

2013 Annual Report

aldoleopoldnaturecenter.org

Our Mission

Founded in 1994 by committed community leaders, the Aldo Leopold Nature Center (ALNC) seeks to provide innovative, hands-on programs and exhibits for children and their families to:

“teach the student to see the land, to understand what he sees, and enjoy what he understands”

in the spirit of famed Wisconsin conservationist Aldo Leopold.



Today, ALNC has become a regional model of excellence for environmental education, serving more than 45,000 visitors annually at two campuses, in Monona and Black Earth, Wisconsin.

We provide year-round opportunities to participate in nature education programs, healthy physical activities and intellectual stimulation in a safe, nurturing and convenient environment.

A Message from Our CEO

Dear Friends,

The mission of the Aldo Leopold Nature Center, and the key to its success, has always been a unique educational approach, grounded in Aldo Leopold's philosophy to "...teach the student to see the land, to understand what he sees, and enjoy what he understands." Providing this connection to nature has never been more crucial: in today's digital world, children are spending less than 1% of their time outdoors, even as studies continue to prove the innumerable health benefits of spending time in nature.



ALNC's hands-on, outdoor environmental education programs provide the opportunity to discover and connect with the natural world to more than 45,000 children, families and educators every year. Now, we are making that approach even more powerful by combining tried and true outdoor "high-touch" nature programming with "high-tech" multimedia exhibits and interactive programs. Our state-of-the-art Climate Science Education Center, now entering into its third year, is continuously being updated with new information and innovative technologies to provide children and adults alike with a conceptual understanding of climate science, and to encourage them to enact solutions to today's environmental challenges, for the benefit of this and future generations.

We are thankful to the community and its many generous individuals, businesses and foundations who support our mission to connect every generation with nature. Thank you for helping us provide unique, life-changing outdoor educational and recreational experiences for tens of thousands of visitors across Wisconsin.

As key supporters of our work, please share in our achievements with pride. With your help, we continue to make a difference connecting our community to nature and promoting sustainable stewardship of our environment. For your enthusiastic support of our mission, I thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Terry Kelly". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Terry Kelly
CEO and Chairman of the Board
Aldo Leopold Nature Center



Our Programs

In 2013, we continued to expand and fulfill our educational mission, connecting over 45,000 children, students and families to nature and educating visitors about the causes and consequences of climate change through our ongoing educational programming.

Our innovative programs include school field trips, summer camps, preschool, homeschool and scout programs, teacher training workshops, adult lectures, and our Climate Science Education Center exhibits.



"It was fantastic! As the kids were making the shelter out of sticks, one of the students in my group said, 'This is the best day of my life!'"

-Lisa Weaver, 3rd grade teacher, Lincoln Elementary



Our Community

ALNC continued its outreach to our community's disadvantaged and underserved children through our *Nature Nuts* and *Academy A.L.D.O.: Adventures in Learning & Discovery Outdoors*. These programs enhance the emotional and physical development of children by giving them the opportunity to engage in outdoor education that stimulates their minds, promotes positive self and community awareness and improves their academic and problem-solving skills.

In 2013, we launched our *Campfire Fund* to provide the opportunity for area homeless children to attend enriching summer camps at the Nature Center, where they could explore the outdoors and challenge their imaginations and minds in a supportive and empowering environment.



"We would like to say thank you for allowing our children to experience the camps. It was a good experience and they were happy with their choices."

We would also like to say thank you for the grants to pay for the camp and letting our children experience this great place. This is something they will remember for a lifetime."

—Parent of Campfire Fund Grant recipients



Our Land

With generous support from Dane County Partners for Recreation and Conservation, Madison Community Foundation, and community donors, we undertook several improvements to the Center's land and native habitats.

These projects include installation of a native plant phenology garden, accessible nature trail, children's vegetable garden, wetland education bridge, and restoration of our woodland, prairie and wetland ecosystems.



These special projects enable us to provide enhanced outdoor educational and recreational experiences for the growing number of visitors, and will improve the ecological balance of the area's flora and fauna.



Our Events



Our three signature events, *Maple Syrup Fest*, *Pipers in the Prairie* and *Fall Fest*, as well as our public programs for families, continue to provide opportunities for children and adults to explore nature together.

One parent said, “*The programs at ALNC are like a family tradition for us now — our girls are always asking when we will ‘go to Aldo again!’*”

We also launched two new events in 2013. *Brainiac Bowl* featured a lively science, history, culture and pop quiz game in which costumed teams matched wits against each other to raise educational program funds. Over \$20,000 was raised during this first year’s event.



Another new event showcased our beautiful Black Earth Campus. Utilizing the rugged and hilly terrain, *Run Wild in the Woods: A Summer Solstice Celebration* challenged a new audience—novice and competitive runners—with a 5k Run/Walk and a 10k Run.

By providing opportunities for visitors to enjoy nature while participating in active outdoor pursuits, we strive to encourage a sustainable and healthy lifestyle.

