

*Virginia Museum of*  
**NATURAL HISTORY**

# **EDUCATION PROGRAM GUIDE**

**2025-2026**





### Planning Your Visit

Groups may request an engaging educational program led by a museum educator to highlight key elements relevant to your group’s needs. Homeschool groups are welcomed. Please note, school group visits and programs are available Tuesday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Upper level students have the option of participating in a program with either our education department or museum scientists. Please call **276-403-8501** for scheduling.

### Reservations

Reservations are required and must be made at least two weeks in advance. For information or to schedule a visit, please call **276-403-8501** or e-mail [discover@vmnh.virginia.gov](mailto:discover@vmnh.virginia.gov).

### Group Rates

Groups of 10 or more will receive discounted admission. One chaperone is required for every 10 students. Admission for teachers, required chaperones, and bus drivers is complimentary. Additional chaperones are \$6 each. Because groups enjoy a discounted admission rate, membership passes and other discounts/coupons are not valid toward group admission fees.

Group rates are found on the following page. Added programs are \$5 per student.

*Thanks to the support of Martinsville City and Henry County, education fees are discounted for public schools within these districts.*

### Museum Store

The Museum Store offers a variety of fun and educational items for your students. Student souvenir bags are available when requested in advance.



### Sleepovers

Join us after hours for an exciting night of exploration! We offer programs for audiences of all ages! Cost is \$50 per participant. One chaperone is required for every five children. \$25 for each additional chaperone. [www.vmnh.net/plan-your-visit/sleepovers](http://www.vmnh.net/plan-your-visit/sleepovers)



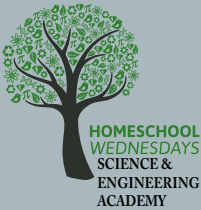
### Birthday Parties

Planning a birthday party? The museum is the perfect place to have a Dino-mite celebration! [www.vmnh.net/plan-your-visit/birthday-parties](http://www.vmnh.net/plan-your-visit/birthday-parties)



### Doodle Bugs!

VMNH’s Doodle Bugs! program provides children ages 3–5 and their caregiver the opportunity to experience science firsthand! They will learn and grow together with this hour-long program. Programs are held on second Wednesdays (September – May) at 10 a.m. Cost is \$10 per participant.



### Homeschool Science & Engineering Academy

VMNH offers engaging educational programs for home-school students. Held on the first and third Wednesday (September – May) from 10 to 11:15 a.m., programs are geared towards ages 6-8, 9-11, and 12 & up. Cost is \$10 per participant. [www.vmnh.net/education/homeschool-education](http://www.vmnh.net/education/homeschool-education)



### AT-THE-MUSEUM PROGRAMS

Enhance your museum visit by adding a hands-on program. Programs presented at the museum are 20 to 60 minutes depending on what other group activities are requested. A minimum of 8 participants is required.

Programs are correlated to SOLs. Added programs are \$5 per student.



### ADMISSION RATES

	Adults (ages 18–59)	Children (ages 3–17); Seniors 60+; Military	Members; Children under 3
Per Person	\$12	\$6	Free
Group rates per person (10 or more)	\$6	\$4	Free

### OUTREACH PROGRAMS

Outreach programs bring museum educators to you! SOL-correlated programs are designed to be presented in a school environment, at a community center, or at other off-site locations. Programs are best suited for classes of up to 30 students or participants. Programs are 45 minutes to 1 hour. One program can be delivered for up to four sessions in the same day. In the event additional programs or staff are needed, an additional fee may apply. Programs are offered year-round and can be customized. A new program can be created upon request.

Number of Sessions	Fee
1	\$100
2	\$150
3	\$200
4	\$250

*Thanks to the support of Martinsville City and Henry County, education fees are discounted for public schools within these districts. A nominal mileage fee will be added for programs outside of Henry County. For more information, please call **276-403-8501**.*

### VIRTUAL PROGRAMS

Virtual programs bring your students to the museum without ever having to leave their seats! Through the use of two-way video, your class will join museum educators as we explore Virginia’s natural heritage and uncover its rich biological and geological history. Together, with the use of videoconferencing and interactive activities, we will spark imagination, enhance curricula, and support Virginia and national educational standards. Distance learning programs can be developed and adjusted to meet your needs. Education staff will work with you to establish your videoconferencing connection in advance. Let us know how we can connect with you!

