DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Dear Friends,

Citing the serious toll of the pandemic, the American Academy of Pediatrics has declared children’s mental health a national emergency. In response, Wildrock launched a Playing Our Way to Recovery Initiative to provide restorative nature experiences for children and families. In the face of pandemic losses and disruptions, Wildrock’s mission to promote nature play for health and happiness is needed now more than ever.

Nature play is one of a handful of evidenced-based approaches that is both intrinsically motivating for children and powerfully beneficial for children's emotional well-being. Throughout the pandemic period, Wildrock innovated new school-based programs, camps, themed trail walks, virtual field trips and workshops to increase access to the healing benefits of nature play. We are grateful for the support of our volunteers, staff, donors, visitors and community partners for joining us in uplifting children through nature play.

Carolyn Schuyler
Executive Director
PARTICIPATION OVERVIEW

Wildrock served 8927 people in fiscal year 2021 in both its Neighborhood Outreach programs and its Blue Ridge Play and Discovery Center programs.

### PLAY AND DISCOVERY CENTER

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### NEIGHBORHOOD OUTREACH

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*This program was heavily impacted by COVID restrictions*
For pandemic safety, Wildrock opened "Quaranteam" Adventures on the Playscape, themed trail walks, and self-guided education trails to complement virtual learning. Visitor feedback repeatedly mentioned that Wildrock is a valued safe resource for joyful play and stress release during the pandemic.

Timed trail walks allowed families and friends to celebrate the seasons safely! Wildrock is the only park in our area offering this safety measure.
In response to pandemic restrictions, Wildrock innovated multiple virtual programs in response to public school need.

**Wild About Animals:** Wildrock brought our education animals to students through virtual field trips. Students learned about animal habitats and adaptations while visiting with Wildrock's rabbit, turtle, snake, and hedgehog.

**Habitat For Humans:** Wildrock innovated a social emotional learning program for Charlottesville City School 5th graders. Students used a design thinking process to create virtual habitats for humans and animals. Dr. Jessica Stern, a postdoctoral fellow at UVA, studied student outcomes and found the program reduced anxiety levels.

Thanks to a **Community Recovery and Catalyst Grant** from the Charlottesville Area Community Foundation, Wildrock worked with Charlottesville High Schools students and UVA students to survey city residents. The survey revealed how people perceive their access and engagement with green spaces. Results will shape future programs.
When pandemic restrictions lifted in the spring, we seized the moment and planned an expansive summer day camp program in order to reach students in need. With support from the Hilltop Foundation and the Prana Fund-CACF we successfully:

- hired and trained 20 new teachers and counselors to facilitate camps both onsite and in area public schoolyards.
- launched therapeutic expressive art and nature play programs in four middle schools and six elementary schools.

Over 800 students attended Wildrock’s day camp programs. Delivered in partnership with the UVA Equity Center and county and city public schools, the programs featured social emotional learning activities to support pandemic recovery.

**EcoArt and Pop Up Play**

Throughout the spring and fall, Wildrock worked weekly with the Boys and Girls Club on Cherry Avenue and in Southwood to provide play-based art explorations with repurposed materials. We also partnered with MACAA Headstart for pop up play-programming for four year olds. Both programs provided access to the vital benefits of play.
Children rely on play to make sense of their world and to develop coping strategies. When children are invited to take their play into nature, the documented benefits of free play are amplified. Decades of research shows that access to natural spaces works to counteract the ill-effects of stress and trauma.

Research shows that the best way to promote children's recovery from the stress of the pandemic is through PLAY1

When kids play outdoors, research has found that children are better able to regulate their emotions and to build positive relationships with their peers. Kids that play in nature do better academically, as they are healthier, happier and more prepared to learn.

Wildrock works to make high-quality nature play experiences more accessible to children by transforming urban green spaces into pop-up play zones.
Earlier this year, Wildrock completed its three year strategic plan. Our primary goal of promoting nature play equity has remained consistent since our founding. In FYI 2020-2021, we documented the following outcomes.

**Goal: Serve as a trusted resource for joyful nature play**
97.2% of visitors surveyed agree that Wildrock fills a needed niche in our community for promoting nature connection and free play.

100% of teachers agree Wildrock programs address critical needs for healthy child development.

**Goal: Create therapeutic play experiences responsive to mental health needs**
94.4% of visitors surveyed agree that being at Wildrock offers a valued opportunity to reduce stress and enjoy a restorative experience in nature.

