



RTPI Rising

A Bold, New
Strategic
Vision for the
Roger Tory
Peterson
Institute

Includes 2020 and
2019 Annual Reports



Roger Tory
Peterson
INSTITUTE



A letter from our Board Chair, Douglas L. Schutte

2020 began with Covid and ended with an electrical fire. In between these unfortunate events, RTPI's board of directors invested in an operational restructuring that welcomed Arthur Pearson as our first-ever Chief Executive Officer.

Arthur comes to us from Chicago, where he spent more than 25 years with the Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelly Foundation, a major funder of the arts, conservation and museum collections. He has a special passion for helping nonprofit organizations build the operational and financial capacities they need to achieve their mission goals.

Over the past year, Arthur worked hand-in-glove with Molly Penn of Penn Creative Strategy to lead the board and staff of RTPI through a rigorous strategic planning process. The result is RTPI Rising, a bold new strategic vision for growing and sustaining RTPI as a treasured cultural resource for art and nature lovers in Jamestown and Chautauqua County, across all of Western New York, throughout the United States and beyond.

To give wings to our new strategic plan, we launched The Phoenix Fund — a campaign to build operational capacity. As board chair, I am proud to announce that we have raised more than \$1 million toward our Phoenix Fund goal of \$1.4 million. Raising the balance over the course of three years will help build RTPI into the strong, resilient organization we need to fulfill our promise as “the living embodiment of the Peterson field guide.”

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Douglas L. Schutte'.



A message from our CEO, Arthur Pearson

Roger Tory Peterson traveled the world in search of birds. Among the few he never found was the phoenix. A bird of myth, of legend. The perfect metaphor for our new strategic plan.

RTPI Rising is our blueprint for emerging from the literal ashes of a fire and a global pandemic. It is our declaration that art and nature remain as important today as when Roger Tory Peterson combined the two to publish the first modern field guide at the height of the Great Depression. It is our pledge to building a strong, resilient organization to champion Roger's legacy and nurture the next generation of nature artists and nature conservationists.

Thanks to generous leadership gifts from our board and regional foundations, our new strategic plan is off to a great start. We've invested in new staff who are reinvigorating our programs and making RTPI accessible to more visitors. We've launched three major new exhibitions. We've designed a new website and branding that will carry our mission to new audiences. We've transformed an underused multipurpose room into a vibrant Art and Nature Lab – our first dedicated space for youth and families.

We've come a long way in a very short amount of time. The road ahead is steep. Lots of challenges remain. But we are definitely on the right track.

RTPI Rising. More than mere metaphor —
they're words we live by.





The background of the entire page is a dark, textured image of a park. It shows silhouettes of trees and foliage in shades of green and brown. In the lower portion, there are faint, light-colored figures of people walking along a path, and an American flag is visible on the left side.

