

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**"Pierce Cedar Creek Institute Executive Director Announces Retirement”**

(HASTINGS, MI) – Michelle Skedgell, Executive Director of Pierce Cedar Creek Institute since September 2001, has announced her plans to retire from the Institute as of December 31, 2024. Michelle joined the Institute shortly after its opening. The Institute is a nature center, an environmental education center, and a biological field station, a destination of learning, research, and natural resource management on 850 acres in rural Barry County. The Institute's founder, Bill Pierce, and his wife, Jessie, created the Institute to give back to the community that meant so much to them and provide a welcoming space for everyone to connect with the natural world.

"Bill's vision has provided the framework for our Board and staff to build an organization that fulfills that mission of inspiring the appreciation and stewardship of the environment," Skedgell said. "Our success has been a result of our community believing in us and a staff of committed, caring, and professional individuals throughout our history. I am proud of what we have accomplished. I am certain I am leaving the organization well prepared for greater achievements under the direction of a new leader inspired to build upon our history."

Skedgell has successfully managed the private foundation and environmental Institute with a substantial budget of $1.4 million and an impressive $23 million endowment. Over the years, the Institute has grown from 5 to 20 employees and from 550 to 850 acres. According to Board President Carl Schoessel, she has demonstrated exemplary leadership by overseeing a widely respected team of scientists, educators, land managers, and experience providers. She was instrumental in the development and continues to support a consortium of 11 colleges and universities as part of their summer research program. She is well known for her civic engagement through the Rotary Club of Hastings, Barry County Parks & Recreation Commission, Leadership Barry County, and other organizations.

The Institute's Board of Directors and all persons associated with the Institute through its various programs, services, and activities are incredibly grateful for Michelle's years of service and leadership at Pierce Cedar Creek Institute.

The Institute's Board of Directors is planning a public celebration of Skedgell's time at the Institute, with specific information about the event to be announced later. The Directors have also initiated a search to identify a successor.

"I am so grateful for my time at the Institute," Skedgell said. "Grateful for the opportunity to get to know and serve my community and to be a part of an amazing team. I've gotten to know so many wonderful people, and I know their continued support of the Institute will ensure its ongoing growth and success. I am excited for its future!

To learn more about Pierce Cedar Creek Institute go to www.CedarCreekInstitute.org.

ABOUT PIERCE CEDAR CREEK INSTITUTE

Pierce Cedar Creek Institute is a nature center, environmental education center, and biological field station located on 850 acres with nine miles of hiking trails 10 miles south of Hastings, Michigan. The Institute’s mission is to inspire appreciation and stewardship of our environment.

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