

### OUR MISSION

The Friends of Willow River and Kinnickinnic State Parks, Inc., (Friends) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, founded in 1990 by a group of dedicated local citizens who saw a need for outdoor education and an opportunity to partner with local state parks to develop and support a range of programming based on the parks' abundant natural resources.

## OUR VISION

The new Willow River Nature Center will serve as one of Wisconsin's leading nature centers – a gateway to experience Wisconsin's natural environment. It will provide exceptional value and leadership through education, conservation and recreation.



# paths to discovery

Each of us travels our own, individual path through life. But how much attention are we paving to what we see along the way?

In a world where more and more children grow up in urban settings, and their view to the outside world may be on a screen rather than through a window, it is more important than ever that young people and their parents not only have opportunities to connect with nature but understand why it matters.

For more than 30 years, the nature center at Willow River State Park has met the needs of St. Croix Valley residents and visitors, providing an exceptional means to experience Wisconsin's natural environment. But now our community has outgrown it. The existing building is too small and, on top of that, has serious structural issues.

Paths to Discovery: The Campaign for the Willow River Nature Center will allow us to continue to provide a rich and growing array of experiences that leverage Willow River State Park and its diversity of ecosystems to engage and inform the more than one million yearly park visitors.

Our plans include construction of a new nature center that will be a gathering place facilitating connections to the natural world of Willow River State Park. We also want to increase staff and programming and take environmental education to the next level via projects that directly improve the park, the community, and the world around us.

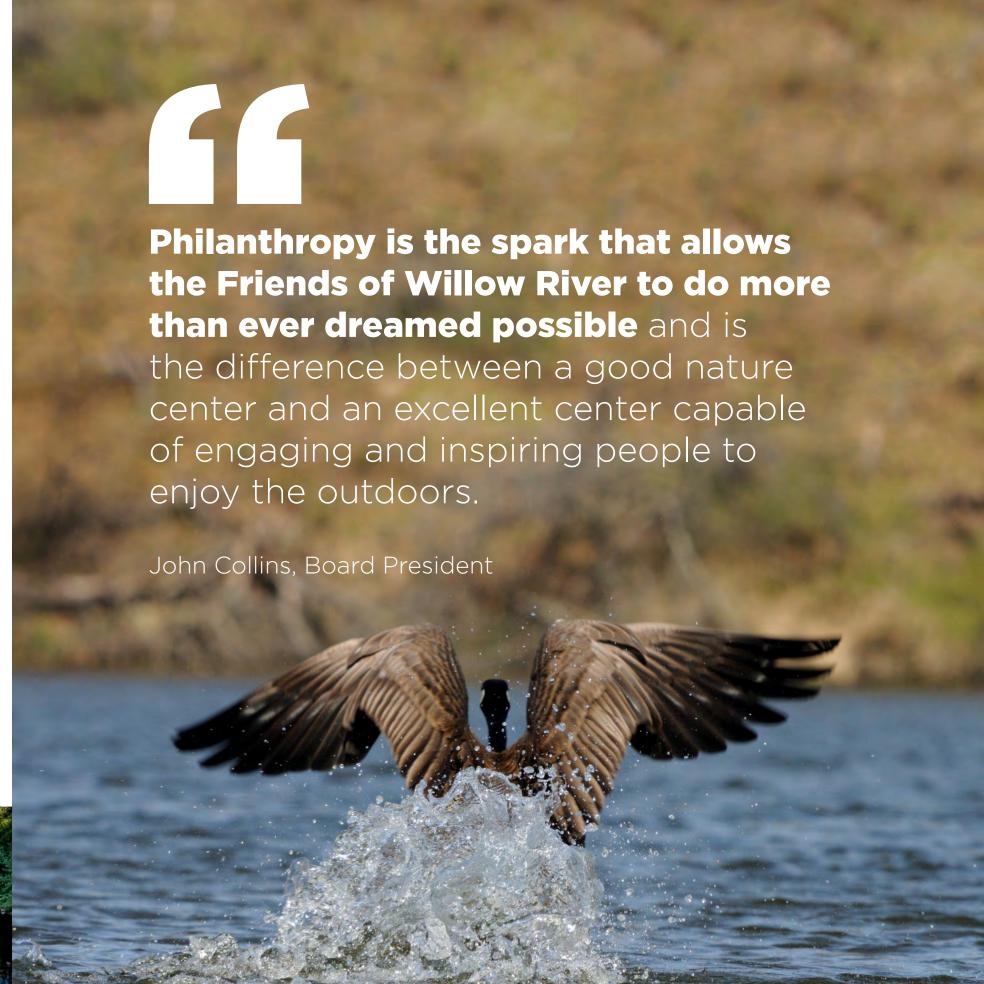
There's a reason we call it the great outdoors. Let's enjoy it more. Understand it better. Care for it as deeply as we can. Share in our common need to preserve the precious gift we have been given. And do it together, by supporting Paths to Discovery: The Campaign for the Willow River Nature Center.

