

directions

Journal of the Association of Nature Center Administrators

Natural Connections ~ Summit 2015 *Georgia on My Mind!*

Lavon Callahan
Director of Development and
Communications
Elachee Nature Science Center
Gainesville, GA

did you know that more than 62 songs have the word “Georgia” in the title..... To name a few - *Midnight Train to Georgia* (Gladys Knight), *Rainy Night in Georgia* (Brook Benton), *The Devil Went Down to Georgia* (Charley Daniels), *Georgia* (Boz Scaggs), *Georgia Rhythm* (Atlanta Rhythm Section), and *Why Georgia* (John Mayer).

There is a reason this place speaks to so many. It is a place of wondrous natural beauty ranging from the Atlantic coastline, to the

southern terminus of the Appalachian mountains, to the cotton fields and plantations of southern Georgia. It is home to 240 species of native plants and 214 species of animals. It is also the home of many time honored Southern traditions highlighted by our hospitality, a superb food history along with modern fare focusing on local natural producers, all within the backdrop of a robust and fascinating history.

When you visit
Elachee Nature



Science Center in our little corner of Georgia in Gainesville at the ANCA Summit XXI ~ *Natural Connections* you will be halfway between the Appalachian Mountains and the urbanized center of Atlanta, GA. Just one hour northeast of Atlanta, Gainesville has the distinction of being named the “Hospitality Capital of the World” by worldwide media during the 1996 Summer Olympics held in Gainesville/Athens/Atlanta.

(continued on page 4)

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Founded in 1989, the Association of Nature Center Administrators is a private non-profit organization dedicated to promoting and supporting best leadership and management practices for nature and environmental learning centers.

Serving more than 600 members, ANCA is the leader in the profession.



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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.

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The American Green Tree Frog is the state amphibian of Georgia
photo by Brian Gratwicke



Director's Notes

the Natural Connections Summit

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

Spring has sprung in northern Utah and we anticipate a dry, hot summer after a very dry winter. I am guessing many ANCA members are still glimpsing the remnants of record snowfall and cold temps and willing the long-buried flowers to bloom. Well we can all look forward to the 2015 ANCA Summit at the Elachee Nature Science Center in Gainesville, GA in August! Registration was just announced, and once again, the Summit planning team has put together a spectacular line-up of workshops, sessions, food, and fun.

The *Natural Connections Summit* will offer several targeted workshops for specific areas of professional development, including planning and fundraising, sustainable design, interpreting climate change, and early childhood education. The Summit will also include a number of facilitated sessions, which, unlike traditional lectures or workshops, focus on small group discussion, shared problem-solving and specialized training. Individual facilitated sessions will cover topics such as managing for change, the value of your center, nature play, diversity, and partnering.

If this is your first Summit and you need financial assistance, we will be offering a limited number of Summit Scholarships. More info can be found here.

Again this year we have partnered with the North American Association for Environmental Education's Natural Start Alliance to offer the Nature-Based



Preschool National Conference in conjunction with the Summit. The NBP Conference will start with a full-day workshop at the Elachee Nature Science Center Nature Preschool. Both Summit and NBP Conference participants are invited to attend the programming offered by the other group.

The ANCA Summit is always hosted at an ANCA member center and gives participants the opportunity to: meet and talk with the staff; tour classrooms, exhibits, and trails; go behind-the-scenes to look at offices, storage, and maintenance; and simply relax and enjoy the flavors of the region through food, drink, and unique entertainment! Click here to learn more about Elachee Nature Science Center.

For the ANCA Staff, the Summit is our best opportunity to get caught up with news and events affecting our members. Ann Rilling and I will be there along with our new Member Services Coordinator, Cameron Lawrence. Cameron joined the ANCA staff in March after Jessie Bunkley left to pursue her passion studying bats. Cameron just graduated from Utah State University with a B.S. in Environmental Studies and is looking forward to meeting our members. We hope to see you there! 

Thanks to our 2015 Summit Sponsors

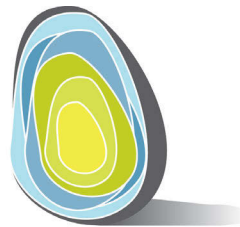


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You will immediately feel at home in this natural jewel which had both water and conservation at its core beginning some 35+ years ago. The Chicopee Woods Nature Preserve which surrounds the Nature Center is part of the 6,000-acre upper Walnut Creek watershed. It is located on what is known as the Gainesville Ridge, a set of ridges marking the transition from the Piedmont to the Blue Ridge Mountains created by the uplift of the Brevard Fault.

