

Nature Centers Across Wisconsin

Client Digital Marketing Strategy



Wisconsin Center for Wildlife
College of Natural Resources
University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point



Forestry & Wildlife Program
DIVISION OF EXTENSION
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN - MADISON

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Executive Summary

The Wisconsin Center for Wildlife (WCW), an affiliate of UW-Extension hosted through UW-Stevens Point's College of Natural Resources, promotes sustainable wildlife management across Wisconsin through research, education, and outreach. Engaging students, landowners, natural resource professionals, educators, nature center visitors, and the general public, WCW provides workshops, training, and online resources that support conservation education and community engagement. Despite these efforts, WCW and Wisconsin's nature centers face challenges in maintaining a consistent digital presence that reaches diverse audiences statewide. The "Nature Centers Across Wisconsin" campaign addresses this gap with an Instagram-based strategy designed to increase awareness, engagement, and actionable participation in conservation efforts.

The campaign's mission is to connect communities to local nature centers while establishing WCW as a trusted, approachable source for wildlife information. It combines nature center spotlights and educational posts to provide accessible environmental education, promote youth programs, and encourage community involvement. This aligns with WCW's broader goals: increasing public understanding of natural resource management, strengthening professional networks, supporting UW-Stevens Point students, and fostering conservation behavior statewide.

Key audiences include private landowners seeking practical guidance, students pursuing wildlife or natural resource careers, professionals needing research-backed updates, and the general public interested in outdoor recreation and conservation. Content meets these audiences' needs through an informative, friendly, and approachable brand voice. Posts make conservation feel relevant, local, and attainable while maintaining credibility.

The campaign follows a structured five-week Instagram schedule, alternating five nature center spotlights and five educational posts. Spotlights highlight North Lakeland, Woodland Dunes, Beaver Creek, Marsh Haven, and Myrick Park, focusing on offerings, significance, and current programming. Educational posts cover local wildlife, youth engagement, responsible nature visitation, and ways to support local centers. Posting occurs twice weekly, scheduled for weekday mornings.

A KPI framework tracks awareness, engagement, traffic, and audience sentiment using metrics like reach, impressions, follower growth, engagement rate, link clicks, program sign-ups, and comments. Weekly monitoring via Hootsuite informs performance evaluation and ongoing optimization, including adjusting posting times, refining content topics, and prioritizing high-performing formats.

Collaborations with UW-Madison student organizations, local influencers, and groups like the Wisconsin Native Plant Society amplify reach, while competitor insights from the Wisconsin Humane Society Wildlife Rehabilitation Center, Wildlife in Need Center, and Wisconsin WildCare guide strategy. Influencers and thought leaders such as Maya Higa, Dean Schneider, David Mizejewski, and Collin O'Mara provide lessons on storytelling, visual engagement, and audience connection.

This strategy positions WCW as a consistent, trusted voice in Wisconsin conservation. By highlighting local nature centers, providing accessible education, and promoting participation in programs and volunteer opportunities, the campaign fosters engagement, supports conservation behavior, and strengthens WCW's visibility. Short-term goals focus on awareness and audience growth, while long-term objectives aim for sustained engagement and statewide influence, creating a foundation for ongoing digital outreach.

Goals

Primary Goals

The Wisconsin Center for Wildlife's (WCW) primary goals center on promoting sustainable wildlife management across Wisconsin through meaningful research, education, and outreach. Their work engages students, landowners, wildlife professionals, educators, nature center visitors, and the general public. In partnership with UW-Extension, WCW offers outreach for private landowners, provides workshops and training for natural resource professionals, and shares accessible online resources that help residents stay informed about Wisconsin wildlife and ecosystems. WCW also supports undergraduate education at UW-Stevens Point's College of Natural Resources, helping prepare the next generation of conservation professionals. Across all of these activities, WCW aims to strengthen connections within the wildlife community and engage diverse stakeholders to advance statewide conservation efforts.

Why They Matter

These goals reflect the organization's broader mission: increasing public understanding of natural resource management, improving networking and engagement within Wisconsin's conservation community, enhancing the knowledge and skills of students and professionals, supporting wildlife habitat conservation, and addressing human-wildlife conflicts. All of these goals directly relate to the long-term sustainability of Wisconsin's ecosystems. Achieving them requires an informed public, active engagement with local nature centers, and strong communication networks among conservation professionals. WCW's long-standing emphasis on education and outreach, amplified through this campaign, lays the foundation for lasting stewardship and environmental responsibility.