RTPI Rising

A Strategic Plan for the Roger Tory Peterson Institute

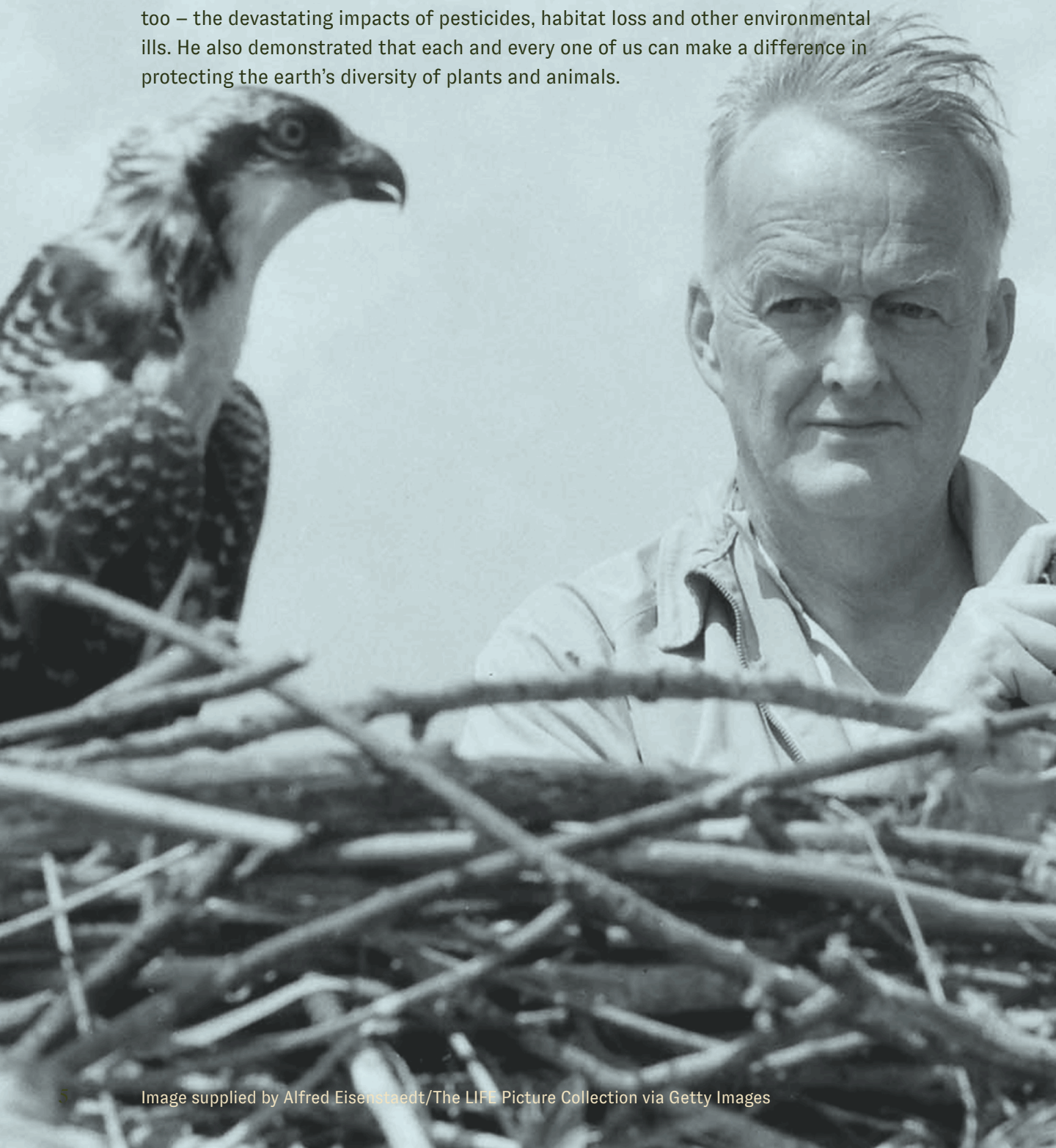
Over the course of three years, RTPI will transform itself into a nature art museum of national significance. It will inform, inspire and enlighten a large, diverse audience through exhibitions and programming at the nexus of art and conservation. It will nurture the next generation of nature artists and conservationists. It will drive tourism to the greater Jamestown community. It will build the necessary operational and financial capacity to be a model of nonprofit sustainability. RTPI will matter to its community — locally, regionally, nationally.

Each year, in pursuit of the overall strategic plan goals, RTPI will develop an annual implementation plan inclusive of specific strategies and measurable outcomes. At the end of each year, RTPI will evaluate the success of its plans and share the results with our community of friends and supporters.

A special thank you to Molly Penn of Penn Creative Strategy for her expert guidance of RTPI's staff and board throughout the strategic planning process.

Legacy

Roger Tory Peterson's signature contribution to the arc of the American Conservation Movement was the modern field guide. Trained as an artist, Peterson understood the power of art to inform, inspire and illuminate people about the natural world. His illustrated field guides allowed for easy, accurate identification in the field. The experience of using the field guide has helped millions of people across the globe really see the natural world. To be inspired by it. To fall in love with it. Throughout his multifaceted career, Peterson helped us to see the challenges, too – the devastating impacts of pesticides, habitat loss and other environmental ills. He also demonstrated that each and every one of us can make a difference in protecting the earth's diversity of plants and animals.





