

directions

Journal of the Association of Nature Center Administrators

Dick Touvell ~ Chippewa Nature Center ANCA's 2016 Nature Center Leadership Award Recipient

Tina Popson
Asst. Director Student Engagement
Creighton University
Omaha, NE

anca's Board of Directors is pleased to announce that Dick Touvell, Executive Director of Chippewa Nature Center, was unanimously selected to receive the 2016 ANCA Nature Center Leadership Award.

Pat Welch, past ANCA President and 2009 Nature Center Leadership Award recipient had this to say, "Dick's expertise in fundraising and developing partnerships is excellent, and he willingly shares this knowledge with others. He is recognized among his peers as a person of extreme competence and integrity. Dick has a well deserved reputation for profound thinking, creating shared vision, and constantly seeking new knowledge and understanding. He is one of the leaders in ANCA in embracing and applying best practices while traveling the path of continuous improvement. He repre-



sents the best of what ANCA stands for and is most deserving of the ANCA Leadership Award."

Dick began his illustrious career as a nature center professional in 1968 as the first-full time Director of Asbury Woods Nature Center in Erie, Pennsylvania. In 1974 he remained in the Keystone State and took the position of University Manager at the McKeever Learning Center where he guided a managing consortium of five universities to initiate and maintain high quality environmental education programs. In 1985 he held the position of Director for the Natural Science For Youth Foundation at the Solar Center Field Site, a residential facility in Milford, Pennsylvania. Two years later he was offered the position of Executive Director for the Natural Science For Youth Foundation (a nonprofit organization) and moved to its headquarters in Roswell, Georgia. While on staff Dick increased

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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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Director's Notes

Dedication Coming & Going

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

Happy Summer! I took a few days off in July to go camping in the Uinta Mountains in northeastern Utah. It was beautiful and we enjoyed being “un-plugged.” When we got home we quickly learned about the social media phenomenon Pokemon GO! It felt like everyone was chasing and capturing virtual creatures around every corner. It reminded me of my early days as a nature center director trying to find board members. Today, I work with a fantastic board that understands their role in building and maintaining competent governance. The ANCA Governance Committee has developed and implemented a consistent and robust recruitment process to attract the best candidates. Instead of running across Central Park in hot pursuit of a rare digital creature, the ANCA board has developed a thoughtful process of vetting potential candidates and making clear ANCA’s expectations, interests, strengths and expectations. As of July 1 we have four new members and four who are concluding their service to the board.

THANK YOU! to Jim Berry, Keanna Leonard, Patty Weisse, and Pat Welch. These dedicated professionals donated countless hours of time and expertise serving on the board. All four served as officers as well as active committee members, and they played



a critical role in the development and implementation of our current strategic plan. They were dedicated to improving ANCA and their friendship and mentoring will remain with me for many years.

To fill their seats I am pleased to welcome the following new board members, each to serve three-year terms starting on July 1.

Mary McKinley is Executive Director of the Ogden Nature Center in Ogden, UT and has extensive experience in fundraising, board development, and working with city government. Mary also served as President of her local Rotary Club. She is looking forward to “...giving back to the profession, and to ANCA. ANCA has been tremendously helpful to me, especially when I was a new director. I have attended over 10 Summits, attended the Professional Leadership Institute at the Delaware Nature Center, and benefitted from an ANCA Peer Consult. I’m interested in helping to develop tomorrow’s leaders, and help to grow the role that nature centers play in our community. I’ve served

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in a mentoring role for new executive directors in our community and would like to do the same for emerging leaders."

Jason Meyer is the President/CEO of the Blandford Nature Center in Grand Rapids, MI and the first recipient of the ANCA Outstanding New Leader Award in 2014. Jason is "excited to finally be in a position where I can support the profession in this capacity! ANCA has been an incredible resource for me – both professionally and personally. Besides the access to resources directly related to our, I have developed friendships that have sustained me through difficult times, too. I believe that serving on the Board of ANCA will allow me to have the opportunity to help our profession continue to move forward. Frankly, I just love ANCA and want to help!"

