating addiction. Within the United States, legislative bills have been introduced in New York (2015), Vermont (2016), and most recently proposed in Iowa (2019) seeking to reclassify ibogaine and encouraging research on ibogaine for the treatment of opioid dependency.

Internationally ayahuasca, a plant preparation containing DMT, is not prohibited in countries such as Peru, Costa Rica, and in Brazil specifically for spiritual purposes. According to Herbert Schaepe (2001), the UN International Narcotics Control Board’s position is as follows: “No plants (natural materials) containing DMT are at present controlled under the 1971 Convention of Psychotropic Substances. Consequently, preparations made of these plants, including ayahuasca are not under international control and, therefore, not subject to any of the articles of the 1971 Convention.” While still prohibited in the United States, the Supreme Court has given protection to one church for the sacramental use of ayahuasca under the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993 in *Gonzales, et al. v. O Centro Espirita Beneficente Uniao do Vegetal et al.* (opinion delivered by Chief Justice Roberts). In 2009, the United States District Court for the District of Oregon protected ayahuasca use for the Church of the Holy Light of the Queen.

Within the United States, sacramental peyote practices such as found in the Native American Church gained legislative protection for religious practices through the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993 and the American Indian Religious Freedom Act Amendments in 1994. However, despite specific religious exemption for possessing peyote in California, it is illegal to grow or cultivate despite concerns around peyote’s sustainability. Individual states recognize peyote as a sacrament for various populations

and intentions, specifying exemptions ranging from Native American descent only, to anyone with sincere religious intent.

## **ANALYSIS:**

For millennia, cultures have respected entheogenic plants and fungi for providing healing, knowledge, creativity, and spiritual connection. Recently, scientific studies are demonstrating entheogens can be beneficial for treating conditions such as end-of-life anxiety, substance abuse, addiction, cluster headaches, PTSD, neurodegeneration, anxiety, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and treatment resistant depression, as well as reduce rates of intimate partner violence and recidivism. On October 2018, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) granted Breakthrough Therapy designation for studies on psilocybin therapy for treatment-resistant depression, supporting the Federal position that there can be medical benefits to natural substances on Schedule 1. In addition to treating a variety of conditions, entheogens can also be valuable for personal and spiritual growth. A Johns Hopkins study on “healthy normals” found over 75% of the respondents considered their psilocybin experience to be one of the top five most meaningful experiences of their lives. Yet despite numerous studies showing the potential benefits of entheogenic plants and fungi, they are Schedule 1, meaning they have no medical value, and are highly addictive, both of which have proven to be false. This also sets up a false dichotomy, privileging and requiring authorization through the medical system to be Federally decriminalized, while Indigenous groups throughout the world have been engaging in entheogenic plant and fungi practices for millennia without needing the approval of the Western medical system.

The development of scientific and medical research and FDA Break Through designation provides support for centuries of anecdotal evidence emerging from traditional entheogenic cultures. Unfortunately, the development of the synthetic compounds required for FDA trials, such as psilocybin (which occurs naturally in Psilocybe mushrooms) may cost upwards of \$7-10,000 per gram, and must be prescribed by a medical or clinical professional. Residents of Oakland expressed concern that this dominant model will have high barriers of entry, both in cost and ethos, for those most in need, limiting their opportunities. For those who could afford the treatment, fit the inclusion criteria, and were willing to have their experience with a clinician or a therapist, they would still need to rely upon a laboratory made synthetic compound created by the pharmaceutical industry. The consequences of this reliance are people

are dependent on industry and authority for access to entheogenic experiences, disconnecting them from their place in the natural ecosystem. By choosing to decriminalize nature, this empowers Oakland residents to be able to grow their own entheogens, share them with their community, and choose the appropriate setting for their intentions. As this national conversation on entheogens grows, we feel it is essential to influence the debate now and take a stand for disenfranchised communities who may be left out of the dominant model by opening a way for individual and community access.

This initiative aims to empower the Oakland community by restoring their relationship to nature. The Oakland community behind this initiative believe it is an inalienable right to develop their own relationship with nature, both as a measure of personal liberty and to embrace what it means to be human on Planet Earth. Entheogenic plant practices have long historical roots in the Americas, Africa, Asia, and Europe, yet this connection was severed for most of the global population long ago. Decriminalizing nature provides individual and community sovereignty to explore different levels of the human experience, including mystical and spiritual states of consciousness. By supporting this initiative, further educational outreach and support can emerge from the underground and provide Oakland residents with tools and resources to empower communities to share knowledge and continue building an above-ground infrastructure around entheogens. The depth and diversity of the Oakland community demands a path toward equitable access, and Oakland has a unique opportunity to lead by example, and guide the nationwide conversation.

### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

The legislation would reduce resources that would be spent to assist in the enforcement of laws imposing criminal penalties for the use and possession of Entheogenic Plants by adults.

### **PUBLIC OUTREACH/INTEREST:**

Decriminalize Nature Oakland (DNO) began their outreach at the beginning of 2019, discussing their intentions with residents and City of Oakland officials, including Councilmember Noel Gallo and his colleagues. DNO hosted their first public educational event in Temescal in March and had over 175 attendees and the participation of seven community organizations. DNO has begun a robust social media campaign, and has

already been mentioned in Forbes, Rolling Stone, and the Washington Post. DNO has the support of Bay Area organizations such as Sacred Garden Community, Entheogenic Research, Integration, and Education (ERIE), Psychedelic Society SF, the 9/20 Coalition, Bloom Network, Operation EVAC, Sage Integrative Health, Root Wisdom, and Supernova Women, many of whom have been providing educational resources to the Bay Area on this topic for years. DNO will continue to conduct outreach about this legislation with community representatives throughout Oakland.

## **COORDINATION:**

This report was reviewed by the Office of Councilmember Noel Gallo-District 5 and Decriminalize Nature Oakland.

## **SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES**

**Economic:** Decriminalize Nature Oakland (DNO) believes entheogenic plants and fungi should not be commodified, but services surrounding entheogenic plant practices will bring opportunities to the Oakland community, such as facilitators, hospice care, addiction therapists, educators, researchers, and entheogenic integration support. Additional economic opportunities include the development of gardens, community centers, collectives, and trade schools to offer accessible education and resources.

**Environmental:** The entire DNO campaign brings attention to the environment and how it is being affected by our disconnection to nature. In addition, DNO supports educational outreach on gardening and planting sacred plants for gardens and natural beautification.

**Social Equity:** DNO is creating and protecting an opportunity for equitable access by allowing home grows or personal gardens, where Oakland residents can develop their own relationship with nature, free from external interference. DNO's approach to social equity also includes bringing general awareness and information to the community, as well as access to entheogenic specific knowledge such as facilitator training, gardening and botany workshops, and guidelines and mentorship for developing peer integration circles. Since DNO believes entheogens should not be commodified, there will be no sales of entheogenic plants and fungi and we will work closely with local communities to share resources. As an approach to accessibility also includes those individuals who cannot grow their own entheogens for a variety of reasons, concepts such as collectives

could provide a space to have an experience, or “road people” who could visit those in hospice care or unable to leave their home.

