



Osprey Wilds
Environmental Learning Center

FALL NEWSLETTER 2021

Continuing On

By Bryan Wood, Executive Director

Since the publication of our Fall 2020 print newsletter, we've experienced an entire year of the effects of COVID-19 at Osprey Wilds. We saw our earned revenue drop by over 90% from pre-pandemic levels, a truly astounding loss of income that had wide-ranging effects on our organization.

Staff dealt with severely reduced hours, expenses were slashed and many programs shuttered. We hosted less than 100 K-12 students for residential programs, where normally we host over 4,000 children.

Fortunately, other sources of revenue helped fill the gaps, including federal programs and donors like you who stepped up and provided critically needed financial support. We were able

to complete our last fiscal year on solid financial footing.

We are certainly not out of the woods yet, though, as the impacts of COVID-19 continue to linger on with reduced K-12 school and program enrollments. We are taking all the steps we can to provide a safe learning environment, including 100% of our instructors being vaccinated, investing in the highest-rated air filters available in all of our buildings, and following current CDC and MN Dept. of Health recommendations.

We continue to remain vigilant and respond in real time to changing externalities to ensure we can offer programs and host groups as responsibly as possible. Wishing you good health and hope to see you on campus soon.



YOU'RE INVITED!

Osprey Wilds
Annual Fundraiser

Bids for Kids

GROWING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Sunday, October 24

2:30-5:00 pm

54165 Audubon Drive
Sandstone, MN 55072

RSVP

Learn more and RSVP
online at OspreyWilds.org
or use the QR code.



Can't attend but want to support our work? You can still bid on auction items and donate online!

Osprey Wilds is following COVID-19 recommendations and guidelines from the CDC. Please contact us if you have any questions or concerns.

Don't miss your invitation to our annual fundraiser on the back!

View our 2021 Annual Report and learn more about our work at OspreyWilds.org

Reduce your environmental impact and switch to our digital newsletter! Email us at marketing@ospreywilds.org,z



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Meet Our New Education Director!


Greetings! I would like to take a moment of your time to introduce myself. I'm Nadine Meyer, the new Education Director for Osprey Wilds. I have a BS in Environmental Science from the University of Minnesota and a Master's in Education in Curriculum and Instruction from Kent State University.

I grew up near St. Cloud, MN and have worked for environmental organizations in ND, IN, OH and MN as an Environmental Educator, Interpretive Naturalist, Aquatic Education Specialist, and State Park Manager. I'm ecstatic to be part of Osprey Wilds and have enjoyed my time since joining the team on July 1.

Over the past year, the educators at Osprey Wilds put their creative juices to work to provide engaging community programs and school services safely during the pandemic. Highlights include:

- Offering an on-site Academic Support Center for students attending school virtually
- Hosting on-site interpretive hikes and community events for local residents
- Leading virtual courses for adults, families, and school groups
- Creating a summer pay-as-you-can day camp for children ages 8-12
- Providing safe on-site programming for school groups this spring and summer

Our on-site community events and programs will continue—please visit our website to see upcoming events! [OspreyWilds.org](https://www.ospreywilds.org)



Charter School Division News

by Erin Anderson, Director of Charter School Authorizing

Summer is typically when we tie up loose ends from the past school year and prepare for the year ahead. It's quiet and slow-paced, and lets us recharge our batteries as we get ready to hit the ground running in the fall.

Unsurprisingly, the summer of 2021 was not that. In June, we hosted our first virtual Environmental Education (EE) Teacher Workshop for more than 100 educators in more than 30 schools across Minnesota, focused around building racial equity and inclusion in EE. The online setting meant we could welcome speakers from all over the U.S.

In August, we welcomed four new schools to our portfolio: Angela Day School for Liberation and Progressive Education (Minneapolis), Endazhi-Nitaawiging (Red Lake), St. Cloud Social Justice Academy (St. Cloud), and STEM Micro School (Twin Cities). These innovative programs will begin serving students in Grades K-8 next fall.

