

wildrock

ANNUAL REPORT
2021

Nature Play for
Health and
Happiness



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT



Dear Friends,

Citing the serious toll of the pandemic, the American Academy of Pediatrics has declared children's mental health a national emergency. In response, Wildrock launched a ***Playing Our Way to Recovery Initiative*** to provide restorative nature experiences for children and families. In the face of pandemic losses and disruptions, Wildrock's mission to promote ***nature play for health and happiness*** is needed now more than ever.

Nature play is one of a handful of evidenced-based approaches that is both intrinsically motivating for children and powerfully beneficial for children's emotional well-being. Throughout the pandemic period, Wildrock innovated new school-based programs, camps, themed trail walks, virtual field trips and workshops to increase access to the healing benefits of nature play. We are grateful for the support of our volunteers, staff, donors, visitors and community partners for joining us in uplifting children through nature play.

Carolyn Schuyler
Executive Director





PARTICIPATION OVERVIEW

Wildrock served **8927** people in fiscal year 2021 in both its Neighborhood Outreach programs and its Blue Ridge Play and Discovery Center programs.

PLAY AND DISCOVERY CENTER

Camps	957
Public Days	*3252
Field Trips	*231
Stewardship Days	88
Retreats	*28

NEIGHBORHOOD OUTREACH

Neighborhood and School Programs	*2671
Talks and Consultation	1459
Special Community Events	*241

*This program was heavily impacted by COVID restrictions



PLAYSCAPE PROGRAMS



For pandemic safety, Wildrock opened "Quaranteam" Adventures on the Playscape, themed trail walks, and self-guided education trails to complement virtual learning. Visitor feedback repeatedly mentioned that Wildrock is a valued safe resource for joyful play and stress release during the pandemic.



Timed trail walks allowed families and friends to celebrate the seasons safely! Wildrock is the only park in our area offering this safety measure.



NEIGHBORHOOD OUTREACH

In response to pandemic restrictions, Wildrock innovated multiple virtual programs in response to public school need.



Leche, the education rabbit, made online visits with students

Wild About Animals: Wildrock brought our education animals to students through virtual field trips. Students learned about animal habitats and adaptations while visiting with Wildrock's rabbit, turtle, snake, and hedgehog.

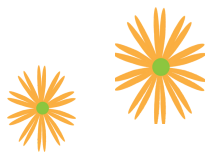


A virtual habitat created by students. The project reduced COVID isolation for over 200 upper elementary students.

Habitat For Humans: Wildrock innovated a social emotional learning program for Charlottesville City School 5th graders. Students used a design thinking process to create virtual habitats for humans and animals. Dr. Jessica Stern, a postdoctoral fellow at UVA, studied student outcomes and found the program reduced anxiety levels.

Thanks to a **Community Recovery and Catalyst Grant** from the Charlottesville Area Community Foundation, Wildrock worked with Charlottesville High Schools students and UVA students to survey city residents. The survey revealed how people perceive their access and engagement with green spaces. Results will shape future programs.

SUMMER PROGRAMS



When pandemic restrictions lifted in the spring, we seized the moment and planned an expansive summer day camp program in order to reach students in need. With support from the Hilltop Foundation and the Prana Fund-CACF we successfully:

- hired and trained 20 new teachers and counselors to facilitate camps both onsite and in area public schoolyards.
- launched therapeutic expressive art and nature play programs in four middle schools and six elementary schools.

Over 800 students attended Wildrock's day camp programs. Delivered in partnership with the UVA Equity Center and county and city public schools, the programs featured social emotional learning activities to support pandemic recovery.



EcoArt and Pop Up Play

Throughout the spring and fall, Wildrock worked weekly with the Boys and Girls Club on Cherry Avenue and in Southwood to provide play-based art explorations with repurposed materials. We also partnered with MACAA Headstart for pop up play-programming for four year olds. Both programs provided access to the vital benefits of play.

THE EVIDENCE



Children rely on play to make sense of their world and to develop coping strategies. When children are invited to take their play into nature, the documented benefits of free play are amplified. Decades of research shows that access to natural spaces works to counteract the the ill-effects of stress and trauma.

Research shows that the best way to promote children's recovery from the stress of the pandemic is through PLAY!