A Renewed Vision

The Roger Tory Peterson Institute is a living embodiment of the Peterson Field Guide. It is a trusted source of information, inspiration and illumination. It is a gateway to the natural area wonders that inspired Roger to his career as one of the world's premier artist-naturalists and international ambassador for the protection of nature. It is a leader for driving the cultural economy of Jamestown, NY and the surrounding area.

Mission

Home to the largest collection of Roger Tory Peterson's work, the Roger Tory Peterson Institute is a leader for the study, exhibition and nurturing of art that matters to the planet. Through world class exhibitions and programs, RTPI illuminates the beauty of nature; challenges us to confront environmental issues of regional, national and global concern; and inspires us to preserve the earth's biodiversity — with a particular emphasis on the natural area wonders of Western New York.

Values

Art Matters — among the many ways to raise awareness about conservation, art has a unique and underutilized power to engage hearts, minds and hands

Biodiversity Matters — RTPI embraces the full diversity of the biological community

People Matter — RTPI embraces the full diversity of the human community

Sanctuary Matters — RTPI is a safe space, a refuge for nature, a place of reflection, renewal and rejuvenation for people

Speaking Out Matters — RTPI takes no sides regarding politics but will always side with nature, no matter the politics

Strategic Plan Goals

Goal I: Build RTPI into a nature art museum of regional & national significance

The living embodiment of the Peterson field guide, RTPI uses art as the lens through which to engage visitors about the natural world. Each exhibition engages deeply on multiple levels: 1) the exceptional beauty and wonder of nature, 2) the critical conservation challenges of our time, and 3) the creative solutions to those challenges. In short, RTPI matters for its commitment to exhibiting art with intention: Art that Matters to the Planet.

- 1 Establish RTPI as a leading curatorial voice on nature art and the critical conservation issues of our time**
- 2 Forge strategic alliances with regional and national nature art groups to raise awareness of art as a powerful conservation tool and elevate RTPI's stature as a nature art museum**
- 3 Nurture the next generation of artists and conservationists in pursuit of Art that Matters to the Planet**

Goal II: Build RTPI into a conservation organization of regional value

Born and raised in Jamestown, NY, Roger Tory Peterson was inspired to his future career by the nature of Chautauqua County. RTPI has an obligation to ensure that the nature that inspired Roger is accessible and healthy enough to inspire the next generation of artists, conservationists and those who simply love the natural beauty of the Chautauqua region.

- 1 Build RTPI into a gateway organization for nature and birding in Western New York and Northwestern Pennsylvania**
- 2 Establish programs that incorporate art in cultivating the next generation of conservationists**
- 3 Develop a regional ecological services business plan that advances mission and financial goals**



Goal III: Drive the cultural economy of Jamestown and the Chautauqua County region

Jamestown, NY is exceptional for being a small town with a wealth of high-value cultural attractions, including institutions dedicated to three hometown heroes of national significance: Roger Tory Peterson, Lucille Ball and Robert H Jackson. RTPJ – with its combination of nature preserve, architecturally-significant building, world class art collection, enhanced exhibitions and programs – is poised to fulfill its potential as a major cultural attraction for Jamestown and the Chautauqua region.

- 1** Establish RTPJ as a “go to” cultural resource for art and nature lovers
- 2** Launch a series of annual events that become treasured community traditions
- 3** Expand marketing efforts with a concentration on regional markets

Goal IV: Build operational and financial capacity necessary to support the strategic vision

Fundamental to the success of any nonprofit organization is a strong governance, operational and financial infrastructure.

- 1** Establish and implement administrative policies, procedures and protocols in line with industry best practices
- 2** Develop new earned income opportunities and expand fundraising efforts to grow total revenues by 25% per year
- 3** Expand the Peterson Society planned giving program





Our People

New staff, new voices, new life.



