



Squam Lakes Natural Science Center

Strategic Plan

2016-2020

Vision:

Through experiencing the exhibits and programs of Squam Lakes Natural Science Center, visitors of all ages will gain a greater understanding of ecology and a lifelong respect and appreciation for the natural world leading to active environmental stewardship.

Mission:

To advance understanding of ecology by exploring New Hampshire's natural world.

Core Values 1: Nature

Nature is at the core of all we do.

We value natural communities and ecological systems at local, regional, and global scales.

We recognize the interconnectedness and biodiversity of the natural world, including human impacts on the environment.

Core Value 2: Learning

Natural Science guides us.

We create positive outdoor experiences where learning is fun, engaging, and enduring.

We recognize the intrinsic value of maintaining native wildlife and providing learning opportunities through direct observation, inquiry, interaction, and wonder.

Core Values 3: Excellence

We exemplify excellence through best practices in nature center management. We commit to quality, customer service, fiscal responsibility, and environmentally-sustainable practices in all aspects of our operations. Through AZA accreditation we demonstrate our commitment to the highest standards of animal care.

Core Value 4: People

We celebrate our science center community and our role in the region. Our staff, neighbors, volunteers, trustees, members, donors, peers, partners, and visitors support, motivate, and inspire us.

Strategic Priority #1: Environmental Education

Fully implement the Science Center's mission and educational goals

1.1 Leadership: Extend the Science Center's reputation for excellence in programs and facilities into the realm of leadership in environmental education throughout the State of New Hampshire.

1.2. School Programs: Further align Science Center's environmental education programs with classroom standards and curriculum in the region and throughout the State.

1.3. Current Issues: Incorporate current and urgent issues in science, particularly climate change, into Science Center exhibits and programs.

1.4. Blue Heron School: Increase enrollment and expand facilities to accommodate a minimum of 36 students.

1.5. Research, Development & Technology: Conduct trials, tests, and pilot programs to evaluate new ideas and determine future initiatives and programs.

1.6. Review & Evaluation: Continue commitment to ongoing evaluation to assess program effectiveness, relevancy, and demand on resources (staff and budget).

Strategic Priority #2: Dynamic Teams

Provide enhanced support of the Science Center's extraordinary teams

- 2.1. Outstanding Staff:** Support our talented staff with adequate resources (time, compensation, and professional development) to enable and encourage continued excellence as programs and audiences grow.
- 2.2. Active Board:** Set clear expectations, provide training, and deeply engage board talent.
- 2.3. Engaged Volunteers:** Maintain the exceptionalism of our volunteer program and volunteer engagement as the number of volunteers increases.

Strategic Priority #3: Smart Growth

Grow visitorship while building and maintaining best-quality infrastructure.

3.1. New Audiences and More Visitors: Increase annual trail visitors to 70,000 and boat riders to 12,000 by 2021. Emphasis on new visitors and non-members, with an annual target of +5% among this group.

3.2. Audience Demographics: Consider adult demographic and interests in all planning and educational programs.

3.3. Quality of Experience: Ensure that our exhibits, trails, buildings, boats, vehicles, visitor services, etc. are maintained to the highest possible standards.

3.4. Short-range Campus Master Plan: Establish 5 and 10-year campus improvement plans.

3.5. Sustainable Practices and 50 by 30 Pledge: Incorporate “green” practices into our building projects/energy use systems. Achieve 50 by 30 pledge: 50% of our energy consumption comes from renewable sources by 2030.

3.6. Technology Related to Operations: Science Center studies, and when appropriate, incorporates technology for the purpose of improved audience experiences and organizational efficiencies.

Strategic Priority #4: Financial Health

Improve fiscal sustainability through effective analysis, planning, and fundraising.

4.1. Advanced Budget Planning: Incorporate risk analysis, and our 70/20/10 (operations, donation, investment returns) revenue percentage benchmarks, into creating 5-year operating budgets.

4.2. Capital Budget Planning: Address annual needs, short-term (5 years) and long-term Master Plan projects (10-20 years).

4.3. Grow Development Capacity: Increase number of annual fund participants to 600 per year by 2021. Increase average AF gift size from recurring donors by 5% annually. Increase major gift-giving and grants in support of specific projects. Maintain current donor (65%) and member retention rates.

4.4. Grow Endowment: Achieve and sustain long term investment funds equal to \$10MM (4.5x the 2021 operating budget).