The Troy Nature Society (TNS) is a nonprofit organization conducting educational nature programs for individuals of all ages at the Stage Nature Center. The organization promotes knowledge of our natural world and good stewardship of our environment.

6685 Coolidge Hwy, Troy, MI 48098
Ph: 248.688.9703
www.stagenaturecenter.org
A Message from David Lambert, President of the Troy Nature Society

In 2010, a group of concerned citizens approached the Troy City Council about forming a nonprofit organization that would partner with the City of Troy and keep the Stage Nature Center open for the public. In July 2011, the Troy Nature Society contracted with the City of Troy to manage the programs and activities of our community’s beautiful 100 acre preserve. We wish to extend a thank you to the Troy City Council, City management, and City staff for their continued partnership with the Troy Nature Society.

The Troy Nature Society offers a variety of programs and events for people of all ages to participate in and learn about the natural world. By supporting our organization, the community helps ensure that these programs and events are available to help foster a love and appreciation for the natural world.

We are most thankful to our hard-working staff and volunteers who’ve managed educational programs for the children and adults of our community and region. They continue to work hard to expand educational programs for students of all ages.

We also wish to thank everyone who continue to provide financial support for the new home for our adopted owls. Visiting the owls is a must-see when you visit the Nature Center.

Here are some of the significant highlights from the past year:

- We received more than $112,000 in grant funding from Oakland County in November 2021 for a complimentary Mindfulness project geared towards reducing the effects of stress and anxiety on individuals of our community due to the pandemic. Look for new permanent focus stations along the trails by spring that will be available for all to use in conjunction with mindfulness practices.
- Our 2022 fundraisers were very successful. The “Nature Uncorked Wine & Beer Tasting” event raised nearly $35,000 and the “Run for Nature” event raised its highest amount to date, over $13,000 in revenue for our programs and activities.
- We are delighted to see the return of school field trips to the Nature Center in 2022. Pre-pandemic, our staff served more than 6,000 students annually with nature and science programs that also encouraged good stewardship of our environment.
- The City of Troy is expected to begin an extensive four-year project to replace portions of the Stage Nature Center board walks that have exceeded their life expectancy.

Going forward, we are looking for new ways to raise funds to help maintain and improve our top-notch programming. Your membership and participation can help us expand our outreach to the local community.

Our Troy Nature Society Board of Directors welcomed some newcomers to the Board this past year. The new members come to us with plans and ideas for the future of the nature center.

Make sure to visit the Stage Nature Center in 2023 to enjoy this major, green asset in our community.

David Lambert
President, TNS Board of Directors
In The Beginning

Land for the Stage Nature Center (SNC) was originally purchased by the City of Troy in the 1970s and is located at 6685 Coolidge Hwy. in Troy, just south of South Blvd. At the time of acquisition, there was an older home on the property that was initially used as the nature center building. In 2002, the old structure was demolished and the current 8,200 square foot interpretive nature center building was constructed using funds received from a government grant to the City of Troy. This center for learning contains classrooms, a public research library, an observation bee hive, a wildlife viewing area and an exhibition lobby with a live reptile and amphibian display. The headwaters of the Rouge River flow through this unique 100-acre preserve. More than 145 plant and animal species may be viewed throughout the grounds. An outdoor play area features climbing boulders, and a paved path provides wheelchair access to the streamside forest. Within the nature center boundaries are two miles of trails, which pass through upland forest, meadows, streamside wetlands, cattail marsh and a Monarch Butterfly Way Station constructed in 2017.

In 2010, in response to the planned closure of the Stage Nature Center by the City of Troy, a small but devoted group of citizens came together to create the Troy Nature Society, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Members of the Board of Directors immediately began raising funds to support operations. The Society assumed management oversight of the nature center on July 1, 2011 and immediately began offering educational nature and science programs. This was a critical time in the transition of this valued community resource from city government to nonprofit management and funding. The Troy Nature Society sought members, volunteers and financial supporters to ensure our community would continue to enjoy the benefits of time spent in the out-of-doors. During the first fiscal year of operations, TNS had one full time employee and provided services for 8,253 visitors, students and program participants.

