

Friends of WNC Nature Center
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement
Updated and Approved 4-2025

Just as biodiversity is essential to healthy, rich, and complex ecosystems that sustain the natural world, people with diverse backgrounds make the Friends a stronger, more vibrant, and sustainable organization that is better prepared to achieve its mission. The Friends of the WNC Nature Center (“Friends”) aspires to be a welcoming organization that engages, serves, and provides opportunity for all people to belong.

The Friends aspire to become a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive organization. Progress toward this goal requires a long-term approach of regular attention, reflection, and action. This statement formalizes the Friends’ intentions going forward.

The Friends will advance these values by:

- Reflecting, representing, and engaging the diverse communities we serve as we build our programs, partners, volunteers, members, board members, donors, vendors, and audiences.
- Respecting and learning from our rich variety of experiences, perspectives, values, opinions, and ways of thinking, and leveraging our differences to be more effective in achieving our mission.
- Incorporating diversity, equity and inclusion values into our strategic plan, internal and external facing materials, programs, and other outreach.
- Empowering the WNC Nature Center to provide a welcoming and inclusive environment for all through their facility offerings and programs.
- Evaluating, assessing, and updating our diversity, equity, and inclusion practices annually.

Definitions:

- **Diversity** in nature is the variety and variability of life in all its forms, functions, and interactions. Differences in species, genes, ecosystems, and behaviors make the natural world dynamic, adaptable, and resilient. For the Friends, diversity is the range of human differences, including, but not limited to, the following characteristics: race, ethnicity, culture, gender identity and expression, age, national origin, religious beliefs, work sector, physical ability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, physical appearance, and cognitive differences.
- **Equity** in nature is when natural systems balance resources, relationships, and roles to support the survival and flourishing of an ecosystem. Each part is supported in the way it needs and is respected and sustained according to its unique function and context. For the Friends, equity involves acknowledging disparate needs and abilities and creating an environment in which all have the opportunity to participate and thrive.
- **Inclusion** in nature occurs when every organism, element, and interaction matters, and the whole ecosystem is enriched and thrives when everyone has a part to play. There is value in variety, and the presence of difference makes the ecosystem stronger and more resilient. For the Friends, inclusion is the intentional and proactive efforts and practices in which all people are respected, valued, involved, and have access to opportunities.