

Annual Report

2021



Photo by Alizé Jireh

Good day, Severson Dells supporters and community. I hope this day finds you well, and that you're as excited about the beginning of springtime as I am. Observing nature greening up again after the winter always offers a sense of renewal and resilience of the natural world.

My name is Chris Samuelson, and I'm excited to be part of the Severson Dells board, currently serving as Board Chair. It's an honor to be part of this wonderful organization whose mission is to connect people to nature through education and research. I am a Rockford native, having graduated from East High School and Rockford University. I'm celebrating my 25th year with Thermo Fisher Scientific where I currently support a global Operations team. My wife Courtney has been an early childhood special education teacher for over 20-years, and we have two boys, Landon and Wes, who are 14 and 11 respectively. We truly find spending time outdoors centers our family, which is why the mission of Severson Dells is so near and dear to my heart.

Now that you know something about me, let's talk Severson Dells and an important attribute of our organization: resilience. The definition of resilience, simply put, is the ability to bounce back from setbacks or failures. Often resilience is framed as an individual attribute. These individuals have a certain amount of "grit" that allows them to struggle through the pain and ultimately overcome challenges. We often use resilience or grit as a barometer of success. However, according to a recent Harvard Business Review article titled, "The Secret to Building Resilience", the author states, "that resilience is not purely an individual characteristic, but is also heavily enabled by strong relationships and networks. We can nurture and build our resilience through a wide variety of interactions with people in our personal and professional lives" (Cross, Dillan, & Greenburg, 2021). The author goes on to say that "resilience is a team sport."

Over the past two years, the Severson Dells organization has embodied these statements. We are resilient through the strong network of relationships that our organization has cultivated over the decades. More recently, Ann's leadership and her team have excelled at fostering these relationships that have allowed Severson Dells to successfully navigate pandemic-related challenges. We are resilient because of people like YOU who support us and help nurture our mission even through difficult times.

Considering our mission, we can also learn from nature and what it teaches us about resilience. This past summer our family and a close group of friends visited Yosemite National Park. We did all the park things, but one trip stands out above all. Our rental home was located in a small town just south of the park and we were told to travel up a rustic road and observe an area that locals refer to as "moonscape." It was the aftermath of the Creek Fire (2020) that destroyed nearly 400,000 acres of land. Despite the utter devastation and loss of life, it was incredible to see nature once again making a comeback. Beautiful yellow flowers dotted the landscape and made for striking images against the backdrop of charred pines.

From the Severson Dell's staff to the community and our donors, thank you. Your support has been overwhelming, sincerely appreciated, and unprecedented. We hope that despite our recent challenges, recent events have taught us all how to be a bit more resilient.

Best,
Chris Samuelson,
Board President



The Samuelson Family: Courtney, Landon, Wes, and Chris

On March 17, 2022, the Sikich LLP accounting firm completed an audit of Severson Dells Education Foundation's records for the FYE 12/31/21. The following is the condensed balance sheet as of 12/31/21. A copy of the complete audited financial statements is available on request.

ASSETS

CURRENT ASSETS:

\$ 205,062	Cash and cash equivalents
8,417	Grants receivable
2,664	Pledges receivable, current
23,220	Inventory
413	Prepaid expenses
0	Investments
<hr/>	
239,776	Total current assets

NONCURRENT ASSETS:

2,474,183	Investments
102	Pledges receivable, long term, net
39,612	Equipment
-	Construction in progress
(25,431)	Less: Accumulated depreciation
14,181	Property and equipment, net
81,058	Endowment investments
<hr/>	
2,569,524	Total noncurrent assets
<hr/>	
\$ 2,809,300	TOTAL ASSETS

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

CURRENT LIABILITIES:

-	Accrued expenses due to Forest Preserves of Winnebago County
\$ 9,268	Payroll liabilities
2,550	Accounts payable
5,336	Deferred revenue
<hr/>	
17,154	Total current liabilities

NET ASSETS:

\$ 2,677,968	Without donor restrictions
114,178	With donor restrictions
<hr/>	
2,792,146	Total net assets
<hr/>	
\$ 2,809,300	TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS



2021 SEVERSON DELLS PROGRAMS

TOTAL PEOPLE SERVED IN 2021
10725

up from 5819 in 2020



PUBLIC PROGRAMS

2795

up from 1354 in 2020

SCHOOL ON-SITE
1427

up from 278 in 2020



IN-SCHOOL PROGRAMS

226

up from 82 in 2020



OFF-SITE WITH STAFF

2021

up from 736 in 2020



USE OF FACILITIES

1470

up from 1133 in 2020



WALK-IN VISITORS

4624

up from 2236 in 2020



MEMBERS & SUPPORTERS

SEVERSON DELLS EDUCATION FOUNDATION

When Fannie Severson donated 369-acres to the Winnebago County Forest Preserve District, she dreamed of having a nature center in the family's "Deer Lodge." The Severson Dells Education Foundation was created to make that dream come true. Since 1976, donors to the non-profit foundation have financed great programs at Severson Dells Nature Center that have helped teach more than a half million people about the natural world. The Foundation and Forest Preserve District are partners: the foundation pays for educational programs and the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County maintains the property and the facility. It's a relationship that has improved the quality of life for area residents by linking them to the forests, rivers and prairies of the region.



FINANCIAL SUPPORTERS

We have made every effort to list the individuals and groups who have supported Severson Dells Nature Center through memberships, donations, sponsorships, memorials and other gifts during the period January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021.

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Photos by Ellen Rathbone and Jessie Crow Mermel

THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are involved in many different activities, limited only by enthusiasm, interest and available time. We are so grateful for the many unique talents our volunteers share with visitors, program participants, and staff. Volunteers' ages range from youth to senior citizens, and they gave a total of 1706 hours of service in 2021.

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VOLUNTEER HOURS BY PROJECT

176	BLUEBIRD MONITORS
289	CANOE PROGRAM
509	RESTORATION
100	EDUCATION
247	SDNC BOARD
153	SPECIAL EVENTS
232	FRONT DESK
1706	TOTAL HOURS

