

REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

Where Mission Meets Passion

SEPTEMBER 1, 2021 - AUGUST 31, 2022

Dear Friends of the Nature Center,

After weathering a global pandemic and successfully restoring our trails, habitats, and outdoor features as part of a five-year campaign, fiscal year 2022 brought a focus back to our core mission. Our mission "to conserve, connect, and inspire" has remained central to our work and has proven to be our guiding light this past year. With that in mind, we spent time working behind the scenes to strengthen our daily operations, and improve efficiency as we take a strategic look ahead.

Change is inevitable and we have embraced that while continuing to push forward and adapt. Our wildlife population and habitat health are thriving thanks to the sustained focus of our Natural Resources Manager, Nick Mikash, and his team of staff and volunteers. This year over 1,975 trees, shrubs, and live stakes were planted in the riparian corridor surrounding Doan Brook. Having strong native habitats and ecosystems is a central piece of our mission. Not only do these habitats provide a robust place where pollinators and native wildlife flourish, but they are the nucleus of our outdoor classroom where students and visitors find inspiration to connect to and learn about our natural world.

With our primary focus turning from the campaign, we challenged ourselves to carry that momentum forward into our operations. As such, we saw a record number of visitors and an overall increase in revenue from member donations. The annual benefit, Nature at Night, and Summer Outdoor Adventure Camps sold out and exceeded our revenue projections. We have seen our community rally around our mission, demonstrating deep passion by sharing their time, talents, and support at record levels.

This year, we began providing in-person after-school programming for Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) students at the Collinwood Recreation Center through a partnership with the City of Cleveland's Parks and Recreation Department and hosted CMSD preschool students for the Summer Learning Experience program. We created a joint board and staff committee for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) to ensure more equitable access to our mission and to connect ALL people to nature. Fiscal year 2023 will mark the 10th anniversary of our ASK! Program with CMSD, which has become our largest

educational program. Since its creation, the Nature Center has served classes from every one of CMSD's elementary schools and hosted over 35,000 students. In addition, our Summer Outdoor Adventure Camps are now accredited by the American Camp Association, allowing the organization to apply for grants, grow our camp financial aid program, and expand our reach in the community.

With the recent announcement of Kay's retirement in the spring of 2023, a primary goal for the coming fiscal year is to ensure a seamless transition to new leadership. To help with this transition we have hired an executive search firm and have begun a strategic visioning process. Throughout this process, we remain committed to continuing our mission-driven outreach and educational programming without disruption.

We are grateful to have completed another wonderful year and are honored to continue to share this extraordinary place and our passion for it with you!

With deep gratitude and appreciation,



Meg Hunter

Maghan Hunter

Board Chair

Karen Kidwell

Karm

Outgoing Board Chair

Kay Carlson

Kay Carlon

President & CEO

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CONSERVE

A Focus on Pollinator Habit

This past summer, the monarch butterfly was officially designated as endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature. It is estimated that the population of the monarch butterfly has seen a decline of as much as 20-90% over the last few decades. This can be attributed to a number of factors. As a migratory species, the monarch butterfly covers thousands of miles annually and is particularly vulnerable to habitat destruction from climate change. In addition, the way our society is growing food and maintaining yards leads to habitat loss. Heavy use of pesticides and landscaping that is not pollinator friendly has led to population decline as monarch butterflies do not have the resources they need to reproduce at a healthy rate.

The factors of climate change and societal behavior impact all pollinators. As part of our core mission to conserve a natural area, the Nature Center works hard to create friendly pollinator habitats and educate our community on how we can replicate efforts at home to ensure we have healthy yards and a diversity of pollinators.

Over the past year, Natural Resources Manager, Nick Mikash along with volunteers Mary Gannon and Sue Strauss launched a successful seed library with over 30 species of native plant seeds, including ironweed, milkweed, rosemallow, and coneflower. The overwhelming success of the seed library wouldn't have been possible without

the dedication and passion of our volunteers who process, package, and label all of the seeds as well as our community, who donate seeds back to the library to keep our inventory stocked. In our first year of launching the program, over 80 people "checked out" seeds from the library!

