

directions



The journal of the Association of Nature Center Administrators

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RECYCLE THIS NEWSLETTER -
GIVE IT TO A FRIEND

HOT TOPIC Global Warming

Ken Voorhis
Executive Director
Great Smoky Mountains Institute
Townsend, TN

Global climate change, and peak oil production are now topics that are being discussed seriously by more than just environmentalists. Accelerated growth in countries like China and India is moving at unprecedented rates. People seem to be recognizing that the need to address these issues is becoming critical. The pendulum seems to be swinging in terms of environmental awareness and action. The realization that our children are growing up with a very different relationship to nature than what we had at their age is creating a mainstream non-partisan conversation and people want to do something about it.

Even corporate America is moving to put sustainability practices into place to assure their survival. As they have begun to do so they are finding that such practices are actually good for the bottom line.

Can we be nimble enough to respond to these huge changes rapidly enough to keep from experiencing significant detrimental impacts? Could we already be past a tipping point when it comes to some of these issues that may be like trying to stop a runaway train? In the context of such questions, how do nature centers respond?

The following excerpts from an interview with author and environmental educator David Orr explores some of these questions and the role that nature

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Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. It is the only thing that ever has.

-Margaret Mead

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

Bo Glover
Executive Director
Environmental Nature Center
Newport Beach, CA



I joined ANCA just prior to the Tennessee Summit in 1998. I was a new director of a struggling nature center. As with many of you, after attending the Summit, I knew I had found the organization that could provide me with the resources and tools I needed to succeed.

I was asked to join the ANCA Board of Directors in 2001 as Secretary. (We all know it was because nobody else wanted *that* job!) During the past two years I served in the role of Vice President of Professional Services for consults, which provide valuable technical assistance to nature centers. I now find myself as President of the best professional networking organization around - what a privilege.

ANCA has identified many organizational goals for the next several years. The Board, with member input, has strategically determined to put into "best practice" a sound marketing strategy.

The implementation of this plan will help to achieve several organizational goals including: increasing membership by creating a greater awareness of the benefits provided by ANCA, identifying diversified revenue sources, developing strategic alliances, and creating a national awareness of nature centers' benefits to the communities we serve. Our Board of Directors will be working on this marketing plan during the next

several months and we will keep you updated on the progress.

I am honored to be President of ANCA and look forward to a new chapter in the organization under the management of Jen Levy, our first Executive Director.

As the structure of the organization transitions, so too does the ANCA Board of Directors. We thank our former President Tim Sandsmark whose leadership guided the organization through tremendous growth. We thank Ann Rilling who will step down from her Board position in order to head ANCA's marketing department as a staff member. Also, we send our gratitude to Bobbi Jo Geise for her years of dedication to ANCA.

Though the Board will say good-bye to the service of these exceptional individuals, we are fortunate as an organization to have a very deep talent pool from which to draw. Thus, we welcome Alan Barnhardt, Larry Richardson, and Ken Voorhis to fill the vacancies on the Board.

I look forward to working with the ANCA Board, as well as each and every one of you, throughout the coming year. It is our investment in ANCA that has made it the best professional organization serving the nature and environmental learning center field. 🌿

Director's Notes

Jen Levy
Executive Director
Association of Nature Center Administrators
Logan, UT

I have unpacked most of the 63 boxes that arrived from ANCA's former office in Dayton, OH, and have settled in to the new ANCA offices in Logan, UT. I want to thank all of you who sent thoughtful e-mails, notes, and phone calls welcoming me to the executive director position.

Now it's my turn to welcome another new ANCA staffer, Ann Rilling. Ann has served on the ANCA board for the past four years and has been involved with publications, Summit auctions, and most recently served as the Vice President for Professional Services. In September, Ann resigned her board appointment to accept the position of Marketing and Communications Director. Ann will be proactive in designing marketing, membership, and financial development initiatives that support the ANCA mission and membership. She'll work from her home in Cortez, CO.

ANCA Summit XIII, The Green & Gold Getaway, was a huge success! Held at the Schlitz Audubon Nature Center (SANC) in Milwaukee, this was our biggest gathering to date with 199 participants!

