CONNER PRAIRIE 2021 IMPACT REPORT

REIMAGINING OUR FUTURE

Redefining How the World Views and Uses Museums

Conner Prairie
STEP INTO THE STORY
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OUR MISSION
Conner Prairie is a unique historic place that inspires curiosity and fosters learning by providing engaging and individualized experiences for everyone.

OUR VISION
Conner Prairie will expand the boundaries of our historical and natural resources by exploring, celebrating, and improving the human experience.

DEAI PROMISE STATEMENT
Conner Prairie is a place where the doors are always open to a diversity of voices and limitless experiences.
As the pandemic further presented challenges in 2021, Conner Prairie pivoted to define a new “business of the unusual” for delivering our mission. By rethinking and enhancing our daily experiences, events, and programs, we have reimagined our future and the audiences we serve.

Being Indiana’s first Smithsonian affiliate, I am proud of our strong relationship with the Smithsonian and how we are partnering to bring two innovative indoor and outdoor Smithsonian exhibits — Spark!Lab and Habitat — to Conner Prairie during 2022. By sparking imaginations to learn and developing transformational outdoor nature experiences, we are creating the Midwest’s largest learning landscape.

At the heart of Conner Prairie’s values are our DEAI promise to be “a place where the doors are always open to a diversity of voices and limitless experiences.” This promise is at the forefront of how we are reimagining all of our programs and festivals. Conner Prairie was recently selected as one of nine organizations to participate in the Fostering Critical Conversations with Our Communities program. This program will strengthen our relationship with communities in Central Indiana and help bring our newest permanent exhibit, Promised Land as Proving Ground, to life.

Through community partnerships and developments in our Prairie Pathways Campaign, we are making advancements to be sustainable leaders for the vision of the White River. Our plans for the White River Education and Ecology Center will allow us to make river education accessible to everyone. As one of only 4% of the nation’s museums to be accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, I am honored to be leading us through our fourth re-accreditation process. All of our current work and planning is reflective of our aspirational goal to change the way the world views and uses museums.

These highlights are just a part of the larger story and lays the groundwork for Conner Prairie’s future. In the following pages, you will learn more about the incredible achievements of our staff and volunteers. Through the support of our Board, donors, members, and guests, we can be a place where our doors are always open to exploring, celebrating, and improving the human experience.

Best regards,

Norman Burns
President and Chief Executive Officer
2021 proved to be a year of resilience, hope, and joy for the Education department who used our program offerings to enhance our mission with the community. In order to reimagine the way the world views and uses museums, we have adapted our learning model to focus our conversations and initiatives on honoring the learner.

Preschool on the Prairie, the museum’s early childhood initiative, met exclusively outdoors for the fall semester. This provided our preschoolers with a distinct opportunity to connect with nature, build resilience, assess risk, problem solve, and think critically from the time, space, and freedom we provided them to play, to explore, and to dream.
ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN
THEATER

In our indoor areas, the Education team presented a brand-new philosophy of “Anything Can Happen” as a way of presenting new hands-on educational opportunities. The educational emphasis in these spaces relies on the process of learning and creating, rather than the final product. This increased the dwell time of our youngest guests, giving them space to make anything their imagination came up with.

HSE PARTNERSHIP

In partnership with our Hamilton Southeastern Schools teacher in residence, we welcomed nearly every fourth grader from the district into an immersive experience that led to student inventions, meaningful connections to the past, as well as opportunities to learn about inclusive stories and environmental science.

OVER 16,000 VOICES
HEARD ON SCHOOL TRIPS IN 2021
As Conner Prairie continued to lean into a new normal, changes to our experiences presented new and exciting opportunities for us to reinvigorate how people stepped into the story and engaged throughout the museum.

Enhancing the beauty of our grounds with the activation of our sunflower fields and providing new ways for how guests can be inspired by the innovation of our 1859 Balloon Voyage exhibit, these reimagined experiences allowed us to successfully expand the boundaries of our historical and natural resources.

**TOTAL ATTENDANCE IN 2021**

282,227
Conner Prairie looks different 377 feet up in the air. To gaze out beyond Hamilton County and soak up the beauty across the horizon or get a view of the bustling energy across our 1,046 acres, the experience provides an bird’s-eye perspective about how we think about flight.

