



STRATEGIC PLAN 2022



Developed in partnership with:



DAVID CATLIN
CONSULTING LLC

417-861-8875 ■ david@davidcatlin.com

VISION & MISSION

VISION

To connect people and nature.

MISSION

The mission of Wesselman Nature Society is to preserve and protect Wesselman Woods and Howell Wetlands for future generations through conservation, education, research, and to provide equal access to nature.

VALUES

CORE PRINCIPLES AND ETHICS

- **Bioregion:** Defined by the Ohio River Valley, we value the ecological and environmental integrity of our forests, rivers, and wetlands. We recognize the value of the socio-cultural assets of Indigenous peoples native to this land and those that occupy it now.
- **Diversity and Inclusion:** Successful conservation depends upon the representation and respect of all cultures, traditions, values, and needs of the community. We actively seek the opportunity to create diverse internal and external relationships to further our mission.
- **Respect:** We respect all forms of nature - living, nonliving, and Earth systems.
- **Interdependence:** We acknowledged the importance that we are all dependent on one another (Earth systems and all life). We understand that all life is in a process of learning in the urban ecosystems at Wesselman Woods and Howell Wetlands. We value and respect these systems that support all life.

QUESTIONS & STRATEGIES

The Planning Team focused on what we felt to be the seven most important strategic questions facing the organization and developed strategies to address each one.

QUESTION 1

What actions should we take to manage and protect the Nature Preserve and its forest?

Strategy 1.1: Retain an outside consultant for ecological and watershed assessment.

Objective: Develop a plan to identify and determine a scope of work for a consultation company.

Strategy 1.2: Partner with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources.

Objective: By 2024, we will develop a financial and technical partnership with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources for protecting the flora and fauna of Wesselman Woods.

Strategy 1.3: Increase volunteers for natural resources.

Objective: Develop +1 volunteer crew.

Strategy 1.4: Communicate with buffer zone properties.

Objective: Educate adjoining landowners about eco-safe practices.

Objective: Get at least one adjoining landowner to agree to an environmentally-friendly certification through Wesselman Woods or a third party.

QUESTION 1

Continued

Strategy 1.5: Incorporate funds for maintenance and security.

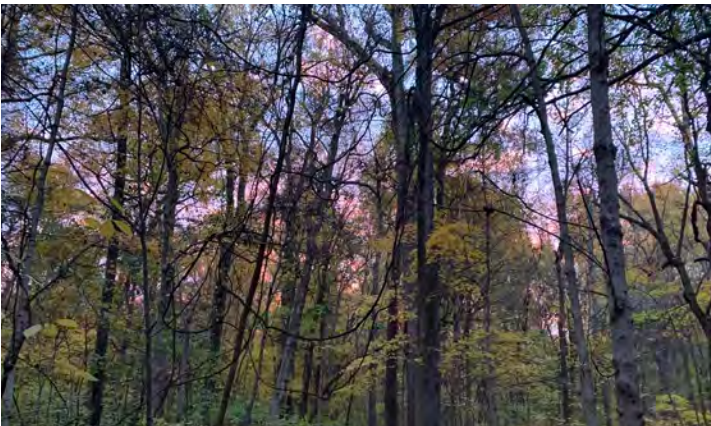
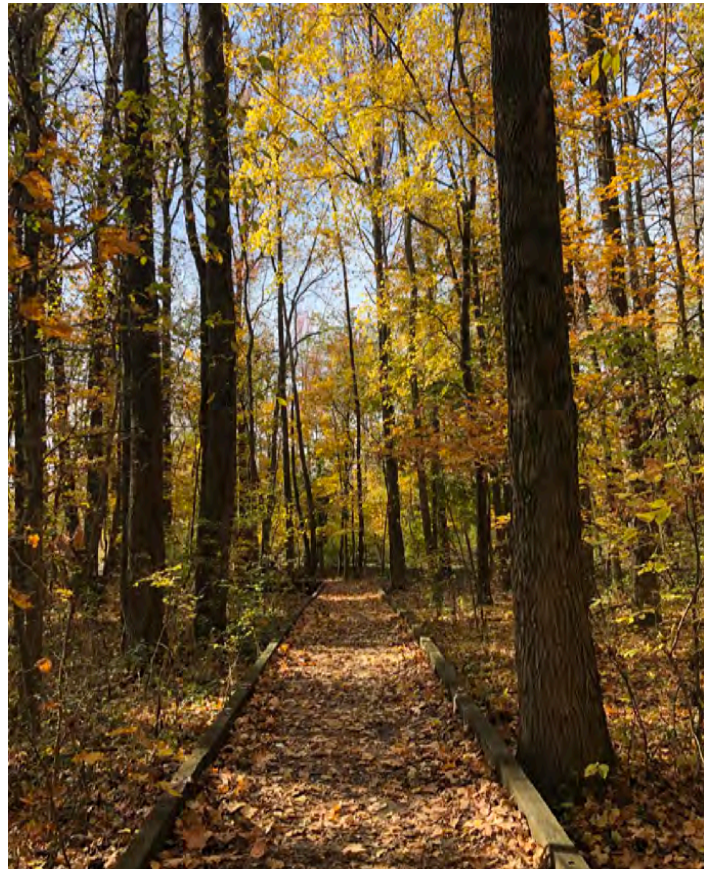
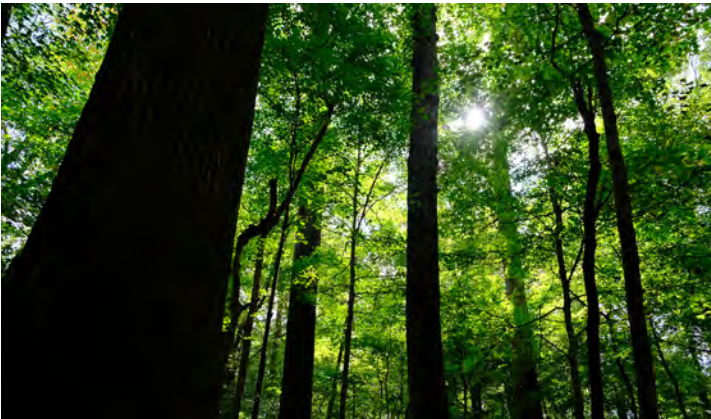
Objective: Develop at least \$100,000 in endowments and donations for facilities and operations by 2032.

