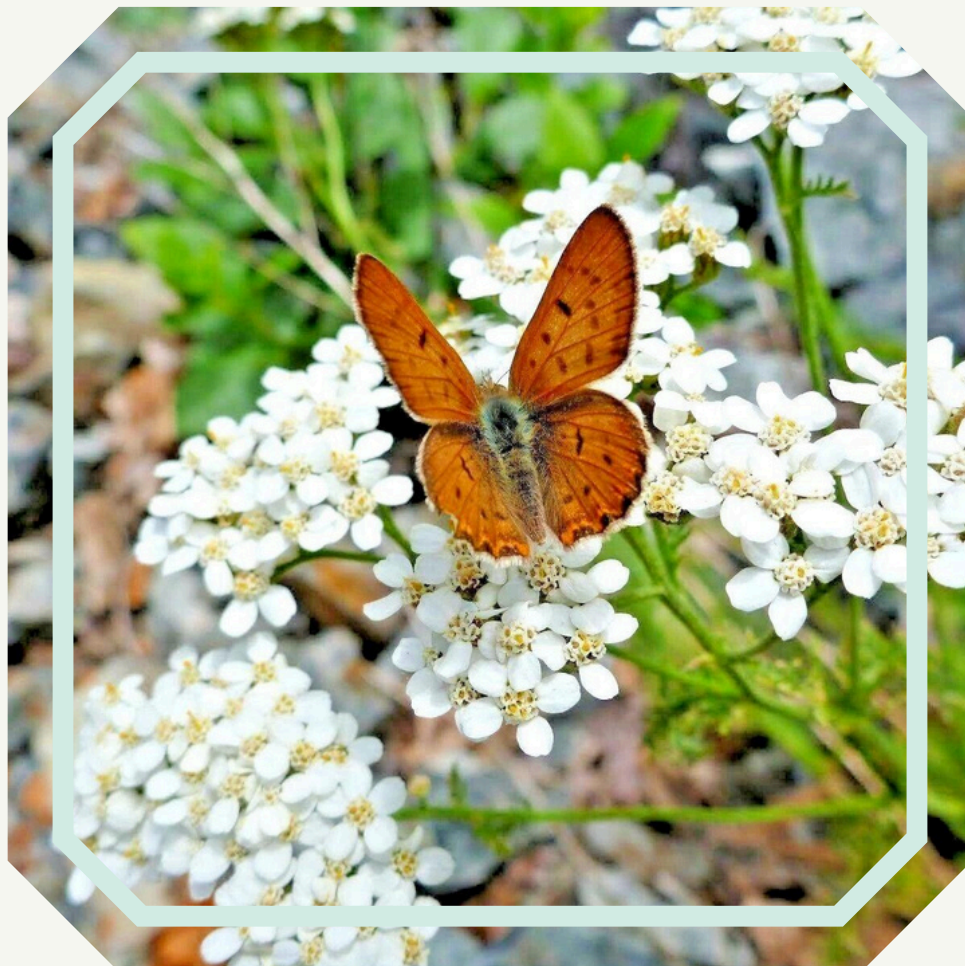




SPRING LAKE

NATURE CENTER



To inspire curiosity, stewardship, and connection through hands-on exploration of North Dakota's natural world.

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Our Story

Founded by Lee Lusht as her long-held dream, Spring Lake Nature Center in Williston, ND, is a 501-c3 non-profit organization and the only nature-based science center serving northwest North Dakota. Early planning began in 2023, and the organization has since grown with the guidance of a committed board and broad community support.

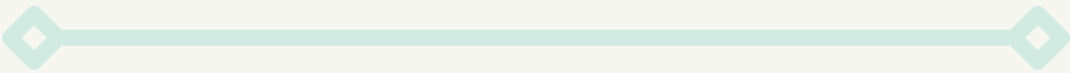
Since its soft opening in early 2026, the center has offered monthly rotating exhibits, hands-on programs, and seasonal activities exploring local ecosystems, fossils, pollinators, and more, all designed to inspire curiosity and stewardship.



