

UPHAM WOODS

Strategic Framework

2025-2029

Upham Woods is a residential, year-round, outdoor learning center for youth and adults, operating under the Natural Resources Institute of the University of Wisconsin–Madison Division of Extension. We offer environmental education and outdoor recreation programs, 4-H and other youth camps, professional development workshops, and conferences and retreats. Through our programs, we aim to ignite curiosity, cultivate leadership, and create a lasting impact on the natural world and the communities we serve.

This Strategic Framework was developed through work supported by UW–Madison’s Office of Strategic Consulting with funding from Extension leadership through the Dean’s Office.



Our Mission

Upham Woods Outdoor Learning Center provides an innovative outdoor experience that connects youth and adults with the research and educational resources of UW–Madison to improve the human-nature connection, support understanding of science, foster environmental stewardship, and engage communities.



Our Strategic Vision

Upham Woods envisions a future where youth and adults have access to innovative and transformative outdoor experiences that connect communities with the resources of the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

Our Strategic Goals

Community and Connection

Create a vibrant and inclusive community where deep connections to nature and to each other foster environmental stewardship, empowered by the resources and expertise of the University of Wisconsin.

- Foster a thriving human-nature connection by providing unique educational opportunities rooted in place-based education.
- Cultivate belonging through inclusive practices and expanding physical and financial accessibility.
- Connect communities to the resources and expertise of the University of Wisconsin and UW–Madison Division of Extension.



Reach and Impact

Provide relevant and transformative opportunities through innovative programming and strategic partnerships, solidifying UW-Madison and Extension as a valued resource across communities.

- Expand educational programming using innovative science and conservation strategies to equip people with the skills and knowledge to address environmental challenges.
- Sustainably engage diversified stakeholders and reach new audiences to enhance the value and impact of the University of Wisconsin and UW-Madison Division of Extension.



Sustainability and Growth

Secure a strong foundation that empowers Upham Woods to thrive and continue its vital work for generations to come.

- Build our capacity for impactful education in the outdoors by diversifying and strengthening Upham's funding portfolio.
- Maximize efficiencies through enhanced systems and advanced planning to modernize facilities and equipment.
- Model a climate of responsible, respectful, and renewable use of resources to demonstrate sustainable practices in action.

