



Our mission:  
To educate people  
about the natural  
environment.



2023 - 2024  
**ANNUAL  
REPORT**





a message from the director

# RESILIENCE AND RENEWAL

Looking back at 2024, I feel a great sense of gratitude to the community that makes Woldumar possible. This was a year of unprecedented growth and a few challenges at Woldumar Nature Center. How often those things seem to go together!

One highlight this year was a prescribed burn of the Woldumar prairie. After months of planning and hoping for good conditions, volunteers from Eaton County Pheasants Forever, Michigan DNR, and several area Fire Departments gathered to conduct the burn, which is required to maintain a healthy ecosystem. It was a great educational opportunity for our students – including my own daughter, a high school senior (pictured with me below). In the aftermath of the fire, it initially appeared as if we'd taken a step backwards. The ground was barren and the air was full of smoke and soot. But in the weeks that followed, new growth emerged and the season that followed was more full of life than the several seasons that preceded it.

Sometimes, leading a small nonprofit is like that: a lot of planning in uncertainty, moving ahead through hard work and with the support of selfless volunteers and staff, and waiting hopefully for results. A great example of this is the major grant we applied for and received this year through the State of Michigan. It allowed us to open more seats in camp, offer more scholarships, and hire more staff. While these were all undoubtedly positive developments, implementation required significant changes to operational procedures. Staff needed new training and certifications. While there was no manual for how to implement these changes, our full time and seasonal staff embraced the challenge, accepted new roles and responsibilities, and led Woldumar to its most successful summer of camp ever.

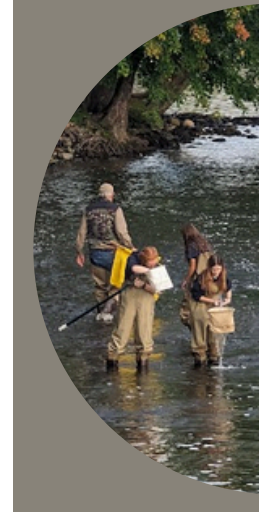
A more somber example of the Woldumar community pulling together is evident in the sustained success of our hospitality program. This year, we celebrated with our Hospitality Manager of ten years, Victoria Churchill, as she moved on to new adventures. Tragically, soon after filling that role, Emily Root passed away unexpectedly. While these events shook the organization, once again our amazing staff embraced new responsibilities and continue to provide outstanding

services for our guests.

As we enter 2025, I am excited for continued growth, and though I know it will come with a challenge or two, I am confident that Woldumar's dedicated staff, volunteers, and board will make it the best year yet!



**Kevin Wernet**  
Executive Director





# Education **WORKING TOGETHER TO BUILD STRONGER PROGRAMS**

I could go on and on about all of the things that makes Woldumar a special organization and how I've come to love it during my time here. Something that really attracted me to Woldumar was something that I heard in my interview, and became evident as I worked here. Its a phrase that I often hear Kevin Wernet say when discussing what and who Woldumar Nature Association is - not just a beautiful place to go, but a cause and a community. Looking back on my experiences over the past four years, I feel grateful for the opportunities, proud of what the programs team has accomplished, and optimistic about the future.

We spent over 900 hours sharing our mission with the community. It was yet another record-breaking Summer Camp Discovery year with over 700 campers, thanks in part to a grant we received from the Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential in partnership with the Michigan Department of Education. School and private group programs are steadily increasing, having done 100 additional hours of programming over last year.

My goal was to boost our community engagement through events and outreach. We attended the Michigan Science Teachers Association and Wildflower Association of Michigan conferences, as well as hosting booths at several community events like PBS Kids Day and Come out and Play Day at the Capital. Additionally, we organized numerous on-site community events, including night and firefly hikes, birding programs, and our biggest Campfire Science Night to date.

It is a joy to share my passion for this remarkable organization with so many people, and I am excited to witness our ongoing journey and the potential we have for even greater growth in the years ahead. So stay curious, and joinus for what's to come!

