



ReconnectWithNature.org

Bringing People and Nature Together

17540 W. Laraway Road  
Joliet, IL 60433  
815.727.8700 • Fax 815.722.3608

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Meta Mueller, *President*  
Annette Parker, *Vice President*  
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Sherry Newquist, *Treasurer*

## Advertisement for Professional Services

The FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT OF WILL COUNTY will receive Proposals for Professional Services at the Forest Preserve Office until 2:00 p.m. prevailing time on November 30, 2023 for:

### Exhibit Design, Fabrication, and Installation for Hidden Oaks Nature Center

Proposals must be submitted in accordance with the Request for Proposals and Qualifications for Professional Services.

The Exhibit Plan project consists of developing a comprehensive exhibit design plan, fabrication of the exhibit designs, and installation of the exhibits for the interior and exterior spaces of the nature center and campus. For additional information and to download this request for professional service and qualifications proposal, please visit our website at <https://www.reconnectwithnature.org/About-Us/Bids-and-RFP>

A physical copy of the Request for Proposals and Qualifications for Professional Services can also be obtained between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday from:

Forest Preserve District of Will County, Sugar Creek Administration Center, 17540 W. Laraway Road, Joliet, Illinois, 60433. Phone: 815-727-8700.

An optional Site Tour will be conducted on Tuesday, October 24, 2023, at 1:00 p.m. at Hidden Oaks Nature Center located at 419 Trout Farm Road, Bolingbrook, Illinois, 60440. A pre-recorded virtual tour will be available upon request. The site is also open to the public Wednesday through Saturday 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.; Sunday Noon – 4p.m. Closed Mondays and Tuesdays.

Request for proposal documents is available free of charge.

The FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT OF WILL COUNTY reserves the right to accept any proposal or any part or parts or combinations thereof, to waive any informalities, and to reject any or all proposals.

By Order of the Board of Commissioners of the Forest Preserve District of Will County.

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For questions regarding the project, contact Angie Trobaugh at [atrobaugh@fpdwc.org](mailto:atrobaugh@fpdwc.org) or 815.722.4121.



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[ReconnectWithNature.org](http://ReconnectWithNature.org)

## Request for Proposals and Qualifications For Professional Design Services September 9, 2023

### I. General Information

#### A. Project Identification

Exhibit Design, Fabrication, Installation  
Hidden Oaks Nature Center  
419 Trout Farm Road  
Bolingbrook, IL 60440  
Forest Preserve District of Will County

#### B. Background

In February 2022, the Forest Preserve District purchased Hidden Oaks Nature Center (HONC) from the Bolingbrook Park District, formerly a LEED Platinum certified building. The nature center is nestled between Boughton Road and Hidden Lakes Trout Farm. Hidden Oaks Preserve includes Hidden Oaks Nature Center and Hidden Lakes Trout Farm. The preserve is connected to the DuPage River Greenway Trail and Whalon Lake via a trail system and hosts active and passive outdoor recreation.

The nature center is comprised of a circular design of 6,972 sq ft. The facility offers a small exhibit lobby, 2 preschool classrooms, restrooms, a reception desk, office space, live amphibians and reptiles (some aquatic), and an outdoor elevated nature observation deck and patio all on the first floor. The second floor includes an accessible green roof, a kitchen/storage area, a meeting room, and a small library. Additional exterior amenities include a nature playscape, a program gathering area with a seating wall and large fire pit, a natural amphitheater, and interconnecting trails.

A Conceptual Exhibit Design Plan was completed in December of 2022 by SpaceHaus and will be made available in its entirety upon request. Excerpts are available as attachments. The nature center's focus will be providing nature-based programming for the public, the community, and facility rental groups as well as hosting professional development opportunities including trainings and workshops for peer organizations such as Chicago Wilderness members.

The exhibit project will be conducted concurrently with architectural renovations being overseen at Hidden Oaks by Wight & Company. The construction project includes improvements and renovations to the interior and exterior areas to provide an enhanced nature center experience, and expanded program and exhibit space. Inside architectural work includes expansion of the reception/gift shop area, conversion of the south existing classroom

into an exhibit gallery, replacing the children's bathrooms with a program prep room with sink, fridge, and stacked washer/dryer, opening up the entrance to the upstairs rental room, and expanding the floorspace of the rooftop garden. Outdoor improvements and renovations include reconfiguration of the existing parking lot and trails, constructing an ADA ramp, building a shade structure, modifying the concrete pathway and a new pathway to the existing amphitheater to improve ADA compliance.

### C. Project Purpose and Budget

The intent of this project is to select a firm that will ultimately be responsible for a 1) comprehensive exhibit design plan including the actual feature plus interpretive panel/signage 2) fabrication of agreed upon exhibit pieces and panels and 3) installation of the exhibit pieces for expanded and enhanced exhibits inside the nature center lobby, the hallway, and the south classroom, and in the surrounding exterior campus: including the playscape, the trails and patio. The plan should also include a review and evaluation of existing exhibit components including the lobby oak tree.

The guiding exhibit theme throughout the nature center will be to: 'Explore Hidden Oaks to uncover surprising stories of local animals, plants and habitats.'

We will have 5 focus areas that need to be brought to life:

OAKS - The story of an oak as a keystone species;

CYCLES/SEASONAL STORIES - HONC is a unique place that is always changing;

SPECIES STORIES - local species have fascinating, interconnected stories;

ACTIONS - connect with nature on your visit – carry that connection to your daily life;

DIVERSITY - visiting HONC helps reveal the surprising diversity of our local natural world.

THE MISSION of Hidden Oaks is *to ignite curiosity by welcoming the local community to discover their natural world through interactive exhibits, educational programs, outdoor spaces and hands on natural play.*

The intention for the exhibit plan is that when the visitor enters the nature center, they feel like they are in a forest. As they move through the exhibit spaces they move from dark (lobby) to light (south classroom/exhibit room) through the corridor. The experience should be engaging and include some exhibits that are tactile with interchangeable parts. The plan should consider use of technologies, but not be the primary focus. The goal is to have several permanent exhibits with seasonal/temporary changeouts to give the visitor something to look forward to on a future visit. The interpretive panels should focus on more illustrative prompts to convey the messages than traditional paragraph heavy text. The exterior interpretive components should connect to the interior exhibit experience and compliment the overall facility vision including concepts of STEAM, Green Living, and Sustainability.

The Comprehensive Exhibit Design Plan has been broken down by design areas. It is important that proposals include the total cost of each breakdown consisting of design, fab and installation of each piece.

## HIDDEN OAKS EXHIBIT DESIGN REQUEST LIST

## OUTSIDE ENTRANCE AREA

Open/Close Sign	\$ _____
Fun Whimsical Kid Friendly Map of Preserve (lakes, trails, & exhibits)	\$ _____
Welcome Feature (an arch? An oak?) – something to signal ‘front entrance’	\$ _____
Elaborate bird feeder exhibit	\$ _____
Window Panel Exhibits (thematic & window collision prevention)	\$ _____

## LOBBY

Existing Tree Exhibit Overhaul	\$ _____
Replace old tortoise enclosure with Leaf Litter Critter & log seat	\$ _____
Replace Sound panel with Oak Anatomy, Bench, Oak Life Cycle	\$ _____
Replace Restoration Exhibit panels with Diversity/Seasons/Primer for outside	\$ _____
Welcome Sign/Panel & Acorn Photo Op Climber Feature	\$ _____

## CORRIDOR

Snake exhibit/enclosure	\$ _____
Canopy	\$ _____
Roots	\$ _____
Back Wall Communication Exhibit (Movable for Access Panel)	\$ _____

## EXHIBIT ROOM

Roots to Underground Exhibit (Live Salamander/Bioluminescence/Fungus)	\$ _____
Big Aquatic/Terrestrial Turtle Habitat Tank Exhibit	\$ _____
Bird Observation Covered Deck (Duckblind/Lookout Feel) & Bookshelf	\$ _____
Storage Closet (doors are magnetic board)	\$ _____
Book Nook & Library	\$ _____
Half wall divider archway bench with seats & table	\$ _____
Thematic Permanent Custom Built Display Counter	\$ _____
Mobile Exhibit Carts – 6	\$ _____

## PLAYSCAPE

Path and Boardwalk with 5-7 play stations	\$ _____
Entry to Playscape Feature	\$ _____

## CAMPUS EXHIBITS

Remove/Relocate sculptures & all outdoor exhibit trail signage	\$ _____
Indoor/Outdoor Bluetooth Enabled Sound System throughout the building	\$ _____
Trail Interpretation (permanent vs seasonal)	\$ _____
Outdoor Leaf Climber Play Feature	\$ _____



Once the scope of the project is agreed upon and the budget has been determined, work will consist of (1) exhibit design, (2) fabrication of the agreed upon exhibit pieces and signage, (3) installation of the components for the interior space and exterior campus.