The Board of Directors of the Friends is pleased and honored to affirm their unequivocal support of this Campaign and the outcomes it seeks to achieve. Please take a few minutes to review our ambitious yet, with your support, easily achievable plans, and then join us in this remarkable journey.

John Collins

Friends of Willow River & Kinnickinnic State Parks. Inc.





# BY THE **NUMBERS**

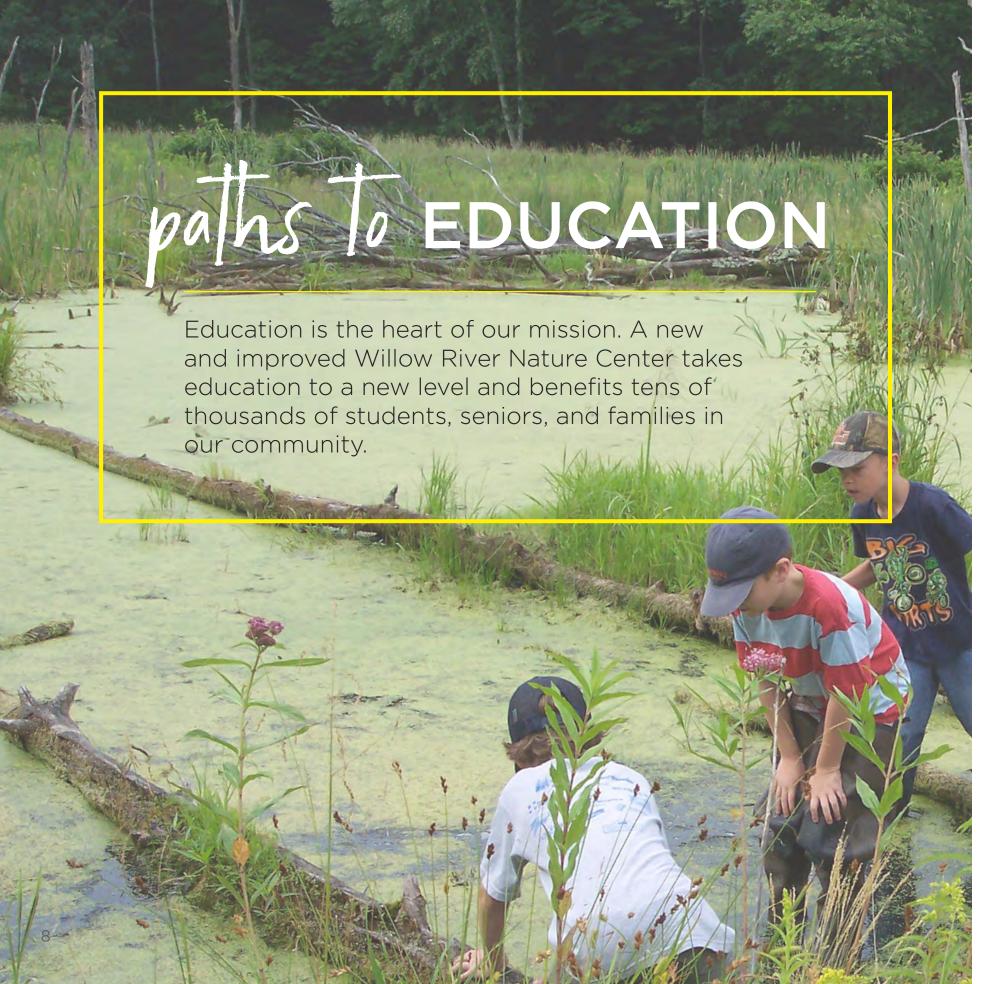
In 2018 Willow River Nature Center hosted **15,000 visitors** with **8,350 people** attending programs. In 2018 more than **50,000** enjoyed casual walks on the Nature Center's trails.