Brand Voice, Tone, & Style

To support these goals, the campaign employs a brand voice that is informative, welcoming, and accessible. Since the "Nature Centers Across Wisconsin" campaign focuses on spotlighting nature centers and providing educational content, the tone prioritizes clarity, approachability, and relevance. The posts are designed to make conservation feel exciting, local, and attainable. CTA's about visiting a center, learning about Wisconsin wildlife, or engaging children with nature help connect WCW's larger mission to everyday behaviors. This tone ensures that the campaign resonates with families, students, young adults, and outdoor enthusiasts while still maintaining credibility as an educational source.

Short-Term and Long-Term Objectives

The strategy is guided by both short-term and long-term objectives. Short-term objectives include establishing a consistent, visually cohesive social media presence, introducing audiences to Wisconsin's network of nature centers, and building early momentum around educational posts. The goal is to begin developing a loyal, engaged following that recognizes WCW's content as reliable and valuable. Long-term objectives include maintaining this engaged community, positioning WCW as a trusted statewide source for wildlife information, and supporting broader conservation behavior through sustained public education. Ultimately, this campaign serves as a foundation for ongoing digital engagement that advances WCW's goals across future outreach efforts.



Niche & Focus Area

Marketing Message

The central message of this campaign is that the Wisconsin Center for Wildlife (WCW) helps connect Wisconsin communities to nature through education, conservation, and accessible outdoor experiences. The focus area is increasing public awareness of Wisconsin nature centers and providing approachable wildlife education. The “Nature Centers Across Wisconsin” campaign highlights five nature centers while delivering simplified, trustworthy environmental information that supports WCW’s mission of public outreach and conservation education (Wisconsin Center for Wildlife, n.d.).

Rationale for Choosing This Niche

This niche was chosen because nature-focused organizations across Wisconsin, particularly local nature centers, receive limited media attention despite their essential educational and ecological roles. Research shows that public interest in outdoor recreation and conservation has grown in recent years, especially among young adults and families seeking nature-based experiences (Outdoor Industry Association, 2022). However, this increased interest is not matched by accessible, centralized information about Wisconsin nature centers.

By focusing on awareness and environmental education, the campaign fills this communication gap and supports WCW’s broader goals of increasing public engagement and education. Spotlighting nature centers also opens up opportunities for strong storytelling, making complex conservation topics more relatable to general audiences.

Unique Value Provided to the Audience

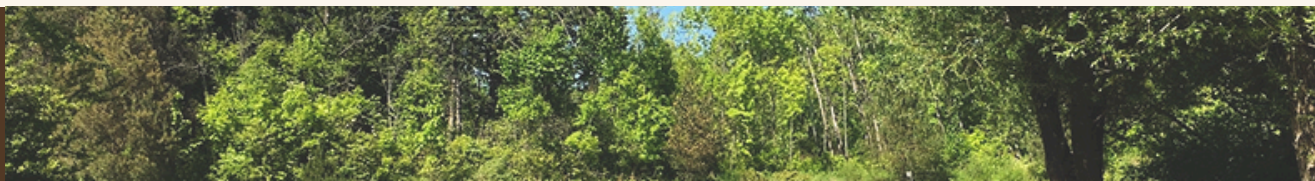
WCW’s unique value lies in its ability to deliver locally grounded, research-informed environmental education. This campaign translates scientific, conservation-related information into accessible, visually engaging social media content specifically tailored to Wisconsin residents. Additionally, the campaign amplifies community resources that often lack dedicated marketing staff. By highlighting local nature centers and their offerings, WCW serves as a trusted, consistent voice for conservation and community engagement.

This value aligns with literature showing that environmental communication is most effective when it connects scientific knowledge with local relevance and actionable opportunities (Schweizer et al., 2013).

Problem Being Solved & Desired Brand Voice

The core problem addressed is the lack of a strong, consistent digital presence for nature centers and conservation organizations across Wisconsin. Without active storytelling and public outreach, these organizations struggle to reach new audiences or share the ecological significance of their work.