**D. Schedule**

1. Proposals can be submitted digitally to the contact person or returned to Sugar Creek Administration Center at the following address by 2:00 p.m. on November 30, 2023.  
Forest Preserve District of Will County  
17540 W. Laraway Road  
Joliet, Illinois 60433

2. Project Timeline

Release Request for Proposals	October 13, 2023
Optional Site Tour	October 24, 2023
Request for Proposals Deadline	November 30, 2023
Award of Contract	January 11, 2024
Kickoff Meeting	Late January 2024
Design Plan	March 2024
Fabrication Plan	Spring 2024
Installation of New Exhibits	Summer 2024
Installation of New Exhibits Completed	Fall 2024

3. Optional Tour:

Location: Hidden Oaks Nature Center, 419 Trout Farm Road, Bolingbrook

Date/Time: Tuesday, October 24, 2023, at 1:00 p.m.

We have scheduled an optional site visit during which we will discuss the project and tour the inside of Hidden Oaks Nature Center and the surrounding campus. A virtual pre-recorded option will be made after the October 24 date and available upon request. The site is also open to the public Wednesday through Saturday 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.; Sunday Noon – 4p.m. Closed Mondays and Tuesdays.

**E. District Contact Person**

Address all inquiries concerning this Request for Proposals and Qualifications to:

Angie Trobaugh, Facility Supervisor–Hidden Oaks Nature Center & Hidden Lakes Trout Farm  
(815) 722-4121; atrobaugh@fpdwc.org

**F. Insurance**

- a. Certificate of Insurance

The Contractor shall furnish the District with a Certificate of Insurance in duplicate within ten (10) days of Award of Contract showing coverage of required insurance. Certificates of Insurance shall be in a form acceptable to the District and shall (1) be signed by the insurance company or authorized agent; (2) certify the name and address of the insured party; (3) describe the work covered by the insurance; (4) display insurance policy numbers; (5) outline limits of policy coverage and expiration date; (6) specifically state the “Forest Preserve District of Will County is additionally insured under the policy.”

Contractor shall keep the required insurance in force during performance of the Contract. Contractor shall not commence work under the Contract until the required insurance has been obtained and Certificates of Insurance furnished to the District. When an umbrella or excess coverage policy is used, the District reserves the right to require a copy of the entire policy. Insurance shall be in form and substance issued by companies satisfactory to the District and shall provide the following minimum limits of coverage:

1. Workman's Compensation: Coverage shall include Occupational Disease and Employee's Liability Insurance having the following minimum provisions:
  - a. Statutory limits in the among and coverage as required by Workman's Compensation laws;
  - b. Employers liability minimum of \$100,000 each accident; and
  - c. "All States" endorsement
2. Public Liability and Property Damage: Coverage shall include directing operations, sublet work, contractual liability, and completed operations. Such insurance shall fully protect Contractor from claims for damages for bodily injury, including accidental death, as well as claims for property damage, including loss of use and including explosion, collapse, and underground damage which may arise from activities under or incidental to the Contract, whether such activities be by Contractor, subcontractor, or anyone directly or indirectly employed or otherwise contracted by any of them. The insurance shall be provided with liability limits not less than \$1,000,000 Combined Single Limits of Liability for Bodily Injury and Property Damage (property damage coverage shall have "XCU" exclusions removed).
3. Comprehensive Automobile Liability: Coverage shall include owned, non-owned, and hired vehicles with liability limits not less than \$1,000,000 Combined Single Limits of Liability for Bodily Injury and Property Damage.

**G. Minority Businesses**

Contractor is encouraged to utilize minority businesses as sub-contractors for supplies, services, and construction.

**H. Illinois Works Apprenticeship Initiative**

Contractor must comply with the Illinois Works Apprenticeship Initiative (Illinois Works Job Program Act, 30 ILCS 559/20-20 to 20-25) and declare that apprentices will perform either 10% of the total labor hours actually worked in each prevailing wage classification or 10% of the estimated labor hours in each prevailing wage classification, whichever is less.

**I. Child Labor**

Contractor must certify that no foreign-made equipment, materials, or supplies furnished to the District have been produced in whole or in part by the labor of any child under the age of twelve (12).

**J. Contractor Declaration**

Contractor will comply with all applicable provisions of state and federal laws and regulations pertaining to nondiscrimination, sexual harassment, and equal employment opportunity, but not limited to the following laws and regulations and all subsequent amendments thereto:

- a. The Illinois Human Rights Act (775 ILCS 5/1-101 *et seq.*), including without limitation, 44 Ill. Admin. Code Part 750, which is incorporated herein
- b. The Public Works Employment Discrimination Act (775 ILCS 10/1 *et seq.*)
- c. The United States Civil Rights Act of 1964 (as amended) 42 USC 2000a- and 2000h-6). (See also guidelines to Federal Financial Assistance Recipients Regarding Title VI Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Limited English Proficient Persons [Federal Register: February 18, 2002 (Volume 67, Number 13, Pages 2671 – 2685)])
- d. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 USC 794)
- e. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (as amended) (42 USC 12101 *et seq.*)
- f. The Age Discrimination Act (42 USC 6101 *et seq.*)

## II. Scope of Services

This initial scope of services is provided as a guide and will be used as a basis to evaluate proposals that are submitted to the District. Design Firms may wish to clarify, separate, or subcontract work items to meet their firm's particular qualifications or expertise.

### A. Exhibit Design, Fabrication, and Installation

- 1. Consultant shall conduct an analysis of site and information provided including background information, concept plans, and preliminary research and other data assembled by the District.
- 2. Consultant shall meet with District staff to ensure an understanding of the goals and objectives for the project.
- 3. Consultant shall be responsible for verifying lines, elevations, measurements, and conditions of the building, grading, and utilities in relation to all design work to be executed in this project.
- 4. Consultant can modify development concepts or prepare design alternatives as necessary to submit to the District for review and approval.
- 5. Consultant shall prepare a preliminary exhibit design plan for review and approval by District staff early March 2024. The District will provide an authorization to proceed.
- 6. The preliminary exhibit design plan shall include proposed locations, exhibit types, layouts, component materials, color schemes, design and fabrication costs, along with themes and storylines.
- 7. Consultant will be required to participate in periodic meetings (in person or virtual) during all three phases of the comprehensive project from design, to fabrication to installation. The Consultant will provide meeting minutes.

### B. Services Provided by the District

- 1. The District will provide existing background information and research, site plans, and conceptual plans, as well as goals and objectives for this project.
- 2. The District will provide any requested materials or text in digital format.
- 3. The District will provide site layout and pathway plans, needed for design or installation.
- 4. The District will provide any approvals and authorizations to proceed.
- 5. The District will negotiate requests for monetary or schedule changes and will prepare all change orders to the contract.

