# Rusk Ranch Nature Center
## Nature Discovery Center Master Plan

### BUSINESS PLAN

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### INTERPRETIVE PLAN

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INTERPRETIVE PLAN

Planning Methodology and Community Involvement

Interpretive Theme

- Specific Exhibit areas of interest
- Exhibit plans
  o Interior
  o Exterior

Site planning

Site Evaluation and Desired Activities
  o Existing Site Conditions and Analysis
  o Desired Character and Activities
  o Site Development Plan
  o Overall Site Plan
  o Nature Discovery Center Area Site Plan
BUSINESS PLAN

Executive Summary

Business Overview

The Rusk Ranch Nature Center is building a Nature Discovery Center with interactive hands-on exhibits, both indoor and outdoor, on the center property on Highway 199 in Cave Junction, Oregon.

Working with community and the endorsement of the Illinois Valley Community Development Organization, the center will offer visitors a close up memorable experience with nature.

Along with offering families and children wholesome outdoor recreation opportunities, the center will bring revenue into the community and create jobs.

The Rusk Ranch Nature Center provides enriching nature based experiences for visitors to Southern Oregon and for local children & families. The Nature Center turns visitor donations into services and programs for local children.

The Need and Accomplishments

The Illinois Valley, located within Josephine County, suffers from high levels of unemployment and low income with a 35% poverty rate, compared to the county’s overall poverty rate of 18%. It is well-documented that enrichment activities and afterschool programs contribute significantly to positive youth development, but our local schools lack funding necessary for enrichment activities such as outdoor field trips, sports, and arts. The Rusk Ranch Nature Center provides a free venue for during and after-school enrichment programs and field trips offered by the Boys and Girls Club, Girl Scouts, Cub Scouts and local & regional schools.

We live in a world with increasing alienation from nature, rising childhood obesity and dependence upon digital media. Opportunities provided by the center for hands-on positive experiences with nature, can peak an interest in science, support a life long appreciation for nature conservation and feed a deeper understanding of the interaction and interdependence of people and nature. The center programs and services benefit more than 2,000 underserved children as well as over 15,000 adult residents of Illinois Valley. As a result at-risk youth and families have access to healthy enrichment activities that improve their mental and physical wellbeing.

The center generates revenue in the form of visitor fees from the 300,000 visitors that drive past our location on Scenic Highway 199 on their way to the coast or the Oregon Caves National Monument each year. The Illinois Valley is a place of stunning natural beauty; by encouraging visitors to stop and enjoy this beauty, the center is becoming a destination activity for tourists and provide a needed boost to our community’s economic development. The center enhances the
community’s capacity to support a healthy life, increasing the physical, social and mental wellbeing of residents. The all-volunteer Butterfly Pavilion and Nature Center have brought revenue into the community, become a source of civic pride and engaged families in enriching nature based experiences.

Since 2011 more than 24,000 volunteer hours have been logged by community helpers and board members in support of the Butterfly Pavilion, milkweed propagation, community events and building the Natural Playground. Volunteers help as Docents, Gardeners, Naturalists, Assistant Camp Counselors, Event helpers, Advisory, Board members, Builders, Resource donors and Workshoppresenters.

The Nature Discovery Center will be self-sustaining and increase revenue for other local businesses and visitor venues, thereby relieving some of the significant poverty of the Illinois Valley.
Mission

The Mission of the Rusk Ranch Nature Center is to benefit the community and to provide opportunities for the public, particularly young people, to appreciate the natural world and instill a sense of stewardship toward the earth and its inhabitants, and preserve and conserve nature and wildlife.

Vision

We envision Rusk Ranch Nature Center as an inspiring place for interactive nature programs & exhibits and outdoor recreational activities, enhancing quality of life and fostering community pride.

Rusk Ranch Nature Center awakens children of all ages to the adventure, discovery and awe of our natural world. The center supports the mutually beneficial relationship between the human community and nature, restoring wetlands, creating habitat for wildlife, and providing protected areas for endangered species. A multitude of discovery opportunities are offered for children and families. The public is invited to enjoy the wonders of nature through indoor and outdoor interactive displays and experience the deep value of our interdependent living communities.

Rusk Ranch Nature Center is a multi-use, park-like facility, available for a diversity of activities; a place where people can spend the day; a place that is developed, supported and used by the community. The center attracts many visitors, both national and international, who bring sustaining revenue to the organization and to the region.

Values

At Rusk Ranch Nature Center we value the healing power of nature and nature’s ability to nurture creativity, to inspire a sense of belonging, and to build community by showing us our deep interconnectedness. We value the long term wholeness of recognizing that people and nature are inseparable. We strive to nurture whole families, multi-age groups and children.

Business and Strategic planning for Rusk Ranch Nature Center are based on visitor data from
Travel Oregon, and Oregon Caves National Monument and visitors to the nature center. Rusk Ranch Nature Center is located on a major highway to the Oregon Caves National Monument. Approximately 300,000 vehicles travel by on the 199 Highway each year. Data from visitor surveys at the monument indicates most visitors cite "fun experiences" as their reason for stopping. Last year 70,000 visitors stopped at the monument. The nature center’s highway venue offers extensive, low cost marketing of the exact thing for which visitors are looking. By connecting the nature center with visitors, the organization channels revenue into services – providing learning experiences and healthy physical outdoor experiences for kids and area residents. In 2011 the Butterfly Pavilion was a destination for travelers from Ashland, Medford, Grants Pass, Eugene, Crescent City and Brookings. In 2012 and 2013 numerous international visitors also visited. The success of the Butterfly Pavilion proved the potential for nature based tourism revenue for the organization. Rusk Ranch Nature Center has the potential to significantly increase the economic outlook of the valley. Building on existing nature tourism venues will further enhance the attractiveness of the valley to visitors who bring in needed revenue.

