



2022

ANNUAL REPORT



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A word from Executive Director John Myers



In nature, often the simplest things are the most peaceful. The point in time where the sun first peeks over the horizon, the quiet of a new fallen blanket of snow, or the peace of a deer quietly feeding off a forest floor. In a world that focuses on busy schedules, instantaneous information, and ever expanding technology, it is easy to forget about the simple things in our life.

There was a time during the pandemic, where society slowed down and the importance of calm, peace, and quiet was welcomed. During this time, when the virus caused hardship across the globe, many took advantage of the pandemic as a chance to get outside, become closer with family, and engage further with the things that brought us peace and calm. Nature was certainly one of those things and many people showed a renewed interest in getting outside.

As I reflect on 2022, and we enter ICNC's 50th Anniversary in 2023, I'm reminded that so much of Indian Creek Nature Center's mission is about helping others find those simple moments in life. Since 1973, ICNC has strived to connect people with nature through:



Trails that are designed to provide time in nature — celebrating the joy, peace, and quiet of each of ICNC's unique habitats.



Programs — specifically those for young people — that strive to create a connection to nature that will last a lifetime.



Special events, like the annual Maple Syrup Festival and Farm to Table Dinners, that are designed to increase your connection to other people, while celebrating the bounties of the land.



Increasing sustainable living, focusing on recentering on our own self reliance, while decreasing our carbon footprint.

I'm thankful for our founders' vision and for the generations of people who have come before us to create and nurture a Nature Center that provides this peace for all of us. Through continued leadership, we will strive to make sure these opportunities are available for everyone in our community and make sure that we are on the forefront of this work nationally.

In 2023, please take time to get outside, create meaningful connections and celebrate nature for the little things that make it so special.

YEAR IN REVIEW



Woodland Trail Connection

With the help of volunteers, the Woodland Trail has a new extension that connects the Cedar Rapids Prairie to the Cedar Overlook Trail.



Pavilion Creates Outdoor Gathering Space

The newly constructed pavilion, complete with space heaters, adjacent to our parking lot, offers an outdoor meeting space that provides shelter from the elements without removing people from nature. Special thanks to Munson Electric Inc., King's Material and Whitters Landscaping for their excellent work completing this project.



David Novak Prairie Planting

After a few years of preparation, the David Novak Prairie on the Věčný Property was seeded with approximately 180 native plant species using a seed driller, and help from volunteers.



Creekside Forest School Completes 1st Year

Cedar Rapids' first outdoor preschool completed its inaugural year, with many students either returning for year two this fall or others ready for Kindergarten becoming our first "alumni."



Fresh Air After School

Eastern Iowa school children (K-3rd) now have an immersive outdoor option available for their after-school care. Fresh Air After School opens up our 200-acre outdoor classroom to more children seeking a connection to nature.

Nature's Noel sets new records

Months of hard work and preparation by the Friends of the Nature Center led to a record year in sales at Nature's Noel, raising more than \$20K for educational programs and land restoration projects.



INDIAN CREEK NATURE CENTER 2022 Financials

Total Revenues\$2,241,007

- Individual & Business Contributions\$557,303
- Mission Related Revenue.....\$462,217
- Operating & Restricted Grants.....\$442,462
- Covid Relief Funding *(granted in prior years)*\$177,182
- Endowment & Investments Earnings.....\$132,406
- Special Events & Friends Group Income\$119,520
- Contributions made to the Endowment.....\$119,052
- Facility Rentals\$83,540
- In-Kind Contributions\$81,735
- Memberships\$33,437
- Creekside Shop *(net sales)*\$20,590
- Other Revenue\$11,563

Total Expenditures\$2,093,291

- Education & Mission-Related Programs.....\$544,811
- Land & Property Management.....\$272,406
- Mission Support\$363,207
- Experiences & Events.....\$90,802
- Development & Marketing.....\$242,138
- Administration.....\$262,114
- Depreciation.....\$317,813

2022 Net Income \$147,716

CliftonLarsonAllen LLP annually audits ICNC's financials. Due to timing, unaudited financials are included in this annual report. ICNC's annual IRS Tax Return (Form 990) is made available on ICNC's website upon completion of the audit annually.



Creekside Forest School

Educating Champions of Nature

by Director of Education, Kelli Kennon-Lane

In spring 2022 I found myself in Bena Brook, a hidden nook on the Nature Center property where Creekside Forest School, Fresh Air Academy, and summer camp participants take respite from the temperatures on hot days and the cold wind in the winter. Our teachers and naturalists take students there regularly as part of their planned lessons. It's also just a fun place to play.

On this warm, late spring day I wiggled my sandaled toes in the muddy water. Creekside Forest School students were headed northbound, stomping up the creek behind lead teacher Nicole Upchurch who was (of course) beckoning them forth with song. A blissed out smile on my face, I turned to then-Preschool Specialist Betsy Bostian and asked, "What do you think these children will remember of their preschool years here?"

Indian Creek Nature Center's immersive programs like Creekside Forest School and Fresh Air Academy can be categorized as "place-based education." Among the benefits of nature-based education — and there are many — a sense of place is one of the top.

"A sense of place refers to a child's connection with their



community and natural environment. A sense of place is developed with a place-based education approach that fosters those connections," as explained recently in the KinderNature publication from the Iowa Conservation Education Coalition. "Place-based education immerses children in their local community, landscapes, heritage, and experiences. It is using the local, natural and human world to learn science, social studies, math, art, music and language."