## III. Special Design Considerations

**A. Accessibility**

The District is committed to the full inclusion of all our citizens and visitors with disabilities. For accessibility of elements to be effective, seamless, and attractive, it must be included as a design and production priority throughout the entire process.

Recommended references for the project include ADA / ADAAG guidelines and federal, state, and county regulations. The District utilizes an accessibility advisory group to provide feedback on proposed design elements.

**B. Existing Building Design**

Staff envision the proposed exhibit plan to be compatible with the existing LEED platinum certification building design whenever possible. The exhibit design will address selection of green and sustainable materials and finishes for overall consistency. Exterior and Interior components will compliment building aesthetics.

**C. Use of Green Technologies**

The proposed exhibit plan should consider materials wherever possible that are recycled, recyclable, and / or sustainable, thus reducing demand for virgin wood, plastics, and fossil fuels. Solar power should be considered for any proposed electrical components.

**D. Exhibit Components**

All interior and exterior work shall be designed to last a minimum of 10 years in a public environment. The exhibit plan should include a variety of components and media, including interpretive panels, wayside signs, areas for play and activities, and support equipment and structures.

**IV. Exhibit Design Plan (Some concepts highlighted here. Refer to Conceptual Design Attachments.)****A. Focus: Connect People to the Natural World using elements of STEAM; Green Technology/Living; Sustainability**

Hidden Oaks Nature Center exists to provide opportunities and experiences for visitors to explore their unique, individual relationship with nature. Using STEAM undertones and subtleties tied with ecological/nature center features, we will foster visitor discovery, understanding, appreciation, and respect for the natural environment and its resources through science. Interpretive exhibits and areas should provide the visitor with interactive experiences, engage reflection of their own behavior, and inspire choices through behavior / consumer responsibility. It is important to note that the campus would be appealing to visit whether the nature center was open or closed for the day.

**B. Interior Exhibit Concepts****1. Lobby Exhibits**

Replace or incorporate existing exhibits into several new permanent exhibits with a comprehensive story/theme. Overall sound system for the first floor (outdoor mic for bird feeder sounds, music). We envision the lobby retaining more permanent exhibits.

**2. Exhibit Gallery (South Classroom)**

Interactive, interchangeable/temporary, as well as permanent exhibits using STEAM, Green Living, Sustainability, Urban Wildlife. An inviting kids nature play area. Large live animal habitats. Enclosure would house terrestrial turtles; aquatic turtles; a snake; and a salamander. Currently, we have on display 7 live animals – a tortoise, 2

box turtles, and a snapping turtle that needs space to grow, as well as an aquatic turtle, a tiger salamander, and a corn snake. Design should have a natural habitat look and allow for visitor discovery and exploration – and serve as an interactive exhibit. Lounge area overlooking bird feeder area with interpretation inside the exhibit gallery.

### C. Campus/Exterior Exhibit Concepts

#### 1. Open/Close, Welcome, Whimsical Campus Map

Facility sign serving as a focal point to the nature center that identifies the facility and interpretive focus. Should provide orientation to the facility including site map site and trails and should consider an interactive component.

#### 2. Trail Interpretation

Overall concept for an interpretive story along the campus trails that connects visitors to the interior nature center interpretive experience.

#### 3. Building Campus Interpretation

Concept for several experiential /interpretive areas in the surrounding campus using the patio and deck to create comfortable spaces to engage with visitors through minimally interactive components such as a reading nook, comfortable seating, and green living. Include large site map on building exterior. Include a bird feeding area/exhibit.

#### 4. Playscape/Nature Play Area

Create a design plan for a new nature play area incorporating signage, free play with natural features and climbing structures. Playful seating for children and adults.

### V. Proposal Requirements

#### A. Format

1. Responses to this request shall be in one (1) volume with a maximum of 10 sheets. Two-sided printing / copying is acceptable (maximum of 20 pages).
2. Proposals shall be titled "Professional Services Proposal – Hidden Oaks Nature Center Exhibit Design, Fabrication and Installation Plan."
3. Proposals can be submitted digitally to the contact person or in person at Sugar Creek Administration Center - Three (3) copies are required.

#### B. Contents

Each submittal will be reviewed by an Evaluation Committee to determine the ability of each firm to perform the required services. The recommendation of the Evaluation Committee may be subject to approval by the Forest Preserve District Board of Commissioners. Proposals will be evaluated on the basis and percentage of importance shown below:

#### 1. Completeness

**5 points**

Proposals that do not contain all of the request information will be disqualified from consideration.



**2. Project Team****35 points**

Provide a brief history and description of your firm. Describe the experience and skills of your firm that qualify it to undertake this project for the District. Identify the project manager and professional staff person(s) who would participate in the project. Indicate the abilities, qualifications, and experience of all persons who would be assigned to provide the required services. Indicate professional registration and / or license numbers.

**3. Firm Resources and Capabilities****25 points**

Provide information on your firm's current and planned workload and your ability to complete this project within the desired timeline. Include a statement regarding the key personnel listed in this submission and their availability for the duration of the project. Provide your firm's approach to the quality assurance standards to protect the District. Discuss your firm's method for estimating the costs of this project. Provide documentation of your firm's effectiveness in cost estimating.

**4. Project Understanding****35 points**

Describe three (3) relevant projects undertaken within the last five (5) years. Indicate any innovative solutions used to complete these projects. Provide references including name, address, and telephone number of a contact person for each project described. References will only be contacted for the top ranked choices. Discuss your firm's method / approach to completing this project, including any anticipated obstacles.

**5. Contact Person**

Provide information on contact person(s) who have been involved in the development of the proposal and whom the District may notify if there are any questions or clarifications needed regarding the proposal.

**VI. Selection Process**

- A. The Evaluation Committee will review the submitted proposals and rank them based upon the criteria described above.
- B. The Committee will select up to three (3) firms to meet with an interview format if needed to discuss the project and the Firm's qualifications in greater detail.
- C. The selected Design Firm will meet with the District to negotiate a final scope of work, project schedule, and fee compensation for the project.
- D. The District reserves the right to use its discretion to eliminate proposals that are deemed unacceptable. Only the proposals that meet the requirements will be eligible for short-list consideration.
- E. The District will select a Design Firm on the basis of the responsiveness of the proposal to the Request for Proposals and Qualifications requirements, and the Firm's willingness to negotiate and execute an acceptable written agreement.
- F. The District reserves the right to reject any, some, or all proposals, and to request written clarification of proposals and supporting materials.
- G. The District shall not be liable for any costs incurred by the Consultant in response to the Request for Proposals and Qualifications, or any cost incurred in connection with any discussions, correspondence, or attendance at negotiation sessions.

- H. The District will not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, or national origin against any applicant.

**VII. Attachments**

- A. Highlights from the Conceptual Exhibit Plan: Parts 2 and 3.

