

**Board of Trustees Quarterly Meeting**  
**Friday, February 6, 2026, 3:30 PM – 5:00 PM**  
**All Virtual Meeting**  
**Virginia Museum of Natural History**



**AGENDA**

Welcome and Call to Order	Dr. Melany Clark, Chair
Approval of Minutes (Action) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">August 22, 2025</a></li><li>• <a href="#">November 15, 2025</a></li></ul>	Dr. Clark
Chair's Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• New Board Members Introduction</li><li>• Reading of the 2026-2027 Slate of Officers</li><li>• Staff Spotlight</li><li>• Deep Dive – The Power of Real</li></ul>	Dr. Clark  Nominating Committee Ms. Lila Dougherty Ms. Christy Deatherage
Consent Agenda (Action) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Treasurer's Report</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Facilities Report</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Waynesboro Advocacy Committee Report</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Committee Composition</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Adoption of Bylaws</a></li></ul>	Mr. Will Clements Dr. Tom Benzing Dr. Benzing Dr. Melany Clark
Strategic Plan Report (Action) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">2025-2030 Strategic Plan</a></li></ul>	Dr. Melany Clark
Research and Collections Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Staffing update</a></li></ul>	Dr. Art Evans
Education and Public Programs Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Education by the Numbers</a></li></ul>	Mr. Nathan Sanford
Executive Director's Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Museum Updates, <a href="#">Events</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Advancement Report</a></li><li>• <a href="#">First reading of 2026-2027 Budget</a></li></ul>	Dr. Joe Keiper  Mr. Ryan Barber Mr. Jonathan Martin

Closed Session (Action)	Ms. Lauren Hall
Certification of Closed Session (Action)	Ms. Hall
Announcements & Open Discussion	Dr. Clark
Adjournment	Dr. Clark

**Next Board of Trustees Meeting – Saturday, May 16, 2026**

*No public comments will be taken at this meeting.*

## **Board of Trustees – Called Meeting**

**Friday, August 22, 2025, 2 PM**

### **Remote Participation Only**

Present:           Dr. Melany Clark (Chair)           Dr. David Furth  
                      Ms. Lauren Hall           Ms. Cathy Hincker  
                      Dr. Art Evans           Ms. Lisa Carter  
                      Dr. Tom Benzing           Mr. Nathan Sanford

Staff Present:    Dr. Joe Keiper (Executive Director)  
                      Ms. Jennifer Whitlow  
                      Mr. Zach Ryder

Others Present:  Ms. Lauren Coleman (OAG Representative)

Trustees Absent: Mr. Will Clements  
                      Ms. Carol Nash  
                      Ms. Emma Ito

## **WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER**

The Board of Trustees of the Virginia Museum of Natural History held a remote meeting on Friday, August 22, 2025. Eight trustees were present, thereby establishing a quorum.

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Dr. Evans moved and Ms. Carter seconded to approve the minutes from the 5.17.25 and the 8.9.25 Board of Trustees meetings. The motion carried unanimously.

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

Ms. Carter made a motion with a second by Ms. Hall to approve the consent agenda as presented on today's agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

## **CLOSED SESSION**

Ms. Hall made the following motion to move to closed session.

*I move that the Board of Trustees of the Virginia Museum of Natural History enter closed session to discuss the assignment, appointment, performance and salary of a specific employee, particularly to conduct the annual performance review of the Executive*

*Director, pursuant to the personnel exemption in Virginia Code § 2.2-3711(A)(1), and for consultation with legal counsel regarding the same pursuant to Virginia Code § 2.2-3711(A)(8).*

The motion was seconded by Dr. Benzing. A unanimous roll call vote followed.

## **OPEN SESSION**

Following the closed session, Ms. Hall made a motion with a second by Dr. Benzing to return to open session. A unanimous roll call vote was taken.

## **CERTIFICATION**

After which, Ms. Hall read the certification statement:

*Whereas, the Board of Trustees of the Virginia Museum on Natural History convened in closed meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and*

*Whereas, Virginia code §2.2-3712 requires certification by this Board that such closed meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law.*

*NOW BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Trustees of the Virginia Museum of Natural History hereby certifies that, to the best of each member's knowledge; (1) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under Virginia law and (2) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the closed meeting was convened were heard, discussed, or considered in the closed meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Virginia Museum of Natural History.*

A roll call vote was held to unanimously certify the closed session.

## **OPEN DISCUSSION**

Ms. Hall moved that the Chair of the Board work with appropriate staff to follow through on the personnel matters discussed, consistent with the discussion held in the closed session. Dr. Benzing seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Having no further business or discussion, Dr. Clark adjourned the meeting at 2:35 PM.

The next meeting of the  
Virginia Museum of Natural History  
Board of Trustees will be:  
Saturday, November 15, 2025  
Virginia Museum of Natural History  
21 Starling Ave., Martinsville, VA 24112

**Board of Trustees Quarterly Meeting**  
**Saturday, November 15, 2025**  
**Virginia Museum of Natural History**  
**Walker Lecture Hall with remote participation option**



The Virginia Museum of Natural History Board of Trustees held their quarterly meeting at 10 AM on Saturday, November 15, 2025.

Trustees Present:	Dr. Melany Clark (Chair) Dr. Carole Nash Dr. Tom Benzing Mr. Nathan Sanford	Dr. Art Evans Mr. Will Clements Ms. Sarah Bowman Ms. Ambria Wood (OAG Rep)
Staff Present:	Dr. Maddie Bassett Mr. Jonathan Martin Dr. Kal Ivanov	Mr. Ryan Barber Mr. Ben Williams Dr. Joe Keiper (Executive Director)
Trustees Remote:	Dr. David Furth (Distance) Ms. Elizabeth Carter-Bailey (Foundation Liaison)	Dr. Mindy VanDevelder (Distance)
Absent:	Ms. Lisa Carter Ms. Lauren Hall	Ms. Cathy Hincker Ms. Emma Ito

### **WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER**

Dr. Melany Clark opened the meeting and welcomed everyone at 10:04 AM and determined that a quorum was not present.

### **MINUTES**

August minutes to be considered for approval at the next Board of Trustees meeting.

### **CHAIR'S REPORT**

Dr. Maddie Bassett was introduced as the staff spotlight and spoke about her work at the museum. At the museum Dr. Bassett manages archeology collections, builds out the museum's reference collection, generates archeology data, and conducts research. She is also involved in key projects for the Cultural Heritage Monitoring Lab. Her local work most recently includes research on 179 sites in the Dan River drainage area which will be published in the coming months.

Mr. Barber provided a "deep dive" about the transformational gift from Mr. Frank Mariels. The total amount received was over 4.5 million dollars bringing the endowment total to 5.7 million dollars. The foundation has agreed to use the initial interest income to focus on the Young Explorers Center and Petra exhibit. Meanwhile, other endowment funds continue to grow and additional estate gifts are expected soon.

Mr. Barber urged all to remember that these funds were donated exclusively to the foundation and are being used as seed money. A priority is to continue to submit grants, cultivate memberships, and pursue other avenues to grow the endowment.

As a result of Mr. Mariels' transformational gift, one of the first items to be developed is a Young Explorers Center. Ms. Jennifer Whitlow shared some preliminary planning of the Young Explorer Center. Potential elements were shown, and the board was encouraged to submit any additional insight to staff for consideration. There was brief discussion about connecting elements in the Young Explorer Center to the museum either through play elements or with murals. It was noted that the exhibits manager may need to be included in an Ex Officio capacity on the Education/Exhibits Committee. Dr. Keiper added that the museum plans to request an additional staff member from the state to support the YEC following completion of the room.

Dr. Clark urged the Board to nominate anyone they feel would be an asset as a member of the Board of Trustees. There are still two vacant seats.

Dr. Clark thanked staff and Ms. Lisa Carter for their ongoing work requesting additional funds to support staff retention efforts. Dr. Keiper cautioned that while the state budget is flush at this time, the agency must remain cognizant of changes in the economy.

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

The items listed on the consent agenda will be considered at the next meeting of the Board of Trustees. Dr. Keiper noted the museum will assess next steps for the Waynesboro project with the release of the Governor's budget in December.

## **RESEARCH AND COLLECTIONS**

Dr. Art Evans reported for the R&C Committee that interviews for a new herpetologist are underway. The goal is to have the position filled by the summer. Additionally, the renovation of Douglas Ave. to provide storage is progressing. Dr. Evans reported that looking forward, staff would like to have a dedicated field vehicle that can travel off road with plenty of clearance.

## **EDUCATION**

Mr. Nathan Sanford reported for the Education Committee that the pavilion has been used numerous times for educational experiences. He also noted that the Education staff participated in numerous events including the most recent Bonez and Booz festival. Staff continue to find creative solutions to challenges and expand their offerings to accommodate demand.

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Dr. Keiper encouraged the Board to consider how each member can contribute to the mission through committee work. A list of committee descriptions will be emailed to each board member.

The museum's contribution to the VA 250 celebration will begin in January with an exhibit and interpretive signage throughout the museum. A membership event will be held on February 19<sup>th</sup> which will include a sample of Jefferson's corn beer and other natural history highlights from Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia*.

The Natural History of Chocolate event was a success and well received. The museum was able to offer the event at \$100 a ticket due to the caterer donating her time and expertise.

The museum's annual "gala" event is scheduled for March 21<sup>st</sup> with a Bridgerton-inspired theme.

The mobile museum trailer is currently undergoing extensive evaluation with Spevco, a professional trailer company in North Carolina. Spevco will provide the museum with a cost estimate to renovate the inside, address the electrical issues, and wrap the outside, then move it back to Waynesboro for stationary use. The museum will continue to operate the trailer during farmers market hours, and festivals. Depending on the cost of the renovation the hope is to have the trailer operational and back in Waynesboro in May. Dr. Benzing noted the annual River festival is May 3<sup>rd</sup>.

## **ADVANCEMENT REPORT**

Mr. Ryan Barber presented the Advancement Report for the quarter. Memberships continue to grow and there seems to be greater awareness of the museum and its offerings. Giving is strong and Museums for All participation remain steady.

Many of the museum's original exhibits have recently been repaired.