WCW’s desired brand voice for this campaign is informative, friendly, and inspiring. The tone blends expert knowledge with a playful, welcoming style that encourages exploration, supports environmental learning, and reduces barriers to engaging with local nature. This voice is intentionally designed to make conservation feel engaging and relevant to everyday life.



Target Audience

Primary and Secondary Audiences

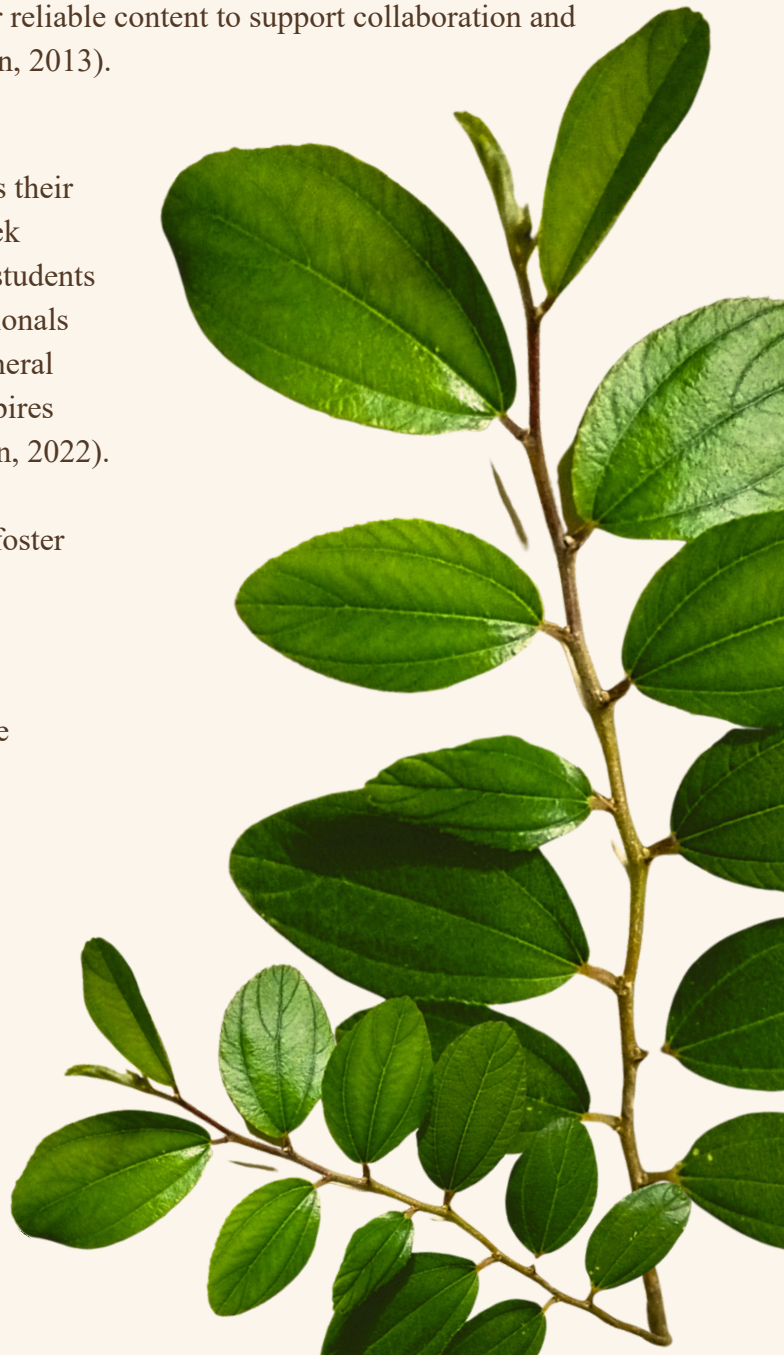
The WCW engages multiple audiences through its research, education, and outreach programs. Understanding these audiences ensures that content is relevant, accessible, and engaging. WCW's primary audiences include private landowners, students studying wildlife or natural resources, and natural resource professionals. Private landowners, such as farmers and rural homeowners, are interested in practical guidance for managing wildlife and improving habitats (Wisconsin Center for Wildlife, n.d.). Students seek learning opportunities, hands-on experiences, and career-relevant information, while professionals, including staff at agencies and conservation organizations, require up-to-date research, training, and networking opportunities. Secondary audiences include the general public, such as families, hikers, birdwatchers, and outdoor enthusiasts, who want approachable information about Wisconsin's wildlife and ways to engage with local nature. Conservation partners, including community leaders and environmental organizations, also form a secondary audience and look for reliable content to support collaboration and informed decision-making (Schweizer, Davis, & Thompson, 2013).