For questions regarding this report, please contact Mar Velez, Office of Councilmember Noel Gallo at (510) 238-6126.

Respectfully submitted,

Councilmember Noel Gallo, District 5

Prepared by:  
Mar Velez, Office of  
Councilmember Noel Gallo, District 5

Attachments: A - Proposed Resolution

Approved as to Form and Legality

City Attorney's Office

## OAKLAND CITY COUNCIL

RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_ C.M.S.

INTRODUCED BY COUNCILMEMBER NOEL GALLO

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**RESOLUTION SUPPORTING ENTHEOGENIC PLANT PRACTICES AND  
DECLARING THAT THE INVESTIGATION AND ARREST OF  
INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED WITH THE ADULT USE OF ENTHEOGENIC  
PLANTS ON THE FEDERAL SCHEDULE 1 LIST<sup>2</sup> BE AMONGST THE  
LOWEST PRIORITY FOR THE CITY OF OAKLAND**

**WHEREAS**, Entheogenic Plants, based on the term “entheogen”, originally conceived by Ott, Ruck, and other colleagues from a working group of anthropologists and ethnobotanists in 1979; and defined herein as the full spectrum of plants, fungi, and natural materials deserving reverence and respect from the perspective of the individual and the collective, that can inspire personal and spiritual well-being<sup>i</sup>, can benefit psychological<sup>ii</sup> and physical wellness<sup>iii</sup>, and can reestablish human’s inalienable and direct relationship to nature; and

**WHEREAS**, substance abuse<sup>iv</sup>, addiction, recidivism<sup>v</sup>, trauma, post-traumatic stress symptoms, chronic depression, severe anxiety<sup>vi</sup>, end-of-life anxiety, grief<sup>vii</sup>, diabetes<sup>viii</sup>, cluster headaches<sup>ix</sup>, and other conditions are plaguing our community and that the use of Entheogenic Plants have been shown to be beneficial to the health and well-being of individuals and communities in addressing these afflictions via scientific

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<sup>2</sup> Refers to plants and natural sources (as defined herein), such as mushrooms, cacti, iboga containing plants and/or extracted combinations of plants similar to Ayahuasca; and limited to those containing the following types of compounds: indole amines, tryptamines, phenethylamines.

and clinical studies and within continuing traditional practices, which can catalyze profound experiences of personal and spiritual growth; and

**WHEREAS**, practices with Entheogenic Plants have long existed and have been considered to be sacred to human cultures and human interrelationships with nature for thousands of years<sup>x</sup>, and continue to be enhanced and improved to this day by religious and spiritual leaders, practicing professionals, mentors, and healers throughout the world, many of whom have been forced underground; and

**WHEREAS**, seeking to improve their health and well-being through the use of Entheogenic Plants use them in fear of arrest and prosecution; and

**WHEREAS**, the Entheogenic Plant practices of certain groups are already explicitly protected in the U.S. under the doctrine of religious freedom -- the Native American Church's use of peyote and the use of ayahuasca by two other churches, a Santo Daime congregation and the Uniao do Vegetal; and

**WHEREAS**, The United Nations considers Entheogenic Plant material used for ritual purposes as excluded from Schedule 1 substances; and

**WHEREAS**, Entheogenic plants containing ibogaine, for example, have been shown to alleviate treatment resistant cases of opiate and methamphetamine addiction at significantly higher rates than all other treatments for addiction<sup>xi</sup>. In addition, ibogaine is reported to be beneficial for addiction therapy related to specific work-related PTSD encountered by first responders such as EMT, police, and firefighters, as well as military veterans; and

**WHEREAS**, Entheogenic Plants or combinations of plants such as Ayahuasca that contain forms of DMT, a naturally occurring compound in the human body that is listed as a Schedule 1 substance, can lead to experiences that are reported as mystical or experientially similar to near death experiences\*<sup>i</sup> and that are can be demonstrably beneficial in treating addiction<sup>xiii</sup>, depression<sup>xiv</sup>, PTSD<sup>xv</sup>, and in catalyzing profound experiences of personal<sup>xvi</sup> and spiritual growth<sup>xvii</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, Entheogenic cacti that contain phenethylamine compounds such as mescaline can be beneficial in healing drug and alcohol addiction<sup>xviii</sup> and for individual spiritual growth<sup>xix</sup>, and have been utilized in sacred initiation and community healing by diverse religious and cultural traditions for millennia and continuing use as religious sacraments in modern times; and

**WHEREAS**, psilocybin, naturally occurring in Entheogenic mushrooms, can alleviate end-of-life anxiety for hospice and terminal cancer patients<sup>xx</sup>, can reduce prison recidivism<sup>xxi</sup>, and can effectively treat substance abuse, depression<sup>xxii</sup>, cluster headaches<sup>xxiii</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, a Johns Hopkins University study on “healthy-normals” found that psilocybin can occasion mystical-type experiences, which were considered one of the top five most meaningful experiences in a subject’s life for over 75% of their subjects within the first year after the study, and also found continuing positive life-style changes after a 14-month follow-up; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Oakland wishes to declare its desire not to expend City resources in any investigation, detention, arrest, or prosecution arising out of alleged violations of state and federal law regarding the use of Entheogenic Plants; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED:** That the Mayor and City Council hereby declare that it shall be the policy of the City of Oakland that no department, agency, board, commission, officer or employee of the city, including without limitation, Oakland Police Department personnel, shall use any city funds or resources to assist in the enforcement of laws imposing criminal penalties for the use and possession of Entheogenic Plants by adults; and be it

**FURTHER RESOLVED:** That the Oakland City Council directs the City Administrator to instruct the City’s state and federal lobbyists to work in support of decriminalizing all Entheogenic Plants and plant-based compounds that are listed on the Federal Controlled Substances Schedule 1; and be it

**FURTHER RESOLVED:** That the Mayor and City Council hereby declare that it shall be the policy of the City of Oakland that the investigation and arrest of adult persons for planting, cultivating, purchasing, transporting, distributing, engaging in practices with, and/or possessing Entheogenic Plants or plant compounds on the Federal Schedule 1 list shall be amongst the lowest law enforcement priority for the City of Oakland; and be it

**FURTHER RESOLVED:** That the Mayor and City Council call upon the Alameda County District Attorney to cease prosecution of persons involved in the use of Entheogenic Plants or plant-based compounds on the Federal Schedule 1 List; and be it

**FURTHER RESOLVED:** That if any provision of this resolution is declared by a court of competent jurisdiction to be contrary to any statute regulation or judicial decision or its applicability to any agency person or circumstances is held invalid the validity of the remainder of this resolution and its applicability to any other agency person or circumstance shall not be affected.