Our Exhibits



In 2013, the Aldo Leopold Nature Center opened its new indoor *Nature Nook* exhibits that reflect the native plant, animal and natural communities found at the Nature Center.

Designed to encourage children to head outside and discover first-hand the benefits of connecting with nature, and supported by generous gifts from Dental Health Associates of Madison and anonymous donors, the new Nook includes *Monarch Butterfly & Prairie*, *Native Fish & Wetland* and *Woodland* exhibits.



Environmental teachings taken from Aldo Leopold's writings are featured on interpretive signage throughout the exhibits, which were crafted by area carpenters and artists using locally sourced wood and other materials.

These provide a welcoming place for families to spend time with their children while discovering the wonders of nature.



Statement of Financial Position

From 2013 Audited Financial Statement

Assets

Cash & cash equivalents: \$321,503
 Promises to give (short term): \$71,446
 Grants receivable: \$29,831
 Prepaid expenses: \$4,634
 Property & Equipment, Net: \$4,784,569
 Promises to give (long term): \$68,600

Total Assets: \$5,280,583

Liabilities

Line of credit: \$308,000
 Accounts payable: \$49,610
 Accrued payroll & related liabilities: \$35,183

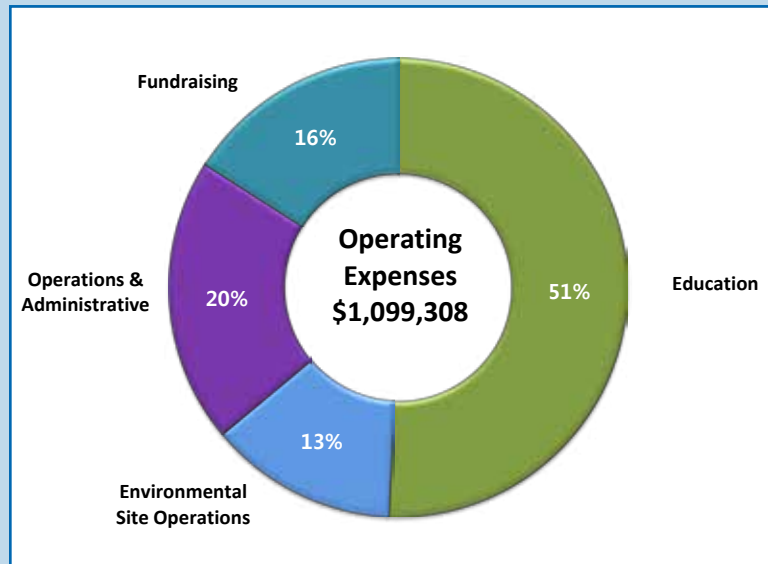
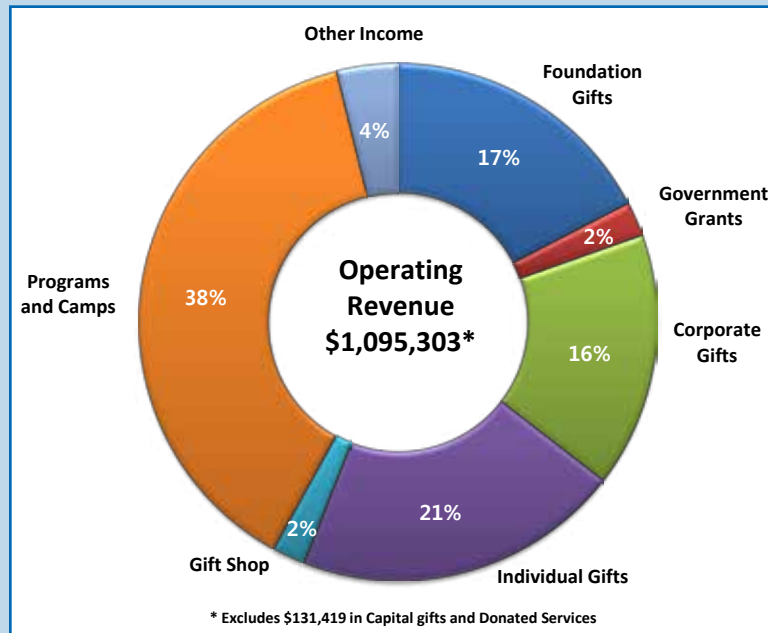
Total Liabilities: \$392,793

Net Assets

Unrestricted: \$1,520,012
 Temporarily restricted: \$3,352,778
 Permanently restricted: \$15,000

Total Net Assets: \$4,887,790

TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS: \$5,280,583
 IN-KIND & CONTRIBUTED SERVICES: \$75,456



The Aldo Leopold Nature Center extends its most heart-felt gratitude to the many donors who made our work possible in 2013. If your name was inadvertently left off the list, we apologize! Please call 608-221-0404 to let us know.

Our Donors

\$50,000+

American Girl's Fund for Children

\$25,000-\$49,999

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