

Holden Forests and Gardens
Kirtland, Ohio



At Holden Arboretum, seeing the forest for the trees took on new meaning with the installation of two new exhibits. How would we take advantage of the views to tell compelling stories about the forest?

The Murch Canopy Walk is a walkway built 65' above the forest floor. Here, visitors have a squirrel's eye view of the forest and its wildlife, like red bats and black snakes. The Kalberer Emergent Tower invites visitors to climb 202 steps. Swaying high above the forest canopy, visitors are rewarded with views that sweep across treetops to Lake Erie.

In 2015, The Acorn Group began designing the interpretive media. For the canopy walk, we created six stations, each dedicated to one forest species, like the black rat snake and red bat.



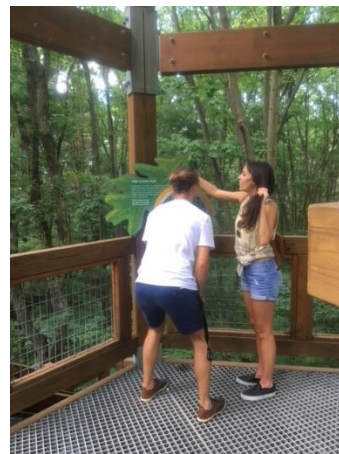
Hanging out in the forest
Squirrels aren't the only mammals that live among these trees. Bats live here too. For example, Eastern red bats hang upside down with a cluster of leaves. Northern long-eared bats do the same under loose bark. Protected and camouflaged, their fur blending with the background, they can rest undisturbed.

A bat's workday begins at sunset, when it takes to the sky to hunt. Relying on sound waves and echoes, it can pinpoint the location of moths, leafhoppers, and other flying insects. In the process of finding a meal, bats provide a free service: controlling insects.

Family portraits

Where do Northern long-eared bats roost?
Long-eared bats, like some other bats, roost under loose tree bark or even rotting logs. Snobark history is completely handy when it comes to finding a roost. Underneath, the bats find a snug crannies where they can rest. Look no further.

For the tower we proposed media that celebrate both the climb and the changes visitors experience—an ever-increasing pulse, shortness of breath, and unsteady feet due to the swaying. We went further to relate human physiology to a tree's condition.



We also created new media to engage visitors and build anticipation as they embark on the climb, like a water-squirting model of stomata on a leaf's surface.

