

Virginia Museum  
of Natural History

**2022-2023  
Annual Report**



## From the VMNH Team

The Virginia Museum of Natural History is well-known for its physical collections – an estimated 10 million specimens and artifacts representing the natural and cultural heritage of Virginia, and in some cases, the world. As the museum has grown, its impact has as well, and any day you visit, scientists will be behind the scenes doing amazing work. From protecting world cultural heritage, to describing new extant and extinct fauna, to building a genetic library of life in Virginia, VMNH generates new knowledge and scientific resources. This informs our education and exhibits programs. Your support of the museum makes you part of the work that leaves the earth a little better understood than before we studied it.



Joe B. Keiper, Ph.D.

VMNH Executive Director



## From the Foundation

The Virginia Museum of Natural History Foundation is proud to partner with VMNH staff, Trustees, and other stakeholders to secure vital charitable contributions for direct support of VMNH and its mission. From annual giving and memberships to grants, corporate partnerships, and endowment support, donations of all types and amounts help to ensure the museum's continued success statewide and beyond. The VMNH Foundation is proud to have provided support for a variety of impactful programs and initiatives over the past year, including the opening of the new special exhibit *Dinosaur Discoveries: Ancient Fossils, New Ideas*, new science festivals, need-based K-12 scholarships, groundbreaking scientific research and collections, staff professional development, engaging publications, and even a museum drone! With your continued support, the Virginia Museum of Natural History and its world-class staff will continue to accomplish its important mission over the coming year and beyond. On behalf of the entire VMNH Foundation Board, thank you for your support.

Respectfully,

Earl Armstrong

President, VMNH Foundation (2021-2023)

Dr. Joan Montgomery

President, VMNH Foundation (2023- )



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# From the Board of Trustees

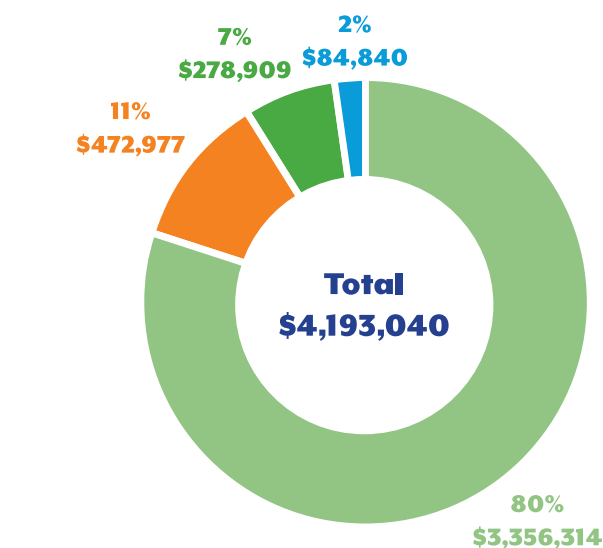
The Virginia Museum of Natural History exemplifies the finest in operational execution through its staff and facilities, bringing to the Commonwealth and beyond some of the best in natural science and experiential learning. Tenaciously following its charter, the museum's research, collections, exhibits, educational programs, and events deliver to our communities across all demographics a strong sense of historical perspectives of our natural world. Its endeavors also recognize the importance of our collective and individual responsibilities to be informed custodians of the future of our natural resources. The museum's direct economic impact on the communities of Martinsville and surrounding counties today, as well as the Waynesboro campus where we are already expanding, is a vital part of our mission to be responsive to the needs of all Virginians. With a particular focus on Virginia, but with the scientific collaboration of our curators and their colleagues across the world, VMNH is recognized for several areas of expertise. These partnerships also involve work not just with other museums and universities, but state and federal agencies. The continued growth of this institution requires a vital commitment to sustained funding of its expanding facilities, operations, and staff. The return on this investment in maintaining our rich treasure of collections, diverse research, and educational programs for all Virginians has proven economic value well beyond the museum's walls. We wholeheartedly summon our Governor, legislature, and all fellow Virginians to embrace support for VMNH.