Arthur Pearson, CEO

A Chicago native, Arthur has a richly varied background in the arts, conservation, museum collections and philanthropy. Over the course of 25 years with the Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation, he worked hand-in-glove with a large portfolio of nonprofit groups, with an emphasis on helping them to build the operational and financial capacities they need to achieve their mission goals. Arthur is the author of “Force of Nature,” the award-winning biography of George Fell, father of the Natural Areas Movement and the driving force in the founding of The Nature Conservancy.

Melissa Post, Chief Curator

An art and nature enthusiast, Melissa hails from New England. Observing wildlife and communicating cross-culturally has informed her life. Volunteering with the National Park Service also illuminated new paths of engaging with audiences. Melissa’s dynamic arts career includes collaborations with artists and collectors, galleries and museums. A seasoned curator and manager of a world-class visiting artist residency program, Melissa looks forward to channeling her personal and professional experiences into compelling exhibitions and programs centered on Art that Matters to the Planet. She received her Masters’ degree from the Bard Graduate Center.



Maria Ferguson, Collections Curator

Having grown up in nearby Erie, PA, Maria is excited to be part of the curatorial team at RTPI. A lover of animals, nature, and art, Maria is thrilled to be in a position which celebrates the vital role of all three in our lives. She is passionate about the important role of art and museums in shaping communities, and looks forward to implementing dynamic exhibitions and programs at RTPI. Maria is an experienced registrar and has worked primarily with museum collections and exhibitions. She studied Art History and Museum Studies (M.A.) at the University of Memphis, and Art (B.A.) at Penn State University.

George Harper, Development & Communications Director

Prior to coming to RTPI, George was a tenured biology professor, teaching courses in Ecology and Evolution with published research on coral snakes and their venom, and on non-venomous species of snakes that mimic coral snakes. George has degrees in biology from SUNY Fredonia (B.S.) and UNC Chapel Hill (Ph.D.). Prior to embarking on a career in biology, he was an IRS auditor and a self-employed tax preparer. George has a lifelong interest in nature and the fascinating organisms that inhabit it, and enjoys hiking, camping, and other activities that allow him to spend time in nature.





Megan Sorenson, Major Gifts Officer

After beginning her career at a major book publishing company in New York City, Megan was drawn back to Western New York by its natural beauty and the proximity of family. For the past decade, she served Chautauqua Institution – most recently as its Director of Donor Communications and Community Engagement. An experienced fundraiser, grant writer, and marketing and communications professional, Megan is excited to help advance RTPI as a nexus of art and conservation. She believes in the power of nature to make us better people and in art’s ability to inspire us to become better stewards of our planet. Megan enjoys traveling, hiking, and spending time with her husband and their bubbly daughter.

David Niles, Programs and Events Manager

After living in New York City for the last 26 years, David is excited to be back in Chautauqua County and part of the team at RTPI. He spent the last 7 years as Director of Service at upscale event companies (Canard Inc, and Cloud Catering and Events). Before that, David was a professional AEA actor based out of New York. He left Western New York after high school to attend The American Musical and Dramatic Academy, and spent many years performing all over the United States. He now resides in Jamestown with his wife, Julia, and their fat cat, Abby.



Amy Hudson, Operations and Administration Assistant

Lifelong resident of the Jamestown area, Amy oversees the Visitor Experience Team helping to ensure the highest quality experience for visitors to the museum, as well as expanding/maintaining the museum gift shop. Amy also provides administrative support for both George Harper, Development Director, and Arthur Pearson, CEO. She brings a background of 25+ years of customer service/retail management to the Visitor Experience team. Her interests have always included a love of the outdoors, with nature photography topping the list. Striving to share the essence of a moment or memory through photos, has been a passion for a very long time.



Amelia Duffee, Visitor Experience Associate

Nature lover, recycling enthusiast, along with a divine appreciation for art brings Amelia to her dream job working at RTPI. Amelia is a proud mother of two who grew up in the scenic woodland landscapes outside of Bemus Point. Spending much of her time in the woods, listening to the birds, critters, and the rustling of the leaves always brought such joy and peace which grew into an immense appreciation for the natural world around us. Amelia has over 25 years of experience in the hotel, restaurant, and retail industries and is thrilled to be in a museum setting interacting with guests from near and far.