In addition to the seed library, Nick Mikash also led a major replanting of the Tamar Maltz Pollinator Garden at the entrance of the All Peoples' Trail. The new design wraps around the mason bee hotel and transitions more naturally to the habitat behind it. The focus of the garden was to plant Ohio-native species that support pollinators and wildlife. The new Gloria & Leon Plevin Entrance Gardens at the parking lot and Stearns Trail entrances are similarly designed and planted. All of these gardens were made possible with the support of community donors whose partnership and passion for the environment is deeply appreciated.

Each fall, we collect seeds with Ruffing Montessori students from these gardens which will be grown and returned next spring to the Nature Center for habitat restoration. These ongoing efforts, which include our fall perennial, milkweed, homegrown, and online plant sales—together with Nick's leadership and our community's passion to share, learn, and create pollinator-friendly habitats is critical to the future of insects and animals like the monarchs.





339

COMMUNITY
MEMBERS PLACED
ONLINE PLANT
SALE ORDERS

510

ATTENDEES
SHOPPED THE
ANNUAL PLANT
SALE AND

241

ATTENDEES
SHOPPED THE
ANNUAL
HOMEGROWN SALE

NATIVE PLANTS
SOLD ONLINE FOR
PLANTING
THROUGHOUT
OUR REGION

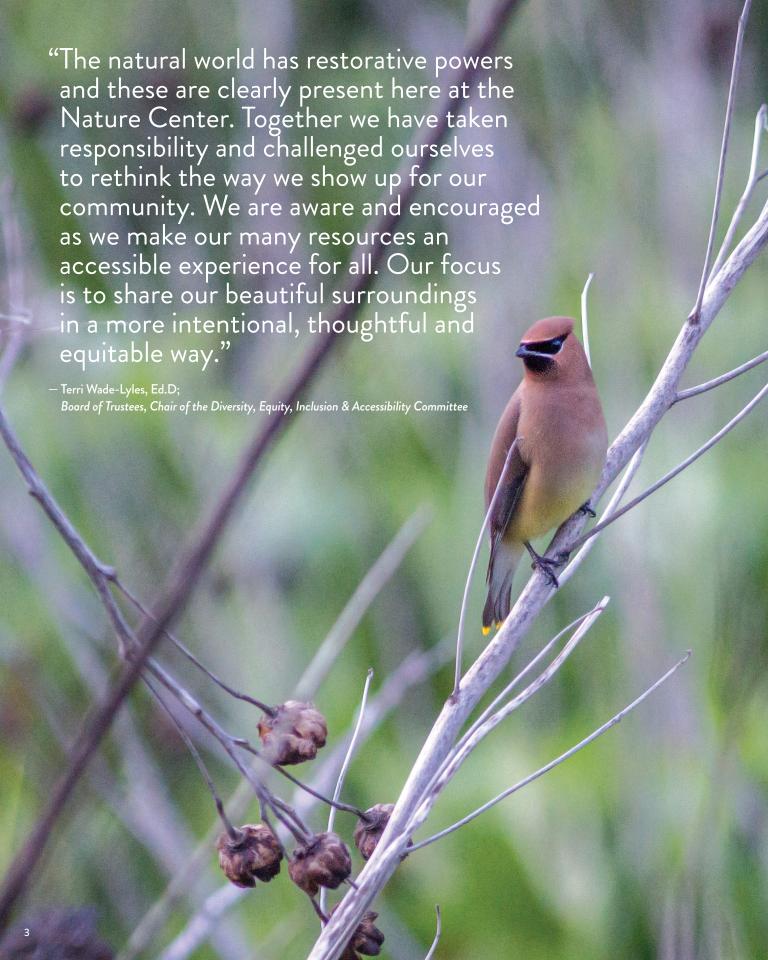
549

MILKWEED PLANTS

SOLD AT OUR

FIRST ONLINE

MILKWEED SALE



CONNECT

Connecting All People to Nature and Our Mission

Since 2012, avid birder and Honorary Life Trustee Julie West has been leading monthly bird walks around the Nature Center's 20-acre property. Julie guides both novice and experienced birders along the elevated All Peoples' Trail boardwalk to observe resident and migratory birds in our recently restored wetlands and forested floodplains. In 2021, Ellen Euclide, a regular Nature Center visitor and program attendee, began attending the bird walks and saw the potential to engage birders and nature lovers with physical challenges, given the universal design and accessibility of the All Peoples' Trail.