| Our year-round classes already reach nearly <b>8,000 people each year</b> , with <b>240+ classes and activities</b> .               | More than <b>3,500 children and youth</b> ages 3 to 15 participated in one or more of the <b>158 programs</b> offered to the public.                   |
|---|--|
| The nature center staff worked with <b>30 Wisconsin Schools</b> and <b>10 Minnesota Schools</b> representing <b>1,700 students.</b> | The park is home to nearly <b>3,000 acres</b> and <b>150+ campsites. 35 km of trails</b> are open to park visitors year-round.                         |
| The Friends group includes over <b>350 individuals</b> committed to supporting Willow River & Kinnickinnic State Parks.             | The Friends provide staffing for the Nature Center and related programming by employing two highly trained and capable part-time naturalist educators. |

There are approximately **200 volunteers**, providing almost **3,000 hours of support** annually, a core group of whom consistently dedicate time and enthusiasm as Nature Center hosts, teacher naturalists, guides and land care partners. Groups gather for trail work, campground cleanup, plantings, Friends group events, and the Willow River Trail Challenge, our annual trail run fundraising event.

# Almost 1,000,000 visitors to the park each year!

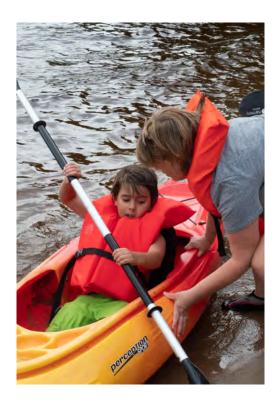
\*Birds not included



# NATURE'S CLASSROOM

Serving more than 3,500 students each year Willow River Nature Center builds a passion for education and hands-on experiences that promote a healthy respect and appreciation for the natural world. Whether through school-organized field trips, summer camps, or weekend programs, these future leaders are building the foundations for making

wise and informed decisions about how our environment will benefit everyone in the community. Providing a wide variety of positive learning opportunities, Willow River Nature Center is proud to be a wholesome place that welcomes everyone with a passion for learning.









Outdoor recreation promotes health, wellness, and quality of life for park visitors of all ages. By showing park patrons how and where to kayak, camp, hike, swim, ski, and bike - to name just a few activities - the center will enhance their lives.



# NATURE = LONGER, HAPPIER LIFE

The average American spends only 7% of his or her life outdoors.\* That's unfortunate, since it's well documented that spending time outside is one of the easiest ways to improve overall health, acting as a natural

medicine for improving your physical, mental and emotional well-being. With a place and a purpose, it's likely more individuals will lean toward outdoor activities to exercise their bodies and refresh their minds.



# TOURISM BRINGS A MUCH NEEDED ECONOMIC BOOST TO THE REGION.

# WHERE EDUCATION AND TOURISM MEET

# ECONOMIC IMPACT IN THE REGION

Willow River is one of the top three busiest parks in Wisconsin and deserves a facility that our community can be proud of. Western Wisconsin needs this. This facility will be a regional destination and a comfortable gathering place for the community. Outdoor nature-based recreation is one of the largest industries in Wisconsin. The new Willow River Nature Center will provide exceptional value to this region. A place where tourism and education intersect.

