



2025 Annual Report



WELCOME



Welcome to the Outdoor Heritage Education Center or OHEC (*OH'-heck*) for short.

Like our logo with hidden eagle, fish and wolf, there are so many more positive aspects of the Outdoor Heritage Education Center than first meet the eye. For more than 26 years we continue to play a key role affecting millions.

Founded in 1998, the charitable non-profit Outdoor Heritage Education Center group continues to fulfill its Mission to:

Increase the public's understanding, appreciation and sense of stewardship for natural resources, professional resource management, and America's outdoor heritage, including related activities like fishing, hunting and other shooting sports.

We connect youth and adults to the outdoors and natural resources.

We understand how this benefits people, families and society. Healthy, active outdoor lifestyles and a connection to nature are good for the individuals, communities, and the environment.

The Outdoor Heritage Education Center fulfills its mission in a number of ways, from hosting mentored hunting, target shooting and fishing events and programs to providing support for like-minded outdoor education efforts, with a special emphasis on working with youth.



WHERE WE ARE NOW

After more than two decades of service, the Outdoor Heritage Education Center stands as a trusted leader in conservation education and outdoor mentorship. It is not a place; it is an organization that delivers services to communities all across Wisconsin.

OHEC has built a strong foundation of programs that connect youth and adults to fishing, hunting, shooting sports, and the conservation principles that support healthy natural resources.

Today, we serve a growing and diverse audience through safe, mentored, and educational outdoor experiences supported by dedicated volunteers, knowledgeable partners, and engaged supporters.

Our programs emphasize having fun outdoors, learning to appreciate nature, gaining a greater sense of self, learning and taking pride in new skills and connecting to places, all while building a deeper understanding of responsible resource management.

With established partnerships, proven program outcomes, and increasing demand for our services, OHEC is well-positioned to expand reach while remaining grounded in our mission.

As we look ahead, we continue to remain committed to strengthening mentorship and sustaining our outdoor heritage for future generations.

HELP EXPAND OUR IMPACT

The future of our outdoor heritage depends on education, mentorship, and responsible stewardship.

As the Outdoor Heritage Education Center looks ahead, continued community support is essential to expanding access to outdoor education and ensuring these traditions and conservation values are passed on to future generations.

Supporters can help move our shared mission forward by donating, which directly funds mentored hunting, fishing, and shooting sports programs, safety education, and youth outreach. In 2025 OHEC also created an opportunity to donate appreciated assets and dollars. Volunteering as a mentor provides hands-on guidance and creates meaningful connections for participants, especially young people experiencing the outdoors for the first time.

Partnering with us—as an organization, business, or agency—helps strengthen programs through shared resources, expertise, and opportunities. Finally, by participating in our programs and sharing our mission, supporters help build a community that values conservation, ethical outdoor recreation, and professional resource management.

Together, we can ensure that outdoor education remains accessible, impactful, and rooted in stewardship—today and for generations to come.



IMPACT & REACH

The Outdoor Heritage Education Center is committed to accountability and continuous improvement.

Each year, we track participation, program quality, and outcomes to ensure our efforts are effectively connecting people to the outdoors.

*Midwest Outdoor
Heritage Education
Expo (MO'-hee)*

4,265

Individuals Reached



200

Mentors

2,886+

Hours of Instruction/Mentoring

Scholarships

2

*Awarded to students
in Conservation*

*Touch of the Wild
Education Trailers*

306,874

Individuals Reached

(increase from 255,113 in 2024)

7

*Mobile Education
Units*

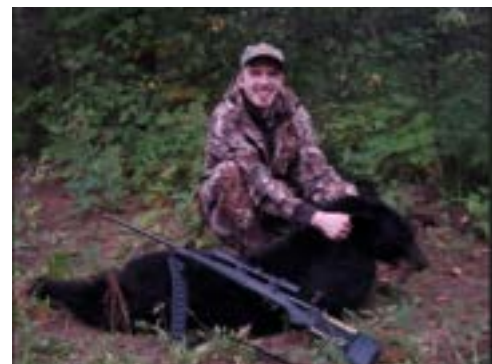
**LTH Bear
Calin's Wish**

1

*Very successful LTH
Bear "Make a Wish"*

**Assisted with the WI
Statewide Shooting
Range Summit**

**Assisted with the
Grant Co Outdoor
Sports Alliance's
Youth Outdoor
Skills Day**



Invaders of the Great Lakes Field Guide

5,000

*Books Distributed
Statewide*



OHEC helps you Go Fishing

3

*Supported Schools in
Learning to Fish*

4

*New Libraries
Received Fishing Gear*



FFA Wisconsin Agricultural Education

144

*Students who qualified
for State Exam*

36

*Teams of students who
qualified*

'25 was the 3rd year, OHEC
lead the FFA Wildlife Career
Development State Test.