Ellen and Julie worked together to create a plan that would make our birding hikes more welcoming, safe, and accessible for everyone. Ellen uses a wheelchair, so she was able to test potential routes herself to ensure wheelchair accessibility. The pair used the website birdability.org as a resource, studying recommendations on how to make birding experiences more inclusive for people with mobility challenges, blindness or low vision, chronic illness, and more.

In July 2022, the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes offered its first fully accessible bird walk, and soon, American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreter Christine Anastasia Mason joined the effort. Christine now attends the monthly walks to provide ASL interpretation for birders who are deaf or have hearing impairments.

These volunteers have helped us utilize the All Peoples'
Trail exactly the way it was originally envisioned in the early
1980's—as a community resource that provides people of
all ages and abilities with full access to nature. In keeping
with this vision, the Nature Center restored the All Peoples'
Trail in 2019, bringing it up to current ADA standards and
providing other accessible outdoor amenities, such as the
Rose Foundation Gazebo, Jimmy's Treehouse, and the
Lavelle Family Amphitheater.

These physical improvements, combined with the efforts of many board and staff members on the Nature Center's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Committee, recently led the Cuyahoga County Board of Developmental Disabilities (CCBDD) to include the Nature Center in its All Means All Program, which helps people identify

organizations and business that meet CCBDD's standards for inclusion and accessibility and offer adaptive activities or recreational opportunities.

The Nature Center will continue to look to its visitors and volunteers for inspiration as we further our efforts to be an accessible and inclusive organization. Interested in joining a bird walk? Check out our program listing at shakerlakes.org for upcoming dates. We'd love to have you join us!







INSPIRE

Elevating Our Summer Camp Experience

The American Camp Association (ACA) is the largest and most renowned camp accreditation organization in the country. Beginning in February 2021, the Nature Center camp staff began working toward getting our summer camp accredited. This October, we received our official certificate of accreditation, and we are excited to share the benefits that this new accreditation provides for the Nature Center.

The accreditation process took hundreds of hours and included rewriting existing camp policies to meet updated ACA camp standards, creating new policies that did not previously exist, improving upon and implementing new training for staff to meet the new standards, and obtaining ACA membership to gain access to the most current camp trainings, workshops, and literature.

Areas of focus included health and safety, staff trainings, social and emotional health, equity and inclusion, and camp organization. All the hours of preparation culminated in a visit from ACA volunteers on July 25. This visit included a review of 140 written standards and policies, a tour of the Nature Center with the Camp Manager, and meeting and observing camp staff to see our policies in action. Comments from our visitors included, "This was the most organized visit I have been on!" and "You have a beautiful location!" Attendees also mentioned how well policies and documents were written. The visit ended with a final evaluation that was submitted to the head of the ACA national office for approval.

The benefits of the accreditation process have already been immense. Not only have our policies and trainings improved to better meet the health, safety, social, and emotional needs of our campers and staff but we have restructured our existing volunteer program to better meet ACA staffing requirements. This new "Camp Teen Leadership Program" consists of an experience and age-based position structure that allows

teens to develop their leadership skills from a Counselor-In-Training, to a Junior Counselor and ultimately having the opportunity to apply to be a paid Camp Intern. In its inaugural year, we were fortunate enough to have three high school interns on our camp staff who greatly diversified our staff and assisted our lead camp staff in a number of ways, improving the overall culture of our camp. We also saw marked improvement in the level of professionalism and initiative from our younger teen volunteers directly linked to the example that our teen interns set.

Moving forward, accreditation through the ACA will allow our camps to be listed as a "Publicly Funded Childcare Provider" through the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, which will allow us to grow our camp financial aid program and expand our reach in the community.



