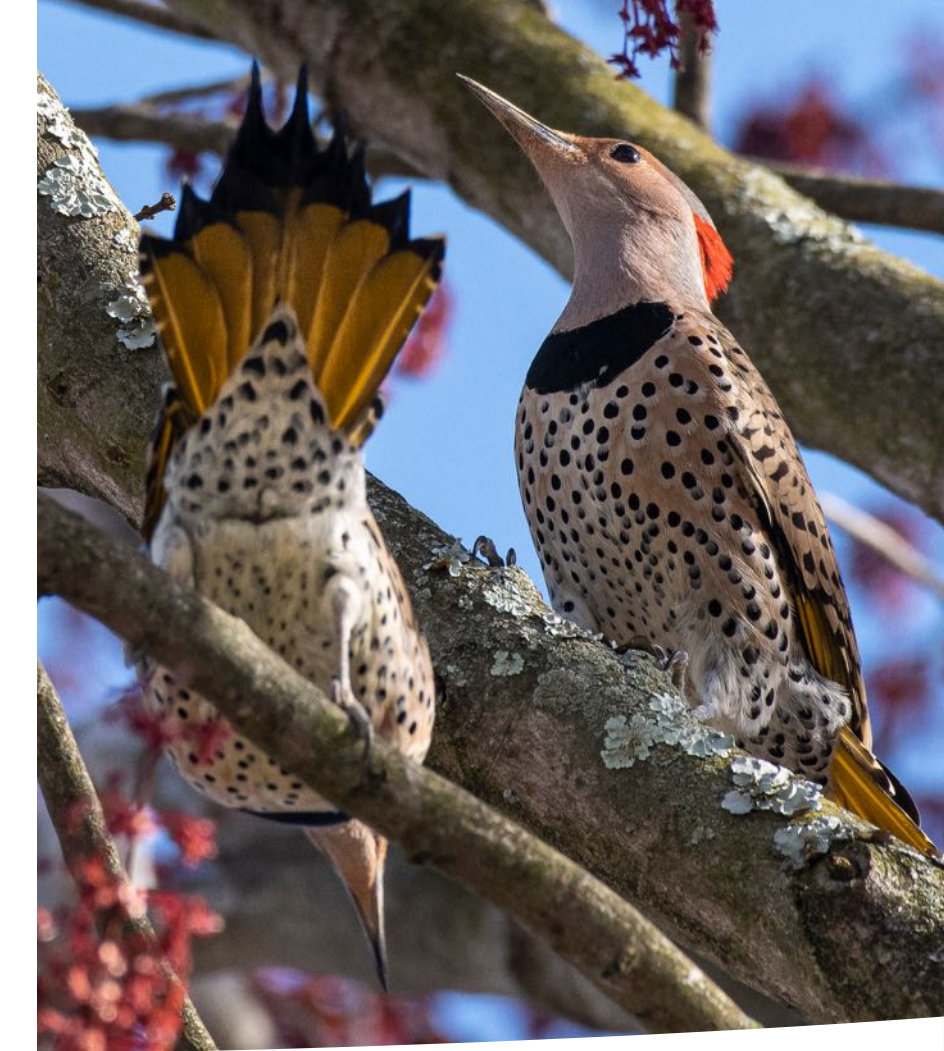




STRATEGIC PLAN

2023-2027

A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS



The Board of Directors of Nature Forward (formerly the Audubon Naturalist Society) is proud to present the following Strategic Plan for 2023 - 2027. The past few years have been challenging for our world, our communities, and our organization. It has been a time of social reckoning, particularly regarding racial equity and justice. The climate crisis deepened, and a global pandemic had enormous human and economic consequences. As an organization, we rely on strategic planning to guide us through good times and bad. We are proud that our prior strategic plan (2018-2022) allowed us to thrive through adversity and remain focused on our mission and vision.

With a solid foundation built over the past 125 years, today Nature Forward stands poised to increase access to nature for all people in the Washington, DC region. Thanks to enormous support from donors, sponsors, and partners, we completed major restoration efforts at

Woodend Nature Sanctuary, and grew the impact and influence of our signature Taking Nature Black and Naturally Latinos conferences. As a result, we increased access to our education, conservation, and restoration programs for people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds.

With the input of over one thousand members, partners and stakeholders, we made the decision to change our organization's name to better reflect who we are today and to welcome all people in the region to be part of our work. Under the banner of Nature Forward, we will continue to make progress on our journey of embodying values of inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility (IDEA) across all aspects of our work. As Nature Forward, we will build on our commitment to environmental justice, advocate for practices and policies that address the climate crisis, and work toward creating thriving communities for all people and wildlife.

We developed this plan for our future with input from members, volunteers, and staff in a six-month exploration of our goals and ideals. The 2023 - 2027 plan recommits Nature Forward to its mission and vision through a fresh lens. This Plan offers a guiding light for our goals, and gives us the flexibility to adapt to whatever challenges emerge in the next five years.

Thank you to all who participated in the creation of this plan and to those who will help bring the plan to fruition. We look to the future of Nature Forward with great optimism for all the good work for people and nature that we can and will accomplish together.