We also hosted a Leaders Retreat in August. The highlight was a panel of students from five charter schools who shared their experiences of distance learning in an effort to make the upcoming year better and safer. We learned so much from them, and

it was a great reminder to keep students at the center of all we do!



Trapp Farm Takes Shape

By Bryan Wood, Executive Director

The progress that has taken place at Trapp Farm this growing season has been incredible! Since this spring, we've added an access road, built a washstand for cleaning and packaging produce, and staff and volunteers completed our livestock fencing (no small feat with 1,300 fence posts and miles of woven and electric wiring).

Work on waterlines for livestock is commencing, and a local rancher is renting our pastures for grazing his cattle, beginning the beneficial process of rotational grazing that will enhance soil fertility and the biological diversity of the pastures.

Vegetable production is in full swing in our hoop house and fields! Since early July, participants and staff have been enjoying fresh produce in the Dining Hall. We are also freezing and preserving what we can, selling surplus produce to Daggett's Fresh Foods and at our Farm Stand, and donating food to the local food shelf. Even with the extremely hot and dry summer, the farm has been producing well, and regenerative agriculture is happening at Osprey Wilds!

Next year, we plan to add our own cattle and chickens to the pastures as we continue working to supply a more significant percentage of our food needs from on-site production. We look forward to sharing the fruits of our labor with you during your next meal at Osprey Wilds!



New and Improved

by Jill Rudolph, Operations Director

Due to the reduced visitors during COVID-19, we've had the unique opportunity to do some upkeep on many of our buildings on campus that would typically be hard to schedule. Our projects focus on increasing the energy efficiency, usability, and preservation of our facilities. This year's projects include:

- Painting the inside of Lowry Lodge and converting light fixtures to LED
- Replacing two heating systems with 98%-efficient systems
- Installing a new draining system in the basement of Schwyzer Lodge basement—SPECIAL THANKS To our generous donor and guidance by the Historical Society
- Completing the exterior of our new maintenance shed—the focus is now on the interior. We hope to have it finished by the spring of 2022.
- Replacing an antiquated septic system that will service the barn and maintenance shed
- Replacing a faulty culvert on our driveway, along with adding more gravel to improve our overall driveway

There is still a lot to do, especially with 20+ year buildings and systems. We continue to work with skilled volunteers to help complete many projects around campus. Thank you volunteers!



Donations and volunteers have been essential in completing our new maintenance building.



A Medly of Donations

by Jim DeYoung, Development Director

Gifts made by supporters enabled Osprey Wilds' success on several fronts during the fiscal year that ended on June 30. Most notably, the \$189,409 donated for operational support—surpassing the budgeted \$175,000—helped us continue to offer a variety of learning programs, albeit mostly virtual, and keep our staff employed during a year in which the pandemic reduced program revenue by 90 percent.

The most *visible* outcome of donor generosity was completing a new maintenance building near the wildlife barn this summer. Construction began in the fall of 2020, triggered by anonymous donations totaling \$60,000. Subsequent gifts brought the donation total over \$100,000, largely

covering the cost of erecting the pole-barn-style 2,400 sq. ft. building. In February 2021, Osprey Wilds received a bequest of nearly \$52,000 from the estate of long-time supporter Kathy Aust, who had passed away the previous August. Discussions with Kathy's family led to the decision to use the funds toward the maintenance building.

Volunteers have been absolutely essential to the continued progress and finishing of the interior of the maintenance building; collecting logs, planing, drying and installing pine boards, purchasing a toilet for the bathroom, and putting in countless hours of labor to continue completing the interior.

Osprey Wilds has needed a building like this for as long as we have been in existence. Up until now, we have cobbled together maintenance storage and workspace in the old pony shed, a small add-on space to the Dining Hall, and less than ideal outside storage of equipment and machinery. Ty Johnson, Land & Buildings Manager since 1993, has long dreamed of a building like this where he could work and store equipment, machinery and vehicles. Because of the generosity of donors and volunteers, this dream is now becoming a reality. We are so excited to see it reach its completion soon!

volunteer weekend picture