**VIII. Signature**

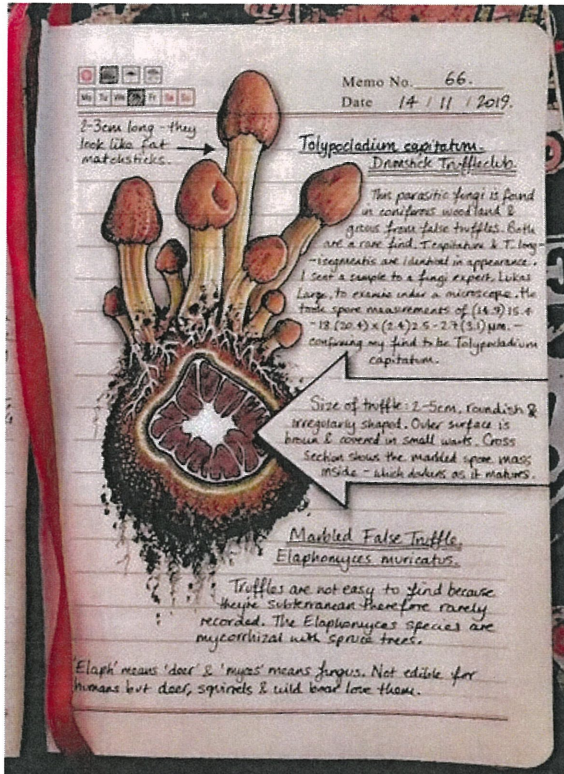
I have read and understand the requirements for professional services to the District and will abide by them.

COMPANY: \_\_\_\_\_ POSITION: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

# 01 CORE BRAND

## MOOD BOARD



The graphic elements are a fusion of two distinct visual styles: modern collages and hand illustrated nature journals.

Combining collage's organic shapes with the unstructured layouts and varied textures of nature journals creates a unique look for the this exhibit.



# 01 CORE BRAND

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## FONTS

Three different fonts are used in the exhibit. Montserrat and Open Sans draw directly from the Forest Preserve's brand. These fonts are clean and easy to read. All key paragraphs should be written in open sans, with sub headings in Montserrat. The third font, Kalam, is a hand written font that is best used for short, attention grabbing titles and short captions or call-outs.

Do not put text over photographs, as this will make reading difficult.

Title:

***Kalam Bold***

*a b c d e f g h i j k l m A B C D E F G H I J K L M*  
*n o p q r s t u v w x y z N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z*

Sub Heading:  
Forest Preserve Brand

**Montserrat Semi Bold**

**a b c d e f g h i j k l m A B C D E F G H I J K L M**  
**n o p q r s t u v w x y z N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z**

Body Copy:  
Forest Preserve Brand

**Open Sans Regular**

**a b c d e f g h i j k l m n A B C D E F G H I J K L M N**  
**o p q r s t u v w x y z O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z**

Call-Out Copy:

***Kalam Regular***

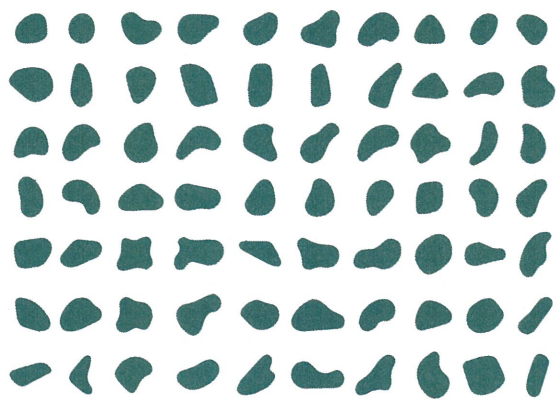
*a b c d e f g h i j k l m A B C D E F G H I J K L M*  
*n o p q r s t u v w x y z N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z*



## 03 PANEL DESIGN SCHEMES

### PANEL SHAPES

One of the key ways that organic shapes are incorporated into the exhibit is through the shape of the interpretive panels. Each panel will be printed on a rounded cut-out shape.



Panels were inspired by these organic shapes.



Featured panels use one of these four shapes.



These examples shows how the design interacts with the panel shape.



# 03 PANEL DESIGN SCHEMES

## PANEL EXAMPLES

This spread contains all of the example panels. The three different design schemes are shown below.

### Dark Primary

This scheme is for use on panels in the exhibit classrooms.



### Light Primary

This scheme is for the panels in the lobby.



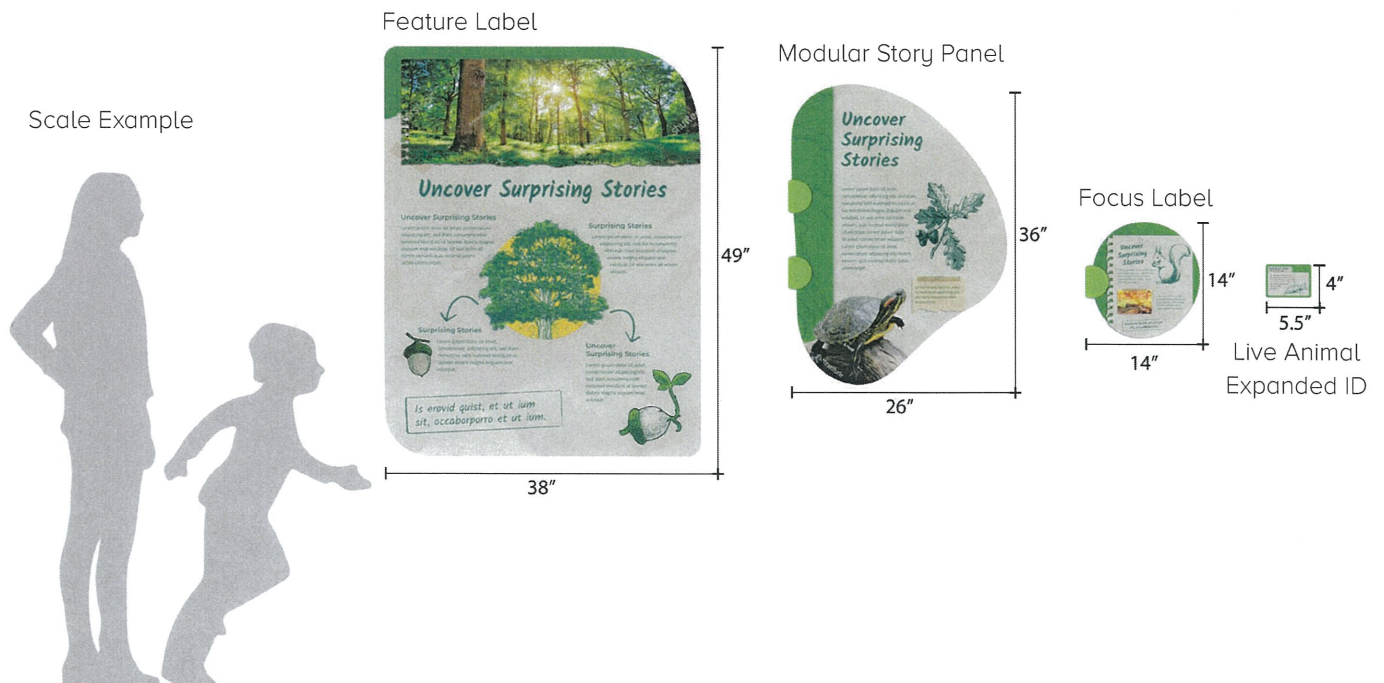
### Seasonal

This scheme is used for panels that are rotated seasonally.

# 03 PANEL DESIGN SCHEMES

## TYPES OF PANELS

Label Type	Description	Word Count	Specifications
Intro Panel	Exhibit or room introduction	50 words or less	Headline 1-2 chunks
Feature label	Explains what a section of the experience is about	80 words or less	Headline Subhead 2 Chunks
Modular story panel	Story panels rich with imagery that are changeable and self contained	60 words or less	Varies based on panel size and topic
Focus label	Smaller label providing more detail about a story, image or object	40 words or less	Headline 1 Chunk
Interactive instruction	Gives instructions or prompts for the interactive	TBD	TBD
"Hidden" story label	These are small supporting labels hidden (say under a flap or in some unique way) that focus on a hidden image or connection	30 or less	Headline 1 Chunk
Live animal expanded ID	Explains one or two facts about the animal	35 words or less	Headline 1 Chunk
Live animal ID	The name of the animal on display	6 words or less	Common Name <i>Scientific Name</i>





## 04 DESIGN EXAMPLES

### FOCUS LABEL

These circular panels are inspired by the “tree cookies” idea, and are used throughout the building. Designed to be small and interchangeable, these panels will call out specific facts or seasonal details.