Despite the challenges of a power outage due to fantastic storms, the SANC staff did an incredible job hosting folks from throughout the U.S., Canada, and Africa! I look forward to working with Teton Science Schools this coming year in planning the ANCA Summit XIV, The



Teton Summit, to be held August 20-23, 2008 in Jackson, WY – be sure to save the dates. You won't want to miss it!

One of the highlights of this year's Summit was the Friday night auction. Enthusiastic participants raised over \$17,000 for ANCA operations. In addition, the annual Fund-the-Need drive was launched to raise funds to create a marketing strategy to improve ANCA's member services (see sidebar for details). One of our first challenges will be to develop a marketing plan. We will utilize the feedback we received during the annual membership meeting where we gathered input from members regarding our services and how we can serve the membership even better.

Another exciting happening is the establishment of a scholarship program for Peer Consults. This coming year we will offer two Peer Consults to qualified organizations for a reduced rate of \$1,000 plus Consult Team members' expenses. These Consults are designed to promote greater success in the nature center profession and to assist organizations that may not otherwise be able to afford the full consult fee of \$3,250. More information and an application can be found on the ANCA website, www.natctr.org.

Have a great fall season and remember that your work is important. And please let me know how ANCA can help. 🍁

Fund The Need



At ANCA's annual Summit this past August participants generously donated to support our "Fund the Need" campaign - this year's Need was determined by the Board to be improvement of the organization's marketing and outreach abilities.

ANCA is a treasure trove of information, experience and resources. . . a treasure trove that up until now has been hard to access, even for our own membership. Yet what we have and know is not available anywhere else. If we don't provide these resources, no one else will. With your contributions and our matching grant, we will begin to create the marketing strategy and tools we need to open up our treasure chest, first to our membership and then to increase awareness and participation by everyone who can benefit from our services and expertise.

In total, \$16,356 was raised for Funding The Need. Debbi and Paul Brainerd provided the lead gift of \$5,000 and \$5,206 was collected at the Summit with an additional \$6,150 pledged.

If you would like to join these generous donors and support the Need, please contact the ANCA office today!

Melissa Alderson
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Fran Blanchard

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centers could play in a world that is changing in many ways. As community based non-profits with passion and a strong sense of mission he views nature centers as places that can react somewhat quickly and intuitively to change. He poses a formidable challenge that steps well beyond the traditional nature center's scope. How should we respond?

A Conversation with David Orr:
The Nature Center's Role in a Changing World
Excerpted from an interview conducted by Ken Voorhis during the "Dialog on Children and Nature", Shepherdstown WV, Sept. 9, 2006.

Ken:
From your perspective how would you define the key societal needs that nature centers (defined broadly) should be addressing?

David:
I think there are two huge issues in our time that relate directly to nature centers. One is climate change - it's on us, it's going

to be serious, it's going to be worse than we thought maybe even four or five years ago. The other is peak oil - the end of cheap portable fossil fuels. And the way that ought to, I think, play out for nature centers is in two ways.

The nature that you have been teaching is disappearing, species by species, season by season. We know that winter is shrinking everywhere because the precision of the onslaught of seasons is changing dramatically- spring comes sooner, fall lasts longer. Nature is going to prove, in the next decade or two or three to be very malleable or changeable. Cheap oil intersects this in this way, we are not going to be able to provision ourselves from long distance suppliers to anywhere near the same degree that we are now provisioned. So nature centers could with some imagination become repositories of learning about how to re-localize economies, and re-stabilize, region by region and place by place, green house gas emissions. Where do people go to learn these things? They are not going to learn them right now in public schools; they are not going to learn them in universities by in large. Nature centers, because they are flexible, they are fast, they are agile, could begin to do all kinds of programs for their constituents in how we resettle these places. How do we re-inhabit places like North Carolina and California and Ohio?

I think we are in a situation where people are going to be looking for answers to some very basic problems - food, shelter, energy, health-care, and livelihood. And the idea that we can be provisioned by a global economy that is no longer able to move, very easily, heavy things long distances - food, energy, materials. We are coming into a brand new situation and the handwriting is on the wall and there is so much evidence.

