



Thomas Irvine Dodge Nature Center
WEST ST. PAUL ■ MINNESOTA
ANNUAL REPORT FISCAL YEAR 2015



DODGE
NATURE CENTER



The Dodge **story**



2015, DODGE NATURE CENTER SAW THE

completion of a critical segment of the River to River Greenway, which crosses the center property.

Dodge is now linked to an eight-mile corridor running from the Minnesota River to the Mississippi River and, perhaps eventually, to the 200-mile greenway network that Dakota County plans to develop. The greenway stands to raise awareness of the center among cyclists, hikers and others who may not be familiar with what it has to offer at its main property or other locations. It also offers returning visitors a new way to access the center and new views of natural areas restored as part of the greenway connection.

The greenway's completion occurred as Dodge reviewed its membership program. According to the Fall/Winter 2015 newsletter, Dodge saw memberships remain steady while attendance at programs, camps and events grew. This past year Dodge hosted some 59,000 nature experiences. A goal of Dodge's strategic plan is to serve even more people and reach new audiences by serving teachers and students in their classrooms.



Dodge is also working with Activated Growth to develop a tagline and infographic as another means of reaching out to the Twin Cities metro area market. This will be significant to celebrate Dodge's accomplishments and expand its profile in the community. Dodge has also expanded digital distribution of its annual report, to share its story with a wider online audience and to support a core value, environmental stewardship.

New connections is a theme running through much of the activity in and around Dodge this year — and likely next year after the greenway and related improvements. The new connections Dodge forges with members, visitors and donors builds momentum for the 50th anniversary of the center's founding which will be celebrated in 2017. ■

MISSION

Providing exceptional experiences in nature through environmental education.

VISION

Inspiring commitment to the thoughtful care of the environment.