Because these panels are smaller, they can be more densely filled with graphic elements without overwhelming the viewer. In the end each panel should look like it was torn from the page of a nature journal. They will contain a variety of motifs such as paper edges, doodles, stamps, illustrations, etc.

These panels will be attached to the wall with a powder coated fastener that allows them to be interchanged easily.

#### Topographic Border

In this instance, the topographic texture has been used as a border. This border color identifies it as a permanent panel.

#### Attachment Point

This powder-coated steel attachment point allows the interchangeable wall panels to be easily swapped out.

#### Torn Photograph

This photograph was incorporated into the design through the use of torn paper textures, tape, and drop-shadows.

#### Title

Smaller sized titles can be positioned at an angle to add a hand-written appearance.

#### One-Color Illustration

This shows how an illustration can be applied to a page, making it appear that it's been drawn on.

#### Torn Paper

The scrap paper element creates a unique background to place content on.



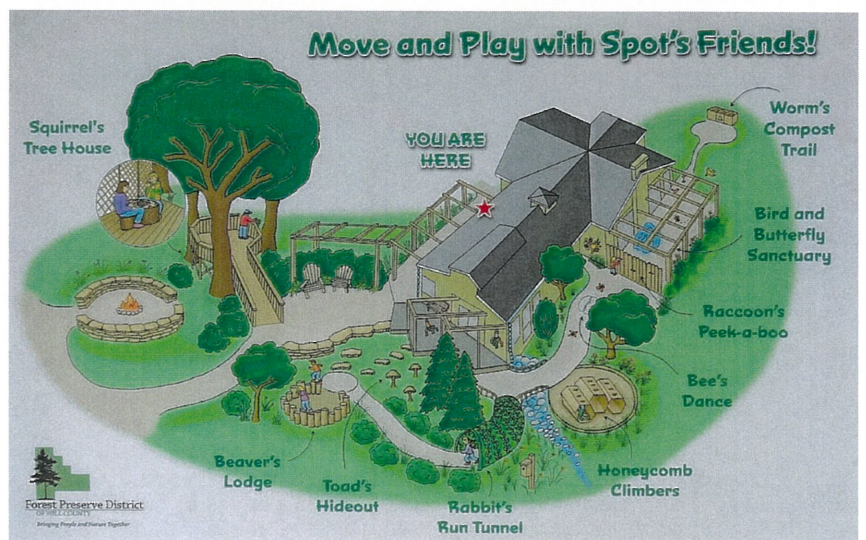


## 04 DESIGN EXAMPLES

### MAP

Another unique panel in the exhibit will be a map of the Forest Preserve. Below are some examples to guide the map's visual development.

The maps created for Plum Creek Nature Center were the initial source of inspiration for the map panel. Of interest is the way the cartoon map presents a playful abstraction of the grounds. The map also points out locations of interest to children.



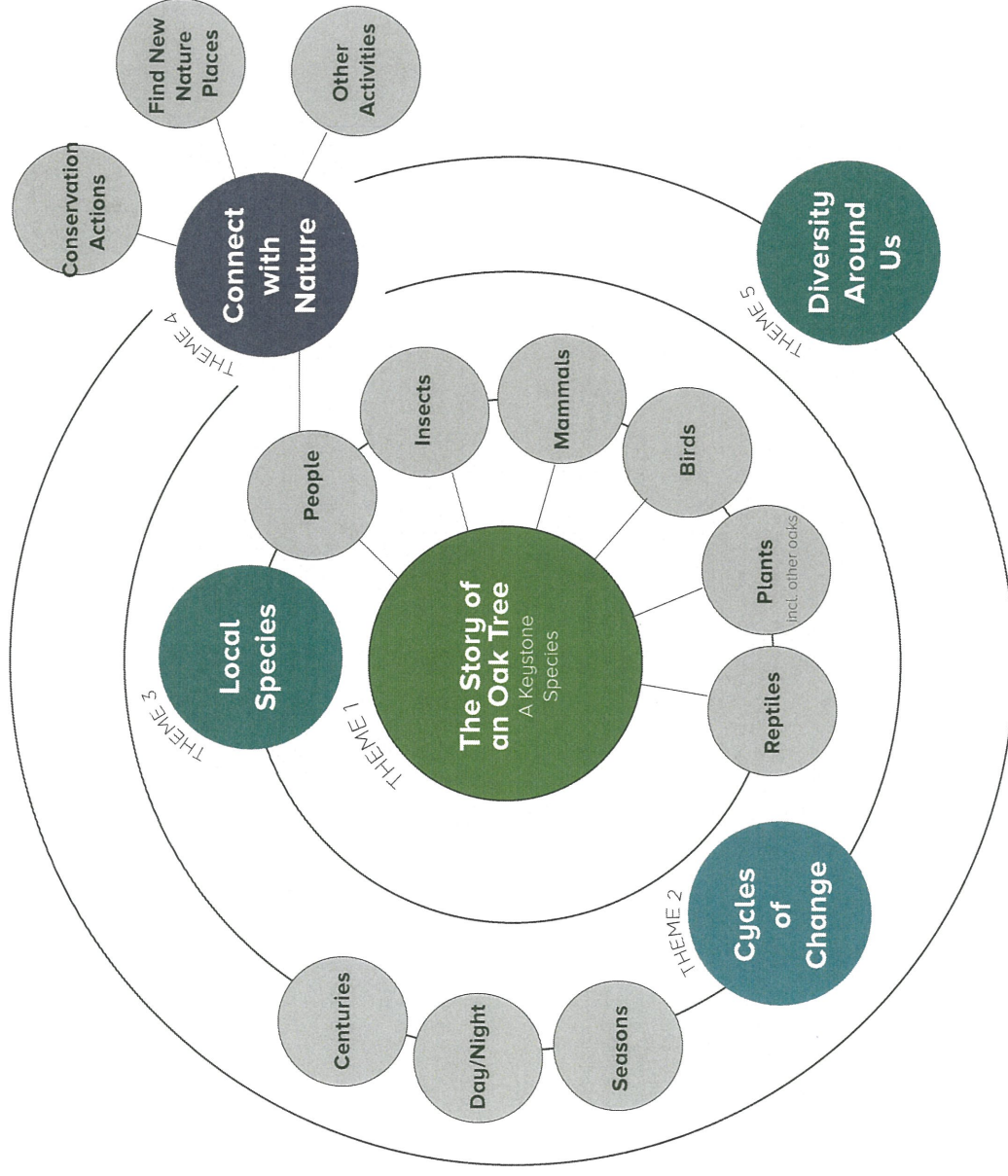
In addition to communicating the facility's amenities, the map should function as a treasure map for visitors, highlighting things to explore and activities to do. The map should incorporate the given design components. Below are several map examples that can further inform the design process.



## Exhibit Organization

This diagram shows the relationship of the 5 themes to each other. They are nested together like the rings of a tree.

The oak tree serves as the heart of the exhibit and becomes the starting point from which other stories are told.