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**Daily Camper Check-In**

*HOW I FELT ABOUT CAMP TODAY:*  
![Emotions](image)

*ME TODAY:*  
![Stick figure](image)

*WORD FOR THE DAY:*  
**Wondrous**

---

**Camper Feedback**

- 98% reported positive social experiences
- 97% had a new nature experience (example: stream wading)
- 99% enjoyed free play
- 98% found nature learning fun

*Thank you Wildrock staff for not just giving us a fun time, but spreading awareness that we must protect nature.*
TESTIMONIALS

That was the best professional development day we have had in years

City School Counselor

Our kids respond to the playscape with so much natural joy and wonder. Is the best feelings to watch them run around and feel free and happy in nature. Wildrock brings out our kids natural desire to explore and discover. Thank you! I hope Wildrock continues to expand its footprint in Charlottesville! We need what you do!!!

Playscape visitor

Wildrock is one of my happy places. I love it! Thank you!

Camper

We recently heard an extremely interesting presentation about Wildrock from Carolyn Schuyler. I was extremely moved by your company’s mission. With mental health becoming destigmatized and spoken about more and more, this is the time to promote ecotherpay and safe spaces to connect with nature.

UVA Student

Wildrock programs helped us and so many of our friends get through the pandemic.

Parent

My two boys, age 5 and 6, attended a session a few weeks ago at their school. They had a fantastic time! Every day they came home very excited to share their experiences from the day, their artwork and best of all, they came home exhausted!
We had the best experience with this program. Our students are still talking about all the things they experienced. We learned so much, had the perfect amount of time to visit and watch the animals. We will be highly recommending this program to other schools and child-oriented programs. Thank you all so much!”

Elementary School Teacher

Our 2.5 year old son absolutely loved exploring the adventure playscape! He was amazed as he ran around and discovered all the different areas and activities! We loved that things were set up when we arrived – nature ingredients out in the kitchen, sticks ready for fort building, etc. It made it so easy for our fairly young son to dive in and engage with everything. Staff were very friendly and checked in on us. We especially enjoyed the kitchen, the little house, the vet station, and feeding dandelions to Leche. Fantastic experience!!

Parent of Wildrock in the Schoolyard camper

Wildrock exceeded my expectations – my children (ages 4 and 6) had an amazing time at the playscape and could have stayed for hours more! Each station felt so perfectly designed, providing simple ideas and tools that allowed the kids to use their imaginations. We will definitely be returning and have already recommended Wildrock to others.

Parent
In November, Wildrock was honored to host Pamela Northam. She came to show support for the value of special outdoors spaces for community mental health during the pandemic. Bettina Ring, Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry, also visited. We had the opportunity to share the following land stewardship projects.

Land Stewardship Initiatives

- Sustainable agriculture garden
- Wildlife conservation trail
- "Three Sisters" garden
- Invasive species removal
- Conservation mowing
- Native tree planting
- Grant-funded solar panel installation
- Use of electric mowers and maintenance tools
Wildrock partnered with the UVA School of Architecture and Convoy Designs to research and design an innovative Cville Nature Play Map. Over thirty public green spaces were coded for the play motifs suited to their natural features. The map will be used by schools, doctors for park prescriptions, mental health agencies, and the general public.

Over 100 families participated in Wildrock’s First Annual Nature Play Challenge. Each day over a two-week period, families received a Play Spark email to inspire exploration of our area green spaces and invite new, creative forms of nature play. The program and the surrounding social media campaign raised awareness about the streams, forests, and meadow areas suited for children's play and...
Nature play has an **equigenic effect**, meaning that when given equal access to nature play opportunities, children in under-resourced neighborhoods benefit more than children living near high-quality green space. By providing under-resourced communities with quality nature play experiences, Wildrock addresses multiple issues of inequity including physical health, social-emotional wellness, and school-readiness.

**Wildrock is committed to making high-quality nature play accessible to ALL.**

### 2021 DEI Initiatives:

- **Black Women Matter Nature Retreat Series**  
  - A series of outdoor self-care retreats for and by Black women funded by Charlottesville Junior League  

- **Nature Friends Preschool Program in Charlottesville City Schools**  
  - Innovative nature-infused play in city schoolyards for 3 and 4 year olds  

- **Virtual Field Trips and Camps for Public Schools**  
  - Overcoming the barrier of transportation and COVID restrictions

- **Free Coupon Codes for Program Registration**  
  - Overcoming the barrier of cost for all playscape and trail visits

- **Camp Scholarships and free Schoolyard Programs**  
  - Providing a week of nature-immersion for campers in need

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Wildrock staff members participated in a DEI certification program through the Muma College of Business at the University of South Florida.

