2025 Strategic Plan & Implementation
For Association of Nature Center Administrators

Setting direction and action for the next 7 years

February 2018
Association of Nature Center Administrators
2025 Strategic Plan
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ANCA Mission
The Association of Nature Center Administrators promotes and supports best leadership and management practices for the nature and environmental learning center profession.

Strategic Plan Purpose
The purpose of this strategic planning process and workshop is to develop ANCA strategic priorities and actions for the next seven years.

The Process
Strategic planning is most effective when organizations implement actions based on priorities and the plan is systematically reviewed and revised. ANCA has committed to establishing and engaging in a continuous process resulting in key strategic priorities and actions for the next seven years. The process results in immediate actionable items and will be reviewed and revised annually. Over the next seven years, ANCA will continue to plan, implement, and revise our actions to meet our visions and mission. This process involves annual Trends sessions at the ANCA Summit, member surveys, board & staff engagement, and member involvement in the plan’s implementation.

The Strategic Planning (SP) workshop held in Monteagle, TN on February 2-3, 2018 with ANCA board and staff was designed to create direction and action for the next seven years. This included pre-planning and workshop phases. Pre-planning included ANCA board facilitated focus groups at the ANCA 2017 Summit (Appendix A). Pre-planning also included a member survey asking ANCA’s wider membership the same questions that were asked at the Summit focus groups (Appendix A). The Focus Group/Survey report was distributed to the SP workshop participants along with a Vision of Success worksheet (Appendix B). The workshop phase resulted in the following strategic plan. Both the documentation of the pre-workshop activity and the workshop results are included below.

Workshop Agenda
- Background and Reviewing the Members Input (What we see now)
- Skits: Relevant, Impact, Community (What we see now)
- Key Question: Setting Direction for 2025 (What we want to see)
- Develop Strategies (How we get there)
Create Action Plans to Strategies (What we need to do)
Continuation and Implementation (How we keep it going)

Workshop Protocol
- Listen actively
- Respect all ideas
- Be fair and equal opportunity to participate
- Stay on task and on time
- Safe place to share

Workshop Activities
The workshop included a review and discussion of all of the highlights from the combined focus group and member survey results. Key points and themes were noted. This report guided but did not direct the strategic plan process. The report will continue to guide the strategies and actions until new data is gathered at a future Summit and/or member survey.

Since the Blue Ribbon Report was published and presented three key words have been repeating themselves in a variety of discussions: relevant, impact, and community. To provide additional background and understanding of these terms, during the workshop, small groups were created, each to explore a different word. Using the results of the board/staff survey to form definitions for each of these words, the small groups were responsible for discussing then presenting to their colleagues a skit that demonstrated the word in action as it applies to the nature center profession.

Following the presentations, Adapted Nominal Group Technique (ANGT) was used to generate, discuss, evaluate and rank the best ideas to the key, driving question of the strategic plan: what should ANCA achieve by 2025 (Appendix C). To help store and retrieve the group’s answers, an Affinity Process was used to create Categories for all of the ideas generated, regardless of the level of discussion to any individual idea. The Category document is a bank for future strategy and action development (Appendix D).

After overarching strategic priorities were established, reported below in Vision of Success Results, the workshop focused on 1-2 year Strategies that need to be established and completed to help attain the Vision of Success. Small groups established by the ‘rule of two feet’ discussed and created Strategies for the next year. A Share Fair was conducted so all workshop participants of other groups could provide input into each of the other group’s strategies.

New small groups were established, again using the ‘rule of two feet’ to discuss and develop Action Plans (Appendix E). Not all strategies were selected for Action Plan development which means those will be developed at a later and appropriate time.
Vision of Success ANCA 2025

ANCA’s Vision of Success statements represents a desired future for seven years from now, 2025. Some Vision of Success goals may be attained in a much shorter time frame while others may continue into the next strategic plan.

By 2025:

1.0 ANCA will have organizational capacity and financial stability to meet its current and future objectives.

2.0 ANCA will maintain best practices that promote diversity, equity, and inclusiveness within our membership and the profession.

3.0 ANCA will continue to recognize and promote its core values while responding & adapting to trends within the dynamic profession.

4.0 ANCA will be the leading source for professional development tools and relevant resources for leaders and aspiring leaders in the nature and environmental field.
Vision of Success - Strategies

Strategies are 1-2 year organizational goals that are needed to accomplish the vision of success. A strategy does not exist without a vision of success statement.

1.0 ANCA will have organizational capacity and financial stability to meet its current and future objectives.

   1.1 Identify, plan for, and secure the components for our financial stability.
   1.2 Identify, plan for, and secure the components for our organizational capacity.

2.0 ANCA will maintain best practices that promote diversity, equity, and inclusiveness within our membership and the profession.

   2.1 Educate ourselves about the issues and practices around DEI.
   2.2 Develop plan for implementing DEI Best Practices for ourselves (ANCA) and our members
   2.3 Create a diverse, equitable, and inclusive ANCA membership

3.0 ANCA will continue to recognize and promote its core values while responding & adapting to trends within the dynamic profession.

   3.1 Revisit/redefine ANCA’s core values.
   3.2 Communicate core values to the ANCA membership.
   3.3 Facilitate member networking for sharing emerging trends & initiatives.
   3.4 Periodically seek trends affecting the nature center profession within and outside our field.

4.0 ANCA will be the leading source for professional development tools and relevant resources for leaders and aspiring leaders in the nature and environmental field.

   4.1 Maintain a suite of delivery methods to provide resources for leaders and aspiring leaders.
4.2 Regularly evaluate delivery methods for effectiveness and seek new ideas and resources.

Vision of Success - Strategies with Actions

Action Plans are short term, usually 3-9 month set of tasks that must be accomplished to complete a Strategy. An Action Plan does not exist without a Strategy. The Action Plans are abbreviated here and the complete Action Plan (AP) is Appendix F. The name in italics after the Action Plan is the Champion for that AP.

1.0 ANCA will have organizational capacity and financial stability to meet its current and future objectives.

Strategy
1.1 Identify, plan for, and secure the components for our financial stability.

Actions
1.1.1 Revise/update our Development Plan. John DeFillipo
1.1.2 Incrementally grow the operational reserve to 3-6 months. Mary McKinley
1.1.3 Revise Planned Giving Program. Brooks Paternotte & Jen Levy
1.1.4 Set a goal for growing the endowment. Jen Levy

Strategy
1.2 Identify, plan for, and secure the components for our organizational capacity.

Action
1.2.1 Deliberate overlay of budgetary goals into programming costs. John DeFillipo & Jen Levy

2.0 ANCA will maintain best practices that promote diversity, equity, and inclusiveness within our membership and the profession.

Strategy
2.1 Educate ourselves about the issues and practices around DEI.

Actions
2.1.1 Seek and provide training for ANCA Board. Pam Musk
2.1.2 Seek programming for our membership that educates, supports, and encourages DEI practices. Jen Levy

Strategy
2.2 Develop plan for implementing DEI Best Practices for ourselves (ANCA) and our members

Actions
2.2.1 Collect and Share Best Practices related to DEI. Caitlin Fader
2.2.2 Communicate ANCA’s DEI policies to our community. *Caitlin Fader*

**Strategy**

2.3 Create a diverse, equitable, and inclusive ANCA membership

**Actions**

2.3.1 Recruit and retain members from across the profession. *Pam Musk*
2.3.2 Recruit board members that represent our membership. *Kay Carlson*

3.0 ANCA will continue to recognize and promote its core values while responding & adapting to trends within the dynamic profession.