Emily Nelson, Visitor Experience Associate

Raised in Busti, NY, Emily's love for nature began on the acreage of her family residence and flourished at the Jamestown Audubon as a nature education counselor - logging over 500 hours as a volunteer. This experience influenced her decision to attend the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry in Syracuse to major in Landscape Architecture before realizing her passion for environmental education and pursued a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Communication. Emily is thrilled to be a part of RTPI to continue to educate her community about the enriching connection between nature and art.



Twan Leenders, Senior Advisor for Conservation

Born and raised in The Netherlands, Twan's journey to Jamestown covered several continents and involved more than a decade of living and working in the rainforests of Central America. An animal ecologist by training, his work primarily focuses on conservation of endangered species and their habitats. If he had to choose a favorite animal, frogs would probably be a top pick, but Twan has worked on many different subjects over his 25+ year career as a conservation biologist. An avid photographer and author of several field guides, Twan loves to share his experiences with the public. At RTPI he advises the curatorial team on all things nature and guides the Institute's birding and natural history programs.

RTPI Rising

From Fire to
Full Recovery

12/3/20

Electrical
Fire at RTPI

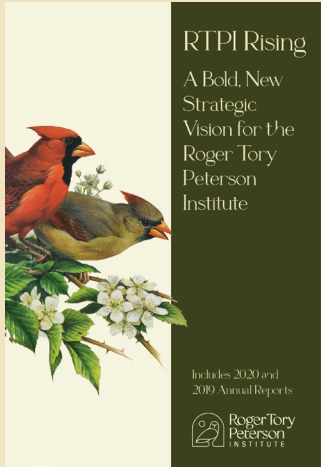


Building
Restoration
Begins

2/15/21

4/23/21

Strategic Plan
Approved

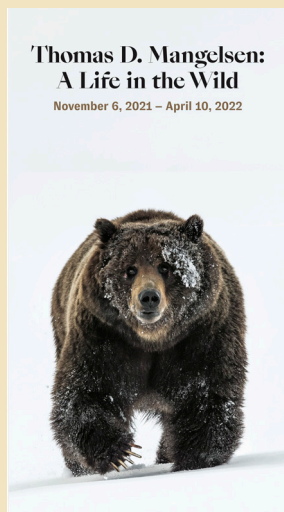


RTPI Reopens -
Art of the Osprey
Exhibition

5/29/21



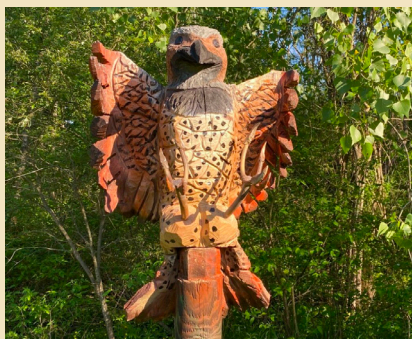
Art that Matters to the Planet Exhibition Opens



Thomas D. Mangelsen: A Life in the Wild Exhibition Opens

6/12/21

Art & Nature Trail Ribbon Cutting



8/18/21

8/28/21

Art & Nature Lab Mural Unveiling



11/6/21

The Phoenix Fund

The Phoenix Fund is a three-year campaign to build RTPI into a strong, effective and resilient organization in pursuit of our new strategic goals.

Rebuilding Staff

First of all, we need to rebuild our staff to meet the challenges and opportunities of the new strategic plan. The Phoenix Fund allows us to hire new staff right away so we can grow programming and expand the earned and contributed income we'll need to sustain RTPI long term.

Emergency Preparedness

Secondly, we need to be better prepared for emergencies. The fire last December was a vivid reminder that accidents happen. Sometimes, too, old equipment — like air conditioning — simply wears out and needs to be replaced immediately. The Phoenix Fund allows us to establish a building reserve fund to ensure that, no matter what happens, we are able to respond right away to protect the Peterson Collection and keep the museum running.

