



1000 Islands
Environmental Center

STRATEGIC PLAN



2023-2027



INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

The purpose for strategic planning is to prepare this organization to focus on its mission, embrace change, and to be proactive towards its direction instead of reactive towards its challenges.

PROCESS

The strategic planning process involved several different stages. It began with a community survey and a strategic planning session with several different stakeholders. The strategic planning process culminated with small group planning sessions including staff and each sub-committee.

MISSION STATEMENT

To provide children, adults and families the knowledge and skills needed to build a sustainable balance among the environment, economy and community through education, conservation and recreation.

BACKGROUND

1000 Islands Conservancy Zone was established in 1969, by the Common Council of the City of Kaukauna. The purpose of the Conservancy Zone is to preserve the land in a natural state for the benefit of all citizens, with the idea of teaching good conservation practices and preservation of natural resources. The Conservancy Zone now encompasses 350 acres. In 1976 the initial building was dedicated as a Bicentennial remembrance established by the City.

1000 Islands is administered by the 1000 Islands Environmental Center Committee - consisting of 10 members appointed by the Mayor and approved by Common Council as well as the President of the Friends of 1000 Islands or their designee. It is staffed by a full-time Director/Naturalist and 3 part-time positions: an Administrative Assistant, Assistant Naturalist, and Site Manager.

1000 Islands hosts well over 20,000 visitors each year including school children, scouts, senior citizens groups and the general public.

STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPANTS

Kelli Antoine

Alderperson, City of Kaukauna

Lilly Roehrig

Student, Kaukauna High School

Leah Vanevenhoven

Teacher, Park Community Charter School

Stefanie Stainton

Teacher, Kaukauna High School

Ron VanderVelden

Retired Teacher, Kaukauna High School



Committee & Staff

Kathy Breitzman

Kymberly Carlson

Jennie Eggleston

Sue Gertz

Eric Hietpas

Deb Jakel

John Manion

Penni Pautz

Paul Van Berkel

Diane White

Debra Nowak - Director/Naturalist

Maureen Feldt - Administrative Assistant

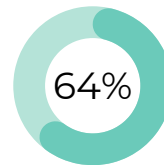
Sarah Ironside - Assistant Naturalist

Brad Garrity - Site Manager

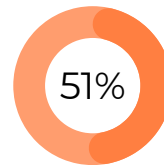


A public survey gathered feedback from the community and other visitors. A few highlights of the information collected through the survey include:

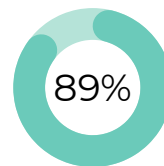
Top reasons that prevent respondents from participating in more programs or utilizing the property more is being unaware of opportunities and not having enough time.



64% of respondents are very satisfied with the Environmental Center and the Conservancy zone



51% of respondents explore the Nature Center during a visit to 1000 Islands



89% of respondents hike on the trails during a visit to 1000 Islands



Goal One:

INCREASE FULL TIME STAFF

OBJECTIVE

To increase our ability to recruit and coordinate volunteers, increase exposure of the department and its educational and recreational opportunities, and increase revenue through additional grant writing and private donation efforts. In addition, 1000 Islands strives to better manage the aging infrastructure and the continued threat of erosion and invasive species.

ACTIVITIES

- Request all permanent, part-time positions be increased to full-time over three budget years.
- Utilize the Personnel and Operations Plan to justify staffing needs.
- Establish productivity markers to evaluate the effectiveness of additional staff time.

SUPPORTED SECONDARY GOALS

This goal will support the remaining goals of this strategic plan as well as all secondary goals with an increased ability to plan, fund, and implement. See page 8 for full list.



Goal Two:

INCREASE FINANCIAL SUPPORT

OBJECTIVE

To increase our ability to contribute towards the annual operating and personnel expenses as well as reduce the budgetary impact of educational programs and special events.

ACTIVITIES

- Increase revenue through restructured fees and evaluating gift shop and building rentals to maximize profit.
- Develop new fundraising projects to support specific programs.
- Continue collaboration with the Friends of 1000 Islands and help create a vision for their future.
- Create a 1000 Islands Foundation as a 501(c)3 organization to better manage the endowment.

