



Directions

The digest of the Association of Nature Center Administrators

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For more information on ANCA call our toll-free number:
1-800-490-ANCA (2622)

Directions Editor

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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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Mike Riska Selected for ANCA Leadership Award

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Each year the Association of Nature Center Administrators recognizes an individual who has made a major contribution to the success of a nature center and who has made important contributions to the profession through professional organizations and through support and mentoring of other nature center leaders. The ANCA Board has unanimously accepted the selection of Michael E. Riska as the 2002 recipient of the ANCA Leadership Award.

Mike is no stranger to the nature center profession. Starting as a coordinator of youth programs for

staff has grown from 8 to 24 and the organization's endowment has increased from \$200,000 to over \$14 million.

The organization now operates four nature preserves totaling over 1,000 acres. One of their facilities, the Ashland Nature Center, played host to ANCA's 2000 Summit and is currently undergoing a major capital improvement and expansion program.

Mike's contributions to the profession also include service on the ANCA Board from 1993 to 1999, the establishment of an annual Environmental Institution Management Course offered through the University of Delaware, and the creation of an annual Professional Leadership Institute for working professionals.

The nature center field is quite fortunate to have Mike Riska as one of its leading professionals. The ANCA Board extends its congratulations to Mike and looks forward to the formal presentation of the award at the 2002 Summit in Colorado.

The Leadership Award is funded by the Hastings Foundation and includes a cash donation to the nature center of the candidate's choice in addition to a check presented to its recipient. 🌿



the Delaware Nature Society in 1969, he moved up through the ranks of the organization and became its executive director in 1983. Under his leadership, the Delaware Nature Society has become a model program.

The success of the Society's land preservation efforts, advocacy initiatives, and education programs has made it a true leader in the environmental field. The full-time

July - September, 2002

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Captive Wildlife Isn't Necessary

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Indian Creek Nature Center
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When I first stepped into the building at the Dillon Nature Center in Kansas the odor of animals hit me. That was back in 1975, and I'd just been named director. The center confined a wide array of exotic and native wildlife. The budget was tiny, and needs were many. Animals required daily care, and within months I gradually got rid of them to free both time and money, for added programming, and the care and restoration of the property.

A bit over three years later I became Director of the Indian Creek Nature Center in Iowa, and I again found myself disposing of various caged animals. They were consuming a large chunk of our budget and time, and I wanted to pare them down. Fortunately, a volunteer shared my concern and drafted a "no confinement" policy that was approved by our board. For two decades now, with only a few exceptions, we have not confined any animals in cages or aquariums.

We decided to not confine animals for these reasons:

- They need constant care, even on Christmas day, and consume much staff time and money.
- They consume building space.
- They encourage the wrong kind of education. In the old days I watched our naturalists holding an animal and telling kids to not make pets of it, when that's basically what we had done.
- It's inhumane. Wild animals are wild animals and shouldn't be confined.
- Nature Centers aren't zoos.

shifted gears and devoted energy and money to the ecological restoration of our property. We've since restored a large oak savanna, 40 acres of prairie, and a large wetland. We have restored a wild and self-sustaining population of state threatened river otters and grass pickerel. Restoration work opened a new programming avenue, and we average over 5,000 hours of restoration volunteerism each year now. We also sponsor restoration workshops that are well attended.

One of the delightful results of restorations has been the response of wildlife. Before we restored our prairie we never saw a hognosed snake here. Now they are common along with many other native species that have increased. A visitor stands an excellent chance of seeing a diversity of unfettered animals here.

Our staff and volunteers now frequently encounter hognosed snakes when leading a group. The children see the reptile do its huffing and puffing act. The leader picks the animal up and shares it with the group before gently releasing it. No long-term care is required, and the children have experienced the animal in nature rather than behind wire.

There are a few exceptions to our no confinement policy. Sometimes we'll keep an amphibian or reptile for a few days, especially if we expect big crowds out and it's rainy. The animal is always released. And we've kept a flock of chickens some summers as an encephalitis sentinel flock. Our "no confinement" policy has been in force now for two decades and we are pleased with it. 🌿

When we stopped confining animals we



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.