Goals of Rusk Ranch Nature Center

• Offer an interactive learning environment that features and conserves the unique flora, fauna and cultural history of our area, while helping to preserve ecologically valuable riparian areas, building pride-of-place for local children and adult residents.
• Create programs for children and youth that offer hands-on learning experiences about nature.
• Become a destination venue that protects wildlife and compliments other area visitor sites, thus enhancing the valley for the nearly 1M visitors per year who drive by on Highway 199.

The Rusk Ranch Nature Center provides enriching outdoor experiences for local children & families and visitors to our valley. The Nature Center turns visitor donations into services and programs for local children. The Butterfly Pavilion at the center opened for the first time in 2011. The center brings jobs, revenue and pride-of-place to residents of our community.

The nature center offers a Nature Discovery Playground. More than ever kids need safe outdoor activities. Oregon’s “No Child Left Indoors” initiative documents that these activities provide opportunities for learning science, communication skills, self-esteem and real world interactions. The Nature Discovery Playground at the center fosters imaginative play, is protected and safe, is cost effective and addresses children’s need for discovery and contact with nature.

![Americorps youth team.](image)
History

The organization was formed in 2005. In 2007 the Rusk family, Wayne Rusk and Shirley Harrold Rusk, donated 56 acres of beautiful riparian property to the non-profit organization. The property stretches from Highway 199 in Cave Junction, northwestward until it reaches the West Fork of the Illinois River. There are large meadows, forests of pine, fir and cedar, as well as high country hardwoods. The Illinois River flows through the back edges of the property and offers access to lower channeled areas rich with unique flora and fauna communities growing in an area of constant disturbance.

Trails connect the upper part of the property to the river. In the open meadow area, designated as a Wildlife Preserve, a wetlands is being restored and attracts many wildlife species such as coyotes, deer, turkeys, ducks, geese, turtles, great blue herons and others. The trails venue offers an informative pathway through indigenous plant areas, with planned interpretive and interactive signage along the way.

Through a series of focus groups with leaders and stakeholders in the valley, the organization board gathered information about the needs of the community. One of the re-occurring themes brought up by the participants was the need for a place for families and children to have access to outdoor recreation in a safe environment. In 2011 Rusk Ranch Nature Center opened the Butterfly Pavilion, offering hands on activities for kids in the nurturing, emergence, and life of native butterflies. The all-volunteer center brings revenue into the community, is a source of civic pride and engages families in enriching nature based experiences. The cleanup of invasive plants, the wetlands restoration and the creation of the Nature Discovery Playground offer further learning and hands-on experiences for local youth. Helping children and families remember their interconnection to nature is key to solving problems for our future. Access to the playground, along with visits to the Butterfly Pavilion, are free to southern Oregon schools and children’s groups.

The trails, Wildlife Preserve, Nature Discovery Playground and Butterfly Pavilion will enhance the outdoor exhibit areas of the interactive Nature Discovery Center. Board members have spent many hours researching and traveling to a variety of interactive centers to augment their ability to plan and implement the nature center. They have visited and interviewed staff at Douglas County Museum; Elkton Community Education Center; Umpqua Discovery Center in Reedsport, Oregon; Museum of Science and Industry in Portland; the Environmental Nature Center in Newport Beach, CA; the Lakeshore Nature Center in Kansas City and the High Desert Museum in Bend, Oregon. In addition they have used the internet extensively to learn all they can about what other nature centers are doing.
Rusk Ranch Nature Center has initiated and sponsored planning meetings in the community for children’s recreational services, visitor enhancement and nature-based organization collaborative planning. Results from those meetings offer a framework for community collaborative planning of youth and nature oriented events throughout the year.

Rusk Ranch Nature Center helps to meet the needs of children in the valley for enrichment activities and expanded education about our cultural and natural history. Strategic planning includes the goal to be a destination spot for visitors to the community to go along with other major sites such as the Oregon Caves & Chateau, the Great Cats Center and the Siskiyou Field Institute. Hands-on fun exhibits, highlighting features such as on-site wetlands, geology of the varying flood plain levels, an organic garden, native plant and wildlife communities, and the Butterfly Pavilion, will surround the center.

As part of the mission to serve the recreational and enrichment needs of valley youth, Rusk Ranch Nature Center leases a large area to the Illinois Valley Youth Soccer Club for one dollar a year to build soccer fields.

Rusk Ranch Nature Center has received grants from the Carpenter Foundation, Cow Creek Umpqua Indian Foundation, Fourway Community Foundation, Mountaineers Foundation, Collins Foundation, the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) partnering with the Illinois Valley Watershed Council, Oregon Community Foundation, Americorps National Civilian Community Corps and the Illinois Valley Family Coalition. These grants and awards have helped the organization to offer free nature based activities for kids and families, provide space for the local youth soccer club and bring visitor revenue into the community. The organization is deeply grateful to these foundations and agencies for their support of the valley community!

