



FRIENDS OF RYE NATURE CENTER *Annual Update 2023*



Nature At Your Doorstep

Imagine a world where everyone connects with nature. A place that allows both young and old to watch a turtle wade or clouds pass. A world where these observations spark the desire to not only coexist with our planet but to appreciate and protect it. This is the vision that Friends of Rye Nature Center (FRNC) seeks to create. At a time when so much seems overwhelming, our 47-acre preserve is a sanctuary where we can all find adventure, curiosity, and peace in nature.

This year, FRNC facilitated more than 40,000 experiences for individuals across all agegroups—children, teens, adults, and seniors—to explore nature. The Rye Nature Center stands as a community resource, offering educational programs and a place for those seeking a tranquil retreat.

As land stewards of our precious community park, FRNC's commitment can be seen in the hundreds of trees, shrubs, and wildflowers planted this year. Restoration work in some of the preserve's most sensitive areas, including Nanderwhere Pond and the Blind Brook riparian corridor, was paramount this year. You can read more about these projects in the enclosed pages.

Our vision only becomes reality because you work alongside us. FRNC is so grateful to all the volunteers and donors who have helped keep the Nature Center a haven for our community. Your donation today allows us to continue to offer quality programs, maintain and improve nature trails and exhibits, provide underserved populations with meaningful outdoor experiences, and develop new ways to connect people with nature.

With your help we can create a greener and brighter future for our planet.

With Gratitude,



Caitlin Layng
Board President



Christine Siller
Executive Director

Donate online at ryenaturecenter.org/annualappeal, by mailing the enclosed envelope, or by scanning one of the QR codes found on this mailing. We accept and appreciate employer matching gifts. If you would like to make a donation of stocks or securities, please contact Nicole Pennucci, Director of Development and Operations, at nicole@ryenaturecenter.org.



SCAN TO
DONATE!



Nature For All

We all benefit from time in nature, no matter our age. Our Forest School programs prioritize experiential, place-based, and inquiry-led activities. Both preschool classes and afterschool programs utilize the Forest School model to encourage children's appreciation of nature, while guest speakers, public programs, and My Naturalist & Me help broader ages deepen or discover their relationships with the natural world.

FRNC is committed to ensuring that financial constraints, transportation issues, and logistical challenges do not prevent participants from experiencing nature. Through our Nature Access Fund (NAF), FRNC brings nature education to underserved populations. NAF supports the Inner-City Scholarship Fund camp, which has brought students from Westchester, Manhattan, and the Bronx to Rye Nature Center to enjoy camp for the past fifteen summers. Additionally, NAF provides funding for scholarships and outreach initiatives, allowing FRNC to offer sustainability workshops to seniors, assist White Plains YWCA residents in establishing and tending a vegetable garden, and deliver hands-on science education to youth.



More information is available at ryenaturecenter.org/programs. Subscribe to our newsletter to be sure you receive communications about the latest program offerings.



OF QUALITY CONSERVATION
AND ENVIRONMENTAL
EDUCATION PROVIDED
TO OUR COMMUNITY

5,000
STUDENTS CONNECTING
SCIENCE CONCEPTS TO
THE NATURAL WORLD
THROUGH FIELD TRIPS
AND CLASSROOM VISITS

OVER 40,000
NATURE EXPERIENCES
DELIVERED TO CHILDREN,
FAMILIES, AND VISITORS



969
CAMPERS AND SCHOLARSHIP
STUDENTS EXPLORING THE
NATURE CENTER AND
LOCAL WATERWAYS



131
FOREST PRESCHOOLERS
SPENDING THEIR EARLY
CHILDHOOD YEARS
IMMERSED IN NATURE

Conservation Corner

Friends of Rye Nature Center's conservation staff and volunteers put in many hours to ensure the 47 acres remains a beautiful, thriving preserve. This year, the team continued their efforts to foster native biodiversity by planting 120 bushes, 192 trees, and 930 plugs across 44 native plant species. A second deer enclosure was also completed to cordon off part of the forest to protect the understory from overbrowsing deer.

As part of our Blind Brook restoration initiative, FRNC has been working with an environmental engineering firm to create plans for streambank stabilization and enhanced wetland habitats. This project is possible through the generous grants from Long Island Sound Futures Fund, Westchester Community Foundation, and Long Island Sound Stewardship Fund.

Nanderwhere Pond is a beloved site for program participants and casual visitors to enjoy and appreciate. After sustaining significant damage during Hurricane Ida, FRNC and the Little Garden Club of Rye committed to restoring this educational area through a Garden Club of America grant. Volunteers worked to clear the banks of invasives and replant natives that are beneficial to pond habitats. Be sure to take a hike out to the new and improved pond on your next visit!