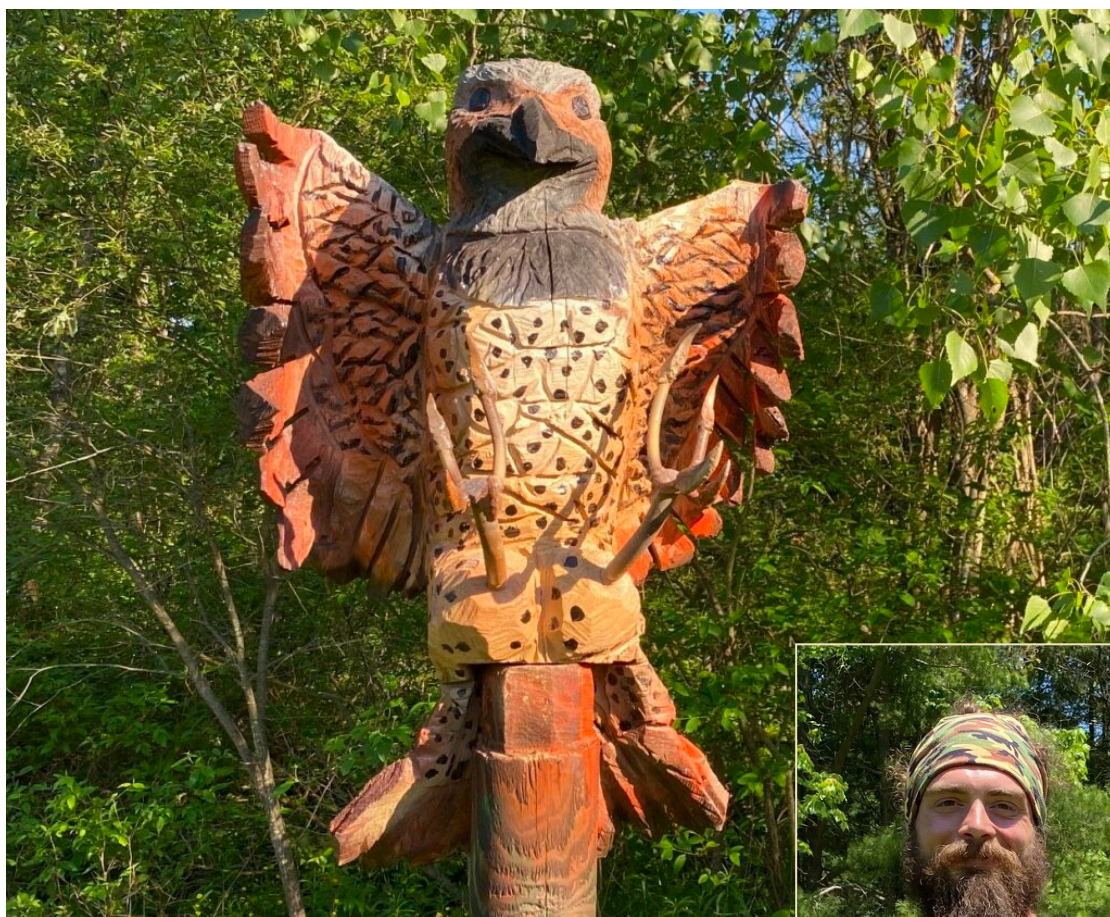
Recognizing the importance of the Phoenix Fund, our board was the first to step up with leadership gifts totaling \$400,000. The Lenna Foundation and the Ralph C. Sheldon Foundation made significant three-year commitments to the Fund. The Roger Tory Peterson Foundation earmarked an additional \$500,000 to establish the building reserve fund.

RTPI Board Leadership Gifts	\$ 400,000
Lenna Foundation	\$ 150,000
Ralph C. Sheldon Foundation	\$ 45,000
RTPI Foundation	\$ 500,000
<hr/>	
Raised to Date	\$ 1,095,000
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Balance to be Raised	\$ 305,000
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Total Campaign Goal	\$ 1,400,000

We’re nearly there. Increased support from our donors and patrons over the next three years will help us achieve our goal of raising \$1.4 million.