**Strategies**

3.1 Revisit/redefine ANCA’s core values.
3.2 Communicate core values to the ANCA membership.
3.3 Facilitate member networking for sharing emerging trends & initiatives.
3.4 Periodically seek trends affecting the nature center profession within and outside our field.

4.0 ANCA will be the leading source for professional development tools and relevant resources for leaders and aspiring leaders in the nature and environmental field.

**Strategy**

4.1 Maintain a suite of delivery methods to provide resources for leaders and aspiring leaders.

**Action**

4.1.1 Create a Marketing Committee. *Caitlin Fader*

**Strategy**

4.2 Regularly evaluate delivery methods for effectiveness and seek new ideas and resources.

**Action**

4.2.1 Establish programs and services committee. *Amber Parker*
Continuation and Implementation

1. Select an overall Strategic Plan Champion. A Position description is attached as Appendix G.
2. Each year at the winter Board retreat an annual review and revision process should be part of the agenda.
3. Action Plans come and go, and each AP completed should be celebrated and at that time determine if a new AP needs developed. If the Strategy is not completed, then a new AP is needed.
4. Vision of Success 3.0 has strategies, but no Action Plans were developed. Keep checking to determine if the timing is right to develop an Action Plan.
5. After Year 4 of this 2025 Strategic Plan, determine if the overall plan is still relevant or if steps should be taken to create a new plan.
6. This plan has a life expectancy and should not go beyond 2025.
7. Continue to seek ANCA members to serve on Action Plans. This is a good technique to assess potential board members.
8. As new board members arrive the SP Champion or other member of the board/staff should provide an orientation to the SP and its implementation. New members should be given an opportunity to champion an Action Plan.
Appendices

Appendix A: ANCA Trends Complete

This data includes both the 2017 ANCA Summit Focus Groups and the 2017 Membership Survey. Categories were established based on individual responses and themes have been developed from the categories.

What impact should we have in the communities we serve?

Themes
I. Nature Center’s Impact People for Our Environment.
II. Nature Center are Active Role Models.
III. Nature Centers Achieve Impact as Places, People, and Programs.
IV. Nature Centers are a Part of a Larger Community.
V. Themes with Categories and Individual Statements.

I. Nature Center’s Impact People for Our Environment.

A. Human Impact on Climate
   • Help people understand human impact on climate.
   • Communicating on climate effectively.
   • Should be at forefront of defining how to effectively communicate and CC, as well as science and nature.
   • Change how they respond to, and influence policy makers on climate change.

G. Determining Our Impact
   • We need to do a better job of anticipating the impact.
   • Need better storytelling and tying to people’s emotions – lining impact of environment to emotions.
   • Need to scientifically document that impact, adults have an impact to become environmentally responsible adults because of what we did when they were kids.
   • Define the ideological differences between the surrounding community and the people that operate the nature center. Then create a deeper dialogue between the services that you provide and the relationships that exist – BIGGER IMPACT.
   • Make Nature Second Nature; Make the Emotional Connection.
   • Have the same impact as rec. sports – encourage people to pay as much attention to nature as to competition.
   • Assuage fears of engagement with nature.
   • How do you define impact?
• Education and programs are not our mission.
• Transcend their lives.
• Long-term.
• Being environmentally aware.
• Source of expanded impact of school lessons with schools, after school, supplementing.
• We impact people who self-select to be at nature center.
• Education on the sense of place locally focused educational efforts that may or may not be in addition to what is in the broader world.
• Impact as a place of firsts, first stream walk, first touched a snake, first time an urban kid walked in woods by themselves.
• Impact: climate literacy, access to nature, health and nature, equity, environmental justice.
• Create positive environmental outcomes.
• Nature Center's influence people to make personal choices that save the planet and enjoy doing it.
• ANCA member organizations should be among the most significant and vocal communicators of the importance of nature to the overall health and wellbeing of the community's children and adults of all ages. Our impact should be measurable via improvements in community health statistics (e.g. weight losses; exercise rates; and decreases in blood pressure, diabetes, and obesity). Impact should also be measurable via environmental metrics such as new acres conserved, improvements in flora and fauna diversity, increases in recycling efforts, etc.
• Making it clear to everyone that we all make an impact everyday on the planet in both positive and negative ways. We need to steer humanity to a place where they see themselves as part of nature, not opposed to it.
• Arouse interest, wonder and excitement about the world around us. Spur people to take action on important environmental issues. Build life-long conservationists. Easy-peasy, right?
• Nature Centers should construct all their activities to inspire stewardship and conservation behaviors from all their constituents.
• Raising awareness, understanding and action.
• We should develop conservation ethic of our citizenry by informing, educating, and inspiring people to make and support responsible stewardship practices and policies.
• Educate people on the stewardship of natural resources in the present and for the future.
• To bring environmental education opportunities to as many as possible, help build sustainable environments and help people understand how they can do their part, as well as stand as role models for the community.
• Promoting connection between humans and nature, supporting science-based nature study, and encouraging stewardship of the natural world.
• Nature Centers should have major impact in their communities by providing leadership and good example of the benefits of beautiful natural areas to people.
• We should be encouraging our community members to think critically, from an early age; we should be battling scientific illiteracy on all fronts; and we should be working to bridge the attitude-behavior gap so apparent in conservation.

I. Ecological Restoration
• Keep doors open and provide guidance to the ecological impact or restoration.

II. Nature Center are Active Role Models.

B. Advocacy Role
• Should not abandon our advocacy role.
• Speak for the needs of the environment.
• Need a sense of urgency.
• Support impact of government and citizen decision making.
• Voices for environmental justice, access issue (soils, water, air quality), not avoid advocacy.
• Advocacy – Have been doing it but need to do it more intentionally. (4)
• We could be a hub of collective action since EE is so interdisciplinary.
• Work on more advocacy for outdoor nature spaces and the benefits to people.

F. Be a Change Agent
• Being a change agent.
• Provide action items for how people can do things in their own backyards.
• Get people to make conservation one of their top priorities – it’s not how many gifts we get or lives we touch, but the number who we help make conservation their top priority.
• Conscious regard for the “envison a sustaining community where conscious regard for the natural world guides their actions.”
• Unite two different communities and bridge the gap between childhood and adults.
• How can we make a place for authentic one-on-one discussions?
• Creating leaders.
• Make science and the facts accessible.
• Create a message that can cross party lines.
• We have a lot of influence in land management, policy, and use. There can be opportunities for influencing the public.
• The difference between government vs. non-profit.
• To provide the safe, yet encouraging and supportive, environment to have these discussions.
• Be the facilitator, big picture holder and resource communicator.
• Actively recruit and inform youth about the career opportunities in the environmental and EE fields.
• We should endeavor to be leaders by example, helping to create forward-thinking, engaged citizens who care about nature and the environment, and who value leaving a positive legacy for future generations.
• Be examples in our communities of ways to live lightly on the land (i.e. use native plants, create or conserve habitat, etc...).
• Connect members to one another in order that we may be more effective individually and as a greater organism.
• Educational and professional guidance.
• Be a force for change as regards the health of all living systems on this planet.
• Leaders in the environmental education movement.
• Bringing people together around conservation – building a community of people who care and want to work together in/for nature.

