

The Perennial **ANNUAL REPORT**



DODGE
NATURE CENTER

Fiscal Year 2025

Letter from Leadership
Annual Overview
Nature by the Numbers

Dear friends,

This past year at Dodge was one of change and continued growth.

In the fall, we experienced a leadership transition with Jason Sanders' departure, board member Chad Dayton graciously stepping in to provide steady and thoughtful leadership during the interim, and welcoming [Missi Arens](#) into the role of Executive Director.

Throughout these changes, our commitment to high-quality environmental education remained constant.

Change is a natural part of any healthy ecosystem. In nature, seasons shift, roots deepen unseen, and growth unfolds in its own time. Like the prairies we steward, Dodge is always evolving—responding to the environment while staying grounded in our mission.

Prairie growth is described in three steps: sleep, creep, and leap.

In its earliest stage, a prairie appears quiet as plants focus on building strong root systems below ground. As it creeps, leaves and flowers pop up above soil. Over time, the prairie leaps into full bloom, thriving because of the careful groundwork laid before.

We invite you to explore this annual report through the lens of prairie growth. As you read, you'll discover the foundations we strengthened, the ideas set in motion, and the programs and partnerships that flourished. Together, they show how

patience, care, and intention lead to lasting impact.

Missi Arens

Missi Arens

Executive Director

Carol Bouw

Carol Bouw

Board Chair



Lupine

Black-eyed Susan

Sleep

Foundations taking root

This phase is all about planning, learning, and investing in strong foundations that will support long-term growth, even when progress isn't visible.

At Shepard Farm, a lot of actual underground work took place to strengthen essential infrastructure.

- Water lines and electric wiring were added to the historic stables, preparing this space for animal use that will grow our farm programming.
- In the wake of a large buckthorn removal project, we worked with the Washington Conservation District to create plans to remove dead ash trees and plant new saplings in our old-growth forest.



Gray treefrog

Leap

In full bloom

This stage celebrates all that is flourishing at Dodge: long-standing programs and trusted relationships that illustrate the impact of delivering on our mission for 59 years and counting.

- Girls Explore Science expanded from an after-school, onsite program to an in-school program, serving 52 more 4th and 5th graders at Crestview, Pullman, and Woodbury Elementary schools.
- Outreach programming reached new heights—naturalists taught 44% more programs and served 32% more learners than last year.
- Dodge Nature Preschool celebrated its 25th anniversary. Since opening in 2000 as the first nature preschool in Minnesota, the preschool has served more than 3,500 students and continues to flourish as a cornerstone of nature-based early education in the state and across the country.

Eastern bluebird



Creep

Early growth and activation

Here, signs of growth emerge. These are the programs and initiatives we're testing, refining, and bringing to life as momentum builds.

- Field trip and outreach programming increased for South Washington County schools, making progress on our goal of providing 10,000 environmental education experiences for K–6 students by June 2027.
- Preschool Teacher Melissa Thompson launched Nature Tots, a program for toddlers and their grown-ups that introduces young children to nature education and play.
- New starter herds of Arapawa goats and Clun Forest sheep, two endangered heritage breeds, were welcomed to Shepard Farm with a goal to support genetic conservation efforts.



Bumblebee



Milkweed beetle



Monarch butterfly



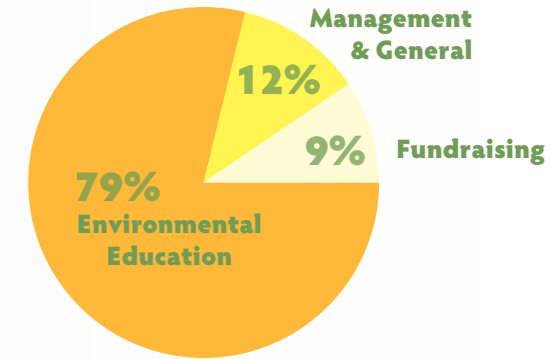
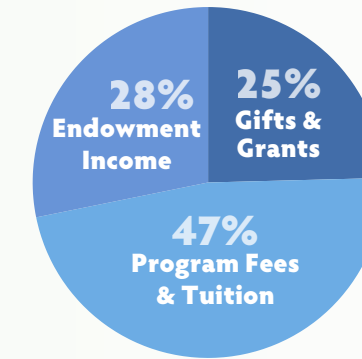
Nature by the numbers

Financials

September 1, 2024 – August 31, 2025

REVENUE Total \$4,508,827

EXPENSES Total \$3,895,770



Scan the QR code or visit DodgeNatureCenter.org/FY25 to view our summarized FY25 financials. Our 990 and audited financials are available online.

Shrew



Miles, Acres, & Moments

13,680 miles

hiked by preschoolers in one year



54 acres

of forest restored by removing invasive buckthorn



Rue anemone

280 pounds

of honey harvested



890 campers

played at spring, summer, and fall day camps



4,433 hours

given by volunteers across Dodge



Jack-in-the-pulpit





365 Marie Avenue W
West St. Paul, MN 55118

Eastern Tiger Swallowtail



Mission

Providing exceptional experiences in nature through environmental education.



📞 Main Office: 651-455-4531

🌐 DodgeNatureCenter.org

✉ info@DodgeNatureCenter.org

@ Follow Dodge on social media