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The Kalamazoo Nature Center's mission is to inspire
people to care for the environment by providing
experiences that lead them to understand their
connection to the natural world.
— ● —

ANNUAL REPORT

2019





**NATHAN
SMALLWOOD**
President & CEO

Thanks to the support of many, KNC has enjoyed another, wonderful year of connecting people with the natural world. Program delivery remains strong, diversity of engagement continues to increase, and our impact on land and water quality has expanded. For this we owe a great debt of gratitude to both past and current leadership, donors, volunteers, and staff.

You will find stories of the past year in the pages that follow. While looking back on a successful year, we are also looking forward to our 60th anniversary in 2020. As we prepare to mark this milestone, KNC is launching into strategic planning. Staff, volunteers, members, visitors, and community partners will all have the opportunity to

inform KNC's direction for the years that follow.

It is with both excitement and reverence that we enter this time of dreaming and planning for the future of one of our nation's finest nature centers. Earlier this year, an encounter with a very rare barn owl reminded me that anything is possible! We need only look, listen, believe, and persist in our mission. Thank you for being a part of KNC's forward journey.

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A RARE SIGHTING

In April, CEO Nathan Smallwood thought he'd glimpsed a rare barn owl during a walk through the forest. After searching extensively to confirm the sighting, Smallwood was alerted by a songbird's alarm, which helped locate the bird of prey.

Barn owls have only been sighted in the wild 13 times in Michigan in the past 35 years. Until Smallwood's discovery, there were no previous confirmed sightings in Kalamazoo County. Barn owls are not territorial animals, with adults living in overlapping ranges, each one covering over 12,000 acres. Animals like these are examples of a thriving ecosystem. Since our creation in 1960, KNC has grown to steward over 1,400 acres inhabited by native wildlife. This exciting discovery gives us pride in the extensive, long-term work KNC has done to protect vital wildlife habitats here at KNC and elsewhere.





STORY QUILT

Mark and Jane Fisher Laing have been married 3 years. Every year on their anniversary they spend the day walking along KNC trails and appreciating the natural world around them. Their favorite trails include Beech Maple, River Walk, and Source Pond. Their time along KNC's trails offer the opportunity to be "reborn" as they journey through nature, discovering different surprises along each path.

The couple holds their special moments at KNC dear. On their past two anniversaries, they have been visited by Hackberry Emperor Butterflies. In both cases, a butterfly landed on their hands and followed them along the trails. Jane documents these special experiences on photo quilts - collages of memories they created each time they visit KNC. Each quilt helps them look back on their favorite moments and reflect on their connection to nature.



HERONWOOD FIELD STATION

When Field Station Educator Darienne Coffee first visited Heronwood, her expectation was of a small shack with an outhouse in the forest. What she found was a beautiful, 5,000 square foot home. It was converted to an ecological field station on more than 60 acre of diverse habitat.

In partnership with Kalamazoo Regional Educational Services Agency, Heronwood Field Station provides Kalamazoo area high school students with in-depth conservation biology course and fieldwork. The Field Station also allows KNC to conduct research and education in the areas of imperiled butterflies and invasive species controls.

"The biggest surprise about Heronwood is having a full lab, and being able to teach students throughout the school year. They take away hands-on, field-based experience that is typically only offered at the college level."

- Darienne Coffee,
Heronwood Educator



FIRST TIME'S A CHARM

This summer, KNC partnered with the Kalamazoo Islamic Center (KIC) to provide a unique and inspiring experience to 65 youth, camp counselors, and family members. This was part of KIC's annual summer camp program. Multiple planning sessions helped create an itinerary that offered once-in-a-lifetime adventures for everyone involved.

