

Friends of Rye Nature Center

Annual Update

2021



EDUCATION



CONSERVATION



COMMUNITY



Secure the Legacy of Your Bigger Backyard

Dear Friend,

What role does the Rye Nature Center play in your life? Do you walk the trails with your loved ones? Is it the route your children take to school? Does your preschooler explore the forest with our educators? Or perhaps it's your own special place to return to season after season. For so many, the Nature Center is a cherished sanctuary, and we are grateful for that role in your lives.

We are also thankful for the ways you have given back to the forest. Our community's love was more than apparent when Hurricane Ida's floods devastated the riparian forest near the brook. Over the course of two weeks and 200 hours of volunteer time, the damaged floodplain and various sections of Blind Brook were restored through the hands-on work of people aged 5 through 75.

It is this commitment to stewardship that has allowed Rye to keep these 47 acres preserved since 1959. As dramatic climate events continue to threaten this beautiful park, it will be your dedication and generosity which allow Friends of Rye Nature Center (FRNC) to keep pace with the challenges. We have so much work to do to ensure forest succession and regeneration, such as incorporating green infrastructure to improve the quality of water headed to the Long Island Sound. We also must maintain a robust program and conservation staff to meet the educational needs of our growing community.

Please remember the role Rye Nature Center plays for you and our whole city during this season of giving. When you support FRNC with a gift today, you are ensuring that this will be a place for all to meet, learn, play, and enjoy the beauty of nature for many decades to come.

With gratitude,

Christine Siller
Executive Director

Rob O'Connor
Board President

Donate online at ryenaturecenter.org/annualappeal, by mailing the enclosed envelope, or by scanning the QR code found on the reverse of this mailing. We accept and appreciate employer matching gifts. Donations of securities can be made by contacting Nicole Pennucci, Director of Development and Operations, at nicole@ryenaturecenter.org.

Conservation Corner



A Community Rallies to Clean Up RNC

It takes many hands and hours to maintain 47 acres of land. This effort is a collaboration of year-round and seasonal conservation staff, individual and volunteer groups, local garden clubs, and even preschoolers who love to pull garlic mustard. The most stunning display of support from our community was in September in the wake of the floods from Hurricane Ida. More than 80 volunteers provided over 200 hours of service to help clean up the debris in the banks of the Blind Brook.

The hurricane put a spotlight on the need to look at large-scale solutions and interventions for flood mitigation in our watershed. On November 16, FRNC hosted Kevin Dahms, a water resources engineer at Biohabitats, to educate our community on green infrastructure. A recording of this presentation and the ensuing discussion can be found on our website.

This fall, conservation projects have focused on planting native trees and shrubs. A major challenge continues to be combating invasive species and opportunistic plants that threaten the health of our forest. We remain committed to implementing our updated Habitat Management Plan and addressing how climate change is impacting our preserve.

Learning Outside



The Nature Renaissance Continues

After kicking off the summer with over 200 enthusiastic June Bugs, we welcomed 400 campers to our day camp and Paddle Adventure Camp. Our campers spent their days exploring the forest, doing science experiments, learning about natural history, and having fun. Our eighth through tenth grade group kayaked and hiked their way through the beautiful parks and waterways of the Hudson Valley while building an appreciation for the natural world. In-person field trips are at full capacity and students of all ages have enjoyed classes on apple cidering, the Long Island Sound, and animal adaptations. Weekly afterschool and Preschool Ecology classes are fully enrolled and we will be adding a fourth session of our Forest Preschool program for the coming school year. For more information about our programs, visit ryenaturecenter.org/programs.

Save the Date!

- January 14: Preschool Ecology Registration
- January 28: Summer Camp Registration
- February 12: Old-Fashioned Winter's Afternoon
- March 11: June Bugs Registration

Nature is for Everyone

Through our Nature Access Fund, outreach programs were able to return in full force in 2021! We began the year with a four-week program for students from the Community Resource Center in Mamaroneck. This series included our favorite late-winter activities such as shelter building, maple sugaring, and campfires.

This year, NatureStation, our mobile exhibit and classroom, has gone on a series of visits to St. Ann's in the Bronx, a program with the Ronald McDonald House, and plans to visit Our Lady of Victory school in Mt. Vernon. Through a partnership with Christ's Church, we hosted weekly, interactive classes for four camp groups from Blue Skies in Port Chester on topics like birding, animal adaptations, ponding, and pollinators.

During biweekly programs at the YWCA Residence in White Plains, our staff helped the residents maintain their garden which includes many herbs and vegetables. During harvest, the classes focused on how to transform the fruits of their labor into tasty treats.

In late August, we welcomed 96 scholarship students for the "greatest hits of camp!" They conducted experiments, enjoyed a special birds of prey show, and had fun exploring the preserve. This was the thirteenth summer we hosted the Inner-City Scholarship Fund students, and the third year we welcomed children from the Community Resource Center to our camp. We are extremely grateful for the special donors who underwrite these programs to keep nature accessible for everyone.



