



Lake Erie Nature & Science Center

Strategic Plan 2017-2022

Mission: To educate and inspire all of us to understand, appreciate and take responsibility for the natural world.

Approved by Board of Directors August 14, 2017



Our Programs

Goal #1: Evaluate and develop new offerings to meaningfully engage college students and strategic partners in the Center.

By June 2018:

- Create pilot internship program for local college students pursuing degrees in early childhood education, informal science education or astronomy.
- Assess capstone project opportunities with local colleges that benefit Center mission and student education.
- Investigate student research program opportunities offered by peers and partners.

By June 2020:

- Implement continuing internship program (2-3 students) based on lessons learned from pilot program.
- Implement pilot capstone project based on design and exploration efforts.
- Collaborate with local colleges to identify 3-5 potential student research opportunities related to our mission.
- Assess potential to offer at least one new college level course offering in wildlife area.

By June 2022:

- Create at least one unique and on-going credit-based college partner internship offering.
- Implement at least one student research project.

Goal #2: Evaluate and develop new offerings to meaningfully engage high school students and strategic partners in the Center.

By June 2018:

- Engage high school students to partner on the creation of seasonal natural history displays at the Center.
- Develop science-based program to engage high school teams in competitive problem solving of an environmental topic selected by the Center.
- Assess physical and operational resources to support future expansion of Project Wildlife program.

By June 2020:

- High school students research, design and produce changing natural history exhibits at the Center annually.
- Engage schools in problem solving competition addressing environmental topic selected by the Center.
- Development and preparation for addition of second session Project Wildlife program.



By June 2022:

- Implement best participatory design solution from problem solving completion to the extent practicable.
- Second session of Project Wildlife program in place.

Goal #3: Evaluate and develop new offerings to meaningfully engage K-8 students and strategic partners in the Center.

By June 2018:

- Begin hosting at least one Boy Scout Roundtable meeting annually.
- Elevate relationship with the Girl Scouts to become a regular partner location for science-related experiences.
- Partner with nearby daycares (including Glenview and Bethesda) to create 4-6 new field trip offerings for students in grades K-4.
- Evaluate “Hikes before Homework” offering for grades 3-6 students to be implemented after school for Bay students.
- Collaborate with local schools to identify and evaluate one distance learning opportunity.

By June 2020:

- Acquire equipment for scientific investigation for the 2018-19 school year to support new program initiatives.
- Investigate demand for science and math tutoring – assess opportunity and economics of leveraging the Center resources to provide same.
- Trial implementation of weekly science or math tutoring program.

By June 2022:

- Successful implementation of at least two of the initiatives being evaluated above.
- Offer collaborative distance learning opportunity with area schools.

Goal #4: Expand the Center’s capacity to provide natural learning opportunities to community preschoolers.

By June 2018:

- Explore initiatives which would use the science resources of the Center in an innovative manner to introduce local daycare preschoolers to the world of science employing a variety of field study exploration tools and experiences.

By June 2020:

- Complete preschool daycare project capacity assessment and seek funding if necessary for tools and equipment for field study.

By June 2022:

- New preschool field study offering in place for local daycares and/or preschoolers.



Goal #5: Enhance visitor engagement with the goal of building visibility and turning walk-in visitors into program participants.

By June 2018:

- Initiate redevelopment of website to enhance educational content and community outreach.
- Create a map of the Center and list of weekly happenings to engage with and educate walk-in visitors.
- Complete installation of new exhibits and improved educational signage.

By June 2020:

- New website completed with enhanced educational content and enhanced transparency of the Center expertise and mission.
- Track success of website through analytic tools while measuring website's impact on visitor engagement.
- Use electronic systems to collect visitor information to serve as a base for further growth and engagement initiatives.

Goal #6: Develop a fee based program providing the public with humane solutions to human/wildlife conflicts.

By June 2018:

- Complete scoping exercise and develop model "business plan" testing viability and economics of the humane solutions concept.

By June 2020:

- Implement humane solutions pilot program; use results of same to test and refine business plan.

By June 2022:

- Presuming the pilot program yields acceptable results, implement full-scale humane solutions services.