What better place for this immersion than the woodlands, wetlands and tallgrass prairie at Indian Creek Nature Center?

(Story continued on next page)



"Place-based education immerses children in their local community, landscapes, heritage, and experiences."

KINDERNATURE
PUBLICATION FROM THE
IOWA CONSERVATION
EDUCATION COALITION



Together with their families we are rearing the next generation of environmental stewards via place-based education on the land. We facilitate experiences in which children can build strong emotional connections with the land and each other. These strong emotional connections developed between the ages of three to five years can serve as a launching pad for a life as a Champion of Nature. For a life as an environmental steward. For a life dedicated to national or global issues while still being rooted to the land where they grew up.

In Daniel Edelson's 2011 article for National Geographic titled "Geo-Literacy: Preparation for Far-Reaching Decisions" he explained, "Sense of place becomes part of what adults need to be considered geo-literate — having the tools and knowledge to protect natural and cultural resources, reduce violent conflicts, and improve the quality of life worldwide."

Creekside Forest School, Fresh Air Academy, field trips, public programs, and even the land itself when used casually by a family, provide individuals with a fundamental connection to the natural world. This deep connection to a hyperlocal place gives children a place in which to be rooted and engaged in the real world right outside their door. From there, they can grow to become champions of regional, national or global environmental issues.

Back to that warm spring day, standing in the creek with mud squishing between my toes. I thought that perhaps, it's not the memories these children will leave with that are the most important. Perhaps, the connection they'll have to the birds, the trees, the stream, the clouds, and the land beneath their feet will have the most profound impact on their futures.

FRESH AIR ACADEMY

by Education Manager,
Andria Cossolotto



Fresh Air After School is Indian Creek Nature Center's newest immersive educational experience. Building upon the success of our daytime Fresh Air Academy, which is mostly attended by children who homeschool, this expansion means nature-based learning is now available to any Kindergarten through third-grade child in our community. Fresh Air After School is designed to be a nature-based alternative to other after school functions and events, and children took advantage of this opportunity to kick off the program in fall 2022.

As is typical with our Fresh Air programs, all activities are

aligned with the season and tailored to the interests of the children. Each day the children go on a fun nature adventure. Being outdoors for extensive time allows adventures at the children's pace. A hike that may take an adult twenty minutes took our adventurous group upwards of an hour due to the children's keen eyes and curious minds. Having time to slow down and allow their curiosity to take over and guide the way is truly what is forming these young Champions of Nature.

Shown below are a few of the adventures the children went on. Other fun the children participated in include building shelters, swinging, making food in the mud kitchen, playing in

(Story continued on next page)



Summary of the day: Today we went on a hike to the Cedar River Overlook trail. Discussions included the ages of trees, the changing seasons, everyone's favorite trees, and seeing how trees are recovering from the derecho. After the hike we went to Bena Brook and climbed logs, found tree stumps, and explored.



Summary of the day: Today we explored the wetlands and saw frogs, toads, and new plants. Using dip nets we caught bugs and other earthly treasures.



Summary of the day: We took the long voyage to "THE Indian Creek." It was so fun to see their reactions when we talked about how this is the famous creek that so many places are named after in Cedar Rapids. We explored the creek by walking through it, playing on the sandbar and using nets to explore the water.



Summary of the day: We made leaf masks and played a leaf parachute game. We worked on group play and team building.



No Dull Moments

by Senior Naturalist,
Emily Roediger

Our education team keeps busy all year long. We have so many types of educational programs (school field trips, Scouts, adult groups, birthday parties, public programs, etc.) that 2022 was a whirlwind of activity!

Although the year felt busy at times, we had many wonderful moments with groups exploring the outdoors together, doing hands-on activities and making real-life connections between

themselves and nature. Some of our school field trip classes are already excited for another opportunity to come back to the Nature Center. We still had some school field trips mentioning that this was their first field trip they were taking, not just here to our Nature Center but anywhere since COVID-19. We were also returning to offering programs for the first time since maybe 2019, including day camps at our pre-pandemic capacity, our first overnight camps, outdoor skill programs, as well as school field trips focused on insects and water quality.

In years past, winter has sometimes been a quieter time for educational programs, but we continued to stay busy throughout 2022. We had school groups visiting well into December, as well as multiple days in November where we had a full house with multiple groups and programs visiting on the same day. Winter Break Camps, our last educational programs of 2022, were full of both campers and fun as we played, learned and explored in the snow, ice and mud. This continues to remind us of the value and need for our programs that get kids and other individuals immersed in outdoor experiences.

I'm reminded why this work is so important every time I see a student pause on the trail to investigate an insect and ask a dozen questions to feed their curiosity. Many of these educational programs are very much a team effort between our education staff and our dedicated volunteers. I'm grateful for every busy day that we work together to bring more people, young and old, closer to nature.



the willow structures, learning about different types of seeds, and how to find seeds in nature. Exploring the prairie and harvesting seeds, learning and practicing the skill of fire making, and walking through the Bena Prairie on a deer trail (walking the path that the deer have made) to search for deer beds. We found several! Meeting some of the animals that live full-time at the Nature Center was also a favorite activity, as well as looking for native habitats on the Bena trail and finding ground squirrel, deer, rabbit and bird habitats. Students even made their own habitat and pretended they were a native animal making a home at the Nature Center. And, of course, we finished Fresh Air After School with s'mores on the last day.

