



Harris Nature Center Foundation 2016 Annual Report

The mission of the Harris Nature Center Foundation is to provide a reliable source of funding for special projects to enhance the quality of nature appreciation and education at the Harris Nature Center.

2016 Board of Directors

Patty Robbins, President
Roxanne Truhn, Vice-President
Julie Moore & Nora Thompson, Secretary
Barbara Kissling, Treasurer
Jim Buscetta
June Hicks
Ex Officio - Kit Rich, Senior Park Naturalist

Honorary Directors:
Howard and Helen Tanner
Rick Preuss

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Harris Nature Center

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A Message from the President

2016 has been another banner year for the Harris Nature Center Foundation! Our bus scholarships enabled 956 students from 43 classes to engage in nature center programs during the last school year. More children than ever before - 460 - attended summer camp and enjoyed the popular Nature Exploration Area, created by our Foundation. And this year we completed another new NEA feature!

Our Michigan Fossil Dig was opened in June, thanks to many people and organizations that contributed fossils, labor and expertise over the last 3 years. We believe this to be the only dig anywhere that includes the whole range of Michigan fossils, from Paleozoic corals to Ice Age herbivores! "Paleontologists" can now unearth real fossils and replicas that date to over 400 million years ago, when our land was submerged underwater at the equator! They can also find fossil casts of mammoths, mastodons, and giant beavers that wandered into Michigan about 12,000 years ago, as the glaciers melted. Beautiful illustrated signs and fact cards help visitors learn about our ancient Michigan residents and identify their finds.

On the little hill overlooking the Dig, our next project, the Beaver Lodge, has already begun! Designed and *generously funded* by local architect David VanderKlok of Studio [intrigue], this nature-inspired playhouse will delight toddlers and small children. We hope it can be completed in the Spring. David's creative plan can be seen on our website and on the HNC sign.

Our Foundation plans and raises funds for these dynamic programs and projects. This year we held a winter Silent Auction and a summer raffle for a paddle board package. Occasional memorial and personal gifts enhanced our endowment fund, and grants made large projects possible. We thank Meridian township residents for their generous gifts to the Harris Nature Center Foundation this year!

Patty Robbins
HNCF President

2016 -The Year in Review

Foundation Projects

- **School Bus Scholarships:** Teachers can ask HNCF to provide \$100 for bus expenses for single classroom visits to the nature center. For week long programs, teachers can request \$200 per bus. During the 2015-16 school year, HNCF gave \$1936 so that 43 classes of 956 children could participate in nature programs. Scholarships are critical when school funding for field trips is limited or not available.
- **Nature Exploration Area (NEA)** is a natural play area, created and funded by the Harris Nature Center Foundation. Components completed previously include the Haslett-Okemos Rotary Club Gathering Circle, the Spider Web, Sticks and Stones, the Log Jam and the DeLind Turtle Sculpture. This year, after 3 years of planning and preparation, we completed our unique Michigan Fossil Dig (described in the President's Message). On June 15, at the Nature Friends Barbecue, we officially opened the Dig and thanked our many volunteers and donors that helped to create this amazing feature.
- **Plans for the Beaver Lodge (NEA)** Students from MSU's Community Sustainability Classes joined the Foundation in developing the concept for our next project, the Beaver Lodge, a fun, beaver-themed play space for young children on a small hill near the Michigan Fossil Dig. Local architect David VanderKlok, from Studio [intrigue] designed this fanciful and artistic play structure *pro bono*! He plans to volunteer his time and materials to complete the project in the spring. The Foundation will supplement where needed.

Fundraising and Volunteer Efforts

- **Silent Auction:** In January the Foundation held its eighth silent auction in conjunction with the nature center's Winter Wonderland festivities. The auction featured nature-related items and merchant gift certificates and raised \$2012. The Okemos Kiwanis Club helped greatly by soliciting business gift card donations.
- **Raffle:** During the summer, Directors sold \$5 raffle tickets at the Farmers' Market for chances to win a quality paddle board and paddle, worth about \$1000. Summit Sports donated the paddle and greatly discounted the price of the paddle board. The drawing took place at the Halloween Adventures event on October 22. Our profit was \$1979.