Staff members also learned about the history and culture of the **Monacan Nation**, on whose land Wildrock is located. We shared our learning with our community through a series of social media posts about the Monacans of yesterday and today.
Abundant life Ministries
Albemarle County Schools
Albemarle High School
Barrett Early Learning Center
Big Brothers and Big Sisters of the Central Blue Ridge
Blue Ridge Children’s Museum
Blue Ridge Young Actors Guild
Building Goodness Foundation
Botanical Gardens of the Piedmont
Boys and Girls Club Cherry Ave
Boys and Girls Club Southwood
Building Goodness Foundation Center for Nonprofit Excellence
Charlottesville City Schools
Charlottesville City Parks and Rec
Charlottesville High School
City of Promise
College of William and Mary
Come As You Are Cville
Community Attention Foster Care
Convoy: Charlottesvile Web Development and Graphic Design
James River Association
Jefferson-Madison Regional Library
Living Free
Lugo McGinness Academy
Miss Tessa’s Community Care and Consulting
Montfair Resort
On Our Own
Pediatric Associates of Charlottesville
ReadyKids
Region Ten
Saint Anne’s Belfield
UVA Equity Center
UVA Rodman Scholars
UVA School of Architecture
Virginia Discovery Museum
Virginia Institute of Autism
Walker Upper Elementary School
Wayne Hill Preschool Program
SUPPORTERS

Altrusa Club of Charlottesville  
Anonymous donor  
Jenny & Joseph Arcidicono  
Bama Works CACF  
Bankers Insurance  
Batten Foundation  
Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream  
Adam and Philippa Belsches  
Blue Ridge Outdoors Magazine  
Christine Bowers  
Jacqueline Bryant  
CACF Community Recovery  
and Catalyst Grant  
Cardinal Home Center  
Carpet Plus  
Deborah and Barry Chlebnikow  
Community Uplift Grant  
CONVOY Design  
Crozet Creamery  
Crozet Gazette  
Cville Arts Cooperative  
Rachael Dealy  
Carol Dempster  
Joan Doxey  
Gregory and Margaret Edwards  
Wendy Ferguson  
Mickie Flanigan  
Anne Foster  
Stacey Gearhart  
Tereze Gegaj  
Peter M. Harbilas  
Hartfield Foundation  
Hooter Hartman  
Sue Haas  
Heiner Family Fund CACF  
Paul and Maria Henderson  
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas J Hill  
Hilltop Foundation  
Jean Holliday  
Carlene Hudgens  
Stephanie Hunter  
Sarah Jones  
Jennifer Lanceley  
Paige Lindblom  
C. Lloyd Lipscomb III and  
Elizabeth J. Lipscomb  
William Lipscomb  
L.L. Bean  
Kate Mahanes  
Erin Malec and Jed Verity  
Amanda McCorry  
Christopher Grey McLean  
Louise R. McNamee and  
Peter T. McHugh
Christine Melnik
Montfair Resort Farm
Courtney Moore
Patrick Moynihan
Don & Libby Nicholson
O’Suzannah
Patina Wealth
Perry Foundation
Piedmont Master Gardeners
Power of Change
Prana Fund CACF
Quantitative Investment
Management CACF
Ragged Mountain Running Shop
Ken and Kim Rambow
Rappahannock Electric Cooperative
Cathy Rebmann
Amy Rector
Will P. Retzer
Maureen Richards
Bettina Ring
Lauren Rosati
Rotgin Family Fund
Alaina Schroeder
Shenanigan’s
Arthur and Karen Sherwood
Philippe Sommer

Timothy and Sheila Sparks
Philip and Martha Stafford
Harry K & Reagan A Stillerman
Ellie Syrerud
T&N Printing
The Blackbaud Giving Fund/ S&P Global
The Front Porch
The Juice Laundry
The Left Coast Fund
John and Elizabeth Tilton
Karyn Trumbull
Michael and Heather Vanderweide

Vanguard Charitable
Monique Vanlandingham
Mary Voorhees
Wegmans Food Markets, Inc.
Mandy and Jeff Welch
Ellen Wermter
Kat Werner
R. Ted and Sheila Weschler
Whitewoods Charitable Foundation

Grant made on behalf of Maggie Trundle in celebration of Global Prairie's BFTW recognition
Volunteerism is at the heart of Wildrock. A total of 3174 hours were donated by volunteers at a cost savings of $90,152.00. We gratefully acknowledge the following volunteers for their dedication and generosity.