Each day of Fresh Air After School provides the opportunity for our staff to see the love of nature grow in each child. Our observations are also being noticed at home:

"It increased their comfort level in the outdoors and interacting with nature," a Fresh Air After School parent wrote in their program feedback. "It challenged them to overcome hesitations about being outside and supported them feeling comfortable with new experiences."



New Trail Experiences

by Trail Builder,
Gabe Anderson

The Woodland Trail behind Amazing Space has been redesigned and officially reopened thanks to the time and effort put in by our volunteers. Portions of the new trail still run under the shady canopy of mature oak trees, but it also passes through patches of sunlight. The sunny spots provide spaces where new compositions of herbaceous plants and native saplings, such as oaks and hickories, can grow. The increased sunlight has also created new habitats for butterflies. Butterflies were almost totally absent from the woods pre-derecho, but now have been seen fluttering along the edges of the new trail.

In addition to our regular volunteers, several Eagle Scouts collaborated with us on woodland trail construction to complete their service projects. Their initial efforts in clearing and leveling trail surfaces play a large role in a user-friendly trail system with improved accessibility. A well-designed, well-constructed trail should minimize erosion



and maintenance issues over time, improving the longevity of the trail system. As Scouts create the trail system they develop their skills in putting together and carrying out plans and adapting to situations that arise during a project. Such a project provides a real-life opportunity for them to practice the safety and communication skills they have learned. Working with Scouts is a joy.

As fallen trees decompose and return to the soil, woodpeckers and mushrooms are both thriving. As new saplings and thicker plant vegetation grow up in the sunny places, the forest will continue to evolve. Through the new Woodland Trail we hope visitors to the Nature Center will experience and enjoy these developments over time, either by hiking in the woods or enjoying the views from one of the trailside benches.

David Novak Prairie

by Land & Farm Coordinator, Sydney Foster

Over the past few years you have probably noticed quite a change to the Věčný meadow, on the corner of 44th Street and Otis Road SE. That's because reconstructing a tallgrass prairie is no easy feat. It is a multi-year process that takes much care and observation to ensure its success. Riddled with invasive shrubs and a few native prairie species hidden beneath, this area was yearning to be tallgrass prairie. The area had become dominated by amur cork and mulberry trees, autumn olive shrubs, multiflora rose bushes, and poison ivy. Before we could plant we had to clear the area of all woody species that would shade out our sun-loving native flowers and grasses. With the help of volunteers we hauled and burned all of this woody debris.

Purchasing native seed for a diverse prairie reconstruction of this size was expensive. Many species have special needs, such as stratification or inoculation. Fall plantings allow the seeds to naturally stratify in the soil over winter. We were able to rent a native seed drill that allowed us to be precise with our seed and ensure every inch of the area had solid coverage. We finished planting with a group of volunteers that helped hand scatter seeds in the hard-to-reach corners that were inaccessible by tractor.

The seeds are patiently waiting to emerge but our work is not finished. We will continue to fight the emergence of invasive species by mowing this area every few weeks throughout the next two growing seasons. This will prevent fast-growing weedy plants, such as ragweed and queen anne's lace, from both setting seed and shading out young prairie seedlings. As the perennial native species expand their root systems, it will be more difficult for weedy plants to emerge.

We are excited to re-establish more of Iowa's endangered ecosystem, the tallgrass prairie, to our community with the 2022 dedication of the David Novak Prairie. With over 180 species planted and trail construction starting in summer 2023, we are happy for you to be able to experience this restoration from its inception.



Etzel Sugar Grove Farm

by Land & Farm Coordinator,
Sydney Foster

You may hear us calling our permaculture field a food forest. That's because it is structured with ecology in mind. The food forest is designed to work as an ecosystem supporting biodiversity, and therefore, ourselves. In a traditional forest, the layers of canopy, subcanopy, shrub, herbaceous, and underground take advantage of different levels of sunlight, and their roots work together synergistically in the soil. The food forest replicates those layers with fruit and nut trees, berry shrubs, perennial crops, and annual crops. Prior to becoming the Frontier Co-op Permaculture field, the field was a conventional row crop operation with corn and soybeans. Years and years of soil erosion, compaction, and pesticide usage altered the composition and fertility of the soil. By using cover crops, rotating annual crops, adding certified organic compost (provided by the Cedar Rapids Linn County Solid Waste Agency) and chicken manure each year, we are starting to see progress of better structure in the soil samples we collect annually. Simply put, soil building is a slow process. We are ecstatic to see that our nutrient levels are already beginning to show the benefits of regenerative agriculture.

Our chicken flock has become a favorite amongst our visitors, who are always quick to snatch up their delicious eggs from the Creekside Shop. The flock is also one of my favorite parts of the farm. They bring so much joy to my day, the way they follow my every move as I tend to them. Unfortunately, I've had incredible struggles with predation over the past season. Not just one, but three different species of birds of prey have given the chickens

quite a fright. We have cooper's hawks, great horned owls, and red tailed hawks in the area. With the help of a few dedicated volunteers we have lined the chickens' outdoor area



with hundreds of meters of fishing line. With eyesight 10 times better than that of humans, the swooping birds of prey will see this fishing line and decide it may not be an area they are able to maneuver through.

I am very excited that we will expand our chicken flock in 2023! Not only will our egg-laying flock be increased to more than 100 chickens, but I will also raise meat chickens in the permaculture field. They will play an important role by assisting in rebuilding our soil health, eating bugs in the field, and providing organic chickens to Creekside Shop visitors.