The museum received a \$10,000 grant from Virginia Tourism for use to promote VA250. One item funded by the grant, the *Virginia Explorer* publication is currently at the printer and will be distributed beginning in January. The museum also used a portion of the funds to order a new case in which to feature an original printing of Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia*.

Mr. Barber also noted appreciation of the recent partnership with the Taubman Museum in Roanoke.

Although there will be no adoption of the Strategic Plan at this meeting, Dr. Keiper encouraged the Board to review the museum's mission alignment with each objective.

The museum is exploring the possibility of obtaining Trilobite specimens and/or 3D prints for the special exhibit gallery. Based on the success of the exhibit, we may want to offer this as a traveling/rental opportunity. After discussion, several board members suggested having a trilobite naming contest.

Finally, Dr. Keiper informed the Board that the museum is currently talking with an industrial engineer and Southern Methodist University about temporarily securing their interactive 3-D printed hadrosaur skull. The skull is anatomically correct and includes technology which allows a guest to blow on a microphone and hear what the hadrosaur may have sounded like. Currently, the museum is negotiating borrowing this skull and technology at no cost.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS AND OPEN DISCUSSION**

Dr. Benzing expressed appreciation for the interpretive signage installed in Waynesboro along the South River. The museum hopes to develop a few more signs with funds left over from the original grant.

Dr. Keiper highlighted two future objectives found in the Strategic Plan regarding professional input on a Starling Ave. wing and connections to Wilson Park.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Dr. Clark reminded all Board members to support the museum through membership and expressed appreciation for their attendance. She further suggested everyone take part in a Doodle Poll to gauge interest in a fully remote meeting in February. Dr. Clark adjourned the meeting at 11:23 AM.

DRAFT



## **Second Quarter FY26 Financials**

<b>Brief Budget Summary .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Balance Sheet Q2 FY26 .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>FY26 Second Quarter Budget Notes.....</b>	<b>3-4</b>
<b>Capital Projects FY26.....</b>	<b>5-7</b>
<b>Budget Amendment Request FY26.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Draft Budget FY27 .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Draft Budget Notes .....</b>	<b>10-11</b>

## **Second Quarter FY26 Summary**

The second quarter of FY26 began on a positive note for VMNH. We received additional legislative appropriations to cover salary and benefit increases. In mid-December, the Governor's budget was released, providing level funding for FY27 and FY28, along with a proposed 2% cost-of-living adjustment for staff, subject to approval by the General Assembly.

The positive year-over-year growth trends across key revenue categories continued into the second quarter of FY26, with increases in class, workshop, and admissions revenues meeting or exceeding second-quarter projections and finishing ahead of prior-year results.

Rising marginal costs across the broader economy continues to place upward pressure on museum operations. Increases in utility rates, materials, and labor have led to higher operating expenses and contractor pricing. These conditions require careful cost management, proactive budgeting, and strategic planning to mitigate impacts while maintaining service levels.

## **Base Budget FY25 and FY26 House Bill 1600, Senate Bill 800 (2024)**

Virginia Museum of Natural History - Museum and Cultural Services (14500)

General Fund	\$3,578,220
Estimated Revenues	\$ 556,011

**VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY**  
**MONTHLY STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENSES**  
**FOR THE PERIOD ENDING DECEMBER 30, 2025**

NOTE		BUDGET	YTD	YTD%
		=====	=====	=====
	<b>SUPPORT &amp; REVENUES</b>			
	<b>Support:</b>			
	Commonwealth	\$3,578,220	3,578,220	100%
1	Add: Appropriation	\$204,414	204,414	100%
	Central Accounts Distribution	\$0	0	0%
	<b>Total Support</b>	<b>\$3,782,634</b>	<b>\$3,782,634</b>	<b>100%</b>
		=====	=====	=====
	<b>Revenues:</b>			
2	Admission to Museum	\$92,075	54,937	60%
	VMNH Publications	\$2,000	272	14%
	Receipts from City & County	\$37,890	37,890	100%
	Honorariums/Misc. Inc.	\$1,000	27	3%
3	Restricted Gifts Foundation/Grants:Research&Education/Memberships	\$270,000	156,723	58%
	Rental of Museum Rooms	\$6,000	2,333	39%
	Exhibit Rentals	\$500	0	0%
4	Souvenirs- Misc. Sales	\$72,800	35,483	49%
5	Classes, Workshops, Kit Rentals, Education Projects	\$50,000	27,553	55%
	Federal Funds Budgeted/Rec'd	\$0	0	0%
	<b>Total FY2026 Budgeted Revenues</b>	<b>\$510,953</b>	<b>315,217</b>	<b>62%</b>
	Special Funds Carryover FY25*	\$354,599	354,599	100%
	Federal Funds Carryover FY25*	\$6,561	6,561	100%
	<b>Total Revenues and Carryover from FY2025</b>	<b>\$872,113</b>	<b>676,377</b>	<b>78%</b>
		=====	=====	=====
	<b>TOTAL OPERATING FUNDS/APPROP</b>	<b>\$4,654,747</b>	<b>4,459,011</b>	<b>96%</b>
		=====	=====	=====
	<b>EXPENSES:</b>			
	Salaries	\$2,214,187	1,143,039	52%
	Payroll Benefits	\$961,261	523,454	54%
6	Contractual Services	\$336,944	292,659	87%
	Supplies	\$80,000	37,723	47%
	Equipment	\$50,000	9,097	18%
	Equipment Maintenance	\$37,703	14,020	37%
	Travel	\$60,000	16,916	28%
	Staff Training	\$14,000	1,955	14%
	Repairs/Construction	\$105,000	30,427	29%
7	Subscriptions	\$1,000	2,494	249%
	Books	\$1,000	0	0%
8	Utilities	\$294,945	157,914	54%
	Telephone	\$15,000	9,077	61%
	Mailing	\$5,000	2,013	40%
	Insurance	\$23,000	0	0%
	Vehicle Maint./Fuel	\$18,000	3,180	18%
	Organ. Memberships	\$20,000	9,324	47%
	Printing	\$5,000	350	7%
	Other:	\$5,000	0	0%
	Awards/Unem.Comp./Ind Cost	\$1,000	0	0%
	Exhibit & Equipment Rentals	\$40,000	18,145	45%
	Building Rentals	\$1,000	515	52%
9	Agency Service Charges	\$185,000	48,507	26%
	<b>TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$4,474,039</b>	<b>2,320,808</b>	<b>52%</b>
		=====	=====	=====
	<b>PERCENT SPENT OF YTD INCOME RECEIVED</b>			
		=====	=====	=====
	<b>TOTAL INCOME BALANCE</b>	<b>\$180,708</b>	<b>2,138,203</b>	
		=====	=====	=====

\*\*\* Central accounts distribution includes payroll and health care adjustments.

\*\* Memberships Income has been combined with Restricted Gifts Income.

\* Numbers are subject to change due to end of year fiscal adjustments.

## **Revenues:**

### **1.) Additional Appropriation**

As is typical, the museum began Fiscal Year 2026 in a deficit position. During the second quarter, the museum received an allocation of \$204,414 from Central Accounts to offset the \$70,702 amendment for staff salaries, 3% staff salary adjustments, increased health insurance costs, and property insurance premiums that took effect in July, resulting in a positive impact on the agency's financial position for the remainder of the fiscal year.

### **2.) Festivals**

The positive revenue trend continued into the second quarter, with admissions revenue running approximately 10% ahead of the prior year's second-quarter results. Admissions performance in the early part of Fiscal Year 2026 was driven primarily by the success of Dino Fest in July, and Bonez and Booz in October.

### **3.) Foundation**

Transfers are in line with expectations for the second quarter of FY26. As new projects come online, we expect funding levels to exceed initial projections.

### **4.) Store Sales**

During the second quarter of FY26, Museum Store revenues reflected level revenues compared to the same period in the prior year. A combination of factors is likely to influence this performance. Fiscal staff will continue to track sales activity and report on any material changes.

### **5.) Educational Programs**

While education program revenues may appear below estimates in certain periods, many of these funds are collected through the Foundation and fluctuate based on the timing of inter-entity transfers rather than program demand. The addition of new staff in the previous fiscal year has allowed educational revenues and program delivery to remain strong and consistent.

## **Expenses:**

### **6.) Contractual Services**

Operating costs in the second quarter were higher than projected due to the timing of planned expenses rather than ongoing cost increases. Costs reflect carryover expenses from Q1 to close out the Pavilion, continued work on the Waynesboro project, and replacement of worn parts in the HVAC system. These costs were anticipated and remain consistent with the approved operating and project plans.

### **7.) Subscriptions**

Subscription fees originally budgeted for FY25 were deferred into FY26 due to a Governor-issued directive prohibiting prepayments. As a result, payments for services that would typically have been made in FY25 were intentionally held and processed in the current fiscal year.

### **8.) Utilities**

VMNH fiscal staff continue to monitor consumption and report to the VMNH administration. Building and Grounds staff continue to work to reduce variability in utility costs and to navigate the challenges posed by aging facility equipment, Martinsville's aging infrastructure, and the impact of winter weather conditions. Their diligence and adaptability have ensured that building operations remain consistent despite these ongoing variables.

### **9.) Agency Service Chargers**

Agency service charges lag the fiscal year much like every year. Service charges for Payroll Service Bureau, Department of Engineering and Building, Department of Accounts and the Payment to Treasury for the ESCO project all fall near the end of the fiscal year.

## **Second Quarter FY26 Capital Projects Summary**

### **Capital Projects – Maintenance Reserve Funded**

#### **Douglas Renovation Project**

##### **Update:**

Fiscal, administrative, and curatorial staff completed the first round of the Agency's Value Engineering. The MEP engineering teams will conduct a final on-site walkthrough between February 4 and 10 to verify system coordination, constructability, and design compliance. As part of the Maintenance Reserve program, this initiative allows for a deliberate and methodical approach, unlike a Capital New Construction Project.

##### **General:**

The Museum has received approval from the Department of General Services (DGS) to proceed with an Architectural and Engineering (A/E) term contract, consolidating several smaller projects, including HVAC installation, into a single, efficiently managed initiative. After reviewing and scoring three proposals, the Purchasing Department awarded the contract to Raymond, P.C., which has executed the agreement and will begin work in accordance with project timelines and state procurement standards.