Our 1859 Balloon Voyage is a testament both to the history of travel and how we understand and inspire innovation. Educational and scientific enhancements to the exhibit allow guests to gain a deeper understanding into the science of balloon flight and how dirigibles were an important transportation tool in the 19th century. With the addition of weather and air quality monitoring stations, we can measure the amount of pollution in our atmosphere. This not only provides an observational view of air quality in real time, but will also allow us to explore partnership opportunities for larger studies and offer ways to inspire people to make change.

A.W once told Gary that “the giver is not as important as the gift,” advice that is incorporated into the company’s business ethics today.

Conner Prairie’s long-standing partnership with Reynolds has helped innovate some of the museum’s most important programs and festivals, led by a $1 million pledge in 2015 and becoming the presenting sponsor for our 1859 Balloon Voyage exhibit. Proudly supporting festivals that include Headless Horseman, Festival of Machines, and A Merry Prairie Holiday, Reynolds plays an important role in enhancing the visitor experience and educational impact within Conner Prairie.

For Gary, Reynolds’s gracious support is a way to not just show, but...
August saw the blooming of a breathtaking new experience at Conner Prairie as three varieties of native sunflowers filled our Sunflower Fields. Guests were immersed within an expansive and beautiful backdrop of sun-drenched flowers that welcomed picture-perfect summer events or that prime photo opportunity.

The Sunflower Fields offered opportunities to provide conversations about the historical importance and sustainable qualities these flowers offer to the environment and native habitats.

In 2021, we planted approximately 111,000 sunflower seeds.
Through our continued partnership with the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, families from all over stepped into the story of music for Symphony on the Prairie’s 40th year.

For the first time, Conner Prairie partnered with Fishers Arts Council for Art on the Prairie. This festival illuminated and celebrated our thriving local arts community while reimagining the Council’s most beloved event, “Art in the Park.” Guests were able to browse and shop the works of more than 40 artists and artisans. Live musical performances throughout the day added to a successful cultural experience.

Nearly 84,000 attended the 2021 season.
As Conner Prairie strives to inspire curiosity and foster learning by providing engaging and individualized experiences for everyone, 2021 saw a continued focus to advance our DEAI promise. It’s this promise that compels us to create and maintain a culture that values everyone. Through all elements of the museum experience, Conner Prairie promises to be a place where the doors are always open to a diversity of voices and limitless experiences.

FOSTERING CRITICAL CONVERSATIONS WITH OUR COMMUNITIES

Conner Prairie was selected as one of nine organizations to participate in the Fostering Critical Conversations with Our Communities program. The pilot program will be activated in 2022 and is a year-long Smithsonian Institution community engagement initiative in collaboration with the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience. This is an exciting opportunity for Conner Prairie to deepen our community relationships in an authentic and supportive way by fostering important, and sometimes difficult or ignored, conversations.

As part of a cohort, Conner Prairie will work with the other organizations to help develop a community engagement implementation plan for the museum’s new experience, Promised Land as Proving Ground.
For the first time in the museum’s history, Conner Prairie offered American Sign Language tours at A Merry Prairie Holiday. By continuing our partnership with LUNA Language Services, we were able to provide a welcoming experience led by LUNA’s gifted ASL interpreters with the goal of expanding on our partnership in 2022.

As we continue to focus on removing unnecessary boundaries and allowing our events to be a welcoming experience for everyone, Conner Prairie provided a new opportunity for those enrolled in the Access Pass program. Beginning with our 2021 Headless Horseman festival and continuing through A Merry Prairie Holiday, guests were able to use their Access Pass to purchase discounted tickets to explore and enjoy these seasonal events. By continuing to expand on opportunities in the coming year, this offering increases access to the museum.

In 2021, Ben’s Ranch Foundation Inc. partnered with Conner Prairie to help employ internship opportunities to at-risk youth who struggle with mental health issues. These internships made a significant impact on the lives of these teens and their work that continues to have a positive effect across our grounds.
Conner Prairie stewards 1,046 acres of natural habitat and green space including over six miles of shoreline across the White River. As we reimagine the future of our land, our sustainability initiatives are guided by passionate ecological stewardship, community-driven programming, and environmental restoration.

In 2021, we continued our mission by teaming up with the White River Alliance to activate the White River Clean-Up Day. To further enhance stewardship of the river, Conner Prairie enlisted a One River Prairieship intern to measure water quality and provide scientific data that will help guide future sustainability efforts.
WHITE RIVER EDUCATION AND ECOLOGY CENTER

Conner Prairie refined plans for the conceptualization of the White River Education and Ecology Center. Through community partnerships, this is a bold first step to make river education more accessible to everyone.