Ken:
So that's a biggie, how do we prepare for that? What kind of programs could we be doing? This is a whole new paradigm. There was a time in the 60's when the message was everything's bad, we are destroying the environment etc... and then the pendulum swung toward the idea that we use nature as a positive thing, that we develop in people an appreciation of nature that will lead to people making positive environmental decisions. And now we are faced with educating people about what these radical changes to the natural world that are upon us will mean as well.

David:
A few random thoughts; Nature centers have a couple decided advantages. They are lighter and more agile, you can mobilize faster, you don't have the vast resources, you are not



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expensive institutions that can only be maintained expensively. Colleges and universities are. And they are the damned slowest things to move. Harvard is probably the last institution that is going to know there is a problem anywhere in the world.

The course for nature centers, if I was to be presumptuous enough to advise would be... I would begin to do programs that would begin to prepare people.... begin to do programs on global change, and keep them fairly low-key and science based, but bring in speakers and do seminars and write columns in the local paper, and have discussion groups on things like Al Gore's book. Low-key stuff. Secondly, while you're doing that, I'd begin to prepare staff and resources for a much more serious effort because we are now seeing the early signs of huge economic dislocations. I would begin to equip yourselves with the capacity to help people with very basic needs - food growing, composting, redesigning the shelter, as the grid becomes intermittent, then getting portable fossil fuels, too expensive to purchase and often can't be bought at any price... then how do local populations cope - what's the technology, what are the means - what are the organizational tools? I'd begin to lay the groundwork for an alternative economy, without saying much about it, just do it.

Ken:

It is the idea that nature centers, like Audubon President John Flicker's vision for a nature center in every community, are community based, they are locally based, so being bioregional education and support centers makes sense. But the idea of re-establishing nature or considering that nature will be very different in the future and how we deal with that is a whole new focus.

David:

Yes, it is going to be a change in target isn't it? A shifting thing, because with carbon now at 385 parts per million we are already seeing species migrate. The ones who can get through are moving. At 400 parts per million or 450, 500, 650 we are going to begin to see all kinds of different things, and the goal here is to stabilize carbon.... Gore says 450, and I think you probably could gather an overwhelming consensus vote among climate scientists that 450 parts per million is where you ought to target.

Ken:

This is off-task a bit from programming but facility design is something that we have talked about a good deal and there are a lot of centers building right now, a number of places starting up. Some are working to create efficiencies and energy reductions in buildings that could be models for what we need down the road.

David:

Yes, and doing that in a way that pushes energy efficiency and zero discharge, waste water treatment, solar power, etc. a lot harder than what is being done. Imagine as you do that, just quietly going about your business in ways that are really instructive to local people. You are starting to build a local know-how. Imagine for nature centers if you say to a local contractor, "Hey, we want photo voltaic (PV) arrays here, we also have some staff that would like PV arrays and live off the grid, we have a potential market here, would you be interested in getting into that business?" So you're starting to spawn businesses around you. Nature centers have another

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Profiles: Rich Patterson

Recipient of ANCA's Nature Center Leadership Award 2007

Dick Touvell
Executive Director
Chippewa Nature Center
Midland, MI

Rich Patterson was presented the ANCA Nature Center Leadership Award on August 23, 2007 at the Schlitz Audubon Nature Center during the annual ANCA Summit in Milwaukee, WI.

The ANCA Nature Center Leadership Award is the highest honor in the country bestowed upon an individual in the nature center profession. Its purpose is to recognize individuals who have:

- Made a major contribution to the success of a nature center;
- Made important contributions to the profession through professional organizations (particularly ANCA);
- Supported and mentored other nature center leaders.

Rich Patterson exemplifies the ideal professional and honors us by receiving this prestigious award. Rich's association with the natural world began when his parents encouraged him to explore nature during his infancy. From early childhood, he explored the waters of Cedar Lake, Iowa near their home and the oak woods of Bald Hill, New Jersey near their vacation home. He earned the rank of Eagle Scout during his high school years.