Respectfully,  
Board of Trustees  
Virginia Museum of Natural History



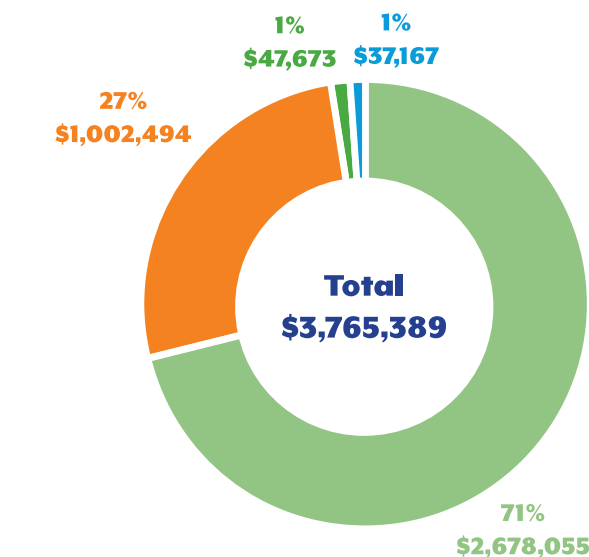
# Fiscal Year 2023 (July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023)

## Total Revenue



- State Appropriation (Museum)
- Museum Earned Revenue (Museum)
- Restricted Grants, Partnerships (Foundation)
- Annual Fund, Memberships (Foundation)

## Total Expenses



- Salaries & Benefits (Museum)
- General Operations (Museum)
- Support of Museum Operations (Foundation)
- Operating Expenses (Foundation)

## By the Numbers 2022-2023



**28,497** new specimen acquisitions



**22** lab & collections tours



**18** visiting researchers

VMNH launched its Energy Efficiency Initiative in Fall 2022, partnering with Siemens and Virginia Energy for:



A **59.64 kW** rooftop solar array with **142** panels and **2** inverters



**100%** LED energy efficient lighting



New building automation systems



**4** electric vehicle charging stations



# Budget Plan & Code of Virginia

More than 80% of the VMNH annual budget is directed toward collections care and curation, supporting research relevant to the natural and cultural heritage of Virginia within a global context, and making the collections and knowledge accessible to all citizens of the Commonwealth. Research & Collections personnel represent the largest complement of staff at the museum, with the division having doubled in size over the past decade thanks to the vision and priorities set forth by the Board of Trustees. Their vision is inspired by the Code of Virginia.



# Research & Collections

For more information about scientific research at VMNH, visit [www.vmnh.net/research-collections](http://www.vmnh.net/research-collections).

## Archaeology & The Cultural Heritage Monitoring Lab

The VMNH Archaeology department modeled the future impacts from extreme weather events to over 48,000 archaeological sites in Virginia. Its study will assist the Commonwealth of Virginia, Tribal governments, and private landowners in safeguarding Virginia's archaeological resources.

The museum's Cultural Heritage Monitoring Lab (CHML) teamed with the Smithsonian Institution to monitor over 28,000 cultural heritage sites in Ukraine using satellite technology. In the past year, this work has been featured in *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *The Guardian*, *PBS News Hour*, *NPR*, *CNN*, *Bloomberg*, *The Telegraph*, *Smithsonian Magazine*, *VOX*, and *Politico*.

## Paleontology

A National Science Foundation grant was awarded to VMNH Paleontology, in collaboration with Dr. Brooke Haier of the University of Lynchburg, to support an ongoing fossil expedition in Wyoming. The grant also provides for student fellowships to attend fieldwork and intern at VMNH.







## Herpetology

VMNH Assistant Curator of Herpetology Dr. Arianna Kuhn established the first ever VMNH Herpetology Lab and frozen tissue collection. Complementing this advancement, the first field collection programs and research projects have also been initiated with regional university and agency partners to build these collections.

## Invertebrate Zoology

The first invertebrate frozen tissue for VMNH was established to support ongoing research in centipedes, millipedes, and other soil-inhabiting arthropods of Virginia and the southeastern United States. The collection currently consists of more than 180 target taxa.

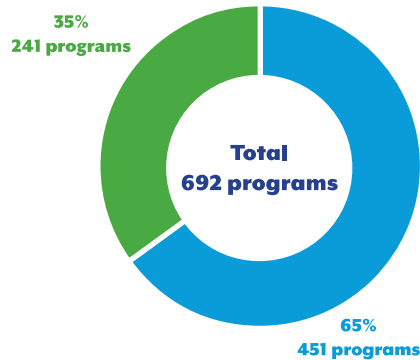
## Mammalogy

VMNH Curator of Mammalogy Dr. Nancy Moncrief received the 2023 Dr. Henry S. Mosby Award from the Virginia Chapter of the Wildlife Society for her “significant contributions to wildlife species and their habitats, and to the citizens of Virginia.” Because of her research that used museum specimens of mice to study the Lyme disease pathogen, Dr. Moncrief was interviewed for an article that appeared in *The Scientist*.