3,091

PRESCHOOL,
KINDERGARTEN,
AND FIRST-GRADE
STUDENTS SERVED
THROUGH THE
ASK! PROGRAM IN
PARTNERSHIP
WITH CMSD

260

CSMD TEACHERS

RECEIVED

PROFESSIONAL

DEVELOPMENT FOR

OUTDOOR

SCIENCE-BASED

EDUCATION

PROVIDED IN-CLASS PROGRAMMING FOR

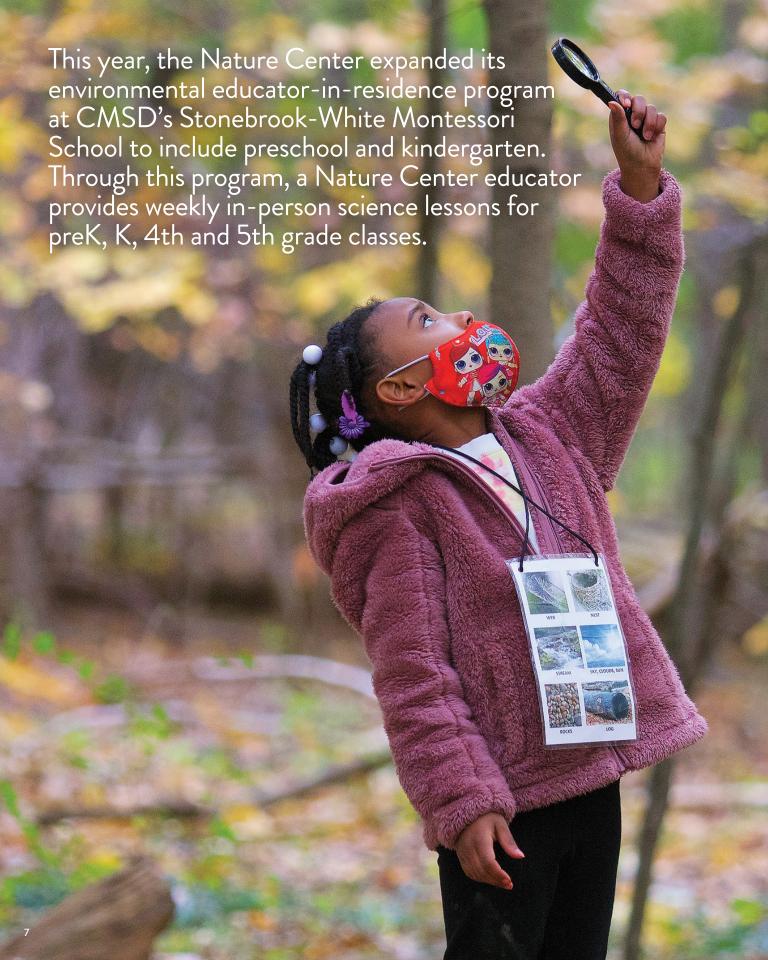
350

HEAD START
STUDENTS AND HAD

6,000+

STUDENTS VISIT
THE NATURE CENTER
FOR FIELD
EXPERIENCES

PEOPLE PARTICIPATED
IN PUBLIC
PROGRAMMING
FOR ADULTS AND
FAMILIES



INSPIRE

Celebrating the Expansion of the Stonebrook-White Montessori Program

A Young Student's Day at Stonebrook White

I'm just finishing up my breakfast when a new face enters my classroom, waving hello. She's wearing a green shirt and rolling a cart full of new and mysterious things, and I think I see a striped tail hanging out from the lid! She starts gathering my classmates around, and I rush to join them, trying to get a good spot, hoping I get to find out what's fuzzy in her box. Is it alive? I sit criss-cross-applesauce on our rug and listen as she greets us. "Good morning, preschoolers! I'm from the Nature Center, and I'm going to be coming to your classrooms to teach you about something new in nature every week!" She introduces me to her raccoon puppet, Bandit, letting us each touch his soft fur, and she explains he's going to help us find all the things on her scavenger hunt! I love scavenger hunts!

We make our way outside, and we look at her list. A nest, a chewed-up acorn, a bird, a squirrel, and an animal hole...no way we can find all of those things here! This is just our playground full of equipment and games, not a nature park! We follow her and Bandit past the equipment and over to some trees, and we look up. There's a huge leafy nest! She said that means a squirrel made that and had her babies there! There were baby squirrels growing up right over our heads this whole time? We start to explore on our own, finding more and more things on her list! I didn't think we could find so much nature here in our playground. We find everything on our list, and she promises she'll be back next week!