Our People

Goal #1: Improve staff compensation and institutional competitiveness in comparison to similar markets.

By June 2018:

- Use results of compensation study to assess staff compensation and adjust at least three positions to the median/average for similar markets. Include in budget.
- Identify and prioritize near term further position adjustments including target compensation.
- Use staff survey results to prioritize compensation benefits other than salary.

By June 2020:

- Redefine and expand grade levels to better assign and classify job responsibilities and related compensation.
- Implement targeted position adjustments identified through prioritization review.
- Staff compensation will continue to be at the average/median level or higher for all applicable positions as confirmed by follow-up compensation study.

By June 2022:

- Overall staff compensation will continue to be at the average/median level for all positions with 25% of positions at the highest competitive level.

Goal #2: Grow the organization through development of our people and attraction of talent.

By June 2018:

- Complete succession planning for the Executive Director, management and team levels.
- Complete SWOT analysis to assess organizational strengths, and identify key areas for skill development.
- Prepare strategy for recruitment/development of required talents.

By June 2020:

- Revise performance evaluation forms and procedures to emphasize skill development, fit with key organizational priorities, continuous improvement and innovation.
- Revisit succession plan and refine as needed to ensure it includes anticipated skill and talent mix needed for continued growth/success.

By June 2022:

- Development/acquisition of talent to address SWOT findings complete.
- Achieve “preferred place to work” perception in our market as shown by acceptance rate by preferred job candidates and staff retention rate.

Our Place

Goal #1: Create, refine and implement a capital projects plan to improve enjoyment, safety and access to visitors and staff.

By June 2018:

- Complete development of core documentation to support capital project (>\$5K) and scheduled maintenance planning.
- Annual refinement and implementation of capital projects and scheduled maintenance plan to minimize emergency repairs.
- Annual effort to identify new capital project needs over the next decade and refresh priority lists.
- Establish strategy to maintain ongoing capital projects account.

By June 2020:

- Establish organizational protocols for prioritization, vendor review, funding strategies, insurance and documentation for primary equipment.

Goal #2: Improve outdoor exhibits to enhance educational value and ensure effective, safe use.

By June 2018:

- Ensure continued ability to comply fully with existing federal and state permits and safety requirements.
- Complete internal collaboration to develop renewed vision for outdoor exhibits. Collaborate with peers and partners to confirm and support vision.
- Prepare written work product reflecting redesign priorities and engage with external contacts to determine project approach and scope.

By June 2020:

- Develop working-level design and plans for implementation of outdoor exhibit improvements.
- Create budget needed to implement plan.
- Establish strategy for funding outdoor exhibits improvement plan.

By June 2022:

- Outdoor exhibit renovation complete.

Goal #3: Enhance physical facility planning to better reflect local wildlife and natural features and better connect with the surrounding parks and community.

By June 2018:

- Maintain proactive engagement with park and community contacts on master planning to identify opportunities and ensure planning visibility.
- Ensure continued involvement in all strategic planning and area development activities potentially impacting the Center.

By June 2020:

- Written plan in place describing succession plan to ensure continued relevancy/enjoyment of exhibits and to maximize emphasis on local features and wildlife.



Our Prosperity

Goal #1: Develop financial and fundraising strategies to sustain current level of financial and programmatic performance and fund implementation of strategic plan goals.

By June 2018:

- Develop working level analysis of revenue streams and key line item expenses of the past five years to examine trends, funding needs and the efficacy of our current funding sources to meet such needs.
- Create a detailed schedule of financial needs to achieve operational and salary goals, scheduled capital maintenance and repairs, and special projects including outdoor exhibits, pilot projects and website redevelopment.
- Develop financial contingency plans for unexpected costs associated with repair or maintenance of the facility.
- Prepare specific plans to increase revenue sources for operating including earned and contributed income sources, endowment projections, and potential sources of new project support.
- Establish monetary goal for endowment fund.

By June 2020:

- Begin implementing specific plans to increase revenue sources that will sustain and grow operations, fund capital needs and special projects and achieve desired endowment goal.
- Use results from further development and planning efforts to tailor and prioritize strategic plan objectives to match available resources.