Camp Whitcomb Mason Boys & Girls Club of Greater Milwaukee

*Support with new pontoon
boat & education materials*



Riparian Project & Outdoor Recreation Area; Benton, WI

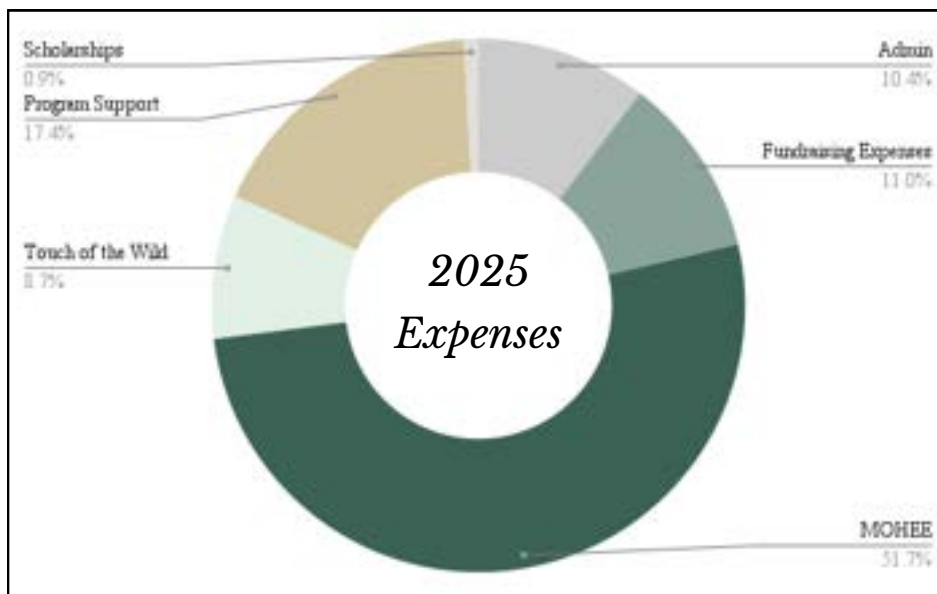
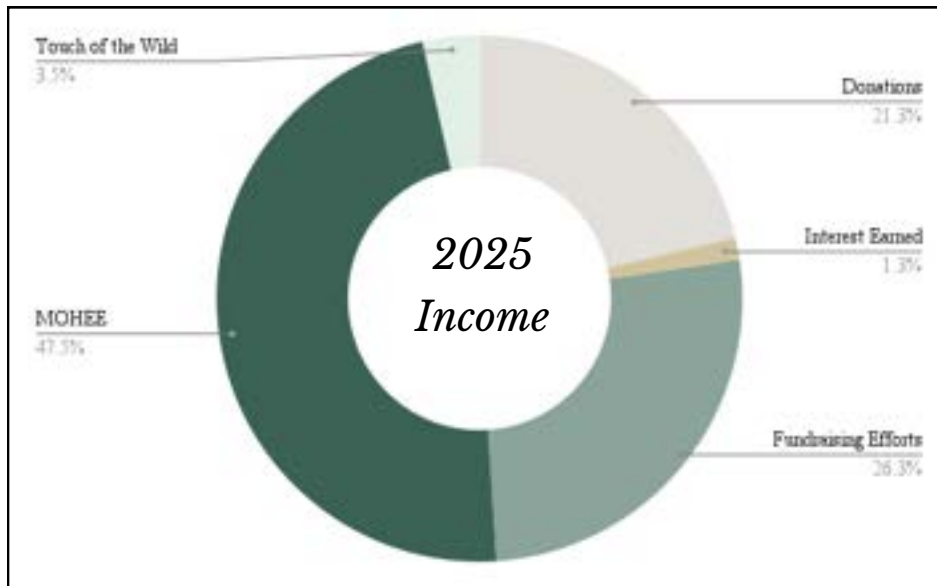
*Site clean up, interpretive
signage, trail work, &
water quality*



The inception of
OHEC's
Archery/Bowhunting/
Bowfishing initiative.



FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS



The Outdoor Heritage Education Center (OHEC) is a 501(c)3 charitable, tax exempt, non-profit organization that has been connecting individuals to the outdoors and natural resources since 1998. EIN 41-1941409

STRATEGIC PLAN



The Outdoor Heritage Education Center (OHEC) Strategic Plan 2025-2026



OHEC works to increase the public's understanding, appreciation and sense of stewardship for natural resources, professional resource management, and America's outdoor heritage, including related activities like fishing, hunting and other shooting sports.

Outdoor Heritage Programming

Increase the public's understanding & appreciation of America's outdoor heritage with mentored programs, providing experiences to connect with the outdoors and build skills.