J. Living Sustainably
• Building homes with sustainable infrastructure.
• Become a conservation center for sustainable solutions.
• Make people think about nature.
• Make the community more livable for people.
• Wellness – social and environmental.
• Show, make available, and/or model the “simple pleasures.”
• Health and wellness benefits.
• Model sustainability.
• Impact on community health as green place to de-stress and relax.
• As Nature Centers, we should be actively connecting our communities to the native flora and fauna via educational opportunities. We should also be promoting conservation and green living and be examples of how to live a more sustainable life.

III. Nature Centers Achieve Impact as Places, People, and Programs.

C. A Place for All People
• Be a place for all people; diversity.
• Be a place for everyone.
• Grow through citizens, from kids to adult.
• We’ve been too cautious at taking a stand at protecting the natural world at specific actions because we’re afraid of offending someone [sp. Donors]
• Educating all ages.
• Crafting programs to reach varying audiences.
• Make the “continuum” accessible for all types of people, skill levels, backgrounds.
• Remain approachable, available, and not above our visitors/participants.
• Nature is for everyone; look at trends to diversify, represent ecological beauties as well as re: people, need to reach MORE than the choir, esp. in leadership.
• A resource for all ages.
• Reflect the entire community as much as possible, not just the nature-loving, purist, choir folks.
• Provide outdoor recreation to improve the mental and physical health of community members.
• Encouraging the importance of the outdoors to all ages.
• Include more family-based programs.

D. Diversity and Cultures
• Engagement of a diversity of people.
• Understand different cultures of where we are and how best to engage the variety of cultures.
• Engage personally with the various communities to help bring together groups.
• Become Hyper Unique! New ways to engage with the public: Diversity, Language – Bilingual programming.
• Accessible Nature.
• Be welcoming, inclusive, and diverse.
• Accessibility to nature for all.
• Diversity represented in the profession.
• Trying to connect people to nature – especially low-income areas that don’t have access. (6)
• I think our job is to actively reach out to populations that are typically underserved in nature education programs.
• Promote and support diversity, equity and access in the field. Maximize impact of the facilities and the environmental education experiences members seek to provide.

E. Connect People with the Environment
• Be a good match-maker, connect people with the environment; make introductions 1st and ultimately lead to a caring, nurturing [something] with environment.
• Establish what our ROI is and defend why it’s important to start with kids and why they’ll grow into responsible adults.
• Fostering a love of some aspect of nature....” even snakes”
• Experiences...
• First time camping program.
• Celebrating local biodiversity.
• Show unique connections and unifying force of nature.
• Celebration of local nature.
• Place based; nature in our own back yards.
• Places for immersion, experiential learning, adventure.
• Foster emotional and sensory aspects of nature.
• Teach how to navigate our environment.
• Prepare for wildlife encounters.
• Provide meaningful experiences with nature to foster learning and growth.
• Provide a positive interaction with the natural world.
• Increasing environmental awareness and literacy among populations that aren't well connected to nature, i.e. broadening our demographic reach.
• An educational one, supporting a focus on the local and unique species/landscapes per community (e.g. native prairie, north woods).
• Promote Outdoor Education.
• Provide as much education and outreach opportunities, at the lowest cost, to spread the word about our mission.
• To be an educational resource to our community; serve to share knowledge of the environment with the public.
• Providing quality, engaging, direct experiences with community members in the natural world. being seen as a source of factual science, connecting people's lives to their backyard and larger environment.
• We should provide effective educational programs in order to affect positive change.
• We educate, inspire, and encourage actions of ways the public can interact, learn to love, and appreciate the natural world.
• Connect people to nature in our communities. Offer opportunities to help people learn to enjoy the outdoors in various ways.
• Get kids of all backgrounds playing in (and with) nature. Protect, encourage and enhance native plant systems.
• Connect people to their natural resources on a personal level.
• To enlighten, educate, entertain and challenge each individual with which we have contact.
• Fostering a connection between our human community and the natural community is paramount; getting people outside and enhancing their understanding, respect, and stewardship of the wild world is our role.
• Introduce people - especially young people, to the natural world and give them the confidence to explore the outdoors.
• We should help people: connect to place, value the natural world, and develop/increase sustainable behaviors (including at the ballot box).
• We should be fostering connections between people and our local environment through positive experiences that increase appreciation, knowledge, and stewardship.
• We believe that our nature center should foster an understanding and appreciation of our natural world and develop an environmental ethic in the people and communities we serve through environmental education, service as a community resource, and responsible stewardship of nature center and adjacent lands.
• Creating awareness of the benefits of the natural world for people.

K. Schools
• Connect with schools by asking them what their needs are from year to year with the local nature center.
• Teach the teachers, broaden reach to more teachers even if they do not visit.
• Support schools in efforts to create hands-on, outdoor opportunities at our facilities and also through outreach.
M. Focus on Early Childhood
   • Early childhood education is big… “blowing doors off my center.”

IV. Nature Centers are a Part of a Larger Community.

H. Being Relevant
   • Relevance – being relevant to people’s lives.
   • Create a human centric nature center that provides education, research and affect change in the community.
   • Be a good neighbor, connect with community, create a safe space to explore nature.
   • Provide unstructured play for all ages – as they grow so does the organization find new ways to re-connect.
   • Community would adequately support 10% increase of visitors from year to year.
   • How to make your center relevant and known . . . “people don’t know us.”
   • Approach the community, diagnose, develop programs that address their needs.
   • Relevance… are we relevant any more.
   • Help people find value in nature relative to their own experience.
   • Does the Nature Center (NC) really know what the community needs?
   • Find out what they truly want and its relationship to the NC’s mission.
   • How do their needs get met?
   • Are we the knowledge base?
   • Get out of boxed because education isn’t just cookie cutter.
   • Go to where they are.
   • So much focus on teaching about “things” but people care because of their emotional experiences.
   • Founded to protect land; is that still relevant?
   • All depends on the characteristics of the community; there are different way to relate to the land
   • Expand thinking.
   • Inspirational - be more.
   • Rooted in data and not feelings, use storytelling wisely and regain control of narrative
   • Change with the times, not just program related, diversify, different needs due to Google and the Internet.
   • Education changes, add yoga classes and concerts, lend out equipment if member.
   • Should be a resource for questions people have
   • Topics that are important.
   • Educate on wilderness ethic, - teach people how to be on the land from simply why your dog. needs to be on leash to more complex lessons and back country exploration.
   • Being the expert in science-based topics. (4)
   • Our profession should represent the communities that we serve. (3)
   • We should be the voice for the resource in our communities, but also the conduit between people and nature to build connections to nature. Nature centers should be
seen as "necessary" elements of a strong, vibrant community. Not just an "extra". We should work to have nature access as part of our community economic development planning.