The earliest human inhabitants were archaic Indians who date back as far as 3000 BC. The Woodland and Mississippian Tribes followed. By the 16th and 17th centuries the area was sparsely settled and hunted by both the Creek and Cherokee nations. The area was then settled by small frontier farmers who cultivated family farms until the 1800's when cotton reigned in the South and claimed the majority of cultivated land in North Georgia. However, the steep ridges and valley of the Walnut Creek watershed did not lend itself to farming and the area escaped some of the abuse of cotton cultivation.

In 1927, Johnson and Johnson (yes, that Johnson and Johnson), under the leadership of Robert Wood Johnson, Jr. purchased the major part of the watershed in order to build a clean, safe, and attractive mill and mill village that was far ahead of its time. The water was drawn from the Oconee/Atlanta watershed side of the ridge, used in the manufacturing process, then the effluent was discharged into the Chattahoochee/Gulf of Mexico side of the ridge, keeping his original water source for the residents and his factory clear and clean.

In the late 1970's Johnson and Johnson began to cut back the mill operations and sold the houses in the village to the residents. A municipal water supply became available to the area and Johnson and Johnson closed the water filter plant. It was then that J&J decided the watershed was no longer



needed and donated the 3,800 acres to the Gainesville Area Park Commission for the establishment of a public park.

The Park Commission developed a public golf course on the north side of the park, an agricultural demonstration pavilion on the west side of the park, and set aside 1,300 acres in the center of the park as a wilderness preserve. The latter area was eventually leased to Elachee Nature Science Center and in 1990 a 1 cent sales tax option helped build a museum and classroom complex for education purposes. A conservation easement naming Elachee as trustee of the Nature Preserve and selected other areas of the park was created in 2001.

It was a core group of committed local citizens who got that sales tax referendum passed and who became our "founding mothers and fathers" hiring Elachee's first employee Andrea Timpone as an educator, designing student and public programs and curriculum. As most of you know, Andrea still leads the organization as President and CEO with an ever growing staff and land/facilities to manage.

Thus, our beginnings. Now 35 years later we are among the premier environmental education centers in the southeast with a full range of environmental education program offerings for all ages. We are the SACS (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools) and AdvancEd accredited nature center in the southeast. This is the same agency responsible for accrediting our public schools and

(continued on page 5)

colleges and a recognition of the high quality of educational programming recognized by teachers, administrators and parents. Our conservation work with a stream mitigation bank, control of exotic invasive species, managing the park boundaries, and hiking/walking trail management. Take a quick scan of our web page at www.elachee.org to learn more about our current endeavors and our BIG plans for the future.

All ANCA member centers, regardless of their size and history, have a story to tell that is rooted in the community we sprang from, and now, from the communities we serve. We look forward to welcoming you to our little corner of the country so you can make “*Natural Connections*” with your colleagues, the new professional friends you will make, the strong learning environment that Elachee staff members have created for you at the Summit sessions, the wide array of exploratory activities awaiting you in pre- and post-Summit field trips, the social times, and the chance to climb a tree!

A warm and open-armed welcome to all of you! See you in August! 



Nature-Based Preschool National Conference

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Elachee Nature Science Center and Nature Preschool

Gainesville, GA



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Sandy Creek Nature Center
Athens, GA

From The Field:

Setting Up For Strategic Direction

Corky McReynolds, PhD, CPF
Principal
LeadTeam Consulting, LLC
Portland, OR

In a fast-moving and changing world our organizations face many challenges and opportunities. One of the tools we can use to be proactive to meet those challenges and opportunities is to engage in strategic direction-setting activities.

“Strategic planning is not just a functional exercise. It means the difference between being a struggling nonprofit and an innovative, cause-driven organization changing the world.” (Redman, 2013). Most often this results in a formal strategic plan, but there are times when an organization may not be yet ready to engage in a formal strategic process. A new organization, a new board, a new executive director, a change in operational ownership or support could all be reasons why it would be critically important to engage in strategic activity but may not be the right time for a strategic plan.