This bundled approach is designed to save time and achieve economies of scale, reducing costs. The project will efficiently address weatherization, plumbing, electrical, structural, and HVAC systems. Total costs will be covered by the Maintenance Reserve.

#### **Waynesboro Trailer Renovation Project**

##### **Update:**

Staff requested that the company review all possible alternatives, resulting in a plan to maintain limited functionality to support general operations. The trailer will be returned to the site and remain in limited service until the completion of the VMNH–Waynesboro satellite facility.

##### **General:**

The VMNH Exhibit Trailer, located in the City of Waynesboro adjacent to the municipal lot, is scheduled for renovation over the next several months. Fiscal staff engaged three contractors through the formal bidding process to assess the condition of the museum's outreach trailer. SPEVCO was awarded the contract, removed the trailer from the site for a full evaluation, and determined that complete renovation was not feasible due to its condition. Project expenses will be funded through the Maintenance Reserve.

## **Capital Projects – Pool Funded**

### **VMNH-Waynesboro – New Facility Construction**

#### **Budget and Legislative**

Governor Youngkin did not move the VMNH–Waynesboro Branch Campus project into the Capital Construction Pool. VMNH staff and stakeholders are now following the next steps outlined by the City’s consultant, McGuire Woods. Staff are currently working with Senate and House Finance Committee members, as well as legislators, to amend the budget and place the project into the Capital Construction Pool.

The project continues to have strong legislative support from Senator Chris Head and Delegate Ellen H. McLaughlin.

#### **Cost Estimate**

VMNH staff, under the direction of Scott Watchner from JMU, completed the cost estimation study. A comparison of the Independent Cost Estimate with the A/E’s estimate yielded the following results:

- **Independent Cost Estimate: \$20,809,373**
- **Glave & Holmes (A/E Estimate): \$19,223,085**
- **Difference: \$1,586,288 (8.25%)**

Because the difference is below DEB’s 10% reconciliation threshold, no reconciliation is required. However, as a best practice, both firms will review each other’s figures to identify and explain significant discrepancies. This process will be completed in the coming weeks.

- **Cost to the Agency: \$26,739**

#### **Value Engineering Study**

VMNH staff collaborated with Grace Hagan of Axias (Alexandria, Virginia) to complete the Value Engineering (VE) study. The process included a kickoff meeting, four full days of virtual workshops, and an exit meeting to summarize findings. The study reviewed 19 options, of which six cost-saving measures were adopted. All six measures reduce costs while fully supporting the Museum’s mission requirements.

- **Cost to the Agency: \$64,720**

## **Project Scope and Timing**

Glave & Holmes submitted the Preliminary Design documents to the Department of Engineering and Buildings (DEB). DEB returned the documents with comments, which were reviewed in a joint meeting attended by VMNH staff, Glave & Holmes, DEB, and Scott Watchner (JMU). The Preliminary Design has been approved, and the project is now ready to advance to the Working Drawings Phase.

### **The next steps include:**

- **Legislative Approval to move into the Capital Construction Pool**
- **Allocation of funds to complete Working Drawings**
- **Final project approval from Mike Coppa, enabling the project to advance to working drawings.**

With the continued support of the Board of Trustees and the VMNH Foundation, Dr. Keiper and museum staff have worked diligently with contract partners, including Glave & Holmes and JMU, to ensure all submissions are timely and accurate. The goal is to position the project for inclusion in the Governor's December budget.

### **Additional Projects FY26**

- **Reseal Front Patio: Near completion.**
- **Repair Concrete Roof Accent: Near completion.**
- **Window Film Installation: Completed.**
- **Library Compactors: Removed and Stored**
- **Library Hallway Renovation: Preliminary Discussion Stage**
- **Exhibit Rails: Complete**



## **Fiscal Year 26: Virginia Museum of Natural History**

### **SUCCESSFUL - FY26 Budget Amendment Request:**

The Virginia Museum of Natural History (VMNH) requests a budget amendment to address salary alignment challenges and strengthen staff retention. This funding will enable VMNH to establish competitive base salaries for educators and provide modest incentive increases to support workforce stability. These efforts are essential for attracting and retaining skilled professionals, maintaining compliance with regulatory requirements, and ensuring the Museum can fulfill its mission of education, community engagement, and scientific research. This strategic investment will help VMNH remain competitive in today's job market while safeguarding its long-term operational capacity.

Total Request \$70,702

Program	Fund	Subobject	Definition	FY 2026 Dollars Increase Req
Museum and Cultural Services (14500)	01000	1111	Employer Retirement Contributions – VRS Defined Benefits program	\$8,317.00
Museum and Cultural Services (14500)	01000	1112	Federal Old-Age Insurance for Salaried State Employees (Salaried Social Security and Medicare)	\$3,680.00
Museum and Cultural Services (14500)	01000	1114	Group Life Insurance	\$699.00
Museum and Cultural Services (14500)	01000	1116	Retiree Health (Medical/Hospitalization) Insurance Credit Premium	\$666.00
Museum and Cultural Services (14500)	01000	1117	VSDP and Long-term Disability Insurance	\$295.00
Museum and Cultural Services (14500)	01000	1123	Salaries, Classified	\$57,045.00
			Total	\$70,702.00

**VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY**  
**MONTHLY STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENSES**  
**DRAFT BUDGET FY27**

NOTE	BUDGET
	=====
<b>SUPPORT &amp; REVENUES</b>	
<b>Support:</b>	
1 Commonwealth	\$3,782,634
Add: Appropriation	\$89,772
	-----
<b>Total Support</b>	<b>\$3,872,406</b>
	=====
<b>Revenues:</b>	
2 Admission to Museum	\$101,283
VMNH Publications	\$2,000
Receipts from City & County	\$37,890
Honorariums/Misc. Inc.	\$1,000
3 Restricted Gifts Foundation/Grants:Research&Education/Memberships	\$315,031
Rental of Museum Rooms	\$8,000
Exhibit Rentals	\$500
4 Souvenirs- Misc. Sales	\$70,000
5 Classes, Workshops, Kit Rentals, Education Projects	\$62,000
Federal Funds Budgeted/Rec'd	\$0
<b>Total FY2026 Budgeted Revenues</b>	<b>\$510,953</b>
Special Funds Carryover FY25*	\$354,599
Federal Funds Carryover FY25*	\$6,561
	-----
<b>Total Revenues and Carryover from FY2025</b>	<b>\$872,113</b>
	=====
<b>TOTAL OPERATING FUNDS/APPROP</b>	<b>\$4,744,519</b>
	=====
<b>EXPENSES:</b>	
6 Salaries	\$2,331,799
Payroll Benefits	\$1,046,907
7 Contractual Services	\$400,000
Supplies	\$80,000
Equipment	\$50,000
Equipment Maintenance	\$38,000
Travel	\$40,000
8 Staff Training	\$7,000
Repairs/Construction	\$105,000
Subscriptions	\$1,000
9 Utilities	\$284,000
Telephone	\$17,000
Mailing	\$5,000
Insurance	\$23,000
Vehicle Maint./Fuel	\$18,000
Organ. Memberships	\$20,000
Printing	\$5,000
Other:	\$5,000
Awards/Unem.Comp./Ind Cost	\$1,000
Exhibit & Equipment Rentals	\$40,000
Building Rentals	\$1,000
Agency Service Charges	\$145,000
	-----
<b>TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$4,664,706</b>
	=====
<b>PERCENT SPENT OF YTD INCOME RECEIVED</b>	
	-----
<b>TOTAL INCOME BALANCE</b>	<b>\$79,813</b>
	=====

\*\*\* Central accounts distribution includes payroll and health care adjustments.

\*\* Memberships Income has been combined with Restricted Gifts Income.

\* Numbers are subject to change due to end of year fiscal adjustments.

## **Revenues**

### **1.) Commonwealth Appropriation**

VMNH received level funding in Governor Youngkin's budget this fall as expected. The legislature now has its turn to produce an amended budget. Staff will follow the process and provide updates.

### **2.) Admission Revenue**

Revenue is running approximately 10% ahead of the prior year's second-quarter results; therefore, staff believe that a 10% increase to the forecast is warranted.

### **3.) Foundation**

We anticipate that new Foundation-funded projects will come online in FY27, resulting in an increase to the forecast. In addition, with the continuation of funding for Cultural Heritage Monitoring Lab activities, we anticipate an increase in transfers in FY27 and FY28.

### **4.) Store Sales**

VMNH Museum Store sales appear to have softened on a year-over-year basis. Several variables may be contributing to this trend, resulting in an approximately level forecast. Fiscal staff will continue to monitor the situation and provide updates accordingly.

### **5.) Education**

Now fully staffed and following recent programmatic price increases, we expect education programs to outperform expectations over the next few years.

## **Expenses**

### **6.) Salaries and Benefits**

General compensation is expected to increase over FY27 and FY28. Governor Youngkin's budget increases agency wages by 2 percent and provides for a bonus. This is subject to change, as the legislature now has its turn at producing an amended budget. Staff will continue to follow the process and provide updates.

### **7.) Contractual Services**

As new projects come online and economic headwinds persist, contracted expenses are expected to increase.

### **8.) Staff Training**

Increases in Foundation support for staff training allows for the movement of funds to other areas of the operations.

### **9.) Utilities**

Building and Grounds staff continue work that is expected to result in improved utility efficiencies.

## VMNH FACILITIES COMMITTEE REPORT

Joe Keiper, Director

6 February 2026

### STARLING AVENUE

- Variable Flow Drives for HVAC all replaced – project completed.

### DOUGLAS AVENUE

- Further meetings with architects and engineers narrowing scope of first \$500,000 investment.
  - HVAC for full building.
  - Aesthetic work (walls, floors) on first level.
- May 2026 anticipated start.

### GALLERY USAGE

- The current changing exhibits gallery will be emptied in July at the close of the current dinosaurs exhibit. This space will be transformed with support from VMNH-F into the Frank Mariels Young Explorer Center.
- The former Library space is being transformed into the new changing exhibit gallery.
  - Compactors removed, stored temporarily at Douglas for collections use there in future.
  - Compactor rail channels have been filled, carpeting to be laid creating a fresh floor.
  - Lighting contractor approached for install of track lighting.
  - Future improvements include paint, and ultimately a door replacement to create an access point 50% larger than what is currently installed.
- When the Young Explorer Center opens, the Hooker Furniture Discovery Reef will be transformed into the Hooker Furniture *Petra* Gallery, This will celebrate the cave cat fossil excavated from SW Virginia, and interpret cave habitats.