45 youth, 10 parent chaperones, and 10 camp counselors participated. All arrived early on a warm Saturday morning in late July. Their first day was packed with hikes, team building on the low-ropes course, and zip lining through the summer tree canopy. The adventures didn't stop there! After dinner, everyone enjoyed a bird of prey program and the chance to take a night hike or catch a rare glimpse of KNC's natural beauty after sunset. Chatter about the day lasted well into the night. Sunday began with a hike to the highest point of KNC, where the sun rise over Kalamazoo did not disappoint. The adventure continued with more zipline canopy tours and an excursion to Spring Valley Park for a canoe trip around the lake.

Many of the participants had never spent so much time outdoors. For others, this was their first time sleeping in a tent under the stars. This special partnership inspired many participants to continue making connections to the natural world.



GENERATIONS OF NATURE LOVERS

The Birch family (right) has a long-standing relationship with KNC. Brett Birch was a Nature's Way Preschool (NWP) student in the early 1980s. His daughter, Scarlett Birch, attends NWP today. Scarlett's great grandmother, Carole Birch, was KNC board chair in the 1960s. Scarlett's grandfather, William Birch, is a former KNC camper. Together, the Birch family has a four-generation connected to KNC.

Brothers Dan and Michael Stohr attended NWP in the late 1980s, along with Alaina Schuld. All three grew up with an appreciation of the natural world and wanted their children to have the same preschool experience. Their respective children now attend or have attended NWP. We are proud to have generations of nature lovers as NWP alumni!



HAPPY TRAILS AGAIN

Pam and Arno Yurk have owned nearly twelve acres of wooded land adjacent to Galesburg's Chipman Preserve for over a decade. Sadly, this nature-loving couple found that a jungle of invasive species (autumn olive, honeysuckle and oriental bittersweet) crowded the forest understory and made enjoying their acreage almost impossible. Some of these non-native plants were highly recommended generations ago for attracting wildlife and birds. Today, land managers recognize that their aggressive spread outcompetes native vegetation and threatens habitats for sensitive species. The Yurks experienced this firsthand and had tried hiring occasional help to clear overgrown shrubs and vines. But that intermittent management actually made the situation worse. Finally, in early 2019, Pam and Arno called KNC's Ecological Services team for advice.



