

2008 ANNUAL REPORT

Blue Deer Center • P.O. Box 905 • 1155 County Route 6 • Margaretville • NY • 12455-0905 • www.bluedeer.org

Dear Friend,

“Our way of life is carried on the shoulders of evolution. There may be problems still to be worked out, but new technologies will soon provide the solutions we need.”

So it seemed until now, and some would like to believe it still, but most of us aren't so sure anymore. Melting ice caps, extinction of species, scarcity of water, starvation of human populations have concerned us from a distance. Now we are being touched where we live, as we watch powerful institutions teeter and fail. We begin to sense how fragile our way of life really is. The word “unsustainable” takes on sinister immediacy. It's not just a concept anymore.

Even though some try to hide, eventually they will have to lift their heads out of the sand and look around for something to eat. What they see will break the denial. Two things will be obvious: 1) greedy disrespect for the natural world is not practical. At some moment it begins to destroy itself and its adherents. 2) We've been greedy and disrespectful for some time now.

We will then recall a sense we humans have of another way to live—a way that has to do with hearing the natural world speak of sacredness.

Listening to the sacred natural world is nothing new; wind, sun, fire, earth, mountains, rocks, waters, plants and animals spoke to our ancestors for thousands and thousands of generations. The world told the people how to survive and thrive, and the listening was effective; its proof is you and me, alive today.

Good news: The millennial wisdom is still kept by holders of many sacred traditions. *More good news:* These ways are timeless. They are just as practical now as they ever were. *Even more good news:* There is something in our soul that recognizes the wisdom teachings and practices. We

still resonate with them. They still open, instruct and move us.

What sustained our ancestors will sustain us. The way forward is the way back—back to hearing the world we are part of. Back to knowing that everything is alive, and that life is sacred. Back to the possibility of a future for humanity.

How do we get back? The ancestral teachings and practices need a home where they will be nourished, kept strong, and made available. To provide this home is the mission of the Blue Deer Center. Can there be a more important mission? One more deserving of your support, or one more timely?

Time is of the essence. Waiting for things to fall apart more won't do. We must be ready to serve the many who will feel the urgency of finding what the Blue Deer Center offers. We have a staff of incredible people on fire with enthusiasm and skill. What is needed now is funding to do the things any home must do: pay the mortgage, replace leaky roofs, retire oil-thirsty furnaces, and so on.

We are offering our people a new chance to connect with something very old: the ways to get along with the natural world.

Thank you deeply for the support you have given Blue Deer Center in the past. Thank you deeply for the support you will continue to give in the present. Together, we are sowing the seeds of a very rich and vibrant future.

With appreciation,



Eliot Cowan
Board Chair
Blue Deer Center



FROM THE BOARD

2008 was a year of transition and renewal for Blue Deer Center.

During the year, we said “good-bye and thank you” to several staff and volunteers, including David Wiley (board member), Maggie Klippel (director of programs), Christina Gravelle (facilities co-ordinator), Mary Long (web and graphic design), and Ashley Jacobsen (administrative support).

However, as one door closes, another opens. We are pleased to say “hello and welcome” to several new staff, and we are thrilled with the new energy that comes with the winds of change brought by Karen Aberle (board member), Peter Brown (fundraising), Melissa Clare (programs) and Maggie Flynn (web design). We increased our emphasis on “face to face” meetings this year, to deepen our grounding and cultural bonds.

Although 2008 was a slow year for program and revenue development, it afforded us the opportunity

to adopt a new “dynamic model” framework for budgeting, planning and intercommunications. This change eliminated the periodic cash flow crisis we’ve experienced in the past, and brought a new level of responsibility and accountability to our departments.

Dan Sprinkles
Board Member

We enter 2009 full of commitment, dedication and enthusiasm. In this annual report you’ll find highlights of last year’s activity and projects, and a glimpse into the projects and activity on our horizon.

We are humbled by the consistent generosity that has enabled our growth during the center’s first five years. We thank you deeply for the support you’ve given Blue Deer Center.

Comparing 2007 to 2008

- Our “contact list” increased 7% to 3,492 people
- Subscribers to our Enews Bulletin increased 14% to 1,293 people
- Same-month website visitors increased 13% to 665
- Fundraising revenue increased 48% and program revenue increased 11%
- The total number of donations increased 6% to 636
- The mean (adjusted average) donation amount increased 12% to \$65



Baby Bison's Gift of Story

Blue Deer Center is a place where the gods and spirits often manifest in "real world" events that bring a lesson with their story...

During the Summer of 2008, as they were being unloaded from a trailer, 13 bison escaped from a farm in Bovina, about 11 miles north of BDC. The driver and farmer refused to take responsibility for the animals, and they wandered away.