**Allie**  
**PROGRAM MANAGER**





# Camp Discovery



# 2023 - 2024 Program Snapshot

Field Study

On- and off-site environmental education with schools, other educational groups, and scouts

201 Hours of Programming  
1,485 Students  
79 Classes

Camp Discovery

Eleven weeks of summer day camp, plus spring and winter break day camp

857 Campers  
640.5 Hours of Camp  
Avg. of 89.5% Capacity Filled

Annie's Big Nature Lesson

Five days of nature programs with schools

11 Classes  
254 Students

Eco - Green

Water quality testing program that includes a summer high school internship program

10 Unique Sampling Sites  
58 Samples Collected  
8 Interns  
Over 280 Participants

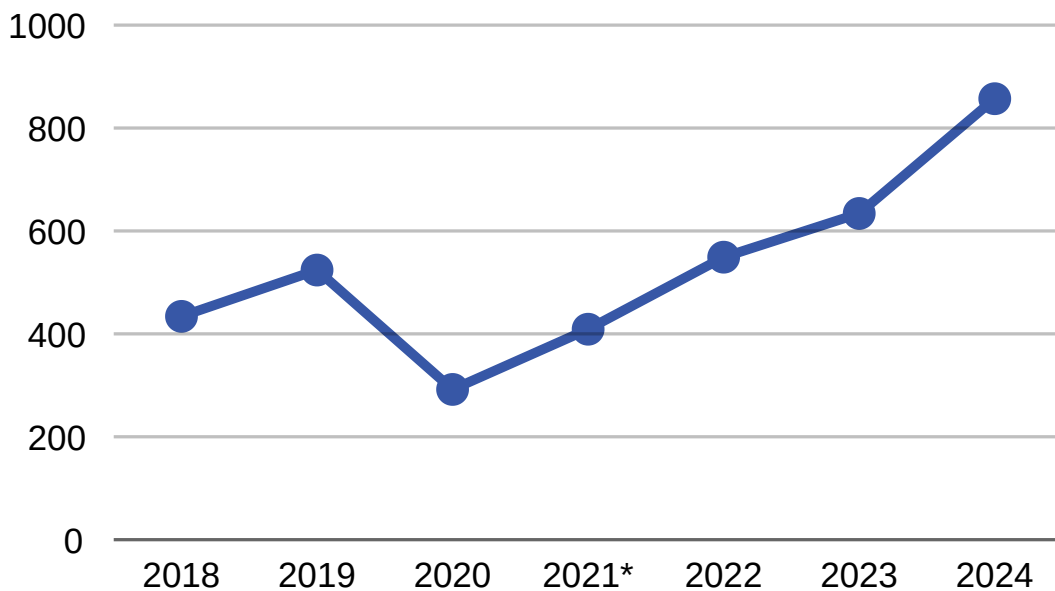
Team building, Retreats, & Activity Course

Businesses, teams, and classes work on communication and creative problem solving

71 Participants  
4 Events



Camp Discovery Participants



\* A partnership with Waverly schools provided 3 weeks of camp for free to their students; their numbers are not reflected in this graph.



# Hospitality HOSTING HAPPINESS

## A Special Guest & Opportunity

We had the honor of hosting the Michigan annual Tribal-State Summit in late October, 2023. We also got to witness the ceremonial signing of the bill to designate Manoomin, wild rice, as the official state grain of Michigan.

Manoomin is native to the Great Lakes region and parts of Canada. Not only is it important for wetland ecosystems and as a food source, it has a deep cultural importance to Indigenous peoples. This act helps to recognize these significances and raise awareness for its protection and restoration efforts.



### 2023/24 Events At a Glance

24 Weddings Held

55 Non-Wedding Events

### 2024/25 To Date

24 Weddings Booked

23 Non-Wedding Events

## A fresh coat of paint

As we work to maintain the rustic charm of the original buildings on our property, we made progress on some much-needed projects in the R.E. Olds Anderson Rotary Barn. Our most recent project in 2024 was the repainting of the interior of the lower barn.





# Community Support

122 Volunteers  
6 Different Groups  
1,821 Hours!



# Community Engagement

123 On-Site Programs  
6 Off-Site Events  
1,825 Community Members Engaged



# Development AN INCREDIBLE YEAR OF GROWTH

When I joined the Woldumar staff last year, I knew I had a big job ahead of me. Now, twelve months later, I am encouraged to see the rays of hope coming through all the challenges we've faced. Our staff is small but dedicated to the cause and the mission—our supporters as well. Together, we are accomplishing great things every day!

