



directions

The journal of the Association of Nature Center Administrators

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Great Lakes Great Summit



Cathy Devendorf & Dick Touvell

Chippewa Nature Center with excerpts from Janea Little's Barstow Guide to Natural History of Chippewa Nature Center

For the 11th time, the Summit will bring together practicing professionals from all parts of the country. Whether you come from a center with many staff members or just one, a large or modest budget,

lots of acreage or a single building, there is no substitute for the inspiration you will receive and give to folks who face the same challenges and triumphs that you do.

The ANCA Summit will change your perspective and help bring a new "can-do" attitude to managing your organization. You'll share stories, learn new things, laugh, have fun, be challenged and perhaps, most importantly, become part of a network of nature center leaders that will help you do a better job.

Like other nature centers that have hosted ANCA Summits, we're excited to share our part of the country with others. We have dubbed it the Great Lakes - Great Summit for a variety of reasons. If you haven't made up your mind about attending this year's event, hopefully, the following reasons will help convince you to pack your bags in August for the Great Lakes - Great Summit!

Connect with Other Professionals:

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"Something will have gone out of us as a people if we ever let the remaining wilderness be destroyed." —Wallace Stegner

Directions is a quarterly publication of the Association of Nature Center Administrators, distributed to members of ANCA as a membership benefit. ANCA is a private, non-profit organization, dedicated to promoting and supporting best leadership and management practices for nature and environmental learning centers.

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President's Message

Ruth Lundin
Executive Director
Jamestown Audubon Society



The ANCA Board of Directors meets four times a year. To keep expenses to a minimum, two of those meetings are generally conference calls and one is the day prior to the Summit. However, the fourth meeting is one that is critical for the organization, because it includes a day for strategic planning. Just as it is difficult to make time for thoughtful analysis, evaluation and brainstorming in our own organizations, so it is with ANCA.

This year, in order to make the fullest use of our time, we started with a survey to be completed before the meeting. First, we were asked to evaluate past efforts at strategic planning, where the organization has succeeded, how it has fallen short. Then, we were asked to look at opportunities and threats, looking out over the next five years. Finally, we were asked what we would want ANCA to look like in 2020. We were asked to think not only about our impact on the Nature Center profession, but also on our impact on society, the nature of partnerships and affiliations, ANCA's national or international influence and recognition and (getting back to basics) our funding sources.

The following Strategic Themes were identified from the responses:

- Expanded ANCA role and impact

Rather than responding to needs and relying on networking, ANCA should look at ways it can provide innovative services to its members and represent them in a larger societal

setting.

- Enhanced status for nature centers, similar to the respect accorded museums and zoos.
- Expanded partnerships.
- Increased marketing and communications for the profession.
- Expanded networking and mentoring including efforts to encourage people to enter the profession.
- Increased membership.
- Increased service to members.
- Retention of the personal nature of Summit.

On our planning day, we first reviewed the input we received during the Summit planning session, when we asked participants, "How could ANCA services best help you in your job." We then divided into groups and developed 5 Strategic Intents with accompanying long term and short term goals. Here are the Intents and short-term goals that were developed.

Members - Reach the maximum number of professionals with valuable, relevant, and timely services.

1. Change ANCA communications to reflect broader membership opportunities.

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Message

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2. Develop the Salary Survey as a web database, to keep the information current and allow members to develop targeted analyses.
3. Provide a listserv summary for each topic.
4. Create a mentoring/networking opportunity form for use in Summit open space and facilitated sessions.
5. Publish two monographs and have two more in development.
6. Publicize the fact that Board meetings are open to members.

Marketing -

Nature centers are recognized as a valuable educational and recreational resource, advocating for a developing environmental ethic among individuals and institutions worldwide, with ANCA recognized as the authority in identifying the means to achieving these goals.

1. Survey members for their current perception of services and their relative value in meeting their needs.
2. Develop a marketing plan to members and prospective members.

Funding -

Ensure the long-term financial stability of ANCA.

1. Develop a membership fee structure to increase income.
2. Formalize and promote business sponsorship package first for the Summit and then for the newsletter and website.
3. Write case statements for Summit funding to be

used annually to raise funds locally at host site. Use Summit to build relationships with funders.

Partnerships -

Create strategic partnerships with like-minded organizations to greatly increase our worldwide visibility, influence and access to resource to accomplish our goals.

