

A Plan for the Harris Center's Next Three Years

by Jack Calhoun, Board Chair; and Jeremy Wilson, Executive Director

For the past year, we have been engaged in a formal strategic planning process. As a result of this important planning, our Board and staff are pleased to announce that, over the next three years, we will focus on four crucial areas: **sustaining** core strengths, **strengthening** organizational support, **cultivating** emerging opportunities, and **fostering** greater integration across our program areas. The plan strikes a good balance between developing effective ways of sustaining our vibrant education and land programs, and exploring new conservation research possibilities. Here are some elements of our three-year plan:

Sustain Core Strengths

We're committed to developing and implementing sustainable financial, delivery, and staffing models for our land conservation and environmental education programs. Our environmental education work will focus on ensuring program quality while implementing approaches that improve our efficiency. In the land conservation program, we'll reevaluate priorities for land acquisitions and ensure that systems are in place for ongoing stewardship of conserved lands.

Strengthen Organizational Support

We will develop a plan to ensure that there is adequate financial and facilities support for the work of the organization. Our financial work will focus on ensuring that the development, membership, and communications programs are adequately organized and staffed. On the facilities side, we will determine ongoing maintenance requirements and propose improvements to and possible expansion of our building to meet future needs.

Cultivate Emerging Opportunities

We plan to pursue two new promising program directions. One, to develop and implement a plan for a conservation research arm of the Harris Center that builds upon our existing citizen science programs. In addition, this program area will facilitate continued collaborations with colleges and universities that foster ecological research, environmental monitoring, and landscape planning on Harris Center lands. Two, we'll investigate the publication of a teacher's manual and other media for making the Harris Center's approach to environmental education more widely available.

Foster Greater Integration Across Program Areas

We aim to develop and implement more effective ways of deepening the relationships between and integration across the various arms of the organization. For example, in our Otter Brook Farm project (education programs), ConVal students learn how to monitor climatic conditions, forest health, and water quality (conservation research) while exploring protected lands (land conservation). Promoting connections between program areas will enable us to take full advantage of our unique blend of land protection, education, outings, and conservation research.

Revised Mission

The Harris Center's core message continues to be both important and relevant. Our mission remains the same, except for a small addition which reflects the newly organized conservation research program area.

*"The Harris Center for Conservation Education is dedicated to promoting understanding and respect for our natural environment through education of all ages, direct protection and exemplary stewardship of the region's natural resources, **conservation research**, and programs that encourage active participation in the great outdoors."*

Progress Updates

We are very excited about the new directions that have emerged from the strategic planning process, and will provide updates on our progress. The Harris Center is sustained by generous and enduring constituent support.

Thank you!

REVISED HARRIS CENTER PROGRAM AREAS & COMPONENTS

Our strategic planning made it clear that our program areas fit more cohesively into the following revised categories:

Education	Land Conservation	Conservation Research
School Programs Community Programs Youth Activities/Camps Public Events Outings ESI (Environmental Studies Institute)	Protection Monitoring Management	Citizen Science Projects College/University Collaboration Landscape Monitoring and Planning