Financial Report: Fiscal Year 2020

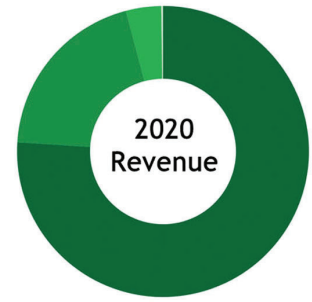
Revenue and Expenses

The Fiscal Year which ended on December 30, 2020, marked the twelfth consecutive year in which Friends of Rye Nature Center operated with a balanced budget. This report provides a summary of revenue and expenses on a cash basis and balance sheet results.

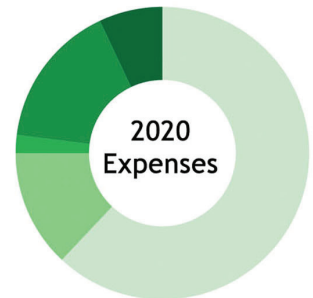
Aggregate revenue was \$1,408,865, decreasing 11% from FY 2019. This decrease was due to disruptions in programming and fundraising events caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Expenses were \$1,330,640 in FY 2020, a decrease of 6% from the previous year as FRNC's board and executive director prudently managed costs in the wake of decreased revenue. The mix of expenses remained constant with 75% going towards programming and conservation and 25% going to towards operations, management, and fundraising. Liabilities increased in 2020 from \$0 to \$386,952, the result of the organization's acceptance of a Payroll Protection Loan and Economic Injury Disaster Loan. Net assets at year-end 2020 were \$1,893,000.

The organization's liabilities decreased from \$386,952 to \$0 during FY 2021. The \$237,052 Payroll Protection Loan issued to the organization in 2020 was forgiven in full by the Small Business Administration in April 2021. Additionally, FRNC paid its Economic Injury Disaster Loan in full in March 2021.

The board and management staff of FRNC, as fiduciary stewards of the organization's net assets, 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 the financial reporting of FRNC and have designed and instituted such internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that financial reporting is accurate and reliable. Finally, this report was completed after the 2020 annual audit process.



74.9% Programs
20.4% Unrestricted Gifts
4.5% Grants
0% Restricted Gifts
0.2% Other



62.0% Education/Outreach
13.0% Conservation
2.0% Fundraising
16.0% Administration
7.0% General Operating

Coming to Conservation in 2022

Blind Brook Restoration and Project Regeneration

FRNC is pleased to announce that we have been awarded a \$20,000 grant to begin the planning phase of an important green infrastructure project to restore the Blind Brook riparian buffer at the Rye Nature Center. This grant was made possible by the Westchester Community Foundation, a division of The New York Community Trust. Additionally, Con Edison has awarded us a grant for \$15,000 to continue Project Regeneration, a long-term program aimed at forest protection, deer management, and conservation awareness. These projects help implement our Habitat Management Plan and are vital to the continued health of our forest.



Oktoberfest's Return to the Forest

Danke Schöen to our generous donors, sponsors, vendors, event attendees, and those who celebrated from home! This year we raised over \$210,000 at this annual fundraiser, providing crucial general operating funds to ensure that FRNC can fulfill our mission of conservation and environmental education. This evening would not be possible without our event planner, Rosie Solano, and co-chairs, Sarah Martin and Thea Van Arkel who led our wonderful committee of twenty-seven women and four men.

Harrison Wine Vault, G. Griffin, Captain Lawrence, Wolf and Warrior, Defiant, and L'Ape Mobile Bar served the best wines, brews, and beverages all night long. Bartaco, Jerry's, The Kneaded Bread, Stephanie's Kitchen Counter, Crotty's Cheesesteaks, and Dartcor provided delicious eats throughout the evening. Our favorite musical guests, Amber Anchor, ensured that beautiful tunes danced through the tents from the moment the first guest arrived until the last one left. It truly was a wonderful night to have everyone together again in celebration of nature.





OUR GROUNDS ARE OPEN DAILY FROM DAWN
UNTIL DUSK. **COME VISIT!**

SCAN TO DONATE!



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Katie Jamer

Julia Koch

Zach Sandler

Denise Shah

HORTICULTURIST

Annette Hein

2021 *By the Numbers*

133

native trees and
shrubs planted.



47

acres of trails, open
space, flora, and fauna
to discover.

1,123

students connecting
science concepts in
the classroom to the
natural world through
our in-person and
virtual field trips.



62

years of conservation
and environmental
education in our
community.

30,000

smiles on the faces
of children, adults,
and families in our
community.



696

campers and scholarship
students exploring the
Nature Center forest
and local waterways.

169

Forest Preschool and
Preschool Ecology
students spending their
early childhood years
immersed in nature.