1. Continue dialogue with National Audubon looking for commonalities and win-win relationships.
2. Set a timeline for serious discussion of strategic alliance with NAI (joint survey, duplication of services).
3. Open a dialogue with The Nature Conservancy to explore their unmet needs and explore mutually beneficial opportunities.



Thanks to the Chippewa Nature Center and a generous grant from the The Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation the ANCA Board of Directors had a productive strategic planning meeting in Midland, MI in January.

The board and friends enjoy a meal in a 1870's style cabin. Seated from left; Wayne Clark, Bill Rose, Cathy Devendorf, Ruth Lundin, Larry Brown, Tim Sandsmark, Ann Rilling, Bobbi Jo Geise, Bob Mercer. Standing from left; Bo Glover, Dick Touvell, Buffy Cheek, Dennis Pilaske.

Staffing -

Maintain staffing and volunteer levels that ensure adequate funding is available to provide member services, maintain operations, carry out implementation of Board policies and initiatives that enable us to reach our goals year after year.

1. Assess current staffing, volunteer, and board capacity and optimize relative to current goals.
2. Draft a vision of what a fully staffed ANCA office would be and could do based on the overall strategic plan.

We are looking for members who are willing to help us advance these goals in the next year! Please contact Larry Brown at the ANCA office, or any of your Board members and help us move forward.



Alison Swain & Rex Lybrand
Instructors at IslandWood

the Garden Classroom

As educators, we know that textbooks

will never enliven the senses of the students we teach in a way that direct experience provides. At IslandWood, an environmental learning center for Washington primary school students, experiential education is the keystone of our teaching philosophy. The 255-acre campus includes classrooms such as a tree house built into a Douglas fir, suspension bridge spanning a ravine, classroom that floats out on a pond, and a bird blind entrenched into a marsh. It is through these outdoor classrooms that IslandWood instructors act as guides into a four-day, experiential world of natural science, art, and technology. Not only do IslandWood instructors expose their students to new concepts and activities, but most importantly, they allow each child to apply their own intellect in hands-on and realistic ways. In one outdoor classroom, the organic garden, students are able to truly observe, manipulate, taste, and impact their surroundings using all of their senses. But the garden classroom is not just about planting, growing, and eating the fruits of one's labor. Hands-on learning in the garden, connected with the rest of their IslandWood experience, challenges students to integrate their knowledge gained in the field with their everyday experience.

Ultimately, the garden classroom offers myriad options for lessons to introduce and activities to embark upon with a swirl of ten eager upper elementary students. A sample of a typical morning exploring garden

most likely includes time for students to smell, pick, and taste the herbs, fruits, and vegetables, which grow from the soil. The garden classroom is also about action. It offers opportunities to plant seeds, transplant seedlings from the greenhouse to the outdoor beds, and harvest ripe foods for immediate tasting, or an upcoming dining hall meal. To watch a student hold a snap pea seed in his hand and gently lay it in the earth, carefully fertilize it, and realize that the seed came from a former pea pod is to deeply know the energizing power of experiential education.



"The greatest gift of the garden is the restoration of the five senses."

—Hanna Rion

With life emerging from soil, and healthy, organic foods to eat, it is easy to love the garden. While churning the soil, the student's mind focuses on the factors that make life possible, allowing the ultimate reward, eating, to be all the more meaningful. Because the student is an active participant in the planting, growth, and harvest of the food, she understands each lesson as part of an interconnected system rather than separate ideas. In IslandWood's garden classroom, the experience continues after the seed is planted. The food cycle is more than mere growth; it inevitably includes the transfer of energy from one being to another, eventual decomposition, and the renewal of the cycle in soil and seed once again.

Just beyond the garden are the twin vats of the compost bin and vermaculture. Understanding the heat generated by biological activity of decomposers becomes clear to students when they climb atop the ladder to examine the compost bin and measure the temperature of its many layers. In the vermaculture, students see an intricate mix of shredded paper, eggshells, and food waste from the morning's breakfast. Peering into the compost

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from the field

(Continued from page 4)

bin, students discover the food, which they separated and weighed in the dining hall, is now part of the cycle of decomposition and renewal.