Art and Nature for Youth and Families

With inspiration and lead funding from the Bereda Children's Fund at the Chautauqua Regional Community Foundation, RTPI inaugurated a new Art and Nature Trail and a new Art and Nature Lab — our first dedicated spaces for youth and families.



We commissioned Vince Liuzzo — a local artist and certified arborist — to carve six sculptures and site them along our main nature trail. Open 365 days year, sunrise to sunset, the Art and Nature trail features sculptures of birds, plants and animals that Roger would have encountered in our woods as a young boy growing up in Jamestown.



We commissioned another artist — Erin Ruffino, a recent graduate of SUNY Fredonia — to execute a mural inside the museum, which has transformed an underutilized multipurpose room into an Art and Nature Lab. The mural celebrates Roger’s transformative role as the Father of the Modern Field Guide.

The Art and Nature Lab also provides young folks the opportunity to experience their own “Roger moment.” An entire dry erase wall is the perfect canvas for them to try their hand at drawing whatever captures their imagination along the Art and Nature Trail.

Art and Nature Lab and Trail Funders

Bereda Childrens Fund at CRCF

Robert F Schumann Foundation

Holmberg Foundation

Cummins Foundation

Jessie Smith Darrah Charitable Trust

A new Plan, a new Brand

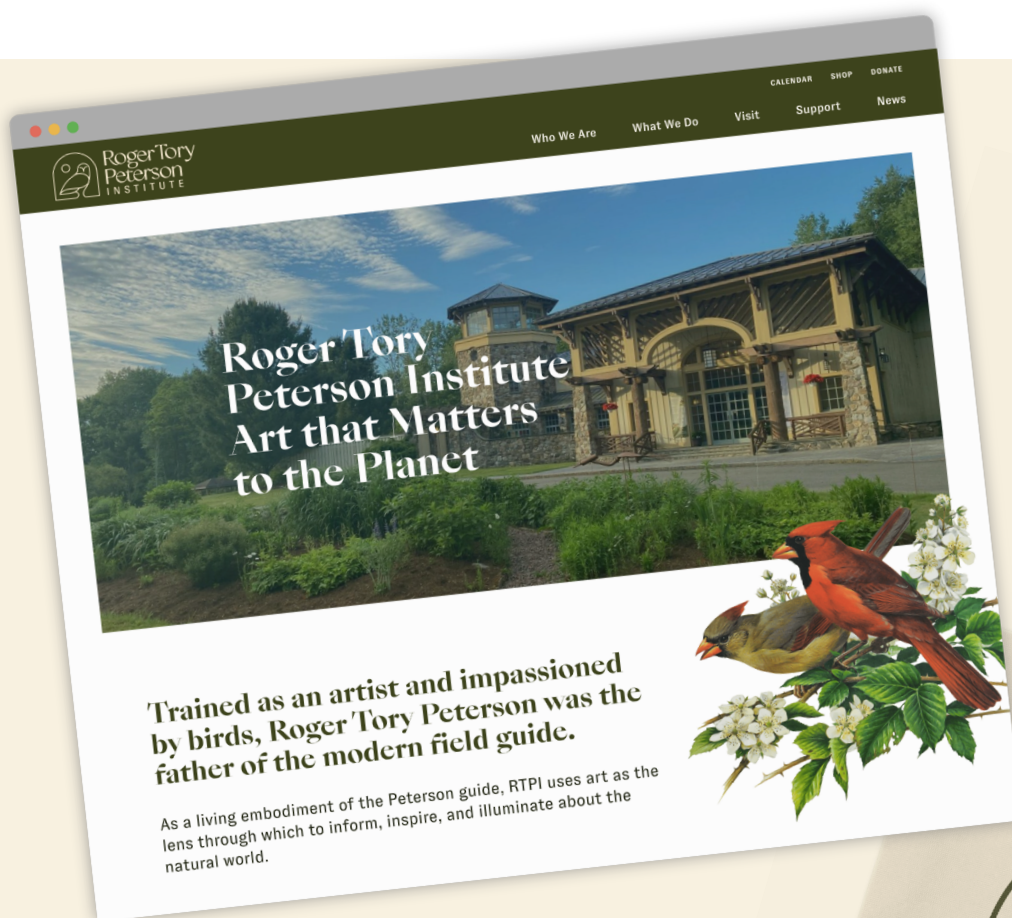
As part of our strategic plan, we wanted to renivogorate RTPI with a new look and feel. We engaged Tanager Creative, a design agency that works exclusively with nature and science organizations. Tanager guided us through a process that allowed us to channel Roger's aesthetic legacy into a contemporary and sophisticated design.



