

The Wild Center
Mentoring Program
for New Trustees and Advisory Board Members
Updated: April 11, 2025

Mentoring is universally acknowledged as important and helpful in many different settings. The on-boarding of new Trustee and Advisory Board members (new members) at The Wild Center (TWC) is evolving and substantive. The inclusion of a mentoring plan will further enhance the effectiveness of welcoming new members.

The purpose of the Mentoring Program is to engage new members in the work of the TWC Board by assigning mentors who share attributes with the new members.

Steps for assigning a Mentor to a Mentee:

1. The Board Chair and the Committee on Trustees (COT) will work together to identify who the mentor should be for each mentee. The following criteria should be considered when choosing a mentor:
 - a. The mentor should be an experienced Board member with a good understanding of the strategic priorities of TWC,
 - b. There should be some commonality between the mentor and mentee, in skills, interests, knowledge and/or relationship to the Adirondacks and TWC, and
 - c. The person who nominated the new member may be a good choice.
2. All current Trustees and Advisory Board members with three or less years of experience will be offered the opportunity to be assigned a mentor. Mentors may be particularly useful in encouraging new members to participate in committee work.

Steps for mentoring:

1. Each mentor will be expected to reach out to their mentee prior to their first Board meeting. In that conversation, the mentor should:
 - a. Review the welcome book, located in the Board portal of TWC,
 - b. Discuss the purpose and process of the mentoring program and of Trustee or Advisory Board service, and
 - c. Discuss the meeting, including identifying key individuals, reviewing the format of the meeting, and answering any questions the new member may have about TWC, the Board or their role.
2. The mentor will again reach out to the mentee a few weeks prior to their second Board meeting to discuss the first meeting and address any questions the mentee may have.
3. Each mentor and mentee are encouraged to cover various topics during their conversations, as suggested from the list of topics found below
 - a. Suggested topics for discussion:
 - i. Ambassador and Financial supporter for and of The Wild Center - outreach to family and friends

- ii. Engagement and interaction with staff - understanding staff roles and advisement from the Trustees and Advisory Board
 - iii. Committee service - the advisory nature of the role of all the members and the committees they serve on
 - iv. Review of Resources - Trustee and Advisory Board Online Library Portal
- 4. The mentor will endeavor to make sure that the mentee feels comfortable in reaching out with any questions or concerns. The mentor will also directly contact the mentee at least 2-3 times over the ensuing year, to address questions and to encourage participation.
- 5. At the end of the first year, a member of the COT will reach out to each mentor to learn about perceptions of the mentoring program and the involvement of the new member. Each mentee will be asked to fill out a brief survey.