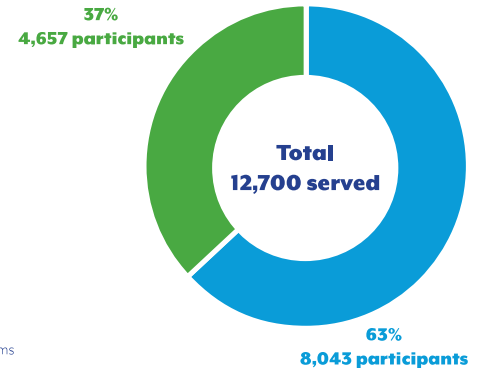
# Education & Outreach (July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023)

Educational Programs



Outreach Programs  
At-the-Museum Programs

Total Served



Outreach Programs  
At-the-Museum Programs



Museum education programs are delivered by an elite science staff both at the museum and via outreach within Virginia classrooms. All areas of the Commonwealth are accessible, and virtual programming is available. All education experiences are designed to underscore Virginia science and social studies Standards of Learning. Over 690 Education department programs served nearly 13,000 students during 2022-2023. Corporate Partners and philanthropists have provided funds to make many programs free of cost.

A full list of offerings can be found online at [www.vmnh.net/education](http://www.vmnh.net/education).





# Targeting Key Audiences

VMNH education staff utilized specific programs to capture age groups 3-5 and 6-11 through its *Doodle Bugs* and *Summer Adventure Camps*, respectively. In addition, the *Homeschool Science & Engineering Academy* provided strong curriculum for homeschool families in STEM-based topics through highly interactive classroom lessons.

## Strategic Initiatives

### IMLS Grant Programs

The Education and Research & Collections departments collaborated on an Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) grant in support of the museum's *Scope it Out!* initiative aimed at bolstering the museum's science education programs and outreach activities. The initiative established a one-of-a-kind Exploration Lab featuring research-quality microscopy equipment that fosters discovery, problem solving, and critical thinking via eyes-on and hands-on learning opportunities for students of all ages. Since the lab opened in December 2022, over 800 students have participated in various microscopy programs.

### JMU Kid Wind Partnership

Over 70 students from across the region participated in the *Wind and Solar Challenge* hosted at VMNH and coordinated by the James Madison University Center for the Advancement of Sustainable Energy.

### VMNH Waynesboro

VMNH educators from Charlottesville, as well as Martinsville, partnered with several Waynesboro schools for programming over the past year. Programs highlighted information regarding the future museum branch campus.

### Museums for All

Thanks to Corporate Partnership support from Hooker Furnishings and Carter Bank & Trust, the VMNH *Museums for All* program allowed SNAP Benefits users the opportunity to attend museum events and visit the exhibit galleries free of charge. Over 3,200 visitors were served by the *Museums for All* program.



## Featured Exhibits 2022-2023



**January 22 to November 12, 2022**

sponsored by Carter Bank & Trust, United Way of Henry County & Martinsville,  
The Helen S. & Charles G. Patterson, Jr. Charitable Foundation Trust, and The  
Harvest Foundation

## DINOSAUR DISCOVERIES

**ANCIENT FOSSILS, NEW IDEAS**

**February 11, 2023 to January 20, 2024**

sponsored by The Helen S. & Charles G. Patterson, Jr. Charitable Foundation  
Trust, Martinsville-Henry County Tourism, and Sovah Health

## Science Festivals 2023



**VIRGINIA MUSEUM  
OF NATURAL HISTORY  
REPTILE  
FESTIVAL**

**Reptile Festival  
April 21-22, 2023**

Sponsored by  
The Helen S. & Charles G. Patterson, Jr. Charitable  
Foundation Trust, Community Foundation Serving  
Western Virginia, Bassett Furniture Industries, Carter  
Bank & Trust, and Sovah Health