IN COUNCIL, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA,

PASSED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES - FORTUNATO BAS, GALLO, GIBSON MCELHANEY, KALB, REID, TAYLOR, THAO AND PRESIDENT KAPLAN

NOES

ABSENT

ABSTENTION -

ATTEST:

LATONDA SIMMONS

City Clerk and Clerk of the Council of the  
City of Oakland, California

### <sup>i</sup> Entheogens for Personal and Spiritual Growth

Frecska, E., et al. (2012). Enhancement of Creative Expression and Entoptic Phenomena as After-Effects of Repeated Ayahuasca Ceremonies. *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs* 44(3), pp. 191-199.

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### <sup>ii</sup> Entheogens and Psychological Wellness

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Ly et al. (2018). Psychedelics Promote Structural and Functional Neural Plasticity. *Cell Reports* 23, pp. 3170-3182.

McCleary, J., et al., (1960). Antibiotic activity of an extract of peyote (*Lophophora Williamii*). *Economic Botany*, 14(3), pp. 247-249.

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#### <sup>v</sup> Entheogens and Recidivism

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#### <sup>vi</sup> Entheogens and Anxiety

Sarris, J., et al. (2013). "Plant-based medicines for anxiety disorders, part 2: a review of clinical studies with supporting preclinical evidence." *CNS Drugs* 27(4), pp. 301- 319.

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<sup>xi</sup> Iboga/Ibogaine for Addiction Therapy

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#### <sup>xv</sup> Ayahuasca and PTSD

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#### <sup>xvi</sup> Ayahuasca and Personal Growth

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Kuypers, K., et al. (2016). Ayahuasca enhances creative divergent thinking while decreasing conventional convergent thinking. *Psychopharmacology*. DOI 10.1007/S00213-016-4377-8

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<sup>xvii</sup> Ayahuasca and Spiritual Growth

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<sup>xviii</sup> Peyote for treatment of alcohol and drug dependence

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<sup>xix</sup> Peyote

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<sup>xx</sup> Psilocybin for End-of-Life Anxiety

Blinderman, C. (2016). Psycho-existential distress in cancer patients: A return to entheogens. *Journal of Psychopharmacology* 30 (12), pp. 1205-1206.

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<sup>xxi</sup> Entheogens and Reduced Recidivism

Hendricks, P., et al. (2014). Hallucinogen use predicts reduced recidivism among substance-involved offenders under community corrections supervision. *Journal of Psychopharmacology* 28(1), pp. 62-66.

Walsh, Z. , etal. (2016). Hallucinogen use and intimate partner violence: Prospective evidence consistent with protective effects among men with histories of problematic substance use. *Journal of Psychopharmacology*, pp. 1-7. DOI: 10.1177/0269881116642538.

<sup>xxii</sup> Psilocybin and Treatment-Resistant Depression

Hendricks, P., etal. (2015). Psilocybin, psychological distress, and suicidality. *Journal of Psychopharmacology*, 29(9), pp. 1041-1043.

Lyons, T. and Carhart-Harris, R. (2018). Increased nature relatedness and decreased authoritarian political views after psilocybin for treatment-resistant depression. *Journal of Psychopharmacology*, 32(7), pp. 811-819.

<sup>xxiii</sup> Psilocybin and Cluster Headaches

Schindler, E. et al., (2015) Indoleamine Hallucinogens in Cluster Headache: Results of the Clusterbusters Medication Use Survey, *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs*, 47(5), pp. 372-381. DOI: 10.1080/02791072.2015.1107664

*This is the final resolution that was passed by Oakland City Council with additional amendments (in bold).*

*To organizers: Subsequent to the passing of this resolution, members of the Native American Church who are part of the Indigenous Peyote Conservation Initiative contacted DN representatives and requested that DN remove any mention of the word 'Peyote' or 'Native American Church' from future Resolutions. Since this request in September 2019, DN has encouraged its member cities to remove these words from their own local Resolutions.*

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## **Decriminalize Nature Oakland Resolution (6/5/19)**



**DATE:** 6/5/19

**TO:** City Councilmembers and Members of the Public Safety Committee

**FROM:** Councilmember Noel Gallo

**SUBJECT:** Decriminalizing Entheogenic Plants

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**RESOLUTION SUPPORTING ENTHEOGENIC PLANT PRACTICES AND DECLARING THAT THE INVESTIGATION AND ARREST OF INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED WITH THE ADULT USE OF ENTHEOGENIC PLANTS ON THE FEDERAL SCHEDULE 1 LIST' BE AMONGST THE LOWEST PRIORITY FOR THE CITY OF OAKLAND**

WHEREAS, Entheogenic Plants, based on the term "entheogen", originally conceived by Ott, Ruck, and other colleagues from a working group of anthropologists and ethnobotanists in 1979; and defined herein as the full spectrum of plants, fungi, and natural materials deserving reverence and respect from the perspective of the individual and the collective, that can inspire personal and spiritual well-being, can benefit psychological and physical wellness, and can reestablish human's unalienable and direct relationship to nature; and

WHEREAS, substance abuse, addiction, recidivism, trauma, post-traumatic stress symptoms, chronic depression, severe anxiety, end-of-life anxiety, grief, diabetes, cluster headaches, and other conditions are plaguing our community and that the use of Entheogenic Plants have been shown to be beneficial to the health and well-being of individuals and communities in addressing these afflictions via scientific and clinical studies and within continuing traditional practices, which can catalyze profound experiences of personal and spiritual growth; and

WHEREAS, practices with Entheogenic Plants have long existed and have been considered to be sacred to human cultures and human interrelationships with nature for thousands of years, and continue to be enhanced and improved to this day by religious and spiritual leaders, practicing professionals, mentors, and healers throughout the world, many of whom have been forced underground; and

WHEREAS, seeking to improve their health and well-being through the use of Entheogenic Plants use them in fear of arrest and prosecution; and

WHEREAS, the Entheogenic Plant practices of certain groups are already explicitly protected in the U.S. under the doctrine of religious freedom -- the Native American Church's use of peyote and the use of ayahuasca by two other churches, a Santo Daime congregation and the Uniao do Vegetal; and

WHEREAS, The United Nations considers Entheogenic Plant material used for ritual purposes as excluded from Schedule 1 substances; and

WHEREAS, Entheogenic plants containing ibogaine, for example, have been shown to alleviate treatment resistant cases of opiate and methamphetamine addiction at significantly higher rates than all other treatments for addiction. In addition, ibogaine is reported to be beneficial for addiction therapy related to specific work-related PTSD

encountered by first responders such as EMT, police, and firefighters, as well as military veterans; and