The need for strategic thinking, discovery, and action is always present in any of the situations mentioned so one of the opportunities is to engage in a pre-plan discovery and learning session. “By going beyond the traditional strategic planning process, the board and staff can truly feel re-

talized, imparting new life to their organization.” (Miller, 2013).

For the purpose of discussing this type of peer consult as a learning experience we can call it the *Educational Summit*.

We cannot plan in a vacuum so the purpose of the Educational Summit is to discover trends in

prepare for strategic planning and provide training for our board.”

Sometimes planning can be hindered if only a few participants around the table have good information to use and contribute. If the board is new but the organization has been around a long time then the culture of holding onto to the past may also hinder forward thinking and strategic change.

ANCA has conducted several of these types of learning experiences as part of the Peer Consult service. As an example, a nature center interested in pursuing a strategic plan but has a new, inexperienced board may want to engage in a pre-planning learning workshop. An ANCA team is assembled and spends time with the organization, just like

a regular consult schedule, but the focus is preparing for setting direction rather than responding to a set of priority topics or challenges. The ANCA team conducts mini-workshops based on the identified learning needs of the host organization in addition to facilitating discussions.

Getting everyone in the organization on board and understanding what the value of strategic planning is and what it can and cannot do, will help the actual process

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Sandy Creek Nature Center in Athens, GA hosted a pre-strategic planning ANCA Peer Consult in 2012. They will also be one of the stops during an “ANCA On The Road” workshop at the 2015 Summit.

operations, programs, staffing, communities, facilities, and more that might impact the results of strategic planning. The Educational Summit, by design, engages the organization through interactions with peers, colleagues, and content experts. The goal of the learning experience is to equip board and staff to be prepared with all of the same information and backgrounds before the organization engages in strategic planning. Sarah Williams, Executive Director, Frontera Audubon Society comments, “Our purpose was to

and results of the planning can be more beneficial to the organization. Sarah Williams comments, "Some of the board members did not understand the value of strategic planning but the peer team provided insight as to how it would help our organization."

Investing in strategic planning can be expensive and then to add an Educational Summit in advance of planning might be difficult. However, another host commented, "Sometimes people are afraid to hire consultants, 'we can do it ourselves' but the outside perspective is so valuable!"

When considering possibly hosting an Educational Summit, be sure you understand what can and cannot be accomplished. The peer Educational Summit helps provide a solid background for the host organization that has expressed a need for strategic planning or some type of direction-setting. Expectations do need to be clear between the team and the host. The Educational Summit Peer Consult does not include the development of the strategic plan or the facilitation of a strategic planning process, and it does not result in a strategic plan.


Components of best practices for an Educational Summit include:

- Staff, board and supporters engaging in discussions with peers about the trends in the programs and operations of our profession.
- Opportunities for mini-workshops on topics that are critical and strategic concerns that are relevant to the host organization. For example, if the host is considering a preschool then a workshop on the trends in nature-based preschools could be conducted by

one or more of the peer consult members who has that expertise or updated information.

- A facilitated discussion on the overview of what a strategic planning process includes and does not include should be part of the agenda. The organization should be equipped to make good decisions regarding their own strategic planning approach. Randy Smith, Facility Supervisor, Sandy Creek Nature Center notes, "it helped us refocus our board, that it takes both sides of an organization to leverage our strengths."

Setting direction and trying to follow that direction can be very challenging. We need to be better prepared and focused with a good understanding of the trends in our profession and the services our centers can provide to set strategic direction. The better equipped and empowered the participants in the strategic planning, the better the results and commitment can be achieved. The Educational Summit is a technique that can truly help build the capacity of an organization toward successful strategic planning and ultimately relevant service to its mission and community.

For more information about Educational Summits as part of the Peer Consults contact the ANCA office at 435-787-8209. 

Charles "Corky" McReynolds PhD, CPF is Professor of Human Dimensions of Natural Resources, College of Natural Resources, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, and Director of Treehaven. Corky develops and teaches graduate courses and workshops in strategic planning, non-profit management, group process facilitation, leadership and qualitative research. He has facilitated and trained facilitators for strategic planning processes for professional associations, corporations, nature centers, state agencies and national organizations.