With their food literally staring back at them, students see one solution to the issue of waste. They can crank the vermaculture, helping to mix and sort the composted food, watching it drop to the bottom of the tub as they turn the cranks. Suddenly, another connection is made as a student recognizes the eggshells in the compost bin as the white specks in the garden soil she just held in her hands.



It is inspiring to witness the awe, respect, and free-flowing effervescence students lend to worms, earwigs, sow bugs, and larvae of all types. Often instructors, excited by the students' reaction to the worms and decomposing food waste, shovel a sample into a bucket and head to the nearest set of microscopes. Through the microscopes, each student examines, closer than most of them, if not all, have ever thought to look, the macroinvertebrates thriving in the soil. The reactions vary from disgust, complete enthusiasm, to uninhibited awe at all that is living, crawling, and munching in the compost. After examining, identifying, discussing, and drawing or painting the magnified soil, these students have taken yet another step in experiencing the food cycle. At the end of the lesson, the students open their journals and create their own food cycle, complete with producers, consumers, decomposers, and the eventual return to soil. Having a hand in each part of the process, students now apply their experiences to create their individual example of the natural cycle at work.

While the lesson of food cycles could exist without this hands-on learning, experiential education has incomparable impact on students' modes of thinking. For many children, planting a seed or tasting something that they have picked from the soil is an entirely new experience that asks them to consider how food is produced, what it needs to thrive, and the journey of waste. In experiential education, students are forced to use all of

"Students can learn all about science, math, and nature while actually seeing how it works in the garden."

—Sharon Quirk

their senses to consider the processes at work in front of them; and gradually, each separate activity becomes an interrelated understanding of natural cycles.

When students leave IslandWood, they think about what they have eaten, their food waste, and the ways food might be used for energy further along the cycle. Along with their greater insight into the natural world, students are more willing to try new foods and eager to observe life processes in their schoolyards or backyards. By engaging students with hands-on learning, this unique educational experience enables them to deeply understand the lessons of natural cycles.

In the end, IslandWood's lush forests, organic garden, easily accessible compost bins, dining hall complete with food weighing mechanism, and wet lab with microscopes are an ideal way to teach the concepts of food and energy cycles. Despite the many challenges of teaching experientially in a traditional classroom, providing students with the eye-popping view of a worm aerating food waste becomes embodied knowledge. All that is truly necessary is a hand lens, a bin outside the door, and a bed of soil. Ultimately, transformative learning begins with just a seed.



Great Summit

(Continued from page 1)

Experience the Great Lakes:

Located near Michigan's "Thumb," the City of Midland is just 20 miles from Lake Huron, and a great starting point for trips to Sault St. Marie, Frankenmuth, Bay City, Kalamazoo, Grand Rapids, Saginaw and Detroit, among others. Chippewa Nature Center (CNC) has planned opportunities for you to explore Michigan's legendary places—Mackinac Island and Sleeping Bear Dunes—as well as a chance to canoe, kayak and fish Michigan's rivers. Four pre-summit field trips and three post-trips will be led by CNC's naturalists and historian.



The Chippewa Nature Center, in Midland, MI, will host the 11th annual ANCA Summit August 25 - 27, 2005

See Michigan through the "eyes" of two Nature

Centers: First, consider a pre-trip to southwestern Michigan to visit Kalamazoo Nature Center (founded in 1960) and go behind the scenes of one of the state's largest nature centers. Then, settle in at Chippewa Nature Center, the Summit host site.

Like so many other centers, CNC was started by a group of volunteers. Local Audubon Society members created the Center in 1966. It is a 1,348-acre haven of woodlands, wetlands, rivers and upland fields, including 10-plus miles of hiking trails. You'll find an interesting variety of plants and animals, due in part to our position in the north-south transition zone. As the southern-most limit for many northern species, and the northern-most limit for many southern species, Midland offers the best of

both worlds. You can find sycamore (southern) and birch (northern) trees, eyed brown (northern) and Appalachian eyed brown (southern) butterflies, and both northern and Louisiana (southern) waterthrushes.

If you take a plane into Midland/Bay City/Saginaw Airport (MBS), you may well fly over the most striking aspects of Chippewa Nature Center—the Pine and Chippewa Rivers. The Chippewa River runs the entire length (3.2 miles) of the property. Just 20 miles from Lake Huron, the Center straddles the Pine and Chippewa, which merge at the Visitor Center. From this confluence, the Chippewa flows into the Tittabawassee River three miles downstream in downtown Midland, then flows another 24 miles to join the Saginaw River.

