

# Development, Membership & Marketing

## 2026 Development, Membership & Marketing Plan

**Goal:** Sustain a thriving Wild Center by growing awareness of our work, driving visitation, and generating earned and unearned income through strategically targeted development, membership, and marketing.

**Strategy 1:** Use designed-for-purpose targeted communications and marketing to expand, diversify, and solidify TWC's supporting constituent groups: visitors, members, donors, volunteers, and board members.

**Objective 1:** Broaden **awareness of TWC** and its mission and **maintain on-site attendance at 140,000 visitors** by reaching desired audiences through targeted Marketing and Communications tactics.

- Tactic 1:** Use Traditional Marketing tactics to promote new and repeat visitation
  - Print Ads
  - Print Collateral (brochures, posters, etc.)
  - Radio Ads
  - Activation at off-site events and trade shows
  - Admission Partnerships
- Tactic 2:** Use lessons from successful 2024 digital marketing campaigns to iterate further and reach specific groups of people with customized messaging
  - Organic and Paid Social Media Campaigns
  - Content Marketing
  - Behavioral and Contextual Display Ads
  - Pre-roll video
  - Google AdWords
  - Email Marketing
  - Website Content and Development

**Objective 2: Enhance public perception of and community engagement with** The Wild Center's current work through public relations and other strategic communications.

- Tactic 1:** Work with public relations partners to gain placements in strategic publications
  - Media Alerts & Press Releases
  - FAM Tours
  - Influencer Visits
- Tactic 2:** Enhance image and brand awareness through promotion of noteworthy programs, projects, and strategic partnerships.
  - Work with YCP and education program staff to highlight high-profile partnerships or collaborations.
    - Ex: ACORN, Adirondack Climate Conference, etc.
  - Amplify the role TWC plays in the community with story placement of accomplishments and accolades.

**Strategy 2: Identify, cultivate, solicit and steward a broad base of supporters to increase fundraising revenue for operating, special projects, capital needs and endowment.**

**Objective 1: Continue to implement the quiet phase of a major comprehensive Capital Campaign.**

- Tactic 1:** Work with Campbell & Company and Campaign Cabinet to implement the Campaign Plan
- Tactic 2:** Integrate all regular Development and Membership work into the campaign planning
- Tactic 3:** Work with University of Rochester students to build a campaign landing website
- Tactic 4:** Motivate, train and engage the Campaign Cabinet with stewardship opportunities like the Campaign reception on February 12, 2026.

**Objective 2: Clearly communicate TWC's financial needs in terms of their mission-driven outcomes.**

- Tactic 1:** Manage a **philanthropic messaging framework** that enables a consistent, disciplined approach to conveying strategically important messages through a range of channels and vehicles.

**Objective 3: Transition visitors into members** and promote a year-long experience with an expectation of visiting regularly and supporting a mission and organization they care about.

- Tactic 1:** Membership Program - in 2026 generate \$372,600 in membership revenue, a 10% increase over 2025 actual
  - Trolls: Save the Humans to encourage membership
    - Members only mornings - Morning Troll Stroll
  - 20th Anniversary: Celebrate 20 years of membership and nostalgia.
- Tactic 2:** Business Partnership - engage and retain over 25 Business Partners with quarterly workshops

**Objective 4:** Utilize **relationship fundraising** approach and **segmented development appeals** to broaden contributed income from individuals.

- Tactic 1:** Annual Fund Appeal - a series of personalized appeals to raise \$2,215,800 in general operating support
  - Individual: \$1,166,000
  - Unrestricted Grants: \$778,800
  - Annual Youth Climate Program (Grants & Contributions): \$271,000
- Tactic 2:** Major Gift Program: plan special moves management for list of individuals to raise major gift support for annual funds and Campaign gifts
  - Director's Circle - host a dinner for Stephanie's portfolio of donors on Date TBD
  - Patron Circle Receptions - Date TBD
- Tactic 3:** Linda Vaughan Society - encourage planned giving with annual event on Date TBD and with LVS feature in Otter newsletter

**Objective 5: Demonstrate role of TWC as an anchor attraction in the local economy by developing, nurturing and maintaining good relationships with the business community.**

- Tactic 1:** Grow The Forest Business Partnership Program
- Tactic 2:** Continue building the sponsorship, small business and corporate giving initiatives
- Tactic 3:** Update Economic Impact Study

**Objective 6: Support the Committee on Trustees in the identification and stewardship of Board Prospects.**

- Tactic 1:** Maintain Board Prospect List
- Tactic 2:** Coordinate COT board prospect research between Development Committee/Team
- Tactic 3:** Utilize stewardship being done through the Capital Campaign to identify possible board prospects
- Tactic 4:** Build and launch an updated Wings program, integrating Youth Climate Alumni, past Fellows/Interns, and younger generations of supporters.

**Objective 7: Increase support for operations and special projects through foundation and government grants.**

- Tactic 1:** Research and apply for unrestricted support grants (total above under Annual Fund)
- Tactic 2:** Research and apply for Restricted support grants
- Tactic 3:** Research and apply for Capital Support Grants
- Tactic 4:** Manage successful application awards; track reports and other deadlines

**Objective 8: Increase Earned Revenue through events and other activities designed to build relationships with constituents.**

- Tactic 1:** Actively promote External Rental opportunities and raise \$35,000 in external event revenue.

**Strategy 3: Strengthen community support, provide an auxiliary workforce and cultivate new relationships by recruiting, training and retaining a diverse cohort of active volunteers, including board members.**

**Objective 1: Grow the Volunteer Program. Engage and retain 200(?) active volunteers, and implement a new teen volunteer program.**

- Tactic 1:** Use new digital presence to help recruit for a new teen volunteer program - Online promotion on the website and signage around museum inside and out with QR codes to scan and pull up applications.
- Tactic 2:** Manage and update volunteer web pages regularly - Update as needed when additional opportunities and volunteer news arises.
- Tactic 3:** Plan and host a Volunteer thank you event on Date TBD.

- Tactic 4:** Work inter-departmentally to identify and post volunteer work opportunities

**Objective 2: Encourage more Trustees and Advisory Board members to expand their volunteer activities to work with programming and relationship building.**

- Tactic 1:** Capital Campaign and Development Committee members - Maintain face-to-face interactions with our closest supporters at development events, such as Patron Circle Cocktail party on Date TBD
- Tactic 2:** Take Five - Fully integrate the Take 5 activity into Capital Campaign prospecting and encourage more Board volunteers to participate.