Send to:
ANCA
1000 Aullwood Road
Dayton, OH 45414
Or call 1-800-490-2622

Charting a Trail for a Sustainable Nature Center: The Nature Center at Shaker Lakes

Allison Copeland & Mark Benton
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The Nature Center at Shaker Lakes exists for the preservation and enjoyment of a natural area surrounded by city and suburb, and for the education of all in the region so that they may become stewards of the environment. Built in 1969, the Nature Center was constructed to help thwart the extension of the highway system through the eastern suburbs of Cleveland and to provide a facility celebrating the natural environment in the midst of a densely populated region. The center has served these functions for over 30 years and during that time has been modified a number of times to meet changing needs. At present, the Center has outgrown the building, creating the need to renovate and expand.

The Cleveland based architecture and landscape architecture firm; Schmidt Copeland Parker Stevens (SCPS) was first involved as a consultant in the early 1980's for the planning and implementation of the Shaker Lakes "All People's Trail". The barrier free boardwalk and marsh study are uniquely designed to integrate cultural and historic features as interpretive events along the trail and to minimize environmental impact. In 2000, SCPS' Recreation/Education Architecture Team was brought on

board to develop and implement plans for the renovations and expansion of the facility.

The renovation of the Nature Center will demonstrate the significance of sustainability by making the most efficient use of all resources, by minimizing waste and pollution, and by serving as a positive symbol for environmental and community responsibility.

This renovation has several exciting proposed attributes including the project's involvement in the Cuyahoga County Solid Waste District's pilot project for minimizing C&D waste, proposed inclusion of a bioswale linear retention basin that will capture and cleanse parking lot runoff before it leaves the site. This also creates a teaching tool exhibiting a more sensitive approach to dealing with storm water management.

One potentially dramatic exhibit that is being evaluated for installation in the Nature Center is a Breathing Wall. Developed by a Canadian scientist, this exhibit consists of a wall of porous lava, covered with moss, plants and saturated with water. Indoor air is purified as it is drawn through the wall, removing contaminants, which are used as nutrients for the various flora and fauna. The

benefits for the Nature Center are obvious: a marvelous exhibit would be provided that not only brings the outdoor ecosystem into the building, but does so in a way that improves the air quality of the building at the same time. The added benefit from a building operation standpoint is that, by purifying interior air that is already conditioned, less outdoor air would need to be brought into the building. This would lower energy requirements as building code regulations direct the introduction of as much as 15% outdoor air that would have to be cooled or heated to indoor temperatures.

Proposed plans also call for the installation of a garden roof system over the new entry to the facility. Proposed long-range plans include replacement of the existing asphalt roofing system with a new, more environmentally responsible, metal roofing system.

For additional information on this project or the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes, please contact Mark Benton, Associate, Schmidt Copeland Parker Stevens, 216-696-6767 mbenton@scpsohio.com; or Nancy King Smith, Executive Director, Nature Center at Shaker Lakes, 216-321-5935, smith@shakerlakes.org. 🌿

Criteria for Programs

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Jamestown Audubon Society (JAS) offers programs both in the classroom and at the sanctuary for school groups from kindergarten through grade 6. These programs were developed to complement the science curricula for each grade level. In 1999 our education director, who was new to the organization, decided that it was time for a structured review of the programs.

Two events precipitated this decision. The first was the new science standards that New York State implemented that year. The second was the desire to incorporate teacher requests for new programs.

An evaluation form is provided for every program presented by JAS, inquiring about content relevancy, program effectiveness in conveying the targeted material and the educator's ability to attract and retain the attention of the students. It also solicits teacher input on other programs they would like to see developed.

With requests for lessons covering a broad range of topics from rainforests to oceans and endangered species to recycling, there was no plausible way to satisfy everyone. Yet we were committed to listening to the needs of the teachers. How could we choose the subjects to be developed into JAS programs?

Using our Vision and Mission statements as a starting point, the education staff developed a Criteria for Programs (see following discussion) that they used as a tool through the ensuing year-long review and development of new

and revised programs to meet the standards. We con-

tinue to use these criteria today and are expanding their use to all our programs, youth and adult. We also find the criteria extremely useful when writing grants to local foundations, indicating our focus on providing user requested programming that ties directly with the natural history of the region.

"Should we commit limited resources to developing this program?"

In retrospect it is such a simple solution to the age old question, "Should we commit limited resources to developing this program?" Like the mission and vision statements, it provides a quick litmus test, a working tool to remind us daily where we should be spending our time.

