



Audubon Center of the North Woods

Experience Your Environment

ACNW CASE STATEMENT

Our commitment to teaching the current and future generations about our interconnectedness to the environment is primary to the well-being of our planet and its inhabitants; this is reflected in the Audubon Center of the North Woods' (ACNW) Mission:

*To instill a connection and commitment to the environment
in people of all communities through experiential learning*

And our resulting Vision:

A healthy planet where all people live in balance with the Earth

And our resulting Core Values:

- *We demonstrate respect, care and passion for the Earth, all people and all things*
- *We strive for excellence in everything we do through integrity, open communication, and teamwork*
- *Individuals are valued, engaged and appreciated for their unique contributions*
- *We believe in life-long learning through positive shared experiences with the natural world*
- *Our efforts encourage others to recognize the interconnectedness with the Earth through their actions*

History:

In 1968, as the surviving member of a prominent St. Paul medical family, Dr. Marguerite Schwyzer gave her family's farm near Sandstone, MN to the National Audubon Society through bequest. Given its distance from the Twin Cities and Duluth, the National Audubon Society at the time decided not to invest resources into it for staffing or infrastructure. In light of this, the Audubon Center gained autonomy when it was established as a 501c3 nonprofit organization in October 1970. In November of 1971, the Minneapolis Audubon Chapter, St. Paul Audubon Society and the Minnesota Valley River Audubon Chapter pooled funds and offered a 3-month long, \$300/month position to our newly hired founding director with the job description "See What You Can Do". The Audubon Center of the North Woods was subsequently born. We began offering programs in the winter of 1972 and have been doing so ever since as a 501c3 residential environmental learning center, connecting hundreds of thousands of people to the environment. In 1995, we received the deed to our property from the National Audubon Society, completing our autonomy.

Experiential Education for All Ages:

ACNW, the closest residential environmental learning center to the Twin Cities, is a short 90 minute drive on I-35 from either St. Paul or Minneapolis. Being a fully accredited school for day use and residential K-12 programs, we offer a diverse curriculum focused on earth and life sciences, history, cultural studies, team-building and adventure all tied to Minnesota State Standards. We serve over 10,000 visitors annually through our K-12, College, Youth, Family, Community and Adult programs. Since 1976, we have been a field campus for colleges and universities, teaching a wide variety of undergraduate and graduate level courses. We also partner with Road Scholar® to offer a number of programs and are a licensed wildlife rehabilitation facility. We regularly bring our staff and our educational animals into classrooms through our Outreach and Naturalist-In-Residence programs. As a conference and retreat center, we make environmental education a naturally occurring component to any ACNW facility rental with our nature artwork and book collections in all of our lodges, renewable energy and wildlife interpretive signs, 7+ miles of trails, program options, and scratch-made meals in our dining hall. A passion for the environment and desire to share that with others is embedded in all of our staff, with each staff member having special expertise in any number of subjects. The unique and diverse knowledge base of the ACNW program staff is what makes a visit to ACNW so very rewarding and a national leader in environmental education.

In conclusion, we believe that a healthy environment starts with and is perpetuated by a personal connection to it, and ACNW is and has been committed to that goal for over 40 years. By working with all ages and audiences, we create leaders in the environmental field that spans generations, disciplines and the globe.