What Is EON

• Informal education not-for-profit (501c3) organization started Summer 2002
• Present nature oriented programs featuring live animal ambassadors
• Programs presented in 8 Maryland counties
• Estimated audiences (age 2 to senior citizens):
  – 19,000 in 2012
  – 21,000 in 2013
  – 24,000 in 2014
  – 24,000 in 2015
  – 23,000 in 2016
What Is EON cont.

• Dr. Michael Uzzo
  – Co-founder, Executive Director
  – Over 14 years experience guiding and supporting EON activities

• Echo Uzzo
  – Co-founder, Director of Education, Lead Instructor
  – Over 24 years experience designing and providing educational programs (most featuring live animals)

• Part-time staff includes 4 education instructors, animal care specialist, and a summer instructor
Ambassadors

• Mammals, Birds, Reptiles, Amphibians & Invertebrates which include Maryland native & non-native species
• Most come from shelters and rescues
• Hold all required permits
• Have three Veterinarians servicing ambassadors
• Inspected by Department of Natural Resources, Prince George’s County Animal Management, USDA-APHIS, US Fish & Wildlife
EON Program Characteristics

• Central theme with supporting animal ambassadors, “biofacts”, and information
• Educational, interactive, and fun programs
• Variety of program styles including:
  – Public, Private, & Home School Programs
  – Early childhood centers
  – Nature Tables
  – Summer Programs
  – Birthday Parties
  – After School Nature Club
  – Senior Center Enrichment
  – Lab & Assembly Style Programs
  – Scouting Groups (including badge requirements etc.)
EON Program Characteristics cont.

• Variety of program themes including:
  – Animal Adaptations
  – Skeletons
  – Microscopic Pond Life
  – Life in the Chesapeake Bay Area
  – Frog Math
  – Food Chain
  – Wildlife from Maryland and Around the World

• Program goal is to make “LASTing” impression regarding the natural world and particularly wildlife
  – Learning
  – Appreciation
  – Stewardship
  – Treasured Memories
Objective of an EON Program

Bringing nature to the community to teach about wildlife and the environment in a manner that brings multiple senses into play thus making a lasting impression to instill a sense of wonder and stewardship
The Ways EON Reaches the Public

Labs

Adult Centers

Nature Table

Classroom

Assembly
How Will This Facility Be Different?

*This facility will bridge the gap between a traditional nature center and zoo with additional unique features*

- Present the many habitats of Maryland through mini recreations of their environments and featuring the species that live there
- Concentrate on Maryland wildlife
- Programs engage critical thinking in science, math, literature, and art
- Instructors & docents to engage and educate the visitors
- Continue off site programs
What The Wildlife Discovery Center Is NOT

• A petting zoo:
  – place for petting farm/pet animals
  – usually no educational programming

• A traditional museum:
  – mostly covering the location of its site instead of entire state
  – mounted displays
  – few animals
Why Is It Needed

• Environmental literacy
• Enhance curriculum
• Public interest
• Wildlife conservation
• Environment stewardship
How Wildlife Center Contributes To Communities

• Deliver wildlife, nature, environmental, natural resource, and outdoor education curriculum that helps students with graduation standards in science, environmental education, and more

• Bring enrichment to families and senior citizens

• Supports community environmental conservation and green initiatives

• Provide rewarding volunteering opportunities

• Strengthen community bonds

• Provide jobs

• Support local businesses
Goals of Wildlife Discovery Center

- **E** – Educating the public (especially children) about the natural sciences and particularly wildlife
- **C** – Conservation of wildlife
- **H** – Health by inspiring people to get outdoors and explore
- **O** - Outreach into schools, daycare centers, senior centers and community events
- **E** – Enrichment opportunities for the community
- **S** – Stewardship of the environment
EON Center Features

• Animal Housing – indoor & outdoor enclosures
• Staff Offices
• Classrooms for Booked Programs
• Exhibit Hall
  – Live animal exhibits
  – Interactive exhibits
  – Touch Tank
  – Critter Encounters
• Outdoor Exhibits
• Gift Shop
• Walking Trails

• Association of Zoos & Aquariums Accreditation (guiding design and practice from start)

Legend:
Phase 1
Phase 2
Phase 3
Optional
Future Objective
(only 1 AZA in 20 miles)
Land Site Features

• Size must support facilities, parking, outdoor enclosures (≈10 acres minimum)
• Zoned to allow facility and ambassadors
• Long term token lease, partnership, or ownership
• Room to expand for larger outside exhibits
• Preferred Prince George’s County
• Beneficial but not critical features:
  – Walking trails
  – Water such as pond, lake, stream or river
  – Easily accessible from major road to draw visitors
  – Staff access driveway direct to private door
Facility Characteristics