By partnering with neighboring municipalities and higher education institutions, this center will provide an essential space to create environmental education, research, and programming opportunities for Conner Prairie to be leaders for the vision of the White River.

The new center will allow visitors to gain a deeper understanding of the river and its role in the regional ecosystem, all to complement other planned environmental and programmatic improvements in the area.

WHITE RIVER CLEAN-UP DAY

With 3.3 miles of the White River running through our grounds, Conner Prairie took strides in improving the overall quality of the river by dedicating a day of action to clean up its waters. Removing small debris and large trash items like tires and cinder blocks, the White River Clean-Up Day was an opportunity for community members and staff to work together and make an ecological impact. By protecting an important natural resource in Indiana, this successful event showed a deep commitment to community and partnerships.

IN 2021 WE PLANTED

114 NORWAY SPRUCE TREES & 17 HARDWOOD TREES
JUPITER FLIGHTS

In July we launched a colorful new festival celebrating the innovation of flight. Our Jupiter Flights Balloon Festival featured a sold-out balloon glow with 17 hot air balloons from across the region. It was followed by a weekend of family events highlighted by the presentation of “To Soar Above,” a performance piece that took a look back in time and the history of two women who had a desire to turn their aspiration for flight into action.
HEADLESS HORSEMAN

For the first time ever, Headless Horseman broke an all-time record for the level of interest in Conner Prairie’s longest-running festival. We reimagined the guest experience to include a community-driven scarecrow contest and new immersive encounters with the Headless Horseman on the hayride.

TOTAL ATTENDANCE: 32,105

A MERRY PRAIRIE HOLIDAY

A Merry Prairie Holiday returned for its third year adding two new experiences to the festival. The William Conner House was converted into an innovative 3D video projection experience. With the premiere presentation of “‘Twas the Night Before Christmas,” we used this modern technology to make the house come alive. The addition of a new sock skating rink added fun for families to glide seamlessly around a winter wonderland.

TOTAL ATTENDANCE: 19,232
Activating Our Future

Volunteers

As Conner Prairie continues to reimagine our future, it is through the dedication of our volunteers and their countless hours that we give thanks. We could not succeed and do the things that we do without them.

With 103 youth volunteers contributing to the 2021 season, they have played an important role throughout our historic grounds and during our festival season. Engaging in hands-on experience and valuable learning opportunities, this program has allowed our youth volunteers the opportunity to grow into a lifetime of achievement and success.

Our Adult Volunteer program played a crucial role in providing staff support for major projects and festivals. With over 200 adult volunteers in 2021, their daily contributions as ambassadors are invaluable.

In 2021, over 12,000 hours were volunteered by both adults & youth.
The Conner Prairie Alliance made a significant impact in 2021 by fundraising through the Apple Store and providing substantial support for the museum’s programs. After being closed in 2020, the Apple Store reopened for the 2021 fall season with almost all returning non-patron members. Through these efforts and the support of the community, the Alliance fulfilled their three-year commitment in two years.

The Horizon Council was instrumental in activating Conner Prairie’s annual History on Tap in 2021. History on Tap is the Council’s signature fundraising event that provides an entertaining and educational evening of craft beer and history. Featuring over 25 brewers, the event served as a means to raise awareness about our mission and provide support to our programs. This contribution from the Council helps our museum remain accessible to all members of the community.
The Prairie Pathways Campaign, and its engagement within our community, forges a bold and vibrant pathway — a pathway that will transform Conner Prairie and how the world views and uses museums.

Campaign development will fund the key first steps toward our future with the reimagining of our Welcome Center. The Welcome Center will be transformed into a renovated Museum Experience Center, now planned to create a health and safety conscious environment with adaptable spaces that will allow rare items in our collection to be on display to the public year round.

Our beautiful outdoor woodland and prairie areas, which have proved to be so vital in the past two years, will be expanded and improved for visitors with new trails and education hubs. The trails will also trace the shoreline of the White River, providing the opportunity to explore the history and ecology of the river.