Corky's research, teaching and consulting focuses on leadership and enhancing organizational change through effective individual and group processes. His workshops are known for high activity, involvement and fun. In 2004, Corky received the profession's highest honor, the National Leadership Award from the Association of Nature Center Administrators. In 2013 Corky earned the Certified Professional Facilitator (CPF).

Miller, Dennis (2013)
Beyond Strategic Planning
The Nonprofit Times

Redman, Paul (2013)
Five Essentials of Strategic Planning
Stanford Social Innovation Review




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More From the Field:

Business Plans for Nature Centers: An Ounce of Planning Is Worth a Pound of Cure

"Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?"

"That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," said the Cat.

"I don't much care where—" said Alice.

"Then it doesn't matter which way you go," said the Cat. ~ Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, by Lewis Carroll

"As requested, I wrote the business plan to show profitability by Year Three. The key revenue assumption is that an armored car crashes through that wall and spills its contents. . . . And don't stand where the comet is assumed to strike oil."
~ Dilbert, by Scott Adams

David Catlin
David Catlin Consulting LLC
Springfield, MO

Let's say you decide to leave behind the frustrations and odd hours of the environmental field, and instead determine to open a little roadside shop selling the kaleidoscopes you have fashioned over the years out of old pairs of binoculars.

You talk to a former colleague who has made a similar (and highly successful) transition to owning her own wild-foods restaurant, and she says, "You need a business plan."

Impatient with what you regard as her overly-cautious approach and eager for advice from a true expert, you pick up a book on how to start a retail business. The first thing written there is, "You need a business plan."

Still fancying yourself a man (or woman) of action rather than words, and fired with the brilliance of your kaleidoscope idea, you approach the local bank for a start-up loan. The loan officer hands you back your application and says, "You need a business plan." Maybe you weren't cut out for the world of commerce after all,

you think. You sign back on with a local environmental nonprofit, recruited to lead in the creation of a brand new nature center. And the



first item on the to-do list handed to you by the Board chair?

A business plan

Whether you are planning to develop a new interpretive center or re-evaluating the direction of an existing one, the steps are essentially the same: assess the status of things as they are, outline (or affirm) the strategic direction the center should take, and spell out the details of the steps you'll

need to take to get there. This brief outline, though, focuses on the development of a new center.

Step 1: Gather the Facts

The first step is to gather the facts that will help you determine the steps that follow. It's important to conduct an objective analysis and keep an open mind as you gather information about the feasibility of developing a new center or expanding an existing one. The product of this step is a separate document that can go by various names: an "internal and external audit," an "environmental scan," a "summary of findings," or something similar. What you call it doesn't matter, as long as you begin the planning process with a clear idea of where you already are. Here are the contents of a typical example:

I. Resource Assessment

Gather all the relevant information you can find about the resources that might support or limit your efforts to build and run an effective nature center:

- Natural resources of your site (flora and fauna, special land-

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forms, bodies of water, ecological phenomena such as nesting sites and unique habitat types, etc.)

- Built resources (existing buildings, roads, trails, fences, or other human-created features, including the location and availability of utilities and zoning or easements that may limit your development options)
- Environmental problems (determined by a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment and asbestos and lead-paint examinations of existing structures, if appropriate)
- Cultural and historical resources (archeological sites, historic structures, etc.)
- Human resources (time and talents of staff and volunteers, potential partners, etc.)
- Financial resources (committed and potential funds, along with an assessment of potential donors and their interest in the project)

Much of this information will be available from existing public sources. Some will require field work. It may be necessary to hire consultants for some aspects of the work.

II. Market Analysis

Examine the potential markets for the programs and services your center will offer, as well as any items you might want to sell, facilities you might offer for rent, or services you might offer. This step is designed to examine what audiences you expect to attract, the demographics of the community that will be using your center, the needs of the key audiences, and how your center might address those needs.

- Overall area demographics

- Demographics and preferences of current users (for existing centers or projects that have some history of use at the site)
- Description of potential market segments (elementary school classes, local families, youth groups, eco-tourists, landowners, etc.—potential market segments may vary somewhat depending on the project)
- Trends in the environmental learning center field (and related fields) that suggest new or altered products and services you might offer.