Spring Lake Nature Center has grown through the support, encouragement, and generosity of the community. Financial and in-kind contributions have played an important role in helping bring the vision to life. The Williston STAR Fund awarded a community grant to support development efforts, Williston CVB has provided ongoing support, and Western Cooperative Credit Union pledged \$100,000 over three years to help advance the center's mission and programming. Volunteers, local organizations, and community partners have also contributed countless hours, materials, and resources to help create engaging exhibits, programs, and experiences for visitors of all ages.

As the Nature Center continues to grow, the primary long-term goal remains establishing a permanent home in Spring Lake Park — a welcoming community space where people of all ages can gather to learn about, explore, and connect with the natural world. Looking further ahead, future outreach initiatives such as the Prairie Rover could help expand nature-based learning opportunities to schools and rural communities across the region.

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July News Recap

This year's 2nd Annual Roots & Wings Festival was certainly one to remember! Despite a record-setting high of 109°F, our incredible community proved that a little heat couldn't stop a day filled with learning, discovery, and fun.

Thanks to the support of 35 dedicated volunteers, 11 exhibitors, our generous sponsors, and approximately 1,000 visitors, the festival was another wonderful celebration of nature, science, and community at Spring Lake Park.

Visitors explored a wide variety of hands-on activities and exhibits throughout the day. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers shared information about local waterways, environmental stewardship, and the importance of protecting the ecosystems that make places like Spring Lake Park so special. Nature enthusiast Adrian Azar captivated audiences with observations on the lake and Louis & Clark State park taught visitors about wing spans while helping them observe some of the birds that call the park home.

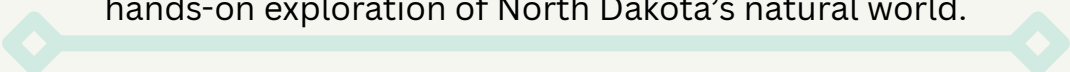
We were excited to welcome Classical Conversations as a new exhibitor this year, where visitors learned about flowers and the incredible systems that help plants grow and thrive.

The Paul Broste Rock Museum traveled from Parshall to share fascinating rocks and fossils from our region, while Neset Consulting Service helped visitors explore the connections between geology, minerals, and North Dakota's energy industry.

The Missouri-Yellowstone Confluence Interpretive Center once again drew crowds with its interactive atlatl exhibit, giving participants the opportunity to safely experience an ancient hunting tool while learning about the region's history.

Festival favorites also returned, including gemstone panning at the Sluice Box and our popular scavenger hunt, generously sponsored by Ruach Resources. At the clay mold station, children and adults alike created their own animal track and flower impressions to take home as a reminder of their day at the festival.

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July News Recap cont.

Of course, no festival would be complete without great food and cool treats! Visitors enjoyed the Williston Fire Department's Free Will Donation BBQ and cooled off with delicious ice cream from Susie Q's Ice Cream Truck.

Whether you volunteered, exhibited, sponsored an activity, or simply came to enjoy the day, thank you for helping make the 2nd Annual Roots & Wings Festival another incredible success. We are already looking forward to continuing this tradition and growing it for years to come!



Susie Q's ice cream



Thank you Sponsors!



Thank you Sponsors!



Discovering nature



Fun for furry friends



Great Information



Classical Conversations

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What's Going On In August?

One area we're especially excited to continue developing is educational programming for schools and homeschool families. We're working with local educators and community partners to explore future field trip opportunities, hands-on learning experiences, and flexible programming that complements classroom learning.

One thing we keep coming back to is scheduling, permanent location, and the Prairie Rover. After careful consideration, we have decided the best option for our community at this time it is to have select pop-up exhibits and field trip opportunities at Spring Lake Park and the keel boat building. We want to be able to provide a wonderful experience of nature, learning and engaging with nature and natural sciences and to do that, we are focusing on raising money for our Prairie Rover while still providing some learning opportunities.

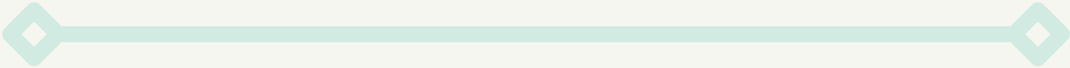
Some ideas we have in the mean time are field trips exploring the park and animals of the park, birthday events, and pop-up exhibits. We will share the space with other vendors and organizations who utilize the building throughout the winter months as well.