Visit [www.vmnh.net/education/virtual-education](http://www.vmnh.net/education/virtual-education) or call **276-403-8501** to find out more.



NATURE OF SCIENCE

### Scientific Investigations

Students will learn what it takes to investigate like a scientist! They will engage in experimental design, hone their observation skills, even practice data collection and analysis in challenging and fun ways. Choose the topic that best suits your students' needs from below. Programs will be tailored based on requested grade level.

- The 5 Senses
- Evolution
- Climate Change
- Resource Overconsumption
- Troubled Oceans
- Space

Grades K–12



## PROGRAM TOPICS

LIFE SCIENCES

### Grow As We Go

Does the baby look like its parents? Life processes are illustrated as students investigate the basic needs and life cycles of living things through observing animals' physical characteristics. Please choose one: **Animals** or **Plants**

Grades Pre-K, K

LIFE SCIENCES

### Dino Dig

Students will think like paleontologists during a mock dig for dinosaur “bones,” touch fossils from different geological periods, and learn how fossils are formed.

Grades Pre-K–1

LIFE SCIENCES

### Bears in the Forest

Have fun learning about habitats, seasons, and the life needs and characteristics of bears in this active role-play program adapted from Project WILD®.

Grades Pre-K–2

LIFE SCIENCES

### Animal Needs

Meet the museum’s live animals! Students will explore life needs, characteristics, adaptations, and habitats as they interact with our friendly critters.

Grades Pre-K–4, 7–12

LIFE SCIENCES

### Cultivating Classification

With a focus on the many ways that biological organisms can be classified, this program highlights the basics of how animals are classified. This program is applicable to a variety of grade levels, ranging from taxonomic sorting based on physical characteristics to utilizing a dichotomous key to identify and classify various organisms.

Grades K, 1, 4 & LS, BIO

LIFE SCIENCES

### Fantastic Food Webs!

Explore food web basics and the connections between organisms and the environment.

Please choose one:

**Owl Pellets:** Students will explore the predator/prey relationship as they dissect owl pellets. *There is an extra \$3 charge per student for this option.*

**Live Animals:** Students will learn about food webs while getting up close and personal with a variety of live animals!

Grades 1–4, 6–12

LIFE SCIENCES

### Exploring Nature in the Community

Enjoy a unique experience in an outdoor, natural laboratory exploring terrestrial or aquatic ecology. These hands-on, highly interactive programs can be customized.

Grades K–12

LIFE SCIENCES

### Let’s Make a Fossil

Students will explore what makes a fossil a fossil, make observations to determine what we can learn from fossils, and explore the processes of how fossils form. Students will even make a fossil of their very own to keep! *There is an extra \$3 charge per student for this program.*

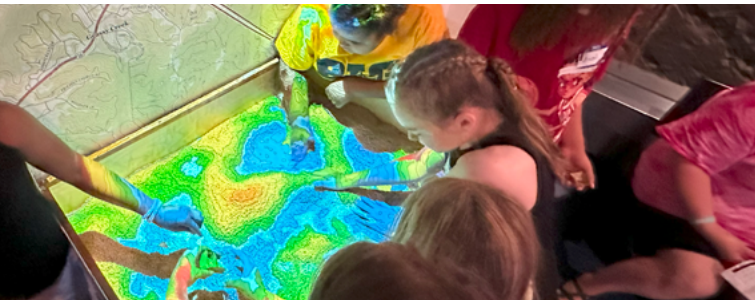
Grades 3, 5, 7–12

EARTH SCIENCES

### Rocks and Minerals Uncovered

Students will explore the bountiful resources of the earth through rock and mineral samples.

Grades 1, 4, 5, ES



EARTH SCIENCES

### Space Voyage

Students will journey through space as they create scale models exploring planet sizes, distance, and characteristics that are out-of-this world.