Just like she says, she comes back every week, and we learn things about squirrels, plants, seasons, birds, and she even brings in a real live turtle! Now when I go outside, I walk past the equipment and look up to see if the squirrels are up by their nest. I search to see if the slug is still under that log we looked under last week. There is so much more to do outside than I realized! I like to look out of the windows and watch the squirrels play. I wonder if one of them is a baby that grew up on our playground.

One week, she comes with the coolest thing of all! She gives our class a little container, but when you look in close, there are real live caterpillars inside! Now instead of looking out of the windows, I can use my free time watching the caterpillars munch and munch away on their food. They get bigger and bigger, and then one of them crawls to the top and hangs upside down. We leave school that afternoon, and when we come back, there's something new inside! Teacher says it's a "chrysalis" and it'll open up, and a butterfly will come out! A real butterfly! One by one, they all crawl to the top, and in a few days, all we have are chrysalises. Every morning when I walk in, I hope to find a new butterfly. Days and days go by, and I can barely stand it, until one day after lunch, we find a butterfly drying its wings in our container. We feed her and her siblings sweet oranges as they all make this magical change and then our nature teacher tells us it's time to let them go! We take them outside, and she walks around to make sure we all get to say goodbye, and then they take off. Goodbye butterflies! I hope we get to do this next year too.



375
UNIQUE
VOLUNTEERS
(INCLUDING
TRUSTEES)

6,1814

TOTAL

VOLUNTEER

HOURS

\$185 K & OF VOLUNTEER TIME

(THE EQUIVALENT

OF 3.5 FULL TIME

EMPLOYEES!)

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

CONTRIBUTED

525+

SUMMER TEEN VOLUNTEERS GAVE OVER

1,818 HOURS

Volunteers of the Year

A heartfelt THANK YOU to the many volunteers who gave of their time and energy in support of our mission during the past year. We are extremely appreciative of your service!

Linnea Koops

Linnea Koops is a junior at Shaker Heights High School. The Nature Center has been a special place in her life since she came to camp here as a 4-year-old. Linnea loved spending time exploring in nature with the Squirrel Scouts and Nature's Detectives this summer. She watched for opportunities to connect individually with campers as well as to support them in their friendships within the group. Outside of volunteering, Linnea keeps busy with violin, ballet, and creative writing.



Marilyn Singer

Marilyn Singer began volunteering for the Nature Center as part of the Feeder Watch program during the winter of 2019. She was looking for new opportunities after practicing law for forty years. The Nature Center certainly provided her with those opportunities. While most businesses and activities were closed due to the pandemic, the Nature Center remained a vital part of the community and Marilyn was able to help. She continued to be part of the Feeder Watch program during the winters of 2020 and 2021. In 2021, she became a Trail Ambassador and began assisting with the bird banding project that has been part of the Nature Center's vital work on behalf of the natural world for over 20 years. She has also volunteered her time on Stewardship Saturdays and with the annual plant sale and Autumn Fest. Marilyn has found her time spent at the Nature Center to be the perfect antidote for a professional life spent mostly behind a desk and is enjoying every minute of the time she is able to spend outdoors and continue her education about the world around her.



YOU CAN HELP US FURTHER OUR IMPACT

MEMBERSHIP

Become a member by giving a 100% tax-deductible gift at one of our six levels ranging from \$50-\$1,000+, and receive a sense of pride knowing that your membership supports community, conservation, and education. Members qualify for special benefits, including early and discounted program registration, 10% off our Duck Pond Gift Shop, invitations to members-only events, and more.

ANNUAL FUND

Already a member? The Annual Fund is a year-round effort to raise additional funds necessary to support the daily operations of our organization, including the maintenance of our trails and facilities. Gifts of any size are appreciated and are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.

HERON SOCIETY

The Heron Society recognizes our dedicated donors who annually give \$1,000 or more. In addition to a host of membership benefits, Heron Society patrons enjoy access to exclusive events.

TRIBUTE GIFTS

A tribute gift is a wonderful way to recognize an important person, honor the memory of a loved one, or celebrate a special occasion. Your gift will help us continue to provide rewarding experiences and high-quality educational programming to thousands of visitors each year. We have several opportunities to make a tribute gift, including our new Tribute Tree program.