Direct competitors might include:

- Other nature and interpretive centers
- Similar nonprofit attractions like parks, zoos, museums, and aquaria
- Commercial attractions like butterfly houses, show caves, and guide services

Indirect competitors may be less obvious, but still draw from the same audiences your center hopes to attract:

- Youth sports
- After-school programs
- Summer day-camps



This process typically incorporates information gathered from public sources, surveys, interviews, focus groups, and your peers in the profession. (Another great reason to attend ANCA Summits!)

A market analysis can be conducted in-house or by paid consultants. Part of the market analysis is an analysis of your competition. Explore your direct and indirect competitors, gathering information about the market segments they serve, the fees they charge, and the degree of success they are experiencing. Use this information to assess their competitive advantage and to determine what niche a new center might serve and how it might overcome any obstacles that other competitors are facing.

III. Educational Summit

It is often helpful to include some “pre-planning training,” especially if the people responsible for setting the direction of your center have limited planning experience or a short history with your organization. This session can review important parts of the resource assessment and market analysis and can also help the group set reasonable and shared expectations for the planning to follow. (See the Corky McReynolds article on “Educational Summits” on page 6.)

Step 2: Make the Key Decisions

Developing a strategic plan with key stakeholders is the most critical factor in ensuring that the center will be successful.

The work you have done in Step 1 plays an important role in this planning step, because it ensures that everyone who participates has the same baseline information from which to work. The facts that you have gathered so far will help you make critical decisions about the center. Those deci-

sions will include selecting its key programmatic goals and desired outcomes, target audiences, size, and other elements. For example, will this be mostly an eco-tourism destination, or will it serve primarily families and schools in the community? What is the “essence of the place,” and what are the most exciting stories to tell there that will help you reach your intended conservation outcomes? Will the center be modest in size—a “neighborhood” kind of place, or will it be a large city-wide attraction? Ideally, these decisions should be made by a group of key stakeholders that could include staff, Board members, representatives from partner organizations, outside experts, and major donors. Getting external facilitation for this step ensures that everyone on your team (including you!) gets to participate fully in the conversation without having to worry about guiding the process. A good facilitator will also keep the discussion on track, help resolve conflicts, and forge a consensus that everyone will support.

I. Mission Statement—What business are you in? The Mission Statement tells people, inside and outside the organization, what your center is all about and why it exists.

II. A Vision—This is your picture of what your center and its community will look like at some point in the future, as a result

of achieving the success you dream about. What has changed? What key milestones have you achieved? How has the center contributed to achieving your mission? What role is your center playing in the community?

III. Core Values—More and more frequently, organizations are identifying their most important shared values as a part of strategic planning—the principles they want to guide all of the choices they make.



An organization's core values play an important role in strategic planning.

IV. SWOT Analysis—Which aspects of the project pose the greatest risks? It's a good idea to conduct a SWOT (Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats) analysis as part of your strategic planning. Describe what steps you will take to avoid or overcome those obstacles.

V. Goals—Identify a few broad targets you want your center to achieve. In addition, a key part of goal-setting is determining what market segments will be the primary ones you strive to serve. Consider audiences for program-

ming, fundraising, and other center activities and how each will contribute to your overall goals. Your center won't have the resources to provide equal support for all audiences, so it's important to be deliberate about where you focus those resources.

VI. Objectives—Specific, measurable, time-limited outcomes of your efforts, statements derived from the goals. These should cover the period of the business plan, generally three years.

VII. A Theme—A central message that should be expressed in a single sentence. If a significant percentage of the visitors you expect at your center will experience the place on their own rather than as participants in educational programs, having a central message expressed through the exhibits, trail signs, brochures, and other interpretation becomes essential. The theme

should answer the question, “What is important about this place?”

VIII. An Evaluation Process—How will you measure the success you achieve? What will the metrics be, and who will be responsible for reviewing your progress and tracking its milestones? The creation of good objectives is a prerequisite to meaningful evaluation.

There may be written reports or other products that document this planning step, but ordinarily

the decisions made here become a section in the final business plan.