Grades 4, 6

EARTH SCIENCES

### Trees for the Future

We all need trees! During this hands-on program, learn about types of habitats, seasons, plant parts, and the role that trees play in an ecosystem.

Grades K–2



EARTH SCIENCES

### Pollution Prints

Water is a valuable natural resource. In this program, students will learn about the importance of water, evaluate their water footprint, and look at what causes water pollution and prevention.

Grades K–12

EARTH SCIENCES

### Digging In

Students will explore the causes and results of weathering and erosion, the landforms that are affected and what part plants and animals play. Let’s get a little dirty as we examine the components of soil, its origin and its importance as a Virginia natural resource. Please choose one: **Soil** or **Weathering/Erosion**

Grades 2–5

EARTH SCIENCES

### Water Cycle Voyage

Students will learn about the water cycle as they “become” water droplets through highly interactive games. *Additional fee of \$3 per student.*

Grade 3



EARTH SCIENCES

### Renewable or Not?

Students will explore sources, transformations, and uses of renewable and nonrenewable energy through grade appropriate activities such as creating a wind turbine. *Additional fee of \$3 per student.*

Grades 4–6

EARTH SCIENCES

### We’re All in a Watershed

This program incorporates an interactive watershed model to illustrate the basic properties and characteristics of watersheds, as well as human impact.

Grades 4–12







# PROGRAM TOPICS, continued

PHYSICAL SCIENCES

### Marvelous Magnets

Students conduct simple experiments involving magnetic fields, poles, attractions, and the uses of magnets.

Grades K, 2

PHYSICAL SCIENCES

### I Like to Move It, Move It!

Students will work together to explore the many ways objects move and the forces that cause movement in this highly interactive program.

Grades K–2

MATH & ENGINEERING

### Speedy Building

Students will use LEGO® bricks, axles, and wheels to build cars to race to explore motion, friction, energy, and simple machines. They will measure distance and time traveled, and will construct a graph to understand how to calculate speed.

Grades 3, 5

MATH & ENGINEERING

### Engineering Workshop

Students will gain an introduction into the world of engineering by discussing the engineering design process, while completing an engineering challenge of their own. Engineering design process step vocabulary and engineering challenge will differ by grade level.

Grades 2–5

HISTORY & SOCIAL SCIENCES

### Virginia’s Indigenous People

Students will learn about the natural resources that indigenous tribes of the Eastern Woodland used in their daily activities. Students will examine artifacts and reproductions to get a glimpse of the lifestyles of indigenous people before colonization.

Grades K–5

PHYSICAL SCIENCES

### Light Science

Students will explore the science of light, shadows, night, and day, and learn about waves, reflection, refraction, and the color spectrum using hands-on activities!

Grades K, 1, 5

PHYSICAL SCIENCES

### Sound Detectives

Students will investigate the world of sound by experiencing vibrations using various objects. Concepts include: motion of objects, vibration frequency, waves, and wavelength.

Grades 1, 5

PHYSICAL SCIENCES

### The Nature of Matter

Solids, liquids, and gases, oh my! Students will explore the distinguishing properties of matter, including atoms, elements, compounds, mixtures, and everything in between using hands-on experiments!

Grades 2–3, 5

PHYSICAL SCIENCES

### What a Shock!

Working together, students will test objects for conductivity and experiment with open and closed circuits. Classes will explore conductors, insulators, circuits, electrical energy, static and current electricity.

Grades 5, 6

HISTORY & SOCIAL SCIENCES

### Link to the Past

Students will get a choice to explore either **ancient Egypt and China** or **ancient Greece and Rome** (please choose one) through comparison of cultures. Student led inquiry will be followed by a craft reinforcing important cultural topics.

Grade 3

HISTORY & SOCIAL SCIENCES

### Historical Climate Change

Explore past climates and their effects on historical populations within North America. Students will be able to map climate change and discuss its impact on how people interacted with their environment.

Grades 6–12

EXHIBITS

The museum offers innovative, award-winning exhibits highlighting the unique features of Virginia’s natural history. All exhibits and displays are correlated to Virginia education standards. The following is an overview of the 2025–26 exhibits.