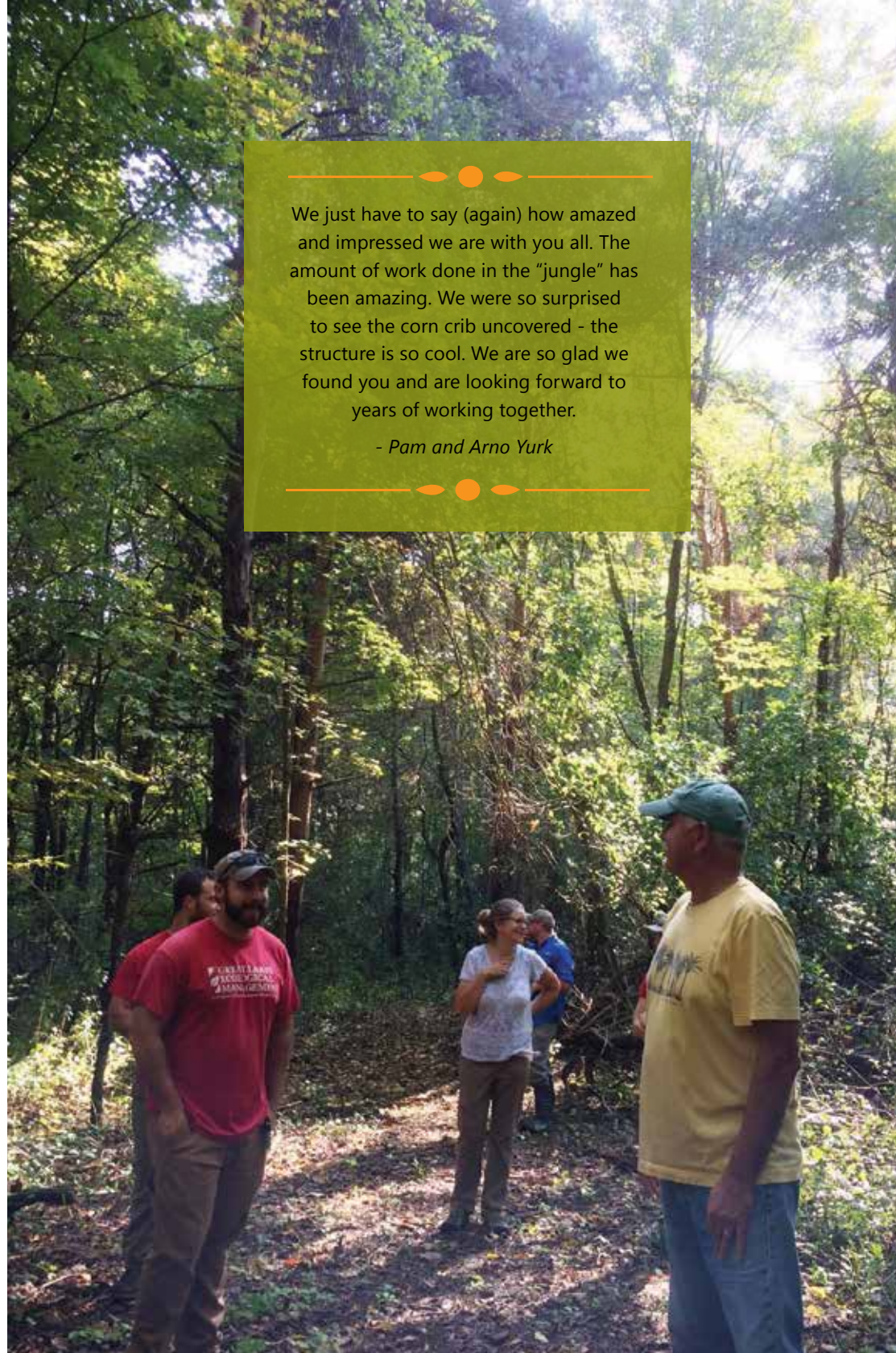
To start, KNC's team walked through the forest with the Yurks to learn more about the property's history and the couple's goals for the landscape. Then the crew created a sustained, multiyear plan to remove acres of invasives. This will allow native plants to establish. As a first step, they cut nearly a mile of trails through the dense shrubs to serve as access points, hiking trails, and burn breaks for future prescribed fire treatments in the future.

The Yurks have already seen a big impact on their property after just the first year of management. KNC's field crews are gearing up for the next phase of the plan: shrub removal activities throughout the winter months. In the meantime, Pam, Arno, and their dog Mr. Bob can finally enjoy daily walks through the forest on their newly completed trails. They are looking forward to their property's continued transformation.



We just have to say (again) how amazed and impressed we are with you all. The amount of work done in the "jungle" has been amazing. We were so surprised to see the corn crib uncovered - the structure is so cool. We are so glad we found you and are looking forward to years of working together.

- Pam and Arno Yurk





THE NUMBERS

3,442 / 80 / 493

Individual butterflies
observed / species observed /
surveys completed

8,181 / 636

Volunteer hours
contributed / Group &
individual volunteers

13,164 / 405

Total Public Program
participants / Total
programs presented

128

Nature's Way
Preschool enrollment

7,000+

Birds banded

919

Annie's Big Nature
Lesson Students

43,418

Group program
participants

398.6

Total acres of
prescribed fire

1,275

Total Camp
attendance

SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN CULTURAL MEMBERSHIP EXCHANGE

The greater Kalamazoo area's membership-based organizations (right) partnered for a sixth year to provide the Southwest Michigan Cultural Membership Exchange. New this year, the Kellogg Biological Station's Bird Sanctuary and Manor House joined the Exchange. Through this partnership, each organization becomes more accessible to a broader segment of our community.