• Support our operations
  – animal exhibits & enclosures (electrical, water, etc)
  – public (lighting, traffic flow, comfortable)
  – staff (easy maintenance, access to exhibits)
• Fenced in perimeter for outdoor exhibits
• Energy efficiency (possible LEED certified)
• Include green features when possible
• Safety of public, animals, and staff
• 2 or more classrooms
• Expandable facility
• Economical to operate
Wildlife Center Visitor Experiences

• General Admission
  – Access to exhibits, critter encounters, & public programs

• School Programs At Center
  – Access to exhibits and reserved program

• Summer & After School Nature Camps
  – Variety of age ranges, themes, and durations

• Hosted Birthday Parties
  – Room rental and reserved program

• Adult Programs
  – Special topic presentations

• Community Family Fun Days
Wildlife Center Draft Diagram #1
Exhibit Example: From Mountains to the Bay

From the source

To the ocean

Providing examples of plants and animals found along the water from its source to the ocean
Exhibit Examples: Maryland’s Wetlands

Discover why wetlands are important and what species call them home
Indoor Animal Exhibits

Featuring ambassador(s)

Accompanying “Fun Facts”
Outdoor Exhibits

Otter Enclosure

Interactive Learning Station
Outdoor Exhibits

Otter Enclosure

Different Perspective
Outdoor Exhibits

Mimic natural setting for the health of ambassador and public experience
Exhibit Features - Senses

Visual comparisons

Tactile experiences, discover differences between their fur

Engaging multiple senses creates a more “LASTing” impression
Exhibit Features - Interactive Displays

Learning through puzzles

Learning through matching

- Body Language
  - Coyotes don’t talk, at least not like people do, but they still communicate with each other. In addition to vocalizations like barks and howls, coyotes use body language to let each other know what they are feeling.
  - Can you read coyote body language? Match each picture on the left to a behavior on the right. If the light comes on, you have it right!
  - Stay away (Dominance)
  - I’m the leader (Dominance)
  - Let’s play (Play)
  - This is my territory (Terriortial)
  - Hello (Greeting)
  - I won’t fight (Submission)
Exhibit Features – Further Details

Supporting information

Utilize technology smartly

- In display signs
  - migration patterns
  - maps to highlight where species found in MD
  - interactive
- Animal sounds
- Online supporting videos
Examples Of Future Ambassadors

- Mammals
  - Otter
  - Skunk
  - Raccoon
  - Deer
  - Beaver
  - Bobcat
  - Fox
  - Groundhog

- Insects
  - Bees (apiary)

- Birds
  - American Kestrel
  - Crow
  - Great Horn Owl
  - Vulture
  - Turkey
  - Bald Eagle

- Reptiles
  - Eastern King Snake
  - Pine Snake
  - Bog Turtle
  - Sea Turtle

- Amphibians
  - Tiger
  - Salamander
  - Hellbender

*Italicics are endangered/threatened in MD*
Examples Of Future Ambassador Species

Skunk

Fox
Examples Of Future Ambassador Species

Bobcat

Bald Eagle
Funding Sources

• On the road program fees
• In house reserved program fees
• General admission (possibly $14/adult $6/child)
• Grants from government bodies & foundations
• Donations from individuals
• Corporate Sponsorships
• Support via Combined Federal Campaign (CFC), etc.
• Fundraising events
• Gift shop (if present)
• Future endowment fund
• Loans (if required)
Staffing / Volunteers

Current

• 2 Directors
• 4 Instructors
• 1 Animal care specialist
• 3 Volunteers

Starting with a small center

• 3 Directors
• 6 Instructors
• 3 Animal care professionals
• As many volunteers as possible
• 3 Front desk personnel

Note, some positions could be filled or assisted by volunteers and the numbers depends on size and phase (slide 14) of the center

Not a current picture
What EON Provides To Center

- Almost 15 years of proven experience
- A large client base
- Reputation for quality & enjoyable educational programs
- Over 60 animal ambassadors with staff trained in handling and caring for them
- Staff experienced in engaging audiences of all ages
- Currently insured and ready with insurance company to cover the center’s insurance needs
- 7 years researching the establishment of a center
- Clear vision for the wildlife discovery center
- Member of ANCA (Association of Nature Center Administrators) & MAEOE (Maryland Association of Environmental and Outdoor Educators)