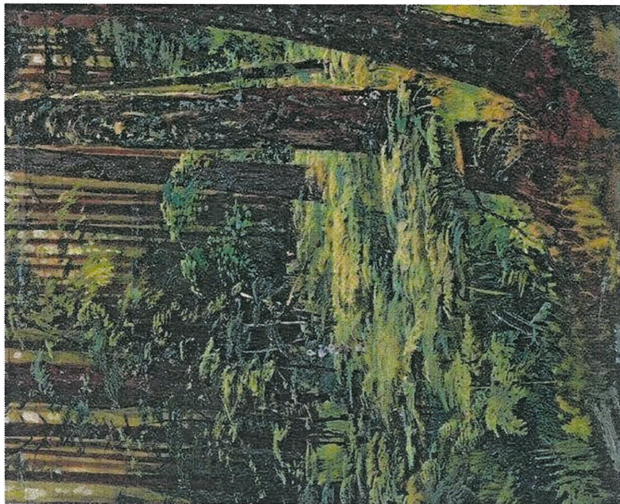




05

# Visitor Journey

The intention for the exhibit is that when the visitor enters the nature center they feel like they are in a forest - as though the forest continues through the building. As they move through the exhibit spaces, they move from dark to light, finishing with the bright open exhibit spaces at the end of the corridor.



Lobby: Dappled Forest



Corridor: Forest Corridor

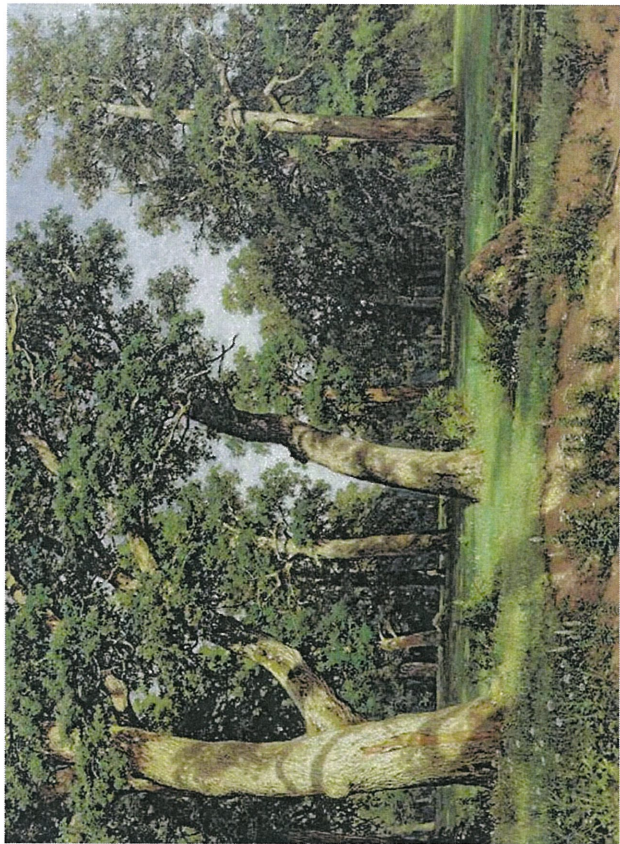


Exhibit Room: Forest Clearing

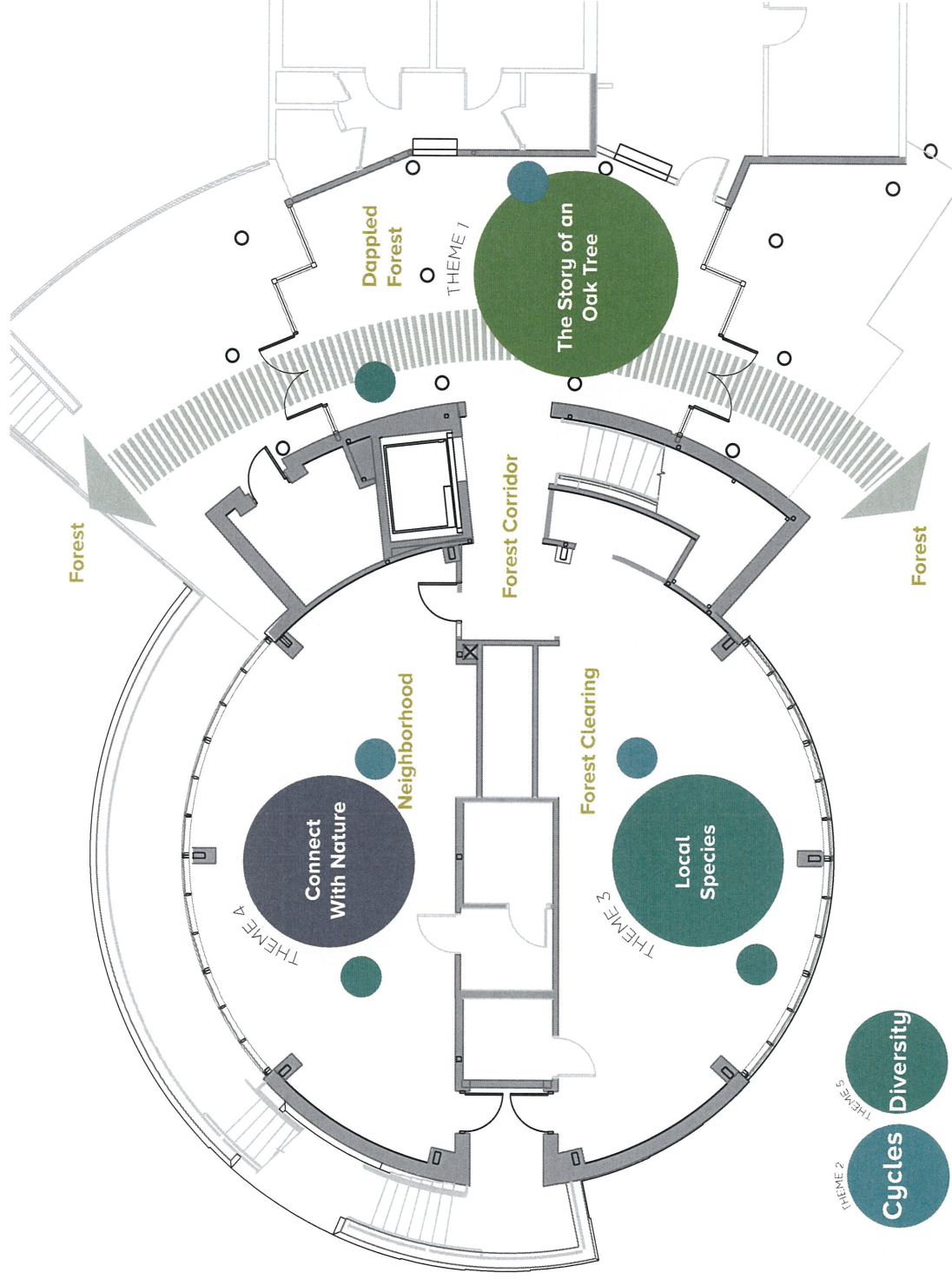
DARK

LIGHT

## Exhibit Themes

This diagram shows how the 5 theme areas are distributed through the nature center.

The main theme, **the story of the oak tree**, occupies the lobby area. Themes 4 and 5, Cycles and Diversity, will be integrated throughout the interpretive panels in all the rooms.