Audience Needs and Interests

These audiences care about WCW content because it meets their specific informational and practical needs. Landowners seek actionable solutions for wildlife and habitat management, students want resources that enhance knowledge and skills, professionals need research-backed content to stay informed, and the general public seeks engaging, easy-to-understand content that inspires participation in conservation (Outdoor Industry Association, 2022). By tailoring content to these needs, WCW can increase engagement, strengthen connections to local wildlife, and foster meaningful interactions across diverse audiences.

Providing Value and Relevance

The campaign delivers value by using a friendly, accessible tone that invites audiences into the conversation. Posts provide practical wildlife tips for landowners and outdoor enthusiasts, clear explanations of scientific concepts for students and the public, information about workshops, programs, and local opportunities, and spotlights on conservation efforts and community resources. This approach ensures that all audiences like students, professionals, landowners, and the general public, can access content that is actionable, informative, and engaging.



Addressing Key Questions and Challenges

Content is designed to answer common audience questions, such as how to manage wildlife on private land, where to find training or internship opportunities, updates on Wisconsin wildlife, and ways to get involved in conservation efforts. By answering these questions, WCW builds trust, fosters engagement, and positions itself as a reliable source for wildlife information across Wisconsin (Wisconsin Center for Wildlife, n.d.).

Collaborator & Competitor Analysis

Potential Collaborators

There are several potential collaborators that could help amplify the Wisconsin Center for Wildlife's (WCW) campaign. UW-Madison clubs and student organizations offer a built-in audience of passionate students and fresh perspectives, which can support engagement and content creation. Local nature and wellness influencers provide opportunities for authentic content that can reach wider audiences, while organizations such as the Wisconsin Native Plant Society share overlapping goals related to conservation and education (Wisconsin Center for Wildlife, n.d.). Collaborations offer strengths such as cross-promotion, educational alignment, advocacy synergy, authenticity, and engagement with younger audiences. Potential challenges include limited flexibility in collaboration, restricted digital engagement, and the risk of brand confusion. Nevertheless, these partnerships provide valuable learning opportunities, such as understanding effective science communication models, advocacy strategies, content trends, audience engagement techniques, and brand storytelling.

Competitors and Learning Opportunities

Several organizations serve as direct competitors, including the Wisconsin Humane Society Wildlife Rehabilitation Center in Milwaukee, the Wildlife in Need Center in Oconomowoc, and Wisconsin WildCare in the Madison area. These organizations share similar goals and maintain social media presences to engage the public. Their strengths include local brand recognition, established membership and donor networks, active citizen engagement, and cross-platform strategies. Weaknesses include small teams, limited accessibility, and restricted personalization of content. WCW can learn from these competitors by enhancing community engagement, improving cross-platform presence, strengthening donor and membership communication, and professionalizing educational content (Schweizer, Davis, & Thompson, 2013).



Influencers and Thought Leaders

Influencers such as Maya Higa and Dean Schneider provide insights into blending education with entertainment and creating visually engaging, personality-driven content. Higa’s content is fun and relatable but primarily targets Gen Z, which may limit reach among older demographics. Schneider’s work offers global visibility and strong brand positioning, but can sometimes prioritize sensationalized content over scientific accuracy. Thought leaders like David Mizejewski excel in professional, public-facing science communication, providing lessons on clarity and credibility, although his focus is less on short-form digital content (Mizejewski, n.d.). Collin O’Mara represents high-level conservation advocacy, offering opportunities to learn how to translate complex policy into accessible messaging, though his work is less focused on local, hands-on wildlife experiences (O’Mara, n.d.).