- **We should be seen as a vibrant, sustainable resource that helps people understand the value of a healthy natural environment while offering other benefits such as economic development through tourism, etc.**
- **We need to be able to embody the importance of conservation and the value of our natural resources to our communities through our programs.**
- **Use any stream of public information, e.g., media (social and others) to reach those we don’t.**
- **Providing services, a natural space, education and current and relevant environmental information to our members and community.**
- **We should be the place that visitors come to for connection to the resource we teach about -- they should think of our Centers when they want to explore, learn and discover. They should want to share our place with the people that are important to them, and they should understand that the world is a better place because of the work we do.**
- **We should be asking questions of our different audiences and communities about what they want and need from us. We need to be engaged in the communities that surround our centers. Then we should develop and prioritize specific, measurable outcomes. Try. Evaluate. Rinse. Repeat.**
- **Be informed and adaptable to our community demographics.**

**L. A Place in the Community**

- **Awareness of the place.... Why it’s a special place.**
- **Reshape how people think about nature.... It’s all around you.**
- **Create community cohesiveness through nature, health, inclusiveness.**
- **Market nature centers as community resources; build community around nature; be a community hub.**
- **Nature centers as a place to just “be”; place to unplug.**
- **Model connections between/among nature, art, music, etc.**
- **Create a culture celebrating our connection to nature**
- **Comfortable, more relaxed academic environment**
- **Get out into community, define the community.**
- **Let’s say we define our community, then what?**
- **What are primary, secondary, tertiary communities?**
- **I want to be our community’s Roxaboxen (https://www.amazon.com/Roxaboxen-Alice-McLerrany/dp/0060526335) – let imagination soar.**
- **Economic impacts on region**
- **Invite everyone in to work and play.**
- **Mentorship component - be there for the community, pair well, our job to remove barriers.**
• Opportunities for leadership development, find people in communities and let them develop the messaging.
• How do we drive traffic to programs? Partnerships - lots of land conservancies.
• Holders of public lands within their communities.
• A place where preservation of wildlife and habitat.
• A place of trails and access where people can get out on the land.
• Place where others educate, e.g. serving as a location for a field school for another institution.
• Impact community as a meeting place- dates, family gatherings, friends meeting to hike and talk about the week.
• Community connections can be strong impact where diverse groups can interact that may not be a traditional nature-oriented group, jazz concert on the lawn, book group etc.
• Place where people and kids can get dirty e.g. natural playground.
• The phoneless place can have a strong impact to reconnect people or give people a chance to disconnect.
• Support local economy through employment, including seasonal part time jobs, impact economy as helping improve quality of life.
• Focus more on working with community partners to conserve land and provide natural spaces – (development, parks and rec, planning, etc.). They have the power to change the landscape. Getting a direct ear with city officials. Land conservation authorities. (5)
• Be a resource for our community for schools, teacher – authority figure to help with subject matter teaching.
• Resource for a safe place to explore outdoors at all ages. Especially at young ages. (1)
• Community gathering place for everyone.
• Providing a safe, encouraging place to discuss issues and successes that we have within our profession.
• We should be a central location where our communities go to support preservation through learning, volunteerism, habitat, wildlife, and respectful recreation.
• Move/inspire our communities to being places that thrive together with nature. In urban and rural planning, we should impact net positive for biodiversity conservation and healthy ecosystem function. In recreation, we should lead in promoting the benefits of an outdoor culture and children’s risk taking in nature-based play.
• We should be recognized as a community gathering place by our constituents and serve as a conduit for facilitating and strengthening bonds between humans and the natural world.
• Create partnerships with organizations with similar missions for events, teacher training, etc.
• We should be a place that provides our community with a respite from their busy lives (in nature) and a place to learn from nature.
• Assuring that center missions and programs create a "brand promise" that aligns with the values and needs of our served communities, and that our served communities in turn place a high value on our recreational, educational and ecological services.
• We should set an example for the community and be a resource that provides programs, interpretive exhibits, publications and informational data as requested.
• Building community around local nature and natural history.
• Facilitate community's relationship with nature.
• Create on-site nature play features/spaces. Create a site stewardship plan to remove/manage non-native and plant/encourage native plants. Create programs and projects that define and encourage nature play and native plants in your local area.
• Provide facilities, programming and information.

N. Standards
• National standard for nature centers.
• Next generation science standards.

O. Our Centers
• My center should be seen as a resource for answers, my center should be seen as a place for people to be introduced to nature, to learn, to have fun nature recreating my center should be a place people go to have a nature experience, be it a quiet walk, to interact with good (non-degraded) habitat; view wildlife, my center can be a place where people invest their time to make the world, other’s lives, and our environment a better place my center should be a place where multi generations can come to meet their nature needs.
• Each nature center's primary impact should be fulfilling that center's "Mission" (as on file with the IRS, & perhaps as further defined by that NC in its other documents & its activities). So, if EE ("environmental education") is the Mission and the goal, then successfully & genuinely & thoroughly providing EE would be the primary desired impact. HOWEVER, there are some soft secondary impacts that can come full circle (such as providing a popular "green wedding" venue, or holding golf tournament fundraisers), that introduce and open up a NC to a larger community, who start to think positively and/or kindly of the NC, which may lead to more people learning about ecology and the importance of EE over time. In this best-case scenario (which I espouse), it becomes important for a NC to become a community center, or be viewed as a broad-based community resource, the way many communities view their local VFW hall or library building. Without compromising Mission.
• Our Centers should offer environmental education and outdoor experiences that enrich the lives of our visitors. Our visitors have many reasons for coming to us, but we hope they will leave feeling one or more of the following: enlightened, relaxed, reflective, engaged (with the natural world), uplifted, connected, intrigued, joyful, and many more. In other words, with nature at the core, we need to help our visitors connect what our Centers offer to their own lives. in as many ways as are realistically possible.
ANCA’s Role Complete

This data includes both the 2017 ANCA Summit Focus Groups and the 2017 Membership Survey. Categories were established based on individual responses and themes have been developed from the categories.

What is ANCA’s role to achieve this impact?

Themes
I. ANCA is the advocate for our profession and our causes.
II. ANCA champions research for our profession.
III. ANCA serves the nature center and its professions.
IV. ANCA helps nature centers connect with their communities.
V. ANCA helps nature centers and professionals to collaborate with each other.
VI. ANCA continues to provide excellence in its current professional services.
VII. ANCA explores new opportunities to develop and serve the profession.

Themes with Categories and Individual Statements

I. ANCA is the advocate for our profession and our causes.

A. Advocacy/Change Agent
   • Have grad students writing position papers for us.
   • Provide Members better tools for advocacy; case studies/articles at other Nature Center’s or Directors who did well at advocacy.
   • Training for centers on how to “advocate” with jeopardizing 501c3.
   • Advocacy.
   • Take a leading role in advocacy.
   • Provide guidance on doing advocacy in appropriate manner.
   • Be a unified voice for protecting the earth.
   • Advocacy, esp. EE - could be a powerhouse.
   • Advocacy on issues, providing background, access to selected papers, journals on topics.
   • Advocacy – Voice of the Profession (3)
   • Advocacy – ANCA as advocates (educating decision makers).
   • As primary proponents of nature and the importance it plays in the health of our communities and the planet, ANCA member organizations need to initiate the programs and efforts to change the minds of those who don't recognize the importance of nature and to challenge those who agree but need motivation to play a more active role in improving the ways nature is fostered within the community.
   • Provide leadership with the resources, tools, networking and professional development to lead their staff towards this mission. create greater awareness among local/state/national community leaders, government officials and community leadership on the value/need/opportunities of connecting with our nature centers.
• Lobbying on behalf of nature center and representing us in the face of potential legislation where nature centers are under attack.