Kitty Pochman is Executive Director of the Linda Loring Nature Foundation in Nantucket, MA and has over 25 years of experience in nonprofit leadership, fundraising, and serving on nonprofit boards. Kitty is interested in serving on the board "...because I want to be a more active participant in ANCA and to share my knowledge and resources. I have been fortunate to be involved with the Development Committee, leading sessions at the Summit, serving on consult teams, planning regional meetings, and mentoring other ANCA members. The opportunity to serve on the ANCA Board is a great honor and I will use my skills to advance an organization that has such tremendous positive impact not just

nationally but globally as well."

Vera Vollbrecht is the Director of the Warner Park Nature Center in Nashville, TN, a facility of the City of Nashville. Vera's experience includes, "extensive time spent in environmental education programs and exhibit design. While my center is not a private non-profit, it is a relatively small center, and I have perspective of what it means to wear many hats. Working within a municipal government has given me valuable experience of dealing with fluctuations and challenges related to changes in administration, significant budget and staff cuts, and having to constantly advocate for the nature center. I have received SO MUCH from being a member of ANCA. I use the Director's Guide all of the time, and every year come back from the Summit salivating with new ideas and refreshed from spending time and sharing with colleagues. ANCA is a one-of-a-kind professional organization and I am humbled and honored to be a member of the Board."

In staff news, Member Services Coordinator Cameron Lawrence is leaving ANCA to start her new role as mom to her daughter, due at the end of August. In addition to the management of our membership program, Cameron made significant improvements to our Mentor Program, developed new tools for Regional Meetings, and contributed significantly to the selection of the new database. We will certainly miss Cameron's dedication, innovation, hard work, upbeat attitude, and cheerful always welcoming smile! 🌿



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membership by 325%, established fiscal accountability, and co-chaired two national conferences.

Dick soon discovered the position for which he is perhaps most renowned--Executive Director at Chippewa Nature Center in Midland, Michigan. He began there in June 1990 when the organization was preparing to celebrate its 25th anniversary and remains there to this day to help celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2016.

Such dedication and leadership spanning over 25 years at one institution is remarkable; a lifelong career devoted to the natural world extending over 48 years is legendary.

In 2005 Chippewa Nature Center hosted the ANCA Summit.

Under Dick's leadership two major initiatives occurred that year: a) he introduced Sponsors to the Summit, a practice that continues today and provides a significant source of additional revenue for ANCA and b) he co-authored the first Summit Planning Manual as a resource to help other nature centers plan future Summits.

Dick (along with 99 other Midland community leaders) participated in a two-day process called "Exploring Our Future" in 2014. He now serves as a member of the infrastructure and environment team. This group explores initiatives that will improve public transportation, make internet access available at no cost for the community, and help the county to become the leader in renewable energy by committing to replacing fuel burning sources with renewables.

"Dick has been a leader in the nature center realm, within the

community and with his staff. He has always been a very supportive supervisor who cares for his employees. He loves being involved in the community, networking with other agencies whenever he can. He puts visitors first and always does his best to make sure the Chippewa Nature Center's image is very positive for anyone who interacts with staff or visits the center." says Tom Lenon, Director of Land and Facilities at Chippewa Nature Center.




Chippewa Nature Center got nationwide attention in an article by *The New York Times* headlined "Preschool Without Walls."

In his 25 years with Chippewa Nature Center, the organization has experienced significant growth and is well known and respected in the community. The Nature Preschool and Summer Day Camp programs are extremely popular with extensive waiting lists. Under Dick's leadership, the Chippewa Nature Center staff has grown from seven employees to 30 full-time staff. Significant renovations and investments in staff development over the years manifested in Chippewa earning the Environmental Education Award for significant contribution to EE by the Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry in 1996. Dick also managed a \$2 million capital campaign for the Visitor Center Renovation in 1998 as well as a \$9 million capital campaign toward

the construction of a new pre-school building and major renovation of the visitor center, which was complete in 2010.

Throughout the years, Dick has generously contributed to the nature center profession--from serving on various professional boards (including the ANCA Board from 2004-2010) and committees (he is a past-chair of the ANCA Leadership Awards Committee and the Summit Selection Committee and served on the ANCA Development

Committee as well as the Regional and Specialty Initiatives Committee) to hosting the ANCA Summit in 2005 and participating in ANCA Peer Consults. Dick is the living embodiment of the phrase "real generosity towards the future lies in giving all to the present."

Please join us at the North Star Summit in August to celebrate Dick's accomplishments and legacy. 