Hundreds of community volunteers and the southern Oregon Garden Clubs have helped with building, being docents at the Butterfly Pavilion, gardening, tree planting, trail building, outreach, children’s workshops, planning, donating, landscaping, events and much more. The nature center is being created by our can-do community as an inspiring place for interactive nature programs & exhibits and outdoor recreational activities, enhancing quality of life and fostering community pride, awakening children of all ages to the adventure, discovery and awe of our natural world.
Summary of resources acquired, collaborations & presentations

Resources acquired
Collins Foundation $20,000
Oreon Community Foundation $10,000
OWEB $10,000
Fourway Community Foundation $6,000
Carpenter $3,500
Cow Creek Umpqua Indian Found. $2,108
Mountaineers Foundation $1,000
Illinois Valley Family Coalition $2,000

Americorps (Labor resources)
NCCC 2011 $30,160
NCCC 2012 $48,256
NCCC 2012 $41,470

Total resources brought into the valley - $164,494.

Collaborations
Fiscal sponsor for Jubilee Park Ford Foundation project in 2011
NCCC team acquired and shared with Siskiyou Institute 2011
Rivers and Forests Festival, Illinois Valley Watershed Council event
Nature & Art Festival together with the Illinois River Valley Arts Council
Fundraising effort and salmon art project for Evergreen elementary summer school program
Collaborative meetings organized:
  Children services 2010
  Nature Based Organizations Planning 2013
  Three nature center Strategic Planning meetings open to community
  Two Interpretive Planning meetings open to community

Presentations
Free Bugs R Us presentations for community (3) and for elementary school (14)
Free butterfly and pollinator presentations at elementary school (9)
Free community presentations (10)

Self sufficiency data

The Oregon Caves National Monument and Oregon Caves Chateau have collected visitor data each year. From this data we know that approximately 300,000 vehicles with 1M visitors pass by the nature center Highway 199 location each year. Last year 70,000 of them stopped at the Oregon Caves Monument (a 40 minute drive off highway). The visitor surveys indicate they normally stop as a "spur-of-the-moment" decision. The property where the Rusk Ranch Nature Center is located is directly on Highway 199, a major artery for visitors driving into this area or going to visit the coast. Using data collected from the Oregon Caves visitor surveys, we know that most visitors are looking for fun experiences as their reason for stopping in our valley. The Highway 199 venue offers an opportunity for extensive, low cost marketing of the fun family
experiences desired by the majority of visitors. The first exhibit of the nature center, the Butterfly Pavilion was overwhelmingly well received.

Additionally the Great Cats venue, an exotic cats “zoo” directly across the street, receives approximately 100,000 visitors per year, asking $14 per adult and $10 for children over 3 yrs old.

**Current Activities**

In 2014, with help from the Fourway Community Foundation, the soccer lot was leveled in order to build the first field. The soccer team contributed, and is currently fundraising to complete the fields.

The nature center again partnered with Evergreen Elementary School to sponsor the Bugs R Us program to present to all 450 kids at the school. Thanks to the Oregon Community Foundation, a “Youth Employee” was hired over the summer for part time help with the plants.

An internal financial review process was initiated this year, and some community members who are nonprofit executives contributed to the review. When the final assessment by the board is complete, the financial review will be available upon request.

There was an increase in visitors and milkweed seed and plant sales in 2014 and 15. And revenue from donations, earned income and events, (excluding grants and loans), has grown approximately 20% each year for the past three years. During that time the Collins Foundation and the Oregon Community Foundation have assisted the nature center with grants to help pay for administrative and program coordination.

An architect was selected and retained for the planned Nature Discovery Center building, and a community steering committee convened to help over the next two years to get the discovery center built. A grant from the Carpenter Foundation helped to fund a preliminary drawing and the involvement of local high school seniors in the design.

The Natural Playground made significant progress, (thanks to the Rusk family, the Illinois Valley Family Coalition and previously the Fourway Community Foundation and Cow Creek Umpqua Indian Foundation). Plans include finishing all the major features in the spring. Families or small civic groups are being solicited to adopt specific features. A Hummingbird Garden is being developed around the exterior of the Butterfly Pavilion for 2015.

Based on a cash flow projection, and using the data above, the Nature Discovery Center can become self-supporting within a short time. Cash flow projections are based only on indoor interactive Nature Discovery Center and Butterfly Pavilion and do not include other program earned income (Nature Camps, Plant sales and workshops) or fundraising events and initiatives.
Business Description

Exhibits, Programs, Services

Exhibits will be based on the Interpretive Plan with a core theme of highlighting the “Web of Life” – the interconnection and interdependence of all things in nature. The venues will include forest life, watershed processes, animal and plant interactions, soil life and also a sustainability center.

The Nature Discovery Center will offer visitors a unique interactive experience designed to help people remember the awe of nature and the importance of conservation, wildlife preservation and sustainable processes.

Programs include
• The Butterfly Pavilion and other indoor and outdoor exhibits.
• Children’s outreach services to bring nature experiences and outdoor recreation opportunities to valley children.
• Public outreach services offering public presentations, the Nature Festival and open workshops to offer nature awareness and interaction.
• Other fee-for-service mission-based activities such as plant & seed sales, community event space rental and workshops.
Management

The Nature Discovery Center will be managed by an Executive Director with guidance from the Board of Directors. The current Executive Director is Patricia Downing whose resume is attached in Appendix ( ). Patricia has more than 25 years experience in nonprofit management as an Executive Director, Development Director and Nonprofit Consultant.