WHEREAS, Entheogenic Plants or combinations of plants such as Ayahuasca that contain forms of DMT, a naturally occurring compound in the human body that is listed as a Schedule 1 substance, can lead to experiences that are reported as mystical or experientially similar to near death experiences and that are can be demonstrably beneficial in treating addiction, depression, PTSD, and in catalyzing profound experiences of personal and spiritual growth; and

WHEREAS, Entheogenic cacti that contain phenethylamine compounds such as mescaline can be beneficial in healing drug and alcohol addiction and for individual spiritual growth, and have been utilized in sacred initiation and community healing by diverse religious and cultural traditions for millennia and continuing use as religious sacraments in modern times; and

WHEREAS, psilocybin, naturally occurring in Entheogenic mushrooms, can alleviate end-of-life anxiety for hospice and terminal cancer patients, can reduce prison recidivism, and can effectively treat substance abuse, depression, cluster headaches; and

WHEREAS, a Johns Hopkins University study on "healthy-normals" found that psilocybin can occasion mystical-type experiences, which were considered one of the top five most meaningful experiences in a subject's life for over 75% of their subjects within the first year after the study, and found continuing positive life-style changes after a 14-month follow-up; and

**WHEREAS, the following principles when adhered to, help to ensure safe and responsible use of entheogenic plants:**

- 1. Entheogens are not for everyone. Knowledgeable clinicians caution that some people should not take entheogenic plants or fungi, including people with a personal or family history of schizophrenia or bipolar disorder or who are taking certain medications.**
- 2. If someone has a serious condition like major depression or PTSD, they would do well to get serious, professional help before using an entheogen and to ask that caregiver's advice. {Some counselors are therapists who are glad to work with a client before and after an entheogenic journey.}**

3. **Unless you have expert guidance, it's best to start with small amounts, using more only after you become familiar with the material and the terrain.**
4. **Don't go solo (with nontrivial doses.) Have at least one trusted friend (called sitter, guide, facilitator) be with you, sober during the entire journey, and commit in advance to honor that person's instructions if he or she tells you to not do something. Entheogens can amplify the whole range of human emotions, including anxiety which can sometimes lead to panic. Having a sitter gives you a certain comfort and mental freedom, and can help keep things safe.**
5. **Reverence reduces risks and can help lead to positive outcomes. In cultures that have long used entheogenic substances beneficially, that use is approached with great respect, not haphazardly, and for life-enhancing purposes. And**

WHEREAS, the City of Oakland wishes to declare its desire not to expend City resources in any investigation, detention, arrest, or prosecution arising out of alleged violations of state and federal law regarding the use of Entheogenic Plants; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That the Mayor and City Council hereby declare that it shall be the policy of the City of Oakland that no department, agency, board, commission, officer or employee of the city, including without limitation, Oakland Police Department personnel, shall use any city funds or resources to assist in the enforcement of laws imposing criminal penalties for the use and possession of Entheogenic Plants by adults; and be it

**FURTHER RESOLVED: That this resolution does not authorize or enable any of the following activities: commercial sales or manufacturing of these plants and fungi, possessing or distributing these materials in schools, driving under the influence of these materials; or public disturbance, and be it**

FURTHER RESOLVED: That the Oakland City Council directs the City Administrator to instruct the City's state and federal lobbyists to work in support of decriminalizing all Entheogenic Plants and plant-based compounds that are listed on the Federal Controlled Substances Schedule 1; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED: That the Mayor and City Council hereby declare that it shall be the policy of the City of Oakland that the investigation and arrest of adult persons for planting, cultivating, purchasing, transporting, distributing, engaging in practices with, and/or possessing Entheogenic Plants or plant compounds on the Federal Schedule 1 list shall be amongst the lowest law enforcement priority for the City of Oakland; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED: That the Mayor and City Council call upon the Alameda County District Attorney to cease prosecution of persons involved in the use of Entheogenic Plants or plant-based compounds on the Federal Schedule 1 List; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED: That the City Council directs the City Administrator to come back to Council and present an assessment of community impacts and benefits within a year of passage of this resolution; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED: That if any provision of this resolution is declared by a court of competent jurisdiction to be contrary to any statute regulation or judicial decision or its applicability to any agency person or circumstances is held invalid the validity of the remainder of this resolution and its applicability to any other agency person or circumstance shall not be affected.

*This is DN Ann Arbor's Proposed Resolution, which employs slightly different text and formatting than the DN Oakland Resolution. This will be introduced to Ann Arbor City Council on September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020.*

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*Decriminalize Nature Oakland and Ann Arbor present on a panel at the Detroit Psychedelic Conference August 8, 2020*

## **Decriminalize Nature Ann Arbor Proposed Resolution**

**RESOLUTION DECLARING THAT THE INVESTIGATION AND ARREST OF INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED WITH THE PERSONAL USE, GROWTH AND POSSESSION OF ENTHEOGENIC PLANTS, INCLUDING THOSE SCHEDULED AT STATE AND FEDERAL LEVELS, BE THE LOWEST PRIORITY FOR THE CITY OF ANN ARBOR**

WHEREAS, Entheogenic Plants, defined herein as the full spectrum of plants, fungi, and natural materials and/or their extracted compounds, limited to those containing

the following types of compounds: indole amines, tryptamines, and phenethylamines; that can benefit psychological and physical wellness<sup>2</sup>, support and enhance religious and spiritual practices<sup>17</sup>, and can reestablish human's inalienable and direct relationship to nature; and

WHEREAS, substance abuse, addiction, recidivism, trauma, post-traumatic stress symptoms, chronic depression, severe anxiety, end-of-life anxiety, grief, cluster headaches<sup>9;23</sup>, and other debilitating conditions are present in our community; and

WHEREAS, the use of Entheogenic Plants, which can catalyze profound experiences of personal and spiritual growth<sup>1</sup>, have been shown by scientific and clinical studies and traditional practices to be beneficial to the health and well-being of individuals and communities<sup>17</sup> in addressing these conditions<sup>7</sup>; and

WHEREAS, practices with Entheogenic Plants have long existed and have been considered to be sacred to human cultures and interrelationships with nature for thousands of years<sup>10</sup>; and

WHEREAS, individuals seeking to improve their health and well-being through the use of Entheogenic Plants fear arrest and prosecution due to current legal prohibitions; and

WHEREAS, the City of Ann Arbor currently has many other priorities for the use of its funds, staff, and law enforcement resources; and

WHEREAS, the United Nations considers Entheogenic Plant material used for ritual purposes as excluded from Schedule 1 substances; and

WHEREAS, the Entheogenic Plant practices of certain groups are already explicitly protected in the U.S. under the principle of religious freedom; and

WHEREAS, Entheogenic plants such as Ibogaine have been shown to alleviate treatment resistant cases of opiate and methamphetamine addiction at higher rates than other treatment; and