Tina Popson is the Assistant Director of Student and Recent Alumni Engagement at Creighton University. Prior to this, Tina was the Education Program Manager for Pottawattamie County Conservation based at Hitchcock Nature Center (HNC) and the Director of Education for the Salisbury House Foundation and Gardens. She serves on the board of directors for the Association of Nature Center Administrators and chairs the ANCA Leadership Awards Committee. She is past-president of the Iowa Association of Naturalists and previous board member for the Iowa Museum Association.

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ANCA's 2016 Outstanding New Leader Award

John Myers ~ Innate Leadership

Tina Popson
Asst. Director Student Engagement
Creighton University
Omaha, NE

"The kind of leadership he embodies cannot be entirely learned; it is innate. He strategically builds his staff around a shared vision, intuitively finds a balance between constructive guidance and compassionate encouragement, and maintains this high level of leadership while adeptly managing the demands of directing a busy, growing nature center. He is a true leader in every sense of the word." - Lindsey Flannery, Business Development Coordinator, Indian Creek Nature Center

Caring comes naturally to John Myers, the 2016 recipient of the ANCA Outstanding New Leader Award. When John applies his leadership and business skills toward his passion of creating a stronger community, the results speak for themselves.

His professional career includes co-founding and serving as director of operations for Independent Child Advocate Services (a nonprofit organization), leading a team to provide round-the-clock services to a youth shelter, and being an executive with Boy Scouts of America in the greater Cedar Rapids and Iowa City Metro areas. In May of 2013 he brought his 11 years of nonprofit sector experience to the field of nature centers when he was hired as the Executive Director of the Indian Creek Nature Center in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

John's natural instincts assist him in developing outstanding

rapport with the board of directors, local governments, businesses, and nonprofits as well as his staff. Since starting at Indian Creek Nature Center, John successfully led his team of staff, volunteers and community members to fundraise the \$6.9 million project goal. Guided by John's leadership, Indian Creek Nature Center accepted the International Living Future Institute's Living Building Challenge to construct a new environmental education center that protects more land than it hardscape, generates more renewable energy than it uses, and makes the community a leader in sustainable design. Groundbreaking took place in August 2015 and the grand opening is planned for September 2016. The project includes a \$1 million addition to the endowment that will yield a perpetual cash store to care for the new building and campus. John's expression "believe in people, empower people" is evident by increased community engagement.

John understands the importance of implementing best practices, such as standardizing communications and program fees; these measures simplify processes and increasing efficiency. Other measures reflect changes in the profession and culture, including allowing people to sign up for programs via new web-based registration software and better volunteer training. All of these changes serve to create a stronger, more professional Indian Creek Nature Center and were executed by John as part of his overall vision.

John's first contact with Indian Creek Nature Center came when



he completed his Eagle Scout Service Project there - building and installing wood duck boxes along Indian Creek. Fast forward to today, John continues to give back to Indian Creek Nature Center--positively impacting lives and improving the world around him. John also gives back at the national level - after attending his first ANCA Summit in 2015 he volunteered to join the ANCA Development Committee and contributes time and expertise to ANCA's fundraising program. 🌱

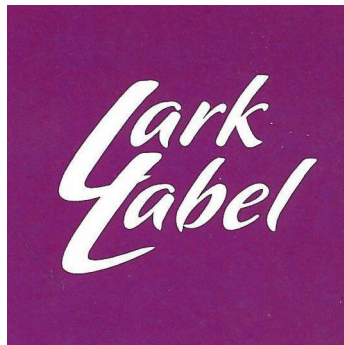
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From The Field:

a Field Guide to Nonprofit Finances ~ Part II The Basics of Keeping an Eye on the Finances

Rich Patterson
Director Emeritus
Indian Creek Nature Center &
Patty Weisse
Director Emeritus
Balitomore Woods Nature Center

Things to Watch on the Monthly Financials

Board members are often personally interested in what the organization does rather than financial fine print, yet financial health is vital and the board is responsible for it. All board members should receive regular reports that include both statement of financial position (sometimes called a balance sheet) and a statement of financial activities (sometimes called a profit and loss).