Rich graduated from the University of Idaho's College of Natural Resources and spent three years as a fisheries biologist in Alaska before deciding on a career switch. Following a year in grad school studying outdoor education, he launched his nature center career in 1975, as he became the director of the Dillon Nature Center in Hutchinson, KS.

Rich has demonstrated superlative leadership skills through his work as Executive Director of the Indian Creek Nature Center, his work with the Outdoor Writers Association of America, and as one of the original founding members of ANCA. His commitment to and passion for giving back to the community is demonstrated by his long-standing involvement in Cedar Rapids, Iowa where he serves on the Board of the Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation investment committee. He is also a member and founder of the Linn County Nonprofit Resource Center and the Iowa Association of Naturalists. Rich has been a Peer Reviewer and Grant Reader for the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

He has touched the lives of many people, as evidenced by his many awards including the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Award, the Iowa Energy Leadership Award, the Governor's Volunteer and Environmental Leadership Award, and Rotary Community Involvement Award. He was also elected to the National Circle of Conservation Chiefs for Distinguished Service to Conservation. Rich has touched the lives of many through his writing of hundreds of freelance articles on camping, hiking, fishing, hunting, family travel, and natural history.

In the past 27 years dozens of newly appointed administrative naturalists and nature center directors have visited Indian Creek and received assistance from Rich, as he has helped them avoid financial, legal, and facility problems and helped them build their programs.

Congratulations, Rich, on a wonderfully successful career inspiring so many others. 🍁



photo by Jimmy Paz

Rich and Marion Patterson. Rich, Executive Director of Indian Creek Nature Center, received the 2007 ANCA Nature Center Leadership Award for his many years of dedication to the profession.

Still Motivated After All These Years

Rich Patterson
Director
Indian Creek Nature Center
Cedar Rapids, IA

When my wife, Marion, and I got married in 1974 we were jobless, homeless, and nearly penniless. Both of us kept scanning job postings for work in outdoor education, and one caught her eye. The Hutchinson Recreation Commission in Kansas was seeking someone to convert a former private recreation park into a natural area with an environmental education program. They offered me the job. I don't think anyone else applied!

It was a daunting challenge.

I inherited a run down facility. There were no volunteers, no staff, hardly any materials or tools, and money to pay my modest salary for about six months. Essentially I had to succeed or be unemployed. Three years later we left Kansas with the Dillon Nature Center running well.

It is ironic and unfortunate that many of us have academic backgrounds in education and natural resources yet are utterly lacking in management and fund raising. My academic background helped develop the environmental education part of the task, but I had no experience in fund raising, financial management, the legal aspects of the job, or many other areas.


In 1977, I accepted a position as Director of the Indian Creek Nature Center. I inherited a projected deficit. I had no peers within the state and still don't. In those days my immediate challenge was my inexperience in critically important legal, financial, and supervisory aspects of running a nonprofit organization. There was no professional organization to help nature center administrators learn important skills, except the few other nature center directors scattered about the country. In the late 1980's, Gomer Jones approached me, and other nature center directors, to help promote his backyard habitat program. Working with Tracy Kay at the Rye Nature Center in Rye, NY, he invited me and 12 other nature center directors to gather in New York. In 1988 and 1989 we met several times

at Rye. Out of those meetings came the Association of Nature Center Administrators - ANCA.

Managing a non-profit nature center is difficult. Some people ask how I stay motivated. On those occasions, I look out my window and watch a volunteer leading a group of preschoolers to a small pond. I watch the kids excitedly stalk motionless frogs and point at dragonflies buzzing around. Those kids are captivated and enthralled by nature. That's what keeps me motivated after all these years. 🍁


"It is an honor receiving this award from peers who understand the challenges, frustrations, and joys of nature center work. I have deep respect for nature center staff members and volunteers for their commitment to people and our environment. They deserve more respect, support, and appreciation than they receive."