By presenting a membership card from any partner, visitors enjoy free admission at all participating organizations during the

month of May.

Participating families who visit all six attractions are entered to win a set of annual memberships to all six organizations. Since the beginning of the Exchange in 2014, there has been a 339% increase in overall member participation!



17,811

Total number of visitors to all Cultural Exchange Venues in 2019

The mission of the SWMSBF is to promote business practices that demonstrate environmental stewardship, economic vitality, and social responsibility.



51

Companies and individuals involved in the Southwest Michigan Sustainable Business Forum

THE NUMBERS

REVENUES \$3,168,673



Endowment Income	31.9%
Contributions* and Grants	19.2%
Tuition and Program Fees	39.0%
Memberships	3.9%
Rental Income	3.0%
Admissions and Special Events	2.5%
Retail Operations	0.5%

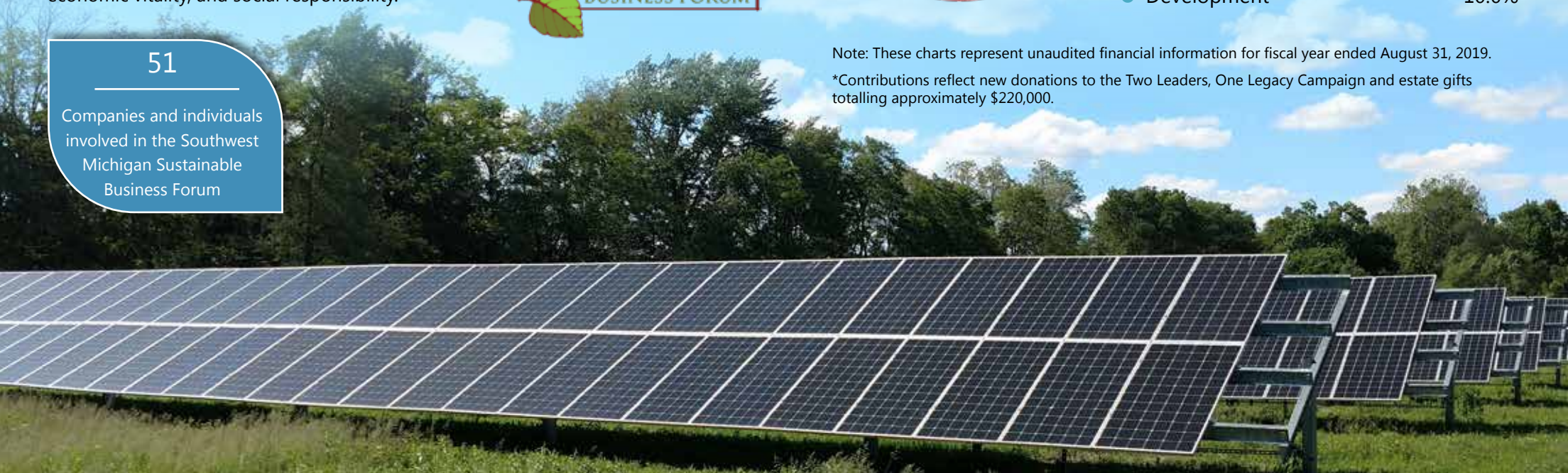
EXPENDITURES \$2,986,774



Education	46.0%
Conservation Stewardship	22.1%
Member/Guest Services	7.9%
Administration	14.1%
Development	10.0%

Note: These charts represent unaudited financial information for fiscal year ended August 31, 2019.

*Contributions reflect new donations to the Two Leaders, One Legacy Campaign and estate gifts totalling approximately \$220,000.



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Lois Heuchert and Kathleen Russell
Shawn Hinga and Leroy Waling
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Carl H. and Anna Ill
Josh and Kelly Johnson
Michael and Betsy Kelly
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Lisa and William Lupton
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Noel Ocen-Gorgone
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AND SUBHASH
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Sita P. Nilekani

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CLARE AND CLARA
POLOMS**

Anonymous

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Kalsec, Inc.