## BY THE NUMBERS

# Over 70% of visits are non-local daytrips to the Park.

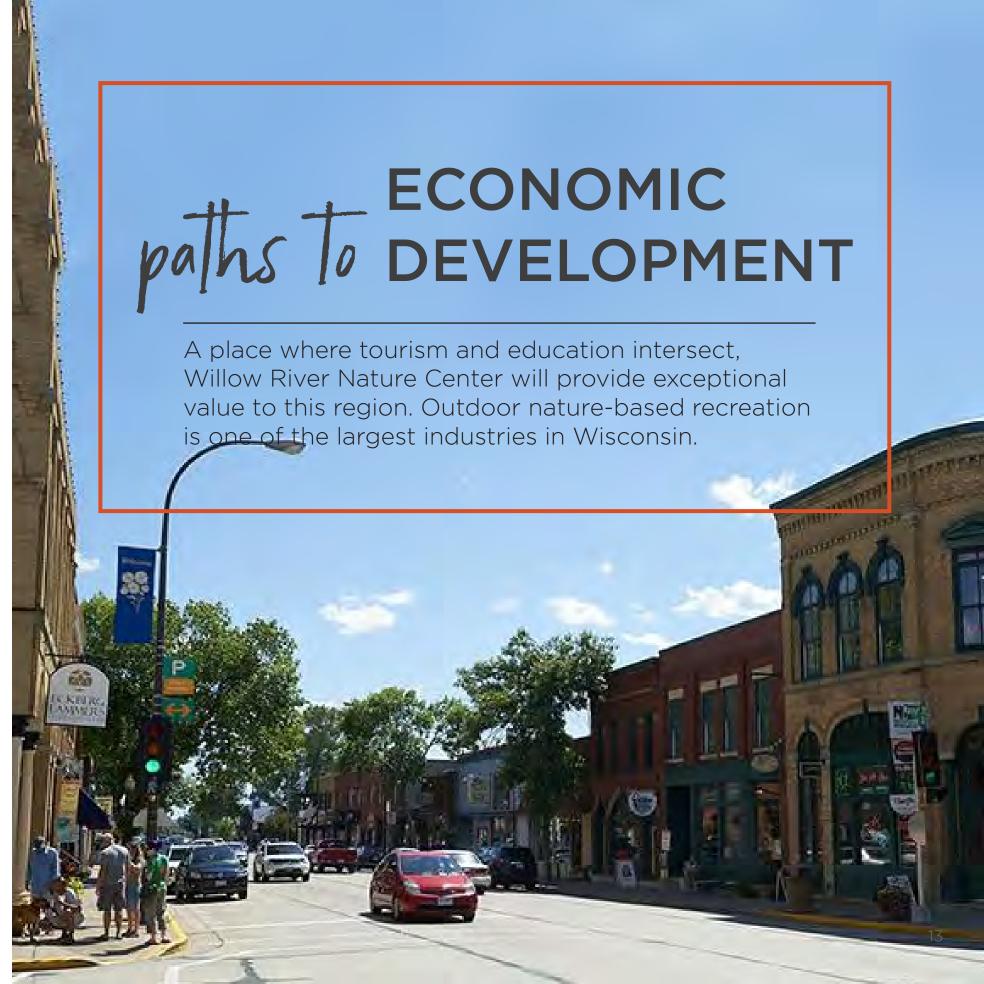
NON-LOCAL DAYTRIPS

LOCAL DAYTRIPS

Trip-related expenditures by visitors to the Wisconsin state park system properties located in the Mississippi River corridor region (In 2013 USD) were **over \$131 million.** 

The Willow River State Park visitation level has grown from 479,000 visits in 2010 to almost one million in 2018.

The total annual visitor expenditures at the Willow River Park location are now estimated to be **over \$65 million in 2018**–a significant economic boost to the area economy.



## **NEW** NATURE CENTER



SW Classrooms

CONCEPTUAL DRAWING

Our region has the natural beauty. We have the experts and dedicated volunteers to help us maximize enjoyment of that beauty. Now we need an exceptional focal point, a gathering place that welcomes those who come to learn or play, tells the story of the land they are about to enjoy.

A successful capital campaign will allow us to replace the current, aging building with a new and larger facility, nestled into the surrounding natural environment. A bright, welcoming design will attract park visitors and better meet the needs of all anticipated users, including casual visitors, school groups, campers, hikers, and skiers.

The new nature center will be designed as a destination, attracting more visitors to the park and to the programming our Friends group offers. Together, we can create this state-of-the-art facility that will inspire and serve our growing community for generations to come. We will partner with local health care agencies and initiatives to improve our visitors overall health and well-being.

Education and tourism will intersect here, with the center sure to become a significant tourist attraction and welcome center, portal to Willow River State Park. The new nature center will connect tourists, students, educators, families, and others to a natural playscape that includes woodlands, wetlands, a river and lake, unique geology, and restored prairie amid an extensive network of well-designed nature trails.

