

Long-range Plan
(2023 – 2033)

Updated: May 17, 2023

Definitions & Abbreviations

Below are definitions and abbreviations for key verbiage found throughout this document.

Biodiversity: Biological variety and variability of life on earth or in a defined area; a measure of variation at the genetic, species, and ecosystem level.

Boundary Partners: Individuals, groups, or organizations the Institute plans to work with to influence change.

Conservation: an active practice of protection, preservation, restoration, enhancement, and long-term management of a species, natural resources, or natural community; sustainable use of a natural resource that ensures its perpetuity into the future.

Healthy Ecosystem: Dynamic, diverse, and resilient communities of plants, animals, and microorganisms interacting with their physical environment as a functional unit. All the living and nonliving parts of an area are functioning together to promote biodiversity, nutrient and water cycling, and long-term resilience to disturbance.

Outcomes: The desired effects of the Institute's efforts.

Output: Directly achievable and observable results of changed behavior, though not necessarily short-term results of the Institute's efforts.

Pierce Cedar Creek Institute Community: Institute members and guests from Barry County and the adjoining counties of Allegan, Calhoun, Eaton, Ionia, Kalamazoo, and Kent.

Scientific Literacy: Scientific literacy is the knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts and processes required for personal decision-making, participation in civic and cultural affairs, and economic productivity.

BP – Boundary Partners

CRLM – Climate Resilient Land Management program

LRP – Long-range Plan(ning)

SWMLC – Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy

The Elements of the Long-range Plan

LRP Vision

The Pierce Cedar Creek Institute Community is healthy and resilient for all inhabitants because people and organizations have the interest, ability, and skill sets needed to actively ensure its continued well-being.

Boundary Partners: are the constituents we will first focus on to change behaviors.

1. Barry County Formal & Informal Educators & Their Students
2. Institute Members & Visitors
3. Biological Field Station Researchers, Artists, & Writers
4. Private Land Owners & Riparian Residents

Outcomes: changed behaviors

- Outcome 1: Boundary partners make scientifically-literate decisions that support and create healthy ecosystems.
- Outcome 2: Boundary partners develop individual connections to the natural world.
- Outcome 3: Boundary partners engage in conservation efforts to maintain and improve ecosystem health.
- Outcome 4: Boundary partners utilize civic engagement to support and create healthy ecosystems.

Outputs: are the results of the Outcomes above, or changed behavior.

- Output 1: Healthy ecosystems are supported through scientifically-literate decisions.
- Output 2: Healthy ecosystems are improved and enhanced by caring individuals.
- Output 3: Native ecosystems are expanded, maintained, and improved through conservation efforts.
- Output 4: Healthy ecosystems are protected through various civic engagement efforts.

The Institute's Current Vision:

Vision: To be a leading force and vibrant center for environmental education and research, resulting in awareness, appreciation, and preservation of the natural world.

Expanded Vision

The Pierce Cedar Creek Institute Community, defined as members and guests from Barry County and the adjoining counties of Allegan, Calhoun, Eaton, Ionia, Kalamazoo, and Kent, enjoy nature's health benefits through all four seasons and are inspired to learn more about the natural environment and their place in it. They understand they are not separate from nature and engage in actions to support their mutual health now and in the future.

Community members of all ages are scientifically literate, meaning they know and understand scientific concepts and processes and make their decisions on that understanding, not on opinion. They see environmental protection as a standard to be maintained and recognize that healthy, functioning ecosystems are the foundation of healthy communities. Community members support conservation efforts and the sustainable use of natural resources to enhance biodiversity.

A diverse community of college students and faculty use the Institute to engage with the environment through research, natural resource management planning, and various creative pursuits. Area ecosystem biodiversity and land management decisions are strengthened by applying Institute research findings, which provide a better understanding of a diverse ecosystem's environmental, economic, and social benefits. Long-term research data is also used to understand environmental challenges and changes. Community members celebrate, learn from, and are inspired to practice stewardship because of the creative projects, research, and natural resource fellowships that are offered at the Institute.