Organizational Chart

Areas in blue are the current and planned staffing positions. Areas of responsibility are listed beneath each heading.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
  BOD Development
  BOD Recruitment
  Organizational Planning
  Committees as needed
  Executive Committee
    President, Secretary, Treasurer duties
    Executive Director

ADMINISTRATION
  Human Resource Management
    Employees, Contractors, Volunteers
  Property Management --- Property Maintenance Coordinator
    Maintenance – Wetlands; Water / irrigation; Mapping
  Office Management
  Financial management – Bookkeeping, Cash flow planning
  Marketing
    Web, social medias management
    Community & civic outreach, collaboration
  Strategic planning and business planning coordination
    County, Permitting
  Research & training presentations for BOD and staff as needed

FUNDRAISING ------ Development Coordinator
  Grants - Coordinate applications, grant tracking, reporting & planning
  Events
  Donor relations
    Coordinate donor data tracking
  Legacy Giving

PROGRAMS ---- Programs Coordinator
  Children’s outreach - Schools, groups
  Soccer
  Nature Discovery Exhibits and programs – Volunteer Docents
    Staffing as needed
  Butterfly Pavilion
  Fee for service misc - Plants and seeds
    Volunteer & Job Council labor
  Other Program and project activities
Names of Steering Advisory Committee Members for the Nature Discovery Center.

Kimberlie Lehman  
Retired Educator, IV Senior Center President, RRNC Board

Jan Walker  
Selma Community & Education Center, Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs, IV Soil and Water Board, RRNC Board

Terry Davis  
School Teacher, Artist, Naturalist, RRNC Board

Patricia Downing  
Nonprofit specialist, Biologist, IV River Valley Arts Council, formerly IVCDO Board, RRNC Board

Meadow Martell  
IV Medical Center Board, formerly Siskiyou Field Institute Board

Josiah Dean  
Hospitality Consultant, former Caves Chateau Manager, former Mt. Rainier Guest Services, Small Business consultant

John Gardener, Ph.D.  
Civil Engineer, London’s Imperial College of Science and Technology and Southampton University, City Council Member Cave Junction, Former professor for Flood Hazard Research Centre (FHRC) at Middlesex University, Founder Bioengineering Institute, author City of Sandy Stormwater Quality Master Plan

Jeffrey Hyde  
Evergreen Federal Bank President, OCC Mutual Savings Association Advisory Committee, former Grants Pass City Council President, Board Member Josephine County Chamber of Commerce, graduate National School of Banking, Fairfield, Connecticut.

Divonna Ratliff  
Retired Exhibits Developer, formerly many years with OMSI in Portland and then with the Portland Children’s Museum as Program Director.

Noted community participants in stakeholder meetings for planning the vision & purpose, exhibits, land development and building structure for the Nature Discovery Center:

Roger Brandt, IVCDO Board President  
Kenny Houck, RCC-IVBEC Manager  
Jean Robertson, Architectural Designer  
Alison Arnold, former state Wetlands Specialist  
USDA Fish and Wildlife agency
Need and Market Opportunity

Economic Development need in the Illinois Valley

The Rusk Ranch Nature Center directly serves more than 2,000 children in the immediate community (Illinois Valley), as well as over 15,000 adult residents of Illinois Valley. The project also serves Josephine County, with a population of over 80,000 residents and an 18% poverty rate. Illinois Valley in Josephine County, where the center is located, remains an area with even higher levels of unemployment and low income with a 38% poverty rate as of 2011. Unemployment for 2013 was at 11.3%. The median household income is significantly below state average. Children in the area are particularly hard hit by these conditions. While 39% of students overall in the state qualify with poverty status for reduced price meals at school, in Illinois Valley 78% of students qualify for this basic service! There are still youth in the valley who have never even been to Grants Pass! Many local artists and volunteers make efforts to benefit local children. However, the schools lack funding for enrichment activities such as science field trips, sports, and arts. The Rusk Ranch Nature Center currently offers several programs to help meet educational enrichment needs for local children and the Nature Discovery Center will offer both employment opportunities and enhancement of economic development for the area.

Eco/nature based tourism data and Market segment opportunity - National data

According to a study from the Outdoor Industry Association, nature-based tourism has a large national economic footprint (please note that the numbers below reflect national totals):

- Industry Sales dollars: Nationally $730 Billion
- Other Key Statistics:
  - Supports nearly 6.5 million jobs across the U.S.
  - Generates $88 billion in annual state and national tax revenue.
  - Provides sustainable growth in rural communities.
  - Generates $289 billion annually in retail sales and services across the U.S.
  - Touches over 8 percent of America’s personal consumption expenditures—more than 1 in every 12 dollars circulating in the economy

Eco/nature based tourism data and Market segment opportunity - Oregon data

Oregon Tourism Commission, Dean Runyan Associates and Travel Oregon data show:

- The Oregon travel industry is a leading export-oriented industry. Travel and tourism is one of the most important “export-oriented” industries in Oregon. Spending by visitors generates sales in lodging, food services, recreation, transportation and retail businesses – the “travel industry.” These sales support jobs for Oregon residents and contribute tax revenue to local and state governments. Travel is especially important in the rural areas of the state, where manufacturing and traded services are less prevalent.
- Oregon tourism is a $9.6 billion industry and directly generates some 91,100 jobs in Oregon — and indirectly creates another 41,000 jobs.
- The Oregon travel industry continued to exhibit growth in spending, visitation and employment during 2012, despite the recession influence.
- The Gross Domestic Product of the travel industry was $3.4 billion in 2012. Overall, the travel industry is one of the three largest export-oriented industries in rural Oregon counties (the other two being agriculture/food processing and logging/wood products).
- In general, more rural counties have a bigger share of travel-generated employment.
- Approximately $46M spent in Southern Oregon in 2012 on recreation by visitors. Of this 30% was for outdoor activities.
Target market demographics