Criteria for Programs

The Education Staff of the Jamestown Audubon Nature Center is undertaking the exciting process of revamping our nature education programs for school groups. In doing so, we have identified the following criteria for programs we wish to offer:

- 1) Programs should be solidly tied to our mission and inspire one or more of these three items listed in our mission:
 - a) Appreciation and enjoyment of the natural world
 - b) An understanding of how systems work in the natural world
 - c) A sense of environmental stewardship and desire to

develop personal good habits

2) Programs should be clearly aligned to national and state learning standards and curriculum frameworks.

3) Programs should take advantage of the special resources of our region as seen at our site and should involve topics of a regional nature. By resources, we mean several things:

a) Physical resources include the nature center building and displays, the sanctuaries and trails. As an example, if teaching the concept of biodiversity, we do not need to turn to the rainforests of South America. There is great diversity in our local wetlands.

b) Human resources include our staff and trained volunteer educators. The programs we offer should be such that our special expertise is required to enhance the curricula at schools.


c) Materials resources are the props and materials that we use to teach concepts. It is far more cost effective for the nature center to develop these materials and present the lessons at many schools than for teachers at each school to develop their own sets of materials.

4) Programs should be designed to involve students to the greatest degree possible. For example, rather than lecture/presentation, activities should be included that help students construct the knowledge themselves whenever possible.



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5) Programs should be designed to address requests we have had from teachers. The most common requests are that we create programs that:

- a) correlate with, enhance, or supplement what they already teach and help prepare students to meet NYS and PA learning standards
- b) address issues of endangered and extinct species
- c) address issues of earth stewardship 

Endowment Update

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

- Marcy Rogge
- Jen Levy
- Helen Fischel
- Kim Langmaid
- Sandra Murphy
- Bill Hopple
- Ann Guion
- Jim Fitzpatrick
- Cathy Devendorf
- Carol Knepp

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 Peer Consults: Bring Affordable Expertise to Bear on Your Organization's Issues!

Richard Haley
Goodwin Conservation Center
23 Potter Road
Hampton, CT 06247
(860) 455-9534, rdhaley@snet.net

ANCA offers consulting assistance to nature centers and other environmental education organizations at very reasonable fees. The charge is costs 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 get the advantage of advice and guidance from some of the profession's most respected and experienced leaders.

What can be covered? 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
- √ land use planning


To find out more about ANCA's Peer Consults, contact any ANCA board member or Richard Haley at 860-455-9534 or rdhaley@snet.net. The following are two examples of recent consults.

In November, a three-person ANCA consult team visited the National Audubon Society's center in Greenwich, Connecticut, first established in 1942 as a NAS education center. The team consisted of Lee Reading from the Joy Outdoor Center

in Ohio, Ken Voorhis from the Great Smoky Mountain Institute at Tremont in Tennessee, and Richard Haley from the Goodwin Conservation Center in Connecticut.

The team was there to help the Audubon Center at Greenwich evaluate options for its residential summer teacher workshops. As is typical with consults, the team spent the bulk of its time discussing the issues with staff, key board members, and others involved with the programs and facilities in question. Also as is typical, the interaction between the team and the people at the center was intense, creative, and enjoyable for all parties.

In January, another team visited the Richard M. Nixon County Park Nature Center in York Pennsylvania. That manager and staff were seeking an outside review of the overall environmental education programs at the Nixon Center. The ANCA team included Richard Haley, Bob Mercer of Pennsylvania's Silver Lake Nature Center, Bill Rose from the Kalamazoo Nature Center, Helen Fischel from the Delaware Nature Society, and Bill Hopple of the Cincinnati Nature Center. Also joining the team was Jim Brett, advisor to the governor of Pennsylvania and former director of Hawk Mountain Sanctuary.

The ANCA team met with staff, volunteers, advisory and trust board members, and local teachers who make use of Nixon Park. The resulting report was a report card for the organization, along with a list of suggestions for approaches to improve current operations and new possibilities to explore in programming. 

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Ken Voorhis

Great Smoky Mountains Institute
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Nominate Someone for Next Year's Leadership Award!

The purpose of the ANCA Leadership Award is to recognize individuals who have made a major contribution to the success of a nature center (or centers) and who have made important contributions to the profession through professional organizations (particularly ANCA) and through support and mentoring of other nature center leaders.

The award is intended to recognize professionals in the field of nature center administration. Candidates should be employed (or formerly employed) in a top leadership role in a nature center. The award is not intended for volunteer leaders of nature centers such as trustees and donors.