Environmental Education Programming & Events

Provide & support opportunities to understand, appreciate & build a sense of stewardship for natural resources & professional resource management.

Awareness & Brand Recognition

Increase marketing & media to build awareness of OHEC with like-minded organizations.

Goals

Increasing OHEC's impact by enhancing funding

Develop & strengthen partnerships, Grants, Development, & Fundraising.

Organizational Development

Strengthen operating procedures, policies and technology. Build Board capacity and recruit new members and volunteers, & long term plan for assets.

Conservation/Habitat Projects

Increasing public access and getting individuals outdoors while teaching them about the protection and management of the surrounding natural resources in a place based environment.

www.ohecyes.org



Mark LaBarbera & Ruth Ann Lee pictured here in Benton, WI; near the prairie that OHEC helped fund at the local high school

STAFF & VOLUNTEER BOARD

Ruth Ann Lee, Executive Director
608-358-1708
ruthann@ohecyes.org

Mark LaBarbera, Founder & Chair
520-730-9252
mlabarbera57@icloud.com

Coni LaBarbera; Hazel Green, WI

Ryan Knight; Waunakee, WI

Donavon Steinmetz; Pewaukee, WI

Sally Schnoenike; Oconomowoc, WI

PARTNERS & SUPPORTERS

The Outdoor Heritage Education Center's impact is made possible through strong partnerships with organizations, agencies, businesses, and individuals who share our commitment to conservation education and responsible resource management of Wisconsin's outdoor heritage.

These partnerships allow us to expand access to high-quality outdoor learning experiences while maintaining best practices, and the highest standards of safety, mentorship, and stewardship.

Assoc of WI Snowmobile Clubs (AWSC)
 Beaver Dam Conservationists
 Blackhawk Bow Hunters
 Bob Haase
 Cabela's/Bass Pro Shop
 Conservation First Bank
 Dane Co. Dept of Waste & Renewables
 Dane County Conservation League (DCCL)
 Dodge County Sporting Alliance
 Ducks Unlimited (DU)
 Field and Stream Sportsman's Club
 Friends of Havenwoods State Forest
 Friends of the MacKenzie Center
 Friends of the Poynette Game Farm
 4imprint
 Generac/Donavon Steinmetz
 Grant County Outdoor Sports Alliance
 Harold Drake
 IWLA - Bill Cook Chapter
 IWLA - Brown County Chapter
 IWLA - SW WI Chapter
 IWLA - Wisconsin Division
 Jill Knight
 Jim Rupnow
 Kevyn Quamme
 Kids and Mentors Outdoors (KAMO)
 Lafayette County Sportsmen's Alliance
 Lawrence's Pub and Eatery
 Manitowoc Fish and Game
 Milwaukee's Inner City Fishing Club
 Mike and Angela Fuge
 Mound City Bank
 National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF)
 N. American Versatile Hunting Dog Assoc. (NAVHDA)
 NRA Foundation

Packwaukee Historical Society
 Pass It On Outdoor Mentors
 Pheasants Forever
 Pheasants Forever Columbia and Marquette Chapter
 Pheasants Forever Southeast Wisconsin Chapter
 Pumpkin Center Sportsmen's Club
 Raised At Full Draw
 Rich Chronquist Central Wisconsin Outdoor Youth Day
 Rio Conservation Club
 Rough Fish Assassins
 Sally Schoenike
 SCI Badgerland Chapter
 SCI Northeast Wisconsin
 SCI Wisconsin
 Scott and Lisa Gunderson
 Silent Wake Kayaking
 Taylor County Sports Club
 Waukesha County Conservation Alliance
 Waukesha County Fair
 Watertown FFA Alumni
 WI Hunter Education Instructors Association (WHEIA)
 WI Trappers Association (WTA)
 Wings Over Wisconsin (WOW)
 Wisconsin ATV UTV Association
 Wisconsin Bear Hunters
 Wisconsin Bow Hunters Association
 Wisconsin Conservation Congress (WCC)
 Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
 Wisconsin Federation of Great Lake Sport Fishermen
 Wisconsin Waterfowl Association (WWA)
 Wisconsin Wildlife Federation (WWF)
 Zoological Society of Milwaukee

Governor & DNR Secretary Videos Thank OHEC Volunteers



"Your dedication to conservation, outdoor education, and making outdoors more inclusive and accessible continues to have a positive impact on connecting youth to the environment and nature-based activities all across Wisconsin."

-WI Governor Tony Evers



"I would like to thank MOHEE for all the work you do in partnership with us (WDNR). I really encourage the public, the teachers, the school districts to get all the kids out for activities like this and really build a foundation for valuable experiences in life."

-WI DNR Secretary Karen Hyun