B. Communicating Our Story
• Helping us adapt our stories.
• Provide collective impact data and stories.
• Draw more attention and build profile for nature center profession.
• Create “exciting things” to help share ANCA story to market and get members.
• Bringing big picture to light.
• Develop specific messages.
• Quote $ and data (e.g. $1 billion industry).
• Rooted in data, not feelings, do storytelling and control the narrative (e.g. why aren’t 1,000 other centers ANCA members?).
• ANCA helps Nature Center leaders more effective in telling the stories of sustainability, biodiversity and interdependence.
• ANCA can help by connecting professionals who need support in implementing this impact. Access to best practices, protocols, and success stories would also be helpful.
• A place to share positive impacts on ANCA website.

II. ANCA champions research for our profession.

A. Research: Data Collection, Management and Interpretation
• Provide data at measurable impact we have.
• Fund research that’s needed.
• Conduct more research like the Blue-Ribbon Report.
• Access to Research . . . best practices.
• Do research and publish white papers.
• Survey our peers and develop a “typology” of nature centers – database of nature centers and ways to slice and dice / analyze.
• Collecting the data and being the support for members to have the resources we need.
• Help us design meaningful assessments. This means measuring behavioral outcomes, just organizational outputs or attendance.
• Provide current research, best practices, and tools for nature centers. It would be nice if ANCA could provide access to current research database.
• Being a central resource for studies on the impact of, and need for, time in nature.
• Provide research-based approaches to achieving the impact described above and provide resources to centers across the country to make this goal achievable.
III. ANCA serves the nature center and its professions.

A. Reaching Out to New Nature Centers and New Directors
   • Number new Nature Center’s open in the US per year – ANCA needs to capture those “newbies” and get them involved.
   • ANCA is relevant to leaders.
   • ANCA allows networking among individuals and maintains a positive and welcoming role to all individuals seeking professional growth as a nature center administrator.

B. Reach Out Beyond the Executive Director
   • Increase google groups and broaden our reach from ED to staff to educators and development.
   • Educating young and mid-level professionals.
   • Creating a better understanding of how to use ANCA to forward career, nature center interests, etc.
   • Need to identify upcoming leaders and connect with them b/c already all administrators - do this at regionals.
   • Being an organization for upcoming leaders in the profession – inviting to middle and upper management (non ED’s). (2)
   • How to define ‘administrators’ and be a niche focus.
   • Grandparents – how you can influence grandparents through their grandkids.
   • Parents through their kids (though less so) than grandparents because grandparents are more motivated to facilitate learning by the grandkids.
   • Support the professionalism of staff in this industry.

C. Marketing- Within the Profession
   • Market more to build up base.
   • Dig down into the data to figure out why our membership has increased but the attendance to the summit has remained the same. Why are they not coming?
   • Get a local college to help analyze the membership data – partner with a local university like Maxwell University.
   • Creating the tools to understand the impact of the profession . . . annual member survey.
   • Better marketing.
   • Put ANCA’s name behind statistics.
   • Look at other industries outside the NC box for ideas on sustainability and messaging.
   • Strength in unity; all 400 members had same voice and offered security to one another (yet realistically unable b/c some government operated, 501c3, politics).
IV. ANCA helps nature centers connect with their communities.

A. Reach Out to Communities

- Reach out to diverse communities – tools for reaching out to diverse communities; success stories.
- Community forums (dialog with local community . . . municipalities). Opportunity for authentic discussions? Facilitator training provided by ANCA. Outdoor natural spaces for discussion.
- DEI – diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Mirror the community.
- Identify the barriers.
- Feel more aware re: connections; not just nature center - perhaps environmental community center.
- How do people, the land, building/interpretive center fit in?
- Diversity of all, including minorities, education, sizes, needs, focus, youth, have a component to include at the Summit.
- Respond to what communities want in an outdoor program.
- Diversity.
- Provide resources for organization to reach diverse audiences. (1)
- Offer support for those who need to increase the sustainability of their centers and to market their services and role in the community. Nationally help to elevate the image of nature centers from places with dusty collections to places where the community can work, play and learn and benefit from others who come to visit.
- ANCA should be facilitating the ability of nature centers to be the community resources they need to be.
- Help nature centers strengthen their ability to be highly visible in their communities to citizens and decision makers. This transcends visitation. Nature Centers should perceive the traditional and social media as a means of education and advocacy.
- Promote positive support and growth among nature centers and their leadership, thereby increasing the professional goals of the community.
- Continue to help us connect to our user groups, both those that do already use us, and those that don’t know they need us!
- ANCA should help to promote environmental and cultural awareness in our communities.

V. ANCA helps nature centers and professionals to collaborate with each other.

A. Collaborations

- Collaborate with other similar conferences and organizations. Consider a joint conference like we did with pre-school.
- Facilitating ongoing collaboration between nature centers
- How do we partner with social justice issues in our community?
- ANCA needs wider focus than just nature centers; more broadly identify & connect with, e.g. outdoor recreation, community garden, environmental justice - don’t lose
ANCA identity, partner and create coalitions; have joint-summit bi-annually with development tracks, etc. Value in NAAEE and NAI.

- Research collaborations, e.g. community assessments - then share out.
- Opportunity to partner/market with other environmental organization.
- An opportunity to examine the profession and what professionals not only need now but will in the future (personally and professionally).
- Education for ANCA members, offering networking opportunities for members to have access to resources and partnerships.
- Connect professionals to one another through the ANCA organization network so that they may collaborate and help each other.
- To make it easier for us to network, and to communicate with one another in sharing successes and failures.
- Provide ways to collaborate: traveling exhibits, sharing program resources, etc.
- Marketing, recruiting other ANCA members/organizations to help.
- Support/promote/expand views on both 1.) Health benefits—fore children— the Rx to outdoor play, “Bill of Rights for Outdoor Play” and for adults; stress reduction, obesity, etc. 2.) Educational benefits—partnering with the North American Association of Environmental Education in some way for Nature Center relevance and necessity in local communities, allowing for more/easier accessibility than say National Parks/Preserves etc.
- ANCA can provide channels for communication among centers and offer suggestions for best practices.
- Supporting collaborative efforts between member organizations and other national EE networks like NAAEE, NAI and Children & Nature network.