The family of Roger and Susie Kowalski provided an exciting addition to the nature center during the 2019 fiscal year. Roger and Susie’s children along with their spouses provided the funds to build and dedicate a new outdoor pavilion in honor of their parents. Susie’s passing in April 2019, left a large void in our hearts for this remarkable wife, mother, grandmother and community activist who had a special passion for the nature center. The Society has been especially appreciative for the construction of the Roger and Susie Kowalski Pavilion since the start of the pandemic. The shelter provides us with many venue options including outdoor space for public and scouting programs, Day Camp programs, rentals for wedding ceremonies, family reunions along with casual group gatherings.
Activities at the nature center include public programs geared toward families, toddlers and senior adults. Additionally, we conduct programming for school and community groups along with guided nature walks and targeted school outreach nature studies. The preserve is a valuable community asset offering quiet retreat to solitary observers, couples, Scout groups, families, and school children who come to enjoy the natural beauty of the preserve. Many take the opportunity to capture photos of the wildlife for their own use and to enhance the Society’s publicity materials.

The Society has seen tremendous growth across all program areas and performed diligently in financial stewardship since its founding in 2011. The Society served more than 27,000 individuals attending programs and visitors enjoying the beauty of the preserve during the fiscal year ended June 30, 2022. The organization:

- Conducted 78 school field trips/school outreach/organized group programs. These programs served a total of 3,923 students and Scouts who were provided with hands-on experience in nature.
- Conducted 270 public programs and events for children, adults and miscellaneous groups at the nature center. These programs served 6,972 individuals (ages two years old through senior adult) with age-appropriate programs and activities designed to enhance learning in a natural environment.
- Maintained a dedicated corps of 225 individuals who volunteered an amazing 4,412 hours in support of TNS programs, activities and initiatives. Comprising 98% of our work force, these devoted volunteers donated time and effort to help with such activities as: educational program assistance; trail maintenance and clean-up projects; the annual Maple Syrup event; fundraising events, blue bird monitoring; front desk reception and administrative support.
- In partnership with the City of Troy, the Society along with its friends and supporters reached its financial goal of $145,000 to complete construction of a Raptor House. In June 2021, a dedication of the new enclosure for the five rehabilitated owls adopted in 2018 by the Society was held. The structure is home to these magnificent birds of prey and for any future raptors not able to survive for themselves in the wild. The public can view the owls daily in their permanent home from dawn to dusk.

In November 2021, the organization was awarded $112,360 in funds from Oakland County to support the TNS Mindfulness at Stage initiative. TNS staff, in conjunction with mental health care representatives from Beaumont Health, DMC Children’s Hospital and Henry Ford Health have developed and are conducting nature-based mindfulness programming at the Stage Nature Center for individuals and family groups. During the project timeline, up to 1,440 individuals will participate in complimentary mindfulness programs designed towards reducing the effects of stress, anxiety, depression and isolation on individuals of our community attributed to the pandemic. Additional funding is being sought to continue this important complimentary program designed to increase the participant’s awareness of nature-based mindfulness practices and its benefits to the participants’ well-being.
Leadership

Board Members

The Troy Nature Society is supported by volunteer Board members comprised of educators, administrators, those with backgrounds in municipal governance, wildlife preservation, environmental activism, business management, fundraising, marketing, IT and finance. Financial support is a Board requirement for which 100% of the Society’s Board Members comply. Board members serve on at least one of six board committees; Board Development, Financial Oversight, Fundraising, Educational Programming/Parks & Facility Management, Operations and Marketing & Communications. All members are involved in governance, policy oversight, strategic planning, fundraising and program development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FY2023 Officers</th>
<th>FY2023 Board of Directors</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>David Lambert – President</td>
<td>Nicole Betzler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott Hunter – 1st Vice President</td>
<td>Theresa Brooks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vacancy - Treasurer</td>
<td>Dan Glombowski</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rebecca Seguin-Skrabucha - Secretary</td>
<td>Ben Funderburk</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Paul Hoef</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ernie McClellan</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Bill Ording</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Fran Stage</td>
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Program Staff