We began the project with Mood Boards (above) that inspired the look and feel of the new brand. We drew on Roger's work, his artistic influences, and other creative works of Roger's era. This mood provided the creative foundation for the branding and web design process that followed. Rich colors, embellished forms, and ornate typography are the key attributes we integrated into the new branding.



A key goal in our rebranding process was to honor RTPI's history while elevating our identity and digital presence to contemporary museum standards. The new logo exemplifies this ideal — paying homage to Roger's iconic Snowy Owl artwork with a fresh and elegant graphic twist.



The culmination of the project was a new website, which enables us to host more content, tell a richer story and greatly expand our reach beyond the walls of our museum.

Please visit www.rtpi.org today to explore our new brand and digital space.



Annual Reports 2020 and 2019

Balance Sheet

2020

2019

Assets		
Current Assets	\$ 299,271	\$ 644,486
Property and Equipment (net)	10,037	13,295
Long-term Promises to Give free rent and utilities	2,711,433	2,774,385
Collections*	0	1,664,819
Other Assets	171,317	72,049
Total Assets	\$ 5,049,714	\$ 6,774,436
Liabilities and Net Assets		
Current Liabilities	\$ 37,848	\$ 74,047
Deferred Income	0	44,078
Total Liabilities	37,848	118,125
Net Assets		
Without Donor Restrictions	1,249,502	1,230,051
With Donor Restrictions	3,762,364	5,426,260
Total Net Assets	5,011,866	6,656,311
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$ 5,049,714	\$ 6,774,436

Statement of Activities and Changes in Net Assets

2020

2019

Revenues, support and gains (losses):		
Contributions and grants	\$ 355,621	\$452,311
Investment Return	180,267	285,102
Service Agreement Revenue	93,857	202,020
Program Revenues	9,027	119,179
Distribution from funds held by other	45,297	44,658
Current Liabilities	37,848	74,047
Museum Store, net of cost of sales	(12,308)	10,366
Other income and reimbursements	112	2,787
Forgiveness of PPP Loan	99,942	0
Total Revenue and Support	\$ 954,867	\$ 1,304,665
Expenses		
Programs	\$ 1,251,975	\$ 882,743
Management and General	66,326	117,067
Development	151,264	72,769
Collection Reclassification*	1,129,747	0
Total Expenses	\$2,599,312	\$1,072,579
Changes in Net Assets*	(1,644,455)	232,086
Prior year adjustment	0	2,502
Net Assets at Beginning of Year	6,656,311	6,421,723
Net Assets at End of Year	\$ 5,011,866	\$ 6,656,311

* RTPI harbors the largest collection of Roger Tory Peterson's artwork, films, photographs and related materials. Since the collection was established in 1993, RTPI has recorded the collection as an asset on its financial statements. In 2021, in preparation to apply for accreditation by the American Alliance of Museums, RTPI adopted a new Code of Ethics, which states, "Since the permanent collection is held in trust for the public, it shall not be treated as a financial asset nor shall it be capitalized in RTPI's financial statements." This complies with the Statement of Financial Accounting Standards No. 116, which states, "works of art, historical treasures, and similar items need not be capitalized if they are added to collections that are held for public exhibition, education or research in furtherance of public service rather than financial gain." Accordingly, RTPI removed its collection from its financial statements, resulting in a one-time "paper" correction of \$1.6 million. Absent of this correction, RTPI would have posted an end-of-year surplus of \$20,723. RTPI retains the collection, which is safe and sound and stewarded in accordance with best practices in the museum field.

Thank You to our 2020 Donors

\$25,000 and above

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\$1 - \$99

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