VALUES

Environmental Stewardship

Experiential Education

Teacher Education

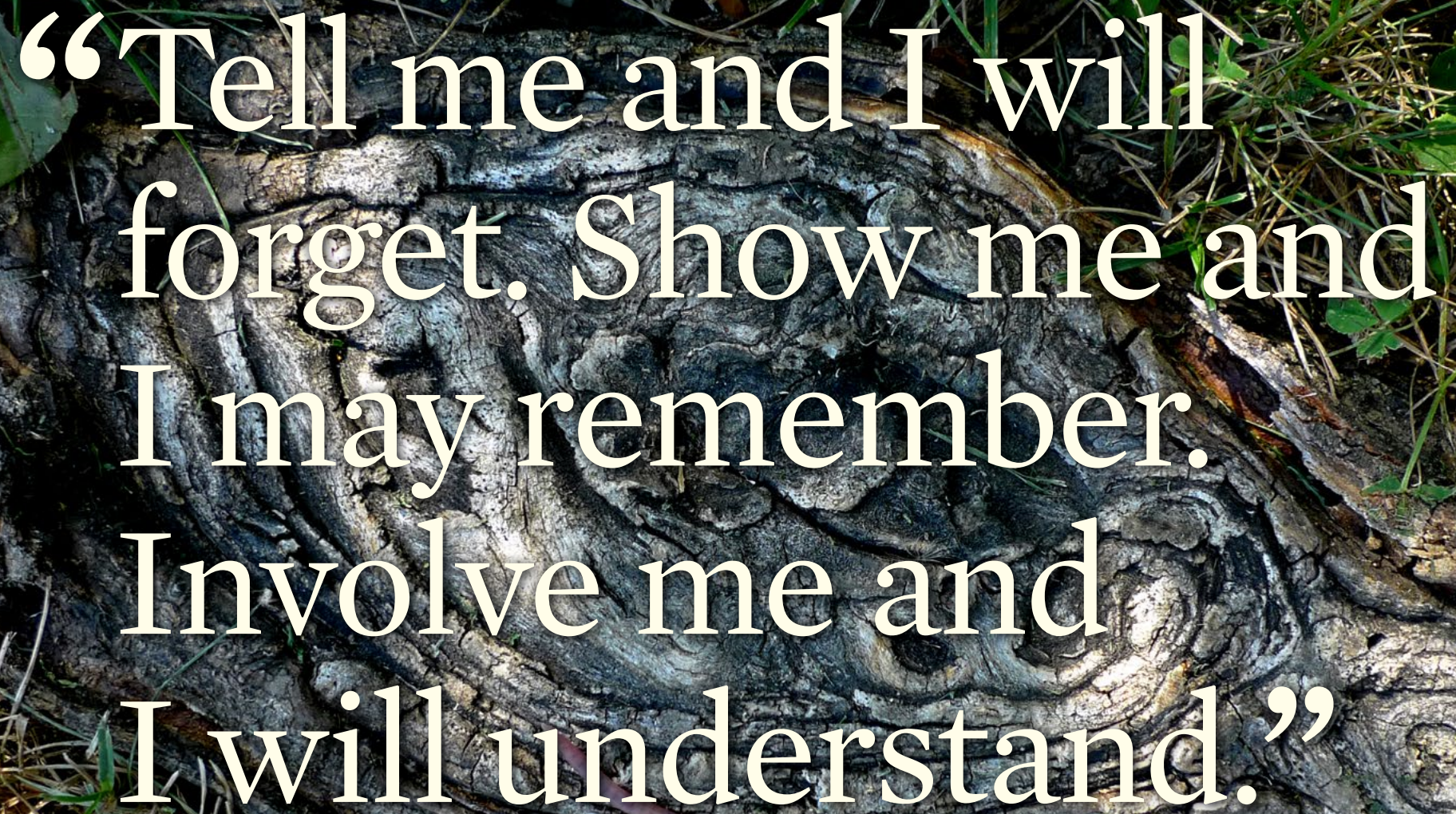
Community Inclusiveness

Collaboration

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“Tell me and I will
forget. Show me and
I may remember.
Involve me and
I will understand.”

— CHINESE PROVERB

2015

New connections at Dodge Nature Center



YEARS OF PLANNING AND

months of construction culminated in the summer of 2015 in one of the biggest changes and greatest opportunities to come to Dodge Nature Center in its nearly 50-year history — the new bike trail that crosses Dodge's main property. The trail, largely completed in July and celebrated on Sept. 1 with an inaugural bike ride, is drawing visitors to the nature center as pedestrians and bike riders alike take

advantage of the safe access that the new tunnel under Charlton Street and near Marie Avenue affords.

The rolling, wooded trail offers glimpses of Dodge's hiking trails, raptor mews, main office and other buildings. Beyond that the trail connects Dodge to the River to River Greenway, an 8-mile recreational corridor that runs through northern Dakota County from the Minnesota River to the Mississippi River Trail. The River to River Greenway *CONTINUED NEXT PAGE*



2015: **New connections**

today links Lilydale, Mendota Heights, West St. Paul and South St. Paul and in the future could become part of a 200-mile greenway network the county hopes to develop. It has the potential to help Dodge reach new audiences and serve more people as part of its mission to provide exceptional experiences in nature through environmental education. The trail also promotes active living and an environmentally friendly way to travel.

"It's quite beautiful," Jackie Hamilton of West St. Paul says of the trail, after biking it with husband, Mick, and their young daughter, Sydney. "You can make connections to the trail system, you can make connections to the parks. There were people walking with kids in strollers, people biking. It was very busy with a lot of people out and about. All I saw on the trail were nothing but smiles. Everyone was just happy and it was a good feeling."

Jeff Johnson, a longtime Dodge supporter and member of the Twin Cities

Bicycling Club, offered design suggestions in public meetings and written comments to county officials over the years while the trail route was under consideration. He appreciates the addition of the tunnel and good sight lines for riders, which he says helps riders avoid possible collisions as they enter and exit the underpass.

"The design brings people through Dodge and allows them to have a bit more of a woodsy experience," Johnson says. "It brings them close to where some of the infrastructure is and introduces them more to other activities at Dodge."

Johnson expects bike traffic to increase on the trail at Dodge as improvements occur to other parts of the River to River Greenway.