WHEREAS, Entheogenic Plants or combinations of plants such as Ayahuasca contain Dimethyltryptamine (a naturally occurring compound in the human body) that can be beneficial in treating addiction, depression, and in catalyzing profound experiences of personal and spiritual growth<sup>1</sup>; and

WHEREAS, Entheogenic plants such as cacti that contain phenethylamine compounds (such as mescaline), can be beneficial in the treatment of drug and alcohol addiction and for individual spiritual growth<sup>1</sup>, and have been utilized in sacred initiation and community healing by diverse religious and cultural traditions for millennia and continue to be used for healing and as religious sacraments in modern times<sup>10</sup>; and

WHEREAS, psilocybin, naturally occurring in Entheogenic mushrooms, can alleviate end-of-life anxiety<sup>6</sup> for hospice and terminal cancer patients, can reduce prison recidivism<sup>5;21</sup>, can effectively treat substance abuse<sup>4</sup>, depression, and cluster headaches (a Johns Hopkins University study on “healthy-normals,” found that Entheogenic plants can occasion mystical-type experiences, which were considered one of the top five most meaningful experiences in a subject’s life, and positive life-style changes continued in a 14-month follow-up); therefore

BE IT RESOLVED: That the Mayor and City Council hereby declare that it shall be the policy of the City of Ann Arbor that the investigation and arrest of persons for planting, cultivating, purchasing, transporting, distributing, engaging in practices with, or possessing Entheogenic Plants or plant compounds which are on the Federal Schedule 1 list shall be the lowest law enforcement priority for the City of Ann Arbor; and city funds or resources shall not be used in any investigation, detention, arrest, or prosecution arising out of alleged violations of state and federal law regarding the use of Entheogenic Plants; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED: That this resolution does not authorize or enable any of the following activities: commercial sales or manufacturing of these plants and fungi, possessing or distributing these materials in schools, driving under the influence of these materials, or public disturbance; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED: That the Mayor and City Council call upon the Washtenaw County District Attorney to cease prosecution of persons involved in the use of Entheogenic Plants or plant-based compounds designated by the federal Controlled Substance Act; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED: That if any provision of this resolution is declared by a court of competent jurisdiction to be contrary to any statute, regulation, or judicial decision, so that its applicability to any agency, person, or circumstance is held invalid, the validity of the remainder of this resolution and its applicability to any other agency, person, or circumstance shall not be affected.

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# Anthem: Plant Power to the People

by Spear of the Nation and featuring Gabor Maté

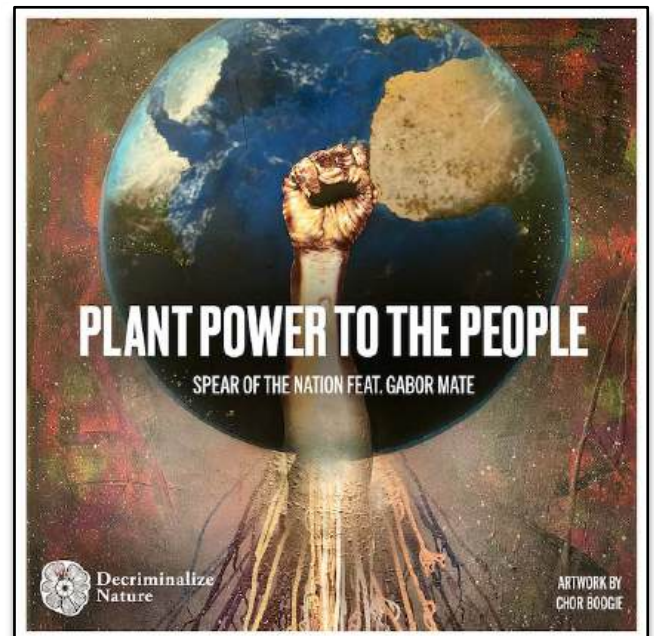
To listen go to the following link: <https://lnk.to/spearofthenation>

Lyrics:

Going beyond the peak experience  
Listening to the lineage  
Multiple messages in the DNA  
Tell me, what did Mama Ayahuasca have to say?  
3rd eye lens widen off the psilocybin realizing  
Trauma need some redefining  
No longer a cage that we must be confined in so  
Light up the sage, let's get it in alignment  
DN from the ground up in the 510  
Integrate the truth worldwide for the win  
I know you feel it 'cause I feel it too  
A shift bigger than anything we thought we knew  
From the soul like Posdnuos  
Put some work in still got a lot to do  
So you knowing what we got to do, huh  
Follow up on that follow through

My relationship with nature ain't illegal  
Plant power to the people  
Plant power to the people  
Where you dream is where I'll meet you (x2)

Your journey begins after your journey, it's a process  
I trust you're not in a hurry  
So many are hurting searching for something for certain  
Only thing that certain is that light inside your person  
Ritual over recreation  
Ways of the ancient  
Yo, I say we save the sacred  
Pave the way so our children know their placement



*Decriminalize Nature 2020 Anthem cover: Plant Power to the People with artwork by Chor Boogie*

Teach 'em not to be ashamed if they naked  
The future's ours and it's up to us to shape it  
Remember cannabis  
Let's not repeat that same shit  
No need to explain this  
I trust you knowing what the aim is...  
Shouts out to Chor Boogie Iboga souljah  
Yo Plazola we gon' free 'em all before it's over  
Can't say I never told ya  
Broadcasting live from Oakland, California

My relationship with nature ain't illegal  
Plant power to the people  
Plant power to the people  
Where you dream is where I'll meet you (x2)

Gabor Mate:

Ayahuasca

If that's what we're talking about

You don't use daily

You use very consciously, in a ceremonial setting

As a way of opening the doors of perception

It's still up to you to walk through those doors

And then walking through those doors is something you have to do in your daily life

So it's not going to happen for you right there in the ceremony

In the ceremony you might have an opening, which otherwise you might not have had

And you might have realized things about your past and your true nature

That had hitherto been hidden to you

But that's just when the work begins

*(This document is the proposed Oakland Community Healing Ordinance (OCHI) that was proposed by DN Oakland in July 2020. An ordinance is one step further than a resolution, as an ordinance once passed becomes codified into local law, and can be a milestone for which local organizers aim.)*

## **Proposed Oakland Community Healing (OCHI) Ordinance**

**OAKLAND CITY COUNCIL**

**ORDINANCE NO. \_\_\_\_\_ C.M.S**

**AN ORDINANCE DECLARING A MENTAL HEALTH EMERGENCY RESULTING FROM TRAUMA IN OAKLAND’S COMMUNITIES AND AMENDING OAKLAND MUNICIPAL CODE TITLE 8 BY ADDING CHAPTER 8.62, TO EMPOWER OAKLAND RESIDENTS TO RESTORE THEIR DIRECT RELATIONSHIP TO NATURE FOR MENTAL HEALTH PURPOSES THROUGH THE CREATION OF A PILOT PROGRAM FOR OAKLAND RESIDENTS TO PARTICIPATE IN COMMUNITY-BASED PRACTICES IN COMPLIANCE WITH SAFE PRACTICE GUIDELINES AND PRINCIPLES FOR ENTHEOGENIC PLANT AND FUNGI USE, AND ENABLING QUALIFIED FACILITATORS AND PARTICIPANTS TO RECEIVE LEGAL PROTECTIONS FROM THE CITY.**