The Institute's work is financially supported by its endowment and funding from individuals and local, state, regional, and national organizations. Clean air, clean water, healthy soil, and biological diversity are accessible to all ecosystem inhabitants because protecting the environment is no longer a niche issue; it's simply "business as usual." Supported by residents and organizations with the interest and skill sets needed to ensure its continued well-being, the Pierce Cedar Creek Institute Community is healthy and resilient.

The Institute's Current Mission:

Mission: Inspire appreciation and stewardship of our environment.

Expanded Mission

In support of the Expanded Vision, Pierce Cedar Creek Institute will encourage all Community members to develop and build a mutually beneficial relationship with the natural world. The Institute will inspire the conservation of healthy ecosystems and motivate the community to spend time in nature by making its property accessible to all.

Contributing to the development of science literacy among students, teachers, and community members of all ages, the Institute will play an integral role in improved science instruction provided by pre-kindergarten through college educators and environmental professionals through access to curriculum, professional training, and support of hands-on learning experiences.

In addition, the Institute will provide opportunities for research, natural resource management, and creative arts to faculty and students from the colleges and universities in the Pierce Cedar Creek Institute Consortium and other institutions of higher learning. These experiences will foster a deeper appreciation of the natural world and guide faculty and student professional development.

The Institute will foster the biodiversity of its property to ensure its research value is maintained. The research will result in the collection, interpretation, and dissemination of high-quality data that will contribute to informed land management activities at the Institute and its Community. Strategic partnerships will be developed and strengthened to encourage diverse perspectives and innovative land management conservation strategies.

The Institute will secure the diverse support needed to ensure continued, effective operations. In this work, the Institute will be guided by its strategic values. It will play a leading role in the community's recognition of conservation and stewardship as the foundation of a healthy community.

Agreed upon Guidelines (Golden Rules):

1. Spending of the endowment does not exceed 5.5% over a rolling 10-year period or as recommended by current research on spending. Growth in fundraising and earned income support expanded efforts.
2. Current facilities are maintained at an optimal level before new facilities are added.
3. Property is not added without the Board and staff in agreement that it can be managed with currently available resources.
4. The quality of programs and efforts cannot be sacrificed for more output. Quality needs to remain high.
5. All aspects of the LRP will be monitored and evaluated yearly, including targeted Boundary Partners, and shared with BPs and the PCCI Community as appropriate. The yearly or biennial Strategic Plan will be based on this evaluation.

Internal Capacity Building & Progress Markers, by Year

YEAR 1 & 2:

Internal Capacity Building 2023 & 2024

1. Staff members increase their understanding of:
 - a. Data management
 - b. Behavior-centered design
 - c. Onsite sustainability & renewable energy improvements
2. By the end of 2023, staff members draft a first-year strategic plan for 2024 with outcome monitoring and evaluation plans.

3. All staff and board members provide input on the Plan and know their roles.
4. Employee pay and benefits are evaluated and adjusted with management and Board approval and as supported by the budget to improve equity and work/life balance for all employees.
5. Potential property additions are evaluated and prioritized.

AFTER 2 YEARS:

Progress Markers

Expect to see 2025

| # | BPs | Progress Markers | Outcome Support | Who is Responsible |
|---|--------|--|-----------------|--------------------|
| 1 | 1 | Preschool through elementary teachers and students participate in expanded environmental learning experiences, both informal and formal, and indoor and outdoor. | All | Education |
| 2 | 1,2,4 | Barry County BPs know more about climate change and biodiversity and what is needed to be a resilient, protected community. | All | Education |
| 3 | 1,2,4 | BPs clearly understand why biodiversity and natural resource conservation are essential. | All | Stewardship |
| 4 | All | BPs take action to support biodiversity and natural resource conservation by expanding native plantings and reducing invasive species, as example. | All | Stewardship |
| 5 | All | More BPs actively observe and appreciate nature and use natural areas regularly. (schoolyards, community gardens, parks, home landscapes) | 2 | Education |
| 6 | 3, All | Researchers, artists, and writers engage in research tied to the PCCI Community ecosystem health. (CRLM) | 3 | BFS |
| 7 | 1 | High school teachers and students participate in expanded opportunities for environmental science learning. | All | Education |
| 8 | All | More BPs participate in stewardship efforts at the Institute. | All | Stewardship |