"I've seen a tremendous increase in people walking through the area," Johnson says. "It's integrated the neighborhood more, encouraging people to get out and enjoy the nice trail system. It does seem quite popular." ■



The new trail: A cyclist's perspective

“It is beautiful, scenic and interesting as a trail,” said Patrick Dupont, president of Team Sprockets Cycling Club, a Mendota Heights-based group with 20 members. “It is certainly an excellent trail for explorers and families, to be in nature and have fun riding a bicycle at the same time. The rolling and winding feel of the trail through a natural setting within the city is not only surprising but is particularly satisfying as a rider. Unlike some of the busier trails in the metro, **this is the kind of trail that gives a cyclist a moment to stop and enjoy the sights and sounds of the scenery.**”

Dupont's three children have attended day camps, field trips and classes at Dodge and he and his wife have attended events at the nature center, including the Benefit Gala.





EXCEPTIONAL **experiences**

“I get to breathe deep and take a break from all of our technology. You’re constantly on call now as a person and a grandparent and I also have elderly parents. I can disconnect from all of those things, which is delightful.”

Kris Rollwagen, of Mendota Heights, retired three years ago after teaching for 12 years at Dodge Nature Preschool, where two grandsons are students.

Thank you **volunteers**

AREA OF SUPPORT	HOURS	NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS
Animal Care	276	6
Board Members	162	26
Fundraising	420	30
Farm	894	16
Buildings & Grounds/ Land Restoration	2,490	113
Administration	138	12
Preschool	628	124
Programming	1,037	43
Community Events	2,213	621
Advisory Committees	413	14
TOTAL	8,671	1,005

VOLUNTEER VALUE:
\$24.31 per hour

**U.S. NON-FARM WAGE
SOCIAL RETURN:**
\$210,792

SOURCES: INDEPENDENT
SECTOR, 2013, MINNESOTA
ASSOCIATION FOR VOLUNTEER
ADMINISTRATION

**Frosty Festival volunteer hours
not included because the event
was canceled due to insufficient
weather.*



VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Jeanine Napier Fillmore: Scaring up fun

Putting the scary into the **Halloween Extravaganza's Scary Trail** is a treat for trail leader, Jeanine Napier Fillmore, the 2015 Shan Knox Award winner as Dodge Nature Center's Volunteer of the Year.



Executive Director,
Jason Sanders with
Jeanine Napier Fillmore

Each fall for the past nine years, Fillmore has spent 30 to 40 hours planning for the hundreds of guests who venture down the Scary Trail. The effort includes lining up 70 to 80 volunteers who stage frightening encounters

along the trail, from a spooky insane asylum to a trip through a clown tent.

Fillmore and other volunteers, including a number of family members,

start setting up the trail early on the morning of the Extravaganza. The work continues until dark, when guests begin entering the trail, and continues late into the night as the trail features get disassembled.

Distraction is the key to a good scare, Fillmore says. Get people looking one way, then spring a shocking sight or sound — or both — on them from another direction will get them every time.

"Usually if you're walking through a scary trail, you want to be scared," Fillmore says. "Once you get people to jump or scream, it's actually really satisfying because that's your goal."

Fillmore has been visiting the nature center since she was a child and looks forward to spending time there with her young daughter. ■



“I love nature,” Alexander says of her connection to Dodge. It’s a beautiful place and I want to keep it clean.” Alexander was 13 when she first came to Dodge Nature Center on a field trip with the Neighborhood House, where she now works and volunteers. With fond memories from that visit of walking around the farm pond and petting the animals, she has returned several times a year since, on other field trips, walks with family members, volunteer opportunities at Dodge events and activities and her sister’s wedding last summer.

LaShaya Alexander, 20, St. Paul College student, SOUTH ST. PAUL

Environmental education

COMMUNITY EVENTS★

Rock the Barn1,000

Golf 108

Halloween 2,511

Frosty Fun ..*cancelled*

Outreach2,727

On-Site Classes ...25,808

Naturalist at Garlough15,184

Naturalist at Heritage5,671
(5TH & 7TH GRADE)

★NUMBER OF ATTENDEES

PRESCHOOL ENROLLMENT

2014-15 SCHOOL YEAR: 201 students

SUMMER CAMP: 166 students



Open to the public!

Whether you're new or returning to Dodge Nature Center, here are some things to know:

Experience nature all year long at the Thomas Irvine Dodge Nature Center. All you need is a desire to get outdoors and escape the city without even leaving town.