We would love to offer more activities—like community bird-watching groups—but since it is just the two of us behind the scenes, we need volunteer leaders to help get these programs off the ground! If you are interested in running a club or helping out with events, we would love to chat. Reach out and let's make it happen!

Follow us on Facebook & Instagram throughout the week as we introduce more of the amazing organizations, activities, and vendors that will be joining us for this year's festival!

@SpringLakeNatureCenter

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Future Endeavors

Growing With Our Community

Keepers of the Prairie

Every organization reaches moments when experience helps shape the road ahead. For Spring Lake Nature Center, this is one of those exciting moments. Our first season of pop-up exhibits at the Keelboat gave us an opportunity to test ideas, welcome families and students, build partnerships, and learn what works best for our growing organization.

It also helped us better understand what will be needed to make the Keelboat a long-term home for Spring Lake Nature Center. While we remain excited about its future possibilities, there are still improvements and logistics that need to be addressed before the space can support the consistent, year-round access our programs require.

Rather than slow our momentum while that work continues, we're taking what we've learned and moving forward with the Prairie Rover.

The Prairie Rover will be a fully mobile nature and STEM learning center designed to travel to schools, rural communities, libraries, parks, festivals, and events throughout western North Dakota.

Our goal is ambitious: raise \$1.2 million to design, build, equip, and get the Prairie Rover rolling within the next 24 to 36 months.

And we're already on our way.

Thanks to the incredible generosity of our supporters, Spring Lake Nature Center has raised more than \$180,000, much of it earmarked toward bringing the Prairie Rover to life.

The Prairie Rover will be more than a vehicle. It will be a traveling place of discovery filled with interactive exhibits, hands-on science, natural history, and experiences connected to the land we call home. From prairie ecology, wildlife, and water to geology, agriculture, paleontology, and energy, the Rover will bring the story of western North Dakota directly to the communities we serve.

This is where our Keepers of the Prairie come in.

Keepers of the Prairie are the people, businesses, organizations, and communities who believe every child deserves the opportunity to explore, question, discover, and better understand the place they call home.

In the coming months, we'll offer opportunities to help bring individual pieces of the Prairie Rover to life, from major interactive exhibits and learning stations to educational materials and hands-on experiences.

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Our long-term vision of a permanent Spring Lake Nature Center has not changed. The Prairie Rover gives us an opportunity to keep growing now, expand our reach, and build an even stronger foundation for that future. With the help of our Keepers of the Prairie, we plan to turn a \$1.2 million vision into a Nature Center on wheels and get it rolling across western North Dakota within the next 24 to 36 months.

Where curiosity takes root and imagination takes flight.

The below picture is a visualization of the Prairie Rover as an idea and inspiration. Artwork may differ on actual bus.



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Featured Plant

Common Yarrow

For generations, people have looked to the prairie not only for its beauty, but also for the many ways native plants could support everyday life. One of the best examples is Common Yarrow, a hardy wildflower that has been growing across North American grasslands for thousands of years. With its clusters of tiny white flowers and finely divided, fern-like leaves, yarrow may appear delicate, but it is remarkably resilient. Its deep roots help it tolerate drought, stabilize soil, and thrive in challenging prairie conditions. Throughout the summer, its nectar-rich blooms attract native bees, butterflies, hoverflies, and many other beneficial insects that help keep prairie ecosystems healthy.



Beyond its ecological importance, yarrow has one of the longest recorded histories of use by people. Indigenous communities throughout North America recognized the plant's many practical uses, and settlers later adopted many of those traditions. Across Europe, Asia, and North America, yarrow has been appreciated for centuries as a versatile herb and was often included in home gardens because of its usefulness.

Today, yarrow continues to remind us of the close relationship between people and the natural world. Plants like these tell the story of observation, curiosity, and generations of learning from the landscapes around us. While modern medicine has changed how we care for ourselves, these native plants remain an important part of our cultural and natural heritage. Whether you discover yarrow along a prairie trail or growing in a native garden, take a moment to appreciate this remarkable wildflower—not only for its beauty, but for the generations of people who found value in the plants growing right outside their doors.