We cannot recap the 2022 season without thanking the Rodale Institute, and specifically Rodale's Midwest Organic Center at Etzel Sugar Grove Farm. Rodale's staff have been an amazing resource to the Nature Center as they continue to support us in growing our newly established certified organic farm. By sitting down to discuss seed sourcing, field planning, as well as random tips and tricks to make every year more successful, they have helped us grow and become more efficient in the regenerative agriculture space. We are grateful for all they do for us and other farmers in our area. Etzel Sugar Grove Farm is a shining example of regenerative agriculture in Iowa, and we would not be what we are without the help of the Rodale Institute.



New Life

by Director of Land Stewardship,
Jean Wiedenheft

There is no conceivable way to count every tree we lost during the derecho, or every tree that was so badly damaged during the derecho that it is slowly dying. The grief of that overwhelming loss will remain with us forever. However, 2022 brought new vitality and new life to the decimated forest. Wood Duck Way is a lovely bottomland trail that runs along Otis Road to the south, connecting the Lynch Wetland with the Penningroth Barn. During the derecho tons of cottonwoods, silver maples, box elders, and mulberries came crashing down in the area.



Volunteers immediately set to work with us to get the trail reopened, but it has taken until this fall to get enough of the downed and badly damaged trees safely cut and piled that we could once again walk through the forest remnants. On a rainy November morning members of the Rotary Club of Linn County started the task of replanting 100 native tree seedlings in the area.

We used this as an opportunity to increase the forest's diversity, which will ultimately increase its resilience and the ecological communities it supports. The cottonwoods and silver maples will rebound on their own with great enthusiasm in the coming years. We focused on trees that are harder to establish, or were missing from the site altogether. With the help of Department of Natural Resources District Forester Mark



Vitosh, we decided to add pecans, pin oaks, river birch, shellbark hickory, swamp white oak, and sycamore.

Throughout November other volunteers, including preschool students enrolled in the Creekside Forest School, helped with the plantings. Planting involves a lot more than just digging a hole in the ground. We flagged where each tree should go, and then put a tree tube or cage around each tree to protect it from deer. The trees will be mulched before spring, which will help with weed suppression.



While we were working in the floodplain we were able to identify and protect naturally regenerating young oak seedlings, as well as oaks, sycamores and Kentucky coffee trees planted years ago as part of earlier forest diversification efforts.

All of our restoration designs follow a similar pattern. We try to work with what the land is already offering and enhance the ecological strengths and communities of the land, either through adding species lost through time or removing species that are inappropriate or overabundant. Sometimes the work we do is dramatic, such as removing silt from the Lynch Wetland, or clearing thousands of invasive shrubs to create a prairie at the Věčný property on the corner of Otis Road and 44th Street SE.

Woven through every restoration project at the Nature Center are volunteers. Whether they wield a chainsaw or a trowel, whether they pick up litter or stand on a fire line, our volunteers are the caretakers of our prairies, wetlands and woodlands. Our volunteers create healthier, more ecologically diverse ecosystems for future generations of both wildlife and human visitors.





Building Awareness

by Amazing Space Manager, Sarah Botkin

One way to build community awareness about the Nature Center is to have people visit the facility. Allowing the space to be rented for a variety of events is a valuable way to get people to the Nature Center and increase that awareness. 2022 was a great year for rentals and for introducing many first-time visitors to the Nature Center. The natural beauty of the building and the surrounding grounds make a perfect backdrop for celebrating special moments and one of those biggest moments is a wedding. At the end of 2021, staff recognized that more people wanted to have their wedding at the Nature Center so that led to a policy shift in 2022 of allowing more than two weddings to be hosted in the same month. That change resulted in every weekend in September being filled with a wedding celebration!

Several local businesses also took advantage of the relaxed, peaceful setting of the Nature Center to bring staff out for meetings, retreats and social events. A number of those businesses used our facility multiple times during the year, allowing for more people to become familiar with our mission. One of the benefits of renting space at the Nature Center is being able to use both indoor and outdoor space. During the summer months construction of a new, covered pavilion was completed, allowing users more opportunities to be outside while having a little extra protection from the elements. Renters are some of our best ambassadors and awareness builders. It is a privilege to share so many special events with members of our community and to have the opportunity to create so many more Champions of Nature!



WIN-WINS

by former Development and Outreach Manager, Jane Schlegel

Opportunities to engage local companies in the Nature Center are win-wins on a variety of levels. For the company, event sponsorship is an easy way to reflect the interests of leadership and employees. For example, sponsoring Monarch Fest and adopting a caterpillar for the office brings awareness of monarchs and pollinators to their workplace. It's almost magical as they watch with childlike wonder as a caterpillar transforms into a chrysalis and then into a beautiful butterfly. This awareness may foster an interest in learning more about monarchs, pollinators, and their importance to our food systems and the environment. Team members who volunteer at their sponsored event also reinforce their commitment to providing nature-based programming to their team members and the community.

Companies can also use volunteer projects at the Nature Center as team-building activities. Gathering outside the office and getting their hands dirty as they complete a task is an excellent way for team members to get to know each other better and build a stronger team.