This past year has been full of amazing successes – from receiving a \$120,000 grant from the Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential in partnership with the Michigan Department of Education to celebrating our largest Trail Run 5K attendance yet! We are so incredibly thankful for everyone who has supported us along this 60-years-and-growing journey.

Our monthly Coffee & Hike events continue to bring our members together, and I've enjoyed meeting many of you to learn more about what it is that makes Woldumar so special for the community. I look forward to meeting more of you in the future as we work together to build on the legacy of the Woldumar Nature Association.

**Lauren**  
**DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT**



## THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

### With your help we:

Grew relationships with organizations like Lake Trust, PBS, and Strange Matter Coffee



Increased grants funding by nearly \$150,000



Hosted our most successful Woldumar Trail Run yet!



Look forward to what's next!



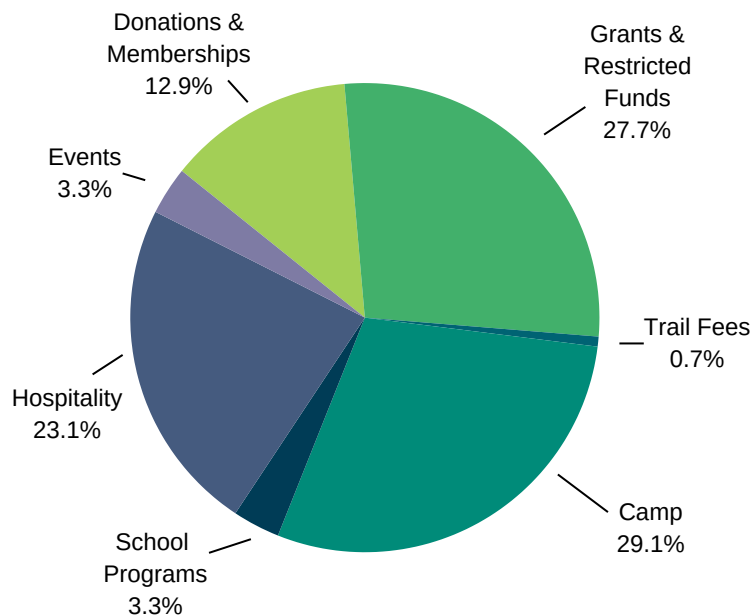
# Treasurer's Report

Summary of 2023 / 24 financial activity. Detailed reports and audited financial statements will be made available upon request.

## Revenue

	FY 24	FY 23
Donations & Memberships	\$79,882.96	\$71,474.58
Grants & Restricted Funds	\$172,081.86	\$27,082.76
Trail Fees	\$4,248.30	\$3,727.32
Camp	\$180,701.52	\$132,511.80
School Programs	\$20,275.97	\$16,480.36
Hospitality	\$143,857.99	\$140,046.50
Events	\$20,595.32	\$16,480.36
	<b>\$642,843.92</b>	<b>\$407,804.56</b>

