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Kalamazoo
Nature
Center



POSITION GUIDE

PRESIDENT & CEO

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POSITION GUIDE

ORGANIZATION:	Kalamazoo Nature Center
POSITION:	President & CEO
REPORTS TO:	Board of Directors
LOCATION:	Kalamazoo, MI

MISSION

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

VISION

The Kalamazoo Nature Center will be internationally recognized as the premier source for environmental information, education and research to achieve a world respectful of its surroundings.

ABOUT THE CENTER

“Certain places have a magic that draws people to them. Cooper’s Glen, one of the best-loved spots in Kalamazoo County, has possessed this power for centuries. There is evidence that Native Americans camped near the glen prior to European settlement. Some of Cooper Township’s first European residents lived close to the glen, building their homes in the clearings made famous by James Fenimore Cooper in his book “The Oak Openings”. Later families and friends traveled out from Kalamazoo by dirt road, by boat

along the Kalamazoo River or on the interurban railway to picnic. Biology students would go for field study, amateur and professional ornithologists to observe and enjoy varied bird life, photographers to capture images, and botanists to study and enjoy the varied wildflowers and other plant life." (from *Glimpsing the Whole, the Kalamazoo Nature Center Story*, 1995)

In the late 1950's gravel mining and commercialism threatened Cooper's Glen. A group of community leaders came together to purchase the land and establish an outdoor environmental education center that would become known as the Kalamazoo Nature Center—one of the first nature centers in the country.

Dr. H. Lewis Batts, Jr. was a nationally known environmentalist at the time and the driving force behind the purchase of Cooper's Glen and the incorporation of the Kalamazoo Nature Center in 1960. Dr. Batts continued to serve as the center's volunteer Executive Director until his retirement in 1989 when Dr. Willard M. Rose was hired to lead the organization into the future.

Today The Kalamazoo Nature Center (KNC), recognized by its peers as one of the top nature centers in the country, has expanded to include 1,100 acres of wooded, rolling countryside five miles north of Kalamazoo, Michigan, the Heronwood Field Station, Nature's Way Preschool, DeLano Homestead and Farms, the Urban Nature Park in downtown Kalamazoo, and the Stryker Nature Preserve. The organization has a budget of approximately \$3M and is supported by a staff of 50, a Board of Directors of 20, and an endowment of \$6M. The primary activities of KNC are education, conservation and research, and community collaboration.



Education

A key pillar of KNC's efforts since its inception has been educating children and adults to enjoy and respect nature. Flagship programs such as [Nature's Way Preschool](#), a tuition-based program that promotes social awareness, school readiness, and opportunities for exploration and discovery, as well as [Nature Center Camp](#), a summer program encouraging children to grow into active and respectful community members, each provide exceptional opportunities for children to learn through an exploration of the natural world. Approximately 100 children and over 1,400 youth are enrolled in Nature's Way Preschool and Nature Center Camp each year, respectively.

Other key educational offerings include [Annie's BIG Nature Lesson](#), a five-day study trip which provides an educational program for students, teachers, and parents. Each year over 600 students from across the region participate in this unique educational offering. Overall, School and Community Programs at KNC reach over 20,000 students and adults each year.



[Heronwood Field Station](#) offers yet another unique element to KNC. A fully operational ecological field station, Heronwood supports a conservation biology Education for Employment course, the imperiled butterfly conservation program, as well as youth and summer classes and programs. Each year, students log approx. 15,000 hours at Heronwood through the EFE course, Conservation Leadership Middle School Program, and Introduction to Entomology adult education course.

Public Programs at KNC are also critical to its mission. [DeLano Farms](#) has become a central hub of public program activity including the Maple Sugar Festival, Earth Day and Mud Fest, DeLano Farms Fall Fest, Creatures of the Night (Halloween), and Holidays at the Homestead. Public programs, and many other activities at KNC, would not be possible at KNC without the dedicated support of volunteers, who provide over 13,000 hours of service every year to various programs at the Center. The recent addition of the Stryker Nature Center will provide two unique resources for additional public programming and education.