It is helpful to report the statement of financial activities as a comparison to budget. A separate and helpful report shows the statement of financial activities as a comparison to the previous fiscal year. Both of these comparison reports can help board members determine whether variations are predictable or exceptions they should be concerned about. Board members should read the monthly financial statement and ask questions if anything is unclear or seems unusual. Some specific items to pay particular attention to include:

- Balance Sheet / Statement of Financial Position:

Is the reserve fund growing/shrinking? Is it adequate?

Be aware that land, building, and equipment assets are fixed. They do not appreciate on the statement over time. In other words the balance sheet shows the historic value of these assets, not their current value. On the balance sheet these assets may look impressive, but they are not cash and cannot be spent.



- Profit and Loss /Statement of Financial Activities:

Do expenses/incomes generally fall within budget guidelines?

Do these follow figures of previous years?

Are there unexplained anomalies? Very high/low incomes or expenses?

What is the reason for significant variances between the budget and actual figures?

Trends are important. A multi month deficit trend is concerning.

Generally the Year to Date portion of the statement is more useful than the report of the most recent month.

Never hesitate to question the treasurer about finances. Make sure the treasurer and/or director clearly and adequately answers them. If deficits are growing it is important to identify and deal with them early before they become insurmountable. Remember, board

members have fiduciary responsibility for the organization, so shortfalls and chronic deficits are your responsibility to address.

Other Items Boards Should Watch

An outside auditor should conduct audits annually. Smaller nonprofits should at the minimum consider an annual financial review by an auditor. Having an annual audit or review serves to reassure potential donors, and it also is an opportunity to get expert feedback on the organization's practices. Often, an auditor is receptive to answering questions that come up throughout the year. This can help streamline the audit process and can be a win-win scenario, saving both the auditor and the organization time in the long run.

- Internal Controls:

Board members should be certain that procedures are in place to reduce theft. Having a good relationship with your auditor is important. They can make appropriate recommendations for "internal controls," which are procedures that make fraudulent practices easier to root out. For small organizations with limited staff, having a board Treasurer receive the unopened bank statements and reconcile them would be an example of an internal

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control. By segregating duties so that, for example, the person that opens the mail and receives payments and invoices is not the same person that does the book keeping; fraudulent practices are harder to conceal.

- Risk Management:

Board members should make sure that insurance is adequate, that reserve funds are high enough to meet unexpected needs and that the Board of Trustees or investment manager is prudently investing endowed funds. A good auditor will identify areas of concern, such as concentration of investment risks, which a board should address.

- Budgeting:

Board members are not spectators in the budgeting process. While an executive director usually works closely with the finance committee to draft a budget, full board input on the draft budget is very valuable. Here are some things to look for:

Are income and expense projections realistic based on past performance?

Does the Development Committee have a sound plan to raise the contributed income goals?

Are staff salary and benefits in line with industry standards?

Think of your budget as your organization's fiscal road map for the next year. If you have a nagging feeling that proposed targets are unrealistic, it is your job as a board member to speak up.

Whether you serve on a board or work with a board at your nature center, the organization will benefit in the long run from having a board more informed and engaged in the fiscal health and well

being of your center. 

Rich Patterson served as Director of the Dillon Nature Center from 1975-1978 and was Director of the Indian Creek Nature Center from 1978-2013. He is a seasoned fund raiser and financial manager.

Rich is a founder of the Association of Nature Center Administrators and has served on several nonprofit boards. He is past president of the Outdoor Writers Association of America.

He is the recipient of numerous awards including the 2007 ANCA Nature Center Leadership Award.

Rich and his wife, Marion, are owners of Winding Pathways LLC, which encourages and assists people to transform their yard and home to enhance natural beauty, stimulate curiosity, enhance learning, and provide economic benefit while yielding solitude peace, exercise, and satisfaction.

As Executive Director, Patty Weisse led Baltimore Woods Nature Center through a 14-year period of unprecedented growth in capacity and public engagement. She was named Social Entrepreneur of the Year by the Whitman School of Management at Syracuse University. Today Patty serves as an active board member of ANCA and the Finger Lakes Land Trust. As a Capacity Building Consultant for Nonprofits, she helps stabilize their foundation and helps them increased earned revenues through entrepreneurial programs.

ANCA's Accountant, Matt Regen and Baltimore Woods Nature Center's Finance Committee member Gary Germain provided valuable input on this article.

Part 1 can be found in *Directions* Spring 2016. Click here.