When kids play outdoors, research has found that children are better able to regulate their emotions and to build positive relationships with their peers. Kids that play in nature do better academically, as they are healthier, happier and more prepared to learn.

Wildrock works to make high-quality nature play experiences more accessible to children by transforming urban green spaces into pop-up play zones.





OUTCOMES

Earlier this year, Wildrock completed its three year strategic plan. Our primary goal of promoting nature play equity has remained consistent since our founding. In FYI 2020-2021, we documented the following outcomes.

Goal: Serve as a trusted resource for joyful nature play

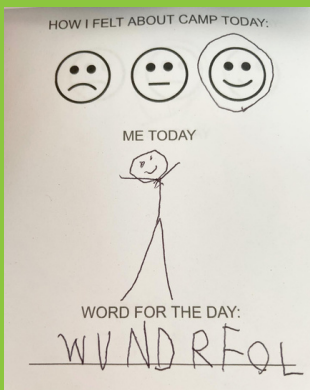
97.2% of visitors surveyed agree that Wildrock fills a needed niche in our community for promoting nature connection and free play.

100% of teachers agree Wildrock programs address critical needs for healthy child development.

Goal: Create therapeutic play experiences responsive to mental health needs

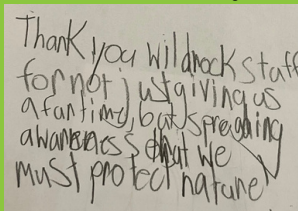
94.4% of visitors surveyed agree that being at Wildrock offers a valued opportunity to reduce stress and enjoy a restorative experience in nature.

Daily Camper Check-In



Camper Feedback

- 98% reported positive social experiences
- 97% had a new nature experience (example: stream wading)
- 99% enjoyed free play
- 98% found nature learning fun



TESTIMONIALS



That was the best professional development day we have had in years

**City School
Counselor**

Our kids respond to the playscape with so much natural joy and wonder. It's the best feelings to watch them run around and feel free and happy in nature. Wildrock brings out our kids natural desire to explore and discover. Thank you! I hope Wildrock continues to expand its footprint in Charlottesville! We need what you do!!!

Playscape visitor

Wildrock is
one of my
happy
places.
I love it!
Thank you!

We recently heard an extremely interesting presentation about Wildrock from Carolyn Schuyler. I was extremely moved by your company's mission. With mental health becoming destigmatized and spoken about more and more, this is the time to promote ecotherapy and safe spaces to connect with nature.

Camper UVA Student

Wildrock programs helped us and so many of our friends get through the pandemic.

Parent

My two boys, age 5 and 6, attended a session a few weeks ago at their school. They had a fantastic time! Every day they came home very excited to share their experiences from the day, their artwork and best of all, they came home exhausted!



We had the best experience with this program. Our students are still talking about all the things they experienced. We learned so much, had the perfect amount of time to visit and watch the animals. We will be highly recommending this program to other schools and child-oriented programs. Thank you all so much!"

**Elementary
School
Teacher**

Our 2.5 year old son absolutely loved exploring the adventure playscape! He was amazed as he ran around and discovered all the different areas and activities! We loved that things were set up when we arrived - nature ingredients out in the kitchen, sticks ready for fort building, etc. It made it so easy for our fairly young son to dive in and engage with everything. Staff were very friendly and checked in on us. We especially enjoyed the kitchen, the little house, the vet station, and feeding dandelions to Leche. Fantastic experience!!

Parent of

Wildrock in the Schoolyard camper

Wildrock exceeded my expectations - my children (ages 4 and 6) had an amazing time at the playscape and could have stayed for hours more! Each station felt so perfectly designed, providing simple ideas and tools that allowed the kids to use their imaginations. We will definitely be returning and have already recommended Wildrock to others.

Parent

VISIT FROM VIRGINIA'S FIRST LADY

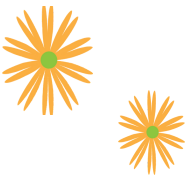


In November, Wildrock was honored to host Pamela Northam. She came to show support for the value of special outdoors spaces for community mental health during the pandemic. Bettina Ring, Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry, also visited. We had the opportunity to share the following land stewardship projects.