Marin Anderson  
Mia Berry  
Alex Diaz  
Margot Diaz  
Caroline Ey  
Sophie Genovese-Mester  
Evelyn Hall  
Hooter Hartman  
Courtney Hopkins  
Marilyn Jenkins  
Kim Leshinski  
Tim McDaniels  
Ingrid Meadows  
Max Murphy  
Tiffany Norman  
Peter Ohlms  
Brad Scharf  
Carolyn Schuyler  
Kevin Schuyler  
William Schuyler  
Art Sherwood  
Karen Sherwood  
Isabel Skarbinski  
Laurel Skarbinski  
Anne Stoner  
Catina Tanner  
Erin Vines  
Claire Watt  
Jill and Jamie Watt  
Rob Wooten

Community Groups  
Boy Scout Pack #114  
Convoy Design  
Girl Scout Troop 927  
Green Grannies  
MLK Day of Caring  
Potomac Appalachian Trail Club  
UVA Darden School  
UVA Rodman Scholars  
UVA School of Architecture

2021 Daisy Award Winners  
for excellence in serving Wildrock's mission
### STAFF

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carolyn Schuyler</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
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<tr>
<td>Margot Diaz</td>
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<td>Sarah Harris</td>
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<td>Kyle Crawford</td>
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<td>Molly Byers</td>
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### SUMMER STAFF

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### BOARD MEMBERS

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<td>Margaret Edwards</td>
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FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Wildrock is currently on solid financial footing due to pandemic pivots to expand programs. We anticipate significant growth in the coming year as it becomes permissible for schools to return for field trips and as the demand for Wildrock’s expertise advancing youth development through therapeutic nature play continues to grow. We are currently expanding our team to increase our reach in the community in 2022.

Sources of Revenue

Under Covid restrictions, Wildrock pivoted to new service models to serve its mission resulting in increased revenue.
WILDROCK IS BUILDING SUSTAINABLE REVENUE SOURCES!
Program & Rental Revenue FY17 through FY21

- 2017: $18,491
- 2018: $57,434
- 2019: $65,342
- 2020: $59,909
- 2021: $142,389

EXPENDITURES ARE PROGRAM-FOCUSED!
FISCAL YEAR ENDED SEPT. 30, 2021

- General, 12%
- Fundraising, 1%
- Program, 87%

WILDROCK IS GROWING!
Assets & Liabilities FY17 through FY21

- 2017: $1,100,000
- 2018: $1,200,000
- 2019: $1,300,000
- 2020: $1,400,000
- 2021: $1,500,000

Liabilities: $0
Assets: $1,500,000
TALKS AND CONSULTATIONS

To meet its strategic goal of contributing thought leadership for nature play equity, Wildrock regularly consults with partner organizations to promote the integration of nature play and youth development work. We have worked locally and regionally with preschool programs, mental health agencies, and professional organizations to raise awareness of nature connection’s role in community mental health. Highlights of this year’s talks include:

National Association of Social Workers Virginia Conference - *Ecotherapy in Clinical Practice*

Virginia Association for the Education of the Young Child - *Creating Nature Play Spaces for Preschoolers*

Steward School Visiting Innovator of the Year - *Nature Play for Health and Happiness*

Youtube talk on Wildrock channel - *Nature Pandemic Self-Care*

Natural Start Alliance - *Nurturing Families with Nature Connection*

Botanical Garden of the Piedmont – Ian Robertson Legacy: Lectureship Series - *Nature for Mental Health*

James River Association - *Ecotherapy in Action*

Charlottesville City School Counselors - *Counseling in the Schoolyard*

ReadyKids - *Nature play in Clinical Work*
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**WILDROCK IN ONE WORD**

**VISITOR RESPONSES**

- Engaging
- Inspiring
- Exciting
- Rewarding
- Lovely
- Refreshing
- Imaginative
- Adventurous
- Dreamland
- Relaxing
- Experiential
- Extraordinary
- Restorative
- Nature
- Relaxed
- Fun

- Magical
- Fun
- Peaceful
- Creative
- Beautiful
- Fabulous
- Wonderful
- Adventure
- Creative
- Awesome
- Unique
- Fantastic
- Wholesome
- Innovative
- Favorite
- Liberating
- Expansive
- Breathtaking
- Enriching
- Joyful
- Outstanding
- Magical
- Ideal
- Glorious
- Lifegiving
- Perfect
- Fun
- Peaceful
- Playful
- Thoughtful
- Recalibrate
- Spectacular
- Enriching
- Transformative
- Fabulous
- Outstanding
- Creative
- Awesome
- Meaningful
- Magical
- Exciting
- Nice
- Enchanting
- Educational
- Fantastic
- Creative
LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge and extend our deepest gratitude to the original stewards of this land on which Wildrock is located, the Monacan and Manahoac people. We respectfully acknowledge the revered ancestors of the Monacan Nation and the esteemed elders of the present day.

We value and protect this land for all it offers:

A peaceful natural retreat, a place to play and explore, a sanctuary for local wildlife, and a place to deepen connections to each other and to the natural world.