- **Major Grants and Donations** for 2016 included:
 - The American Institute of Professional Geologists donated \$3000 for the MI Fossil Dig interpretive sign.
 - The Michigan Basin Geological Society gave \$500 for the MI Fossil Dig interpretive sign.
 - The Tanner Family contributed \$500 for the workstation, supplies & materials, as well as an additional \$500 for the General Fund. Helen and Howard Tanner also donated \$2000 to the Endowment Fund.
 - The Red Oak Foundation donated \$3000 towards Beaver Lodge expenses.
 - The Foundation applied for several larger grants this year without success.

- **In-Kind Donations and Volunteer Contributions:**
 - Artist Cyrus Miller made cement casts of mastodon & mammoth specimens for the MI Fossil Dig.
 - Scott Hicks created mastodon footprints from museum templates.
 - Dr. Geoffrey Marchal of Denmark scanned giant beaver teeth for 3D printing.
 - Dr. Danita Brandt, MSU Paleontologist, provided sage advice about the Dig.
 - The Okemos Kiwanis Club built benches near the Fossil Dig.
 - Leslie Grove and Pat Robbins created flip cards with pictures and facts about prehistoric life in Michigan..
 - Steve Wilson, Bob Reska and Ron Elowski selected rocks for Dig edge.
 - Saturday Work Day volunteers helped move dirt, place mulch, and clear brush to help us maintain all projects.
 - Many other community volunteers and all Directors provided labor and support, embedding fossils in cement plaques, placing fossils in the dig, placing rocks around the edging, building the work station and collecting supplies.

- **Annual Fund Drive:** In the Fall a letter describing Foundation activities and community support during the year was sent to individuals on the mailing list. The 2015 Fall funding letter yielded \$1950.

- **Tree of Thanks:** A wall graphic design of a tree with engraved gold and silver leaves honors those who have given \$500 or \$300 to the Harris Nature Center Foundation in one year.

Organization Development and Administration

- The Foundation met on the second Monday evening of each month at the nature center, except in March.
- The following officers began their duties in January: President Patty Robbins, Vice President Roxanne Truhn, Secretary Julie Moore, Treasurer Barb Kissling.
- The HNCF website, www.hncfoundation.org, is maintained by Julie Moore.
- The Foundation maintained its membership in the Meridian Area Business Association, with Roxanne Truhn representing the Board, through September.
- The Foundation published a 2015 Annual Report with information on projects, activities, financial statements, the budget, and a list of donors. This report was distributed to the Park Commission and placed on the Foundation website.
- A mailing list of about 1600 names was used for event publicity and fundraising. Efforts were made to collect email addresses to avoid mailing costs.
- A combined Harris Nature Center and Foundation newsletter was emailed four times during the year. Information about Foundation projects is featured on the HNC facebook page and is included in HNC press releases.
- Directors spoke about Foundation projects to community organizations, to the media, and at local events. These included the Meridian Parks Volunteer Appreciation Dinner, MABA and Haslett Kiwanis meetings, and HOMTV interviews.
- A PowerPoint on the Nature Exploration Area is updated as new projects are completed. It is used for speaking engagements and to provide visual and written information to potential sponsors.
- A flier about HNCF is available at the Harris Nature Center and at fundraising events, and is sent with our annual letter.
- The Michigan Fossil Dig was featured on the MSU Geography facebook page.
- HNCF is registered at smile.amazon.com for charitable donations.
- Dennis Fliehman, of the Capital Region Community Foundation, spoke to the Board about endowments for planned giving.
- The Foundation continued to carry Directors and Officers Insurance with Great American Insurance Company.
- During 2015, changes in membership on the Foundation were as follows: Nora Thompson joined the Board in October. Director profiles are posted on our website.
- Officers elected for 2017 were President Patty Robbins, Vice President Roxanne Truhn, Secretary Nora Thompson, and Treasurer Barb Kissling.