**Virginia Museum of Natural History**  
**Waynesboro office of Economic Development**  
**Monday, December 1, 2025, 1 PM**  
**Minutes**



**Present in Person:** Dr. Tom Benzing Dr. Maggie Van Huss  
Mr. Greg Hitchin Mr. Len Poulin  
Mr. Urbie Nash Ms. Ann Peltier

**Present Remote:** Mrs. Faye Cooper

**Staff Present:** Dr. Joe Keiper

**Staff Present Remote:** Mr. Ryan Barber Mr. Zach Ryder  
Mr. Jonathan Martin Ms. Jennifer Whitlow

**Welcome**

Dr. Benzing opened the meeting with a welcome to all in attendance both in person and online at 1:01 PM.

**Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Poulin made a motion to approve the November minutes and Dr. Van Huss seconded. Motion carried.

**Community Connections**

Lecture Series – Dr. Benzing thanked everyone who participated during the fall and reminded the committee that the series will resume in January 2026.

Trailer Renovation – Dr. Keiper reported that the trailer was evaluated and has been found to need significant work. The cost of the repair work plus rewrapping will be more than \$60,000.00. Once work is completed the trailer will be moved back to Waynesboro but will no longer be mobile, meaning the trailer will be in a fixed location. Dr. Keiper will work with the City of Waynesboro to allow for an electric hookup. Dr. Benzing suggested purchasing a skirt to be added around the bottom of the trailer since it will be immobile. There was also brief discussion about a new name for the trailer, reorientating the location for greater visibility, and possible wrap concepts.

Events – Upcoming events include Riverfest and Museum Rodeo both of which will be in May 2026.

Interpretive Signage – The Exhibits Manager is newly employed and is aware of the signage project. Additional interpretive signage is expected in Sunset Park and along the South River closer to the museum site.

## **General Assembly and Advocacy**

The Governor's budget will be released mid-December. Dr. Keiper provided a draft work plan to the committee from McGuire Woods Consulting regarding their proposed work in the 2026 General Assembly. The committee should be aware that the budget is very dynamic due to the administration change and new legislative representation. The McGuire Woods representative will work through the Appropriations Committee and other avenues as he advocates for the project.

Dr. Benzing suggested all interested community members attend legislator's open house events as an additional way to boost support. The next meeting of WAC will be held on January 5 at which time a legislative strategy can be developed.

Members of the committee underscored the importance of adjacent community's support as this is a project that benefits the region as well as all the residents of Virginia. The committee engaged in general discussion about recruiting supporters, generating gifts, and boosting engagement from existing regional groups.

## **Open Discussion**

Dr. Keiper reported the VA250 celebration exhibit work is well underway. In addition to exhibiting a first English edition of, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, the museum will exhibit artifacts that highlight the contributions of Thomas Jefferson to the science of natural history. The museum is also planning two evening events to promote further engagement of the community.

A suggestion was made to explore a collaboration with the Waynesboro library for expansion of VA250 exhibits and to consider VA250 exhibits for trailer when it is ready for visitors. There was general discussion about loaning a temporary exhibit to the Heritage Museum in Waynesboro.

Committee members mentioned Monticello sells seed packets that may be an interesting addition to the museum store since our exhibits prominently feature Thomas Jefferson's work in the natural sciences.

With no further business, Dr. Benzing adjourned the meeting at 1:53 PM.

The next meeting of the Waynesboro Advocacy Committee will be held:

Monday, January 5, 2026, 1 PM

Waynesboro Office of Economic Development

**Virginia Museum of Natural History**  
**Waynesboro Office of Economic Development**  
**Monday, January 5, 2026, 1 PM**  
**Minutes**



**Present in Person:** Dr. Tom Benzing Mr. Greg Hitchen  
Mr. Len Poulin Mr. Rick Kane  
Ms. Faye Cooper Dr. Maggie Vanhuss  
Mr. Urbie Nash

**Present Remote:** Dr. Carole Nash

**Staff Present:** Dr. Joe Keiper Mr. Jonathan Martin

**Staff Present Remote:** Mr. Ryan Barber Mr. Zach Ryder  
Ms. Jennifer Whitlow

**Absent:** Ms. Stephanie Duffy

### **Welcome**

Following a short technical delay, Dr. Benzing opened the meeting at 1:07 PM with a welcome to those attending online and in-person. It was determined that a quorum was present.

### **Approval of Minutes**

The minutes from December 1, 2025, were presented and approved with no corrections.

### **Community Connections**

Lecture Series - Dr. Benzing is hosting the next lecture series event on January 20th featuring a film short of the South River from its headwaters to Chesapeake Bay. Admission is free.

Trailer Update – The trailer repair company has been directed to begin renovation work. Delivery of the trailer including a skirt is expected in the spring.

Interpretive Signage – There is no change in production of the signage.

Events – Two large events planned in Waynesboro occur in May 2026, Riverfest and the Museum Rodeo.

Meetings with Legislators - Dr. Benzing reported that he attended a pre-legislative brunch sponsored by the Harrisonburg/Rockingham Chamber of Commerce and was able to speak with numerous delegates about funding for the Waynesboro facility. He encouraged others to attend these events as



it is worthwhile to build a personal connection with delegates before they begin their session in Richmond.

### **Status of State Budget**

Dr. Keiper reported that VMNH was funded in the outgoing Governor's budget with modest increases but with none of the additional fund requests. A new Secretary of Education has not been announced by Governor Elect Spanberger. The effort to re-benchmark and provide for Medicaid expansion are budget priorities that will make funds distribution challenging.

VMNH Waynesboro documents were sent to Preston Bryant, SVP Government Relations-State from the firm McGuire-Woods. There has been no correspondence about a strategic kickoff meeting.

There was general discussion of the committee's responsibility in working with various outside groups while McGuire Woods, namely Mr. Bryant, focuses on the legislative body.

### **Open Discussion**

The committee engaged in a general discussion about strategy to move the Waynesboro project into the capital construction pool. One idea is to redesign the messaging specifically for the General Assembly with a clearer explanation of why the project is important.

Some suggested next steps included meeting directly with Mr. Bryant, engaging strategic supporters, developing a consistent elevator pitch, including STEM education as a primary focus (why) the project is important, conduct advocacy activities in Richmond while the General Assembly is in session.

Dr. Keiper will reach out to select supporters on the Committee's behalf to determine if they can help push the message that:

- VMNH-W is ready for construction working drawings;
- and therefore, can be moved to the Capital Construction Pool;
- with working drawings costing less than \$4 million of the total \$36 million project completion.

### **Adjournment**

With no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 1:57 PM by Dr. Benzing.

### **Next Meeting**

All – virtual, Tuesday, February 3, 2026, at 1 PM.



**Board of Trustees**  
**Committee Roster 2025-2026**  
**1.15.26 – 6.30.26**

**Executive Committee (VI. §6.2)**

Melany Clark	Chair
Lisa Carter	Vice-Chair
Will Clements	Treasurer
Lauren Hall	Secretary
Joe Keiper	Ex Officio

**Finance (VI. §6.3) & Development /Marketing Committees (VI. §6.8)**

Will Clements	Chair
Nathan Sanford	
Sarah Bowman	
Tyler Carter	Foundation
Ryan Barber	Ex Officio
Jonathan Martin	Ex Officio

**Nominating Committee (VI. §6.4)**

Melany Clark  
Emma Ito  
Lauren Hall

**Strategic Planning (VI. §6.5)**

Melany Clark	Chair
Lisa Carter	
Art Evans	
Cathy Hincker	
Steve Powers	Foundation

**Research & Collections Committee (VI. §6.7)**

Art Evans	Chair
Tom Benzing	
Carole Nash	
Melany Clark	
Dave Furth	
Ben Williams	Ex Officio

**Education & Public Programs Committee (VI. §6.9)**

Nathan Sanford	Chair
Emma Ito	
Cathy Hincker	
Mindy Vandevelder	
Gail Vogler	Foundation
Christy Deatherage	Ex Officio
Lila Dougherty	Ex Officio

**Facilities Committee (VI. §6.6)**

Tom Benzing	Chair
David Furth	
Lauren Hall	
Lisa Carter	
Richard Bratcher	

**Waynesboro Advocacy Committee (ad hoc)**

Tom Benzing	Chair
Carol Nash	
Richard Bratcher	
Len Poulin	
Greg Hitchin (City of Waynesboro)	
Faye Cooper	
Maggie Van Huss	
Stephanie Duffy	<a href="mailto:duffyss@ci.waynesboro.va.us">duffyss@ci.waynesboro.va.us</a>
Rick Kane	<a href="mailto:rmkane@ntelos.net">rmkane@ntelos.net</a>
Ann Peltier	<a href="mailto:ann.peltier@gmail.com">ann.peltier@gmail.com</a>
Herold Nash	<a href="mailto:urbienash@yahoo.com">urbienash@yahoo.com</a>
Bill Alexander	<a href="mailto:alexba@ntelos.net">alexba@ntelos.net</a>
Steve Powers	Foundation

**BYLAWS  
OF  
THE VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

*The Bylaws of the Board of Trustees of the Virginia Museum of Natural History are intended to allow the Board to conduct its business in an orderly fashion. Trustees also should familiarize themselves with the relevant sections of the Code of Virginia, the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, and the Virginia Conflict of Interest laws.*