### The Harvest Foundation Hall of Ancient Life

serves as an exciting gathering space that introduces the museum’s research and collections.

Displays include:

- Ice Age Exhibit
- *Allosaurus*
- *Eobalaenoptera*
- *Pteranodon*
- Stromatolite
- *Acrocanthosaurus*
- *Stories from Skeletons* column case exhibit
- Viewable working laboratories including the Elster Foundation Vertebrate Paleontology Lab and the Archaeology Lab.

### The Hooker Furniture Discovery Reef

provides an underwater adventure area for young children on a sunken ship.

### Hahn Hall of Biodiversity

features a variety of taxidermied African mammals including a lion, hyena, and several antelope.

### Uncovering Virginia

features representations of six research sites in Virginia where VMNH scientists and their colleagues have worked or are working.



### Lee & George W. Lester, II How Nature Works

demonstrates how energy from within the earth’s crust and the sun have shaped the earth.

**How Nature Works: Rocks** features dramatic landscape models that reveal how the world is shaped by geological forces.

**How Nature Works: Life** teaches visitors that almost all living things on earth depend, directly or indirectly, on the sun as an energy source.



### Lepidoptera

is now open by the first floor elevator. Explore over 700 species of butterflies and moths from all over the world.

### The Age of Dinosaurs

is available February 2025 through July 2026. Adventure into an age when giants walked the earth! Experience an incredible diversity of dinosaur fossils, cast skeletons and skulls, as well as stunning animatronic dinosaur displays as you learn the fascinating story of dinosaurs and the role paleontologists play in providing our current understanding of these magnificent animals.

### Fossil Overlook

is a prehistoric life exhibit located on the museum’s upper-level and includes a variety of fossils, detailed models, and casts for visitors of all ages. An up-close and personal view of the flying reptile *Pteranodon* is available here, as well. The exhibit features new displays sponsored by the Hermes Family Foundation from prehistoric seas including a *Dunkleosteus* skull and Mosasaur fossils.

### Farmers, Warriors, Builders: The Hidden Life of Ants

is now open in the Suzanne M. Lacy Education Center. This Smithsonian exhibit features stunning macro photographs that tell incredible stories about the lives of ants. *This exhibit was donated to VMNH for educational purposes by the Smithsonian Institution at the end of its national tour in 2016. The original tour ran from 2011 to 2016.*



# MEMBERSHIPS

Become a VMNH Member today to receive FREE unlimited admission, invitations to receptions and events, discounts in the Museum Store, and FREE reciprocal admission to hundreds of museums and science centers nationwide. Learn more and join online at [www.vmnh.net/membership/new](http://www.vmnh.net/membership/new).



## FESTIVALS & EVENTS

### 2025

October 15:

**National Fossil Day**

October 25:

**Bonez & Booz** sponsored by Atlantic Union Bank, Bassett Furniture Industries, Boxley Materials Company, Hooker Furnishings, The Helen S. & Charles G. Patterson Jr. Charitable Foundation Trust

### 2026

April 24–25:

**Reptile Festival** sponsored by Bassett Furniture Industries, Boxley Materials Company, Hooker Furnishings, The Helen S. & Charles G. Patterson Jr. Charitable Foundation Trust

May 7:

**Teacher Appreciation Event** (RSVP required)

July 24–25:

**Dino Festival** sponsored by Community Foundation Serving Western Virginia

# Doodle Bugs!



Pre-registration for ages 3–5 is required one week prior to each event by contacting the museum at 276-403-8501 or [discover@vmnh.virginia.gov](mailto:discover@vmnh.virginia.gov). Programs are from 10–11 a.m.

September 10:

“Wonders of Water”

October 8:

“Serious about Spiders”

November 12:

“Critters in Virginia”

December 10:

“Little Builders”

### 2026

January 14:

“Cool Cats”

February 11:

“Paleo Play”

March 11:

“Mad Scientist”

April 8:

“The 3 R’s—Earth Day”

May 13:

“Plants and Pollinators”



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[www.VMNH.net](http://www.VMNH.net)