YEAR 5:

Internal Capacity Building 2027

1. An effective data management system is in place to support stewardship and research efforts.
2. A Volunteer/Membership Coordinator is added to the staff.

3. An existing trail is converted to a handicapped-accessible trail.
4. The Institute has made significant progress toward becoming carbon neutral through renewable energy.
5. A strong relationship with SWMLC is in place to support land protection efforts.
6. The 2015 Master Plan is completed with the addition of an Outdoor Classroom/Meeting Pavilion.
7. Staff completes a new Master Plan that includes housing upgrades.

AFTER 5 YEARS:

Progress Markers

Like to see 2028

| # | BPs | Progress Markers | Outcome Support | Who is Responsible |
|---|-------|---|-----------------|--------------------|
| 1 | 1 | Preschool/kindergarten students attend an environmental school onsite. School format to be defined with community/school/Institute input. | All | Administration |
| 2 | 1,2,4 | Barry County BPs and other community members form a group to coordinate environmental protection efforts. | All | Stewardship |
| 3 | 1,2,4 | BPs recruit others to learn about and install native habitats. | All | Marketing |
| 4 | All | Barry County BPs see the results of conservation efforts because the existing green corridor is partially mapped by research students. | All | BFS |
| 5 | All | BPs advocate for more outdoor recreational opportunities. | 2,3 | Education |
| 6 | All | BPs begin to use Institute research to assist with their work to improve ecosystem health in Barry County. | All | BFS |
| 7 | 1 | High school students actively participate in the Institute's research, stewardship, and education programs. | All | Education |
| 8 | All | BPs form regularly scheduled stewardship crews with educational support and targeted stewardship goals both onsite and offsite for the community. | All | Stewardship |

YEAR 10:

Internal Capacity Building 2032

1. Community ed staff adds an additional person.
2. Marketing support has increased through staffing or contracted help.
3. BFS faculty researcher is added to the staff to handle research focus and data management.
4. The Institute has become carbon neutral through various energy and operational enhancements.

AFTER 10 YEARS:

Progress Markers

Love to see 2033

| # | BPs | Progress Markers | Outcome Support | Who is Responsible |
|---|-----|--|-----------------|--------------------|
| 1 | 1 | Additional students and grades participate in an expanded, onsite environmental school. | All | Administration |
| 2 | All | Because of what BPs do, BPs see that the Barry County Community is recognized as a special community focused on healthy and resilient natural areas. | All | Marketing |
| 3 | All | BPs develop and strengthen protected natural habitat corridors throughout Barry County, expanding into the PCCI Community. | All | Stewardship |
| 4 | All | BPs begin to use Institute research to assist with their work to improve ecosystem health throughout the PCCI Community. | All | Education |
| 5 | All | BP's physical and mental health improves, strengthening the overall Barry County community. | All | Marketing |
| 6 | All | BPs use art and writing from Creative Arts Fellows to inspire their constituents to actively promote ecosystem health throughout the PCCI Community. | All | BFS |
| 7 | 1 | More Barry County K-12 students pursue opportunities to learn more about STEAM and are impacted by expanded environmental education leading to life-long learning. | All | Education |
| 8 | All | BPs provide the majority of stewardship work on Institute property to maintain and improve the property's health and biodiversity. | All | Stewardship |

Another way to look at the Progress Markers...

1. B.C. Formal & Informal Teachers & Their Students

2025: Preschool through elementary teachers and students participate in expanded environmental learning experiences, both informal and formal, and indoor and outdoor.