Land Stewardship Initiatives

- Sustainable agriculture garden
- Wildlife conservation trail
- "Three Sisters" garden
- Invasive species removal
- Conservation mowing
- Native tree planting
- Grant-funded solar panel installation
- Use of electric mowers and maintenance tools





NATURE PLAY CHALLENGE

Wildrock partnered with the UVA School of Architecture and Convoy Designs to research and design an innovative *Cville Nature Play Map*. Over thirty public green spaces were coded for the play motifs suited to their natural features. The map will be used by schools, doctors for park prescriptions, mental health agencies, and the general public.



Over 100 families participated in Wildrock's First Annual **Nature Play Challenge**. Each day over a two-week period, families received a *Play Spark* email to inspire exploration of our area green spaces and invite new, creative forms of nature play. The program and the surrounding social media campaign raised awareness about the streams, forests, and meadow areas suited for children's play and



EQUITY INITIATIVES

Nature play has an **equigenic effect**, meaning that when given equal access to nature play opportunities, children in under-resourced neighborhoods benefit more than children living near high-quality green space. By providing under-resourced communities with quality nature play experiences, Wildrock addresses multiple issues of inequity including physical health, social-emotional wellness, and school-readiness.

Wildrock is committed to making high-quality nature play accessible to ALL.

2021 DEI Initiatives:

- **Black Women Matter Nature Retreat Series**
 - A series of outdoor self-care retreats for and by Black women funded by Charlottesville Junior League
- **Nature Friends Preschool Program in Charlottesville City Schools**
 - Innovative nature-infused play in city schoolyards for 3 and 4 year olds
- **Virtual Field Trips and Camps for Public Schools**
 - Overcoming the barrier of transportation and COVID restrictions
- **Free Coupon Codes for Program Registration**
 - Overcoming the barrier of cost for all playscape and trail visits
- **Camp Scholarships and free Schoolyard Programs**
 - Providing a week of nature-immersion for campers in need



Wildrock staff members participated in a DEI certification program through the Muma College of Business at the University of South Florida.

Staff members also learned about the history and culture of the **Monacan Nation**, on whose land Wildrock is located. We shared our learning with our community through a series of social media posts about the Monacans of yesterday and today.



COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Abundant life Ministries
Albemarle County Schools
Albemarle High School
Barrett Early Learning Center
Big Brothers and Big Sisters of
the Central Blue Ridge
Blue Ridge Children's Museum
Blue Ridge Young Actors Guild
Building Goodness Foundation
Botanical Gardens of the
Piedmont
Boys and Girls Club Cherry Ave
Boys and Girls Club
Southwood
Building Goodness Foundation
Center for Nonprofit
Excellence
Charlottesville City Schools
Charlottesville City Parks
and Rec
Charlottesville High School
City of Promise
College of William and Mary
Come As You Are Cville
Community Attention
Foster Care

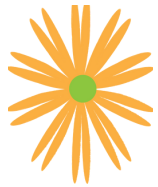
Convoy: Charlottesville Web
Development and
Graphic Design
James River Association
Jefferson-Madison Regional
Library
Living Free
Lugo McGinness Academy
Miss Tessa's Community Care
and Consulting
Montfair Restort
On Our Own
Pediatric Associates of
Charlottesville
ReadyKids
Region Ten
Saint Anne's Belfield
UVA Equity Center
UVA Rodman Scholars
UVA School of Architecture
Virginia Discovery Museum
Virginia Institute of Autism
Walker Upper Elementary
School
Wayne Hill Preschool Program

SUPPORTERS



Altrusa Club of Charlottesville
Anonymous donor
Jenny & Joseph Arcidicono
Bama Works CACF
Bankers Insurance
Batten Foundation
Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream
Adam and Philippa Belsches
Blue Ridge Outdoors Magazine
Christine Bowers
Jacqueline Bryant
CACF Community Recovery
and Catalyst Grant
Cardinal Home Center
Carpet Plus
Deborah and Barry Chlebnikow
Community Uplift Grant
CONVOY Design
Crozet Creamery
Crozet Gazette
Cville Arts Cooperative
Rachael Dealy
Carol Dempster
Joan Doxey
Gregory and Margaret Edwards
Wendy Ferguson
Mickie Flanigan

