



OGDEN NATURE CENTER STRATEGIC PLAN 2015

VISION

Ogden Nature Center will be recognized as the outstanding nature center in the west for its success in transforming Northern Utah into an environmentally enlightened community dedicated to living in harmony with the land.

MISSION

The mission of Ogden Nature Center is to unite people with nature and nurture appreciation and stewardship of the environment.

CORE VALUES

We value:

- Hands-on experiential learning based on discovery and scientific principles
- Teamwork among members of the Board of Directors, staff, volunteers and community
- The highest standards of professional and personal integrity
- Dedication to the Ogden Nature Center and its mission
- Fun as a part of everything we do
- Appreciation of art and beauty
- The highest level of quality in everything we do
- Outreach to all members of the community



BACKGROUND

This plan draws on the strengths of our organization and its unique value and competitive advantage

- We are responsible stewards of the natural resources with which we are entrusted.
- The Ogden Nature Center has earned and enjoys an excellent reputation and brand, and is a beloved community institution. The community is proud of this resource and is committed to its health and welfare. We offer great value. Membership is priced fairly and the services are accessible.
- The Board of Directors (hereafter referred to as the "Board") of the Ogden Nature Center is respected. It understands its role as the public's representative and is dedicated to the mission and future of the organization. It conducts business in a transparent way and is committed to continuous improvement in its governance.
- The Board and the staff lead, manage and operate the Ogden Nature Center towards this strategic plan. Board meeting agendas will be based on these goals and objectives in order to monitor progress and make informed decisions going forward.
- The plan's goals and objectives generally focus on near term (next five years), mid term (next 25 years) and long term (through 2062, the end of our current lease) sustainment, opportunities, and challenges as well as our continuing need for sound governance, fiscal health and vision to be the region's premier nature center.
- Continually increasing demand for our outstanding programs and services has caused wear and tear on the facilities and habitat.
- Ogden's population is changing. The city is 30% Hispanic, and there are more children entering our stressed educational system.
- State and federal interest in environmental education has increased, creating new opportunities for partnership, programs, and potential challenges as we seek to provide new services with new funding.
- Our financial stability is continually affected largely by significant donors and economic cycles.



- In the next five years we must plan for and begin to address our critical water supply issues and our aging facilities

GOALS

Goal I Strengthen community awareness and support for the Ogden Nature Center and its mission

Objectives:

1. Continue to increase community awareness and utilization by providing at least four events each year. Assess each event for its return of investment with respect to value and impact on the mission and financial health of the Center and consider discontinuing events with low return on investment.
2. Increase awareness and utilization by parents of students by providing at least one incentive per year focused on encouraging parents and families to come to the Ogden Nature Center.
3. Continue to attract new visitors and members by offering free admission days and programs such as Wild Wednesdays and Free Summer Saturdays.
4. Continue to enhance our advertising, brand recognition and utilization via social media and online communications, and ensure we expend the necessary resources in this critical communication arena. Monitor related media to respond to comments, questions and trends in a timely manner.
5. Provide excellent customer service to all visitors, and ensure a positive experience by having adequate staff and volunteers available. Keep facilities clean and neat. Service public facilities no less than daily.
6. Continue to market and explain our value and role in the community to our members, donors, and supporters.
7. Continue to develop and improve our long-term relationships with our volunteer base, including individuals and corporations. Actions will include:
 - a. Allocate the financial and staff resources needed to attract and maintain an adequate pool of volunteers.
 - b. Increase communication with individuals and corporations about volunteer opportunities and requirements.



- c. Conduct follow up and/or surveys with the individuals, groups and corporations to better understand their motivations, their abilities, what worked and didn't, and how best to facilitate continued volunteerism going forward.
 - d. Support volunteer appreciation activities, including hosting at least one volunteer "thank you" event per year.
8. Continue to provide personalized site tours to important potential members and supporters.
9. Continue to craft an environmentally friendly identity and brand. Strive for a unified image through art, architecture, landscaping and land management. Implement sustainable practices to be an example to the community for best practices at home.

Goal II Steward the Ogden Nature Center's lands and facilities to ensure their continued value as habitat, settings for environmental education, and a place for our community to commune with nature

Objectives:

1. Provide an annual report to the Ogden City Council on the financial and program status of the Ogden Nature Center and properties.
2. Maintain a Land Management Committee with oversight responsibilities for habitat, wild animals, water, lands and built infrastructure.
3. Maintain, implement and update (when necessary) the Land Management Plan. Address short, mid and long-term viability and sustainability of habitat, wild animals, water, lands and built infrastructure. Brief the Board no less than annually on the status of implementation of the plan.
 - a. Obtain and maintain sufficient sources of surface water and groundwater to maintain habitat and provide for the mission of the Ogden Nature Center.
 - b. Develop an annex to the Land Management Plan that is a master plan for the siting of future construction or major renovations.
4. Manage the habitat, environment, lands and facilities in accordance with the Land Management Plan and the Lease. No less than three times per year brief the Board on status of the habitat, wild animals, water, lands, and built infrastructure.