**WHEREAS, On June 4, 2019, the Oakland City Council unanimously passed the “Resolution Supporting Entheogenic Plant Practices and Declaring that the Investigation and Arrest of Individuals Involved with the Adult Use of Entheogenic Plants on the Schedule 1 List be Amongst the Lowest Priority for the City of Oakland”, effectively decriminalizing the personal use of entheogenic plants and fungi for healing purposes within the City of Oakland.**

**WHEREAS, more than one year later, there have been no known reports of medical or safety emergencies arising from entheogenic plant and fungi use in Oakland, while the**

use of these plants and fungi to heal has expanded throughout Oakland as news has spread locally and nationally about the healing power of these materials.

WHEREAS, since June 4, 2019, activists in over one hundred (100) cities in five (5) countries have begun the process to decriminalize entheogenic plants and fungi in their cities, with Santa Cruz having decriminalized entheogenic plants and fungi in January 2020 and at least five (5) other cities nearing passage of resolutions or initiatives.

WHEREAS, it has been shown that it is very difficult for those with very high levels of personal trauma to overcome trauma-induced responses to stressors, causing many people in Oakland's most vulnerable communities who have experienced trauma due to the War on Drugs, the War on Poverty, exploitation of communities of color, systemic racism, and economic marginalization to experience severe depression, suicidal ideations, aggression, anger, and feelings of hopelessness and destitution which inhibit their ability to find paths out of self-destructive thoughts.

WHEREAS, the recent global pandemic and the civil rights abuses of black and brown people in America continue to add to the high stress in historically marginalized communities, and therefore community-based solutions for healing are desperately needed.

WHEREAS, the medical and clinical care systems in America are largely failing to serve the most vulnerable members in our society with their mental health needs due to economic disparities, racial and cultural insensitivity, and rising health care costs.

WHEREAS, numerous studies show that the availability of community support structures in which to heal before, during, and after entheogenic plant and fungi ceremony is a fundamental tool for facilitators and participants to deeply explore the root causes of the trauma and thereby clear way for the healing process to proceed and succeed, especially with those with very high levels of trauma, by creating the sense of safety and compassion throughout the cycle of healing that ultimately results in a permanent healing.

WHEREAS, scientific and clinical studies continue to show excellent results in mental health healing through the safe and responsible use of entheogenic plants and fungi which, compared to most other mental health options including pharmaceutical prescription drugs, are more affordable and equally, or more, effective.

WHEREAS, for-profit corporations are becoming increasingly dominant in the plant based healing and psychedelic medicine spaces, causing increasing concern among the compassionate-care community that there is very limited time to protect citizens' rights to establish their own direct relationship to naturally occurring plant medicines, without corporate intermediaries or obstruction.

WHEREAS, the City of Oakland has long been a leader in social justice causes.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF OAKLAND DOES ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:

Title 8, Chapter 8.62, shall be called "THE OAKLAND COMMUNITY HEALING INITIATIVE (OCHI) PILOT PROGRAM" and is added to the Oakland Municipal Code as follows:

Section 8.62.010 -- Findings and purpose.

The purpose of this Chapter is to recognize and protect the unalienable human right to develop a relationship with nature and to safely and responsibly seek to improve community health and well-being through use of Entheogenic Plants without fear of arrest and prosecution, to recognize the importance of community support structures in supporting those with the highest levels of trauma and vulnerability, and to offer legal protections to Facilitators and Participants registered with the Oakland Community Healing Initiative Pilot Program and in compliance with the City of Oakland's Safe Practice Guidelines and Principles created by this Chapter.

Section 8.62.020-- Definitions.

Unless the context otherwise requires, the following definitions shall govern the construction of the Oakland Community Healing Initiative Pilot Program as provided herein.

Definitions. The following definitions apply to this section:

1. "City" means the City of Oakland, California.
2. "Commercial" means the activities of cultivating, processing, manufacturing, distributing, delivering, transporting, buying and selling on large scales. (City attorney to refine definition based on existing cannabis definition of "commercial").

3. “Community-Based Organization” or “CBO” means an organization with a long-standing strong reputation of providing services to vulnerable populations in the City including, but not limited to, providing services focused on restorative justice, social justice, violence prevention, supporting the formerly incarcerated, unhoused, victims of violence or domestic violence, and similar community-based needs.
4. “Entheogenic Plant” or “Plants” means plants and natural sources (as defined herein), such as spores, mycelium, mushrooms, cacti, iboga containing plants and/or extracted combinations of plants similar to Ayahuasca; and limited to those containing the following types of compounds: indoleamines, tryptamines, phenethylamines.
5. “Entheogenic Plant Practices” includes the propagation, planting, cultivation, harvesting, drying, processing, possession, furnishing, use, and administration of Entheogenic Plants by a Facilitator, or the use of Entheogenic Plants by a Participant under the supervision of a Facilitator pursuant to the OCHI. Entheogenic Plant Practices are designed to enable the discovery and development of best practices and optimum conditions for users of Entheogenic Plants to gain access to the knowledge, insights, and spiritual growth these Plants can provide.
6. “Facilitators” means an adult twenty-one (21) years of age or older who satisfies the requirements of Section 8.62.030 and engages in or facilitates the engagement in Entheogenic Plant Practices by Participants pursuant to the OCHI and the City’s Safe Practice Guidelines and Principles.
7. “OCHI” means the Oakland Community Healing Initiative Pilot Program.
8. “Participants” means an individual who, after providing informed consent and satisfying the requirements of Section 8.62.030, engages in Entheogenic Plant Practices under the guidance and supervision of a Facilitator pursuant to the OCHI and the City’s Safe Practice Guidelines and Principles.

9. “Safe Practice Guidelines and Principles for Facilitators and Participants” means a document outlining the important lessons and requirements for ensuring safe plant practice.

Section 8.62.030 – Creation of the OCHI; eligibility and registration requirements.