Combined with its other tributaries—the Cass, Flint, and Shiawassee—these rivers make up the Saginaw Bay Watershed, the largest in Michigan, and one of the largest in North America, draining over 8,700 miles.

The Oxbow (the main channel of the Chippewa River prior to 1912) and man-made ponds dot the rest of the property. Many of our trails are located near the rivers so hikers can enjoy the plants, animals and scenic views. While you're here, don't be surprised to see eagles, gulls, ducks, swallows, or a multitude of other birds that use the rivers both for feeding and as a navigational roadmap. Mink, muskrat, coyote, beaver, and otter find food in and along rivers, where

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Great Summit

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other mammals can often be seen stopping for a drink.

Other outdoor features at CNC include the Wildflower Walkway (a short pathway adjacent to the Visitor Center showcasing the natural history of wildflowers native to Michigan), a Wetlands Area, including three marsh basins created in 1991 and a remnant bog, and the Garrett Arboretum, situated on approximately 16 acres of Nature Center land. Well-established, yet still expanding, the arboretum will eventually be home to over 1700 trees and shrubs.

The Summit's main activities will be based in the Visitor Center, designed by Midland's own Alden B. Dow, the first Architect Laureate of Michigan. The building's River Overlook is a 60-foot-long, glass-walled room cantilevered over the Pine River, offering a 180-degree view. Inside the Ecosystem Gallery, visitors are encouraged to explore the major habitats that make the Chippewa Nature Center special. Other facilities include an auditorium, a library, classrooms and the Nature Center Store.

On Friday evening of the Summit, we will base our activities at three carefully restored log buildings on the property (the 1870s Homestead Farm cabin, Log Schoolhouse and maple Sugarhouse).

Visit a big, small town: Midland's downtown area will provide a relaxed backdrop for the Summit. The Farmer's Market is open on Wednesday and Saturday mornings during the summer, and you may also want to take advantage of our 33-mile Pere Marquette Rail-Trail, Trilogry skate-park, and a disc golf course.

Our town of 40,000 people while small, boasts many fine examples of the architecture of Alden

B. Dow, Midland Center for Arts (currently featuring a major traveling exhibit on Egypt), Dow Gardens, and the Historical Society, with brand new exhibits highlighting local history. The city is also home to corporate headquarters of The Dow Chemical Company and Dow Corning Corporation. Expect fine weather, as Midland lies in one of Michigan's milder climate pockets, with average daily maximum temperature of 85 ° F in August, and 32° F in January.

Watch for the Summit brochure in early April: We hope you will be able to join other nature center professionals here in Michigan at this year's Great Lakes - Great Summit. Take the next step in making your nature center the very best it can be!



*Midland's "Tridge"
A bridge with three bases that span the Tittabawassee
and Chippewa Rivers*

Great Lakes • Great Summit
Chippewa Nature Center
Midland, MI
August 25 - 27, 2005

Profiles: Teton Science Schools

Connecting Kids to Nature Through Education

Jack Shea
Executive Director
Teton Science Schools

Whether or not you agree with the points of view expressed in last year's special issue of *Directions* regarding the "extinction of experience," can any of us dispute the notion that we should always be on the lookout for new ways to facilitate children's frequent, positive experiences in nature?

Our work in outdoor, experiential education got its start in 1967 at a tent camp in Grand Teton National Park, where Teton Science School founder Ted Major taught summer field ecology to Jackson Hole High School students. Since then, we have grown to become Teton Science Schools (TSS), with a broad range of programs that annually provide place-based learning experiences to over 10,000 students of all ages.

From pre-school to Elderhostel, all TSS programs follow a basic paradigm for experiential learning: we don't just talk about it if we can do it. And every TSS program strives to connect (more) people to nature through education.

But the challenge put forth in *Directions* was to find ways to bring nature back into the daily rhythm of children's lives. And a recent

call for articles sought stories from ANCA's membership about efforts to combat the "extinction of experience."

Here's how a variety of TSS programs specifically combat the "extinction of experience" for kids:

As we have since 1974, TSS offers residential programs for school

explore alpine ridges or canoe a peaceful lake. And fall is a wonderful season to observe wildlife as they migrate into the valley in preparation for winter.