Activities and experiences of visitors by % for Southern Oregon 2012 from Travel Oregon:

The Nature Discovery Center is well positioned on a major highway, already a significant route for visitors to the Caves National Monument, to capture a share of the growing travel market. That revenue will generate jobs, increase quality of life in the community, increase other retail sales and further enhance existing venues thus benefiting both the long term economic development and community enrichment of this area.
Relevant Market Size

The relevant market size is the annual revenue that the organization could attain if it owned 100% market share. Relevant market size is calculated as follows:

1. Number of customers who might be interested in purchasing our products and/or services each year? Conservative estimate: 100,000 (based on 300,000 vehicles and 1M people traveling by, Great Cats market share of 100,000, and the Caves Monument share of 70,000).

2. Amount these customers might be willing to spend, on an annual basis, on our products and/or services? $7 (first year)

3. Our relevant market size: $700,000 / year

As the analysis shows, the relevant market is large enough for the organization to enjoy considerable success.

Customer Analysis

Data from the Dean Runyan study shows the majority of visitors to this area are adults aged 25 to 64 who spend $1,000 or more on vacation travel per year and live in Northern California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho. Canada is our largest inbound consumer international market, currently, providing more than 1,500,000 visitors each year. British Columbia in particular offers great opportunities due to drive and fly accessibility to Oregon.

Demographics of main target customers:
- Age: 25 – 65
- Income: over 25K/year
- Gender: Equal split male and female
- Location: Day trip and Overnight trip visitors along Highway 199
- Marital status: Most married or with a partner
- Family size: 2 or more (30% traveling with children)
- Education: some college to post-college education credentials
- Activities & Interests: Nature and/or family based activities
- Data from visitor surveys at the Oregon Caves Monument indicates visitors’ number one priority is to have a fun and memorable experience.

Below is a snapshot of the size of the target customer market:

In 2014 more than 300,000 vehicles traveled along Highway 199 including north and southbound traffic. With an average 3 visitors per vehicle this amounts to almost a million visitors. In 2013 the Oregon Caves National Monument nearby tallied 70,000 individual visitors. The monument is a 45 minute drive off of Highway 199.

To address the needs of this target group the Nature Discovery Center will consist of interactive, hands-on exhibits that offer fun family experiences, both indoor and outdoor. Exhibits will be designed with multi-age groups in mind.
Competitive Analysis

The following companies are our **direct competitors**.

**Direct Competitor #1: Great Cats of the World**

- Products/services offered: Viewing large exotic felines in cages and occasionally in action demonstrations.
- Price points: $14 per adult
- Gross Revenues (# units sold/dollars generated): Estimated 25,000 visitors / yr = $350K
- Location: Almost directly across the highway from the nature center
- Customer segments served: Slightly younger demographic than the nature center, of ages 25-45, families.
- Competitor’s key strengths: Unusual animals, large and exotic, notoriety re: established marketing.
- Competitor’s key weaknesses:
  - Higher entry fee for visitors
  - “Road-side zoo” stigma,
  - For-profit non-community business,
  - Higher maintenance costs – lions eat more than butterflies.
  - Only partially open in winter

**Direct Competitor #2: Oregon Caves Monument**

- Products/services offered: Cave tours
- Price points: $18 per adult
- Revenues (# units sold/dollars generated): $18 x 70,000 visitors = $1.2M
- Location(s): Cave Junction Hwy 199 turn off, then 45 minute drive up the mountain on Hwy 46.
- Customer segments: same as Great Cats, slightly younger than nature center, ages 25-45, families; very few seniors.
- Competitor’s key strengths: Nationally known, federal marketing
- Competitor’s key weaknesses:
  - Long drive off highway,
  - Higher cost,
  - Not open in winter.
  - Not community based (revenue beyond jobs created goes out of area to a federal agency)
Competitive Advantages

• **Services:** The experience at the nature center offers a more relaxed and in depth opportunity than the Great Cats across the street. The focus is more on staying for a lengthy period and fully absorbing the experience of nature. Offering something different means that families and other visitors do not have to make a choice, and often choose to attend both venues. There is no other venue comparable within 50 miles, and no comparable venue at all on this major Highway.

• **Human Resources:** The nature center team has unique experience in the industry including degrees in Biology, a combined 50+ years of nonprofit management experience, teaching experience, outdoor & wildlife experience and a combined 80+ years in business.

• **Location:** The Highway 199 location offers a proven market for securing visitor dollars. Having the Great Cats across the street and the Cave Monument nearby creates a ready-made target market, already established with years of marketing, for the services of the nature center.

• **Operational Systems:** The nature center can be very competitive because it can utilize extensive volunteer labor and thus operate at a very low cost. In addition the center has developed a unique market for plants and seeds that support butterflies and other pollinators.

• **Customers:** The nature center is already serving key customers whom the competition does not serve. These customers include seniors over 60 years old. This is not a significant market segment for either the Oregon Caves Monument of the Great Cats. The senior market is the fastest growing market, and the wealthiest, regionally, state-wide and nationally.