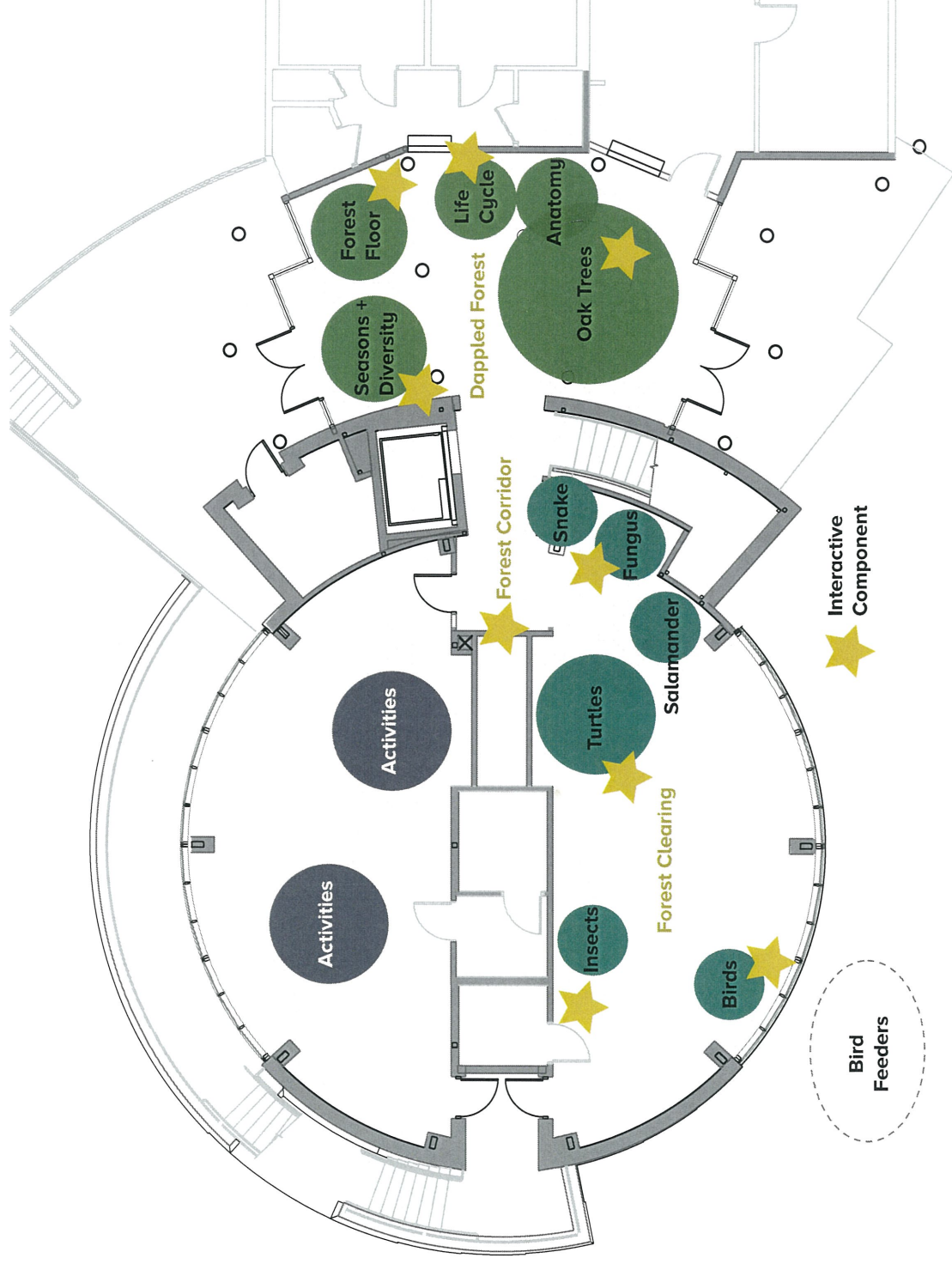




## Exhibit Topics

A more detailed breakdown of the exhibit topics, organized by theme, shows where the different content areas appear in the building.

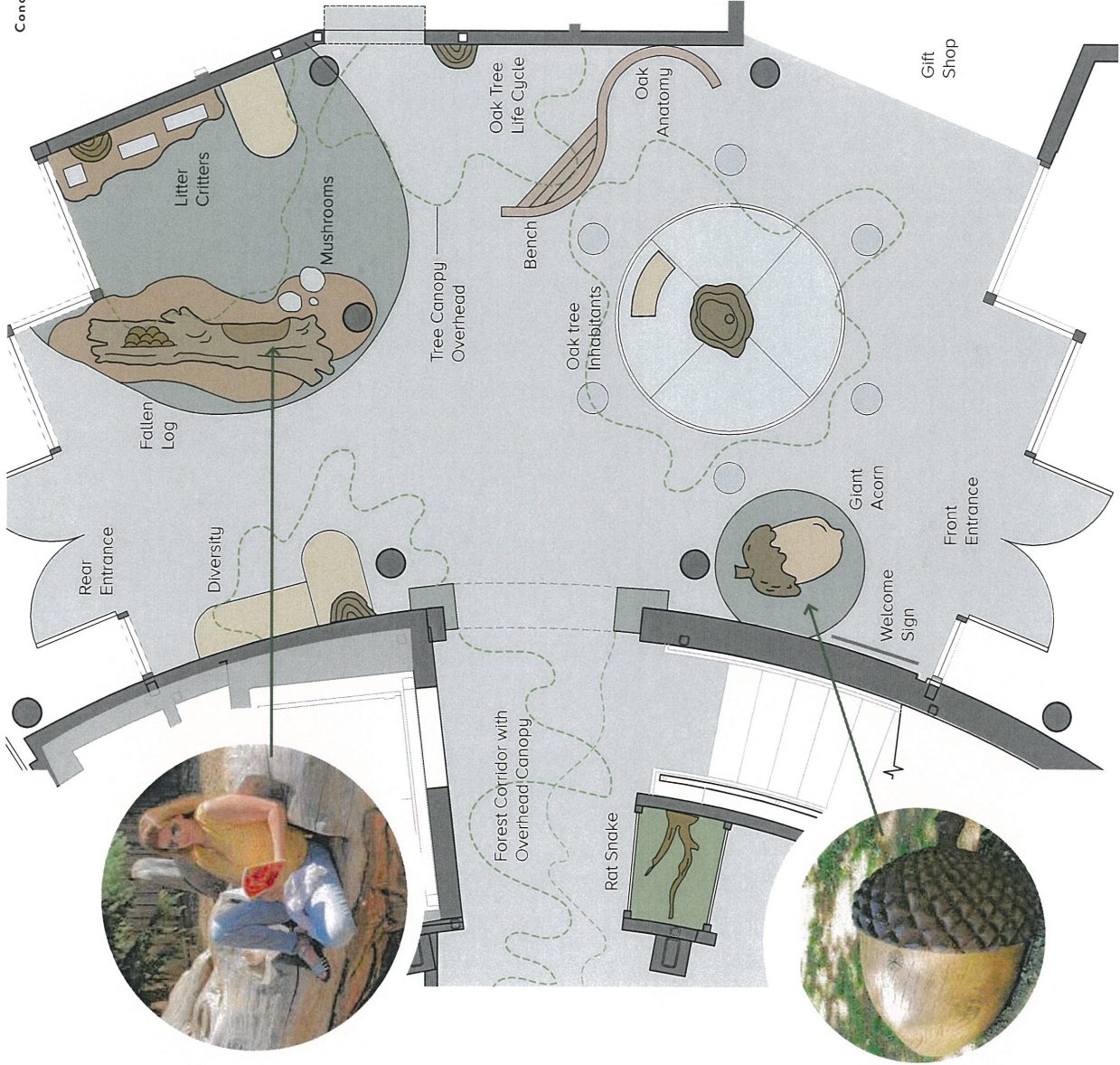
Stars denote interactive features, with the aim of at least one interactive feature per topic. Mechanical interactives are favored over technology-based ones. Examples of interactives include tactile models, flip-up or rotating panels, or opportunities for visitors to take rubbings of leaves or other objects.



# Lobby Layout

A meandering path through the lobby invites discovery and reveals surprises in different activity nooks.

Natural materials are predominant in this space. Where possible, replicated components are carved out of wood (see acorn, below.)