#### WHY BUILD NEW?

It has become clear that new facilities and outdoor educational spaces are needed. The current nature center is an old house that was moved onto the current foundation more than 30 years ago. The building is much loved but has become inadequate as the park is visited by nearly one million people each year. It won't accommodate a full school bus of students, which discourages school visits. It meets neither ADA accessibility standards nor exhibit and programming needs. The existing structure is failing. Engineers and architects have advised against remodeling or making major repairs.

# paths to discovery CAMPAIGN

With a project budget of \$4 million, our goal is to build a 7,500-square-foot structure to support the growing needs of our community. The new building will not only support educational program expansion for all, it will also provide spaces to better support recreational activities in all seasons, an enlarged and improved exhibit area, and large, comfortable gathering spaces with lovely views to meet with friends or watch the birds.



### **NEW NATURE CENTER PRIORITIES**

- 1. Expanded exhibit spaces.
- 2. Classrooms designed for multiple and flexible uses.
- 3. Energy sustainability and low impact requirements.

#### **Key Components of the Project**

- Enhanced learning environmment
- Multi-purpose gathering spaces
- Technology, furniture and equipment
- Outdoor learning space

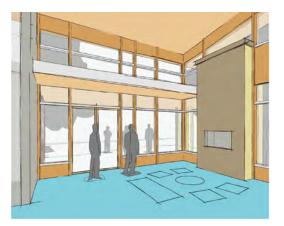
- Bird watching area that includes outdoor birdfeeders, desirable plantings, limited or no foot traffic, and an indoor area for observation.
- Butterfly garden that demonstrates native plants and provides a supportive environment for butterflies and other wildlife.
- Approximately 7,500 square feet



Main Entrance



Group Entrance Gallery



Gathering at Fireplace

The following list reflects the needs associated with building a new nature center with low impact and energy sustainability.

- DESIGN AND CONSTRUCT NEW NATURE CENTER
- ENERGY SUSTAINABILITY AND LOW IMPACT REQUIREMENTS
- SITE DEVELOPMENT
- WATER AND WASTE TREATMENT
- CAMPUS DEVELOPMENT
- EDUCATIONAL AND INTERPRETIVE DISPLAYS
- DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE
- PROJECT AND CAMPAIGN ADMINISTATION

**TOTAL CAMPAIGN COST** 

\$4,000,000





### **Willow River Nature Center \$4 Million Goal**

#### HOW WE GET THERE

Willow River & Kinnickinnic State Parks would not be the community assets they are today without the ongoing, generous support of individuals, families, and friends. Philanthropy has allowed the Friends to sustain its mission and support the programs and activities at Willow River Nature Center. Now, as we embark on an exciting new path, one that leads to a brand new nature center sure to impact and serve our region for generations to come, we invite you to join us on the journey.

#### HOW YOU CAN HELP

We know the path we want to follow, we know our final destination, and now we need the tools - your generous gifts - to get there.

**YOUR GIFT CAN MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE** in the success of the Paths to Discovery \$4 million campaign. In return for financial support, you may take satisfaction in the knowledge that your own journey has been a meaningful one, that your generosity will directly impact the lives of others by helping them travel a path that allows for maximum benefit from the world's natural gifts.

Please join neighbors, friends, businesses, and others with your own commitment to Paths to Discovery. Your contribution will not only provide the direct resources for bricks and mortar, but also aid in our recruitment, education, and retention of a new generation of volunteers and leaders.

All gifts are tax deductible and Friends of Willow River & Kinnickinnic State Parks, Inc. is recognized as a fully-qualified, not-for-profit organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

#### IT'S YOUR DECISION!

When a donor makes a gift to the Friends of Willow River & Kinnickinnic State Parks, Inc. campaign, the funds are invested and placed in a restricted account until they are used for a specific project. Additionally, there are several opportunities for the endowment of program-specific gifts. You can designate your gift to any one of the key project areas targeted in the campaign. Or you can simply give toward the overall campaign goal.



# paths to RECREATION

We take care of the land because we should, we must. But we also take pleasure in it. Willow River Nature Center will be the hub of recreational activity, providing families with a clear "starting point" to their adventures in nature.



#### **PHILANTHROPY**

We urge you to join us in the *Paths to Discovery Campaign.* It is our shared responsibility to ensure that we establish and sustain quality educational and recreational opportunities to our community. Contributions to the **Friends of Willow River & Kinnickinnic State Parks** capital campaign will help us achieve our goal of a quality nature center.