2028: Preschool/kindergarten students attend an environmental school onsite. School format to be defined with community, school, and

Institute input.

2033: Additional students and grades participate in an expanded, onsite environmental school.

2. Teachers & Students, Members & Volunteers, Private Land Owners & Riparian Residents

2025: Barry County BPs know more about climate change and biodiversity and what is needed to be a resilient, protected community.

2028: Barry County BPs and other community members form a group to coordinate environmental protection efforts.

2033: Because of what BPs do, BPs see that the Barry County Community is recognized as a special community focused on healthy and resilient natural areas.

3. Teachers & Students, Members & Volunteers, Private Land Owners & Riparian Residents

2025: BPs clearly understand why biodiversity and natural resource conservation are essential.

2028: BPs recruit others to learn about and install native habitats.

2033: BPs develop and strengthen protected natural habitat corridors throughout Barry County, expanding into the PCCI Community.

4. All BPs

2025: BPs take action to support biodiversity and natural resource conservation by expanding native plantings and reducing invasive species, as example.

2028: Barry County BPs see the result of conservation efforts because the existing green corridor is partially mapped by research students.

2033: BPs begin to use Institute research to assist with their work to improve ecosystem health throughout the PCCI Community.

5. All BPs

2025: More BPs actively observe and appreciate nature and use natural areas regularly.

2028: BPs advocate for more outdoor recreational opportunities.

2033: BP's physical and mental health improves, strengthening the overall Barry County community.

6. BFS Researchers, Artists, & Writers, and All BPs

2025: Researchers, artists, and writers engage in research tied to the PCCI Community ecosystem health.

2028: BPs begin to use Institute research to assist with their work to improve ecosystem health in Barry County.

2033: BPs use art and writing from Creative Arts Fellows to inspire their constituents to actively promote ecosystem health throughout the PCCI Community.

7. B.C. Formal & Informal Teachers & Their Students

2025: High school teachers and students participate in expanded opportunities for environmental science learning.

2028: High school students actively participate in the Institute's reach, stewardship, and education programs.

2033: More B.C. K-12 students pursue opportunities to learn more about STEAM and are impacted by expanded environmental education leading to life-long learning.

8. All BPs

2025: More BPs participate in stewardship efforts at the Institute

2028: BPs form regularly scheduled stewardship crews with educational support and targeted stewardship goals both onsite and offsite for the community.

2033: BPs provide the majority of stewardship work on Institute property to maintain and improve the property's health and biodiversity.

Current Values:

- **Land Conservancy**

Pierce Cedar Creek Institute values the natural environment and the native plants and animals that are a part of a healthy ecosystem. We believe biodiversity and natural change play a critical role in the sustainability of the land and support all efforts that promote this sustainability.

- **Environmental Responsibility**

We believe our actions must speak louder than our words, and through best management practices, we will work ethically and responsibly to protect the health of our environment now and for future generations.

- **Fiscal Responsibility**

Resources must be managed carefully, and at Pierce Cedar Creek Institute, we value financial resources as a way to ensure our continued growth and development. We will take care to wisely manage our financial resources while effectively planning for the future.

- **Pursuit of Knowledge**

In life, we are constantly making decisions that affect the environment. The knowledge we receive plays a key role in helping us all make informed decisions. Pierce Cedar Creek Institute does not advocate a particular viewpoint but believes that awareness and understanding come through knowledge that is made available in a clear and non-biased format.

- **Honest and Ethical**

Pierce Cedar Creek Institute believes honesty is a core value that promotes ethical practices. Fairness, trust, and respect for everyone and everything we come in contact with are integral.

- **Good Citizen**

We believe playing an active role in our community and serving our community are important. The Institute and its staff will support and act as a facility for collaboration and cooperation between Barry County organizations to improve the quality of life in our community.

- **Inclusive**

Pierce Cedar Creek Institute values and respects all living beings and believes that people have a right to learn about the natural world. We believe healthy interactions breed a healthy environment from which to learn and grow.