- A. Through adoption of this Ordinance, the City hereby establishes the Oakland Community Healing Initiative Pilot Program (OCHI) to enable the creation of a community-serving regulatory framework for engaging in Entheogenic Plant Practices that is specific to the City’s unique needs and that enables and promotes self-sufficiency in Oakland’s most vulnerable communities.
- B. Within one (1) year of the date of adoption of this Ordinance, City Council shall convene a task force of leaders of the participating Community-Based Organizations to evaluate and design community-serving micro-economic models for engaging in Entheogenic Plant Practices that create opportunities for self-sufficiency in Oakland’s most vulnerable communities and are specific to the City’s unique needs.
- C. Two (2) years after the date of adoption of this Ordinance, City Council shall evaluate the results of OCHI and report its findings.
- D. Minimum eligibility requirements for OCHI participation:
- a. Individuals interested in becoming a Facilitator must be:
    - i. twenty-one (21) years of age or older;
    - ii. reside in the City;
    - iii. be recommended for participation in OCHI by at least one (1) of the participating Community-Based Organizations (CBO’s)
    - iv. Able to demonstrate to the recommending-CBOs that they have at least five (5) years of facilitation experience; and

v. agree to participate in a public health research program associated with OCHI.

b. Individuals interested in becoming a Participant must:

i. reside in the City; and

ii. be recommended for participation in OCHI by at least one (1) of the participating Community-Based Organizations;

E. Registration requirements:

a. To qualify as an OCHI-registered Facilitator for purposes of Section 8.62.040, an individual must:

i. satisfy the eligibility requirements of Section 8.62.030(D)(1), above;

ii. complete the OCHI registration process and pay any associated fees;

iii. be able to demonstrate to the recommending CBO a minimum of five (5) years of facilitation experience;

iv. successfully complete an eight (8)-hour training course on the City's Safe Practice Guidelines and Principles for Facilitators;

v. sign and agree to comply with the City's Safe Practice Guidelines and Principles; and

vi. pay a \$250.00 annual registration fee.

b. To qualify as an OCHI-registered Participant for purposes of Section 8.62.040, an individual must:

- i. satisfy the eligibility requirements of Section 8.62.030(D)(2), above;
- ii. complete the OCHI registration process and pay any associated fees so long as the fee, in and of itself, is not cost-prohibitive;
- iii. successfully complete a four (4)-hour training course on the City's Safe Practice Guidelines and Principles; and
- iv. sign and agree to comply with the City's Safe Practice Guidelines and Principles.

F. Leaders of participating Community-Based Organizations will meet regularly to review and offer changes and improvements to OCHI and the Safe Practice Guidelines and Principles.

Section 8.62.040 – City legal defense; compliance requirements.

- A. Facilitators and Participants shall receive legal defense by the City Attorney's office upon arrest or commencement of prosecution by any other government agency that arises from, or directly relates to, his or her participation in the OCHI, subject to confirmation by the City that the Facilitator or Participant, as applicable;
- B. is registered with OCHI and that such registration is valid and in good standing;
- C. has acted in compliance with the applicable Safe Practice Guidelines and Principles;
- D. has not engaged in for-profit cultivation, manufacturing, sales, distribution, or delivery of Entheogenic Plants for commercial purposes.
- E. The requirement to provide legal defense shall not encompass an act or occurrence by a Facilitator or Participant which is outside the scope of, or out of compliance with, the City's Entheogen Safe Practice Guidelines and Principles. Intentional misconduct during participation in OCHI, such as assault, battery, infliction of distress, and any act which constitutes a crime under City law or is

inconsistent with the City's Safe Practice Guidelines and Principles shall not be considered within the scope of the City's requirement to provide legal defense to Facilitators and Participants.

Section 8.62.050 – Entheogenic Plant Practices by community-based Facilitators and Participants.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the City intends that so long as such activities comply with this Chapter and the Safe Practice Guidelines and Principles approved by the City:

- A. Facilitators shall not be subject to arrest, prosecution, criminal sanctions, or civil consequences by the City based solely on their engagement in or facilitation of Entheogenic Plant practices by Participants pursuant to the OCHI.
- B. Participants shall not be subject to arrest, prosecution, criminal sanctions, or civil consequences by the City based solely on their engagement in Entheogenic Plant Practices under the supervision and guidance of a Facilitator pursuant to the City OCHI.
- C. The possession, use, or display of equipment, devices, or other paraphernalia, as that term is defined under California Health and Safety Code section 11364.5, as amended from time to time, by Facilitators or by Participants under the supervision of a Facilitator, operating pursuant to the City OCHI is expressly permitted and shall not be considered a criminal or civil offense under City law.
- D. The City shall not disclose the identification or contact information of any OCHI-registered Facilitator or Participant. Registration processes conducted by the City pursuant to this Chapter shall preserve to the maximum extent possible all legal protections and privileges, consistent with reasonably verifying the qualifications and status of qualified Facilitators and Participants.
- E. Disclosure of any Facilitator or Participant information to assert facts in support of a registered status shall not be deemed a waiver of confidentiality of that information.

- F. City employees shall not provide federal law enforcement assistance to the United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) in investigating any Facilitator or Participant that arises out of or relates to his or her participation in OCHI or in determining the registered-status of a Facilitator or Participant in OCHI, except to respond to a public safety emergency related to a DEA action or where assistance is required by Federal or State statute, regulation or court decision.

Section 8.62.060 – Research.

- A. The City shall encourage research on the safety, therapeutic potential, and healing powers of Entheogenic Plants so long as the research is done in collaboration with, or led by, leadership from within Community-Based Organizations.
- B. In connection with the research, and in furtherance of the enforcement of the OCHI, the City may register Facilitators, Participants, or other individuals participating in or working in collaboration with the OCHI for the purpose of conducting research, demonstrations, or special projects which bear directly on the safety, therapeutic potential, and healing powers of Entheogenic Plants.

Section 8.62.070 - Chapter supersedes existing City law and regulations.

The provisions of this Chapter shall supersede any conflicting City law or regulations.

Section 8.62.080 – Severability.

If any section, subsection, sentence, clause or phrase of this Ordinance is for any reason held to be invalid or unconstitutional by decision of any court of competent jurisdiction, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of the Chapter. The City Council hereby declares that it would have passed this Ordinance and each section, subsection, clause, or phrase thereof irrespective of the fact that one or more other sections, subsections, clauses, or phrases may be declared invalid or unconstitutional.

Section 8.62.090 – Effective date.

**This Ordinance shall become effective immediately on final adoption if it receives six (6) or more affirmative votes; otherwise, this Ordinance shall become effective upon the seventh day after final adoption.**

**Section 8.62.100 – Exclusions**

**Nothing in this Ordinance shall be deemed to allow for the sale, distribution, cultivation, manufacturing, delivery, or administration of Entheogenic Plants for for-profit purposes, and which does not benefit and promote the purpose of this Pilot Program in creating a community-serving regulatory framework for engaging in Entheogenic Plant Practices that enables and promotes self-sufficiency in Oakland’s most vulnerable communities.**

IN COUNCIL, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA,

PASSED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES –

NOES –

ABSENT –

ABSTENTION –

I understand that using Decriminalize Nature's resources suggests that I am in alignment with the DN ethos and positions as described below:

### Our Primary Positions

1. Entheogenic plants and fungi are sacred, and should not be commodified or taxed.

2. Why should we decriminalize all entheogenic plants and fungi on Schedule 1?

Thousands of years of practices across the globe highlight entheogens healing and spiritual potentials. Humans should have the inalienable rights to engage with naturally occurring plants and fungi in the manner they feel appropriate for themselves. These plants and fungi were placed on the Federal Schedule 1 without any scientific research, based on Nixon's intention to arrest the leaders within the African American civil rights movements and the leaders of the anti-war movements and we should correct this wrong.

