



**SEACOAST
SCIENCE CENTER**

**Seacoast Science Center
Strategic Plan
07.02.2018**



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Statement of Purpose

The Seacoast Science Center (SSC), a 501 (c)-3 organization, has been providing transformative educational experiences in Odiorne Point State Park, on behalf of New Hampshire Division of Parks and Recreation, since 1992. This includes:

- Providing the visiting public year-round interpretive facilities and exhibits featuring the ocean and marine environment as well as the natural historic and cultural features of the Park.
- Offering a range of general interest and specialized environmentally-based educational and interpretive programs for all ages on a year-round basis.
- Co-promotion of SSC and the Park.
- Providing administrative services for the operation of the Center premises and a point of contact for the public in the Park.

Over time, SSC has developed its signature brand of marine and environmental education based on the belief that through first-hand interactions, people establish personal connections with the natural environment. Through these meaningful connections people's awareness and appreciation of our natural resources increases, as well as their understanding of how our cultural history has influenced and has been influenced by those same natural resources. Further, SSC believes that through increased awareness and appreciation, people will be motivated to take actions in their daily lives to help to sustain our environment and a healthy World Ocean.

The Seacoast Science Center's 25th Anniversary was an opportune time to give deliberate consideration to the future of the institution. If we listen to our history, learn from our visitors, members, donors, and partner organizations, then dare to dream, we can envision a future for the Center where, with single-minded focus, we are actively working toward creating an environmentally literate, conservation-minded constituency that advances our vision of a world that places value on our natural resources and on an abundant, sustainable, healthy World Ocean. The ultimate goal of any strategic plan is to both advance a thoughtful perspective on a grander future and lay out an approachable, purposeful roadmap to the realization of that future.

The vision presented in this document is fundamentally important to the Seacoast Science Center for the sake of the Center's focus, relevance and sustainability. This plan re-establishes the vision and mission of SSC, identifies 4 fundamental goals of the organization for the next 3 years, and identifies 6 core institutional values that must be reflected in Center programs and business activities. The core values of the institution will also be represented in the metrics that will be monitored to evaluate institutional progress, outcomes, and adherence to this plan. In addition, the plan identifies 6 strategic priorities that speak to improving and sustaining critical areas of the Seacoast Science Center business model.

This Strategic Plan is intended to be a "living document" that can be adapted through periodic review and revision. We recognize that occasional realignment of the Seacoast Science Center's institutional goals and strategic priorities will be necessary to ensure that the Center is responsive to



the needs of its community and to any changes in the educational and business environments in which the Center operates.

Vision, Mission & Goals

Our Vision

The Seacoast Science Center envisions a healthy World Ocean.

Our Mission

To spark curiosity, enhance understanding and inspire conservation of our Blue Planet.

Our Institutional Goals

(3 year goals of the institution not goals for the institution)

- Broaden our Impact: More community members, including those of diverse backgrounds, are engaged with SSC.
- Amplify our Message: The community sees SSC as a safe space, integral to the cultural fabric of the Seacoast, which advocates for science, critical thinking, and conservation of our natural resources, with focus on the World Ocean.
- Foster a Culture of Philanthropy: The community regards SSC as a place that shares and reflects their values and is worthy of investment.
- Elevate the Visitor Experience: Visitors' experiences are rich, meaningful, and inspiring.



The Core Values of the Seacoast Science Center

The Importance of Environmental Conservation and the World Ocean

The Seacoast Science Center believes that the World Ocean plays a prominent role in our daily lives; moderating our climate, providing sustenance and valuable resources, as a place of biodiversity and natural wonder, and as a critical cultural mainstay for seacoast New Hampshire. We also recognize that the actions we take in our daily lives can impact our natural environment and the World Ocean in both positive and negative ways. In turn, we realize that we have an inherent responsibility to nurture and conserve our natural resources, advance ocean health, and preserve our deep cultural connections to coastal land, the coastal watershed, and the sea.

The Inspiration of Locale

We believe that Odiorne Point State Park plays an integral role in the Seacoast Science Center achieving its mission. The Park provides unique opportunities for impactful educational experiences on a wide variety of topics related to the natural environment and how people have interacted with coastal areas and the ocean throughout history. Engaging visitors, first-hand, in the significant natural features and history of Odiorne Point State Park facilitates learning, appreciation, and the understanding of the interconnectedness between land and sea. It is our commitment to leverage our oceanside location within Odiorne Point State Park to create exceptional experiences that form lasting impressions for our visitors, students, members, donors and volunteers.

The Power of Personal Experiences

We believe that personal experiences and engagement are fundamental to meaningful education and hold the key to conserving the World Ocean. Through education and the interpretation of Odiorne Point State Park, we can foster awareness, enhance environmental literacy, advance natural resource conservation ethics, and move people to action, facilitating change that will help to ensure a healthy, abundant, and sustainable natural environment and World Ocean for future generations. The Seacoast Science Center's brand of experiential education features engaging exhibits and programs that relate content in ways that are approachable, engaging, and are designed to foster personal connections to Odiorne Point State Park, the diverse environments of seacoast New Hampshire, and a healthy World Ocean.