Step 3: Determine the Strategies & Action Steps
After establishing the strategic framework of your center, you need to focus on the programming elements and operational issues that will ensure success. These components will include things like the types of educational programming you will want to develop, how you will fund on-going operations, the number of staff you need, the types of buildings you will require, and other key elements. Together, they form the strategies that lead to the accomplishment of the objectives you've established. While some of this work may involve select committees that include state or local Board members and community leaders, much of it can be done by staff.

I. Programming Plan—We tend to think of most of the “program” at nature centers as educational, but “programming” is meant here in the broadest sense to describe all the important things that the center will undertake. If a part of your business model will be to grow native plants and make them available to the public, describe that in this section. If you plan to offer a “natural pet cemetery” on the back acreage of your site, describe that in this section. With respect to the center’s educational programming, address questions like these: What kind of staff-led programming will you offer? How many people will you reach? What kind of self-guided interpretation (such as exhibits and self-guided trails) will you provide for visitors? What process will you use to develop the programs and self-guided interpretation? How will you measure the impacts of all you do?

II. Site Plan—How will the site need to be developed or changed to support your Programming Plan?

III. Building Plan—Will you need to modify an existing building? Build a new one? How big will it need to be? What features will it need to have to support your operation?

IV. Marketing Plan—How will the programs and other services you offer be tailored to the audiences you plan to target? How will you promote your Center activities and services to each key audience?

V. Operating Plan—How many staff and volunteers will you require? What will their jobs be? How many hours a week will you operate?

VI. Financial Plan—How much will the center cost to build and operate, and where will the money come from to pay for all aspects of planning, building, and operating? (This section will include capital, operating, and cash flow budgets.)

VII. Risk Analysis—What are the key risks associated with this project, and what can/will you do to minimize or avoid those risks?

VIII. Appendices—Detailed information like lists, background reports, and similar items should be attached to the Business Plan as appendices rather than included in the body. The “Summary of Findings” should be attached here as one of the appendices.

(continued on page 12)

Creating a Nature Center

The Nature Center Book
How to Create and Nurture a Nature Center in Your Community

Brent Evans / Carolyn Chipman Evans

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Step 4: Use the Product

With all of this work completed, what have you got? You've got several things:

- A detailed roadmap of the path forward
- A written record of the consensus you have achieved among your staff, Board, and stakeholders
- A sales tool—a document that demonstrates to prospective donors and investors that you have done your homework, and gives them assurance that their dollars will be wisely spent
- Critical background information and guidance for the various people you will add to your team in the future—architects, exhibit designers, new staff, etc.
- A starting point for altered directions when change occurs, as it inevitably will.

What you've got is a business plan! 🌱

David Catlin has recently launched David Catlin Consulting LLC, a firm devoted to supporting new and existing nature centers and similar institutions in the U.S. Immediately prior to this, he served as Senior Director of Field Support for the National Audubon Society. In that position, he coordinated Audubon's support to its 18 nature centers in the Mississippi, Central, and Pacific Flyways—support that included strategic and business planning, curriculum development, staff selection and training, financial management, branding and marketing, and program evaluation. He also led the organization's effort to develop new centers nationwide.



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Feet On The Ground:



Recent ANCA Gatherings Around the Country

ANCA's board of directors held their winter board meeting at Chincoteague Bay Field Station in Wallops Island, VA in March. ↓



↑ Chattahoochee Nature Center hosted 28 nature center administrators at the 2015 Southeast Regional Meeting in Roswell, GA.



↑ Over 20 local nature center administrators attended the Texas Regional meeting hosted by Dogwood Canyon Audubon Center in Cedar Hill, TX.



↑ Ten nature center directors and administrators met in March at Oregon Ridge Nature Center for the Baltimore Area Mid-Atlantic Regional Meeting.

Mass Audubon's Broad Meadow Brook Conservation Center and Wildlife Sanctuary in Worcestor, MA ↓ hosted the New England Regional Meeting.



↑ More than 30 people attended the 2015 NY Regional Meeting hosted by Beaver Lake Nature Center in Baldwinsville, NY



Cibolo Nature Center & Farm and Carolyn Chipman Evans

The secret dream of many nature center leaders is to be able to start their own center. Imagine being able to begin from scratch, create a fresh educational experience, finally have the perfect number of properly sized classrooms (indoor and outdoor), and enough storage. Oh, the dream of enough storage!