Conservation and Research

A critical element of KNC's heritage and future is its dedication and continued success in developing a strong conservation science program. Perhaps best known is the [Kalamazoo Valley Bird Observatory](#), one of the longest running banding programs in North America. Banding occurs at two locations, the Kalamazoo Nature Center and the Pitsfield Station. The fall migration banding program, KNC's largest banding program, has been conducted using the same protocol since 1974. Each year, over 10,000 songbirds and hummingbirds are banded through the KVBO.

The Cooperative Invasive Species Management program (CISMA) and the Great Lakes Ecological Management program (GLEM) are both important efforts underway. Under [CISMA](#), KNC manages the regional invasive species collaborative for three counties (Barry, Calhoun and Kalamazoo) as part of a statewide effort to effectively manage and educate about invasive plants and animals through regional, community-based collaborations. [GLEM](#) offers ecological planning and large scale restoration management in partnership with private landowners, government and non-government entities to maximize biodiversity and water quality.



Citizen Science is also a crucial element of the Nature Center's mission. A prime example of this mission is the [Michigan Butterfly Network](#). Initiated in 2012, MiBN assesses the changing population status of Michigan's butterfly species and evaluates the quality of

Michigan's ecosystems. In the fourth year of the program in 2016, over 2,500 individual butterfly recordings and over 400 surveys were completed by volunteer citizen science monitors.

Community Collaboration

Engaging the community around Kalamazoo has been core to KNC's mission for decades. Two key activities have been the establishment of the [Southwest Michigan Sustainable Business Forum \(SWMSBF\)](#) and the Kalamazoo Climate Change Coalition. SWMSBF is comprised of 74 business and associate members and was established by KNC to promote business practices which demonstrate environmental stewardship, economic vitality and social responsibility among partner businesses and organizations. Operating under the guidance of an Advisory Board of business leaders, the SWMSBF has developed "Project Zero" a program designed to promote innovative waste management strategies moving local businesses toward a zero waste goal.

The [Urban Nature Park](#) is a recently completed project in downtown Kalamazoo. KNC acquired a 4 acre brownfield site along Portage Creek and remediated and restored to wetland habitat and pre-settlement prairie with an accessible trail. Developed in partnership with the City of Kalamazoo and the EPA, future plans for the park include connecting it to the campus of Kalamazoo Valley Community College.

THE OPPORTUNITY

The President & CEO of Kalamazoo Nature Center will be provided the opportunity to substantially shape the long-term future of a highly accomplished, nationally recognized conservation organization with a trusted reputation, dedicated staff, engaged Board of Directors and substantial financial resources. Specifically, the President & CEO will be charged with enhancing organizational and program efforts across the organization. Critical strategic opportunities exist for KNC to expand its impact across all program areas. The President & CEO will be supported by a motivated, dedicated Board of Directors seeking to build upon a strong foundation and grow the organization with ambition.

KNC has been regionally and nationally recognized for its innovative conservation education and science programming. As the Board prepares for the future, the next President & CEO will have the opportunity to lead the organization through a thoughtful strategic planning process that will further outline the vision for this important organization as it moves forward.

POSITION SUMMARY

The President & CEO leads the staff of Kalamazoo Nature Center and is the most high-profile public representative of the organization. S/he has the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the strategic directives of the Board are effectively completed. The President & CEO is charged with guiding the overall success of the organization at all levels. Key responsibilities are to:

- Ensure that the mission and core values of the KNC are put into practice.
- Guide the development and implementation of the overall organizational strategy and direction.
- Provide vision and strategic leadership in crafting organizational goals and outcome metrics.

- Ensure a sound financial foundation through hands-on fundraising and effective budgeting practices.
- Foster a high-energy, goal-drive, team-oriented, accountable organization.
- Inspire, mentor, manage and evaluate staff.
- Cultivate influential relationships with community leaders, major donors, foundations and governmental agencies.
- Represent and promote the work of the KNC as the chief spokesperson for the organization.