The administration of the Society includes an Executive Director responsible for oversight and fundraising activities with over twenty-five years nonprofit management experience. The Society has a Lead Naturalist and an Assistant Naturalist employed full-time, both with extensive backgrounds in nature education: organizing, executing and evaluating educational nature and science programs. A Program Support Assistant provides administrative support for program staff along with acting as the organization’s Volunteer Coordinator. Six program instructors are employed “as needed” to help support the many TNS educational programs as they are offered throughout the year. Part-time staff include a Special Events Coordinator, Accountant, Marketing Specialist who manages the organization’s website and promotes awareness of the organization’s programs and activities through social media and the local press.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FY2023 TNS Staff</th>
<th>FY2023 TNS Program Instructors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carla Reeb – Executive Director</td>
<td>Lori Brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debra Williams – Lead Naturalist</td>
<td>Genia Connell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christina Funk – Assistant Naturalist</td>
<td>Danielle Durham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louise McCormick-Glazier - Program Support Asst.</td>
<td>Linda Friedman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michelle Goyette—Special Events Coordinator</td>
<td>Neha Saigal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cindy Wymer - Accountant</td>
<td>Miranda Roberts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neha Saigal – Marketing Specialist</td>
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Volunteer Corps

The Society has a dedicated corps of 200+ volunteers. Comprising 98% of our work force, these devoted individuals, ages 14+, donate time and effort to help with such activities as: educational program assistance, trail maintenance, clean-up projects, Maple Syrup programming, fundraising events, blue bird monitoring, front desk reception and administrative support.

Members

The organization currently has 200+ members supporting its mission. All membership revenues help underwrite the programs and activities of the Society. Membership benefits includes voting rights at the annual meeting and discounted fees when participating in certain TNS programs.
Mission

Our overarching mission is to provide resources and education to inspire the appreciation and preservation of nature. Specifically, the objectives of the Society are to:

- Provide healthy outdoor experiences and educational activities for individuals of all ages
- Create an understanding of the value and necessity of stewardship of our natural environment
- Preserve and protect the Stage Nature Center for future generations

Our Vision

The Troy Nature Society will become the exemplary community resource for nature education and preservation in the Troy area. We believe in making learning fun! While striving to achieve our vision, the Society will continue to assess our performance in the following areas:

- Education
  - Offer innovative programs developed from current research, national trends and community needs
  - Provide a wide range of program offerings for people to view and interact with the natural environment
  - Act as a resource to the community for nature related questions

- Preservation
  - Maintain and improve the Stage Nature Center
  - Provide a physically safe, peaceful and well-maintained environment for visitors of the Stage Nature Center

- Collaborative Relationships
  - Cultivate relationships with community organizations
  - Participate in the community as a forward thinking and challenging leader
  - Develop a vibrant and involved support base
  - Cultivate relationships with organizations having similar purposes

Program Benefits

Along with providing educational programming, our nature center and its activities provide numerous benefits including:

- Natural features and spaces important to defining community image and distinctive character
- A facility that contributes to educational and cultural benefits
- Protection for important natural systems
- Active and passive recreational opportunities
- Healthy lifestyles enhancement by facilitating improvements in physical fitness through exercise, and also by facilitating positive emotional, intellectual and social experiences

Non-Discrimination Policy

The Troy Nature Society affirms a policy of non-discrimination with regards to persons on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, height, weight, marital status, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, amnesty status, veteran status or any other basis protected by federal, state and/or local law. This policy shall pertain to staff, applicants, volunteers, members and guests.
Making a Positive Difference In Our Community

Public Programs

An extensive variety of educational nature and science programs is offered to the public on a year-round basis. These programs are geared for individuals of all ages - toddlers to senior adults and are designed to help children and adults increase their understanding and stewardship of our natural environment. We accomplish this by interpreting the natural world around us and acting as an educational resource in biology, ecology and natural history for all our students, young and old. Some of our most popular public programs include our various week-long Day Camps offered to reinforce children’s learning experience during the summer months. Additionally we partner with such groups as Michigan DNR to provide classroom facilities for public outdoor education programs.