Goal III *Provide the highest quality environmental education programs to our diverse community in northern Utah*

Objectives:

1. Recruit, hire and retain college-educated individuals with the passion to teach environmental programs.
2. Provide monthly curriculum reviews and ensure a minimum of 90% of all education staff and volunteers attend the reviews. Provide a minimum of four professional training opportunities per year to all education staff.
3. Ensure the quality of all education programs by evaluating new education staff and volunteers on curriculum and classroom management. Ensure they provide accurate and consistent information. All education staff and volunteers must meet minimum standards prior to leading programs.
4. Ensure our educational programs meet and exceed the requirements of the teachers we serve. No less than annually, conduct teacher needs assessments, to include curriculum, language and cultural issues, and logistics.
5. No less than annually, conduct satisfaction surveys of other significant core educational program constituencies.
6. Via pro-active planning and scheduling, ensure the facilities and natural habitat are managed and available to meet the requirements of the education programs.
7. Ensure the health and well-being of all education animals by providing yearly vet check-ups, evaluating, fixing and updating animal enclosures and handler equipment, updating the emergency animal evacuation plan and running two evacuation drills a year with volunteer and staff handlers.
8. No less than quarterly, conduct an inspection and review of all outreach materials, vehicles, the feeding preparation room and animal exhibits to ensure that they are clean and safe. Modify animal and outreach policies to meet the current needs of the program. Conduct two review trainings a year with a minimum of 90% of all volunteer and staff animal handlers and feeders in attendance.
9. No later than September 2015, determine the number of primary language Spanish-speaking visitors we have based on current use and that we could have based on local demographics. Determine the need to translate materials into Spanish and need for Spanish language programs.
10. Continue to improve our self-guided educational opportunities to ensure visitors have opportunities to learn about stewardship and conservation of natural resources as well as provide experiences that nurture an appreciation of nature. Create and implement at least one new initiative per year.



11. Maximize the opportunity for participation in our school-based programs by offering creative and effective incentives for teachers and administrators to use the traditionally slow periods when we have available time and staff.
12. Evaluate our outreach curriculum to ensure it meets age/grade specific requirements and core curricula. Maximize the number of programs utilizing our available resources (staff/volunteers, vehicles and animals). Implement changes and/or provide recommendations to the Executive Director and Board no later than June 30, 2014.
13. Conduct a community survey no later than September 30, 2015 to determine interest in a nature-based preschool.

Goal IV Ensure that the Ogden Nature Center has the resources necessary to provide the habitat, environment, infrastructure and educational programs to accomplish its mission

Objectives:

1. Attract and retain a skilled, professional and passionate staff.
 - a. Provide attractive benefits such as paid personal leave, flexible schedules and medical insurance.
 - b. Provide adequate professional development opportunities.
 - c. Maintain minimum requirements required by the staff positions, such as USEE certification, appropriate levels of education and experience.
2. Increase the interaction between staff and members of the Board to enhance each other's contribution to the Ogden Nature Center. All Board members should attend at least one Education program over the course of the year. Each staff member should attend at least one board meeting each year.
3. Build alliances with community and professional organizations, clubs and city, county and state government. Leverage board connections to increase our reach. Increase financial support by:
 - a. Increasing membership by 2.5% per year.
 - b. Identifying and determining member and donor demographics to better understand trends, gaps, and focus recruiting efforts going forward.
 - c. Maintaining the established "important" donor base.
 - d. No later than December 2016, increase corporate contributions annually by 10% on a number of donations basis, and host at least one targeted event per year. Sustain the increase through at least 2020.



- e. Target the Northern Utah “Outdoor” industry companies by identifying the companies, offering targeted tours and/or events to increase awareness of the Center, and developing partnerships where it makes sense. Continue to highlight the Ogden Nature Center as an “outdoor recreation” main attraction in Northern Utah.
4. The Executive Director will develop an annual budget to be presented to and approved and/or modified by the Board. The budget will provide for current year requirements and lay the foundation for future year requirements. The Executive Director will manage the Ogden Nature Center against the approved annual budget.
5. With an approved lease in place that establishes the Ogden Nature Center through 2062, develop, resource, and execute a sustainable capital improvement and investment plan.
 - a. In 2015, identify the significant capital investment requirements through the short term (2019) and mid-term (2038).
 - b. In 2015, develop a schedule and potential funding alternatives as well as any necessary professional/consultant requirements such as architectural, construction, etc that are outside of the scope of Ogden Nature Center staff capabilities.
 - c. No later than the end of 2016, prepare and present a plan for Board approval to provide for the requirements identified in 5 a. and b. above.
 - d. No later than September 2015, given the importance of the birds to our programs, and the current state of the mews and other support facilities, prepare a plan and cost estimate for the Board that provides for necessary renovations and enhancements to those facilities.
6. The Ogden Nature Center’s endowment is a fundamental component of the Ogden Nature Center’s financial resources going forward. Ensuring its continued viability and the priority of its future uses is essential to overall Ogden Nature Center resourcing decisions. By December, 2015, the Executive Director, working with the Finance Committee, will analyze the endowment against planned and/or assumed future expense requirements, income and growth, and brief the Board. At a minimum the Director will assess whether or not its current level is sufficient, and if not sufficient, provide recommendations for a path forward.



Goal V Provide fully-engaged governance and leadership of the Ogden Nature Center

Objectives:

1. Train new members of the Board regarding their responsibilities and expectations as board members and annually review the same with all board members.
2. Ensure that each Board member understands the fiscal health and management of the Ogden Nature Center. No less than quarterly, present the financial status to the Board.
3. All Board members will serve on at least one committee and support at least one significant event per year. All board members are expected to assist with fundraising events.
4. By June 30, 2015, develop and maintain a risk management plan to minimize Ogden Nature Center risk and liability. Annually thereafter update the plan and brief the Board.
5. Strive for a diverse Board that reflects our Northern Utah communities as well as the mission, vision, values and goals of the Ogden Nature Center
 - a. Recruit new members of the board against identified qualifications, gaps, and need for diversity, knowledge, professional experience, and community involvement.
 - b. Conduct a needs assessment each year in preparation for nominations and approval of new members each November.