*Adopted:*    **May 21, 2005**

*Amended and Restated:*   **February 6, 2026**

**ARTICLE I.**

Section 1.1

Section 1.2

**OFFICES**

Registered Office

Other Offices

**ARTICLE II.**

Section 2.1

Section 2.2

**PURPOSES**

Nature of the Virginia Museum of Natural History

Exempt Purpose

**ARTICLE III.**

Section 3.1

**AFFIRMATION OF NON-DISCRIMINATION**

Non-discrimination

**ARTICLE IV.**

Section 4.1

Section 4.2

Section 4.3

Section 4.4

Section 4.5

Section 4.6

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Duties and Powers

Number

Qualifications

Notice of Meetings; Waiver

Quorum

Voting

**ARTICLE V.**

Section 5.1

Section 5.2

Section 5.3

Section 5.4

Section 5.5

Section 5.6

Section 5.7

Section 5.8

**OFFICERS**

Executive Officers

Election and Term and Tenure of Office

Chair of the Board

Vice-Chair

Secretary

Treasurer

Vacancies

Resignations

**ARTICLE VI.**

Section 6.1

Section 6.2

**COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD**

General

Executive Committee

Section 6.3  
Section 6.4  
Section-6.5  
Section 6.6  
Section 6.7  
Section 6.8  
Section 6.9

**ARTICLE VII.**

Section 7.1  
Section 7.2  
Section 7.3  
Section 7.4

**ARTICLE VIII.**

Section 8.1  
Section 8.2  
Section 8.3  
Section 8.4  
Section 8.5

Finance Committee  
Nominating Committee  
Strategic Planning Committee  
Facilities Committee  
Research and Collections Committee  
Development/Marketing Committee  
Education and Public Programs Committee

**MUSEUM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Duties and Responsibilities  
Evaluation of the Executive Director  
Removal  
Acting Executive Director

**MISCELLANEOUS**

Annual Report  
Acceptance of Gifts  
Rules of Order  
Genders  
Adoption and Amendment of These Bylaws

## **ARTICLE I**

### **OFFICES**

Section 1.1 Registered Office. The Registered Office of the Virginia Museum of Natural History shall be located in Martinsville, Virginia

Section 1.2 Other Offices. The Virginia Museum of Natural History may also have offices at such other places within or without the Commonwealth of Virginia as the Board of Trustees may from time to time determine or the business of the Virginia Museum of Natural History may require.

## **ARTICLE II**

### **PURPOSES**

Section 2.1 Nature of the Virginia Museum of Natural History. The Virginia Museum of Natural History will be a civic, non-profit organization, the purpose of which is as set forth in its Articles of Incorporation. More specifically, it shall be devoted to the organization, management, maintenance and operation of a museum for the purpose as stated by the Commonwealth Title 10.1 Conservation, Chap. 20, 10.1-2001 Purposes. The Board of Trustees is to assist and support the Virginia Museum of Natural History.

Section 2.2 Exempt Purpose. The Board of Trustees will operate without profit and no part of its earnings or assets shall be distributed as a dividend or inure to the benefit of any private individual or member. The Board of Trustees shall be operated to carry out its exempt purposes in a manner consistent with Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, as amended from time to time, and the appropriate regulations there under.

## **ARTICLE III**

### **AFFIRMATION OF NON-DISCRIMINATION**

Section 3.1 Non-discrimination. The Board of Trustees affirms its commitment to comply with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations regarding non-discrimination.

## **ARTICLE IV**

### **BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Section 4.1 Duties and Powers. The Board of Trustees (hereinafter collectively referred to the "BOT") will plan the policies of the Virginia Museum of Natural History, including the transaction of all business pursuant to the authority granted to it by the Code of Virginia.

Section 4.2 Number. The Virginia Museum of Natural History (hereinafter collectively referred to the "VMNH") shall be governed by a BOT consisting of fifteen (15) members appointed

by the Governor. Two of the members appointed to the BOT shall be members of the Virginia Academy of Science.

Section 4.3 Qualifications. All Trustees are subject to and must comply with the Code of Ethics for the BOT. Trustees must also commit to active involvement with the BOT and any other terms and conditions of service that may be promulgated from time to time by the Board and the Executive Committee (as defined in Section 6.2).

Section 4.4 Notice of Meetings; Waiver. Written notice of the place, day and hour of any meeting of the BOT, and in the case of a special meeting the purpose or purposes for which the meeting is called, will be given pursuant to the Code of Virginia

Section 4.5 Quorum. A simple majority of the members of the BOT then serving shall be sufficient to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. The act of a majority of the Trustees present at any meeting at which there is a quorum shall be the act of the BOT, except as may otherwise be specifically provided by law or these Bylaws. If a quorum shall not be present at any meeting of the BOT, the Trustees present may adjourn the meeting without notice (other than announcement at the meeting) until a quorum is present. Each Trustee is entitled to one vote on any issue resolved by vote.

Section 4.6 Voting. A Trustee may vote in person at any meeting of the BOT.

## **ARTICLE V**

### **OFFICERS**

Section 5.1 Executive Officers. At each annual meeting, the Trustees shall select a Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer from its membership.

Section 5.2 Election and Term and Tenure of Office. Officers will be elected by the BOT at the annual meeting of the BOT, and each Officer shall serve for one (1) year and thereafter until their successors are elected and qualified. The Chair shall be eligible for re-election, but may serve no more than two consecutive terms. New officers will immediately begin their terms upon election.

Section 5.3 Chair of the BOT. The Chair of the Board will have the following duties and powers:

- i. To provide leadership to the BOT as they work together to fulfill their duties as Trustees.
- ii. To call meetings of the BOT, in accordance with these Bylaws at such times and places as the Chair deems proper.
- iii. To preside at meetings of the BOT.
- iv. To attend in an ex-officio capacity the meetings of all Committees.

- v. To execute for and in the name of the BOT such written instruments and documents as may be necessary to carry out the specific actions authorized by the BOT.
- vi. To report annually to the BOT on the activities for the previous year.
- vii. Subject to confirmation by the BOT, to select the members and Chairs, and designate the powers and duties of all Committees that may be provided for in these Bylaws or that may be deemed necessary or desirable by the BOT.
- viii. To do and perform all such duties that pertain to the office of Chair or as the BOT or Executive Committee (as defined in Section 6.2) may request. The Chair of the BOT is the presiding officer of the Board chosen to provide the board with leadership.
- ix.. To create and appoint ad-hoc committees and appoint members to said committees as the Chair deems appropriate.

Section 5.4 Vice-Chair. The Vice-Chair shall, in the absence or disability of the Chair of the BOT, perform the duties and exercise the powers of the Chair. The Vice-Chair will also have such other powers and duties as the Executive Committee (as defined in Section 6.2) may determine from time to time.

Section 5.5 Secretary. The powers and duties of the Secretary shall be:

- i. To keep or cause to be kept full and complete records of the meetings of the BOT and the Executive Committee (as defined in Section 6.2).
- ii. To keep or cause to be kept and preserved the minute book and all other books and records of the BOT and the BOT seal.
- iii. To give or cause to be given all notices that may be necessary or proper. In case of failure for any reason of the Secretary to give any such notice, then such notice may be given by the Chair of the BOT or by any person authorized by the Chair of the BOT.
- iv. To do and perform all such duties that pertain to the office of Secretary or as the Executive Committee (as defined in Section 6.2) or the Chair of the BOT may request.
- v. To join the Chair of the BOT (or such other properly designated officer) in the execution and delivery of deeds, contracts, and other instruments where appropriate, and to affix the corporate seal where appropriate.

Section 5.6 Treasurer. The powers and duties of the Treasurer will be:

- i. To render to the BOT at the regular meetings, or whenever they may require it, an account of the financial condition of the VMNH. Copies of the VMNH's annual financial statements, certified by the VMNH's auditor, shall be delivered to each

member of the BOT. When available, interim financial reports shall be made to these persons at their request.

- ii. To serve as Chair of the Finance Committee of the BOT.
- iii. To do and perform all such other duties that pertain to the office of Treasurer and as the BOT or the Executive Committee (as defined in Section 6.2) may request.

Section 5.7 Vacancies. If any office becomes vacant for any reason, the remaining term of the vacant office may be filled by the BOT by a majority vote at its next regular or special meeting at which a quorum is present.

Section 5.8 Resignations. Any Officer may resign by giving written notice to the Secretary of the BOT.

## ARTICLE VI

### COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD

Section 6.1 General. Except as otherwise provided in the Bylaws, the Chair of the BOT will, subject to confirmation by the BOT, select the members and chairs of any standing or ad hoc committees as may be constituted by the BOT. Committee members will be annually selected to serve a one (1) year term with no limit on tenure. Committees shall meet at such times and places as the Chair of the respective Committees, or the Chair of the BOT shall determine pursuant to reasonable notice to the members of the Committee. With the exception of the Executive Committee, the majority of any Committee shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. In the absence of a quorum, the Committee Chair or Acting Chair will hold the meeting with minutes taken but with a note therein that a quorum was not present and therefore no official votes/actions could be taken. However, as soon as possible, the Committee will hold another meeting. Each Committee shall keep regular minutes of its proceedings and report the same to the BOT. The majority membership of all standing Committees shall be Trustees. All Board Committees may be assigned at least one VMNH staff member, as determined by the BOT or BOT Chair in consultation with committee chairpersons and the VMNH Executive Director, to serve as staff liaisons to the respective Committees.

Section 6.2 Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall consist of the Chairman of the BOT, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, and may include additional members as authorized by the Code of Virginia. The Chair of the BOT shall act as Chair of the Executive Committee. Three (3) members of the Executive Committee present at any meeting of the Executive Committee will constitute a quorum. The Executive Director of the VMNH may attend all open meetings of the Executive Committee as an *Ex-Officio* member but the Executive Director's presence will not be counted in constituting a quorum. The Executive Committee shall monitor and help implement policy approved by the BOT, and execute such other powers and duties as specifically determined or requested by the BOT or authorized by the Code of Virginia. The Executive Committee will meet at the call of the Chairman or a majority of the Executive Committee.



Section 6.3 Finance Committee. There will be a Finance Committee of at least three (3) Trustees. The Treasurer will be chair. The Committee will advise the BOT concerning the effect financially of possible recommended VMNH activities, and other financial matters

Section 6.4 Nominating Committee. There will be a Nominating Committee consisting of at least three Trustees. Presentation of the slate of officers to BOT will be at the first meeting of the new calendar year and voted before the fiscal year ends. Nominations will be taken from the floor, provided the nominee(s) agree to stand for office.

Section 6.5 Strategic Planning Committee. There will be a Strategic Planning Committee of at least three Trustees to plan and coordinate the VMNH 's long-term and immediate future goals. A representative of the VMNH Foundation Board, approved and appointed by the BOT chair with the consent of the BOT, shall serve on this Committee.