#### GIFTS OF CASH AND CASH PLEDGES

Gifts of cash may be mutually beneficial, providing funds for the Friends of Willow River & Kinnickinnic State Parks, Inc. and tax savings for you. Pledges covering a period of three to five years are most welcome since the campaign goals and objectives are expressed over this time frame. Some donors may wish to consider longer or shorter arrangements. Flexibility is provided.

#### GIFTS OF STOCK AND OTHER SECURITIES

Appreciated stocks, bonds, U.S. Treasury notes and bonds, and mutual funds make excellent gifts to the Friends of Willow River & Kinnickinnic State Parks, Inc., at the same time resulting in additional tax savings for you. Contribute securities that have increased in value and avoid capital gains tax that is incurred when you sell appreciated assets. You'll also get a charitable tax deduction for the full market value of the assets, regardless of what you paid for them.\*

#### RETIREMENT IRA GIVING

The IRA Charitable Rollover is a popular way for donors to make charitable gifts. It allows individuals age 70 1/2 or older to transfer up to \$100,000 per year directly from their IRA accounts to qualified charities without incurring federal income tax on the withdrawal. The direct transfers to charity also satisfy the person's required minimum distribution.

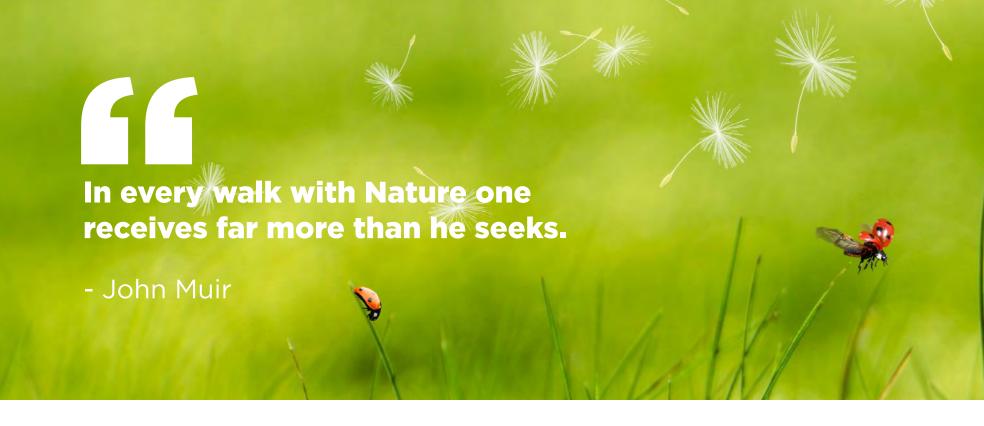


<sup>\*</sup>Information is not intended as legal or tax advice. Please consult with your own professional advisor.



Willow River State Park is the third busiest park in the state. Western Wisconsin needs – and deserves – a facility that our community can be proud of. This facility will be a regional destination and, at the same time, a comfortable gathering place for the community. The success in this campaign will come, not from the power of a few, but from the partnership of many.





#### NAMING OPPORTUNITIES

What does it mean to truly honor or memorialize someone? A variety of recognition opportunities are offered in our Paths to Discovery Campaign to encourage the fulfillment of our campaign objectives and to recognize significant commitments. All donations will be recognized in suitable ways.

You may wish to associate your own or your family's name permanently with new Willow River Nature Center or honor a family member, friend or colleague. Whatever you choose, the name will always be in a place of prominence.

## PERMANENT RECOGNITION AND DONOR APPRECIATION

All donors to the Paths to Discovery Campaign will be acknowledged with a written letter of appreciation, receive a charitable tax receipt, have their names listed in the Friends of Willow River & Kinnickinnic State Parks publications and be recognized in a permanent manner on our donor wall in the New Willow River Nature Center.

There are many ways to associate the name of an individual, family, foundation and corporation with an aspect of the endowment campaign. Campaign staff and volunteer leadership can assist you in determining this lasting remembrance.

All gifts are tax deductible, and Friends of Willow River & Kinnickinnic State Parks, Inc. is recognized as a fully qualified, not-for-profit organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION: Paths to Discovery Capital Campaign

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