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Profile:

Meet Our Summit Hosts ~ Find Your North Star Aug. 17~21



The dedicated and talented staff at Audubon Center of the North Woods has been working hard for more than a year to put together another outstanding opportunity for nature and environmental education leaders to gather for networking, inspiration & a bit of fun.



Bryan Wood – Executive Director started working at ACNW in 2005

What do you do at ACNW?

Oversee operations including budget, strategic plan, fund development, educational programs, facilities and land, teach college courses.

What is your favorite thing about working at ACNW?

Every day I leave feeling I have done something meaningful for our planet.

What are your favorite things to do outside?

Paddling, camping, fishing, and berry picking. Sharing the outdoors.



Char Husom – Operations & Finance Director started working at ACNW in 2000

What do you do at ACNW?

Finances, Office and Operations Management

What is your favorite thing about working at ACNW?

The diversity in staff- our interns are the coolest! The diversity in our programming- always something new. The diversity in my job responsibilities - it changes day to day! Isn't that life?

What are your favorite things to do outside?

Gardening ...flowers, hiking, camping and just watching the river flow....silence.



Connie Haugen – Program Director started working at ACNW in 2001-07 and again in 2016

What is your favorite thing about working at ACNW?

It is an amazing organization to work for whose mission is spot-on. It has a rich history and a bright future built around teaching people of all ages the goodness that exists in their environment.

What are your favorite things to do outside?

There's nowhere I'd rather be than a canoe-in campsite around the fire with my family.

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Feet On The Ground:



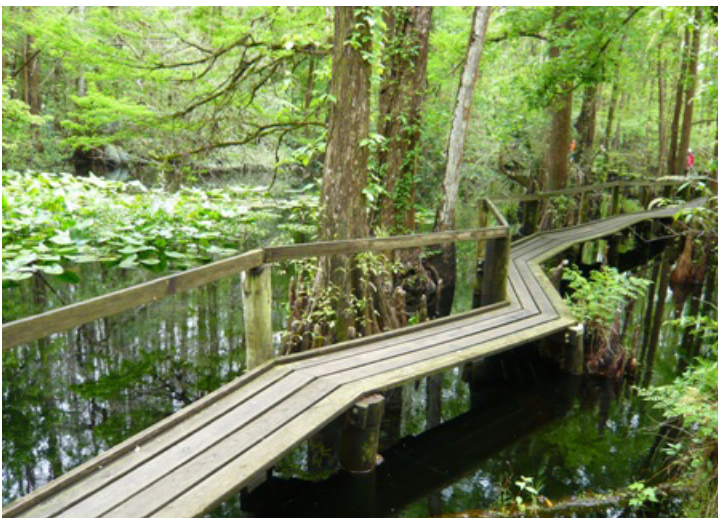
Recent & Upcoming ANCA Activities Around the World



↩ Howell Nature Center in Howell, MI will host the next Michigan Regional Meeting on September 9.



↑ The next Mid-Atlantic Regional Meeting will be held October 7 at The Schuylkill Center in Philadelphia, PA.



↩ The Next Florida Regional Meeting will be on September 16 at Highlands Hammock State Park in Sebring, FL.

35 nature center administrators from across Florida met on May 13 at Gillespie Museum in DeLand, for the Florida Regional Meeting. Attendees learned about exhibit signs, informal science education, citizen science, story boards, and held an idea swap. ↩

“Loved building my network of professional colleagues. Sometimes our work can be isolating and gathering together with like-minded people energizes me.”

- 2014 Florida Regional Meeting Participant





Laurie Fenner – Marketing & Web Manager started working at ACNW in 2006

What do you do at ACNW?

Manage marketing efforts, design/layout of ads and promotional materials, maintain website, IT support, program support.

What is your favorite thing about working at ACNW?

Our beautiful location right on the lake, and close to home. The dedication of the staff and the variety of my responsibilities

What are your favorite things to do outside?

Hike, camp, fish, garden, sit in my Adirondack chair, visit the BWCA and the North Shore.



Ty Johnson – Land & Buildings Manager started working at ACNW in 1993

What do you do at ACNW?

Take care of 535 acres and all its facilities. This position is the person that is “jack of all trades and master of none.”

What is your favorite thing about working at ACNW?

Something new and different every day. The diversity of the position.

What are your favorite things to do outside?

Maple syrup making, watching our Center improve, and riding my motorcycle on the open road.