Section 6.6 Facilities Committee. There will be a Facilities Committee of at least three Trustees to review and make recommendations to the BOT regarding the museum's physical facilities and construction.

Section 6.7 Research and Collections Committee. There will be a Research and Collections Committee of at least three Trustees to review and make recommendations to the BOT concerning science programs as well as acquisitions, accessions and de-accessions of collections, collections care, appointments of Senior Fellows, Research Associates and Affiliated Researchers, and other activities related to the museum's scientific research and collections. [The Senior Fellow is an appointment for life made to distinguished scientists and requires full Board approval. Appointments of Research Associates and Affiliated Researchers are for five and three year terms respectively, and require approval of the Research and Collections Committee of the Board and the Director of Research and Collections.] The BOT has charged this Committee to work closely with the Development/Marketing Committee.

Section 6.8 Development/Marketing Committee. There will be a Development/Marketing Committee of at least three Trustees to review and make recommendations to the BOT regarding marketing, public relations, and fund-raising; and act as a liaison to the VMNH Foundation. A representative of the VMNH Foundation Board, approved and appointed by the BOT chair with the consent of the BOT, shall serve on this Committee. The BOT has charged this Committee to work closely with the Research and Collections Committee.

Section 6.9 Education and Public Programs Committee. There will be an Education and Public Programs Committee of at least three Trustees to review and make recommendations to the BOT concerning education, exhibits, and related public programs as well as matters regarding affiliates and the museum's own affiliate status with similar facilities. This Committee shall be chaired by the Vice-Chair of the BOT unless that duty is assigned to another Trustee by the Chair, and its other members shall include the VMNH Executive Director, the VMNH Education Manager, the Exhibits Manager, and a representative of the VMNH Foundation Board approved and appointed by the BOT chair with the consent of the BOT.

## ARTICLE VJI

### MUSEUM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Section 7.1 Duties and Responsibilities. The Executive Director will serve as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Museum and perform such duties and in such manner as are prescribed by the BOT, or the Executive Committee. The Executive Director will be responsible for the initiation and fulfillment of programs and projects in conformity with the policies as fixed by the BOT. Subject to the foregoing, the Executive Director will be responsible for the administration and operation of the Museum and its staff and specifically the Code of Ethics for the BOT. The Executive Director will serve as an *Ex-Officio* member of the Executive Committee and other Board Committees as required by the Chair of the BOT and the BOT.

Section 7.2 Evaluation of the Executive Director. The Executive Committee shall prepare the annual Performance Review of the Executive Director, subject to review and approval by the BOT at its August meeting. After the Review, the Director's documented and signed statements are reviewed with the BOT and a copy of the Review, amended if necessary, given to the Director.

Section 7.3 Removal. The Executive Director may be removed by a majority vote of the BOT, whenever, in the judgment of the BOT, the best interests of the Museum and Board will be so served.

Section 7.4 Acting Executive Director. In the event of retirement, death, resignation, or removal of the Executive Director, the BOT, as it deems necessary and by a majority vote, shall appoint an Acting Executive Director who, in the absence, disability or removal of the Executive Director, shall be subject to all duties and responsibilities as stated in Article VII of these Bylaws.

## ARTICLE VIII

### MISCELLANEOUS

Section 8.1 Annual Report. The BOT shall submit an annual report to the Governor and General Assembly on or before November 1 of each year. Such report shall contain, at a minimum, the annual financial statements of the VMNH for the year ending the preceding June 30. (1988, cc. 707, 891; 2004, c. 650.)

Section 8.2 Acceptance of gifts; expenditures, certain powers of educational institutions to apply:

- i. The BOT is authorized to receive and administer grants from agencies of the United States government, and gifts, bequests and devises of property, and to expend or authorize the expenditure of funds derived from such sources and funds appropriated by the General Assembly to VMNH.
- ii. Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, the VMNH shall be deemed to be an institution of higher education within the meaning of 23-3.1 and 23-9.2. (1988, cc. 707, 891; 2004, c. 870).

Section 8.3 Rules of Order. The meetings of the BOT shall be conducted according to, but not bound by, Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, revised.

Section 8.4 Genders. The use of a particular gender herein is solely for ease of expression and each gender shall be deemed to include, where applicable, the other.

Section 8.5 Adoption and Amendment of These Bylaws. These bylaws become effective after being approved by two-thirds of the votes cast by Trustees. Any Trustee may propose amendments to these bylaws by submitting them in writing to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall consult with legal counsel and approve proposed amendments, by a two-third vote of the Executive Committee members, before recommending them to the full board.

**ADOPTED AS AMENDED by the Board of Trustees of the Virginia Museum of Natural History, Martinsville, Virginia, this 6<sup>th</sup> day of February 2026.**

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**Melany Clark, Chair, VMNH Board of Trustees**

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**Lisa Carter, Vice-Chair, VMNH Board of Trustees**

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**Lauren Hall, Secretary, VMNH Board of Trustees**

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**Will Clements, Treasurer, VMNH Board of Trustees**

## Virginia Museum of Natural History Strategic Plan: 2025–2030

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The Virginia Museum of Natural History (VMNH) is one of the Commonwealth’s most vital scientific and cultural resources. Its collections, research, and education programs connect Virginians to the deep history of our natural world. VMNH plays a critical role in providing citizens and decision makers with the data and tools needed to manage the Commonwealth’s natural and cultural resources. In providing resources statewide, VMNH also provides significant services (education, tourism draw, and event offerings) to the museum’s surrounding communities.

As Virginia approaches major milestones—most notably the 250th anniversary of the Commonwealth—VMNH stands ready to inspire, educate, and serve as a trusted leader in science communication. From the facilities in Martinsville and outreach programs in communities across the state, including planned expansion into the Shenandoah Valley, VMNH is positioned to reach more Virginians than ever before.

Yet to fully achieve our mission, we must continue to invest in people, spaces, and science education programs that connect natural history to some of today’s pressing issues: climate change, biodiversity loss, and science literacy.

The VMNH Strategic Plan 2025-2030 outlines clear, measurable actions that will:

- Modernize and expand our facilities, ensuring safe stewardship of collections and inspiring exhibits for the public.
- Tell the stories of our researchers and to reveal the significance of their collections-based discoveries.
- Deepen our educational impact by launching the Young Explorers Center, strengthening science festivals, and reaching every region of the state through mobile and traveling exhibits.
- Strengthen sustainability through new philanthropic support, enhanced endowment strategies, and stronger collaboration between our Boards.
- Recruit, retain, and support expert staff who bring science to life for Virginia’s citizens.

VMNH is uniquely positioned to blend rigorous scientific investigations with engaging storytelling, ensuring that natural history collections are not just preserved but actively shared. With the partnership of the Board of Trustees, the VMNH-Foundation Board of Directors, staff, the Secretary of Education, and myriad community partners, VMNH will continue to serve as a cornerstone of science, culture, and community in Virginia.

Together, we will ensure that the Virginia Museum of Natural History achieves great and sustainable impact while maintaining its leadership in scientific discovery and science literacy for the Commonwealth of Virginia.

## Virginia Museum of Natural History Strategic Plan: 2025–2030

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### Mission Alignment

The Virginia Museum of Natural History advances scientific discovery, education, and community engagement through research, collections, and exhibitions. This Strategic Plan establishes clear goals and measurable outcomes to ensure the museum fulfills its mission with sustainable impact.

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### Vision

Virginia Museum of Natural History serves as a leader in scientific discovery, education, and community engagement. Its research, collections, exhibits, and educational programs create opportunities where all Virginians have the opportunity to explore, understand, and celebrate the natural world.

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### Core Values

- **Scientific Integrity** – Uphold the highest standards of research, collections stewardship, and scholarship.
  - **Education & Curiosity** – Foster lifelong learning through exhibits, programs, and outreach that spark wonder.
  - **Community Engagement** – Connect people with nature and science through inclusive, accessible experiences.
  - **Stewardship** – Protect and preserve Virginia's and the world's natural and cultural heritage for future generations.
  - **Innovation** – Embrace creativity, and new approaches and technology applicable to our exhibits, research, and outreach.
  - **Collaboration** – Partner with communities, schools, and institutions.
  - **Sustainability** – Ensure responsible use of resources.
- 

### Strategic Priority 1: Achieving the Mission

#### Objective 1.1: Advance Douglas Avenue Rehabilitation

- Position newly renovated facility to both enhance museum collections storage and a new space for needs identified by staff and the community.
- **May 2026:** Receive approvals; contractors begin Phase I (upper level).
- **Late 2026:** Complete Phase I.
- **May 2027:** Submit preliminary documents for Phase II (lower level).
- **May 2028:** Receive approvals; begin Phase II.
- **October 2028:** Complete Phase II.
- **April 2030:** Address AAM reaccreditation report concerns regarding Douglas Avenue by submitting a progress report.

#### Objective 1.2: Plan for Future Space Needs

- Ongoing evaluation of collections growth (Science Administrator tracking).
- Continuous assessment of storage/expansion needs at Douglas Avenue vs. future Starling Avenue wing. Report as appropriate to R&C Committee.

**Objective 1.3: Connect Research & Collections (R&C) to Contemporary Needs**

- **Spring 2026:** Exhibits & Publications Manager interviews R&C staff.
- Leadership and curators conduct ongoing reviews of publications, exhibits, and public engagement outlets, identifying relevant connections.
- Ongoing use of the Pete Henika Memorial Fund to support student work benefitting the museum's collections while furthering our understanding of contemporary questions related to the Natural History of Virginia.
- Connect the Molecular Lab, STEM Lab, Microscopy Lab, and Cultural Heritage Monitoring Lab to contemporary challenges such as climate change, land use patterns, endangered and invasive species, and other significant challenges.

**Objective 1.4: Leverage Facilities for Strategic Uses**

- Ongoing assessment of the Jean S. Adams Education Pavilion, Douglas Avenue, and facility tours. This facility will be positioned as a strategic tool to enhance education, community vitality, and organizational stability.
- Annual staff meeting dedicated to generating strategic use proposals, reported annually to the Boards.