PLANNED GIVING & EVERGREEN SOCIETY Making a planned gift is one of the most impactful ways to invest in the Nature Center and to create a legacy of conservation and environmental education. You may designate your gift for a specific purpose or offer broad support through an unrestricted gift. There are many ways to make a planned gift, including bequests, charitable trusts, and gifts of appreciated securities.

STOCK, IRA, & DONOR-ADVISED FUNDS

Your contribution can be made in the form of a gift of appreciated assets such as IRAs, stock, or securities. We also welcome gifts from donor-advised funds.

CONTACT US to learn more about our range of giving options

Robert Sikora
Chief Development Officer
216.321.5935 ext. 223
sikora@shakerlakes.org

Rosalind Soltow

Membership & Development
Operations Manager
216.321.5935 ext. 246
soltow@shakerlakes.org

The Nature Center is and will always be a transparent organization that is thankful for the gifts our community members bestow upon us to further our mission.

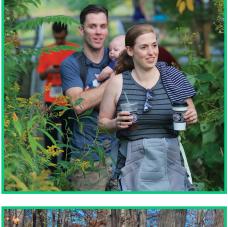
As the only independently-operated nonprofit nature center in northern Ohio, your gift is vital and will ensure that we remain free and open to the public, connecting future generations to nature.

Engaging Our Community:

A place where passionate visitors gather to learn, support our mission, and create lasting memories.











FALL FESTIVAL

Over 1100 visitors celebrated the completion of a successful 5-year capital campaign, **Enhancing Your Outdoor Classroom** with a DJ, games, pumpkin painting, hikes, a native plant sale, scavenger hunts, and live entertainment. All of the Nature Center's newly built features were open and on display for guests to enjoy, including Jimmy's Treehouse, the Rose Foundation Gazebo, and the Carfagna Family





FALL HIKING SERIES

In lieu of our annual Hike & Run, we took a year off to celebrate and reflect on our capital campaign while offering a series of naturalist and partner-led hikes spread throughout fall of 2021. Hikes supported the Jenny Goldman Memorial Nature Outreach Fund, which underwrites our Environmental Educator in Residence program to provide environmental education for hundreds of Cleveland school children each year.





ANNUAL PLANT SALE

Our plant sale took many forms this past year: our online sale, day of sale, homegrown sale, and fall perennial sale. This year, in August, we added a milkweed sale. Nearly one thousand shoppers supported the sales. Each sale helps those in our region select native species to purchase and plant at home to help build healthy native habitats and gardens.









A PLACE TO GATHER

Countless guests and visitors enjoy our trails and outdoor spaces daily.

Whether it's children celebrating friends' birthday parties, visitors meeting up for a leisurely stroll to catch up with one another, couples making lasting vows, families sharing the outdoors with a young child to create lasting memories, or a solitary stroll through our trails to simply breathe and take in nature's beauty, we are here for everyone, through all seasons.









NATURE AT NIGHT

Our largest fundraising event
of the year attracted a sold-out crowd.
Over 500 supporters gathered and
enjoyed delectable food and drink by local
chefs, while patrons supported the
Nature Center's mission and operations.

Nature Center Staff

Visitor and Administrative Services Associate

Shelly Bender

Casey Bogus

Natural Resources Technician

Sara Borse

Volunteer Manager

Christi Carlson Rentals & HR Coordinator

Kay Carlson

Mary Jo Ciuni

Permanent Variable Environmental Educator

Lisa Golba

Environmental Educator/Program Specialist

Eric Gregorchik

Chris Hal

Director of Finance & Administration

Michelle Hall

Accountant/Bookkeeper

Katrina Heinzen

Permanent Variable Environmental Educator

Luke Hester

B'Earthday Party Educator

Nicole Hindman

Early Childhood Environmental Educator

Sarah Holden

Permanent Variable Environmental Educator

Emily Knight

B'Earthday Party Educator

Dave Markowitz

Visitor Services Associate

Marcia McNallie Events & Community Engagement Manager

Nick Mikash

Julia Mitchell

Grants and Special Projects Manager

Erica Prange Director of Education

Permanent Variable Environmental Educator

Meri Ruble

Permanent Variable Environmental Educator

Greg Sabin

Facilities Assistant

Lauren Schmidt

Rob Sikora

Chief Development Officer

Rosalind Soltow

Membership & Development Operations Manager

Andy Weiss

Visitor Services Associate

Wendy Weiss

Visitor Services Associate

Rachel Weller

Visitor Services Coordinator

Tania Younkin

Director of Marketing & Community Engagement

Alex Yurosko

Marketing Content Manager

Volunteers

Laura Gooch Norma Storer Julie West

Natalie Bier Pat Ferrara Mary Gannon Steve Kushnick Margaret Poutasse Marilyn Singer