**IN RECOGNITION OF
BILL ROSE'S
RETIREMENT**

Sandra Edwards

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JOYCE AND DONALD
SEMELBAUER**

Matthew D. Semelbauer

**IN MEMORY OF
COCO & ED SVILPE**

Liz Burke

**IN APPRECIATION OF
CHRIS TRACY**

Bill and Lindy Rose

**IN HONOR OF
MARY TYLER'S 90TH
BIRTHDAY**

First Tuesday Club

**IN MEMORY OF
DEBRA WATSON**

Kathy Pyatt

**IN MEMORY OF
JON WOODIN**

Korine E. Blyveis

**SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN
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At Stake Advisors
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Cooling, Inc.
BBC Distributing
Bell's Brewery
Better World Builders
Breakwater Capital
Bronson Methodist Hospital
Mary Ann Renz - Citizens'
Climate Lobby, Kalamazoo
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Huber, Inc.
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Helios Solar, LLC
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Corporation, LEED AP
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Humanity
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Michigan Energy Options
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Assoc., Inc.
PlazaCorp Realty Advisors, Inc.
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McKinney Dancewear
Miller, Canfield, Paddock, and
Stone
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United Container Company
Gail L. Walter
Audrey Wierenga
Western Michigan University
- Office for Sustainability
Wightman & Associates, Inc.



COOPER'S GLEN LEGACY

Cooper's Glen Legacy members support KNC's future through planned gifts that honor their connection to the natural world. Planned gifts to KNC ensure access to preserved lands and wonderful programs for generations to come.

COOPERS GLEN LEGACY MEMBER INDICATED

Wade and Sandra Adams
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Belinda J. Buchanan
Bob and Sandra Capp
Mike and Judy Clark
Beatrice Clawson
C. Robert and Marcia Cowell
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Mary I. Dobrovir
Monica Ann Evans
Sally J. Goddard
Diana and John Goes
Mr. and Mrs. Henry T. Holland
Dr. Evelyn Iversen
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Kenneth and Andrea Starz
Marcia V. Stucki
Betsy V. Thorne
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Chris and Michelle Tracy

COOPERS GLEN LEGACY MEMBER REALIZED

Anonymous (2)
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Dr. Michael and Mrs. Shirley Bach
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Dr. H. Lewis Batts Jr. and Jean McColl Batts
Avis E. and Donald Bloomquist
William W. Byrnes
E. Louanne Delor
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Dr. Laurel A. Grotzinger
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Naomi Louise Williams
Mr. Thomas Woodworth
Beatrice M. Wyse



Last October, Cooper's Glen Legacy Members had lunch at KNC Camp before taking a hike to the solar array.



KALAMAZOO NATURE CENTER STAFF 2018/19

Bianca Anderson
Jennifer Barck
Fahimeh Baziari
Lorie Breazeale
John Brenneman
Benjamin Chee
Kirsten Clemente
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Andrew Doane
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Sara Ensing
Cheyenne Gandy
Heather Goetzinger
Gregory Hale-Sandifer
Tanequa Hampton
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Holly Hooper
Hannah Hudson
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Ben Koetje
Rachel Koetje

Caitlin Koole
Anna Kornoelje
Ryan Koziatsek
Karen Braddy Lambert
Angelia Lane
Ethan Liggett
Kaitlin Lindahl
Kyle Martin
Kai McDonald
Shannon McLeese
Jennifer Meilinger
Brenda Mohill
Holly Morris
Merideth Morrow
Rose Norwood
Emily Noyer
Lisa Panich
Chaz Rawls
Sara Rutgers
Sara Schlaffer
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Jenny Doezeema, Vice President Learning & Engagement
James Hensley, Vice President Facilities & Project Management
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Jessica Simons, Vice President Conservation Stewardship