# Forest Clearing: Exhibit Room

## INTENTION

To workshop, discover, explore, and investigate

## LEARNING MODULES

- Animals of the forest
- Birds
- Fungus
- The forest as a system of living things, including tiny things that help to create and balance the ecosystem

## MOOD

Playful, happy, bright, lively

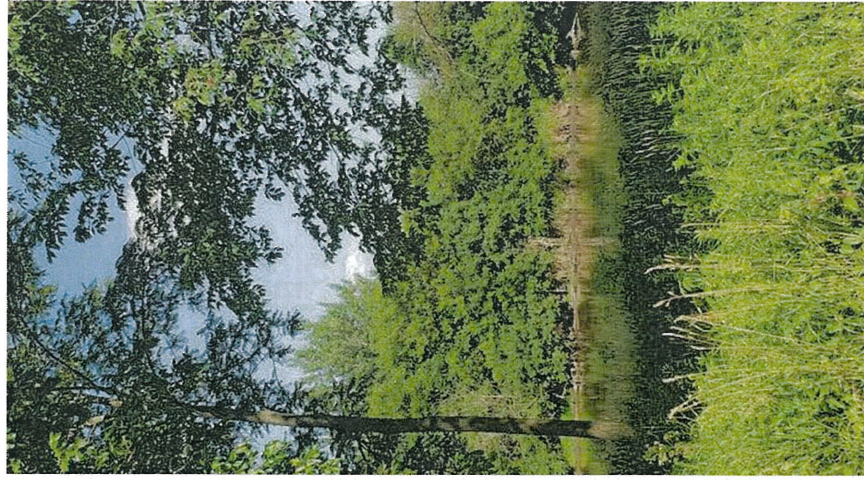
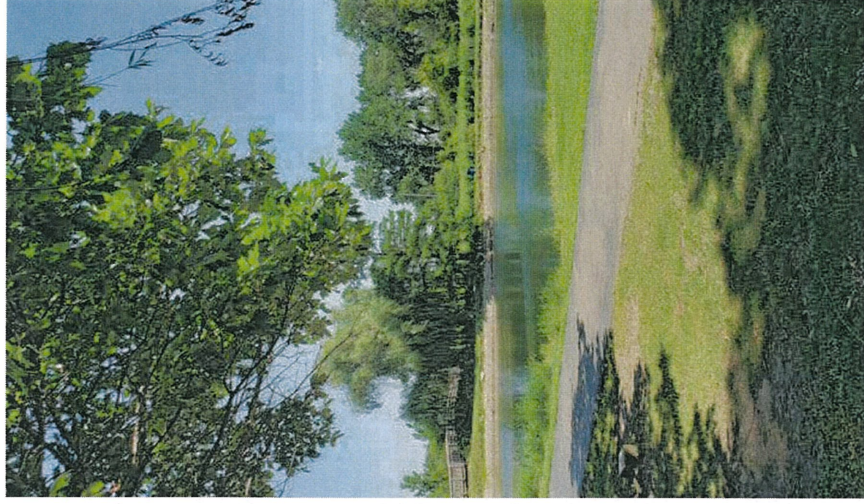


image by Meredith Winn, FPDWC Flickr



## Exhibit Room Layout

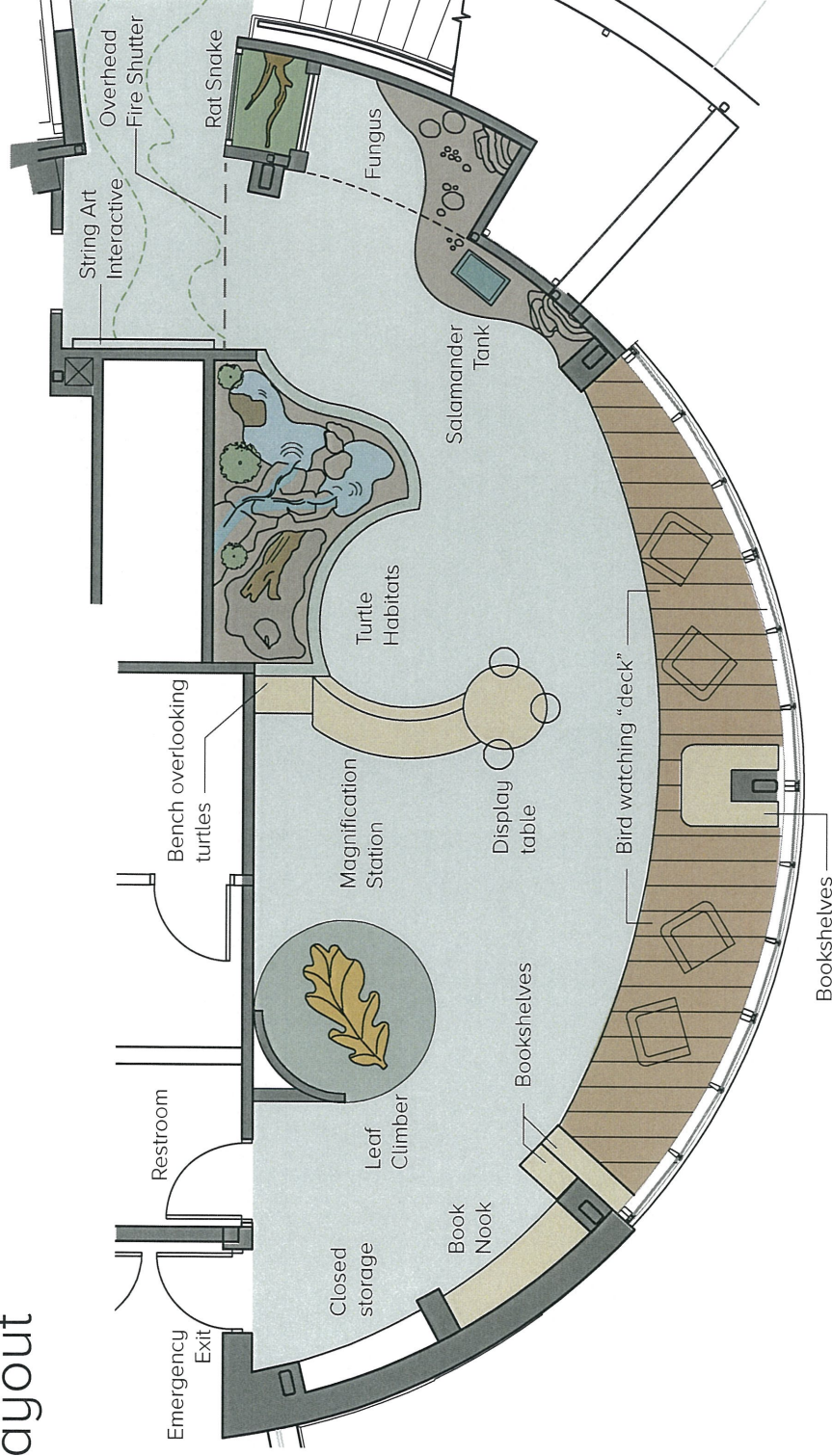
The meandering path continues into the classroom, where visitors immediately hear the sound of a waterfall and see live turtles basking on logs. With a focus on living things, the room demonstrates the sheer diversity of life in the forest, including mushrooms, local reptiles, birds and caterpillars.

Several areas allow for up-close views and exploration through touch and feel activities, microscopes and binoculars. A display table adjacent to the turtle habitat allows for changing displays, and serves to connect the spaces on either side of the low wall.

A nook beneath the stairs is a dark and magical space to highlight the role of mushrooms and other forest fungus.

The flooring changes to wood to denote the bird watching area, with views to a group of bird feeders placed just outside the windows.

A book nook provides a sensory break and cozy space for children and caregivers to rest and read.





## Exhibit Room

A small waterfall provides a soothing soundscape for all the activities housed in the exhibit room. Visitors come face to face with live animals, including a variety of turtles housed in a realistic replicated habitat complete with live plants.