Area hunters took matters into their own hands. In short order, they "bagged" 12 of the 13 bison. Only a lone calf escaped the carnage.

During the following weeks, a strong reaction to the sport killings galvanized the local communities; calf-sightings were frequent, and the story became front-page news in the Catskills.

Weeks after her ordeal began, the baby bison was found calmly munching grass along the side of the BDC driveway. "For some reason, I was not really surprised to see it," comments Center



Director Patrick O'Rourke, who was welcoming folks to the PSM Advanced Class when the calf was spotted. "It just seemed like the right place for it to be."

For the next few days, the baby hung out around the goats at the BDC barn, eluding several capture attempts, until Animal Services was able to move her to a no-kill farm.

Someone asked Tatewari, the spirit of Grandfather Fire, about the meaning in the bison's journey to BDC, and we heard:

"It is about bringing back ancestral tradition. There used to be buffalo and elk and all kinds of animals here. The land was rich with the animals. This is a sign to all of you that what you are doing is to bring back and preserve connections. They are a living presence. This was a sign that this is possible. A miracle to you, but to us it is the obvious result of your work. Take heart from that."

2008 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS:

The Sacred Fire Community's **Lifeways** program facilitated a sacred Men's Retreat on the land and under the skies in February.

Kahuna Lei'ohu Ryder and Maydeen 'Iao brought the spirit of Aloha to BDC during a community weekend in April.

Eliot Cowan held three special five-day events: the Animal Totem workshop (April), a Healing Week (April), and a Healing Camp (October).

Ramakrishananda held three private yoga retreat weekends at BDC in July, August and September.

Plant Spirit Medicine Seminary announced that all future U.S. practitioner training courses will take place at the center, in addition to the annual PSM Association Conferences.

The **Huichol Art Project** reported sales of \$41,400 and an inventory of \$32,500, generating nearly \$50,000 in income for the community artisans of San Andres, Jalisco and Salvador Allende, Nayarit MX.

Dan Sprinkles and **Annie Eagen**, our resident marakames (shamans) in the Huichol Indian tradition, began offering shamanic healing sessions, monthly community fires, and Men's and Women's fires.

THE LAND & FACILITIES

2008 saw the expansion of our gardens, new paint for our emergency stairwells, a beautiful set of new stairs down to the lower fields (right), the cleanup of an old dump down by the river, and a major project undertaken by the town to shore up our riverbank and cliffside on the old county road to the River House (below).



In 2009, we hope to replace the aging roofs on both the Main House and Guest House. We also hope to complete the first phase of a new wood gasification furnace to replace our oil-dependant system, which will include piping the Guest House for hydronic heating...*financial gods willing!*



We are grateful to all of you who have donated your money, your time and your hearts to the upkeep of this amazing place.

Patrick O'Rourke
Center Director



Sharing Resources

Blue Deer Center always looks for ways to be a good neighbor to our local communities. In 2008, we took a big step and established a resource that can benefit dozens of area nonprofits for years to come. We became affiliated with the Foundation Center and opened one of their Cooperating Collection libraries at Blue Deer Center.

The Foundation Center is a national service organization, the leading authority on philanthropy. Founded in 1956, it maintains detailed information about more than 95,000 foundations and corporate donors and tracks well over a million grants made to nonprofit organizations.

Foundation Center lets nonprofits access this information for free. It is an important tool to connect grantseekers with potential grantmakers.

To serve local communities, the Foundation Center encourages libraries and community centers to open a Cooperating Collection—a funding information center offering resources, training and access to their online databases. There are hundreds of Cooperating Collections nationwide...and now there is one in Margaretville, NY.

The Blue Deer Center Cooperating Collection is open to the public five days a week.

We introduced the resource to the local nonprofit community by promoting and hosting a Grant-seeking Basics Seminar in November. The event was a great success. Representatives from over 40 regional nonprofit groups attended the class and luncheon, and several participants have returned to continue their research.

We're proud to support the growth of philanthropy in our town...because what goes around, comes around.

2008 FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS:

The **Fireball**, BDC's annual festival of fun and gratitude, grossed over \$10,000, thanks to the joint efforts of staff and volunteers

The Maine Community Foundation granted \$25,000 to the center's general operating fund

The A. Lindsay & Olive B. O'Connor Foundation awarded BDC a \$5,000 matching grant toward the (much needed) roof replacement

The **Wood-fired Boiler Campaign** kicked off and netted \$17,000 toward the installation of a new facility heating system