1,000+

VOLUNTEER HOURS
THROUGH 14 EVENTS AND
23 INDIVIDUAL VOLUNTEERS

OVER 10,000

SPOTTED LANTERNFLIES
ELIMINATED AND 19 MATURE
TREES OF HEAVEN TREATED



2 TONS
OF INVASIVES
REMOVED

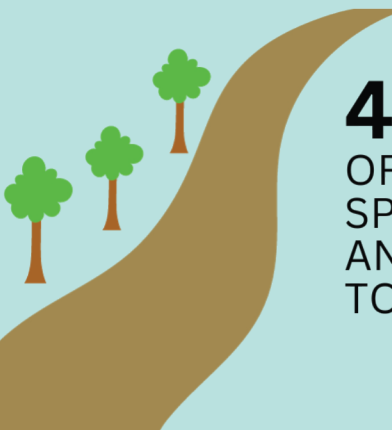
47 ACRES

OF TRAILS, OPEN
SPACE, FLORA,
AND FAUNA
TO DISCOVER



4 ACRES

CLEARED OF INVASIVE
WISTERIA AND
JAPANESE STILTGRASS



Strategic Plan

Earlier this year, FRNC adopted our latest Strategic Plan that considers the growth of our community and the variety of interests and needs this growth brings. We have isolated four main tenants that will guide the next three years of FRNC's programs and conservation efforts.



Nature Must Be Accessible

Develop more opportunities to engage and educate those in our community and beyond through updated programs with a focus on accessibility.



A Forest That Fosters Community

Promote our 47-acres as the community's space for recreation and conservation education and inspire all people to protect and invest in forest health.



Programs for All Generations

Ensure our program reach touches all ages including educational opportunities for senior citizens, teachers, adults, families, and students.



Facilities for Our Future

Provide a safe and enjoyable space for educational programs and visitors. Plan, design, and construct capital projects and improvements that support FRNC's growth, enhancement, and mission.

Visit ryenaturecenter.org/strategic-plan to learn more about these goals and our mission.



Climate Ride

On October 15, a team of nine cycling enthusiasts hit the rolling hills of northern Westchester to bike in Friends of Rye Nature Center's First Annual Climate Ride event! Climate Ride is a non-profit organization that organizes biking, running, and hiking events to help fund environmental causes.

FRNC has been a beneficiary of Climate Ride since 2020, but this year was the first year that we organized our own event. Our team was comprised of our Executive Director, Conservation Director, two Board Members, and five nature-minded cyclists. In addition to raising over \$50,000 to benefit FRNC's mission of conservation and environmental education, their participation helps inspire others to reflect on the climate crisis and take action to create a better future for our planet.

Our wheels are already turning planning next year's route...if you're passionate about biking and climate action, keep an eye out for details about our 2024 event!

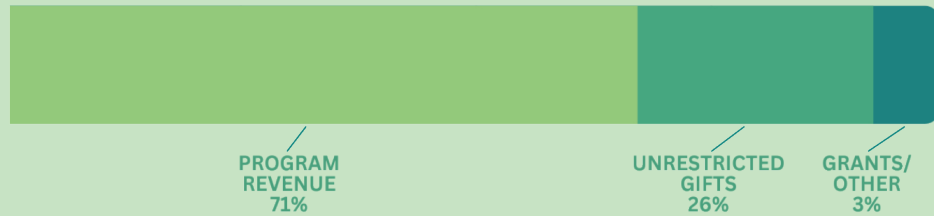


Our Financials

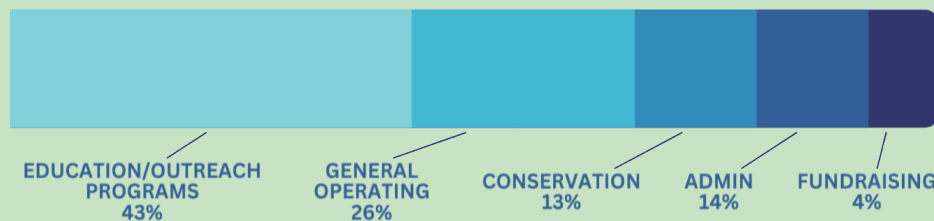
Fiscal Year 2022, which ended on December 31, 2022, marked the thirteenth consecutive year in which FRNC operated with a balanced budget. Earned income was \$1,984,320, increasing 9% from FY 2021. Investment income and the Payroll Protection Loan forgiveness were excluded from the year to year comparison. Expenses were \$1,899,730, an increase of 9.1% over FY 2021.

As fiduciary stewards of the organization's assets, the board and management staff of FRNC understand that responsible fiscal management is a critical obligation to the Nature Center, its donors, and the community. FRNC's President, Treasurer, and Executive Director are responsible for maintaining internal control over financial reporting and have designed and instituted such controls to provide reasonable assurance that financial reporting is accurate and reliable.

2022 REVENUE
\$1,984,320



2022 EXPENSES
\$1,899,734



ASSETS & LIABILITIES

CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS - \$673,555
 INVESTMENTS - \$1,298,900
 PROPERTY/ EQUIPMENT (LESS DEPRECIATION) - \$407,323
 LIABILITIES - \$510,043
NET ASSETS - \$2,379,778

Liabilities consist of accounts payable, accrued expenses, and unearned program revenue. Unearned program revenue is \$471,297 worth of tuition received prior to the year end for classes that will be conducted during the next year and will be recognized when the course is conducted. This report was prepared after the FY 2022 annual audit process.

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