



2022 – 2025

Strategic Plan

Land Acknowledgement

Natural Pathways acknowledges that we gather on the traditional territory of the Three Fires Confederacy of First Nations (comprising the Ojibway, the Odawa and the Potawatomi Peoples) and of the Huron-Wendat Peoples.

As an organization of people from many different backgrounds, we strive to deepen our connection to this land. We are grateful for the Sycamore, Maple, Black Walnut, and Shagbark Hickory that come together to sustain us. We are grateful for the Raccoon, Deer, Fox, Eagle, and countless song birds that grace us with a glimpse or evidence of their presence. We are grateful for the centipedes, moths, butterflies, bees, ants, worms, spiders, dragonflies, frogs, and toads who allow us in their home. To the sacred waters that surround us and the pond that explodes with life we are thankful.

We honour the traditional inhabitants and those who live here today by entering the space with respect and stewardship. We are committed and it is our hope to create awareness of the importance of Nature Connection. Connection to the land and all beings from the ant, to the tree, from the fox and deer to each person all across Turtle Island, we are all family.

Message from the Board Chair

As President of the Board and someone who has been involved with NPLC since inception, I am honoured by the work and dedication that have gone into this, our first formal strategic plan. We truly envision a world where “All people have connections and relationships to land and opportunities to nourish and support a sustainable life on a flourishing planet.” We will uplift this vision by providing opportunities for nature-based play, learning, discovery, inquiry, and connection that honours the natural world and ultimately helps people build a stronger relationship with the land. With our plan anchored in our core values of respect, connection, collaboration, inclusion, kindness, and trust, we are excited and committed to building a strong future for NPLC through:

- Growing strategic partnerships in the community
- Enabling organizational growth and consistency through sustainable funding
- Opening the opportunity for nature-based learning to more people
- Becoming known as a program of excellence in the community.

I would like to thank our staff, volunteers, advisors, community partners, families, the NPLC Board of Directors and the Strategic Planning team who all contributed to our vision and to this process. We are grateful for their support and mentorship, as well as their unflagging willingness to champion and steward the movement toward building relationships with nature for children and families.

With thanks, Pat Andrews

Message from the Executive Director

There is no doubt our community is special. We consider each person, family, educator, and partner to be our extended family. We have accomplished much in the past five years together. As Natural Pathways continues to grow, shift, and evolve to meet the needs of the community we look at this strategic plan and move forward with hope. We continue to engage with heart, mind, and being in all we do. Our vision and values continue to focus on our relationship with the Land, respect, connection, collaboration, inclusion, kindness, and trust. Through this new strategic plan we have a clear path where our goals are realized. I am grateful for the opportunity to work with an incredibly passionate organization and grateful for the Land that allows us to work and play in such a beautifully sacred space. Woven throughout are the thoughts and dreams of our strategic partners, board members, educators, families, and community. I cannot thank you all enough for your input in creating this bright future and for trusting me to see it to fruition. I look forward to seeing you in the Forest and adding branches to our family tree,

With Gratitude, Kimberly Alice



Vision:

All people have connections and relationships to land, and opportunities to nourish and support a sustainable and meaningful life on a flourishing planet.



Mission:

Natural Pathways offers programs to spark curiosity and nurture stronger relationships with the land through discovery, inquiry, play and connection that honours the natural world.



Values:

Respect

We honour the land and all its inhabitants.

Connection

We actively support positive relationship between all living beings.

Collaboration

We work together and in partnership to make positive impact.

Inclusion

We celebrate diversity in all its forms.

Kindness

We practice compassionate awareness in all that we do.

Trust

We create a safe space for learning to trust oneself, the land and each other.

NATURAL PATHWAYS

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND GOALS



- 1. Grow strategic capacity and partnerships.**

Strengthen existing partnerships to create new and innovative programming.
Develop novel partnerships in alignment with promising new client groups.
Invest in development to build an active and thriving board.
Build staff satisfaction and excellence.
- 2. Enable organizational growth and consistency through sustainable funding.**

Identify and integrate anchor program to support base funding.
Leverage novel partnerships to expand funding opportunities in new granting spaces.
- 3. Open the opportunity for nature-based learning to more people.**

Secure additional programming space close to population centres.
Identify and explore untapped client groups.
Broaden program offerings to wider interests in alignment with partnership opportunities.
- 4. Become known as a program of excellence in the community.**

Maximize social media to grow presence and awareness.
Join forums/groups to increase profile and identify possible unique partnerships.
Develop metrics for quality improvement and demonstration of outcomes.

Natural Pathways History

Founded in 2008, Natural Pathways Learning Centre (NPLC) has worked collaboratively in the Windsor and Essex County area to increase awareness of the importance of nature in the lives and well-being of our children and families. We began with a sole educator for a small group of children in Ruthven, Ontario and a growing interest in a mindful, nature-based approach to education. Due to location challenges and a change of direction by the Board, the program was paused but in 2015 interest in outdoor education began growing again and in 2016 NPLC resurfaced and began offering Forest and Nature School programs in new locations and under new leadership. With an Executive Director, three Board members and passionate community volunteers, NPLC developed a framework of goals and objectives that inspired our service to the community, informed quality outdoor programs led by hired staff, grew stakeholder relationships, and built strong ties to families through connection with the land. A great deal has been accomplished since 2016, particularly in the face of incredible challenges in the world at large. Using what we have learned together over the last five years, and with information gathered through formal community consultation, meetings with the Board of Directors, advisors and Executive Director, this 2022 Strategic Plan provides the framework for ongoing growth.



Creative Momentum Consulting was honoured to help support the development of this strategic plan.