



January 30, 2023

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Dear ROLES and Riveredge Community,

As you may have already heard, there will be a change in our community next year. Riveredge Outdoor Learning Elementary School (ROLES) will transition to a new home after June 30, 2024. We'd like to share information about this decision with you.

ROLES started at Riveredge Nature Center in 2019 with a five-year-long facilities use agreement through June 30, 2024. Since 2019, both organizations have successfully navigated the challenges of the pandemic, experienced staffing changes, and evolved with new leadership. Through it all, both Riveredge and ROLES have grown and changed in positive ways.

Both organizations have identified increased needs around facilities and indoor spaces to accommodate our growing organizations. ROLES is looking forward to the potential to expand while finding a location with adequate learning spaces to fit their academic needs. Riveredge is looking forward to having the necessary office space for its growing team to create, plan, and host more nature-based programs that expand access to nature for people across Southeastern Wisconsin.

Over the last four years, Riveredge has learned that increasing access to our programming while still being strong stewards of the land is a delicate balance. After the ROLES facilities use agreement ends in June of 2024, we'll be able to serve more communities and broaden the impact of our nature-based programs while also protecting the integrity of the natural landscape.

Ultimately, this decision affords both ROLES and Riveredge the opportunity to grow and better fully deliver our respective missions. Both organizations are committed to working together through this transition and exploring what a future partnership would look like.

The benefits of inquiry-based learning and connecting children to nature-based education are well-documented and as important as ever. The core values of ROLES and Riveredge remain aligned. We are excited for ROLES to continue this important work in a new location that is better tailored to their needs, and for us to be able to introduce more youth, families, and community members to the wonders of the natural world.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth A. Larsen

Riveredge Nature Center Board President

John Rakowski

Riveredge Executive Director