Differentiation in Tone, Content, & Positioning

WCW aims to differentiate itself by blending scientific credibility with approachable enthusiasm. Posts will translate ecological facts into simple, engaging language, balancing depth with accessibility. The content focuses on local issues, such as specific Madison-area nature centers, rather than general nature facts, and encourages actionable engagement among followers. By connecting residents to their local environment, WCW positions itself as an accessible entry point for learning about local nature while maintaining credibility and approachability (Wisconsin Center for Wildlife, n.d.).

Collaboration Strategies to Amplify Reach

Potential collaboration strategies include partnering with local nature centers and environmental organizations to tap into established audiences while providing local knowledge. Collaborations with UW departments and campus groups offer access to active student audiences and additional credibility. Engaging local influencers and community creators can help reach audiences who enjoy local experiences but may not follow traditional environmental pages. Together, these strategies can expand WCW’s reach and strengthen community engagement while maintaining the campaign’s educational and conservation-focused objectives (Outdoor Industry Association, 2022).

Content Strategy

The goal of this social media campaign is to increase public engagement with Wisconsin’s nature centers, encourage environmentally responsible behavior, and educate audiences about local efforts. The campaign, titled “Nature Centers Across Wisconsin,” will be executed entirely on Instagram and will consist of ten posts: five nature center spotlights and five informational/educational posts.

Platform Selection

Instagram has been chosen as the primary platform due to its highly visual nature and its capacity for storytelling through carousel posts and static graphics. Instagram is particularly effective for reaching WCW’s core audiences: Wisconsin residents, families, students, and outdoor enthusiasts. The platform allows for the use of branded visuals and shareable educational content, all of which align with the campaign’s objectives. Other platforms such as Facebook or LinkedIn were not prioritized for this project, as Instagram’s engagement and visual features best support both the educational and promotional goals of the campaign.



Content Types and Structure

The campaign content will be divided into two groups, each consisting of five posts, designed to complement each other while forming a single cohesive narrative. The first group, the nature center spotlights, will feature North Lakeland, Woodland Dunes, Beaver Creek, Marsh Haven, and Myrick Park. Each spotlight post will follow a consistent five-slide structure: title, location, offerings, significance, and fun facts. These posts will highlight the unique offerings of each center, such as trails, wildlife observation opportunities, and educational programming, while also emphasizing their importance in conservation and environmental education.

The second group, the informational posts, will focus on educational content directly related to Wisconsin nature centers. Topics include: how to responsibly visit Wisconsin nature centers, how to help out local centers, Wisconsin wildlife that can be spotted at these centers, ways to get kids engaged with nature, and fun facts about Wisconsin nature centers. These posts are designed to provide actionable information, encourage community engagement, and increase public knowledge of Wisconsin’s wildlife and conservation efforts. All posts will be visually consistent, using a Wisconsin-inspired color palette and clear typography, ensuring that the campaign feels unified.

Content Production Process

The content production process began with research and ideation, gathering information on each nature center’s programs, species, and educational offerings. The next step involved outlining the slide content for each post, ensuring that each slide communicates concise, accurate, and audience-appropriate information. Visual design used consistent templates across all posts, incorporating photos, filters, and clear typography to maintain brand recognition. Posts will be scheduled using Instagram’s scheduling options which helps target optimal engagement times such as evenings and weekends.



Content Production Schedule

Post #	Post Theme	Content Type	Purpose	Date	Expected Outcome
1	North Lakeland Nature Center	Carousel Post (5 slides)	Spotlight local nature center, highlight offerings	Week 1, Monday	Increase awareness of North Lakeland; +10% engagement on post
2	Responsible Nature Visits	Still Post (1 slide)	Provide educational tips for visiting nature centers sustainably	Week 1, Thursday	Educate audience; encourage responsible visitation behaviors
3	Woodland Dunes Nature Center	Carousel Post (5 slides)	Spotlight nature center, emphasize conservation importance	Week 2, Monday	Drive interest in local nature centers; +5% link clicks to WCW resources
4	Wisconsin Wildlife Species	Still Post (1 slide)	Introduce local species, promote wildlife knowledge	Week 2, Thursday	Increase engagement; audience learns about local species
5	Beaver Creek Nature Center	Carousel Post (5 slides)	Spotlight nature center and educational programming	Week 3, Monday	Raise awareness; audience inspired to visit centers
6	Getting Kids Engaged with Nature	Still Post (1 slide)	Provide family-friendly educational content	Week 3, Thursday	Encourage youth participation; +15% reach among family audiences
7	Marsh Haven Nature Center	Carousel Post (5 slides)	Spotlight conservation, trails, wildlife observation	Week 4, Monday	Increase public awareness and visitation; +10% profile visits
8	How to Help Local Nature Centers	Still Post (1 slide)	Give actionable guidance for volunteering or supporting centers	Week 4, Thursday	Promote engagement and volunteer sign-ups; clicks to WCW page
9	Myrick Park Nature Center	Carousel Post (5 slides)	Highlight community resources and educational opportunities	Week 5, Monday	Strengthen community awareness; inspire local visits
10	Nature Center Programming	Still Post (1 slide)	Share up-to-date educational programs and opportunities	Week 5, Thursday	Increase engagement, awareness of ongoing programs, and potential participation