— Rich Patterson




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from the field: news, notes & natural history

Everyone's Nature

Kathy Ambrosini
Director of Education
Mohonk Preserve
New Paltz, NY

significant steps toward the accommodation of visitors with disabilities and the development of inclusive programs for the public. Even on a shoe-string budget, enhancing the accessibility of your center can begin as soon as you get the information and training into the hands of your staff.

Is your center ready for the rising number of people with disabilities in your community? It's a fact: individuals with disabilities are now the single largest minority group in the United States - and they want access to nature centers like yours! Some are arriving at our doors, while others wait just beyond our gates hoping for the day when we offer them real access, not just entry.

You might be surprised to learn that 20% of Americans now live with some type of disability.

Increased longevity, improved diagnostic tools, and other factors are raising the bar, identifying challenges such as Learning Disabilities, Developmental Delays, and Autism at an earlier age. As more individuals enter into this circle, greater pressure is being exerted on nature centers to offer facilities and programmatic accommodations for those who, today, find a visit to a nature center simply beyond their reach.

From removing learning barriers to improved access for the mobility-impaired, centers nationwide are beginning to take



photo courtesy of Mohonk Preserve

Nature beckons to us all, but it's up to us to provide the forethought to make nature accessible to everyone.

Consider the case of Tyler, a young visitor with disabilities who may have recently attended a program at your center. He arrived by bus with the rest of his group, yet your staff soon noticed that there was something different about him. Tyler's mind seemed to wander while directions were being given. He was distracted by every little sound, every ripple on the surface of the water nearby. It seemed that he also had difficulty standing up straight. Your staff went into "reactive mode", trying to quietly plot how they might modify their plans for the day. This is a common occurrence at nature centers across the country, yet with proper planning and program design, this visit might have materialized more like this:

Blue skies so vast, that morning at the water's edge, stirred Tyler's enthusiasm. As he pressed his down-turned net gently against the ground, he snuck a peak at his prize: a bright green bullfrog! His friends looked on in awe. "Let me see it! Pick it up!" they prodded, but Tyler's instincts told him to resist... to wait for help. He held a net with a long handle, enabling him to reach the water's edge from where he sat. The naturalist had shown him pictures of the animals that lived in these waters, passed around models for him to hold, and had sat next to him so that he could hear the directions clearly. That day Tyler had many firsts. Though he was almost ten, Tyler had never before been to a nature

center.

Tyler is one of more than a thousand boys and girls with disabilities who have explored the woods and streams of the Mohonk Preserve in New Paltz, New York, over the past decade. Beginning in 1994, the Preserve's NatureAccess™ program has provided the tools and expertise to meet the needs of today's visitors, many of whom learn differently. Children

(continued on next page)

like Tyler are reaping the benefits of a 22-year collaboration between the Mohonk Preserve and the New Paltz Central School District. NatureAccess is a pro-active approach to accessible programming, applying the principles of Universal Design and bringing together environmental educators, therapists, social workers, psychologists, and other specialists to plan for accommodations, one person at a time. If an individual needs visuals, then we create them; if s/he needs mobility, we provide wheels; if s/he needs structure, then we define it. Inclusive programs do more than just provide access; they offer the supports and aids necessary for people with disabilities to actively engage in and learn from our programs. We are pleased that our efforts have been recognized by the Independent Living Centers of New York State and by the Resource Center for Accessible Living.

The changing profile of today's visitors reveals the magnitude of the situation. Statistics now reveal that 10% of all Americans have a Learning Disability (LD); 8% are diagnosed Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD or ADHD), and one out of every 150 children is now autistic. At the same time an overwhelming 45% of Americans are either overweight or obese, leaving them prone to a host of related health and physical conditions which can affect their inclusion in activities. Our growing senior population is also increasing visitorship by those with hearing, visual, mobility, and other health impairments.

Although the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was passed 17 years ago, most programs at nature centers and parks have yet to address the inclusion of visitors with diverse needs. The rationale is that, historically, there's been a lack of appropriate print resources for not-for-profits in this area, along with a scarcity of trainers on the topic. Our response to this need came in the form of a series of workshops and a training manual entitled Making Outdoor Programs Accessible. Designed as a ready-to-use guide, the book has traveled widely and is already in 28 states and six National Parks, as well as in Finland, Germany, Puerto Rico and Canada (see the following for more information).