2022 SPECIAL EVENTS



MAPLE SYRUP FESTIVAL

Maple Syrup Festival sponsors:



CEDAR RAPIDS BANK & TRUST



Alliant Energy



Collins Aerospace



PRACTICE IN THE PRAIRIE

Practice in the Prairie sponsors:



BACKCOUNTRY FILM FESTIVAL

Backcountry Film Festival sponsors:



MONARCH FEST

Monarch Fest sponsors:





NATURE'S NOEL

Nature's Noel sponsors:



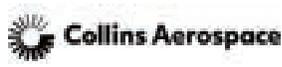
TRAILSIDE TASTINGS

Trailside Tastings sponsors:



TRAIL TREKKERS

Trail Trekkers sponsor:



WOMEN IN NATURE

Women in Nature sponsors:



CREEK CAMP

Creek Camp sponsor:



SPRING PLANT & ART SALE

Spring Plant & Art Sale sponsors:



FARM TO TABLE

Farm to Table sponsors:



Time is precious.

Our volunteers are too!



Friends of the Indian Creek Nature Center

Nature's Noel and the Spring Plant and Art Sale are gigantic undertakings, but the Friends of the Nature Center make sure both events are successful year after year. This group, originally formed as The Guild in 1975, has hosted more than 100 events over the years. Their countless hours planning, creating and managing two annual events raises thousands of dollars each year that directly support ICNC educational programs and land restoration projects.

Friday Farmers

Every Friday during the entire growing season our Friday Farmers can be counted on to get their hands dirty helping out at Etzel Sugar Grove Farm. No matter the task, whether harvesting produce, tending the chickens or small maintenance around the property, these volunteers showed up with can-do attitudes each week. There is much to be done around the farm during the busy growing season, and our staff appreciates all the help they receive from this hardworking group of volunteers. Next time you enjoy organic produce from the Creekside Shop, you can thank one of them.

Teacher Naturalists

For decades, field trips to Indian Creek Nature Center have been part of area children's educational experiences. Volunteer Teacher Naturalists, who are the heart of those field trips, consistently inspire wonder in visiting students. They do this not only by understanding the field trip curriculum, but also thanks to their own love for the natural world — a love they share with every student who comes to ICNC programs.



Sundial Installation

Dedicated in memory of longtime visitor and volunteer Tom Cleveland, a sundial exhibit was installed by volunteers, including Tom's wife Kris Cleveland pictured above, who used a combination of ancient mathematics, modern tools and plenty of hard work to create an interactive exhibit near the parking lot. Visitors can stand at the name of the current month marked in the center stone, raise their arms and cast a shadow to learn the time. This addition to our outdoor exhibits will provide another fun, engaging way for visitors of all ages to connect with natural elements.

Jan Aiels Receives National Recognition

Jan Aiels, who served as an educator at Indian Creek Nature Center for 24 years, was honored by the Cedar Rapids Garden Club as a recipient of the Garden Club of America's Elizabeth Abernathy Hull Award. Established in 1992, the Hull award recognizes local champions who impart to children under 16 years of age a love and concern for the natural environment. During her years at ICNC, Aiels developed a wide range of innovative programs, led school and Scout groups, as well as creating curricula for outdoor programs. When Aiels retired as ICNC Director of Education in 2016 her educational programs and field trips served 14,000 children each year.



INTERESTED IN JOINING FRIENDS OF THE NATURE CENTER?

Just fill out the volunteer application at indiancreeknaturecenter.org/get-involved/volunteer, or call us at (319) 362-0664.

Growing Partnerships

It's our opinion at the Nature Center that you cannot get far alone. We work together as teams internally and externally. This has been true over the past 50 years, beginning with the City of Cedar Rapids allowing ICNC to rent the Penningroth Barn site annually and later their gift of the Cedar Rapids prairie. When field trips began, ICNC hosted all 5th grade classes from the Cedar Rapids School District and beyond. This expanded to all 2nd grade classes. While these partnerships have changed and grown, ICNC envisions a day when all children in our community and beyond will benefit from the experiential, environmental education at ICNC. That all will have learning adventures in nature and have countless immersive hours outside as they grow.

Maintaining a 90-year-old site gave way to envisioning Amazing Space roughly a decade ago. This required partnering with businesses who could envision a Living Building Petal Certified facility in Cedar Rapids – and a community of supporters whose imaginations were captured by this project and, in turn, their financial support.

Renewable energy and solar panel research have been at the heart of the Nature Center since the late 1980s. While Alliant Energy has been most visible in the solar field partnership with ICNC beginning in 2016, Alliant has been and continues to be a longtime partner. In 2023, ICNC and Alliant will have an exciting announcement to make regarding renewable energy that benefits not only the environment, but all aspects of ICNC's mission.

When Amazing Space was built, the team had in mind a space where local nonprofits can partner and benefit not only from the physical space, but also the benefits of a Living Building. This has been realized in the countless free and paid rentals

provided to mission-driven nonprofits and organizations. One such partner is Monarch Research Project. In 2022, MRP partnered with us to host Dr. Doug Tallamy for a community presentation.

Small businesses have partnered with ICNC at Nature's Noel and the Plant & Art Sale, finding ICNC to

be the place to share their crafts with the community. Local restaurants focused on the local producer movement (food sourced from our community) have hosted more than ten Farm to Table dinners at ICNC. When weather permits, these events occur in nature's midst — on the patio surrounded by prairie, wetland and woodlands.

The annual "MaryBeth's Kids in the Woods" camp with Jane Boyd Community House has brought out 299 kids and has grown to include spring break camps.