CANDIDATE PROFILE

Kalamazoo Nature Center seeks an accomplished leader who demonstrates a keen understanding of, and passion for, the organization's unique mission. The person must be ready to join with the Board to lead KNC in pursuing strategic goals in environmental conservation, education and research through a proven ability in fundraising, program oversight, collaborative ventures and constituency building. The ideal candidate will have a background that includes a rigorous understanding of the environmental and conservation sector, financial and staff management combined with an extraordinary understanding of philanthropy and proven success in raising significant funds from individuals, foundations, corporations, and public entities on behalf of mission and organization.

The successful candidate will have:

- Relevant executive management experience in a not-for-profit and/or mission focused organization.
- Exceptional interpersonal skills and manage with an inclusive team-oriented leadership style.
- A personal commitment to fostering a multi-cultural, diverse organization.
- The ability to inspire and motivate staff and volunteers.
- Proven fundraising skills and the ability and desire to cultivate influential relationships with all KNC stakeholder constituencies.
- The capability to envision and chart meaningful organization growth while maintaining a strong sustainable foundation.
- A positive perspective that encourages a little fun along the way.
- Executive level achievements in the fields of environmental education, advocacy, policy, research, business, and/or law

A Master's degree from an accredited college or university is required. A Ph.D. in environmental sciences, conservation or other aligned fields is highly desired.

To apply, please send a current resume and letter of introduction to Kittleman & Associates, LLC at <https://www.kittlemansearch.com/kalamazoo-nature-center/>

For more information about the Kalamazoo Nature Center, please visit <https://naturecenter.org/Home.aspx>

ABOUT KALAMAZOO

Kalamazoo is famous for a lot of things. It's a major international pharmaceutical and life sciences center; it's the original home of the Upjohn Co., Stryker Corp, Gibson Guitars, Checker Motors and Bell's Brewery, among many others; the Kalamazoo Gazette is the second oldest newspaper in Michigan; and a century ago, Kalamazoo was so famous for one crop, it was known throughout the country as the Celery City.

Kalamazoo is a center of higher education. In addition to Western Michigan University, it is home to Kalamazoo College and Kalamazoo Valley Community College. The three institutions collaborate on a variety of fronts and add significantly to the cultural and educational opportunities and economic development of the region.

The Kalamazoo Promise, a program ensuring every resident graduate of the Kalamazoo Public Schools is provided with a scholarship for up to 100% of tuition and mandatory fee costs for four years at any public university or community college in Michigan, started in 2006. In 2015, Communities in Schools of Kalamazoo received the national Unsung Heroes award in recognition of elementary school programs aimed at overcoming cultural and language barriers faced by students.

With a population of more than 325,000, Kalamazoo is the sixth largest metropolitan area in Michigan and among the 150 largest in the country. It's large enough to support all the amenities and entertainment found in larger cities; and yet, you can be in the heart of farm country in 20 minutes.

Located in Southwest Michigan, about two hours from Chicago, Kalamazoo features a vibrant and progressive downtown that sets the stage for quality dining, eclectic shops and galleries, and live entertainment. Kalamazoo is a 40-minute drive from Lake Michigan beaches at South Haven and slightly farther from beaches at St. Joseph and Saugatuck. Michigan's ski country, considered the best skiing in the Midwest, is three to four hours north, and excellent local skiing is only 30 minutes away.

Originally a railroad line connecting Kalamazoo and South Haven, the 33-mile Kal-Haven Trail is popular for bicycle riding, hiking and cross country skiing. In 2008, the eastern end of the trail was extended into Kalamazoo as part of the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail. When completed, the two trails will create a 70-mile bike path from South Haven to Battle Creek.

Local festivals, featuring live music, arts and crafts, food and drinks, attract crowds in the tens of thousands. The Kalamazoo Art Fair, held annually on the first weekend in June, is the second oldest community art fair in America and attracts 60,000 visitors over two days. Kalamazoo supports a thriving Farmers Market downtown May through November.

The above information is a compilation gathered from the Western Michigan University website (<https://wmich.edu/about/kalamazoo>), Wikipedia (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kalamazoo,_Michigan) and Discover Kalamazoo (<http://www.discoverkalamazoo.com/#/gallery/recent>).