Hike, snowshoe or simply enjoy nature on the miles of trails on Dodge Nature Center properties, which are open to the public from sunrise to sunset. Discover wildlife, raptors, rare-breed farm animals, reptiles and amphibians along the way. Watch — or listen — for woodpeckers, goldfinches, mourning doves and turkeys among 125 bird species you can encounter.

Learn to make maple syrup, take a harvest hayride or find out about bees, birds, gardening and more at nature programs in more than 40 subjects, for parents and preschoolers, families, adults and seniors.

Or come to one of Dodge's popular all-ages events: the Frosty Fun Festival, which offers

kick-sledding and ice bowling and other winter activities; the Rock the Barn Farm Festival, which features visits with farm animals and live music for dancing and the Halloween Extravaganza, where you'll find both a friendly trick-or-treat trail and a scary trail for frightening fun.

Dodge Nature Center encompasses more than 460 acres of serene wetlands and ponds, prairie grasslands, woodlands and forests in the Twin Cities suburbs of West St. Paul, Mendota Heights and Cottage Grove. It includes a working farm with sheep, cattle, guinea hogs, goats and chickens, an orchard, an apiary, a maple sugar shack, raptor mews and reptile and amphibian classroom.

The varied landscapes serve as outdoor classrooms for visiting school groups, community education programs, day camps for school-aged children and those attending Dodge Nature Preschool. At Dodge Nature Preschool, children grow and develop as they explore connections with the natural world as they visit *CONTINUED NEXT PAGE*



Open to the **public!**

the nature center's 40-acre model farm, its prairies and wetlands. This premier, accredited preschool serves children ages 3 through 5 with morning or afternoon classes on two, three or five days a week. Summer and spring break camps for students through eighth grade also are available.

DODGE NATURE CENTER'S FOUR PROPERTIES ARE:

Main Property, WEST ST. PAUL

Established as a nature preserve in 1967: Set out on miles of trails among ponds, woodlands and wildlife on this 110-acres site, which also houses the administrative office, preschool and farm and serves to host most events and public programs.

Marie Property, WEST ST. PAUL

One of Dodge's best hikes awaits on 40 acres of mixed woodland and prairie with trails and a boardwalk for hikers.

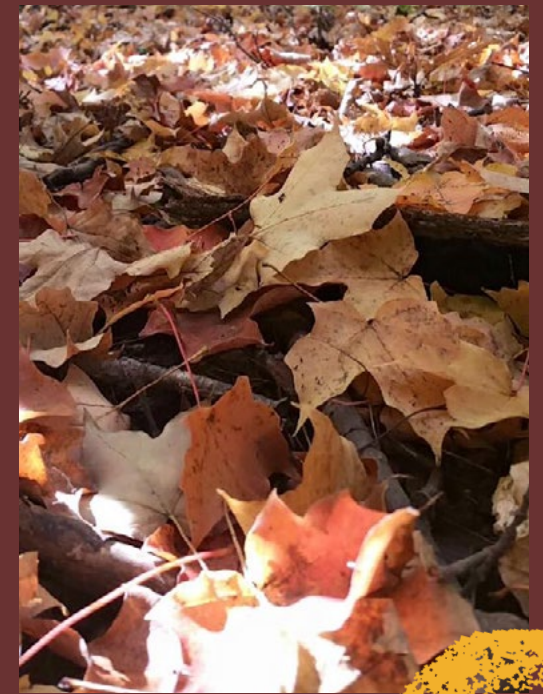
Shepard Farm, acquired in 2013: Open only to registered participants of Dodge tours or program, this 139-acre property features mature forests and an elegant homestead.

Lilly Property, MENDOTA HEIGHTS

Acquired in 1976: Hike, cross-country ski or snowshoe on this 170-acre parcel, which includes trails, marshland, prairie, mixed woodlands and a large pond. The Lilly family barn still stands while the former windmill now serves as a wind-powered pump at the main property farm.

50th anniversary COUNTDOWN

Dodge Nature Center already is looking forward to celebrating its 50th anniversary in September 2017. Olivia Irvine Dodge, a pioneer in environmental education, had the foresight to buy the truck farms around her home and, in 1967, establish what became the Dodge Nature Center. Stay tuned for news on how Dodge plans to celebrate this milestone and continue delivering natural outdoor experiences and education to children and people of all ages.