**Objective 1.5: Celebrate Virginia's 250th Anniversary (VA250)**

- **Jan 2026:** Launch Thomas Jefferson exhibit featuring *Notes on the State of Virginia*.
- **Feb 2026:** Host members' VA250 celebration.
- **March 2026:** VMNH participates in Virginia Association of Museums annual conference.
- **2026:** Host author/artist event tied to Jefferson's travels.

**Objective 1.6: Develop Traveling Exhibits**

- **2027-2030:** Create a traveling exhibit, debut at VMNH for one year, then circulate to other museums.

**Objective 1.7: Integrate R&C, Education, and Exhibits in Science Storytelling**

- **Summer 2026:** Evaluate education programs to determine best practices for integrating VMNH stories into outreach.
- **2026-2030:** Apply "5 C's of Storytelling" framework in new exhibit development; integrate with Objective 1.3.
- **2027:** Use Discovery Reef space for Petra the Cave Cat story; work with Virginia Cave Conservancy to enhance the public experience.

**Objective 1.8: Advance VMNH-Waynesboro Expansion**

- **2026:** Rehabilitate Mobile Science Outreach trailer for use in the Shenandoah Valley.
- **2026-2028:** Use the Outreach trailer to support regional programming, and to complement educational programs and Wayne Theatre Lecture Series.
- **2026 & 2028:** Pursue Capital Construction Pool inclusion.

**Objective 1.9: Explore New Wing Development**

- **2027:** Begin preliminary work with architect.

- **2028:** Determine space needs with staff, Boards, stakeholders.
- **2029:** Receive report on location, capacity, and capabilities.

#### **Objective 1.10: Strengthen Wilson Park Connections**

- Evaluate feasibility of canopy walk in coordination with wing planning.
- **2026-2027:** Explore new ways of connecting to Wilson Park, including but not limited to a) crosswalk installation, b) establishment of dinosaur playground elements, and c) interpretive trail signs.

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### **Strategic Priority 2: Great Sustainable Impact**

#### **Objective 2.1: Grow Philanthropic Support**

- **2025-2030:** Review endowment investments with VMNH-Foundation quarterly.
- **2026:** Host cocktail event on planned giving for young professionals. Evaluate, modify as needed, and repeat as appropriate for the community.
- **2026-2027:** Use endowment revenues aggressively for transformational work (see Objectives 1.3, 1.6, 1.7, 1.10, and 2.4).
- **2027-2030:** Execute plan to spend the first 4% of endowment revenues on mission-based projects in Research, Collections, Education, and Exhibits. Reinvest any additional revenues into the General Endowment to support long-term growth.

#### **Objective 2.2: Strengthen Board Collaboration**

- Use strategic plan and endowment to guide BOT requests of VMNH-F.
- Establish mechanisms for BOT to request Foundation support for new opportunities.

#### **Objective 2.3: Expand Public Festivals**

- Offer 3–4 themed festivals per year (10,000 visitors annually).
- Explore offsite festival opportunities.

#### **Objective 2.4: Develop Young Explorer's Center**

- **Fall 2026:** Relocate Library Compactors at Douglas Avenue.
- **2026:** Education staff develop content; acquisition of interactive elements
- Purchase interactive stations and open Center in late 2026 or early 2027.

#### **Objective 2.5: Recruit and Retain High-Quality Staff**

- Work with Secretary of Education for competitive compensation.
- Maintain VMNH-F staff enhancement fund.
- Provide professional development opportunities.
- Share staff experiences with both Boards.
- Annually request new FTEs as justified.

#### **Objective 2.6: Develop Next 5-year Plan**

- **2029-2030:** Begin process of gathering input from staff, Boards, and community regarding the 2030-2035 Strategic Plan.
- **December 2030:** Release next 5-year plan.

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**Accountability & Review**

- Progress will be reviewed quarterly by leadership and reported regularly to the Boards of Trustees and VMNH-Foundation.
- Milestones with dates will serve as primary measures of success.
- Adjustments will be made as necessary in response to novel opportunities and challenges.

DRAFT



**VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY**  
**Board of Trustees Research and Collections Committee**

**A G E N D A**

Due to the Feb. 6 VMNH Board of Trustees meeting being a virtual meeting, it was decided that the Research and Collections committee will meet the following quarter.

***The mission of the Virginia Museum of Natural History:***

*To interpret Virginia's natural heritage within a global context in ways that are relevant to all citizens of the Commonwealth.*



**VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
MINUTES OF THE RESEARCH AND COLLECTIONS COMMITTEE  
Nov. 15, 2025, 9 A.M.  
Virginia Museum of Natural History, Room 237 Conference Room A**

Present at the meeting were Dr. Art Evans, Dr. Carole Nash, Dr. Melany Clark, Dr. Tom Benzing, Dr. Hayden Bassett, Dr. Kal Ivanov, Dr. Collin Van Buren, Marshall Boyd, Jonathan Martin, Dr. Joe Keiper, Ambria Wood, Sarah Bowman, and Ben Williams. Dr. David Furth was absent and a quorum was provided.

Committee Chair Dr. Art Evans called the meeting to order. The committee unanimously approved the meetings from the August 9 meeting. The committee circulated the acquisitions sign-off sheet and approved it unanimously.

Dr. Joe Keiper introduced Ambria Wood, the museum's new representative from the Virginia Attorney General's Office, and Sarah Bowman, the museum's newest trustee.

Dr. Art Evans said that the committee was initially going to recommend to the full board that it approve the changes to the museum's live animals policy, but that it had been decided to table that recommendation until the following board meeting in February. Dr. Melany Clark said it was likely that the February board meeting would be a virtual meeting. Dr. Carole Nash asked how often the museum has to update its live animal certifications. Jonathan Martin said that the museum has a live animal permit that must be updated annually, and Dr. Collin Van Buren clarified that it's a permit rather than a certification since the museum's animals are ambassadors and not research subjects.

Dr. Art Evans extended the committee's congratulations to Dr. Maddy Bassett for receiving her Ph.D.

Dr. Kal Ivanov said that the previous Wednesday, the herpetology curator search committee completed its first round of virtual interviews with the second round taking place on Monday. Three candidates will be chosen from the nine total interviews for in-person interviews.

Marshall Boyd and Jonathan Martin provided an update on the museum's Douglas Avenue facility. Boyd said that the museum's library is in the process of being stabilized. Martin said that the museum received its first cost estimate for the total project. He's

looking through the estimate line-by-line and noticed that the costs for certain things (such as finishings) were high, so he's going to go room-by-room with the architect to get the cost down to a more reasonable level. Martin added that asbestos remediation will be taking place concurrently with renovations. Dr. Joe Keiper added that a decision was made the day prior to go with a larger HVAC unit for the new facility rather than two smaller HVAC units, which would have been both more expensive and less efficient. Dr. Tom Benzing said it was too early to schedule another joint meeting between the Facilities Committee and the Research and Collections Committee, but another meeting would likely be scheduled prior to the February 7 board meeting.

Dr. Carole Nash said that she sits on the science advisory committee for the Wintergreen Nature Foundation and the foundation's new executive director is planning to develop a field station north of Waynesboro. Nash said she was tasked with coming to the Research and Collections committee and asking if anyone had ideas for the field station. The committee agreed that it was an exciting prospect once a site has been chosen.

Dr. Art Evans said that given how much the museum's endowment has grown, he thinks the museum should consider purchasing a dedicated field vehicle for the research staff. Dr. Melany Clark asked if any staff are wanting for vehicles, and Dr. Kal Ivanov explained that the state motor pool vehicles are readily available but not suitable for field work. The one field vehicle — a Subaru Outback — is rapidly nearing the end of its life. Clark said that Frank Mariels, the late donor who substantially grew the VMNH endowment with his generous gift, was a frugal man, and the museum had also been frugal. However, she said, she thinks that it's possible to strike a balance between being frugal with the endowment and spending enough of it to make a substantial difference for the museum.

Dr. Art Evans said that he will be rotating off of the Board of Trustees in June 2026. As a result, he is going to begin stepping back from some of his board responsibilities. The February meeting will be the last Research and Collections Committee meeting that he chairs, he said. He added that he feels comfortable leaving the board as the museum is in an excellent position and the future looks bright.

Dr. Tom Benzing congratulated Marshall Boyd for being featured in an article produced by the Virginia Retirement System that focused on a state employee early in their career. He also thanked both Boyd and Dr. Joe Keiper for attending the most recent Waynesboro Science Talk.

Dr. Art Evans adjourned the meeting.

**VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY  
RESEARCH AND COLLECTIONS ACTIVITIES**

**Report to the Board of Trustees  
October-December 2025**

**Kaloyan Ivanov, Ph.D.  
Associate Curator of Invertebrate Zoology**

**Dr. Jackson Means  
Associate Curator of Myriapodology**

- Drs. Ivanov and Means, and L. Hightower published a paper at *Jeffersoniana*.
- Drs. Ivanov and Means, and colleagues published papers at *Proceedings of the Entomological Society of Washington*, *Zootaxa*, and *Cladistics*.
- Dr. Means and colleagues published a paper at *Zootaxa*.
- Drs Means and Milne have a paper accepted at *Banisteria*.
- Drs. Ivanov and Means, and colleagues have manuscripts in revision at *European Journal of Taxonomy*, *Invertebrate Systematics*, and *Zoologia*.
- Drs. Ivanov and Means and colleagues have a manuscript in review at *Spixiana*.
- Dr. Ivanov and colleagues received funding from the National Science Fund, Ministry of Education and Science, Bulgaria for their “Museomics of Balkan invertebrates: Unlocking hidden genomic diversity in historical collections through next-generation sequencing” proposal.
- Dr. Means was the keynote speaker for the annual meeting of the Virginia Natural History Society.
- Liberty Hightower presented a talk at the Weevil Workers Meeting.
- Dr. Ivanov recently returned from a 3-week-long expedition to Vietnam.
- Dr. Means, L. Hightower, and M. Boyd participated in the 14<sup>th</sup> annual Hokie Bugfest at Virginia Tech.
- Dr. Means, L. Hightower, and Recent Invertebrates volunteer L. Apel participated in VMNH’s fourth annual Bonez & Booz Halloween and Fall festival.