Most of us, however, won't have that opportunity. We will work hard for and love the centers we have inherited from other founders. That's not such a bad deal! But to give birth to your own center.....well that's a dream, one that Carolyn Chipman Evans realized in Cibolo Nature Center & Farm, in Boerne, TX.

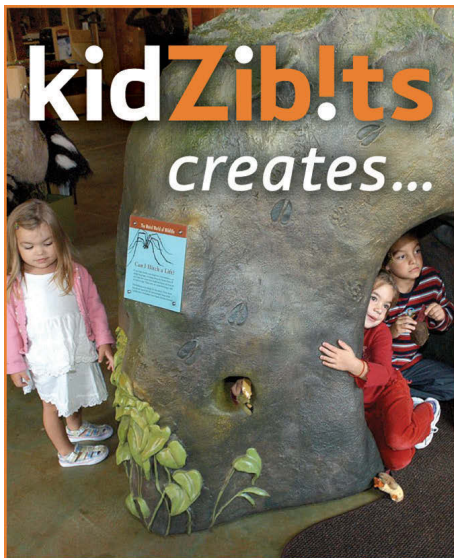
Carolyn and Cibolo Nature Center are well known in the ANCA community. Even more so since she received the 2014 ANCA Nature Center Leadership Award for her 26 years of working to preserve a wild stretch of Cibolo Creek develop a model nature center, and then branch out to promoting nature centers around the world. During her time with ANCA, Carolyn has served on the ANCA Board of Directors and participated in ANCA Peer Consults to other nature centers. The interactions with fellow nature center directors were important for her professional growth and that of Cibolo Nature Center.

“The Cibolo Nature Center and Farm has been my education. And ANCA provided the teachers I needed. This generous family helped me become a competent leader, and helped our nature center become a real, relevant, and successful place. Our friends at ANCA understood the challenges, and offered words of wisdom, support, advice and encouragement. It is our collective knowledge that makes ANCA work. And it is our collective knowledge that we tried to capture in the book we wrote, *The Nature Center Book: How to Create and Nurture a Nature Center in Your Community*.” Without ANCA there still would be no how-to book. The ANCA family is a creative bunch, full of great ideas and the generosity to share them.”

Under Carolyn's leadership, Cibolo Nature Center & Farm has accumulated a net worth of \$5.7 million with a \$1.6 million annual budget. Through the years, Cibolo added a new learning center and acquired additional lands through the Cibolo Conservation Corridor initiative. Realizing the dream of a thriving organization, Carolyn hasn't stopped growing. The nature center movement has been promoted across the globe as a result of Carolyn's efforts. As co-author of *The Nature Center Book*, she has traveled to Japan and China to promote the development of nature centers. Her tireless efforts benefit the entire nature center community through increased global recognition, education, and mentorship. In turn, those efforts also cast a spotlight on Cibolo Nature Center & Farm, increasing its reach and growth.

Carolyn, Cibolo Nature Center & Farm, and the nature center community are a perfect example of how people and organizations can support and grow each other through continuous feedback loops generated by creativity and passion. In turn, the ripples created fan out across our globe to help others find a sense of place and kinship with their local natural environment.





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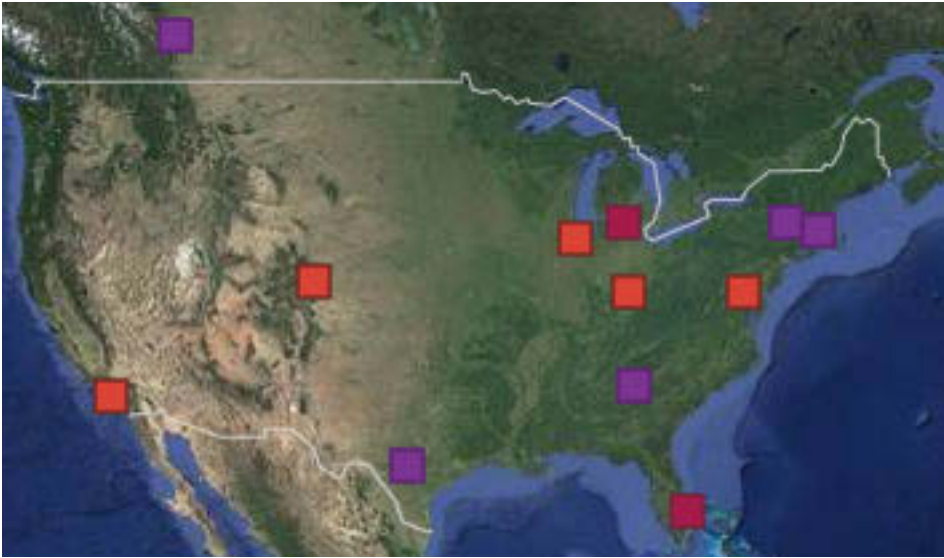
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ANCA Regional Meetings