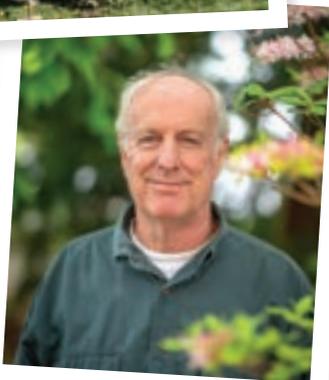
Other long-term relationships include the Cedar Rapids Garden Club, both founding families (the O'Donnells and the Stamats), Rotary and other civic clubs like the Kiwanis and the Optimists. Linn County has also been an incredibly dedicated partner over the years, providing funding, collaborative support on projects, and what was formerly the Indian Creek Nature Center Guild and is now the Friends group is less a partner and more an integral part of the Nature Center since 1975. Friends' annual hard work and determination support year round educational programming at ICNC.

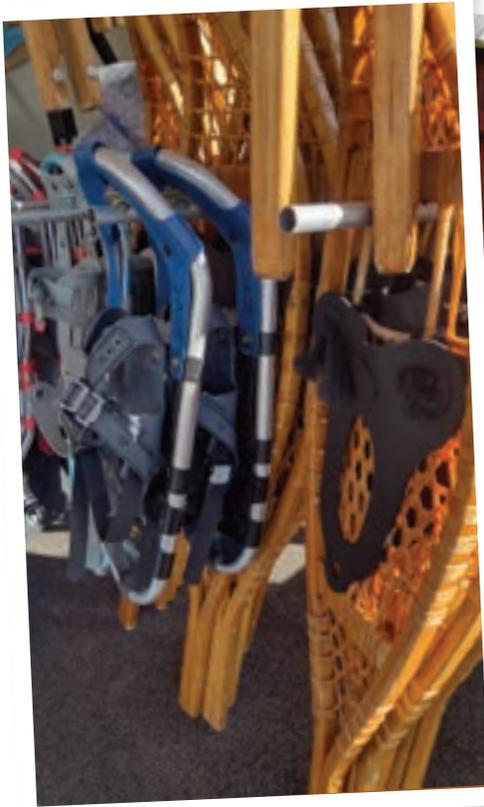
Newer friends have emerged — places like Big Grove Brewery, which does not hesitate to say "yes" to ICNC hosting its annual Backcountry Film Festival at their Iowa City location every year. Or Compost Ninja, owned by board member Kaveh Mostafavi, which offers off-site composting for ICNC.

While preschools and K-12 schools partner with ICNC, local colleges have been longtime partners as well. They connect their students with internships, programs and other site visits to ICNC to further students' learning and community engagement. Coe College, Mount Mercy University, Kirkwood Community College and Cornell College have all adopted this relationship model.

Have we mentioned our volunteers? With an annual count of over 450 active volunteers, one begins to realize how building and education committees become active partners at ICNC. These partnerships have been with the many hard working and talented volunteers and supporters.

From our very beginnings, ICNC has partnered with many others to help carry out our mission of creating Champions of Nature. We are grateful for the shared vision and belief in the importance of environmental education and protection. We look forward to the next 50 years.





Snowshoe Fundraiser

A Snowshoe Fundraiser held in February 2022 raised funding for 30 additional pairs of snowshoes! This allows for larger groups, like middle schools, to participate and for folks of all sizes and ages to head out on the trail together in snowshoes. This was made possible by 46 individual donors. Thank you! Also, a special thank you to SOKO Outfitters for partnering with ICNC to allow us to shop locally and keep costs low.



ARPA/ ESGF

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) has allowed Linn County and the City of Cedar Rapids to help local municipalities, nonprofits and other organizations fund projects that help our community recover more fully from the COVID pandemic while also planning for future crises. In 2022, ICNC's Etzel Sugar Grove Farm was awarded funding by Linn County to build out the water, septic and sewer infrastructure of the workshop to be built. The new space will provide critical programming infrastructure for the regenerative organic farm, which began programming in 2017. While the ARPA grant is significant, this project requires an additional \$360,000 to provide washing stations and storage for produce, space for equipment and restroom facilities for program attendees. The new workshop will help fill the need for these amenities.



Věčný Woods

If you have driven down Otis Road past 44th Street lately, you may have noticed some changes. ICNC's Věčný Woods property has been the beneficiary of donations to recover from the derecho and has been re-envisioned during this recovery process. The initial 29 acres was protected in 2008 and the remaining 26 acres in 2019. This land protection was driven by individual donors who value undeveloped land and green space. REAP grant funds have supplemented this project.

In fall 2022 the abandoned farm field was cleared and seeded for a new prairie. A trail has been designed to go around the prairie and another one will go up the steep hill that parallels 44th Street. A parking lot will provide 8-9 parking spaces with at least one accessible spot. Trail amenities such as accessible benches and picnic tables will allow folks to rest and gather while enjoying the prairie, listening to migrating songbirds and taking a leisurely walk around the prairie or trekking up the new hill trail.

Special thank you to these donors for their contributions: The Steve Ovel Family, The David & Heather Hayes Family, Charlie Rohde, Downtown Rotary and Rotary International to support site improvements. A special thank you to the "Friends of David Novak," a group of passionate prairie conservationists who donated in honor of David Novak's 2022 retirement. Thank you to the Colton Family for their early support of trail creation in honor of their daughter, Hannah. More to come in 2023. Stay tuned!

Why an Endowment?

by *Director of Development and Marketing, Sarah Halbrook*

As an organization with a long history of prioritizing its endowment, this year continues that tradition and focus on endowment growth through intentional endowed gifts and lifetime memberships.