B. Summit and Follow-Up

- Record videos of presentations and create webinars to share with the ANCA membership as a whole.
- Summit attendees’ love the “safe zone” don’t lose the safe zone but expand the reach of ANCA to more levels of management.
- Examine data of each region and compare to the “rate of return” for summits.
- We asked at the table if the new leaders could have a 1/2-hour phone conversation with pat welch (also at table and known by new leaders) how much they would pay, for 4 one on one conversations of 1/2 hour they said between 150 and 200 dollars this would be like under mentoring for a particular period of a post summit follow up.
- Could increase ANCA membership as organizations would send staff to summit for PD.
- Have to read monographs.
- ANCA should also serve as a bridge-builder among nature centers nationwide, beyond what is currently offered at the annual Summit. I am comparing this to the TEDx events that accentuate the traditional TED events and accelerate practice on a more personal level.
VI. ANCA continues to provide excellence in its current professional services.

A. Professional Services – Current

- Professional peer support.
- Webinars and other training opportunities.
- Providing resource materials.
- Help address “situational interests.”
- Develop, revise, and share industry BPs.
- Continue mentoring, conducting peer consults, and networking (Summits, regional meetings).
- Reciprocal list... are centers promoting it... is there a link on your website.
- “Help keep us out of jail” – non-profit management help.
- Continue to inspire us! Be our cohort.
- Helping keep members aware of trends in society with bearing on environment, society and nature center directors, the example given is the trend toward nature-based preschools. An example that everyone is working on to varying degrees of success is diversity.
- Status of Audubon economic impacts of nature centers is there and update blue ribbon report was great help.
- Serve as a safe place to have difficult conversations on difficult, or controversial topics, serve a catalyst.
- Networking.
- Model and collect best practices.
- Provide benchmarking opportunities: one example is the growing participation in third space studio.
- Basic standards, board structure, etc.
- Best practices and how to continue that expertise? Monographs, best practices? Upgrading and downloadable monographs. (7)
- How to share listserv with other staff on one’s staff.
- Continue to offer relevant workshops, newsletter articles, etc. on education as well as executive director issues.
- A forum to share thoughts questions.
- Providing resources managers need for master planning, fundraising, hiring, operations, grant opportunities, etc. I use the example documents more than anything else! I would love to see more best practices and example programs and documents.
- Professional development, support in certification/ auditing best practices, planning support services, creating spaces and opportunities for the development and continuation of networks and support services for Nature Centre operations.
- Continue the Annual summit but with more geographic diversity.
- Networking, sharing - in order to improve us individually.
- Offer support for new innovative programs and exhibits with free materials, lists of contracted instructors and exhibit designers, and seminars and conferences.
• Continue to support Nature Center leaders with safe opportunities for venting, gathering new ideas, recharging, becoming more well-rounded professionals. Maybe even develop a formal educational track for addressing mental health issues like burnout.
• Supporting the people who are working to make the impact by providing resources, cutting edge info, and networking. More of what it is doing now!
• Providing a platform for sharing information and ideas, inspiring us to achieve greater goals through our missions.
• Keep Nature Center Administrators up-to-date with information and training as the profession and the field changes.
• Provide multiple platforms for members to share information as well possibly an online source to share things such as waivers, by-laws, lesson plans etc.
• As a resource center - for tangible resources as well as advice/mentoring.
• To facilitate partnerships, professional development, research, webinars, etc. I think you are doing it.
• The ANCA can play a key role in this by facilitating networking opportunities between nature centres, both in person and online, to support the exchange of ideas and best practices.
• ANCA should serve as a platform for developing and sharing best practices and fostering networking, as well as helping the sector speak and act with a unified voice as possible.
• Assuring that nature center leaders have the operational, financial, fundraising and community relation skills essential to sustaining their facilities.
• Pretty much what you are currently doing with the wealth of info on your website and the quarterly meeting throughout our community.
• ANCA’s role is to assist members in being current and professional.
• Facilitate the tools necessary to achieve impacts stated in #1 above.
• Providing data and resources, sharing best practices, and encouraging innovation. Essentially what you are already doing.
• Assisting the nature centers in myriad ways: helping them with structural, governance, financing decisions; finding resources to ameliorate some of the expenses like insurance by allying itself with providers who understand the field and are willing to underwrite it.
• **ANCA should provide services that help administrators do their jobs in a thoughtful, responsible, compassionate manner. From what I can tell, you already do this!**
• Provide resources and support to organizations. ANCA has done a good job of connecting people through discussion boards and at conferences--perhaps ANCA could facilitate webinars, monthly topical discussions, or something similar that could help with professional development. Maybe topics such as marketing, fundraising, partnering?
• Help administrators, many without MBAs, to address the technical aspects of running an organization. Engage in philosophical, strategic and programmatic discussions about how to accomplish mission of nature centers--which are different than distant national parks. Most readily available methods were developed in distant exotic attractions, not places heavily focused on repeat visitors.
• ANCA should act in a support role, providing training, leadership, mentoring, and opportunities for collaboration and sharing.
• ANCA’s role in achieving this goal would be to support the professionals who are the “boots on the ground” with professional development opportunities and professional consultation services.
• ANCA should be the go-to resource and network for top administrative staff at nature and environmental learning centers.
• **Provide a place to share strategies and methods for engaging the community.**
• Training nature Center professionals and fostering communication and best practices among members.
• Improve administrators' ability to create thriving programs.
• I think ANCA should support the Nature Center Administrators as they work to fulfill the missions of their facilities. Our mission is to Preserve history, protect habitat, and promote harmony with nature. I am working to rebuild trails after Hurricane Harvey and redesign our master plan in response to the damage we incurred. Helping other sites plan for resiliency, disaster prep and response might be a new idea to consider.
• To help Nature Centers achieve their missions and goals.
• Help member organizations achieve their goals and missions of environmental and sustainability education.
• ANCA should be a resource for the diverse needs of nature centers: fundraising and development, professional learning, problem solving and specific needs support, electronic resources to use or adapt, marketing tools, site visits, structured mentoring program (including high quality mentor training).
• ANCA should continue to be a go to resource for information and help, and local groups should meet on a regular basis so that members can network, exchange ideas and assist each other.
• Make nature and environmental learning centers the most effective and impactful at achieving their mission.