Jen Fisher - Food Service Manager started working at ACNW in 2015

What do you do at ACNW?

Food Service Manager

What is your favorite thing about working at ACNW?

I enjoy the natural setting and the variety of groups we feed and meeting new people. I also enjoy all the wildlife.

What are your favorite things to do outside?

I enjoy gardening, hiking, fishing, camping and picnics with my family. I collect agates and love goats!

(continued on page 13)





Jaime Souza – Education Manager started working at ACNW in 2007-08 and again in 2016

What do you do at ACNW?

Supervise our fantastic naturalists! Coordinate education schedules, train staff, and serve as lead educator.

What is your favorite thing about working at ACNW?

Working in a natural, wild and beautiful setting and inspiring an ethic of caring for our land, lakes and animals.

What are your favorite things to do outside?

Cross country skiing and paddling on a quiet trail or lake.



Sarah Odendahl – Reservations Coordinator started working at ACNW in 2015

What do you do at ACNW?

Handle all details for educational and group inquiries.

What is your favorite thing about working at ACNW?

I love working at ACNW because I learn something new daily. All of my coworkers have a wealth of knowledge and unique perspective that engage me.

What are your favorite things to do outside?

The outdoors is a great place to connect with others. I enjoy taking my dog, niece, and nephew outside and exploring whenever I can.



Roberta Volk – Lead Housekeeper started working at ACNW in 2012

What do you do at ACNW?

Keep the buildings neat & clean for our participants.

What is your favorite thing about working at ACNW?

The attitude and friendliness of the staff.

What are your favorite things to do outside?

Planting flowers and watching the birds.



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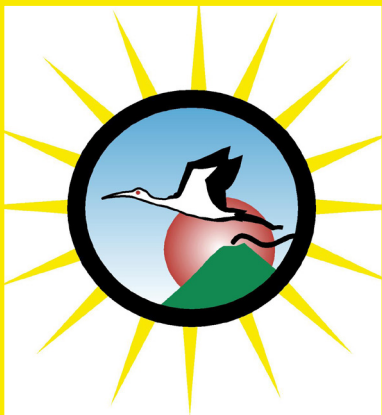
- Nature-Find
- Wikipedia ~ US Nature Centers

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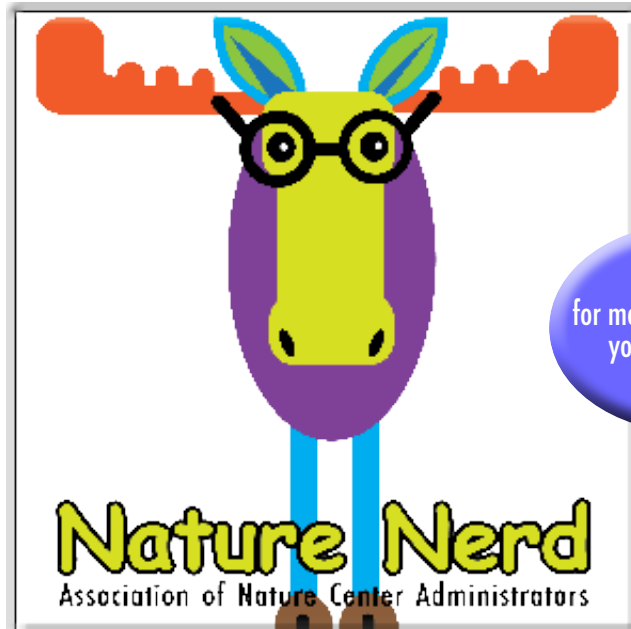
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Aug. 17 ~ 21