Countless supporters over the past 50 years have contributed immensely to the success and perseverance of ICNC during both hard times and good times with gifts to the endowment. These annual dollars help maintain and grow the Nature Center as annual distributions to the operations budget and specific mission areas designated by donors.

Our community of supporters share this strong belief in endowment support.

In 2022, in memory of her passing, a significant gift was made to ICNC's Education Fund to remember Esther Wilson's belief and support of the importance of the Nature Center's work with children. Mike and Esther Wilson, known throughout the community for their generosity, wanted to provide an annual distribution to support the work of the Nature Center by leaving a legacy that will continue their giving for future generations.

Lifetime memberships are one-time gifts of \$1,000 to one of ICNC's endowed funds.

Over the past three years, we have seen a steady increase in the number of individuals becoming lifetime members. This includes grandparents gifting lifetime memberships to their grandchildren, and parents to their children. In 2022, nineteen new individuals become lifetime members. One out-of-state family purchased three memberships – both parents and their newborn daughter

because "they believe in the Indian Creek Nature Center's mission and want to ensure that it continues as a national model." They are particularly supportive of land restoration and the Creekside Forest School.

All these donors have one thing in common – they want to ensure the Nature Center and its mission are here to serve future generations. This feels particularly meaningful as we consider the organization's history over the last 50 years, and look at the impact and the legacy the Nature Center will have in decades to come. That is why the trustees, directors and staff have committed to grow the endowment to \$5 million by 2026. We invite you to help your Nature Center achieve this goal.

ARE YOU CONSIDERING AN ENDOWED GIFT OR LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP?

Please contact Director of Development and Marketing Sarah Halbrook or visit www.indiancreeknaturecenter.org/join-give.

IN 2023, BECOME ONE OF OUR 50 DONORS!

By joining other individuals and organizations in **50 Donors Celebrating 50 Years** you are providing steady income for years to come. As a donor to The Fund for the Future, you're investing in the future of Indian Creek Nature Center and have an outsized impact on our efforts to build a more sustainable world with a new gift or increased gift of \$2,000 in 2023.

Endowment Donors



Indian Creek Nature Center has mission-focused funds at the Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation (GCRCF). We continue to honor the memory and service of those who provided or inspired legacy gifts to benefit the Nature Center for future generations.

Indian Creek Nature Center General Operations Fund

Legacy Donors:

ICNC Founders - BB Stamats & the Jean O'Donnell Family (Michael & Tiffany O'Donnell, Ann O'Donnell Ilten)

2022 Donors to this fund:

Lisa & Randy Ramlo

Indian Creek Nature Center General Operations Friends Fund

Legacy Donors:

Jeanne and Robert Blahnik (in memoriam)
Cedar Rapids Garden Club
Harriet and Robert Eckard

2022 Donors to this fund:

Ryan and Katie Buresh
Sue and Ron Neil
Rich and Marion Patterson
Sara and Jim Sauter

Indian Creek Nature Center Land & Facilities Fund

Indian Creek Nature Center Land & Facilities Friends Fund

Legacy Donors:

Carl and Doris McClain
Lynne Stimple Family (in memoriam)

Indian Creek Nature Center Education Fund

Legacy Donors:

Metro High School
Mrs. Paul (Sigrund) Lynch
Richard Schulz (in memoriam)
Robert G. Worley (in memoriam)

Indian Creek Nature Center Education Friends Fund

Legacy Donors:

Ella Johnson Miller
Helen Troxel (in memoriam)

Creekside Forest School Endowment Assistance Fund

Legacy Donors:

Oglanian Family Early Education Fund
Esther Wilson Education Endowment Fund

2022 Donors to this fund:

Terrie & Terry Huff
Nancy Lorenzini
Thursday Noon Optimist Club of Cedar Rapids
Myron & Esther Wilson

In addition, Indian Creek Nature Center is grateful for grants and endowment distributions received from these funds at the Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation in 2022, with donors to those funds shown below the fund name:

Alex Strait Memorial Fund for Indian Creek Nature Center

*Bill & Lu Barron Donor Advised Fund of the GCRCF
Les & Katrina Garner
Chris Keeran
Mary James
Fred & Deborah Walk*

Betty and Meril Geuder Land Care Fund

David and Chris Kubicek Endowed Fund

Dorothea and Joseph Hall Gift of Wonder Fund

Dorothea E. Garberson Wildflower Project Fund

Etzel Sugar Grove Farm Endowed Fund

Gladys Bock Children's Fund for Indian Creek Nature Center

Marcia Whiteford

Indian Creek Nature Center Joy Kim Fisher Memorial Fund

Jay G. Sigmund Fund

Norm and Floy Erickson Endowment Fund

Paul and Jennifer Morf Endowed Fund for Indian Creek Nature Center

Paul Christiansen Memorial Fund

Les & Katrina Garner

Rich and Marion Patterson Family Fund

Robert W. and Elizabeth M. Allsop Endowed Fund

Roger and Thea Leslie Endowed Fund IV

Ruth M. and Clifford M. Altermatt Fund

William B. Quarton Unrestricted Fund

CORPORATE DONORS

Thank You

We are lucky to work with so many individuals and organizations on a day-to-day basis. Many choose to give back to the Nature Center in a variety of ways. A deep felt thank you to each of you.