Content Calendar

Week	Monday	Thursday	Notes
1	North Lakeland Nature Center	Responsible Nature Visits	Launch campaign with local highlight and educational post
2	Woodlands Dunes Spotlight	Wisconsin Wildlife Species	Continue alternating explore → learn format
3	Beaver Creek Spotlight	Getting Kids Engaged	Mix local spotlight with family-oriented content
4	Marsh Haven Spotlight	How to Help Local Nature Centers	Focus on local conservation & actionable guidance
5	Myrick Park Spotlight	Nature Center Programming	Wrap-up with community engagement & up-to-date program information

Targeted Marketing

Although this campaign was created in an organic marketing lens, Instagram promotion could help target specific Wisconsin-based audiences. Potential audience segments include young adults (ages 18-30) interested in outdoor activities and conservation, parents looking for family-friendly educational opportunities, and outdoor enthusiasts interested in wildlife protection. Boosted posts could focus on species spotlights, educational tips, or ways to support local centers. Promotions would primarily be used with location-based targeting within Wisconsin. This way the niche is reached and success is projected

Execution & Promotion Strategy

Posting Frequency and Timing

Posts will be published 2 times per week, alternating between nature center spotlights and an educational post. Content is strategically scheduled on weekday mornings from 9-11 a.m. This posting schedule ensures content reaches audiences when they are most likely to engage (Smith, 2021)



Traffic Goals and KPI Framework

The campaign aims to increase visits to partner nature center programs, conservation education pages, and WCW resources. Target outcomes include a 20-30% weekly increase in profile visits, a 10-20% increase in link clicks, and a 30-40% growth in reach over one month. Performance will be measured using a KPI framework tracking awareness, engagement, traffic, and audience interaction. Awareness metrics include reach, impressions, and follower growth. Engagement metrics include likes, comments, shares, saves, and reel watch time. Traffic and conversion metrics include link clicks, program sign-ups, volunteer participation, and donations. Sentiment metrics monitor comment tone, direct messages, and user-generated content. Analytics will be tracked weekly using Hootsuite to evaluate performance trends and inform optimization strategies (Morrison, 2020).

4–6 Week Campaign Structure

The campaign will follow a weekly structure that directly aligns with the content calendar and moves audiences from awareness to engagement to action. Weeks 1-2 are the awareness phase. These weeks introduce the campaign's core nature centers and foundational educational content. This phase builds baseline reach and introduces followers to both the locations and the ecological context. Weeks 3-4 are the engagement phase, where content shifts toward interactive, community-oriented posts. These posts encourage sharing, conversation, and increased profile visits and link clicks. Weeks 5-6 are the action phase; the final weeks focus on promoting real-world participation. These posts support conversions such as program sign-ups, volunteer interest, and donations.

Performance Optimization

Insights gathered during the campaign will guide future content. High-performing formats, such as reels with longer watch times or posts with high save/share rates, will receive greater emphasis. Posting times may be adjusted based on engagement trends, and content topics will be refined to focus on nature centers, wildlife themes, or conservation issues generating the most interest. Calls-to-action will be improved when link clicks or sign-ups lag behind engagement metrics. Audience feedback from comments and direct messages will also inform content adjustments. This iterative process ensures that WCW's campaign remains engaging, effective, and aligned with its goal of connecting audiences to Wisconsin's wildlife and conservation efforts (Smith, 2021; Morrison, 2020).



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