Over the past several years our trainers have led NatureAccess workshops for outdoor professionals around the country, and have trained staff from a wide variety of not-for-profit organizations as well as agencies such as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Parks Association, New York City Parks Department, Florida State Parks, U.S. Forest Service, and California State Parks. These trainings offer interactive opportunities that teach us how to better understand the needs of our audience, and provide the tools to develop inclusive programs for a diversity of participants. Hands-on sessions support the staff's understanding of the services,

materials, and ideas needed to present programs that are accessible to everyone.

When we think about improving access, we realize that becoming an inclusive nature center seems a bit like blazing a trail through a thicket: we may build it for those who can't bushwack, but we soon realize that everyone is enjoying it! Nature beckons to us all, but it's up to us to provide the forethought to make nature accessible to everyone. 🌿

For more information or to arrange a training workshop for your staff, contact:

Kathy Ambrosini,
Mohonk Preserve Director of Education
845-255-0919 ext. 233
kambrosini@mohonkpreserve.org.

Copies of Making Outdoor Programs Accessible may be ordered by calling:

Mohonk Preserve Nature Shop at: 845-255-0919
or by printing an order form at:

www.mohonkpreserve.org/index.php?education#NatureAccess.



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Hot Topic

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huge advantage. You are not seen as threatening, people love nature centers. You have constituents and folks who have brought their kids out for years and years and they hike the trails and they love the place.

Begin to stock your bookstores with Ed Masria's book on solar energy and Al Gore's *Inconvenient Truth* and just quietly without needing to say much to anybody just start doing it. And as you rebuild facilities, have a couple public charettes and use your rebuilding efforts to educate the public on what's possible. And soon they come out there and they say "Wow, that building's solar powered, why can't my house be solar powered?" You pay attention to things that are going to shift dramatically.

Ken:

The educational role that nature centers have in the community, with these changes, where does helping children relate to the natural world fall into that?

David:

Well, I think one of the quarrels I have with this event (Dialogue on Children and Nature) is.... if I was given an hour I would have expounded along this line a lot more. We know enough to say the following: that nature... is highly changeable, its going to be radically mutilated... unless we cap carbon emissions a lot sooner than anyone previously has been thinking. It needs to be.... Gore says 450 and that's... the background rate was 280, we're already at 385 and adding 45 parts per million per year. That's going to be number one. If we don't do that there is not going to be a lot of nature to relate to. Nature's going to become a hostile force. The second point is that... when you scan the horizon... if you send out a scouting expedition through every discipline you can think of, everybody in science that you can imagine, they will come back and report to you that they are in growing consensus that civilization is now in a more dire jeopardy that what was previously thought. You can say it's "all hands on deck time."

We are in for the fight of our life. And nature centers, thirdly, in that, you have to make a smart transition. I don't think I'd do a lot of hand waving right now. I would slowly go about the business of battening down the hatches, securing the top deck, cutting back on the sails, and beginning to prepare to equip people for a very different kind of curriculum.

Ken:

One of things that occurs to me as you say all this is that because this is such a hard message, people may just say, "Well lets just continue to plant our butterfly gardens and take kids

out into the woods, and do those things that we know best, rather than facing this huge challenge."

David:

Ken, you can come up with a dozen analogies of stupidity in dangerous times, or of the inability to... the churchmen of Galileo's time did not want to look down the barrel of that telescope, they didn't want to see it because it was too threatening. Custer's final recorded words were, "Hurrah, boys, now we have them!" There are any number of cases when people, when the stakes were high, could not summon the intelligence or the courage to do what was necessary. The first thing here is to have an honest, accurate assessment of where we are.

Ken:

Can we play a role in stopping climate change?