Strategy 1.6: Complete inventory/infrastructure tracking (e.g., boardwalks, bridges, outside benches).

Objective: Develop a process to identify equipment and infrastructure that requires maintenance and replacement.

Strategy 1.7: Establish a path forward on preserve protection.

Objective: Develop a 25-year natural resources management plan for Wesselman Woods.





QUESTION 2

How do the City of Evansville and Wesselman Nature Society collaborate on a master plan that ecologically and recreationally benefits the region?

Strategy 2.1: Find partnerships with key stakeholders.

Objective: By the end of 2023, Wesselman Woods has identified and contacted key stakeholders for the City and Par 3 development.

Strategy 2.2: Develop and solidify a plan of action with key stakeholders.

Objective: By the end of 2024, Wesselman Woods will have solidified a plan of action the City.

Strategy 2.3: Create a capital campaign.

Objective: By the end of 2026, Wesselman Woods will have reached their financial contribution to the overarching City Parks Plan.

QUESTION 3

How do we effectively manage and finance Howell Wetlands?

Strategy 3.1: Hire one staff member (40 hours) for Howell Wetlands.

Objective: Hire one staff member (40 hours) for Howell Wetlands.

Strategy 3.2: Increase programming/events at Howell Wetlands.

Objective: Have one Howell Wetlands annual event and regular programs per year for perpetuity.

Strategy 3.3: Increase fundraising at Howell Wetlands.

Objective: By the end of 2023, we will have \$5,000 of earned revenue raised for Howell Wetlands.

Strategy 3.4: Find and enlist partners to support Howell Wetlands.

Objective: By the end of 2023, we will find five partners to help us support Howell Wetlands.

Strategy 3.5: Improve infrastructure at Howell Wetlands.

Objective: By the end of 2025, we will have improved the Howell Wetlands Shelter and boardwalks.

Strategy 3.6: Increase our promotion of Howell Wetlands.

Objective: By the end of 2022, we develop a regular schedule for promoting Howell Wetlands.





QUESTION 4

How do we attract and retain talented staff? How do we grow our staff and volunteers?

Strategy 4.1: Benchmark and implement competitive compensation and benefits.

Objective: Determine where Wesselman Woods stands compared to other nature centers and job types in Midwest nonprofit organizations (and nationally).

Objective: Retain more than 75% of current staff.

Strategy 4.2: Create a plan for career development.

Objective: Staff participate in minimum of 24 hours per year in career development activity.

Strategy 4.3: Enable employee engagement through staff and Board collaboration.

