FOUNDED IN 1905

Connecting People with Nature and Science to Inspire Stewardship of the Natural World
Directors' Message

Dear Friends of the Museum,

We are proud to share our 2020 Annual Report, covering July 2019 through June 2020, and hope you enjoy these photos from before the pandemic. This year has been one of changes, challenges, and tremendous learning. With a new Executive Director in September, this year was an opportunity to revisit and redefine our values. By mid-year we saw increasing visitation, sponsorship, and participation, setting us up for a record year and affirming that our community shared our values.

Of course, this year has been unlike any other. As the challenges posed by COVID-19 mounted, our guiding principles of prioritizing long-term viability, serving emerging community needs, and supporting staff, helped to map a path forward. Our strong financial practices kept our team whole, our staff worked to adapt, and our community came together in many ways, enabling us to continue to provide programs that serve Santa Cruz County, carrying our 115-year legacy onward.

J.M. Brown
President, Board of Directors

Felicia B. Van Stolk
Executive Director
Museum educators worked with local teachers to enhance science education and environmental literacy as part of the Santa Cruz County Office of Education's Science Initiative and Teacher Leadership Institute, resulting in refined Museum programs and robust science lesson sequences.

"We have an education blueprint that recognizes that our school system cannot achieve [environmental literacy] on its own solely in the classroom. We must partner with community-based environmental educators to bring their unique expertise and inspiring programs to every student, and Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History has been one of those key partners."

~ Amity Sandage, Environmental Literacy Coordinator
Santa Cruz County Office of Education
SCMNH 2020 Laura Hecox Naturalist Award recipient
K-12 students and their parents served by Museum nature-based school programs

Hours youth spent outdoors through Museum school programs

Students attending field trips with scholarships for transportation and program fees

Standards-aligned science lessons shared through the County Office of Education’s Distance Learning dashboard to support students through the end of the disrupted school year.
Exhibits

The staff refreshed the Museum galleries, working with community partners to include new stories and enhance permanent and temporary exhibits.

Clockwise from upper left: Staff painted and updated galleries, and new carpet was installed. The *First Peoples of California* exhibit labels were re-written with input from the Amah Mustun Tribal Band. The temporary exhibit *Mushrooms, Keys to the Kingdom Fungi* was enhanced by specimens from the UCSC Norris Center for Natural History and the Fungus Federation. Visitors shook and stomped to learn about seismology from the *Sense of Scale* exhibit commemorating the 30th anniversary of the Loma Prieta earthquake, with items from the UCSC Seismology lab.
In Our Galleries and Online

By state order, the Museum closed two weeks before the opening of *The Art of Nature*, our annual exhibit of science illustration. The artwork was instead displayed in a virtual exhibit with accompanying online programs reaching over 2,000 people by June.

Temporary exhibits welcomed new audiences and engaged visitors with dynamic hands-on *investigation stations*.


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Community & Outreach

Free Events
Monthly First Friday events and seasonal open houses were enriched by partner organizations and hands-on learning, with themes such as natural disasters, herpetology, and A Trip to the Moon.

Connecting With Youth
The Museum partnered with community centers to provide after school enrichment activities, reaching 262 students.

Mobile Museum
The Museum connected with 1,204 people through 23 outreach events across the county.
Future Museum Professionals
Student interns received 130 hours of collections management training, with a focus on inventory and digitization working with the Museum's malacology collections.

Digitization and Review
Over 250 of hours of digitization and critical review of the museum’s ethnographic records resulted in updated descriptions of over 300 objects correcting for outdated terminology.

Access and Care
Over 1,700 catalog records were individually transcribed, fundamentally improving access to and care of collections specimens and objects.

Increased public engagement with Museum collections is a priority, guiding focus on areas of interest such as herpetology, Fungus Fair memorabilia, and Loma Prieta earthquake artifacts.
By the Numbers

- **2,030** Hours served by volunteers
- **31,596** People engaged through programs, visits, and virtually
- **414** Museum Members
- **14** Live programs online
- **62** "Museum at Your Side" virtual resources
- **25** Nature-connection videos, reaching 2073 viewers
- Operational expenses totaled $807,881
- Revenue from individual donations increased by 3.8%
- Increased investment in Exhibits and Collections by 68%

*Includes facility rentals and fees
*No longer with the Museum at the time of printing. We are grateful for their contributions.

** Confirmed to the Board to begin service in the next fiscal year.
Volunteers, Docents and Interns

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Kathleen Church
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Gregory Kolar
Gloria Lee
Nancy Lenz
Alice Levine
Dorothy Lieber
Boddy Matt
Donna Meyers
Aggie Morrow
Michaeline Musick
Sylvia Patience
Odessa Pearce
Susan Pearce
Carol Penrose
Jeff Perez
Lise Peterson
Julia Philipp
Gavin Piccione
Miles Potter
Alexandra Race
Juliana Rebagliati
Molly Ressler
Penny Rich
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Despite a difficult year the Museum continues to thrive and most importantly serve our community - for teachers, students, families and those who needed to be lifted up and learn a wonderful fact about nature. This is what the Museum does so well and we are so proud to be supporters now and into the future.

~ Donna Meyers and Birdie Hunter
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Your contribution supports science education and environmental stewardship in our community.

- Join or renew as a Museum Member
- Visit often and see special exhibits on science and art, Santa Cruz native animals and plants, and local geology
- Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, or sign up for our online newsletter
- Become a volunteer
- Tell three friends about the Museum
- Donate to our Annual Appeal
- Become a Business Partner
- Plan a legacy gift to the Museum and ensure generations to come will benefit from our science education programs