David:

Yes. And I think we are close on the positive side to a national consensus that this is THE issue of our time and we have to do something about it and the means to do something about are already at hand. I think the good side is, and what nature centers CAN do which the colleges and universities are very slow to do is build green, solarize, make your places interesting, exciting, fun, instructive, and catalytic. The means to do that are all there, it's not rocket science. And many of you have already done some of the more innovative design work and building work than anywhere else in the country. The rest of it is about testing your capacity to do what you need to get people in. Double, triple, quadruple your throughput. Expand resources, increase budgets and staff. Make yourselves larger without losing the agility that most nature centers are famous for. I think you are well positioned to have a huge impact. Like the monasteries in the middle ages, alert people that change is underway, ways that they can slow or stop the change,

(continued on next page)



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even reverse it, and – see here is what you do – be models of this. And one other thing is reach out to other constituencies; builders and developers, other folks like that, get them on your side, get people you don't normally think of as nature center lovers, behind you, supporting you, being started by you, ... become partners with them.

Ken:

What are nature centers doing well? What are things that we have done wrong in the past or should avoid?

David:

The answers to both would be presumptive for me to say without touring around and some study. My overall impression is that nature centers are among the jewels of American culture, uncelebrated, greatly loved, and well positioned now to do heroic kinds of things, in a kind of quiet and unassuming way. If there were ten or twelve directors of nature centers that you know, call them high performance places, in critical habitats. I'd get together, without any fanfare, call a meeting and say, "What do we do relative to climate change and peak oil?" And quietly talk among yourselves about changing your mission, to becoming places that can speak to what will emerge as a huge public need for advice and information and help on energy systems, food, shelter, water, livelihood, and possibly healthcare

People hear this kind of message I've been talking about and they say.... well what can we do? Well this is something you do... you begin to shift resources and begin to build the social infrastructure, the social and intellectual capital for a transition... and that's cool, you guys already exist, you're well thought of, you have resources, you are well positioned to just make a real quiet but pretty quick transition into a very different kind of agenda.

It's going to vary depending on size location, capabilities, funding levels, but to say that we are going to become an effective force in this area. Schools, universities, and similar institutions have lots of things that hold them back. These things don't generally affect nature centers and if you have to pick organizations that are already on our side, with knowledgeable people and good staff resources, nature centers have a lot of assets. And people on your side of the fence are probably saying, damn we are so stretched, we are thinner than the boiled shadow of an anorexic pigeon (as Abraham Lincoln put it)we can't stretch to cover more issues. But if you turn that over, that is a good argument to donors and foundations to provide some help.... and the critical lynch pin that connects the check with the issue is that you are capable of doing something that no one else can do. 🍁

David Orr is a well-know advocate for the environment. Every year, three or four dozen colleges and universities invite him to lecture, often as keynote speaker for conferences and symposia. Reporters covering global warming flip through their Rolodexes for his name. Several dozen journals have published his articles about biophilia, sustainability, and environmentalism as a question of ethical design.

Two of Orr's books, *Earth in Mind* and *Ecological Literacy*, have been best sellers. Meanwhile, back home in the parallel universe that is Oberlin College, Orr chairs the Environmental Studies Program, teaches and advises students, and oversees the green designed Adam Joseph Lewis Environmental Studies Center.

For a copy of the complete interview contact:
Ken Voorhis ken@gsmiit.org.

The full interview will also be published in the upcoming ANCA Monograph on educational programming for nature centers.



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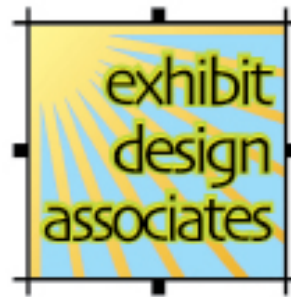


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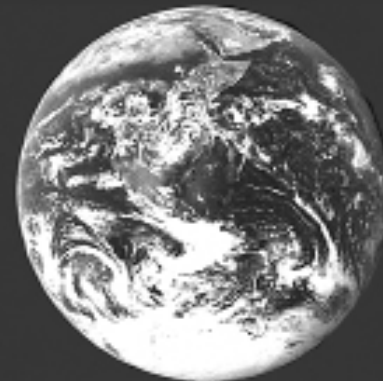
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