VII. ANCA explores new opportunities to develop and serve the profession.
A. Professional Services – Future
• Consider a Nature Center Management certification / certificate.
• Develop and articulate a code of ethics for our profession.
• GIS nature center map?
• Develop Nature Center App.
• Provide resources to help NCs define and interface with our communities.
• Provide tools for organizations to make their voices heard.
• Community foundation model - fundraising arm and create mini-scholarships members can apply for.
• Financial planning - create donors, national impact, yet distribute at local level.
• Tailored for 1. Org types, 2. Size and life cycle, 3. Issue - is a precedent re: ANCA RELC Summit, the data will tell us what is needed Blue Ribbon Project & Audubon Study - continue to look at this to help members.
• Share surveys.
• More in – depth salary comparisons needed - are we at market for the industry.
• Retain staff issue - personnel issues, donor issues - e.g. can’t offer them benefits, compete with other organizations, provide continuing ed.
• Move from deficit mentality to abundance mentality.
• Services: salary survey or links to where they can find good salary surveys.
• Interim Exec Director services.
• Could ANCA develop like chalk talks via web on a topic, or panel of three exec who on
the second Thursday of the month will be on line for an hour to help with questions,
sort of phone an expert.
• Discussion of expanded new director’s tracks, talked about a Tuesday and 1/2 wed pre-
summit training that will help them know the questions they should be asking, the 1/2
wed to go on field trip to let them jell as a group and explore and renew, could be
Tuesday late afternoon, dinner with board, evening session then half Wednesday.
• Help organizations find grants and other sources of funding.
• Accreditation: (1)
  • Promoting this goal as a strategic priority in the profession and providing tools and case studies
    for successful implementation.
  • Provide best practices on diversity and inclusion in EE programs and hiring practices, youth
development programs. Offer grant funding to support EE programs for populations that can’t
afford to pay.
  • Be a clearing house and cross roads of ideas, creative thinking, other professionals, tried and
true as week avant-garde approaches to all a nature center is.
  • ANCA should support nature centers through access to online resources, workshops, and a
platform for experience sharing.
  • One of the roles I am most interested in is how ANCA helps nature centers understand their
responsibilities in a different light when they also offer licensed preschool programs. Running a
nature center is quite different than running a licensed preschool or childcare center, and so are
the commitments to families, children, and staff. I would like to see tailored professional
development for nature center administrators, so they might better understand these differences
and support the nature preschool communities they serve. Likewise, for nature centers that may
want to start a licensed nature preschool, ANCA might also offer tailored consulting. I would love
to have a conversation to see how I might help ANCA in this regard.
  • Encourage more regional summits via grants, ANCA staff support or by collaboration with other
national organizations to co-host. This could be a great membership recruiting tool for ANCA.
But those in the Western US may need assistance to do multiple day event to make travel time
worth it.
  • Nature centers need a structure to hang their mission on. Buildings, personnel, trails, exhibits
are all in motion, changing with the trends of the community. ANCA should help facilitate the
creation of new visions and directions through time.
  • Training and networking to see how others are working with similar programs.
  • Create partnerships with national organizations that share the above impacts.
  • Serve as a resource for best practices and convene meetings of like-minded organizations.
Assistance with grants and other fundraising solutions would be amazing.
  • Give professional development support and guidance to Parks and Rec and Natural Science
Education Staff.
  • Educate centers about this possible role for nature centers.

B. About ANCA
• Retain, expand/grow – internally (staff) and externally (member organizations).
• Be the louder voice for the profession and environmental advocacy.
• Change ANCA Name? Depending on history and timeline; nature center, farms, preserves, museums, interpretive facility, EE, nature preschool, food justice, environmental public health, social justice movement.

• Avoid large expansion and losing our ANCA culture; our specialty.

• Size of institutions - design for; other options beyond Summit and Consults and Regional.

• Would need to hire a lobbyist – increase fees to help support?

• Increase our membership – but how big do we want to go. Would we lose something by being too big? (2)

• ANCA should be known as the premier resource for anyone who is doing environmental work. (6)

• Plot 1400 on a map, where are the gaps, is ANCA reaching everyone? Be strategic.

• ANCA has long had its original role, of providing support for nature center HEADS. Over the years, it has also moved into the role of providing overall support for NATURE CENTERS, with its publications, peer consults, and by sharing “best practices” (for non-profit governance, administration matters, & EE techniques). Personally, I like this shift, so that in essence ANCA would become well-known as “the national nature center organization” (not just the national NC org for NC heads). Thus, as doctors have the AMA, and lawyers have the ABA, ANCA would be the global or national voice of nature centers and all those who work for or support them (including Staff, Board, Volunteers, Donors, Partners, & Supporters). Then ANCA could play two related roles: (1) support for nature centers (helping them fulfill their EE Missions), & (2) get the word out directly to the general public about the importance of EE and environmental science, using marketing, lobbying, etc. With all the good scientific information generated, produced, and shared by the hundreds of ANCA-member nature centers, surely, we could be a clearinghouse for that information. NOT an archive or a repository; a clearinghouse. For example, on ANCA’s website (or in answer to questions to an ANCA toll-free #) (or at special ANCA events?), we could steer people wishing to learn about birds, by listing the most popular birdwatching books, websites, apps, speakers, birding institutes, etc. So ANCA wouldn’t be pretending to be an expert on birds; ANCA would be an expert on informing the public where bird info may be found.

• To boldly lead us into a sustainable future.

• I find that ANCA’s support of my professional goals, and nurturing/identifying a peer group who “gets it” and can provide answers and support is really crucial for my long-term involvement in this field.

• Providing leadership, resources, and community.

• To serve as a source of education in all facets of Nature Center organization and management.

• ANCA’s role is to serve as the recognized leader in supporting local nature centers by leading the way in innovative programming.

• Not everyone can make it to a Summit or afford peer consults. How else are you helping us talk to each other? Is it just a newsletter and Google groups? Those are great, but there are dozens of other possible tools: social media, webinars, more regional meetings. I don’t mean to sound negative, and maybe I need to put more effort into finding you, but you just don’t seem to have much of a presence in areas where I think you could offer more opportunities to help us all share what we know.

• Provide leadership and resources to fulfill our mandate.
• **Serve as the visionary,** gathering the minds and talents of members to execute the vision collaboratively. Ensure membership is value-added for EVERY level of expertise of ANCA members.

• **More support in local meetings. The NY members haven’t met in a few years?**

• **ANCA should be a resource for all Nature Centers.** ANCA meetings are an opportunity to share our best practices with other administrators to help each other function at the highest level possible. I think that ANCA should also be a place where members can access and share documents to assist one another. We create the largest impact in our own communities but can help each other on a national and global level.

• **At national level, more of the same. At local level, more assistance in establishing robust local groups.**

• **To empower the nature centers that are our members through networking, resources for administrators, etc.**

• **I believe ANCA serves communities indirectly by serving the nature centers that are directly impact communities.**

• **Big question. Short answer:** Continue to make centers/organizations the best they can be. This will impact the community as whole the most. The more centers/organization ANCA reaches and helps, the stronger the profession will be, and the most impact is made. It seems to me ANCA has a pretty strong and established goal and model to do so. So maybe more resources this year should be aimed at targeting centers/organizations not aware of ANCA and bring them in?
Appendix B: Vision of Success

Vision of Success

A vision of success is a time-framed process to establish overarching goals for the organization; a desired, practical set of statements for the organization's future. Vision of success is founded upon the organization's mission and values. Vision statements tend to be broad and will serve as the basis to develop specific strategies (how to reach the vision). Please consider the following question and write your answer in concise statements. Bring this completed worksheet with you to the workshop.

Mission

The Association of Nature Center Administrators promotes and supports best leadership and management practices for the nature and environmental learning center profession.

Question: What should ANCA achieve by the year 2025?

It is a good time to sit back and look ahead—during good times—rather than to have to put out fires. B. Kramer
Appendix C: Workshop

ANCA SP Workshop
Feb 2-3, 2018

Appendix- Original List of Ideas

Below are the original ideas generated in the all group brainstorm and discussion of the participants best ideas to the key question. Statements in bold were selected to discuss in depth, and those with a number following the statements are the total votes received.

What should ANCA achieve by 2025?

