

# Education Program Guide



Virginia Museum of  
NATURAL HISTORY

2023 – 2024





# At-the-Museum

## 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 276-634-4187 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 276-634-4187 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 \$5 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 below. Added programs are \$4 per student and a guided tour is \$2 per participant.

*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.

## Homeschool Science & Engineering Academy



VMNH offers engaging educational programs for homeschool students. Held on the first and third Wednesday (September – May) from 10 to 11:15 a.m., programs are geared for ages 6-8, 9-11, and 12 & up. Cost is \$7 per participant. [www.vmnh.net/education/homeschool-education](http://www.vmnh.net/education/homeschool-education)

## 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 \$7 per participant.

## Birthday Parties

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



## Sleepovers

Join us after hours for an exciting night of exploration! We offer programs for audiences of all ages! \$45 per participant. One chaperone is required for every five children. \$20 for each additional chaperone.



## Scouts

Working on badge requirements? VMNH can assist with a wide variety of scout programs including sleepovers. [www.vmnh.net/scouts](http://www.vmnh.net/scouts)

## Admission Fees

	Adults (ages 18–59)	Children (ages 3–17); Seniors 60+; Military	Members; Children under 3
Per Person	\$10	\$5	Free
Group rates per person (10 or more)	\$5	\$3	Free

# Details

## At-the-Museum Programs

Enhance your museum visit by adding a program and a guided tour. 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 \$4 per student. Guided programs are an additional \$2 per participant.

## Outreach Education

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	\$90
2	\$135
3	\$170
4	\$210

*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 276-634-4187.*



# Programs

## 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 all 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

### Microscope Lab Investigations

Elevate your students' hands-on learning experience with the use of microscopes. Students will have the opportunity to visit the new microscope lab to view & investigate specimens under magnification. Topics include, but are not limited to:

- Botany
- Geology
- Fossils
- Predator/Prey Relationships



# Programs *continued*

## Physical Sciences

### Light Science

*Grades K-1, 5*

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!

### Marvelous Magnets

*Grades K, 2*

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

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

*Grades K-2*

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

### The Nature of Matter

*Grades 2-3, 5*

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!

### Sound Detectives

*Grades 1, 5*

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

### What a Shock!

*Grades 5-6*

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.



## Life Sciences

### Grow As We Go

*Grades Pre-K-K*

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.

### Bears in the Forest

*Grades Pre-K-2*

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

### Animal Needs

*Grades Pre-K-4, 7-12*

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

### Dino Dig

*Grades Pre-K-1*

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

### Fantastic Food Webs!

*Grades 1-4, 6-12*

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 \$2 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!

### Let's Make a Fossil

*Grades 3, 5, 7-12*

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 \$2 charge per student for this program.*

### Exploring Nature in the Community

*Grades K-12*

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



# Programs *continued*

## Earth Sciences

### Rocks and Minerals Uncovered

*Grades 1, 4–5, ES*

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

### Digging In

*Grades 2–5*

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.

### Water Cycle Voyage

*Grade 3*

Students will learn about the water cycle as they "become" water droplets through highly interactive games. *Additional fee of \$1 per student.*

### Renewable or Not?

*Grades 4–6*

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 \$1 per student.*

### Space Voyage

*Grades 4, 6*

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

### We're All in a Watershed

*Grades 4–12*

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

### Out of this World

Students will have the opportunity to use VMNH's 8-inch reflector telescope to view constellations and various other celestial objects. This program is offered as night program only: 7–8:30 p.m. *Special pricing applies; please call for details.*

### Pollution Prints

*Grades K–12*

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

### Trees for the Future

*Grades 1–2*

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

## History & Social Studies

### Eastern Woodland Indians

*Grades K–5*

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

### Link to the Past

*Grade 3*

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

### Historical Climate Change

*Grades 6–12*

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.

## Math and Engineering

### Speedy Building

*Grades 3, 5*

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.



# Exhibits

The museum offers innovative, award-winning exhibits highlighting the unique features of Virginia's natural history. All exhibits and presentations are correlated to Virginia education standards. The following is an overview of the 2023–24 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 and Archaeology Labs.

***The Hooker Furniture Discovery Reef*** provides an exciting underwater adventure area for young children on a sunken ship.

***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.



***Hahn Hall of Biodiversity*** features a variety of taxidermied African mammals including a lion, hyena, and several antelope.

***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.

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

***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.*

***Dinosaur Discoveries: Ancient Fossils, New Ideas*** is open through January 2024. This exciting exhibition from the American Museum of Natural History showcases the world of modern paleontology, introducing a dynamic vision of dinosaurs and the scientists who study them. New discoveries and technologies reveal how dinosaurs lived, moved and behaved. Find out how advanced technologies allow scientists to look at fossils in fresh ways. Examine realistic models and casts, and see dinosaurs walk, run and move their long necks in fantastic computer simulations.