MISSION IMPACT FUND

INDIVIDUAL DONORS
$937,032.58

GRANTS + FOUNDATION GIFTS
$487,043.00

CORPORATE SPONSORSHIPS
$499,978.42

TOTAL
$1,924,054.00

SPECIAL PROJECTS
$677,851
PROMISED LAND AS PROVING GROUND

Promised Land as Proving Ground is Conner Prairie’s newest permanent exhibit that covers 500 years of African American history from pre-colonial Africa to the present day and highlights the African American faith experience in Indiana, specifically through the lens of faith traditions and lifeways. Conner Prairie is committed to educating visitors on the totality of the historical narrative and incorporating the voices of all Hoosiers, particularly those whose stories have traditionally been excluded from the historical narrative.

SPARK!LAB

Conner Prairie is the first Smithsonian Affiliate in Indiana, and to support our strong connection with the Smithsonian, our collaboration to reimagine learning will bring Spark!Lab to our museum. To inspire curiosity and encourage innovation, Spark!Lab combines STEM learning with art, history, and creativity. Featuring activities that align with Conner Prairie’s mission, this exhibit will allow children and families the opportunity to invent, innovate, problem solve, and collaborate through the exploration of ideas.

HABITAT

Conner Prairie has partnered with Smithsonian Gardens for the development of Habitat. This new exhibit provides an educational understanding of protecting wildlife by turning the outdoors into your classroom. Guests will get first-hand experience with wildlife and the education of a variety of local habitats. From what bugs call their homes to the habitat of flight, the exhibit provides an immersive experience both from a broad perspective and a magnified view.
### CONNER PRAIRIE MUSEUM, INC.
#### Summarized Statement of Activities for the 12 Months Ending December 31, 2021*

*Unaudited numbers

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<th>Description</th>
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<td>Endowment Support**</td>
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<td>Admission &amp; Program Fees</td>
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<td>Gifts, Sponsorships &amp; Grants**</td>
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<td>Rental &amp; Other Income</td>
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<td>Food &amp; Retail</td>
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<td>Memberships</td>
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<td><strong>Total Revenue &amp; Support</strong></td>
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<td>Programs &amp; Guest Experience</td>
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<td>Membership Services</td>
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<td><strong>$10,468</strong></td>
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### CONNER PRAIRIE FOUNDATION, INC.
#### Summarized Statement of Financial Position for the 12 Months Ending December 31, 2021*

*Unaudited numbers

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<td>Cash &amp; Investments</td>
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<td>Property &amp; Equipment, Net</td>
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<td>Accounts Payable</td>
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<td>Unrestricted</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Liabilities &amp; Net Assets</strong></td>
<td><strong>$191,767,234</strong></td>
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REVENUE & SUPPORT

Conner Prairie Museum, Inc.

Excluding the impact of federal pandemic funding.

*Unaudited numbers

Endowment Support** 41%
Gifts, Sponsorships & Grants** 15%
Management & General 13%
Public Affairs & Marketing 11%
Fundraising 7%
Membership Services 1%
Admissions & Program Fees 20%
Food & Retail 8%
Rental & Other Income 11%
Memberships 5%
Rental & Other Income 11%

EXPENDITURES

Conner Prairie Museum, Inc.

*Excluding the impact of federal pandemic funding.
2021 CONNER PRAIRIE LEADERSHIP

CONNER PRAIRIE MUSEUM
Reggie Henderson - Chair
Steve Hageman - Vice Chair
Jill Grossman - Secretary
Jane Niederberger - Treasurer
Teresa Altemeyer
Christine Altman - Immediate Past Chair
Jessica Bastin
Amy Berg
Mike Berry
Marvin Blade
Becky Brammer
Constance Brown
Will Bryan
Norman Burns - Conner Prairie President & CEO
Melissa Caito
Kip Chase
Kristen Dauss
Marco Dominguez
Gay Dwyer
Suzanne Gaido
Jeff Hagerman
Clint Hangerbrauck
Ross Hendrickson
Leonard Hoops
Helena Hutton
Dave Kinard
Deon Levingston
Jay Love
Leah McGrath
Clarence G. Newsome
Don Orr
Rebecca Shrum
Shawn Smith
Denny Sponsel
Brian Timmerman
Randy Wilson

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Bill Batt - Vice Chair
Jay Ricker - Secretary
Kevin Schmidt - Treasurer
Rita McCluskey
Jerry Semler
Rich Thrapp

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Berkley Duck
Pat Garrett Rooney
Stan Hurt
Jay Ricker