Harris Nature Center Foundation

Balance Sheet

(As of December 31, 2016)

Assets		Liabilities & Equity	
Cash – checking	26,207	Opening Cash – checking	18,794
Savings – Endowment Fund	10,578	Opening Savings/ Endowment Fund	7,527
Total Checking/Savings	<u>36,785</u>	Total Opening Balance Equity	<u>26,321</u>
Total Current Assets	<u>36,785</u>	Net Income	<u>10,463</u>
Total Assets	<u>36,785</u>	Total Equity	<u>36,785</u>
Total Liabilities & Equity		<u>36,785</u>	

Harris Nature Center Foundation

Profit & Loss

(January through December 2016)

Income		Expense	
Donations: General	7,763	Insurance	740
Donations: Board of Directors	1,250	Postage	288
Grants	3,500	Conference	140
Pass-through grant	2,500	Pass-through grant	2,500
Fundraising Events	6,758	Memberships	30
Interest	1	Fees	109
		Fundraising Expenses	940
		Project Expenses Bus Scholarships Nature Exploration Area	6,561
Total Income	<u>21,772</u>	Total Expenses	<u>11,308</u>
Net Income		<u>\$10,464</u>	

Harris Nature Center Foundation

2017 Budget

Income			Expenses		
Checking balance 12/31/16		26,207	Nature Exploration Area	Fossil Dig Renovations	2,000
Reserve fund		6,207		Beaver Lodge	16,000
2016 carryover		<u>20,000</u>		Signs	1,000
Income			Architect for new projects		15,000
Donations	Individual	5,000	Bus scholarships		2,500
“	Club/Foundation	3,000	Printing/Copying		200
Fundraisers	Silent Auction	2,000	Fees		200
“	Fall Fund Drive	2,000	Postage		300
“	Turtle Toast	2,000	Fundraising		1,000
Grants		<u>5,000</u>	Insurance		800
Total Income		<u>19,000</u>			
Total income with 2016 carryover		<u>39,000</u>	Total Expenses		39,000

2016 Donors

We thank the following friends of Harris Nature Center and Harris Nature Center Foundation for their support (financial or gift-in-kind) in 2016. If your name is missing or inaccurate, we apologize and ask that you let us know so that we may correct our records.

Businesses & Groups

<p>\$3000 American Institute of Professional Geologists Red Oak Foundation</p> <p>\$2500 Jackson National Life Insurance Company</p> <p>\$100 - \$499 Brookshire Golf Club Burgdorf Winery City Limits Bowling Demmer Shooting Sports Meridian Garden Club Meridian Cleaners Meridian Sun Golf Club Michigan Basin Geological Society Playmakers Preuss Pets Zap Zone</p>	<p>\$1 - \$99 Backyard Bar-b-q Bigby Blue Gill Grill Breadsmith Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee Doggy Day Care and Spa Douglas J Dusty's Cellar Farm Fresh Seafood Framer's Edge Leo's Lodge Mert's Meats Noodles Okemos Hardware Royal Nails Spagnuolo's Sportz Junkies Stillwater Grill Tannin Vine and Brew Watershed Woodcraft Kits</p>
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Individuals

\$2000

Helen and Howard Tanner

\$1500

H. Mark and Sally Tanner

\$500

Thomas and Barbara Kissling

Gerry and Gaelen McNamara

\$100 - \$499

Ron and Susan Bacon

Frances Dittrich

Mary and Larry Hennessey

June Hicks

David and Margaret Holtschlag

Alan and Cara Jones

Paul and Judy Kindel

Marilyn Lee

Brian and Joyce McKenna

Elizabeth Mercer

Julie Moore

Mike and Betty Moore

Tom Randall

Patty and Larry Robbins

Patricia and Nathan Shier

Kay Trosko

Roxanne Truhn

Frank and Shar Walch

Jerold and Sue Weiss

\$1 - \$99

Joyce Benvenuto

Ron St. Germain

Ron Hagaman

Frederick Hambly

Emily Hammargren

Frank Hatfield

Erica Kissling

Mike and Connie Lenkowski

Branden Lyon

Kit Rich

Maynard Shier

Philip Trosko

Char Vogan