

Friends of Rye Nature Center

Annual Update

2022



Secure the Legacy of Your Bigger Backyard

Dear Friend,

The world may be rapidly evolving, but nature remains constant. Our connection to the natural world is the link between the past, present, and future. Friends of Rye Nature Center (FRNC) strives to provide opportunities for our community to get outside and get connected. Whether it's taking a hike along the trails, resting beside Nanderwhere Pond, or immersing yourself in local history at the Parsons' Ruins, the Nature Center keeps us exploring and engaged.

FRNC provides educational programs and outdoor experiences to increasingly more people each year. In 2022 alone, our demand for our summer camp increased by 20%. NatureStation programs increased by 50% and traveled as far north as South Salem and as far south as Mount Vernon. Additionally, this year we planted a record number of trees thanks to our community's robust conservation efforts. We are endlessly grateful to all the volunteers, donors, and visitors who make this possible.

For more than half a century, FRNC has adapted to our community's needs. Your contribution today helps ensure that the Rye Nature Center will be a place for our community to meet, play, and enjoy the beauty of nature for generations to come.

Gratefully,

Christine Siller
Executive Director

SCAN TO
DONATE!



EDUCATION



CONSERVATION



COMMUNITY



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.

Everybody Get Outside!

The Forest School at Rye Nature Center

Nature, science, and conservation education are at the heart of FRNC's mission. We strive to create programs that are exciting and encourage a love and appreciation of nature. We do this by utilizing experiential, place-based, and inquiry-led activities, an approach that has been successful in our Forest Preschool and after-school classes, as well as our summer camps. From small hands to adult hands, every program that we have stems from our work and understanding of our 47-acre forest.

In 2023, we will rebrand our educational philosophy and teaching style as The Forest School at Rye Nature Center. Whether it's a school study tour, a preschool class, a summer camp day, or a hands-on workshop for adults, our community is learning through our forest. The Forest School at Rye Nature Center encapsulates the idea that we all benefit from long-term exposure to nature no matter our age.

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



PRESCHOOL

All preschool classes will adopt the Forest Preschool model. We are now accepting applications for the 2023-24 school year. Offerings include one-, two-, three-, and five-day sessions with the option to walk to or from other local preschools.

GRADES K-6

We are revamping our afterschool programs so that each several-week session focuses on a new theme like survival skills, marine animals, or animal tracking in winter. This gives students an opportunity to get outside and get active after long school days indoors.

ADULTS

We will host a series of workshops and lectures to help deepen or discover your relationship with the natural world. Topics may include anything from tree and bird identification, to mushrooms and sustainable gardening.

FAMILIES

Our seasonal public programs will return with maple sugaring, spring walk, and build your own birdhouse. 2023 will also welcome back "My Naturalist and Me" previously known as "Mommy- or Daddy-and-Me."



There are many exciting conservation projects on the horizon. Our existing deer enclosure, which protects the understory from browsing deer, was damaged by a downed tree. The fencing is in the final stages of repair and a new deer enclosure will be completed soon to help encourage further understory regeneration.

Additionally, FRNC received a grant from Con Edison to help make updates to our trails. Planned updates include new trail markers to safely guide hikers through the forest and informative signage indicating different tree species on the property. We also plan to update the trail map to make it more user friendly and reflect any changes made to the trail system.

Conservation Corner

Boots on the Ground: A New Conservation Crew

2022 brought a new conservation team to FRNC! Land Stewards Steven Koester and Cameron Smith joined the staff in January and have put in long hours clearing out 27 acres of invasive species as well as controlling the first year of Spotted Lantern Fly on the property. Jaxson Mack, our new Conservation Director, arrived at the Nature Center in July. Together the team has been hard at work restoring the property by planting 100 trees and plants and working alongside 49 volunteers for a total of 273 volunteer hours. The team held several volunteer events this fall with an array of organizations, like Regeneron, who joined the Rye Nature Center for a successful day of planting. The Rye Reflect Space, an Eagle Scout project, was completed and provides a peaceful sitting area along our expanding Poetry Path.



conEdison

EVERYTHING
MATTERS

Financial Report: Fiscal Year 2021

Revenue and Expenses Summary

Fiscal Year (FY) 2021, which ended on December 31, 2021, marked the thirteenth consecutive year in which FRNC operated with a balanced budget. This report provides a summary of revenue and expenses on a cash basis and balance sheet results.

Revenue was \$2,192,666 increasing 54% from FY 2020. This reflects the increased enrollment in our outdoor programs and normal group capacities, as well as more robust fundraising with the return of an in-person Oktoberfest fundraiser. Expenses were \$1,761,624 in FY 2021, an increase of 33% over FY 2020. The expenses in FY 2020 were prudently managed because of the decreased revenue in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, FRNC invested in new educators and conservation staff to meet the growing program needs and help with the preservation of the 47-acres. The mix of expenses remained constant with approximately 65% going towards programming and conservation and 35% going towards operations, management, and fundraising. Net assets at year-end FY 2021 were \$2,439,536.

Liabilities decreased from \$386,952 to \$0 during FY 2021. The \$237,052 Payroll Protection Loan issued to FRNC in FY 2020 was forgiven in full by the Small Business Administration in April 2021. Additionally, FRNC paid off its Economic Injury Disaster Loan in full in March 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 the financial reporting of FRNC and have designed and instituted such controls to provide reasonable assurance that financial reporting is accurate and reliable. This report was completed after the FY 2021 annual audit process.

2021 Revenue



Programs - 64.7%
Unrestricted Gifts - 20%
Grants - 3.2%
Other* - 12.1%

2021 Expenses



Education/Outreach - 54.2%
General Operating - 14.3%
Administrative - 11%
Fundraising - 11.3%
Conservation - 9.1%

*Other Revenue includes the \$237,052 PPP loan forgiveness.

Nature is for Everyone

A Record \$130,000 Raised for FRNC's Outreach Programs

The Nature Access Fund (NAF) plays a vital role in FRNC's commitment to accessibility. NAF supports the Inner-City Scholarship Fund camp, which has allowed students from underserved communities in Manhattan and the Bronx to attend summer camp at Rye Nature Center for the last fourteen years. NAF also underwrites our scholarships and outreach programs. Thanks to the Nature Access Fund, we have held sustainability workshops for senior citizens, helped the residents of the White Plains YWCA plant and maintain a vegetable garden, and brought hands-on science education to underserved children throughout Westchester and New York City.

We love to bring people to the Nature Center, and with our mobile, interactive NatureStation, we can also bring nature to them! NatureStation brings sustainability and conservation education to locations across Westchester. The Nature Access Fund exemplifies FRNC's mission of helping everyone, no matter age, ability, or background, take an active role in learning about and supporting our planet.



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

DONATE BY MAILING THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE,
VISITING RYENATURECENTER.ORG/ANNUALAPPEAL,
OR BY SCANNING THIS QR CODE.



2022

By the Numbers

27

acres of invasive
plants removed.



OVER
37,000

children, families, and
casual visitors enjoying
nature by attending our
programs and visiting
our park.

4,743

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

63

years of conservation
and environmental
education in our
community.



47

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



837

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

157

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

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