



**THE FOREST  
EXPLORATION CENTER**

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## OUR PURPOSE

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To provide a unique woodland learning environment where meaningful opportunities in forestry education, recreation and stewardship are accessible to the broadest audience

To foster a deeper understanding of forest ecology and sustainable forestry management practices for current and future generations

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## **WE STRIVE TO**

Foster immersive explorations in forest ecology, deepen the understanding of sustainable forest management practices and create a learning environment where meaningful opportunities in forestry education, recreation and stewardship are accessible to the broadest audience.

## **WHO WE ARE**

The Forest Exploration Center is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the creation of a unique woodland learning environment that provides opportunities to: deepen the understanding of forest ecology, explore the nature and use of forests and the importance of sustainable forestry practices. We work to provide immersive educational experiences and recreational opportunities that engage the community in stewardship of the land.

## **WHAT WE VALUE**

***We value the forest environment;***

*As a natural place for community engagement,  
As a space for all to learn, explore and recreate, and  
As a classroom, laboratory and provider of solitude.*

### **We Value Forests**

We are committed to sustainable forestry practices and the functions, products, and aesthetic values they provide for current and future generations.

### **We Value People**

We strive to provide opportunities for all users of forest resources to better understand sustainable forestry through stewardship, educational explorations and recreation.

### **We Value Learning**

We share a passion for learning through teaching, research, experience, and immersive educational opportunities.

### **We Value Collaboration**

We address forest resource management issues through science driven collaboration across disciplines, institutions, and perspectives.

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## WHO WE SERVE

We serve the residents, schools, scientific community and forest industry of Wisconsin and all visitors to the woodland by caring for the forest through sound, science driven, management of the land.

We provide meaningful and achievable opportunities in education and recreation to the broadest audience through thoughtful and innovative development of accessible trails, programs, and guided and self-guided explorations in forest ecology and sustainable forestry.

## OUR GOALS INCLUDE

- Connecting Milwaukee County residents and visitors of all ages and abilities with Wisconsin's forests resource and increase their awareness of the role of forest resources in their daily lives
  - Nurture opportunities that deepen the understanding of the ecological, social and economic benefits of Wisconsin forests.
  - Provide sustainable forestry education experiences and activities for children in pre-K through grade 12, parents/grandparents, residents and visitors to the area.
  - Connect with Wisconsin's K-12 forestry curriculum to teach science, history, mathematics, social studies and other subjects using forestry themes.
  - Provide a rotating series of immersive indoor and outdoor exhibits, workshops, programs, guided experiences and community events.
  - Offer an orientation to educational opportunities that connect with careers in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and the arts.
  - Become part of an integrated land use plan, linking the forest experience with nearby University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee Innovation Campus, Milwaukee County Grounds Floodwater Management Facility, Milwaukee County Parks trails and facilities, and other nearby trail systems.
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## **THE FOREST AND ITS CARE**

### **The Forest is a State-Owned Property Co-Managed Through a Unique Public/Private Partnership Between The Wisconsin DNR Division of Forestry and The Forest Exploration Center**

The Forest Exploration Center is within a 60-acre, mature hardwood forest, an exceptional gem in the heart of Milwaukee, representing one the best and last remaining remnants of the southern hardwood forests that once covered southeast Wisconsin. With a unique mix of large, old, oak trees, maple, ash, basswood and sixteen other species native to the region and a rich understory of wildflowers the forest provides a diverse habitat for wildlife, including more than 158 species of birds that feed, rest and nest in the area on an annual basis.

The forest also provides opportunities for solitude and passive recreation such as hiking and nature observation where each of us has an opportunity to develop an understanding of our relationship to forest ecosystems, and the role each of us plays as a steward of these special places.

### **THE DNR DIVISION OF FORESTRY WILL**

Conserve, restore and maintain the forest to reflect the ecological characteristics of southern Wisconsin.

### **THE FOREST EXPLORATION CENTER WILL**

Create an environment that supports opportunities for education, recreation and forest stewardship.

### **OUR SHARED PARTNERSHIP GOAL**

To expand each visitor's understanding of sustainable forestry in our everyday lives where sustainable forestry is defined as: the practice of managing dynamic forest ecosystems to provide ecological, economic, social and cultural benefits for this and future generations.

### **CONTRIBUTIONS**

The Forest Exploration Center is an exempt organization as described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Donations are tax deductible and welcome at any time.

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## PROPERTY OBJECTIVES



### EDUCATION

**To preserve and sustainably manage the woodland for educational and interpretive purposes.** We will become a natural place for community engagement and stewardship. Our primary focus: to increase awareness and deepen understanding of forest ecology and sustainable forestry practices through hands on experiences in citizen science and immersive self-guided and guided explorations. This includes objectives to interpret and enhance wildlife habitat, create opportunities for stewardship and to ensure and offer the highest quality of accessible recreation.



### FOREST MANAGEMENT

**To conserve, restore and maintain the hardwood forest and its connected ecosystems** to reflect the environmental and ecological characteristics of southern Wisconsin and to demonstrate sound forest management practices that will promote a healthy, sustainable forest.

Management of the forest resource will be performed by Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources foresters using sustainable forestry practices. Any timber that will be harvested through trail development or for management purposes will demonstrate these practices in accordance with an educational goal that furthers the understanding of Wisconsin forest management techniques, issues and benefits.

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**Forest Exploration Center Inc.**  
**Statement of Financial Position**  
**June 30, 2019**

**ASSETS**

Current Assets:

Cash	\$ 163,787
Support receivable – DNR	140,000
Prepaid expenses	<u>1,167</u>
Total Current Assets	304,954

Property:

Equipment	6,773
Less accumulated depreciation	<u>(6,773)</u>
Net Property and Equipment	0

**TOTAL ASSETS** **\$ 304,954**

**LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS**

Current Liabilities:

Accounts payable	\$ 0
Deferred grant income	<u>0</u>
Total Current Liabilities	0

Net Assets:

Unrestricted	304,954
Total Net Assets	304,954

**TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS** **\$ 304,954**

*Thomas Gaertner*

Thomas Gaertner

President April 27, 2020

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(Charity Officer's Signature)



(Printed Name)

(Title and Date)

## The Board of Directors

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**Mary Ann Buenzow**

**Jean Davidson**

Executive Director, Davidson Yell and Tell Foundation, Inc.

**Tom Gaertner**

Tree farm owner

**Robin Ginner**

Executive Director, Trees for Tomorrow

**Ray Guries**

Professor Emeritus, Forest and Wildlife Ecology, UW-Madison

**Alan Kesner**

Wauwatosa City Attorney

**Tim Lizotte**

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

**Tom Luljak**

Vice Chancellor, UW-Milwaukee

**Jonathan Piel**

President of the Friends of County Grounds Park

**Dwayne Sperber**

Owner, Wudeward Urban Forest Products

**Kyle Sprague**

Part-owner of Firefly Real Estate

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**THE FOREST EXPLORATION CENTER**  
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**Wauwatosa, Wisconsin 53213**  
[info@ForestExplorationCenter.org](mailto:info@ForestExplorationCenter.org)

Fostering a deeper understanding  
of forest ecology and sustainable  
forestry management practices

Providing a unique learning environment  
for accessible and meaningful  
opportunities in forestry education,  
recreation and stewardship

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