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Featured Plant cont.

Common Yarrow

Did You Know?

- **An Ancient Plant**

Yarrow has been used by people for thousands of years and is one of the oldest documented medicinal plants in human history.

- **Pollinator Favorite**

Its flat flower clusters make it easy for many different insects—including butterflies, bees, and beneficial flies—to feed on nectar.

- **Tough Prairie Survivor**

Yarrow's deep roots help it survive drought and make it an excellent native plant for prairie restoration.

- **Tiny Flowers, Big Impact**

What looks like a single flower is actually a cluster of dozens of tiny blossoms working together to attract pollinators.

- **A Living Connection**

Plants like yarrow remind us that long before field guides and smartphones, people learned about nature by observing the plants growing around them and sharing that knowledge across generations.



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How to get involved:

Want to volunteer?



We would love to have you involved! While we don't have immediate openings right now, we are always looking ahead and would love to connect with folks who want to help us grow. Here is what is on the horizon where we could use a hand:

- **Pop-Up Events:** Helping out when we host our park activities, birthday events, and exhibits.
- **Getting the Word Out:** Spreading the news about what is happening at the Nature Center and helping us connect with the community.

- **Committees:** We are also getting ready to form a few committees, like a dedicated fundraising group! While these are still in the planning stages, we'd love to hear if you would be interested in helping

If you are interested in helping with events, spreading the word, or jumping onto a committee, drop us a line and let us know what you're passionate about!

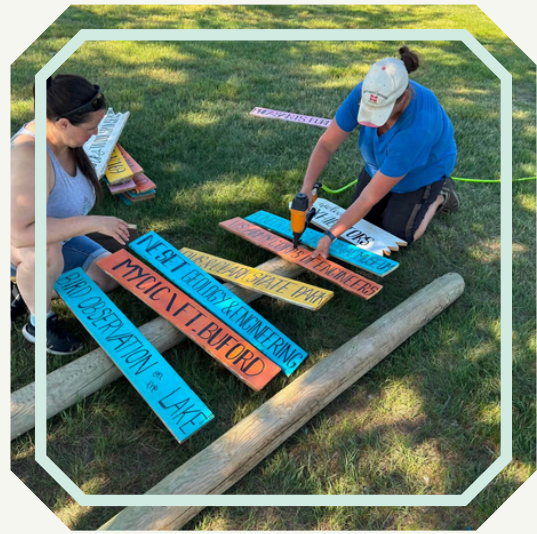
Future Opportunities

As Spring Lake Nature Center continues to grow, so do the opportunities to become involved! We are building future community programs and activities such as bird watching groups, nature walks, hands-on learning experiences, family activities, seasonal exhibits, and more.

Right now, we are still in the exciting stage of building and discovering what our community is most passionate about and volunteers will play a huge role in helping shape that future. Some opportunities may be short-term event help, while others may grow into recurring groups or programs led by community members who simply love sharing their interests with others.

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How to get involved cont.



As we look toward fall programming and future expansion, we are especially interested in connecting with people who are passionate about:

- Bird watching
- Prairie plants and gardening
- Nature photography
- Hiking and outdoor exploration
- Science and hands-on learning
- Family-friendly community activities
- Environmental education
- Local wildlife and conservation

Many of our future programs will only be possible through community involvement and volunteer support. If you have ideas, interests, or would like to help us grow, we would love to hear from you!

To get involved, visit our website at www.springlakenaturecenter.org or sign up through PointsApp at pointsapp.org/orgs/9094 to join our volunteer team.

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How to Donate:

Donations are a vital part of how the Nature Center continues to grow. Every contribution, big or small, helps bring new exhibits, events, and festivals to the community and supports exciting future projects like the Prairie Rover.

Another meaningful way to give is through in-kind donations — this can include goods, services, or volunteer time to help us make our programs and events possible. Every gift makes a difference!

<https://givebutter.com/BZh6be>

Thank You!!!!

A big heartfelt thank you to our sponsors, trailblazers like you that make this possible



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