Anne Foster
Stacey Gearhart
Tereze Gegaj
Peter M. Harbilas
Hartfield Foundation
Hooter Hartman
Sue Haas
Heiner Family Fund CACF
Paul and Maria Henderson
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas J Hill
Hilltop Foundation
Jean Holliday
Carlene Hudgens
Stephanie Hunter
Sarah Jones
Jennifer Lanceley
Paige Lindblom
C. Lloyd Lipscomb III and
Elizabeth J. Lipscomb
William Lipscomb
L.L. Bean
Kate Mahanes
Erin Malec and Jed Verity
Amanda McCorry
Christopher Grey McLean
Louise R. McNamee and
Peter T. McHugh



Christine Melnik
Montfair Resort Farm
Courtney Moore
Patrick Moynihan
Don & Libby Nicholson
O'Suzannah
Patina Wealth
Perry Foundation
Piedmont Master Gardeners
Power of Change
Prana Fund CACF
Quantitative Investment
Management CACF
Ragged Mountain Running Shop
Ken and Kim Rambow
Rappahannock Electric
Cooperative
Cathy Rebmann
Amy Rector
Will P. Retzer
Maureen Richards
Bettina Ring
Lauren Rosati
Rotgin Family Fund
Alaina Schroeder
Shenanigan's
Arthur and Karen Sherwood
Philippe Sommer

Timothy and Sheila Sparks
Philip and Martha Stafford
Harry K & Reagan A Stillerman
Ellie Syrerud
T&N Printing
The Blackbaud Giving Fund/
S&P Global
The Front Porch
The Juice Laundry
The Left Coast Fund
John and Elizabeth Tilton
Karyn Trumbull
Michael and Heather
Vanderweide
Vanguard Charitable
Monique Vanlandingham
Mary Voorhees
Wegmans Food Markets, Inc.
Mandy and Jeff Welch
Ellen Wermter
Kat Werner
R. Ted and Sheila Weschler
Whitewoods Charitable
Foundation
Grant made on behalf of
Maggie Trundle in
celebration of Global
Prairie's BFTW recognition



VOLUNTEERS



Volunteerism is at the heart of Wildrock. A total of 3174 hours were donated by volunteers at a cost savings of \$90,152.00. We gratefully acknowledge the following volunteers for their dedication and generosity.