***Masters of the Night: The True Story of Bats*** is available February 2024 through January 2025. Blind, blood-sucking, squeaky creatures that get tangled in your hair. Who wants to see an exhibit on BATS?! Visitors of *Masters of the Night: The True Story of Bats* soon find these beliefs to be myths that have held fast throughout the years. The exhibit explains that bats are actually gentle, beneficial little animals.



# Festivals

2023

## Bonez & Booz

October 28, 2023

Sponsored by:

- The Helen S. & Charles G. Patterson Jr. Charitable Foundation Trust
- Bassett Furniture
- Sovah Health



2024

## Reptile Festival

April 19-20, 2024

## Dino Festival

July 26-27, 2024

## Bonez & Booz

October 26, 2024

Please visit [www.vmnh.net](http://www.vmnh.net) for festival details.



# Doodle Bugs!

**Sign up today!**

Pre-registration for ages 3-5 is required one week prior to each event by contacting the museum at 276-634-4187 or [discover@vmnh.virginia.gov](mailto:discover@vmnh.virginia.gov). Programs are 10-11 a.m.



September 13:	<i>"Whose Dino Bone Is That?"</i>
October 11:	<i>"Animal Backyard"</i>
November 8:	<i>"Sensational Seasons"</i>
December 13:	<i>"The Three Rs"</i>
2024	
January 10:	<i>"Wild Weather"</i>
February 14:	<i>"Marvelous Messes"</i>
March 13:	<i>"Magnets"</i>
April 10:	<i>"Amazing Reptiles"</i>
May 8:	<i>"Bugs, Bugs, Everywhere"</i>



# Memberships

Are you a VMNH member? Join today to support the museum while receiving special members' only benefits, including free unlimited admission, invitations to receptions and events, discounts in the VMNH Museum Store, and free reciprocal admission to hundreds of museums and science centers nationwide. Save 20% by taking advantage of the two-year option. For more information, please visit our website at [www.vmnh.net/membership/new](http://www.vmnh.net/membership/new) or call 276-634-4162.



# 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!

Email [discover@vmnh.virginia.gov](mailto:discover@vmnh.virginia.gov) or call (276) 634-4187 to find out more.

## Fees:

\$90 for one program	\$180 for one program with VMNH staff onsite
\$135 for two programs	\$270 for two programs with VMNH staff onsite
\$170 for three programs	\$340 for three programs with VMNH staff onsite
\$210 for four programs	\$400 for four programs with VMNH staff onsite





## Dawn of the Dinosaurs

Did you know no dinosaur bones have been found in Virginia? Join educators as we examine fossils from the Age of the Dinosaurs and look at characteristics and adaptations. This program teaches students about dinosaurs while prompting them to draw conclusions based on visual evidence.

## Unsolved Mysteries

Why would the fossils of marine animals and land mammals from long ago all be deposited in the same place? With VMNH educators, students will view fossils from an active dig site along the Fall Line north of Richmond. We will look at a re-creation of a bone bed and hypothesize what may have happened along this ancient shoreline to cause the deaths of such a wide variety of animals. By examining fossil evidence and understanding how Earth's surface changes over time, students will explore scientific explanation of this location 14 million years ago.

## Walking Among Giants

Travel back in time 14,000 years to the last Ice Age — a time when muskox, mastodons, mammoths, and giant ground sloths lived in Virginia. By examining casts of bones, teeth, footprints, and real fossils we will explore how the behavioral and physical adaptations of these animals helped them to survive in the not too distant climatic past.

## Trash to Treasure

Don't miss out on this unique opportunity for students to explore archaeology. By examining artifacts such as pottery pieces, animal bones, and projectile points, students will be able to make conclusions about American Indian culture both before and after European contact. Led by VMNH education staff, students will better understand how trash of past civilizations can be a valuable tool for archaeologists.

**All Distance Learning programs are tailored to specific standards of learning based on your grade level.**

## The Earth as We Know it

Join educators for an exciting investigation of the forces that shape the world. With models and demonstrations, students will make connections between how the energy trapped inside the earth has moved continents and has shaped the earth's surface over time.

## The Circle of Life

By investigating the relationships among organisms and looking at examples of producers, consumers, and decomposers, students will understand the transfer of energy that occurs among all living things and the fundamental processes it fuels. Students will have an opportunity to see the museum's live turtles, snakes, or Madagascar Hissing Cockroaches in action!

## Classification: 101

Amidst specimens from the African Savanna, students will follow educators on a journey through our spectacular African mammal collection. Step into the shoes of a scientist by using observable characteristics as a basis for species classification. By examining the physical characteristics of different mammals, students will understand more about species identification, variation, and adaptations. Students will have an opportunity to see the museum's live turtles, snakes, or Madagascar Hissing Cockroaches in action!







*Virginia Museum of*  
**NATURAL HISTORY**

**21 Starling Avenue,  
Martinsville, Virginia 24112  
[www.vmnh.net](http://www.vmnh.net)**