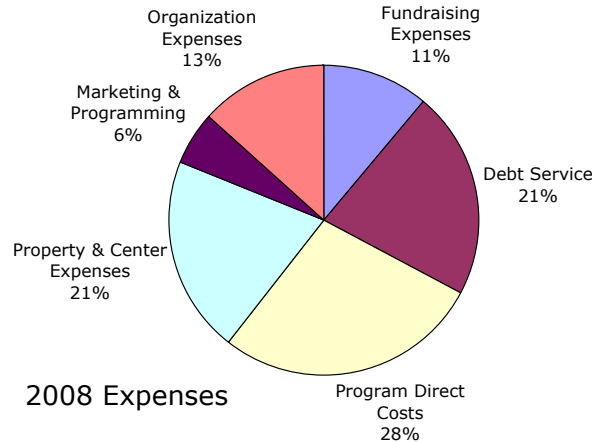
BDC changed its **fiscal year** and its **operating (budget) year** to reflect the calendar year, to facilitate tracking and reporting*

BDC **paid down** \$36,000 of principle on various

mortgages and loans; at year's end the center's outstanding mortgages and loans totalled \$410,654

BDC's **balance sheet** is very healthy; with assets of \$1,260,414 and total liabilities of \$453,335, the center's debt to asset ratio is 36%

BDC is **audited** every year by CPA firm Pattison, Koskey, Howe & Bucci, 502 Union St., Hudson, NY 12534*



*BDC was last audited for the 6/30/07 fiscal year. A review was completed for the short year ending 12/31/07 to change our fiscal year to the calendar year beginning 01/01/09.

BDC Year-to-Year Comparison	2008	% total	% CHANGE	2007	% total
INCOME					
Fundraising Revenue (in cash)	\$ 196,807	61%	48%	\$ 133,105	54%
Program Revenue	\$ 127,113	39%	11%	\$ 114,203	46%
Total Revenue	\$ 323,920	100%	31%	\$ 247,308	100%
EXPENSES					
Fundraising Expenses	\$ 33,599	11%	264%	\$ 9,225	3%
Debt Service	\$ 64,370	21%	1%	\$ 63,625	24%
Program Direct Costs	\$ 83,100	28%	42%	\$ 58,325	22%
Property & Center Expenses	\$ 61,405	21%	1%	\$ 60,765	23%
Marketing and Enrollment	\$ 17,322	6%	-34%	\$ 26,379	10%
Organization Expenses	\$ 39,629	13%	21%	\$ 32,805	12%
Construction				\$ 12,524	5%
Total Expenses	\$ 299,425	100%	14%	\$ 263,648	100%
NET FUND BALANCE	\$ 24,495		167%	\$ (16,340)	

VISIONING 2009

Blue Deer Center is maturing as an operation and as an organization. We have been seasoned by the successes and challenges we've encountered along the way.

In 2009, we plan a new approach to both program development and pricing. We are revising our program structure to allow for shorter events that encourage visits to BDC while lessening the expense to both providers and participants.

We plan a new approach to marketing our programs. We will "go local" by utilizing more "grass roots" communications channels, but we will also "go national" by utilizing professional public relations consultants to "create a buzz" about BDC.

In development, we will work to meet BDC's financial needs by not only communicating consistently with our constituents, but also through increased grant submissions, increased outreach to prospective donors (with a focus on our monthly pledge base), and increased special events that involve participation of our local supporters.

In facilities management, we will need to make hard decisions about financial priorities as our buildings' roofs demand replacement and our

Our fundraising goal for 2009 operating expenses is \$262,500. We thank you for your generous support in the coming year.

Peter Brown
Fundraising Director

heating system demands that we find an alternative to oil. We have a real need for \$50,000 in capital improvements to the roof, and \$35,000 for the completion and expansion of a new wood-fired boiler system.

Blue Deer Center, and the land that holds it, offers the world a place for coming together in peace, for transformation and healing. We are honored to be a part of its manifestation.

Blue Deer Center Staff

Board of Directors

Karen Aberle
Eliot Cowan
Dan Sprinkles

Liz Parker
Adopt-a-Room
Program
Annie Smith
Huichol Art Project

Executive Officers

Keiko Cronin
Safia Johnson
Amanda Kerner

Staff Volunteers

Dorine Karlin
Donor Gratitude
Jane Wollack
Credit Processing

Directors

Peter Brown
Fundraising
Melissa Clare
Program Offerings
Linda Felch
Administration
Patrick O'Rourke
Center Director

Donor Gratitude Committee

Marilyn Berta, Dorine
Karlin, Amanda Kerner,
Courtney Kerner,
Maggie Klippel,
Shuilan May, Lynne
Oyama,
Melissa Van Der Schyff

Coordinators

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Website &
Graphic Design
Barbara Nill
Board Secretary &
Special Events

Consultants

Maggie Freier
Legal Matters
Mark Gionfriddo
River House
Site Improvements

2008 DONORS

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