3. Why should we ensure equitable access to all people? The global drive to prioritize clinical and medical settings is inaccessible in both cost and ethos for those most in need, costing thousands of dollars for treatment to access material naturally occurring in mushrooms.

Basic human rights must include personal sovereignty, the capability to choose our own human experience. Adults are not children, and with proper education can be empowered to make their own decisions, a potent first step toward healing.

4. Why should we support a decriminalization approach that reconnects our roots to nature?

While science, technology, and industrialization have expanded our capacity, they have also disconnected us from nature. How do we reconnect to nature now that we are at the crossroads of climate change?

#### *Your Commitment to the Residents of your City:*

We commit to working with civic and community leaders and residents to develop an educational framework and program to ensure all residents can receive information, provided in a culturally relevant way, about effective and proper use, practice, set, setting, dosage, risk, and benefits in a way that enables greater personal choice and agency in healing.

#### *Ethical disclaimer:*

"DN operates from an ethical stance that recognizes compassion, inclusion, celebration of and tolerance for diverse cultures, communities and views. Acceptance of any donation by DN, and/or engagement of any form of interaction with any outside individual or group does NOT in any way assert or imply that DN agrees with, accepts or supports any or all history, action, policy, ethical or moral stance or statement of that individual or group.

DN asserts ethical independence from any group DN may be associated with in any way, with the sole exception of the specific actions DN may engage with received donations or as part of any specifically engaged relationship."



*Decriminalize Nature OCHI team retreat, Summer 2020*

## In Closing

So there you have it, as much Decriminalize Nature content as we could fit into a single handbook! Once you have read through this handbook and have gathered your team, please email [decrimnature@gmail.com](mailto:decrimnature@gmail.com) and we can meet with you virtually to go over any details or questions you may have. This handbook is a living document. Please send along any additions you would like to add as you gain wisdom through your process. This movement is growing and with everyone working together as a team we can make change happen! The DN map listing cities with interested citizens continues to expand, so if you are from one of the cities below, check to see if there is a local DN team and community you can support. Remember, it is an unalienable right to develop your own relationship to Nature! Thank you all for your continued support and go Team Nature!



**Decriminalize  
Nature  
<your city>**



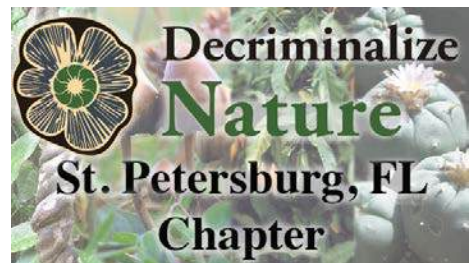
**Decriminalize  
Nature  
Ann Arbor**



**Decriminalize  
Nature  
Chicago**



**Decriminalize  
Nature  
Berkeley**



**Decriminalize  
Nature  
San Francisco**



**Decriminalize  
Nature  
Connecticut**

# DECRIMINALIZE NATURE RESTORING OUR ROOTS

California: Oakland, CA (Passed June 4th, 2019), Santa Cruz, CA (Passed January 28th, 2020), Berkeley, CA (Resolution in City Council process), San Francisco, Humboldt, Sacramento, Santa Rosa, Petaluma, San Jose, Nevada City, Los Angeles, Anaheim, Orange County, Laguna Beach, Imperial Beach, San Diego, Santa Monica, Santa Barbara, Palm Desert, Long Beach. Alabama: Ft. Payne. Arizona: Phoenix, Tempe, Tucson, Flagstaff. Colorado: Boulder, Durango, Denver, Colorado Springs, Pueblo, Westminster. Connecticut. Delaware: Wilmington. Florida: Tampa Bay, Tallahassee, Gainesville, Sarasota, Orlando, Broward County, Miami, Boca Raton, Ft. Lauderdale, Naples/Ft. Myers. Georgia: Atlanta. Hawaii: Kauai, Maui, Big Island. Illinois: Chicago (Resolution in City Council process) Indiana: Ft. Wayne, Indianapolis. Iowa: Clinton, Jefferson County, Des Moines. Kentucky: Stanford. Louisiana: New Orleans, Slidell. Maine: Portland. Maryland: Baltimore. Massachusetts: Boston, Cambridge, North Hampton, Worcester, Cape Cod. Michigan: Detroit, Ann Arbor, MI (City Council sponsor introducing resolution September 21st, 2020), Grand Rapids, Marquette, Kalamazoo. Minnesota: Minneapolis. Mississippi: Oxford, Starkville. Missouri: Kansas City, St. Louis, Springfield, Columbia. Montana: Missoula. Nevada: Las Vegas, Reno. New Jersey: Toms River, Ashbury Park. New Hampshire: Manchester, Wolfeboro. New Mexico: Albuquerque. New York: NYC, Ulster County, Brooklyn, Rochester. North Carolina: Asheville, Charlotte, Guilford County. Ohio: Columbus, Cleveland. Oklahoma: Oklahoma City, Norman, Tulsa. Oregon: Portland, Eugene, Corvallis, Ashland. Pennsylvania: Philadelphia, Pittsburgh. Rhode Island: Cranston. South Carolina: Charleston, Greenville County. South Dakota: Rapid City. Tennessee: Nashville, Chattanooga, Knoxville. Texas: Austin, Dallas, Houston. Utah: Salt Lake City. Vermont: Burlington. Virginia: Danville. West Virginia: Huntington. Washington: Port Townsend, Seattle, Tacoma, Spokane, Olympia, Bellingham. Washington DC (on the ballot for November 2020). Canada: Winnipeg, Vancouver.



#DECRIMINALIZENATURE | [DECRIMINALIZENATURE.ORG](http://DECRIMINALIZENATURE.ORG)



# DECRIMINALIZE NATURE RESTORING OUR ROOTS



The garden continues to grow!  
Go Team Nature!

**Red pins:** Introduced to city council and agendized or in process

**Green pins:** Hosting events, beginning engagement with City Council, may have interviews in media

**Blue pins:** Beginning to organize, DN social media accounts, Launch events, or Participated in Visit Your Local Reps Day

**Orange pins:** Attending DN webinars and communication channels, organizing community

**Cream pins:** Have reached out to DN and recieved DN info-packet

#DNUSA  
[#decriminalizenature](https://decriminalizenature.org) [#yourcity](https://yourcity.decriminalizenature.org)  
[decriminalizenature.org](http://decriminalizenature.org)