SUPPORTED SECONDARY GOALS

The majority of the secondary goals will be supported through additional financial support. Some of the projects that could be supported through specific fundraising efforts include:

- Build a natural play area
- Install a webcam on the bald eagle nest within the Conservancy Zone
- Build outdoor teaching areas
- Build STEM/indoor classroom space



Goal Three:

ADDRESS BUILDING NEEDS

OBJECTIVE

To improve the Nature Center building through structural improvements, remodeled areas and upgrades to reduce maintenance and create a better experience for visitors.

ACTIVITIES

- Replace flooring throughout the majority of the building.
- Replace siding with low-maintenance material.
- Remodel the restrooms.
- Replace the front storage room to address structural concerns and maximize storage capacity.

SUPPORTED SECONDARY GOALS

- New live animal displays
- New or improved educational exhibits



Goal Four:

IMPROVE TRAILS

OBJECTIVE

To improve the visitor experience by upgrading different trail sections. In addition to upgrading the trail surface conditions, accessibility will be improved with wider trails, visitors will be able to navigate the trail system easier, and erosion issues will be addressed through erosion control measures.

ACTIVITIES

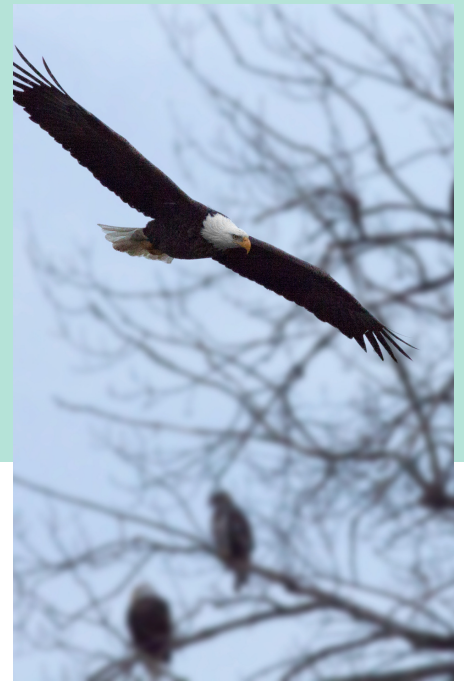
- Replace existing boardwalk trails to make them wider and include railings where appropriate for safety.
 - Create a system of trail signage including updated maps, wayfinding signs and emergency location markers.
 - Improve blacktop trail to address drainage and erosion concerns.
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SUPPORTED SECONDARY GOALS

- Increase Inclusivity – Offer Spanish & Hmong translations

LOOKING BEYOND

The preceding goals were chosen as the highest priority to focus on over the next five years. Progressing towards these goals will help move 1000 Islands towards success in the future beyond this strategic plan. Below are additional goals that came from the strategic planning process that will help the Committee and staff direct additional time, effort and funding as appropriate.



Secondary Goals

Interpretive/Exhibit Improvements in Nature Center

- Hunting - Shoot/Don't Shoot Display
- Purchase New Pelts
- Educational Friendly Signs for Building Expectations
- Crayfish Exhibit
- Remove Non-Wisconsin fish collection
- Invasive Species Exhibit
- Upgrade Displays – remove glass display cases
- Increase Inclusivity – Offer Spanish & Hmong translations

Expanded Programs

- Sustainable Program Series
- Additional Summer Camps
- Additional Adult Programs
- Additional Make & Take Programs
- Program Registration Software
- Broader Special Events – Tie to fundraising efforts
- Invasive Species Education
- Program Evaluation System
- Increase Inclusivity – programming for special needs – sensory based
- STEM Room/Classroom Space

Collaboration with Other Groups

- Networking with other organizations, groups, & city departments
- Join Friends with Environmental Action Group/Reorganization of Friends

Outreach

- Increase Social Media Presence
- Increase Marketing
- Develop Outreach Table

Equipment Needs

- Purchase New Truck – EV
- Purchase BenQ Board
- Eagle Nest Webcam
 - Fundraising Plan
 - Installation of Webcam

Live Animal Collection Improvements

- New Displays
- Improve Animal Husbandry Practices

Property Improvements

- Natural Play Area
- Outdoor Teaching Area
 - Picnic Area
 - Upper Woods
- Establish New Use for Previous Goat Browsing Area
- Permanent Orienteering Course in Upper Woods
- Evaluate Island #3
- Investigate Uses of Island #3
- State-of-the-Art Sugar Shack
- Utilize ball diamonds/football field if no longer used by other groups



Thank you to the City of Kaukauna, 1000 Islands Committee, stakeholders and other visitors for your continued support.