Since 1991, we've built upon that foundation of short-term residential programs, through various outreach programs, and have taken our teaching philosophy and methods

into school settings throughout the intermountain west. Our capacity for outreach is due, in large part, to the Professional Residencies in Environmental Education and Natural History Interpretation that were launched in 1994 and 2003, respectively. Today, graduate residents expose schools throughout the intermountain west to our sense-of-place curriculum. The goal: to enrich educational experiences in the classroom by incorporating

student-centered learning, environmentally focused activities and multi-disciplinary approaches to teaching.

Our outreach to schools got us thinking about developing a year-long, pre-K through 12th grade, place-based learning opportunity for kids in Jackson Hole, which led, in 2001,



Bird banding is a great way to get kids in touch with nature

groups throughout the school year as well as summer programs for individual kids. Of course, we're blessed by the fact that the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem offers unique opportunities for learning year-round. In the winter, we use cross-country skis to explore and learn about the winter environment. Spring programs offer the chance to witness the return of wildflowers and migratory birds. Summer brings the opportunity to

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Profiles

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to TSS launching Wyoming's first independent school.

The purpose of Journeys School is to integrate ecology, culture and community to ensure academic excellence and personal success. Its innovative approach to education is based on experiential learning, team teaching and multi-age classrooms and the learning environment features small, interactive groups with low student/teacher ratios. Over 110 students, from pre-K through 12th grade, are attending Journeys School this year.

When construction of our second campus is complete next fall, we plan to introduce a new residential Teacher Learning Center. But TSS has been offering opportunities for educators to develop the skills and knowledge to foster appreciation of place in their students since its first workshop in 1970. The Teacher Learning Center will take full advantage of all the resources of TSS and use Journeys School as a learning laboratory, allowing TSS to multiply its effectiveness and reach by offering short and long-term residential development opportunities for teachers from across the country.

For now, that's it: the different ways TSS tries to bring nature back into the daily rhythm of children's lives. We are, however, always on the lookout for new ways to facilitate children's frequent, positive experiences in nature. I'm sure you are too.

Jack Shea has been Executive Director of Teton Science Schools since 1988. Under his leadership, TSS has implemented the Outreach Program, Professional Residencies In Environmental Education and Natural History Interpretation, Journeys School, the Conservation Research Center, the Teacher Learning Center and acquired Wildlife Expeditions. He considers himself a scientist by training, a teacher by choice and an administrator by mistake. www.tetonscience.org

Great Ideas from Great Books

Hot Off The Press!

The Nature Center Book

How to Create and Nurture a Nature Center in Your Neighborhood

Published by the National Association for Interpretation's InterPress, *The Nature Center Book* provides up-to-date information and expanded discussion of topics key to nature center development. It outlines lessons learned and important new developments in the field.

This edition includes updated information regarding organizations and resources, as well as expanded coverage of financial and organizational issues and government-based nature centers. The book, printed in full color, features more than 200 photographs.

Price of the book is \$24.00 plus \$5.00 shipping first item (\$2.00 each additional)

Order Your Copies Today!

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Dayton, OH 45414

Or call 1-800-490-2622

A Must Have Classic

Director's Guide to Best Practices

The Director's Guide includes chapters on five essential areas: leadership, strategic planning, boards, staff, and fund raising.

ANCA developed this book for busy directors and staff people with many roles and responsibilities. It is a handbook for those new to the profession and will also challenge and inspire the most experienced directors and their staffs. ANCA members have also found it valuable to give to board members, and volunteers.

Directors from 23 states and 40 different facilities reviewed and commented on the chapter drafts and evaluated the book's effectiveness.

Price of the book is \$60.00 plus \$5.00 shipping and handling.

Educational Farm Symposium

November 3, 4 & 5, 2005

Ashland Nature Center & Coverdale Farm
Delaware Nature Society
Hockessin, DE

The symposium is designed for directors, educators, land managers and farmers of educational farms. This symposium will provide an opportunity to share with colleagues, celebrate our successes, learn from our failures, recognize and prepare for challenges ahead, network, mentor and renew our vision. Participants learn and recharge through field trips, workshops, facilitated discussion, open space sessions, and ongoing exchanges with peers.