Objective: Require minimum volunteer hours for Board for specific events.

Strategy 4.4: Recognize employee achievements.

Objective: Include achievements in social media or newsletter quarterly and internally (staff meetings).

Strategy 4.5: Invite staff to Board meetings.

Objective: Encourage staff/Board collaboration by opening all/most Board meetings to staff.

QUESTION 5

How do we ensure financial security for the organization?

Strategy 5.1: Secure more federal, state, and city funding and engagement.

Objective: By the end of 2024, Wesselman Woods has identified and organized prospective city, state, and federal resources.

Strategy 5.2: Secure funding and engagement through the private sector (individuals, foundations, and businesses).

Objective: By the end of 2028, Wesselman Woods has doubled our private sector funding.

Strategy 5.3: Secure endowments.

Objective: By the end of 2025, Wesselman Woods will have achieved \$250,000 in endowment funds.

Strategy 5.4: Sustain regular programming and events.

Objective: By the end of 2025, Wesselman Woods developed and maintained regular programming and events.

Strategy 5.5: Increase number of memberships.

Objective: By the end of 2023, Wesselman Woods will have reached 1,000 memberships (different than number of members).





QUESTION 6

How do we make Wesselman Woods more diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible to all—both internally and externally?

Strategy 6.1: Remove barriers to Wesselman Woods by including accessibility days, expanding hours, and providing financial assistance.

Objective: By the end of 2023, hire an outside source to assess current state of affairs (Barriers: admission, transportation, language, physical barriers, time, messaging).

Objective: Revisit to reassess by the end of 2025.

Strategy 6.2: Expand local partnerships with Diversity-Equity-Inclusion-Accessibility (DEIA)-focused institutions.

Objective: Work with 10 DEIA local partners on programs and outreach (five per year).

Strategy 6.3: Educate and train staff and board on DEIA.

Objective: By the end of 2023, we will have completed the first training sessions.

Strategy 6.4: Diversify programming through outreach to under-represented groups in the community.

Objective: By the end of 2023 and every year forever, provide at least four outreaches to Title I schools per semester.

QUESTION 7

How do we maintain an engaged and effective Board?

Strategy 7.1: Recruit reliable and active committee members to become future Board Members.

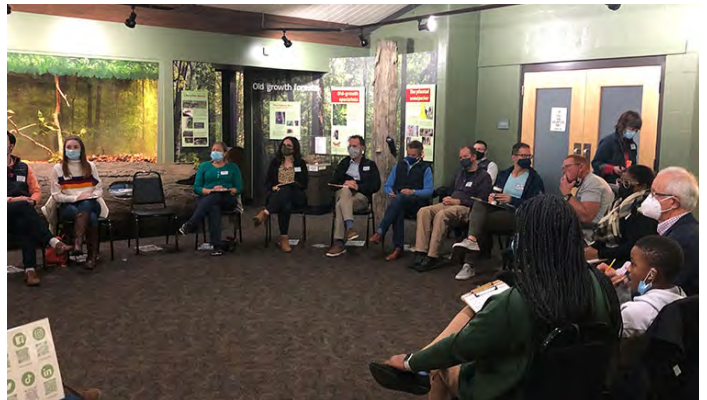
Objective: Recruit at least one non-board member volunteer on each committee in June of 2022.

Objective: Identify one board member from those candidates by the end of September 2022.

Strategy 7.2: Provide a full orientation of Wesselman Woods programs, events, and ecological importance to new and existing Board Members.

Objective: Create a Governance Committee to ground, orient, and train new and existing Board Members by the end of April 2022.





Strategy 7.3: Provide concise and impactful Board meetings in one hour unless specified.

Objective: In 2022, we will respect all Board and committee meetings' allotted time, predetermined by Board President and/or committee chairs.

Strategy 7.4: Ensure all Board Members are fully engaged and participating in the organization.

Objective: In 2022, Board Members' attendance and participation will be monitored, evaluated, and tracked.

Strategy 7.5: In 2022, we will maintain ways for Board Members to be engaged with Wesselman Woods outside of events and board meetings by inviting them to participate in unique volunteer opportunities.

Objective: By the end of 2022, Board members will have opportunities to engage with staff, volunteers, and members outside of board tasks.

Strategy 7.6: Celebrate the Board Members.

Objective: Beginning in Summer 2022, celebrate our Board members through a combination of website biographies and social media posts



info@wesselmanwoods.org • 812-479-0771 • wesselmanwoods.org

