



OGDEN NATURE CENTER STRATEGIC PLAN 2024

VISION

To ignite curiosity, educate, and inspire action in valuing nature across generations.

MISSION

The mission of the Ogden Nature Center is to unite people with nature, and create a community dedicated to environmental stewardship.

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 strategic plan draws on the strengths of our organization and its unique value.

- We are responsible stewards of the natural resources and land 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 continued 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 well-respected. It understands its role as the public’s representative and is dedicated to fulfilling 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, Executive Director, and the staff lead, manage and operate the Ogden Nature Center towards the strategies in this plan. Board meeting agendas will be based on these goals and objectives in order to monitor progress and make informed decisions.
- 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 responsibility and vision to be the region’s premier nature center.
- Notably, increased demand for our outstanding programs and services has caused disrepair to our aging facilities and habitat.
- In addition, Ogden’s population, like most of the state, continues to evolve and change. The city is now ethnically diverse and there are more children entering our already strained educational system. We need to rise to meet this growing need.
- However, State and federal interest in environmental education has increased, creating new opportunities for partnerships, programs, and potential challenges as we seek to provide new services with new funding.
- Our financial stability is continually challenged largely by significant donor fatigue and economic cycles.

OUR 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 one fundraising event and four community events annually. Assess each event for its return on 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 providing at least one incentive per year focused on encouraging patrons (i.e. families, organizations, companies) to promote returning and encouraging others to visit 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. The Ogden Nature Center provides an inclusive environment and offers programs and events to all populations in and around surrounding communities.
7. Expand our marketing effort and visibility in the community to increase our members, donors, and sponsors.
8. 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, corporations and media 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.
9. Continue to provide personalized site tours to important potential members, donors and sponsors.

10. Continue to craft an environmentally friendly identity and brand. Strive for a unified image through art, architecture, landscaping and land management. Implement safe and sustainable practices to be an example to the community for best practices at home.

Goal II: Steward the Ogden Nature Center's lands 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, and lands.
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, and lands. Brief the Board no less than annually on the status of the implementation of the plan.
 - a. Maintain sufficient sources of surface water and groundwater to maintain habitat and provide for the mission of the Ogden Nature Center.
 - b. Land management activities will be consistent with the Land Management Plan and will utilize Adaptive Management Strategy when appropriate.

Goal III: Steward the Ogden Nature Center's infrastructure to ensure structures and Capital Improvements are managed and maintained for the community and employees.

Objectives:

1. Create an environmentally and ergonomically sound and safe work space for all ONC employees and volunteers.
2. Create and execute a Facilities Advisory Committee to work in conjunction with the Land and Facilities Director with oversight responsibilities for built infrastructure. (buildings, roads, fences, irrigation, play areas ect.).
3. Complete a facility assessment. Develop, implement and update (when necessary) a facility master plan that addresses short, mid and long-term, maintenance needs including major reconstruction. Annually thereafter update the assessment and use the assessment to prioritize repairs, renovations, and new infrastructure. (First plan to be completed in 2024).
4. Develop, implement and update (when necessary) an annual facility condition checklist to provide planning for the future.

5. Update the Board at least annually on the condition of structures and any major construction needs for our year end budget consideration.
6. For any new construction fund, raise an additional 15% of the construction cost due to rising construction costs.

Goal IV: Provide the highest quality environmental education programs to our diverse community in northern Utah

Objectives:

1. Recruit, hire and retain qualified candidates with the passion to teach environmental programs.
2. Provide ongoing curriculum reviews of current education staff in conjunction with the Board and leadership to ensure standards (iSee) are met. Professional opportunities will be provided for ED staff annually.
3. Brief the Board no less than annually of the status of education programs and outreach at the ONC.
3. 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.
4. No less than annually, conduct satisfaction surveys of other significant core educational program constituencies.
5. Via proactive planning and scheduling, ensure the facilities and natural habitat are managed and available to meet the requirements of the education programs.
6. 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 an annual evacuation drill with volunteer and staff handlers.
7. 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.
8. 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.
9. No less than quarterly, evaluate our outreach curriculum and materials 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 annually.
10. No less than quarterly, conduct an inspection of all 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.

Goal V: Ensure that the Ogden Nature Center has the business 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 education, and experience.
2. Evaluate the organizational structure and job descriptions. Annually present the organizational structure and responsibilities, and recommend any changes to the Board.
3. 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 executive committee staff member should attend at least one board meeting each year.
4. 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, and gaps, and focus recruiting efforts going forward.
 - c. Maintaining the established "important" donor base.
 - d. Increase corporate contributions annually by 10% and host at least one targeted event per year.
 - 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.
 - f. Develop and implement an on-going capital investment campaign that funds the prioritized infrastructure requirements. For any new construction projects, raise an additional percentage of the construction cost to be allocated to future maintenance needs.

5. 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.

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

Objectives:

1. Benchmark the Board Structure and duties of local and similar non-profit boards to identify best practices and Board Structure for the future ONC Board. The Board Chairperson and the Executive Director will evaluate the Board responsibilities annually.
2. Create 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.
3. Train new members of the Board regarding their responsibilities and expectations as board members and annually review the same with all board members.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. The Executive Director will annually assess the risk management plan and brief the Board on its status and any recommended changes.
7. The Executive Director will annually update the Board on the ONC Policy Manual and any recommended changes.
8. The Executive Director will conduct performance evaluations of all the employees annually.
9. The Strategic Plan committee will conduct a review of the entire document biennially, and present any recommended changes to the Board. The Executive Director will brief the status of each Objective and Goal to the Board no less than annually.