**Dino Festival  
July 21-22, 2023**

Sponsored by  
The Helen S. & Charles G. Patterson, Jr. Charitable  
Foundation Trust, Bassett Furniture Industries, Boxley  
Materials Company, Carter Bank & Trust, Martinsville  
First Savings Bank, and Sovah Health

**BONEZ  
& BOOZ**

**Bonez & Booz  
October 28, 2023**

Sponsored by  
The Helen S. & Charles G. Patterson, Jr. Charitable  
Foundation Trust, Bassett Furniture Industries, Boxley  
Materials Company, Carter Bank & Trust, and Sovah  
Health

# Looking to the Future

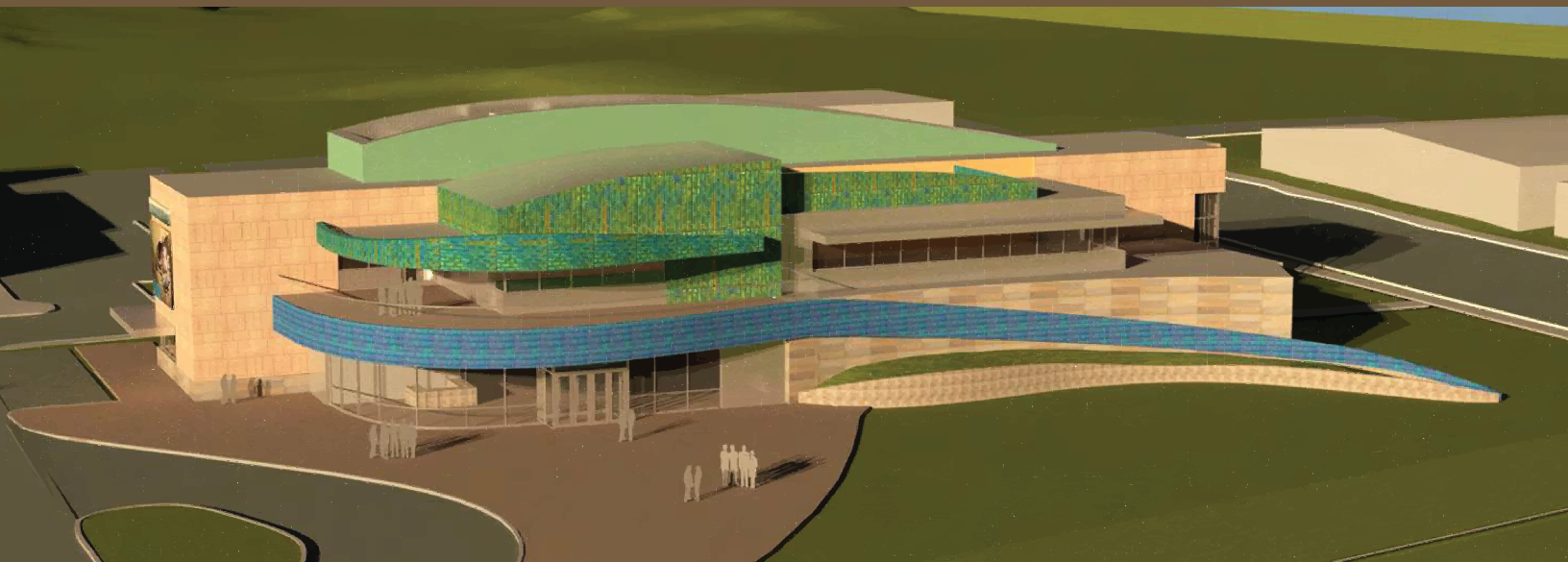
VMNH has secured a contractor for the Jean S. Adams Education Pavilion

- Construction start date anticipated in Fall 2023

Completed Schematic Design for the upcoming VMNH Waynesboro Campus

- Preliminary building design completed
- General exhibits strategy and overview determined
- Site analysis and condition report completed

We are increasing the rate of deposition of genetic samples (frozen tissues) in the VMNH Molecular Laboratory, including invertebrates, herpetiles, and mammals.



Because of you, we have come so far.

# Thank You

[www.vmnh.net/donors](http://www.vmnh.net/donors)







Virginia Museum of Natural History • 21 Starling Avenue • Martinsville, VA 24112 • [www.vmnh.net](http://www.vmnh.net)

*The Trout in the Classroom program at VMNH  
raises and releases brook trout in the South River.*