• **Marketing:** The location on Highway 199 offers a huge amount of “free” advertising to the 300,000 vehicles with approximately 1M visitors driving by each year.

• **Successes achieved to date:** The organization has already accomplished the following which positions us for future success.

**Butterfly Pavilion**

Offers free admission to schools and children’s groups. In the last four years RRNC has also offered a variety of nature based experiences for Madrone School, Dome School, Evergreen School, IV High School, IV Boys & Girls Club, New Hope School, Talent Elementary School, Brooking preschool and Evergreen Summer school - all at no charge.

800 visitors in 2011 when first opened, 900 visitors for 2013
1500+ for 2014
Maintaining approximately 1/3 of regular operations costs
Sells tropical & local milkweed & seeds to help support the center
Conditional Use Permit to develop the Nature Discovery Center was acquired in spring 2013.
Community partnerships

Illinois Valley Garden Club, Regional Garden Clubs,
Ford Foundation Leadership Program IV: Fiscal Sponsor 2011
Americorps Team shares: Siskiyou Field Institute, IVCDO (2014)
Rivers & Forests Festival 2013: Salmon display, schools outreach
Illinois River Valley Arts Council: Nature & Art Festival
Healthy U: Shared youth employment project
Us Forest Service & IV Watershed Council shared projects
Community Planning meetings:
   2010 Children’s services organizations,
   RRNC Strategic Planning ongoing public involvement
   Building Design Youth Involvement Planning
   Outdoor Exhibit planning
   Nature Based Organizations meeting (Jan 2014)

Local Schools
Rusk Ranch Nature Center has a strong commitment to enhancing nature experiences for children and families and offering nature based enrichment activities for local youth. The organization partners yearly with Evergreen Elementary School to host free nature days for summer school and sponsoring the Bugs R Us program to present wildlife and nature presentations at the school for numerous classes. For 2013 and also 2014, hearing that the Summer School funds did not cover transportation bus costs to bring the kids out to the Nature Center, the butterflies and caterpillars were packaged up and brought to the school for presentations to six classes at no charge.
In 2012, 2013 & 2014 the organization increased the number of free public events:
- On-going visits to the pavilion with accompanying children’s frogs and pond activities, viewing butterfly wings under the teaching microscope and feeding butterflies and birds.
- Presentations to local civic groups on butterfly gardens and monarchs
- Free presentations on bugs, bats and owls by Bugs R Us for the public.
- The free Nature Festival which engaged students in the re-cycle Fashion Show, creating painted salmon displays and on-stage demonstrations.

Flyway Project
In 2012 RRNC conducted free public presentations and offered free local milkweed starts to those with “no spray” gardens to support monarch butterfly population recovery. We gave away more than 200 plants.
For 2014 we sold milkweed and seeds, and the milkweed sales part of the project has added significantly to organization revenue and community involvement.

**Wildlife Preservation & Habitat Conservation**

Restoring the ditched meadow to a wetlands habitat began in 2011. The first stage with ponds and native wetlands planting was completed in 2013 with the help of OWEB and the local IV Watershed Council. Local wildlife use of the wetlands has been astounding with hundreds of new animal sightings.
Natural Playground

The playground construction began with volunteer help in 2013. With on-going volunteer support, local benefactor donations, support from the Illinois Valley Family Coalition and small foundation grants, the play area features a Hobbitt Hill tunnel, climbing side and slide, water play area, stream table, sand play, children’s seed planting, pollywogs & frogs, carnivorous plant exhibit, music area, puppet theatre and crawl through caterpillar. The focus of the playground (to engage children in experiencing nature and utilizing creativity) has been very successful so far. Further refinement for low water landscaping, bird watching area and trails are planned for 2015.

Current Programs And Projects

- Butterfly Pavilion
- Soccer field
- Wetlands restoration
- Natural Playground
- Nature Camp
- School outreach projects
  - Support for Evergreen summer school
  - Nature presentations at local schools
  - College Dreams youth employment program
- Community presentations and programs
  - Bird house building annual
  - Flyway Project – Milkweed plant and seed sales
  - Nature & Art Festival
  - Civic group presentations
  - Americorps Team Sharing
Recent Program services participation growth

Goal for 2013-14: Increase programs participation 20-50%,

Year 2013 - 2,562 Adults and children participation in all programs
Year 2014 - 4,240 Adults and children participation in all programs

Participation increase of 40%

Recent Program revenue growth

Goal for 2013-14: Increase programs revenue by 50-100%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>2013 revenue</th>
<th>2014 revenue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Butterfly Pavilion</td>
<td>$2,936</td>
<td>$5,673</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant &amp; seed sales</td>
<td>$446</td>
<td>$2,197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature &amp; Art Festival</td>
<td>$657</td>
<td>$2,522</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total from programs</td>
<td>$4,039</td>
<td>$10,392</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Revenue increase of 61%
## Cash Flow Projection of Admissions Fees only

Units Sold Cash Flow Projection (excludes operations cost and other revenue sources)

### Quarterly Revenue Assumptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of units sold</th>
<th>Q1</th>
<th>Q2</th>
<th>Q3</th>
<th>Q4</th>
<th>Annual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FY1</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY2</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>11,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>175%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY3</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>9,000</td>
<td>18,000</td>
<td>31,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>200.0%</td>
<td>200.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>182%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY4</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>24,000</td>
<td>40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>200.0%</td>
<td>300.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY5</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>24,000</td>
<td>40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>200.0%</td>
<td>300.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Price Per unit

| FY1 | $7.00 | $7.00 | $7.00 | $7.00 | $7.00 |
| Growth | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| FY2 | $8.00 | $8.00 | $8.00 | $8.00 | $8.00 |
| Growth | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| FY3 | $8.00 | $8.00 | $8.00 | $8.00 | $8.00 |
| Growth | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0% |
| FY4 | $8.00 | $8.00 | $8.00 | $8.00 | $8.00 |
| Growth | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0% |
| FY5 | $8.00 | $8.00 | $8.00 | $8.00 | $8.00 |
| Growth | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0% |

### Total Revenue

| FY1 | $7,000 | $7,000 | $7,000 | $7,000 | $28,000 |
| FY2 | $8,000 | $16,000 | $32,000 | $32,000 | $88,000 |
| FY3 | $8,000 | $24,000 | $72,000 | $144,000 | $248,000 |
| FY4 | $8,000 | $24,000 | $96,000 | $192,000 | $320,000 |
| FY5 | $8,000 | $24,000 | $96,000 | $192,000 | $320,000 |

### Cost Assumptions

#### Per unit Cost

| FY1 | $2.00 | $2.03 | $2.05 | $2.08 | $2.04 |
| Growth | 1.3% | 1.3% | 1.3% | 1.3% |
| FY2 | $2.10 | $2.14 | $2.19 | $2.23 | $2.17 |
| Growth | 1.3% | 2.0% | 2.0% | 2.0% | 0% |
| FY3 | $2.28 | $2.32 | $2.37 | $2.42 | $2.35 |
| Growth | 2.0% | 2.0% | 2.0% | 2.0% | 8% |
| FY4 | $2.46 | $2.51 | $2.56 | $2.61 | $2.54 |
| Growth | 2.0% | 2.0% | 2.0% | 2.0% | 8% |
| FY5 | $2.67 | $2.72 | $2.77 | $2.83 | $2.75 |
| Growth | 2.0% | 2.0% | 2.0% | 2.0% | 8% |

### Total Direct Cost

| FY1 | $2,000 | $2,000 | $2,100 | $2,100 | $8,200 |
| FY2 | $2,100 | $4,300 | $8,800 | $8,900 | $24,100 |
| FY3 | $2,300 | $7,000 | $21,300 | $43,500 | $74,100 |
| FY4 | $2,500 | $7,500 | $30,800 | $62,800 | $103,600 |
| FY5 | $2,700 | $8,200 | $33,300 | $67,900 | $112,100 |
Cash Flow Table for admissions pricing NET only Year 1 to Year 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual</th>
<th>FY 1</th>
<th>FY 2</th>
<th>FY 3</th>
<th>FY 4</th>
<th>FY 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Net Cash Flow from Admissions</td>
<td>$19,840</td>
<td>$63,940</td>
<td>$174,030</td>
<td>$256,530</td>
<td>$248,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash at Beginning of Period</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$19,840</td>
<td>$83,780</td>
<td>$257,810</td>
<td>$514,340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash at End of Period</td>
<td>$19,840</td>
<td>$83,780</td>
<td>$257,810</td>
<td>$514,340</td>
<td>$762,340</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scenes from the Nature & Art Festival
**Campaign and Financial Plan**

*Estimate of total cost of Phase 1 and how we arrived at that total.*

We cannot have a more firm overall estimate until we get designs from the Architect and the Landscape Architect.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>bldg construction</td>
<td>- Based on estimate of architect for 2000sf Phase 1 bldg.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26,500</td>
<td>architect fee</td>
<td>- Discounted by 15% for nonprofit. $2000 retainer paid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>landscape construction</td>
<td>- soft: need more detail for final estimate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>county permitting</td>
<td>- $2000 paid so far</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>DEQ permitting</td>
<td>- estimate from current fees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>structural engineering</td>
<td>- estimate from architect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,800</td>
<td>geotechnical</td>
<td>- estimate from architect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>site survey</td>
<td>- non-boundary survey average from local surveyors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70,000</td>
<td>exhibit design &amp; build</td>
<td>- estimate from research, OMSI fees and in-kind labor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>fence and gating</td>
<td>- estimate from Caveman Fencing and in-kind labor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$490,800

Remaining:

$473,027

What is the Capital Campaign funding plan?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenue Source</th>
<th>Planning</th>
<th>Phase 1</th>
<th>Phase 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MMT Foundation</td>
<td></td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RRNC</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>crowd funding</td>
<td></td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpenter Foundation</td>
<td></td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USDA Rural Development</td>
<td></td>
<td>150,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RRNC Donors</td>
<td>2,400</td>
<td>21,700</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collins Foundation</td>
<td></td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben B Cheney Foundation</td>
<td></td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ford Foundation</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>26,327</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>16,400</td>
<td>473,027</td>
<td>300,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Worm hunting with Early Headstart
The preliminary design schematics will be used for fundraising starting fall 2015. We have already begun outreach to major donors and established the Angels support system. We will implement the Crowd funding campaign and continue seeking grants through the winter and spring of 2015-2016 and hope to have completed funding and begin building no later than spring of 2017.

What is the operations budget once the building is complete?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NATURE DISCOVERY CENTER</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Operations Budget</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>REVENUE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donations</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fee for service</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butterfly Pavilion</td>
<td>28,000</td>
<td>88,000</td>
<td>248,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature &amp; Art Festival</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant &amp; Seed sales</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>56,000</td>
<td>121,000</td>
<td>288,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EXPENSE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>12,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butterfly Pavilion</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butterfly labor</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAF &amp; Public Presentations</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Playground Maintenance</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature Discovery Center bldg &amp; exhibits</td>
<td>7,000</td>
<td>7,000</td>
<td>7,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant &amp; Seed Sales</td>
<td>3,600</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children's Services</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Support</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>18,000</td>
<td>18,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor, insurance, property tax, materials, utilities, marketing</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>50,100</td>
<td>66,000</td>
<td>68,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Marketing Strategy**

Our marketing plan, included below, details our services, pricing and promotions plans.

**Services & Pricing for Tours of the Nature Discovery Center and Butterfly Pavilion**

- Visitors enter and enjoy the inside interactive exhibits, the gift area and lunch facility. They have access to the full outdoor exhibits, trails, Natural Playground and gardens.

- This is both a spur of the moment as well as a planned destination visitor experience.

- Pricing as listed on the Cash Flow projection: Year 1 - $7 per adult and Years 2 through 5, $8 per adult.

- Visitor counts are expected to be 4,000 in the first year and reach 11,000 by second year and 40,000 by the end of 5 years.

- Strength: The location of the facility is a significant advantage, as well as the pricing and variety of fun experiences that are offered.

- Weakness: The venue is new and it will take time to build up more branding and notoriety.

Other services include plant and seed sales, off-site presentations, on-site nature camps and workshops. Each of these program areas has an annual planning process.

**Promotions Plan**

The Nature Discovery Center will use the following tactics to attract new customers:

- State Blue “Attraction ahead” signs – Many venues report these signs to be very effective.

- Large Highway sign – Since more than a million people pass by each year, this is expected to have significant impact.

- Memberships – These are currently promoted on the web site and with special events as gift certificates

- Direct Mail - Snail mail will be used with existing donors or Angel supporters to maintain relationships and increase donor participation.

- Email Marketing - The organization has an on going email list and is developing a newsletter outreach product

- Event Marketing – The Nature & Art Festival is promoted regionally and offers a low cost way for visitors to explore the center.

- Rack Cards – The center will utilize the statewide service that offers attraction cards in a group rack at visitor centers. Other local destination venues point to this method as very successful in building a customer base. These are also distributed to other local venues, senior centers and lodging.
• Social Media – The Facebook page maintains a healthy following and links to other venues.

• Newspaper/Magazine/Journal ads – Twice yearly the center places an ad in local news magazines. In addition a cordial relationship with local media usually results in at least one “free” story about the center each year. A regular ad schedule is currently in place with family and senior magazines and will be accelerated once the discovery center is opened.

• Online Marketing – The web page is updated regularly and donors are encouraged to donate or purchase tickets online.

• Partnerships/Joint Ventures – Partnerships with local schools and children’s care groups results in exposure for parents who then return for further visits.

• Press Releases/PR – Press releases and PSAs are offered throughout the year for events and workshops.

• Radio Ads/TV Ads/Infomercials – Radio press releases the first year and possible TV ads by the 5th year.

• Viral Marketing – Once the Crowd-funding campaign is launched, any generated videos may be useful for viral marketing. An intern volunteer will be recruited for viral marketing strategy.

• Yellow Pages – The center will have a Yellow Pages listing.

Operations Plan

Operations Plan details:
The key day-to-day processes that the center performs are described below.
The organization plans to continue offering a quality volunteer experience and using trained docents for a variety of tasks. In addition the organization has a long standing partnership with Job Council and employs one to two part time individuals throughout the year. Teen group volunteers and College Dream participants are also part of the volunteer staffing.

• Exhibit Development: Exhibits are an on going process of evaluation, maintenance and innovation. Some exhibits are maintained by groups of volunteers and others by part time staff. Volunteer docents are scheduled to host groups, do presentations and do event off-site plant sales.

• Sales: Trained Volunteer Docents and some Part time Staff greet customers, accept fees, sell gift items, plants and seeds and also assist with tours.
• Hours: The center will be open 7 days a week during most of the year, 10 am to 5 pm.
• Marketing: Marketing is maintained by the executive staff.
• Finance: The executive staff, under oversight from the board, maintains records, creates financial planning, makes day-to-day decisions and oversees a bookkeeper.
• Administration: Executive staffing maintains administrative duties as described in the organizational chart.
• Property maintenance: A property manager maintains trimming, lawn clipping and plant care as well as minor repairs and construction. This individual may be an on-site shared work volunteer or paid staff.
• Programs: A Programs Coordinator will maintain program outreach and activities.
• Development: Currently part of the executive duties, a Development Coordinator will eventually be hired to seek grants and do other activities including Donor Relations.

INTERPRETIVE PLAN

Many meetings with community input, expert input, stake holder comments and research on site and by online surfing, have resulted in an extensive and in-depth understanding of our interpretive focus. This section is still being documented.

Planning Methodology and Community Involvement

Interpretive Theme – The Web of Life

Specific Exhibit areas of interest
Exhibit plans
  o Interior
  o Exterior

Site planning

Site Evaluation and Desired Activities
Existing Site Conditions and Analysis
  o Desired Character and Activities
  o Site Development Plan
  o Overall Site Plan
  o Nature Discovery Center Area Site Plan