Marin Anderson

Mia Berry

Alex Diaz

Margot Diaz

Caroline Ey

Sophie Genovese-
Mester

Evelyn Hall

Hooter Hartman

Courtney Hopkins

Marilyn Jenkins

Kim Leshinski

Tim McDaniels

Ingrid Meadows

Max Murphy

Tiffany Norman

Peter Ohlms

Brad Scharf

Carolyn Schuyler

Kevin Schuyler

William Schuyler

Art Sherwood

Karen Sherwood

Isabel Skarbinski

Laurel Skarbinski

Anne Stoner

Catina Tanner

Erin Vines

Claire Watt

Jill and Jamie Watt

Rob Wooten

Community Groups

Boy Scout Pack #114

Convoy Design

Girl Scout Troop 927

Green Grannies

MLK Day of Caring

Potomac

Appalachian

Trail Club

UVA Darden School

UVA Rodman

Scholars

UVA School of

Architecture



**2021 Daisy Award
Winners**

for excellence in serving
Wildrock's mission



STAFF



Carolyn Schuyler

Executive Director

Margot Diaz

Program Specialist

Sarah Harris

Communications Director

Kyle Crawford

Land Stewardship Director

Molly Byers

Wildrock Host

Tessa Thompson

Black Women Matter Retreats

Max Murphy - intern

Evelyn Hall - intern



SUMMER STAFF



Brienna Hetzel

Chris Zaccaro

Chloe Wilson

Gabi Morris

Elizabeth Sepe

Brittany Durrer

Bridget Drain

Cecilia Degner

Rebecca Baber

William Schuyler

Donna Martin

Chloe Wilson

Sigrid Eilertson

Devin Morris

Tobin Yates

Clare Stenger

Tobin Yates

Stephanie Hunter

Suraya Whynott

Kristina Stegmeier



BOARD MEMBERS



Sue Haas

Shirley Terrell

Jenny Arcidicono

Christian Patrizia

Gary Driskill

Jacki Bryant

Brantley Ussery

Erin Malec

Harry Stillerman

Kim Rambow

Ryan Looney

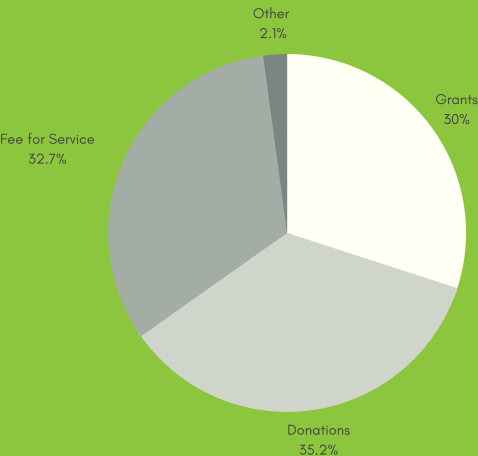
Margaret Edwards

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Wildrock is currently on solid financial footing due to pandemic pivots to expand programs. We anticipate significant growth in the coming year as it becomes permissible for schools to return for field trips and as the demand for Wildrock's expertise advancing youth development through therapeutic nature play continues to grow. We are currently expanding our team to increase our reach in the community in 2022.



Sources of Revenue



Under Covid restrictions, Wildrock pivoted to new service models to serve its mission resulting in increased revenue.

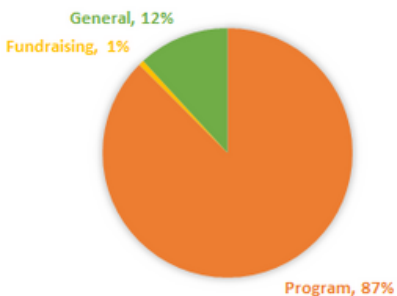
WILDROCK IS BUILDING SUSTAINABLE REVENUE SOURCES!

Program & Rental Revenue FY17 through FY21



EXPENDITURES ARE PROGRAM-FOCUSED!

FISCAL YEAR ENDED SEPT. 30, 2021



WILDROCK IS GROWING!

Assets & Liabilities FY17 through FY21



TALKS AND CONSULTATIONS



To meet its strategic goal of contributing thought leadership for nature play equity, Wildrock regularly consults with partner organizations to promote the integration of nature play and youth development work. We have worked locally and regionally with preschool programs, mental health agencies, and professional organizations to raise awareness of nature connection's role in community mental health. Highlights of this year's talks include:

National Association of Social Workers Virginia Conference - *Ecotherapy in Clinical Practice*

Virginia Association for the Education of the Young Child - *Creating Nature Play Spaces for Preschoolers*

Steward School Visiting Innovator of the Year - *Nature Play for Health and Happiness*

Youtube talk on Wildrock channel - *Nature Pandemic Self-Care*

Natural Start Alliance - *Nurturing Families with Nature Connection*

Botanical Garden of the Piedmont - Ian Robertson Legacy: Lectureship Series - *Nature for Mental Health*

James River Association - *Ecotherapy in Action*

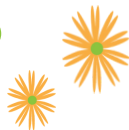
Charlottesville City School Counselors - *Counseling in the Schoolyard*

ReadyKids - *Nature play in Clinical Work*



WILDROCK IN ONE WORD

VISITOR RESPONSES



Engaging
Inspiring
Exciting
Rewarding
Lovely
Refreshing
Imaginative
Adventurous
Dreamland
Relaxing
Experiential
Extraordinary
Restorative
Nature
Relaxed
Fun

Magical
Fun
Peaceful
Creative
Beautiful
Fabulous
Wonderful
Adventure
Creative
Awesome
Unique
Fantastic
Wholesome
Innovative

Favorite
Liberating
Expansive
Breathtaking
Enriching
Joyful
Outstanding
Magical
Ideal
Glorious
Lifegiving
Perfect
Fun
Peaceful
Playful
Thoughtful

Recalibrate
Spectacular
Enriching
Transformative
Fabulous
Outstanding
Creative
Awesome
Meaningful
Magical
Exciting
Nice
Enchanting
Educational
Fantastic
Creative





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Crozet, VA 22932
info@wildrock.org
www.wildrock.org



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

*We acknowledge and extend our deepest gratitude to the original stewards of this land on which Wildrock is located, the **Monacan** and **Manahoac** people. We respectfully acknowledge the revered ancestors of the Monacan Nation and the esteemed elders of the present day.*

We value and protect this land for all it offers:

A peaceful natural retreat, a place to play and explore, a sanctuary for local wildlife, and a place to deepen connections to each other and to the natural world.