Meaningful Relationships

We believe that the Seacoast Science Center's human resource is its most valuable asset. We value a diverse and inclusive community, and will model, promote, and implement this vision. We value:

- The Center's passionate, committed, and innovative staff.
- Our partners at NH Division of Parks & Recreation, with whom we have cultivated the valuable public/private partnership that is the Seacoast Science Center. Through this partnership, SSC has become the premier educational asset of the NH State Parks system and an important cultural asset in the region to the benefit of NH residents, regional school systems and the broader general public.
- The SSC family of volunteers whose personal investment adds immeasurably to the richness and culture of the institution.
- A participatory Board of Directors who are our strongest advocates in the community while providing guidance, wisdom and balance.
- Our Members, who are seen as the Center's extended family, who have chosen to be invested in SSC.
- Our Donors, who are pleased and excited to have financially invested in SSC and grateful for the impact that the Center's brand of education can have on all its visitors, program participants, and the larger seacoast community.

The Spark of Innovation

We believe that only through innovation can we consistently provide an engaging contemporary visitor experience. We must innovate in order to keep the message and the brand of the Seacoast Science Center fresh and relevant. We must employ modern communication tools for contemporary constituents. We must keep our content current so that we can do our part to prepare our students, visitors, and constituents to address present and future challenges to the health, abundance, and sustainability of the world ocean. We must also keep the institution current by employing the best business practices of a 21st century non-profit organization. Our education, fundraising, business practices, and communications must be best in class so that we can be a nimble and efficient institution, relevant to a modern constituency.

The Necessity of Sustainability

We believe that the Seacoast Science Center must be an example in our community. What we teach, what we advocate for, how we act as individuals and representatives of the institution, and how we operate as an organization must represent a positive example of how to live in a manner that helps to sustain a healthy World Ocean. The Center is a member of a world-wide network of museums, educators and conservationists who have a responsibility to, through their collective missions, contribute to an expanded worldview supported by fact and science. The Seacoast Science Center must embrace change, not for sake of change, but for the purpose of adapting its practices to an evolving worldview shaped by science and collaboration.



Strategic Priority 1: Education through Fostering Personal Connections

- Be the premier provider of high-quality, innovative, environmental science and natural resource-related Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) school programs in the region. This includes on site and outreach programming, virtual learning and expanding the SSC program base to middle and high school students.
- Offer engaging camp programs that create personal connections to nature by employing both time-tested and innovative teaching methodologies which build upon natural resource conservation ethics,, regional cultural history, and environmental sustainability.
- Offer consistently compelling, relevant and informative public programs built around a naturalist-facilitated education experience for visitors through the lens of Seacoast New Hampshire and Odiorne Point State Park.
- Be the premiere parent-child nature exploration Pre-K program in the NH seacoast.
- Leverage the broad public appeal of marine mammals and the SSC Marine Mammal Rescue program to establish marine mammal program content as a feature of the SSC education portfolio. Marine mammal programing can foster personal connections with the World Ocean in ways on par with SSC's iconic rocky shore intertidal programs.

Strategic Priority 2: The Visitor Experience through Public Programs & Exhibits

- Recognize that first impressions are lasting impressions and that professional SSC visitor services staff versed in topics pertinent to a healthy World Ocean, environmental sustainability, and the natural and cultural history of Seacoast NH and Odiorne Point State Park, are the institution's primary public interface.
- Invest in exhibit development, acknowledging that high quality exhibits are critical elements of an exemplary museum experience and visitors expect engaging, regionally relevant exhibits that are well maintained and frequently rotated.
- Ensure responsible care and ethical treatment of animals kept for exhibition and educational purposes because interaction with live animals is fundamental to the Seacoast Science Center experience.



Strategic Priority 3: Honoring Our Partnership with NH Div. of Parks & Recreation

- Recognize that Odiorne Point State Park is a critical element of an exceptional visitor experience and that it adds an important dimension to the interpretive strategies and messaging of SSC programs and exhibits.
- Sustain a cohesive public-partnership with the NH Division of Parks and Recreation that includes branding, marketing, interpretation and coordinated shared operational responsibilities within the Park.
- Engage visitors through opportunities that make a personal connection with the New Hampshire's coastal land and waters and the sea.

Strategic Priority 4: A Commitment to Institutional Growth

- Meet the evolving needs and expectations of Center's visitors and other constituents with capital expansion and re-scaling the Seacoast Science Center exhibits and facilities in ways that are consistent with, and highlight the regional importance of, the location within Odiorne Point State Park and seacoast New Hampshire.
- Institutionalize innovative thinking, professional development, and industry best practices to enable the Center to remain relevant, meeting the needs and expectations of its constituents.
- Include environmental sustainability and ecological impact in planning and implementation of all capital projects, building and grounds maintenance, and exhibit development so that the Center is an example to the community.
- Create and sustain a contemporary workplace as an investment in the Center's human resource.

Strategic Priority 5: A Culture of Philanthropy & Financial Stability

- Operate in a fiscally responsible, transparent manner with balanced budgets, financial accountability, and strategic reinvestment in the organization.
- Establish a *Culture of Philanthropy*, within the organization and its Board of Directors, placing emphasis on community relationships, donor cultivation, and charitable giving.
- Be acknowledged as an institution worthy investment for broad-based community capital support from the New Hampshire Seacoast region.



Strategic Priority 6: Enhancing Community Engagement & Brand Development

- Utilize a coordinated brand messaging throughout all Center communications, internal and external, with careful consideration of audiences, media channels and storytelling that draws on the core values of the SSC.
- Expound on the Center’s vision, mission, core values and community impact as our own best advocates.
- Be purposeful advocates for science, natural resource conservation, and a healthy World Ocean, advancing regionally relevant messaging to visitors and other constituents in the seacoast community as a means to foster personal connections to the coastal land and waters of seacoast New Hampshire and the greater World Ocean; inspiring them to take action to conserve our natural resources and World Ocean.