



2020 Annual Report

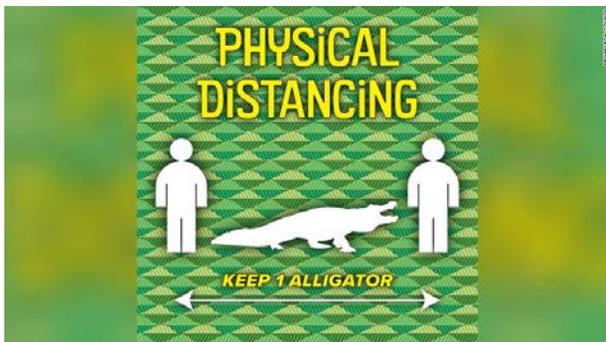
Humankind faces another crisis; we keep our focus on healing the Earth

As the novel coronavirus pandemic shut down “business as usual,” Wild Ones sought new ways to continue providing essential educational and advocacy services to the community.

Opportunity: People sheltering at home turned to home and garden improvements to keep them busy. Gardening in particular is a trend, often as a way to combat stress or to occupy ourselves.

Even before the pandemic hit, native plants and gardening for wildlife were hot topics. According to Nursery Management magazine, the top trend is “native plants” and the second most trend is “plants for wildlife.” In other words, the public is ready to receive Wild Ones’ message of saving the Earth one yard at a time.

REGIONALLY ADJUSTED GUIDELINES



Then the pandemic hit. With social distancing, gardening arises as an antidote, extending the promise of contact with something real. And what

can be more rewarding than seeing wildlife abound as a result of one’s labor?

Challenge: How do we continue our mission when so many of our keystone activities like plant sales, conferences, public meetings, and garden tours involve large gatherings? Can remote learning via web conferencing services substitute for in-person activities? Thus far, we have had to shift our resources to rising to this challenge of delivering our message in new ways.

SOCIAL DISTANCING NATIVE PLANT SALE



Wild Ones responded by making Zoom conferencing available to chapters, allowing them to shift their public in-person meetings into Zoom meetings. Not all chapters have been able to incorporate internet-based meetings, however, and the challenge remains. Some chapters are cautiously holding outdoor events that require social distancing and face coverings; some are holding small group hikes and gardens also observing best practices. We are all striving to find safe ways to continue our work through these terrible times.

2020 brought some highlights

In the midst of a pandemic and national economic hardship, there have been some bright spots for Wild Ones.

- Wild Ones Journal won a **2020 APEX Award** for Publication Excellence in the category of “Magazines, Journals, and Tabloids-Green.”
- **Stanley Smith Horticultural Trust** awarded a \$19,000 grant to develop beautiful native garden plans to publish in print and digital formats. Plans are being developed by garden designers

in six regions. As Alice Walker writes in her essay “In Search of Our Mothers’ Gardens,” gardening isn’t just another form of labor; it is an act of artistic expression.

- Wild Ones Honorary Director **Douglas Tallamy** presented Nature’s Best Hope” to nearly 600 screens across the country. Honorary Director **Heather Holm** will present the next presentation on September 24.
- A successful webinar collaboration with **New Directions in American Landscapes** (<https://ndal.org>) provided Wild Ones members excellent learning opportunities at discounted rates. Additionally, **NDAL donated \$1,500 to Wild Ones** in recognition of this collaboration.
- Wild Ones’ **financial position continues to be strong**. We are keeping a careful eye on finances to make sure spending doesn’t outstrip our revenues, especially in an economic recession.

SFE Awards

Although the Lori Otto Seeds for Education program is on hiatus for 2020-2021, for the 2019-2020 grant cycle, SFE received 39 applications from 25 states and awarded 9 applicants in 7 states. A total of \$4,650 was granted:

California

- Protecting Biodiversity in the Bay Delta Region, Mno Grant Elementary School, Antioch

Colorado

- Pollinator Paradise, Hotchkiss Elementary and Middle School, Hotchkiss

Illinois

- Pollinator Prairie and Rain Garden, Douglas-Hart Nature Center and Charleston Middle School, Charleston, Wild Ones Partner-at-Large
- School Pollinator Garden, Elizabeth Meyer School, Skokie, DuPage Chapter

- Supporting Pollinators Garden, Cristo Rey St. Martin College Preparatory School, Waukegan

Minnesota

- Community Garden Native Pollinator Space, FAIR School at Pilgrim Lane, Plymouth, Twin Cities Chapter

Missouri

- Student Led Native Pollinator Garden, The Summit School, Springfield

New York

- Pollinator Learning Garden, Apalachin Elementary School, Apalachin

Wisconsin

- Chain Exploration Center Native Plant Garden, Waupaca School System, Waupaca, Central Wisconsin Chapter

Wild Ones Statistics

No annual report would be complete without an update of key statistics. Here they are:

- Paid Membership 9/11/2020: 4,147
 - Paid Membership 9/1/2019: 3,994
- Currently chartered chapters: 60
- Chapters chartered since the last Annual Membership meeting:
 - Chesapeake, MD
 - Keweenaw, MI
 - Ozark, AR
 - Southern Kentucky, KY
- 2019 Annual Appeal total: \$50,000 (not net)

With Gratitude

Wild Ones cannot exist on dues alone. Like all nonprofits, we must depend on extra support from our members and other supporters to run the organization. Some of this support is in the form of time – the untold hours worked by board, committees, and members. Other support comes in

the form of dollars – the organization is deeply grateful for each donation. These individual contributions were compounded when employers matched them. This past year, some made exceptional investments in the organization; those who gave \$1,000 or more are:

Chapters

Fox Valley Area (WI)

Gibson Woods (IN)

Tennessee Valley (TN)

Members

Janice Hand (PAL)

John Kreutzfeldt (PAL)

Richard Madlon-Kay (Twin Cities, MN)

Mariette Nowak (Kettle Moraine, WI)

Mandy Ploch (Menomonee River Area, WI)

Ted Ross (Rock River Valley, IL)

Karen Syverson (Fox Valley Area, WI)

Honorary Directors

Neil Dibold

Staff

In June, Wild Ones lost its National Director, Elaine Krizenesky. We appreciated Elaine's leadership in the national office and were sorry to see her go. We are currently reviewing and setting up interviews with qualified applicants for the Executive Director position and aim to complete the hiring process in October.

Membership Manager **Janet Rothe** continues in her role, both remotely and at the WILD Center, supporting chapters and members with a broad array of requests and questions including supporting new chapters gain members and strength.

New Mission Manager **Katie Huebner** started this summer with the role of advancing Wild Ones' mission communications, PR and programs for members and the public.

We are also actively seeking an **Accounting Manager** to provide in-house accounting services to reduce our dependence on contractors and volunteers who have been performing the work of keeping Wild Ones' finances in order.

Looking Ahead

This next year also means that the national board will be adjusting the 2019-2021 strategic plan and gathering information for the next iteration. While specific objectives, strategies and tactics may change from time to time, our mission continues -- promoting environmentally friendly sound landscaping to preserve biodiversity through the preservation, restoration, and establishment of native plant communities.



Reported by Interim President, Sally Wencel, with assistance from many folks without whom I would not have the information I needed.