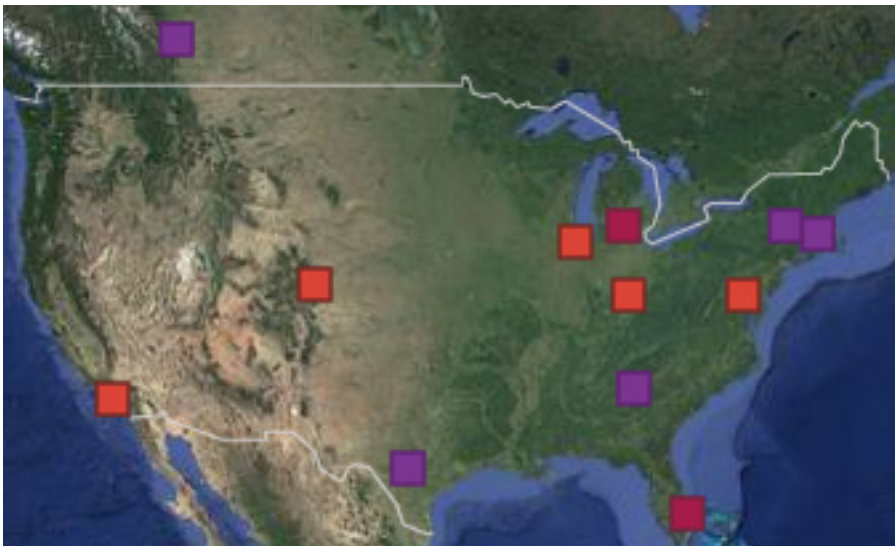


find your

North Star

anca Summit 2016

registration still open!



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 map to see if there's a meeting near you!

Upcoming ANCA Regional Meetings:

- Michigan Regional Meeting – Sept. 9
at the Howell Nature Center in Howell
- Florida Regional Meeting – Sept. 16
at the Highland Hammock State Park in Sebring
- Mid-Atlantic Meeting – Oct. 7
at Schuylkill Center in Philadelphia

NEW!

Peer Consult Financial Assistance Program

ANCA has initiated a new program that will award financial assistance twice per year for peer consults

These consults are designed to promote greater success in the nature and environmental learning center profession and to assist organizations that may not otherwise be able to afford the full consult fee.

Learn More

Application Deadlines: March 15 & Oct. 30

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:

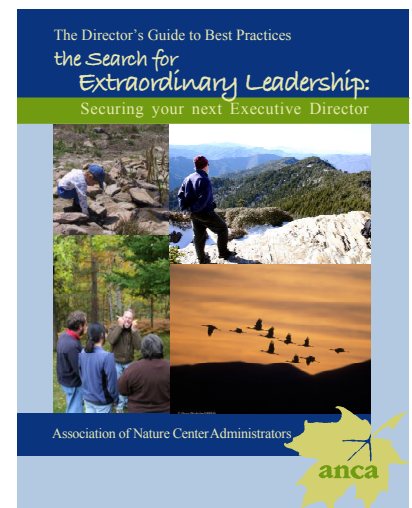
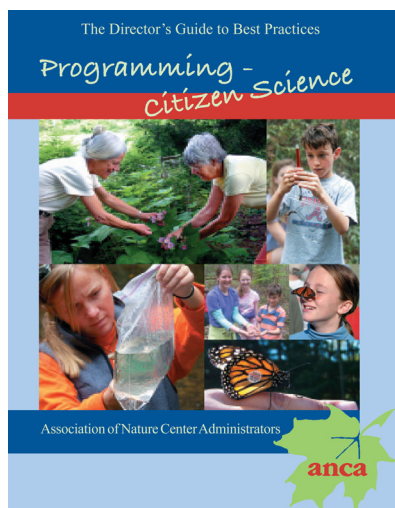
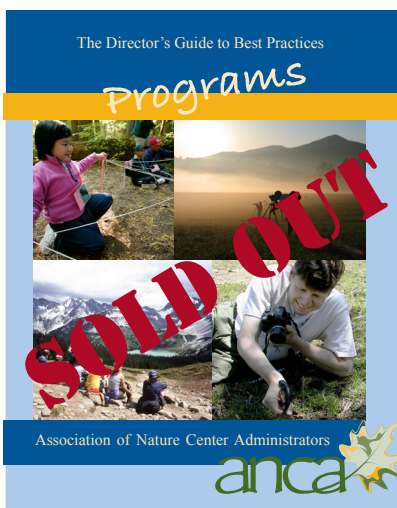
Ann Rilling
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970-375-7090
arilling@natctr.org

ANCA Publications - a Fabulous Educational Investment

- Interpretive Design of Nature Centers: Exhibits
- Interpretive Design of Nature Centers: Buildings
- The Search for Extraordinary Leadership: Securing Your Next Executive Director
- Programming - Citizen Science
- Programs
- The Nature Center Book: How to Create and Nurture a Nature Center in Your Community

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- Marketing and Branding Examples



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