School / School Outreach Programming

As the 2022-2023 school year proceeds, educators are eagerly scheduling school field trips to the nature center for their students that were curtailed during the height of the pandemic. TNS offers educators a wide selection of science programs that meet public, private and home-schooled students’ academic needs. Programs are developed to provide students with hands-on experience in nature and are designed to enhance the school’s core curriculum. We utilize animal mounts, pelts, skulls, shells and other materials to ensure a first-class view of the world around us. Programs engage participants in interactive nature and science experiences which include classroom instruction followed by a guided hike through the preserve. We also offer various outreach programs that fulfill the instructional and educational needs of the school. Just like the programs held at the nature center, all outreach programs are designed to enhance the school’s core curriculum and include hands-on interaction with mounts, pelts and other biofacts.

Scouts/Groups

As a support to organized troops and groups, we offer programs that meet requirements for members to come and complete their nature-related badge or achievement. Current programs include those geared toward Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts and Girl Scouts.

Live Owl Programming

The Society offers opportunities for the public to meet live owls and learn about five fascinating birds of prey that act as the organization’s Educational Ambassadors. Housed at the nature center’s Raptor House, these special owls are the nature center’s most popular live exhibit. Additionally, the Society has developed educational programs featuring these Michigan owls for the public and other organized groups. Fees collected from the programs act as a source of revenue to support the feeding, care and medical expenses that is vital to the livelihood of these amazing rehabilitated raptors.

Family Nature Explorers

This monthly program is offered year-round allows the whole family (parent and child) to participate in hands-on, outdoor experiences that inspire curiosity and create a connection to nature. A different nature topic is featured each month.

Maple Syrup Event

March is a special time for the nature center and the families of our community. TNS holds its annual Maple Syrup Time for three consecutive Saturdays every March. This fun and educational family event is typically attended by nearly 1,000 guests who venture into the woods on a guided tour, visit an historic sugar camp to learn how maple trees are tapped and see for themselves how the sap is harvested. Participants learn about the extraordinary effort it takes to make sap into maple syrup. This unique seasonal event receives extensive local television and media coverage every year.
Program Attendance

Program Evaluation

Public Awareness

TNS reaches out to our community through mailings, local distribution of brochures, public service announcements (PSAs), media events, TNS website, social media sites and participation in local community events to increase awareness of TNS. We also partner with the Troy Historical Village and other organizations serving similar populations. Public program announcements are advertised in the “Troy Rec”, the city’s premiere magazine which is distributed to approximately 32,000 households and businesses quarterly.

TNS school and school outreach program offerings are distributed annually to nearly 500 schools and school districts across the tri-county area. PSA’s are distributed monthly to local papers to create community awareness of TNS programs, activities and volunteer opportunities which are also advertised on the organization’s social media sites and website.

Additionally, the Executive Director and program staff speak at local community groups throughout the tri-county area and provide programs to create awareness of sponsorship opportunities and programs offered at the nature center.

Program Evaluation

Post-program quizzes from pre-selected students participating in school programs are collected and evaluated. Educators also provide important feedback on TNS programs for academic effectiveness. Teacher comments provide both quantitative and qualitative information regarding the overall impact of programs along with providing direction for future programs that promote education, healthy lifestyles and good stewardship of our environment.

### ATTENDANCE TOTALS FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2022

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Type</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group Visitations (Schools/Scouts/Senior Groups/Home School Groups)</td>
<td>1,927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outreach Programs &amp; Lectures</td>
<td>1,996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birthday Parties (Educational) and Facility Rentals</td>
<td>6,972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walk-In Visitations</td>
<td>16,121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>27,016</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Funding

Funding for the organization’s programs and activities comes from individuals, foundations, local government, corporations, membership fees, program fees, fundraising events and facility rental fees. Contributors providing financial support at the $500 level and above during the 2022 fiscal year include:

- Anonymous (2)
- Alpha Delta Kappa
- AOE Sports
- Automotive Authority, Inc.
- Dr. Karol Carter
- City of Troy
- Coldwell Banker-Karen Greenwood
- Chris Davis
- William Davy
- East Michigan Native Plant Sales
- James Grice
- Independent Bank
- Dr. Inder Jit & Dr. Indra Saini
- Kelly Services
- Roger Kowalski
- Kresge Foundation
- Christal Lewandowski
- Meijer
- Mondrian Properties
- Oakland County-Oakland Together
- William and Karen Ording
- Plants For Ecology, LLC
- PNC Bank
- Ward Randol
- Rossman, P.C.
- Janaire Rowland
- Shawn Spearman
- Jeffery Swietlik
- TEZ Properties, LLC
- Troy Community Foundation
- Troy Community Lions Club
- Village Club Foundation
- John and Nancy Youngerman

In addition, we have a well established annual fundraisers including a Wine and Beer Tasting and a Run for Nature event. Currently there are approximately 225 TNS Members proving financial support our programs and activities.

Financials

In 2011, the Society entered into an operating agreement with the City of Troy. The agreement calls for approximately $46,000 annually in city support of services, building maintenance and supplies for the nature center. The current agreement with the City of Troy runs through the fiscal year 2027. In 2018, the Troy Nature Society established an endowment fund through the Troy Community Foundation. The fund is valued at $19,284 as of June 30, 2022.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenue &amp; Expenses</th>
<th>FYE 6/30/2021</th>
<th>FYE 6/30/2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Donations &amp; Grants</td>
<td>$ 60,948</td>
<td>$ 171,894</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising Events</td>
<td>16,443</td>
<td>35,890</td>
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<tr>
<td>Membership Dues</td>
<td>10,892</td>
<td>11,247</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program Fees</td>
<td>40,666</td>
<td>70,492</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-Kind</td>
<td>44,617</td>
<td>11,890</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other (PPP)</td>
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<td>35,434</td>
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<tr>
<td>City Investment*</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>100,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Revenue</td>
<td>$ 273,566</td>
<td>$ 436,847</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wages &amp; Payroll Taxes</td>
<td>187,475</td>
<td>226,721</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract Services</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25,985</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program Expenses</td>
<td>71,887</td>
<td>52,772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Expenses</td>
<td>53,522</td>
<td>37,861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Expenses</td>
<td>$ 312,884</td>
<td>$ 343,339</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Figures do not include $46,000/annually for other city services and supplies provided in support of maintaining the nature center.*
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How is the Society funded? TNS operates on contributions it receives from membership fees, foundation gifts, program fees, local government funding, corporations, individuals, community organizations, fundraising events and facility rentals.

What kinds of programs does TNS offer at the nature center? High quality nature and science programs are offered year-round to the public, local schools along with programs for Scouts and other organization groups. All programs are offered for a minimal fee.

How is the organization staffed? Currently, the organization employs an Executive Director who oversees operations and fundraising activities; a Lead Naturalist and Assistant Naturalist oversee all educational programming and six on-call program instructors assist with programs as they are scheduled. A Program Support Assistant provides support service for all programs and manages the recruiting, training and scheduling of volunteers. Additional part-time staff include a Special Events Coordinator, Accountant and Marketing Specialist.

What types of volunteer help do you need? Individuals offer support in areas such as educational program assistance, various support committees, trail maintenance, trail clean-up projects, our annual maple syrup event, fundraising, blue bird monitoring, photography club, front desk help and administrative support.

Is there a fee to visit the center? There is no fee to walk the trails or visit the nature center building with its exhibit hall which includes a mastodon dig, children’s play area, research library, live amphibian and reptile display and observation bee hive. Donations are accepted and greatly appreciated.

What are the hours of operation? Trails are open to the public daily year-round from dawn to dusk. The nature center’s exhibit hall is open Tuesday through Friday from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm and Saturday 10:00 am to 4:00 pm and is also open when special programs or classes are offered. (Holidays excluded). The nature center’s owls are available for public viewing in their permanent enclosure daily.

The Stage Nature Center is managed by the Troy Nature Society (TNS), a non-profit organization

Troy Nature Society
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Troy MI, 48099
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Fax: (248) 879-9241
www.stagenaturecenter.org

All photos contained in this report were taken at the Stage Nature Center.