Anyone is welcome to make a nomination. To make a nomination follow the steps below.

1. Contact ANCA office for current Award Committee Chairperson and a nomination form.
2. Contact Chairperson by telephone to discuss nomination.
3. Complete nomination form.
4. Contact other nature center professionals, volunteers, etc. for letters of support.

Nominations can be updated by telephone. The judging of nominations is based on three criteria. These are contribution to the profession, contribution to the nominee's center, and seniority in profession.

All nomination materials must be in the hands of the Award Committee Chairperson prior to the ANCA winter strategic planning meeting in February. The final selection will be made at that meeting. The award is presented at the ANCA Summit in August.

Take a moment to consider someone you know that is deserving of nomination. By recognizing the innovative, dynamic leaders in our profession we all win. 🌿

Position Openings

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

Mohonk Preserve, Inc.
New Paltz, NY

Compensation:
\$40,000 - \$50,000 annual

Contact:
Glen Hoagland
PO Box 715
New Paltz, NY 12561
E-mail:
ghoagland@mohonkpreserve.org

Position Details:
Visit: www.mohonkpreserve.org

DEPUTY DIRECTOR/PUBLIC PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR

Greenburgh Nature Center
Scarsdale, NY

Compensation
\$40,000 - \$50,000 annual

Contact:
Search Committee
Greenburgh Nature Center
99 Dromore Rd
Scarsdale, NY 10583
E-mail: gncdirectr@aol.com

SUMMIT VIII - "The Summit With Altitude"

Lookout Mountain Nature Center – Golden, CO

August 22 - 25, 2002



Come to learn, come to renew, come to connect. This year's Summit, nestled in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains, promises to have you soaring to new heights.

Summit Workshops - Thursday, August 22nd

Sustainable Design for Nature Centers - Find out how your center can model sustainable design principles with retrofitting, new construction, site management and more.

Applying Technology Successfully - Get advice from a panel of experts. Share successes and challenges with peers. Take away tips for integrating technology at your center.

Proactive Personnel Management Practices - From recruitment to retention, explore current best practices for creating peak performing people.

Introduction to Visitor Studies - Learn principles and techniques for capturing, evaluating, and using information about visitor needs, desires and expectations, and the quality of their experiences with your center's services.

Small Nature Center Survival Skills II ~ Understanding Ourselves & Others - Learn to build and lead the best working team possible! Reveal your personality type and those of your team with the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. For small center managers only (budget < \$300,000).

Facilitated and Open Space Sessions - Friday & Saturday, August 23rd & 24th

More than 24 facilitated sessions are available that span the gamut of issues facing today's leaders!

Question: Do you have a question or problem of special interest to your organization?

Answer: "Open Space" sessions allow you to customize your Summit experience.

Social Activities

After spending the day "working," relax with friends at a number of social activities planned each evening. Highlights include the always popular ANCA auction, a real "western" dinner at Pine Valley Ranch, or relax and view the night sky treasures at an historic observatory. You can enjoy a variety of peer talent performances, continue to network with friends old and new, and more! The choice is up to you.

Field Trips!

Sunday field trips complete the "Rocky Mountain" experience. Explore Rocky Mountain National Park, raft the Arkansas River, enjoy an overnight Ed-venture in the Gore Range, or visit the wonderful nature centers in Colorado Springs. Any one of these adventures will have you climbing higher as you make your way home.



Cancellation Policy

Cancellations made on, or before, August 1st will be assessed a \$100 fee. After August 1st no refunds will be made. No refunds will be made for field trips or family options.

Scholarships are available.

Visit the ANCA website at www.natctr.org for more information.



July - September, 2002

ANCA Membership Form

If you would like to become a member of ANCA, please fill out this form and mail it to the address given. Members receive 4 quarterly issues of *Directions*, special publications, and admission to ANCA Summits and workshops. Institutional memberships allow for two staff members to receive benefits. Questions? Call 1-800-490-2622.



Name: _____

Title: _____ Organization: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____ Email: _____

Please check the desired membership level

\$60 Individual

\$90 Institutional

Additional staff member _____

Make checks payable to ANCA and
send with this form to:

ANCA

Aullwood Audubon Center

1000 Aullwood Road

Dayton, OH 45414

Directions

c/o Aullwood Audubon Center

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