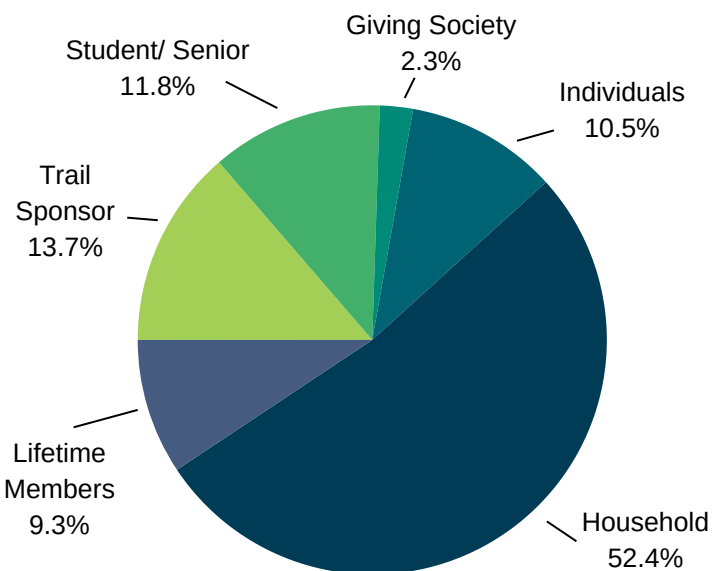
## Revenue



## Expenses

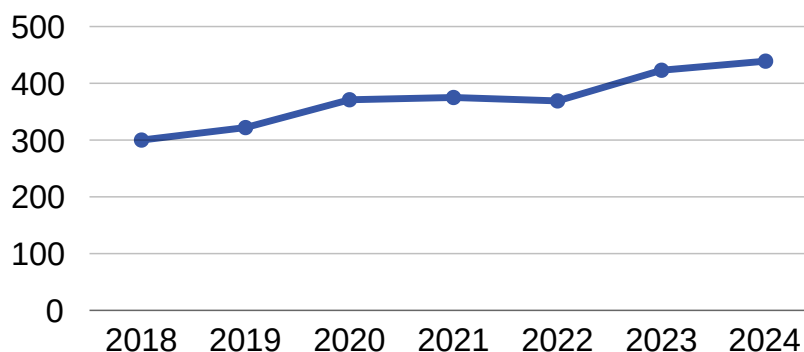
	FY 24	FY 23
Operations	\$81,700.94	\$78,780.44
Wages	\$405,006.81	\$320,327.41
Program Expenses	\$19,101.24	\$13,611.58
Events	\$5,757.84	\$4,189.32
Maintenance	\$14,046.71	\$8,109.39
Special Projects	\$48,656.21	\$44,645.36
	<b>\$574,269.75</b>	<b>\$469,663.50</b>

## Membership Types



**439 Total Members**  
+ 3.8% from last year

## Total Number of Members



# Board of Directors

### Chair

**Kevin Goodwin**

Executive Committee  
Fund Development  
Committee

### Vice Chair

**Melissa Phipps**

Executive Committee  
Grounds & Facilities  
Committee  
DEI Committee

### Treasurer

**Jason Wilkinson**

Executive Committee  
Finance Committee Chair

### Secretary

**Ann Hasen**

Executive Committee  
Finance Committee

### Members at Large:

#### Board Member

**Randy Flick**

Executive Committee  
Grounds & Facilities  
Committee  
PR Committee Chair

#### Board Member

**Judy Gigante**

Volunteer Coordinator  
Grounds & Facilities  
Committee Chair  
DEI Committee

#### Board Member

**Chris Gillett**

Fund Development  
Committee Chair

#### Board Member

**Stephaney Keroson**

Finance Committee  
DEI Committee

#### Board Member

**Mary Louks**

DEI Committee Chair

#### Board Member

**Alaina Nelson**

Grounds & Facilities  
Committee  
PR Committee

### Endowment Trustees:

David Baker, Melissa Hatfield, JB McCombs



# Woldu-Staff

**Kevin Wernet**

Executive Director

**Sally Austin**

Bookkeeper &  
Office Manager

**Allie Shigley**

Program Manager &  
Camp Director

**Lauren Smith**

Director of  
Development

**Ashley Austin**

Naturalist

**Alex Laskowski**

Naturalist

**Barnet Fink**

Hospitality Assistant

**Katelyn Starr**

Hospitality Assistant

**Sandy Tran**

Hospitality Assistant

**Woldumar is made possible by a generous community of supporters who believe in our mission "to educate people about the natural environment" and who understand the value of protecting and restoring local green space.**

There are many ways to get involved at Woldumar! In the coming year, please consider elevating your membership level, becoming a monthly supporter, joining our stewardship corps or a planning committee.

## **Become a Member**

Enjoy discounts to our programs, invitations to special activities, and free access to our trails.

## **Volunteer Your Time**

Share your time and talent in a way that matches your interests, skills and availability.

## **Donate to Woldumar**

Your gift ensures that we can continue to provide powerful experiences and opportunities for all.



## **Thank you!**

Woldumar Nature Association is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that is supported and governed by our members. We continue to exist because of the support of our faithful members, energetic volunteers, and treasured donors.

Sitting on the Grand River with more than a mile of shoreline, Woldumar maintains over 5 miles of trails on over 180 acres of Maple and Beech woodland, tall grass prairie, and a pine plantation. Trails are open 365 days each year - we invite you to hike or ski on them anytime between dawn and dusk!

Each year, Woldumar operates a summer program, Camp Discovery, which serves approximately 600 children, ages 4-16. In addition, our break camps, school programs, and community outreach serve over 25,000 children and adults every year.