



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Contact: Tania Younkin, Director of Marketing
(216) 321-5935, ext. 244
younkin@shakerlakes.org

April 25, 2022
Nature Center at Shaker Lakes

**KAY CARLSON ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT AS PRESIDENT & CEO OF THE
NATURE CENTER AT SHAKER LAKES**

Kay Carlson, President & CEO at the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes (NCSL), has notified the Board of Trustees of her intent to retire in spring of 2023.

Kay has fulfilled this role with the organization since 2008, most recently providing visionary leadership through a successful capital campaign from 2017 to 2021, which included a transformative restoration of the Nature Center's trails and habitats. The recent renovations and new features such as a Nature Play Area, Treehouse, and Meditation Terrace will provide the community with greater access to nature and more opportunities for environmental education for years to come.

In a statement released to Nature Center trustees and members, Kay shared, "Just as the Nature Center is a special place for so many in our region, it is and always will be for me as well. From visiting and attending NCSL programs as a child, to serving on the board prior to becoming CEO, I will always carry fond memories of the organization with me. This was a difficult decision, but it is time for new perspectives and fresh energy to lead the organization through its next phase of growth."

Throughout her tenure, Kay enjoyed many notable accomplishments which included: successfully implementing the Entrepreneurial Operating System (EOS) business model to guide, streamline and drive efficiency in the organization's strategic and tactical planning processes; creating a reserve fund to protect the financial health of the organization; and launching the Applied Science for Kids (ASK!) program with the Cleveland Metropolitan School District, which significantly expanded the organization's environmental and science education programming and increased its reach to underserved youth in the region. In 2019, Kay was named a Notable Woman in Nonprofits by Crain's Cleveland Business.

Kay will work closely with the board and staff to ensure seamless leadership and a smooth transition to the next President & CEO. The organization is working to develop a robust succession plan to prepare the Center for an executive search process. The board's goal is to appoint a new CEO to take the helm in spring of 2023.

"While we will miss Kay's thoughtful leadership, vision, and energy, this will be an opportune time for the organization to make a change. Thanks to Kay's dedication, the Nature Center is a strong and effective organization, as exemplified by the recent successful completion of a multi-year campaign to upgrade our outdoor classroom and restore our natural areas. She has led a transformation that enables us to be more effective than ever as environmental stewards and educators, deeply rooted and beloved in our community," remarked Karen Kidwell, Board Chair.

Over the next year, the search for a new CEO will be headed by our Board of Trustees, led by Board Chair Karen Kidwell and Chair Elect, Meg Hunter. Any information related to the search will be posted at shakerlakes.org.

The Nature Center at Shaker Lakes is located on 20 acres within the greater 300-acre Shaker Parklands on Cleveland's east side. The Nature Center enriches people's lives through education, innovative events and programs, and community involvement. Founded in 1966, the Nature Center is the result of a large grassroots effort that preserved the Shaker Parklands and prevented the construction of a freeway that would have connected Cleveland's East Side to downtown. True to its humble beginnings, the Nature Center continues to conserve a natural area, connect people with nature and inspire environmental stewardship. The Nature Center's trails and habitats are open dawn until dusk and are free and open to the public.

###