EXCEPTIONAL **experiences**

“We love it here,”
Allison Bodkin says.
“We’re so lucky
to have found
it. It’s become a
part of our life.”

Allison and Joel Bodkin, MINNEAPOLIS, are nature center regulars and their two children have attended the Dodge Nature Center Preschool. The Bodkins attend events like Rock the Barn in the spring, Halloween Extravaganza in the fall and Frosty Fun Festival in the winter. Their children also like to revisit their favorite spots on the trails from their preschool class on family hiking trips.

PUBLIC SUPPORT AND REVENUE

	UNRESTRICTED	TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED	PERMANENTLY RESTRICTED	TOTAL
Public Support				
Contributions	220,238	345,660	2,950	568,848
Memberships	12,057			12,057
Fundraiser Revenue (Net)	123,622			123,622
TOTAL PUBLIC SUPPORT	355,917	345,660	2,950	704,527
Revenue				
Visitor Fees and Tuition	394,611			394,611
Preschool Tuition	761,140			761,140
Rental Revenue	61,571			61,571
Interest and Dividends Income	(70,199)	(63,333)	(35,489)	(169,021)
Miscellaneous	25,072			25,072
TOTAL REVENUE	1,172,195	(63,333)	(35,489)	1,073,373
Net Assets Released from Restrictions	—			
Satisfaction of Program Restrictions	396,481	(396,481)	—	
TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUE	1,924,593	(114,154)	(32,539)	1,777,900

EXPENSES

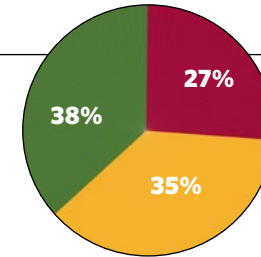
Program Services				
Nature and Environmental Education	1,893,233	1,893,233		
Supporting Service				
Management and General	290,398	290,398		
Fund Raising	132,796			132,796
Total Supporting Service	423,194	423,194		
TOTAL EXPENSE	2,316,427	—	—	2,316,427
INCREASE IN NET ASSETS	(391,834)	(114,154)	(32,539)	(538,527)

CHANGE IN NET ASSETS

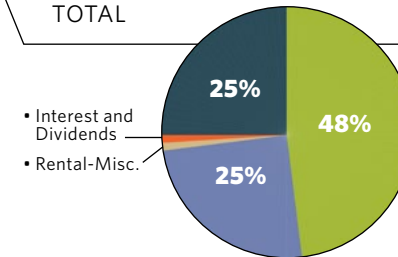
	UNRESTRICTED	TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED	PERMANENTLY RESTRICTED	TOTAL
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	7,821,301	2,155,631	9,741,483	19,718,415
Increase (Decrease) in Net Assets	(391,834)	(114,154)	(32,539)	(538,527)
NET ASSETS, END OF YEAR	7,429,467	2,041,477	9,708,944	19,179,888

REVENUE AND EXPENSES

Corporations & Foundations	98,085	27%
Fundraiser Revenue	123,622	35%
Individuals	134,210	38%
TOTAL	355,917	—



Preschool Tuition	761,140	48%
Released from Restrictions	396,481	25%
Interest and Dividends	(70,199)	-0.045%
Rental-Misc	86,643	0.055%
Program Fees	394,611	25%
TOTAL	1,568,676	—



Thomas Irvine Dodge Nature Center
September 1, 2014 — August 31, 2015

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Northern Tier

STEWARDS \$2,500-\$4,999

Mairs and Power

BENEFACTORS \$1,000-\$2,499

Anchor Bank
Bearence Management Group
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota
Briggs and Morgan
Document Technology Solutions, Inc.
Ecolab Foundation
Eide Bailly
Highland Bank
Hirshfield's Paints and Coatings
Lindquist & Vennum
RAzOR Capital
Sibley Hockey Booster Club
South Robert Street Business Association
Walter and Leona Schmitt Family Foundation
Xcel Energy

PATRONS \$500-\$999

Renewal by Anderson

SUPPORTERS \$100-\$499

Bill Rascher Mechanical Inc.
Connelly Family Wealth - UBS Financial Services
Fireside Bar and Restaurant
Miller Orthodontics
Minnesota State Lottery
Natural Landscapes
POPP Communications



DODGE
NATURE CENTER

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