A taste of the 2005 Symposium:

Field Trips: Rodale Institute, Somerton Tank Farm & Reading Terminal Market in Philadelphia, Delaware Agricultural Museum & Abbotts Mill Nature Center

Facilitated Session & Workshop content areas: fund development, master planning, programming & curriculum development, teaching techniques, animal management, sustainable farming practices, wildlife management on the farm, alternatives to traditional crops, Heirloom plants and their uses, heritage breed: how to obtain and use in programming, farmland preservation and advocacy, law & policy - how to communicate with decision makers and much more.

Registration

Begins June 19, 2005

For more information email

Michele Wales, Farm Program Coordinator,

Delaware Nature Society:

michele@dnsashland.org

or visit our website:

www.delawarenaturesociety.org

Annual Appeal Contributions

Thanks to the following members for supporting
the day-to-day work of ANCA

Kristin Alexander
Jim Berry
Kathleen Brady
Dave Catlin
Buffy Cheek
Amy Dawson
Jim Fitzpatrick
Nancy Furman
Gordon Maupin
S.J. Meyer & Associates
Ann Rilling
John Royster
Tim Sandsmark

Monograph Fund Contributions

Thanks to the following members for supporting
the development of the monographs

Dede Long

Endowment Update

Through your generous support the ANCA
endowment fund continues to grow. Recent
contributors to the fund include:

Gordon Maupin

If you would like to make a pledge
please contact the ANCA Office at
1-800-490-2622 or email at
lbrown@audubon.org.

ANCA Membership Form

Please Join Us!

Membership Benefits: Quarterly Issues of Directions • Special Publications • Invitation to ANCA Summits and Workshops • Reciprocal Admission Program • Membership Guide

Please check the desired membership level: ___ \$70 Individual or ___ \$110 Institutional (two staff members receive benefits)
___ \$25 Student (copy of full-time student ID required)

NAME 1: _____ TITLE: _____

EMAIL 1: _____

NAME 2: _____ TITLE: _____
(with Institutional Membership)

EMAIL 2: _____

ORGANIZATION: _____

ADDRESS: _____ CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____ FAX: _____

• ANCA offers a reciprocal admissions program for our members. Please check the reciprocal benefits your institution will provide: _____ Free Admission _____ Store Discount of _____% _____ Not Interested

• If you would like to participate in ANCA's reciprocal website link program please note your web address below. ANCA's website is www.natctr.org. (Inclusion is subject to review.) _____

• ANCA provides our members with a membership guide of participating institutions and their reciprocal benefits every 18 months. Please list my institution in the brochure as follows:

Name: _____ Web Site: _____

City & State: _____ Phone: _____

• ANCA is funded entirely by the generosity of members like you through membership dues, Summit registrations, grants, and donations. If you would like to make a donation at this time to support the operation of the organization, please note the amount here and add to your membership fees. \$ _____

Total Membership Dues & Donation: \$ _____

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Dayton, OH 45414



Questions? Call 1 • 800 • 490 • 2622

ANCA Technical Consults: YOUR FRIEND IN THE BUSINESS!

ANCA offers consulting assistance to nature centers and other environmental education organizations at very reasonable fees. The charge includes the cost of transportation, lodging and meals for the team, plus a \$2,750 fee that goes toward supporting ANCA's professional services and planning. Our Board of Directors, and members, provide these services with no personal financial gain, while you gain the advantage of advice and guidance from some of the profession's most respected and experienced leaders.

What can be covered? Well, just about anything involved with planning, funding, and operations. Some topics include:

- Assistance with long range and strategic planning
- Review education programs, exhibits, or trails
- Mission focus
- Fundraising and fiscal management
- Facility planning
- Starting a center
- Management strategies and use planning

To find out more about
ANCA's Peer Consults,

contact any ANCA board member or
Wayne Clark at
817-237-6940

Wayne.Clark@fortworthgov.org.

Jeff Brown from the Yellowstone Association had this to say about ANCA consults:

"We contacted the folks at ANCA and they pulled together some of the best people in this business on very short notice. The consulting team spent two full days in the park and provided a detailed written report within one month. The process was fun, the cost was reasonable, and the results are tangible - we are moving forward with a revised proposal based on the excellent advice we received from these experts."

directions

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