Education

- Creek Camps sponsored by Toyota Financial
- Trail Trekkers sponsored by Collins Aerospace
- Education programs supported by International Paper & SOKO
- Raining Rose

Etzel Sugar Grove Farm

- Theisen's
- Hoover's Hatchery

Corporate Donors

- UFG
- Crescent Janko
- Solum Lang
- Scheels
- Northway Well & Pump
- Compost Ninja

Marketing

- KCRG TV—Show You Care broadcast/sponsor
- Allegra Print & Imaging - FootPRINT grant
- Mercy Cedar Rapids - 2022 Annual Report Print Sponsor

NEW 2022 LIFETIME MEMBERS

- Carolyn L Stucker
- Eric Mote
- Jean Mote
- Keith Dearborn
- Mary Kopecky
- Justin D. Kirk
- Laura Thomas
- James Beranek
- Maggie Ireland
- Jan Overland
- Scott Overland
- Kristy Halbrook
- Ava Halbrook
- Stephen Halbrook
- Beth Zakrasek
- John Zakrasek
- Meredith Voight
- Katie Rohde
- Anna Rohde

1 GREAT IDEA. 50 AMAZING YEARS.

On the morning of Friday, February 2, 1974 a crowd gathered for the first event hosted by a brand new nonprofit nature center founded on the simple but profound idea of building a more sustainable future. The occasion was Groundhog Day, and it became the first of many events at Indian Creek Nature Center (ICNC) that would bring the people of Iowa outdoors to find beauty, joy and purpose.

In time, events and programs would be launched that today feel like traditions. For forty years, March has meant maple syrupin' time for many in Cedar Rapids. Some fondly remember their field trips to the Penningroth Barn while hearing about their grandchild's experience connecting with nature at the Amazing Space building. The success of programs and events like those launched in the early days inspired new programs and events that bring young and old outdoors to discover the wonders hidden in the natural world.

Immersive outdoor educational programs like Fresh Air Academy and Creekside Forest School, established in the last few years, meet the community's desire for play-based early childhood education. Events such as Backcountry Film Festival, Trailside Tastings and Yoga in the Prairie bring new and diverse crowds out to the nature center to connect with each other, themselves and nature in different ways.

In 2023, our 50th year, Indian Creek Nature Center is celebrating with its first-ever BioBlitz, bringing the entire community together to create a snapshot of the biodiversity found across the 500 acres

ICNC stewards. The pinnacle of the year, the 50th Celebration Event in October, will honor our past and celebrate the future while bringing Champions of Nature together to enjoy the present.



The events and programs we see as traditions, and the trails we know so well can only bring others joy because of the people who believed in that idea of a more sustainable future. Every staff member, volunteer, donor and member has left an imprint worth celebrating. By sharing 50 Stories for 50 Years, we will make a modest attempt to share as many voices and highlight as many people as we can, knowing that the work of truly honoring every person's contribution is a task that will never be finished.



These past fifty years have seen wonderful changes in our community. Indian Creek Nature Center has been blessed with the people committed to growing, in step with our mission, to meet the needs of our community. Perhaps during the next fifty years, these events and programs that feel new to us now will feel like time-honored traditions.

During that first event nearly 50 years ago, hikers walked the trails searching for groundhogs. The crunch of the snow under their boots. Their breath floating before them. Surrounded by the beauty of a mid-winter forest, they may not be surprised that the idea that brought so many together that day has lasted the test of time.

CELEBRATE 50 YEARS WITH US!

Throughout 2023, Indian Creek Nature Center will be honoring the past and celebrating the future by hosting new events, encouraging investment in our mission and sharing stories of our impact over the past five decades.

BioBlitz *June 25 - July 1*

Become a citizen scientist by discovering, observing and tracking as many different plant and animal species as you wish to during this free weeklong event. These collective observations will create a snapshot of the biodiversity across our grounds that ICNC can use to inform future decisions for educational programs and land restoration projects. Learn how you can get involved at indiancreeknaturecenter.org/50th-anniversary/bioblitz.

50th Celebration Event *October 14*

While we remember the past and celebrate the future, we also want to enjoy the present. Come and celebrate 50 years with us at this ticketed event featuring live music, appetizers, a live auction and drinks from local producers. Tickets are available at indiancreeknaturecenter.org/50th-anniversary/50th-celebration.

50 Stories for 50 Years

There are so many great stories from the past 50 years that show how Indian Creek Nature Center has connected people and organizations with the land under their feet. This series of weekly stories, presented by New Leader Manufacturing, features videos, testimonials, interviews and more. You can read these stories at indiancreeknaturecenter.org/50th-anniversary.

50 Donors Celebrating 50 Years

During this special year, many of our donors are investing in the longevity of our mission with a \$2,000 donation to the Fund for the Future. If you're interested in becoming one of our 50 Donors Celebrating 50 Years, please contact Sarah Halbrook, Director of Development and Marketing at shalbrook@indiancreeknaturecenter.org.





5300 Otis Road SE
Cedar Rapids, IA 52403



Located in Cedar Rapids, Indian Creek Nature Center is the first and largest independent, nonprofit nature center in Iowa. With nearly 500 acres of land under its management, the Nature Center hosts thousands of visitors each year for nature-based programs and activities.

Our Etzel Sugar Grove Farm implements and educates the public on regenerative agriculture. The Creekside Forest School offers play-based learning that educates the whole child with immersive outdoor experiences.

ICNC's mission is to promote a sustainable future by nurturing individuals through environmental education, providing leadership in land protection and restoration, and encouraging responsible interaction with nature.



indiancreeknaturecenter.org
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2022 Annual Report Print Sponsor:

