

Development, Membership & Marketing

2025 Development, Membership & Marketing Plan Report

The Development Membership and Marketing team's 2025 overall goal was to "sustain a thriving Wild Center by growing awareness of our work, driving visitation, and generating earned and unearned income through strategic targeted development, membership and marketing."

By focusing on strategic communication, audience engagement, financial stewardship, and community partnerships, the Development, Membership and Marketing team met many of our 2025 goals to ensure a sustainable Wild Center.

This plan heavily relies on targeted marketing and communication strategies to both drive visitation and reach different audiences.

- **Attendance and Revenue:**
 - The Wild Center welcomed **100,218**—an 6.5% decrease year-over-year
 - Admission revenue equaled \$1,251,011—a 5.05% increase year-over-year
 - Group travel revenue was down 35% year-over-year
- **Digital Stats**
 - 1.07 mil webpage views—an 8% decrease year-over-year
 - 10.5 mil social media views—a 45% increase
 - Total Digital Advertising: 13.2 million impressions and 228,650 link clicks
- **Public Relations & Strategic Communications**
 - 221 published articles resulting in 2.1 bil impressions.
 - Hosted 5 press trips resulting in over 3.6 mil video views
- **Miscellaneous Marketing, Branding and Communications**
 - Successfully launched campaign around TROLLS: Save the Humans

By identifying, cultivating, soliciting and stewarding a broad base of supporters, we met two of our major fundraising goals - Membership and Annual Fund.

- **Membership:**
 - In 2025, we raised \$338,714, 6% below the 2025 goal of \$362,900.
- **Annual Fund:**
 - The 2025 Annual Fund goal of \$2,010,600 was met and exceeded, **totaling \$2,158,776, a 7% increase over the budget goal.**

In 2025, grants were submitted to government entities, foundations and individuals.

- 42 grant applications were submitted totaling \$3,277,887
- 23 applications were awarded totaling \$1,919,887
- Notable awards include:
 - Capital support for the new *Wild Encounters Trail* from ZBGA and Congressionally Directed Spending (Thank you Senator Schumer)
 - AmeriCorps New York Pool Funding - Supporting 7 Members

The Development and Membership team planned and executed 16 stewardship and cultivation events throughout the year. Through these events, our team continued building and stewarding new and existing relationships with individuals invested in The Wild Center's mission and work. Staff continued to steward Linda Vaughan Society members, Patron Circle donors and campaign prospects to continue building on our planned giving initiatives.

Work with board committees, such as the Committee on Trustees, the DEAI Sub Committee and newly formed Campaign Cabinet, helped our work to steward donors and potential new Advisory Board and Trustees.

In 2025, our community partnerships were strengthened through different initiatives, such as business partnership events, community free days, and many different convening opportunities like the Fire Conference and Adirondack Climate Summit. We've continued those efforts of community outreach and building through our Business Partnership Program of 26 partners, welcoming 16 new businesses.

Our work also involved engaging existing and new volunteers. Throughout 2025, we had 146 volunteers working in various capacities across our campus, for a total of 6,338 volunteer hours, with a wage value of \$220,499.02

In addition, our team worked extensively with the Board of Trustees and Advisory Board to gain approval for a comprehensive campaign and officially kicked off the quiet phase. A campaign cabinet was assembled and priority projects have been determined to move forward with.

Overall, many of the Development, Membership and Marketing teams goals were met to further support our overall goal to sustain The Wild Center through growing awareness of our work, driving visitation, and generating earned and unearned income through strategic targeted development, membership and marketing.