1. Communication strategy to reach a wide demographic-generations.
2. Grow services to include accreditation while gathering data to help establish metrics & measurable criteria to determine Best Practices and fiscal sustainability.
3. Develop tools to measure NC’s collective impact. 6
4. Recognized as leading resource for reliable information about Nature Center operations, programs, and advocacy. 10
5/43. (5)Develop, promote, teach advocacy for environmental practices for local environmental arena. (43) Invest in advocacy. 2
6/8. (6)ANCA has become a diverse thriving group of leaders. (8)ANCA has become the diverse, equitable and inclusive organization. 33
7. ANCA is a household name.
9/40. (9)ANCA will achieve financial stability & strength to expand service. (40)Strengthen ANCA organizational capacity to remain competitive & support new initiatives. 42
10. ANCA has a fulltime team of career staff.
11. Refine delivery of Best Practices to leaders; intentional to who we are creating for.
12. [There was no number 12.]
13. Create a Professional Development Model that encourages upward mobility in the NC profession.
14. Attract national funding to provide $ to Nature Centers.
15. Maintain active/used Face to Face gatherings of our profession.
16. Provide tools to nature centers to develop diverse teams.
17. Foster social, emotional connections.
18. Consider rebranding options.
19. Provide unified inspirational voice for protecting the natural world.
20. Teach, emulate, model and mentor Best Practices.
21. Help position nature centers as critical pieces of our communities. 7
22. Explore collaborative & partnerships with other national organizations to enhance ANCA outreach & mission.
23. Develop a suite of electronic tools to provide resources to members.
24. ANCA will provide training & professional opportunities beyond the Summit & regional meetings.
25. Summit is still considered the primary event for our members.

26. Grow members to 1000.

27. Encourage common themes at regional meetings connected to the Summit.

28. Create an on-line following that transcends NC’s—anyone interested in nature.

29. Achieve continued respect for bringing best ideas from across a spectrum of industries to nature centers.

30. Support young/new leaders in the profession.

31. Build an EE pyramid scheme—pop up nature centers, train the trainer, etc.

32. A new website by 2025.

33. Connect healthy lifestyle to a healthy environment.

34. Maintain and promote core values of ANCA & NC’s while responding & adoption to trends & research.

35. Continues to be a global model for NC enhancement.

36. Create membership/marketing plan that addresses size, retention, & recruitment of members.

37. Increase engagement of growing membership from newbies to veterans—ANCA organizational structure represented.

38. Provide global support for NC’s to connect and share best practices.

39. Establish advocacy themes.

40. Engage diverse communities to model sustainable behaviors.

41. Have resources (with partnerships) to offer annual grants.

42. ANCA will promote careers at NC’s so the best & brightest will compete for employment.

43. ANCA is invited to the table.

44. Capture deep knowledge & ability to capitalize & share those resources.

45. Increase fund raising.

46. Capitalize growing trends that businesses invest & partner with social trends.

47. Identify additional resources by meeting with other national organizations.

48. Check back with members annually for listening & responding to their needs.
Appendix D: What should ANCA Achieve Categories

**Marketing and Communications**
- Communication strategy to reach a wide demographic.
- Consider rebranding options.
- Create an online following that transcends nature centers to anyone interested in nature.
- A new website by 2025.
- Create a membership and marketing plan that addresses size, retention, and recruitment. Decide if reaching 1,000 members by 2025 is the right goal.
- Check back with members annually, listening and responding to their needs.
- Increase engagement of growing membership from newbie to veteran. ANCA organizational structure represented.

**Resources/Programs/Services**
- Grow services to include accreditation.
- Develop a tool to measure nature center’s collective impact.
- Develop, promote, and teach environmental advocacy practices.
- Refine delivery of best practices to leaders.
- Professional development model that encourages upward mobility in the nature center profession.
- Have resources (with partners) to offer annual grants.
- Maintain face-to-face gatherings.
- Provide tools to nature centers to develop diverse teams.
- Capture deep knowledge in ANCA network and share this knowledge.
- Build an EE pyramid scheme- pop up nature centers, train the trainer.
- Provide global support for nature centers to connect and share best practices.
- Develop a suite of electronic tools to provide resources to members.
- ANCA will provide training and professional opportunities beyond Summit.
- Encourage common themes at region meetings that connect to Summit.

**Core Values**
- ANCA has become a diverse, thriving group of leaders.
- Foster social and emotional connections.
- Teach, emulate, model, mentor best practices.
- Support young/new leaders into the profession.
- Maintain and promote core values of ANCA and nature centers while responding to trends and research.
- Continues to be a global model for nature center enhancement.

**Aspiration and Vision**
- ANCA is a household name.
- Provide unified inspirational voice for protecting natural world.
- Help position nature center as critical parts of our communities.
- Connect healthy lifestyles to a healthy environment.
- Recognized as leading resource for operations, programs, and advocacy.
- ANCA is invited to the table.

**Organizational Sustainability**
- Strengthen ANCA organizational capacity to remain competitive, financial stability.
- Engage diverse community to model sustainable behaviors.
- ANCA has a full team of career staff.
- Attract funding to provide money to nature centers.
- Achieve continued respect for bringing best ideas from across spectrum of industries to nature centers.
- Increase fundraising.

**Partnerships and Collaborations**
- Explore collaborations and partnerships with other networks of organizations.
- Capitalize growing trend in social business.
- ANCA will promote careers at nature centers to attract the best and brightest.
Appendix E: Participants

Staff

Jen Levy
Caitlin Fader

Board

Iain MacLeod
Pam Musk
John DeFillipo
Jenn Wright
Mary McKinley
Kitty Pochman
Brooks Paternotte
Amber Parker
Francis Velazquez
Jason Meyer
Vera Vollbrecht Roberts
Kay Carlson

Facilitator

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Appendix F: Action Plans

Please see the Action Plans here.
Appendix G: Strategic Plan Champion Position Description

**Strategic Plan Champion Position Description**

**Background:**
To successfully implement a strategic plan the process needs a champion. The champion is a person that becomes the link between the stated actions of the plan and the people who are identified to its implementation. The champion becomes the SP’s ambassador.

**Champion’s Goal:**
Encourage follow through with the plan’s implementation and communicate the results.

**Role/Responsibility:**
- Keep track of the action plans.
- Contact and encourage any staff/board member that has a specific action plan assignment, especially with deadlines.
- Make sure the strategic plan has a place holder at each board meeting and/or staff leadership meeting and determine what should be reported by whom by when.
- Establish an annual review process to evaluate the implementation.
- Assist the coordination of sharing information among individuals and teams for the strategies and action plans.
- Identify resources needed to implement the strategies and action plans and serve as advocate for those resources.
- Use the plan’s priorities to help the organization stay on track with its strategies and action plans.

**Who should/should not be the champion?**
- Should not be the Executive Director
- Should not be the Board President (or Executive Directors supervisor)
- Should be someone who has participated in the planning process.
- Should be a board or community member.
- Could be an administrative staff specifically assigned to the role of champion as a major if not exclusive part of their job.
- Could be a combination of a board/community member with an assigned administrative staff.

**Length of Service:**
If the champion is a volunteer then it could be a 2 year commitment. If a staff member is champion it could be the length of the plan’s time frame.

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