



Merry Lea
Environmental Learning Center
of Goshen College

Strategic Plan 2019-2023

Root A — Educating with Relevance and Influence

The diverse landscapes of Merry Lea provide an educational springboard for people of all ages to develop knowledge, behaviors, and skills that will contribute to a healthier world. The reality of climate change informs the interdisciplinary learning and research within the regional watershed and the global context.

Root C — Shepherding Resources

The team members, land, facilities, and financial base of Merry Lea empower a healthy pursuit of the mission. Careful balancing of these resources will guide the decisions needed to achieve realistic, credible and attractive programmatic directions.

Root B — Strengthening Relationships

The 50-year history of Merry Lea generates an extensive array of relationships in the community, the region, and beyond. Nurturing mutually beneficial relationships with local schools, Goshen College, other organizations and individuals will create ongoing vibrancy in the field of environmental education.

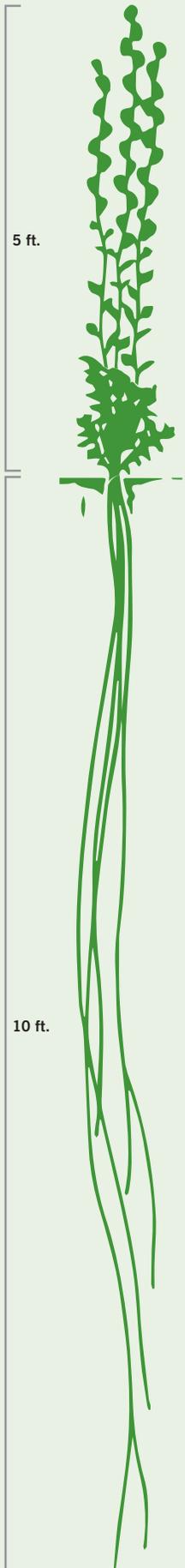
Root D — Communicating Effectively

The robust distinctives of Merry Lea invite people to engage in the array of learning experiences offered. Ongoing work on communication, marketing, and recruitment will fill programs with a diverse set of individuals passionate about ecology, global realities, faith, and their connections.

The grandeur of deep prairie plant roots!

Sticky Purple Geranium
Geranium viscosissimum

Compass Plant
Silphium laciniatum



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Process Context

This is the latest in a series of strategic plans generated every five years. Merry Lea team and board members were involved in a process that included working both in small groups and as a full team. The planning process drew on the SOAR method, where strengths and opportunities are the foundation for the future, and aspirations and anticipated results frame our strategic efforts. The roots and key aspirations below guide an iterative pursuit of our mission, honed over time, in all programs.

Root A — Educating with Relevance and Influence

We aspire to:

- Strengthen programmatic curricula in to ensure transformative learning and addressing regional and global realities
- Exercise leadership in environmental education through every team member, our graduates, and our professional networks

Root B — Strengthening Relationships

We aspire to:

- Deepen relationships and collaborations within the Goshen College community
- Nurture relationships with regional neighbors that yield transformative experiences for all participants

Root C — Shepherding Resources

We aspire to:

- Determine a realistic, balanced and effective staffing model for delivering all programs within the limits of our resources
- Use our existing land and facilities as a foundation for creating experiential learning opportunities

Root D — Communicating Effectively

We aspire to:

- Strengthen communication about the distinctive and inspirational aspects of all programs offered by Merry Lea
- Influence the actions of our various audiences in ways that lead to a healthier region and world

Application

The mission and vision of Merry Lea is achieved through the purposeful, interconnected and interdisciplinary design of all Merry Lea programs. The four roots and key aspirations are amplified through detailed strategic work in each of the programmatic areas at Merry Lea: preK-12 school groups, public programs, land management, the sustainable farm, the Agroecology Summer Intensive, the Sustainability Leadership Semester, the Institute for Ecological Regeneration, and the Master of Arts in Environmental Education. (Detailed action steps and metrics are available from program directors.) No program stands alone!