Celia Snyder

Sue Strauss Ruffing Montessori

Bela Anand-Apte Karen Ault Sumeet Chakravarti Jane Donnell Matthew Goldman David Hackney Daly Harbold Asher Hardis

Andrew Heinzen

Lauren Hilbert Kennedy Hinkle

Linnea Koops Evelyn Macklin Luca Mokotoff

Zachary Moskowitz

Jane Murphy Amberly Neice Kim Pastrick

Anu Ravi Evan Ricchetti

Colt Simonelli Karen Tanquist Nadia Taylor-Osborn Freya Turner Bob Wellman

20-49 HOURS

Louise Abrams Sameer Apte lan Ashton **Andrew Beck** Kim Bihler Luke Bourdrez Steve Cagan

Stephanie Clark

Natalie Cooper

Celia Doherty Mike Dudzynski Ari Feinberg Debra Frank Lisa Gannon Alexandra Hall

Charlize Hall-Ford Kiran Hebert Marie Huang Jenna Loveman Tim Kalan

Talia Kansal CJ Keyes

Thomas Lacerda Allison Lim David Ortega

Hanna Wilde

Rahil Rizvi Christine Schenkelberg **Delores Stephens** Meredith Sundahl Sheridan Sweeney Tavish Sweeney **Neko Tien** Sydney Thornton Hannah Whitney



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We extend our deepest appreciation to all our supporters whose generous contributions helped ensure a successful year. While space limits our ability to list all donor names, we are grateful for the support that each of you provides, no matter the size of your gift.

If you would like to change the way your name is listed in future publications or have other corrections, please contact Rosalind Soltow at 216.321.5935 ext. 246 or soltow@shakerlakes.org.

deceased



Financial Information FY22

(UNAUDITED)

REVENUE:		CONTRIBUTED					
INDIVIDUAL	INDIVIDUALS				\$374,688		
CORPORATIONS / FOUNDATIONS				\$435,889			
GOVERNME	GOVERNMENT*				\$259,446		
EVENTS (NE	EVENTS (NET OF COG – PLANT SALE / ART ON VIEW)				\$310,349		
PLANNED G	PLANNED GIFTS				\$0		
ENDOWMENT (DISTRIBUTION)				\$113,981			
REVENUE:				EARNED			
PROGRAM FEES				\$226,622			
FACILITY RENTALS / MERCHANDISE (NET)				\$52,841			
TOTAL REVENUE:				\$1,773,816			
21%	25%	15%	17%	6%	13%	2%	
EXPENSES:							
EDUCATION & OUTREACH				\$751,599			
FACILITIES & LAND MANAGEMENT				\$317,342			
FUNDRAISING				\$300,639			
MARKETING				\$133,618			
MANAGEMENT & CONTROL				\$167,022			
TOTAL EXPENSES:				\$	1,670,2	_ 19	
NET OPERATING				\$103,59	97		

*Includes Paycheck Projection Program (PPP) grant of \$191,567 that was forgiven in October, 2021. **Excludes depreciation and other y/e adjusting entries.

45%

The Nature Center's community outreach, education programming, and natural resources management activities have grown over the last five years, as has our organizational budget. After implementing budget reductions, staff furloughs, and salary cuts in FY2021 due to the pandemic, the Nature Center returned to full capacity in FY2022. We are ending FY2022 in a strong position, with positive cash flow and revenues slightly exceeding costs. Our annual benefit and our summer camps sold out and exceeded our revenue projections.

Throughout FY2022, we have saw an increase in new members who donate \$50 to \$1,000 as well as an overall increase in revenue from member donations. We believe the excitement generated by our outdoor classroom improvements has led to this increase in our donor base. This positive momentum will aid us as we enter FY2023.

8% 10%









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Conserving a natural area, connecting people with nature, and inspiring environmental stewardship for 56 years