Board of Directors
Nature Forward
October 2022



MISSION AND VISION

MISSION

Nature Forward inspires residents of the greater Washington, DC, region to appreciate, understand, and protect their natural environment through outdoor experiences, education, and advocacy.

VISION

Nature Forward seeks to create a larger and more diverse community of people who treasure the natural world and work to preserve it.

VALUES

- **PURPOSE.** We believe in centering everything we do around our mission and vision.
- **AUTHENTICITY.** We are committed to leading first with honesty, transparency, and integrity in everything we do.
- **CURIOSITY.** We believe learning about nature is a lifelong journey and that rewarding learning opportunities should be available to all people.
- **SCIENCE.** We ground everything we do in science and evidence.
- **BELONGING.** We believe that people of all identities, backgrounds, and abilities should be seen, heard, and truly included in the Nature Forward Community.
- **COLLABORATION.** We believe in working to achieve our goals by leveraging the unique perspectives and skills of individuals and communities.
- **TRANSFORMATION.** We believe that a better world is possible for people and wildlife when we work toward sustainable, equitable and ethical ways of living as part of nature.

THE BIG IDEA

- **INCLUSION.** Fostering an environment where everyone feels welcomed, respected and is invited to participate in the organization’s activities, including decision-making.
- **DIVERSITY.** Reflecting the full representation and participation of all identities and experiences including, but not limited to race, ethnicity, color (defined as skin color, separate from race), natural hairstyle, national origin, ancestry, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, education, family responsibilities, marital status, religious beliefs, language, and abilities.
- **EQUITY.** Allocating resources fairly and the just treatment of all people and partners who participate in our programs and operations.
- **ACCESSIBILITY.** Thoughtfully and intentionally removing barriers and creating pathways that allow for participation in Nature Forward’s programs and operations.

Nature Forward strives to be a model of inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility (IDEA) in all ways feasible for us.

OUR GOALS



Enjoy

Cultivate a range of transformative experiences that reflect our diverse communities and lead to discovery, engagement, and lasting emotional bonds with nature.

- Inspire people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities to connect with nature through experiences and resources that celebrate the varied ways people experience joy in nature.
- Design and manage welcoming and safe spaces and programs for people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities, with the intent of breaking down barriers to accessing and appreciating nature.

Learn

Exchange knowledge equitably with communities of learners of all ages and backgrounds about how nature works, its components, and the complex, intertwined relationship between people and nature.

- Deliver a wide variety of inclusive programming that leads to the regional advancement of environmental awareness, understanding, and literacy.
- Leverage Nature Forward's expertise and resources to support environmental ambassadors and trainers within local communities and other partners.
- Respond continuously to the desires and needs of our diverse communities by listening, learning, and growing as an organization.

Protect

Act as a steward and catalyst to protect, conserve, and restore the regional communities' natural environments for a more resilient future.

- Employ, demonstrate, and promote best practices in management of natural habitats, cultivated landscapes, and historic structures.
- Advocate for sustainable and equitable policies and practices that protect people, wildlife, and natural environments in the DC region as we prepare for and adapt to climate change.
- Use effective storytelling and data to shape policy conversations around issues of environmental concern in the region.



Lead

Evolve Nature Forward’s role as a recognized convener and collaborator in the region, modeling the successful transformation of an historic environmental organization moving into the future.

- Engage and collaborate with diverse communities to advance and expand the work of the organization by actively listening and uplifting voices that are traditionally underrepresented in the environmental space.
- Build, sustain, and support coalitions, partnerships, and grassroots networks to propel the environmental movement forward across the region.
- Take action to support the transformation and recognition of the organization as a multicultural, antiracist organization that serves and reflects the diverse communities of our region.

Sustain

Sustain and strengthen core support functions that allow Nature Forward to be viable, resilient and to successfully carry out its mission into the future.

- Attract and sustain diverse funding sources and relationships to bolster and grow the organizational mission and reach.
- Nurture a culture of interdependence and organization-wide coordination that supports the full range of skills, experiences, and competencies necessary to accomplish these strategic goals, including human, office, financial, and communications resources.

OUR PROMISE

Nature Forward will carry our history and values into ambitious work over the next five years.

We commit ourselves to engaging those of all identities and abilities in building communities where people and wildlife thrive, acting as a trusted partner who works to make positive change possible.

We will leverage our human and material resources to connect more people to nature, creating opportunities for outdoor discovery that span the geography of the Capital Region, all ages from cradle to cane, and the interests of novices to experts.

Together, we will seek ways to address climate change and other environmental threats to reduce their negative impacts on people and wildlife by advocating for bold public policy and inspiring thoughtful personal action.

By listening to and learning from our members, partners and the diverse communities of our region, we will make measurable progress toward becoming a multicultural and anti-racist environmental organization.



“We need nature,
and nature needs
all of us.”



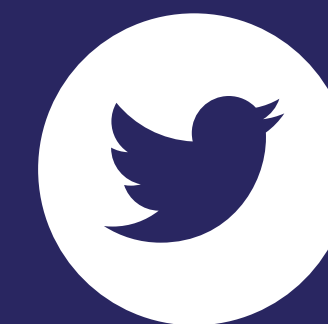


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