In an effort to connect our members regionally, ANCA is now offering peer-to-peer opportunities for professional development in several regions across the country. Click on the adjacent map to see if there's a meeting near you!

Upcoming ANCA Regional Meetings:

- Florida Regional Meeting – May 15 at Boyd Hill Nature Preserve in St. Petersburg, FL
- Michigan Regional Meeting – May 29 at The Dahlem Conservancy in Jackson, MI
- Mid-Atlantic Regional Meeting – October 1-2, 2015. This is a joint meeting of ANCA and the Association of Conservation Executives.

Peer Consults - We know the business. We're in it too!

ANCA offers consulting assistance to nature centers and other environmental education organizations at very reasonable rates.

The cost includes transportation, lodging, and meals for the team, plus a \$3,250 fee that goes toward supporting ANCA's professional services. 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 facilities and trails
- Program evaluation
- Personnel & human resources issues
- Fundraising and fiscal management
- Green building
- Exhibits
- Starting a center
- Organizational structure

Join the Team!

ANCA's Consult Services are a success because of it's members' participation on Consult Teams. Please consider sharing your experiences and lessons learned.

Consult Team members donate their time but all expenses are paid. Participating in a Consult is a great way to see other parts of the country, learn about other nature centers, and take home valuable knowledge for your own center.

So don't delay!!!

PLEASE fill out the skills survey in the Member's Section on ANCA's website at www.natctr.org.

To find out more about ANCA's Peer Consults contact:

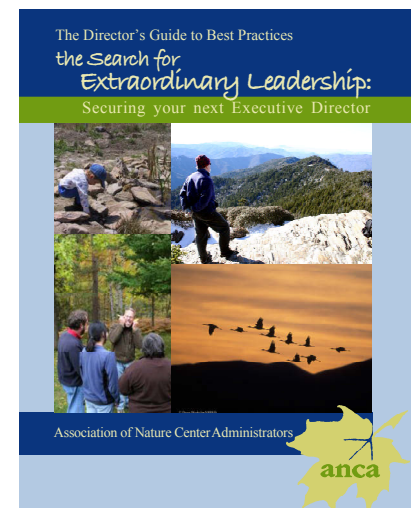
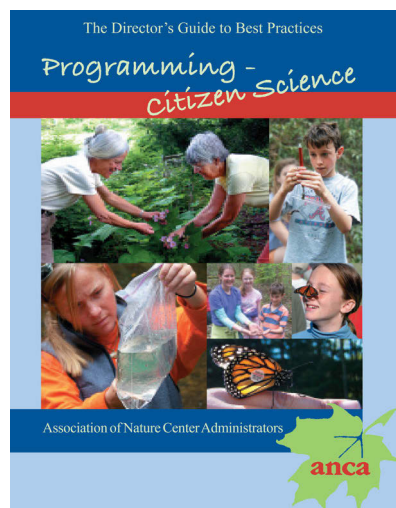
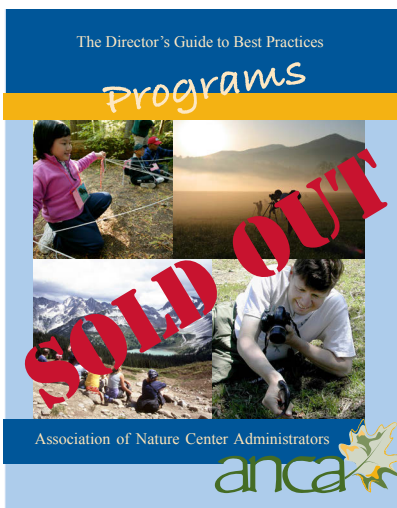
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