**Research & Collections**

Drs. Ivanov and Means, and L. Hightower published a paper at VMNH’s periodical *Jeffersoniana*. The work is the first part of a two-part catalog of the invertebrate type specimens in the collection of the Virginia Museum of Natural History. The paper provides detailed information regarding the types of 109 taxa housed at VMNH, including holotypes of 47 species.

[Ivanov, K., L. Hightower, and J. M. Means. 2025. Catalog of the invertebrate type specimens in the collection of the Virginia Museum of Natural History, USA. Part I Bryozoa, Annelida, and Arthropoda (Chelicerata, Crustacea, and Hexapoda). *Jeffersoniana* 32: 1-56.]

Drs. Ivanov and Means, C. Ziemke (U Southern Mississippi), and N. Jones (American Isopod and Myriapod Group) published a paper at *Proceedings of the Entomological Society of Washington*. The paper focuses on the recent discovery of the terrestrial

isopods *Trichorhina heterophthalma* Lemos de Castro, 1964 and *Caraiboscia christiani* Leistikow, 2001 in Puerto Rico and their association with multiple species of ants (new host associations for both taxa). In addition, the manuscript includes an updated checklist of the terrestrial isopods of Puerto Rico.

[Ziemke, C. H., N. T. Jones, J. C. Means, and K. Ivanov. 2025. Novel ant associations, new records, and an updated checklist of the terrestrial isopods (Isopoda: Oniscidea) of Puerto Rico. *Proceedings of the Entomological Society of Washington* 127(2): 253-274.]

Drs. Means, P. E. Marek (Virginia Tech), D. A. Hennen (VA DCR-DNH), and C. Tingley (NC Biodiversity Project) published a paper at *Zootaxa*. The taxonomic revision of the millipede genus *Apheloria* (Polydesmida: Xystodesmidae) includes the description of a new species from North and South Carolina.

[Marek, P. E., Means, J., Hennen, D. A., and Tingley, C. 2025. Revision of the millipede genus *Apheloria* Chamberlin, 1921 (Polydesmida, Xystodesmidae, Apheloriini). *Zootaxa* 5701(3): 315-350.]

Drs. Ivanov, Means, L. F. M. Iniesta (Universidade Federal de Pernambuco, Brazil), R. S. Bouzan (Instituto Butantan, Brazil), and P. E. Marek published a paper at *Zootaxa*. The study addresses the taxonomic status of *Spirostreptus strangulatus* Humbert & de Saussure, 1870 (Spirostreptida: Spirostreptidae) and its formal transfer to the genus *Pseudonannolene* Silvestri, 1895 (Spirostreptida: Cambalidea: Pseudonannolenidae).

[Iniesta, L. F. M., R. S. Bouzan, J. C. Means, K. Ivanov, P. E. Marek. The correct identity of *Spirostreptus strangulatus* Humbert & de Saussure, 1870 as the first described member of Pseudonannolenidae (Spirostreptidea: Cambalidea). *Zootaxa* 5723(1): 143-146.]

Drs. Ivanov, Means, Bouzan, A. D. Brescovit (Instituto Butantan, Brazil), and Iniesta published a paper at *Cladistics*. The work is the first biogeographic analysis of the family Chelodesmidae focused on analyzing worldwide patterns of endemism.

[Bouzan, R. S., J. C. Means, K. Ivanov, A. D. Brescovit, and L. F. M. Iniesta. Revealing patterns of endemism in the transatlantic family Chelodesmidae (Polydesmida, Diplopoda). *Cladistics*: 1-13. [https://doi: 10.1111/cla.70022](https://doi.org/10.1111/cla.70022)]

Drs. Means and M. Milne (U Indianapolis) have a manuscript accepted at *Banisteria*. The work represents the first catalog of the spiders of Virginia and offers a complete list, including bibliographic history and references, of the 713 species of spiders found in the Commonwealth and includes 147 species previously unrecorded from the state.

Drs. Ivanov and Means, L. Hightower, Drs. Bouzan, Iniesta, Brescovit, and J. P. P. Pena-Barbosa (Instituto Butantan, Brazil), Dr. J. Bueno-Villegas (Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Hidalgo, Mexico), Dr. C. Rojas-Buffet (Universidad de la República, Uruguay), and Dr. P. Sierwald (Field Museum of Natural History) have a manuscript in revision at *European Journal of Taxonomy*. The work represents the first worldwide catalog of the millipede family Chelodesmidae and includes detailed data on all 771 valid species along with synonymies, bibliography, and distributional information.

Drs. Ivanov, Means, Bouzan, Iniesta and Brescovit have a manuscript in revision at *Invertebrate Systematics*. The taxonomic revision of the Brazilian endemic millipede tribe Cornalatini (Polydesmida: Chelodesmidae) includes the description of two new genera and three new species along with the first molecular analysis of the family

Chelodesmidae. In addition, the paper provides an identification key to all known Cornalatini genera and species.

Drs. Ivanov, Means, Bouzan, Brescovit, and Iniesta, and Caroline T. Paranhos and Ricardo Cezar Ramos Nicolau (Instituto Butantan) have a manuscript in revision at *Zoologia*. The study reports the first record of the paradoxosomatid *Helicorthomorpha holstii* (Pocock, 1895) in Brazil, expanding the known distribution of this East Asian millipede to South America.

Drs. Ivanov, Means, Bouzan, Brescovit, and Iniesta have a manuscript in review at *Spixiana*. The work reports the first case of an adult female with fully developed gonopods (specialized male copulatory structures) in the millipede family Chelodesmidae. This rare morphological condition expands our understanding of intersexuality in millipedes and raises questions regarding developmental pathways and genetic regulation of sexual traits in Polydesmida.

Drs. Ivanov, Means, Bouzan, Iniesta, Brescovit, and R. A. Castro-Souza (Universidade Federal de Mato Grosso, Brazil) are completing work on a manuscript focused on the worldwide distribution of the millipede suborder Cambalidea (Spirostreptida). To address knowledge gaps in cambalidean distribution, the study utilizes ignorance score-based maps to estimate the limitation of current distributional data, and the spatial grouping of millipedes based on worldwide species occurrences

Drs. Ivanov, P. Stoev, R. Bekchiev, F. Konstantinov, N. Simov, M. Langourov, B. Vagalinski, A. Tokareva, S. Kazandzhieva, and I. Karaivanova (National Museum of Natural History, Bulgaria), Dr. I. Dedov and Ph.D. student T. Trifonov (Institute for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Research, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences), and V. Gojšina (Ph.D. student, University of Belgrade, Serbia) were awarded \$107,577 from the National Science Fund, Ministry of Education and Science, Bulgaria for their “Museomics of Balkan invertebrates: Unlocking hidden genomic diversity in historical collections through next-generation sequencing” proposal. The project pioneers the large-scale application of museomics and DNA barcoding to Bulgarian invertebrates, representing the first mass effort to sequence historical type material and link it to newly collected samples across diverse taxonomic groups.

Dr. Means was the keynote speaker for the annual meeting of the Virginia Natural History Society held on the campus of Averett University in Danville, VA. The meeting was attended by 20 professionals and students from across the state. (October 11)

Liberty Hightower presented a talk “The Curculionoidea holdings at the Virginia Museum of Natural History in Martinsville, VA, USA” at the virtual Weevil Workers Meeting. (October 17)

Liberty Hightower virtually attended the Entomological Collections Network’s annual meeting in Portland, OR. (November 8-9)

Dr. Ivanov recently returned from a 3-week-long expedition to northern Vietnam where he conducted fieldwork along with an international team of researchers from the Vietnamese Academy of Science and Technology (Dr. P. Thai and T. Vu Mahn), the Bulgarian National Museum of Natural History (Drs. Bekchiev, Kazandzhieva,

Langourov, and Simov), the Institute of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Research, Bulgaria (Dr. I. Dedov), and the Plovdiv Museum of Natural History, Bulgaria (Dr. O. Todorov and K. Vladov). The purpose of the trip was to explore and learn more about the invertebrate diversity of one of the world's most biodiverse nations, while filling in gaps within the museum's arthropod holdings and collecting data for a number of ongoing research projects.

Drs. Ivanov, Means, and A. V. Evans submitted annual reports to the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (Division of Natural Heritage) regarding research activities during the 2025 season.

Drs. Ivanov, R. Anderson (Canadian Museum of Nature), and Evans submitted final reports to Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge, Resaca De La Palma State Park, Sabal Palm Sanctuary, Lennox Foundation Southmost Preserve, and Welder Wildlife Refuge regarding their 2025 work in southern Texas.

Dr. Ivanov completed the identification and curation of 2,983 ant specimens from a recent collecting trip to Alabama, Georgia, and Texas. The materials represent 73 species from 35 genera, of which 14 species and 4 genera are new to the museum's collection. Notable finds include the first records of *Hypoconerops parva* (Forel), *Proceratium mexicanum* De Andrade, *Solenopsis succinea* Emery, and the rarely collected genus *Rhopalothrix* in the United States, the first records of the nonnative *Cardiocondyla obscurior* Wheeler and *Tetramorium lanuginosum* Mayr from Texas, and undescribed species of *Eurhopalothrix* from Resaca De La Palma State Park, Sabal Palm Sanctuary, and Lennox Foundation Southmost Preserve, and *Camponotus* (*Pseudocolobopsis*) from Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge.

Dr. Ivanov completed the identification and curation of 842 ant and 49 isopod specimens from Virginia for end-of-year reporting. The ants represent 28 species from 16 genera and include the first Virginia record of *Lasius subglaber* Emery.

Dr. Means processed (removed and sorted specimens for identification) 18 litter samples from recent collecting trips to Texas and Virginia.

Dr. Means identified and curated over 50 specimens for VMNH's molecular collection and 50 specimens for the wet collection, with another 2,000+ specimens put aside for various taxonomic experts.

Liberty Hightower prepared 1,675 ants from recent field work in Texas, Virginia, and Paraguay.

Dr. Ivanov oversaw the acquisition of 1,035 pinned, mostly unidentified, Coleoptera (beetles) transferred to VMNH by Dr. S. Roble (VA DCR-DNH; RIM2025-35); 1,086 pinned/pointed insects, chiefly Coleoptera, with data and 347 pinned/pointed insects without data donated to VMNH by Dr. A. V. Evans (VMNH Research Associate; RIM2025-36, -37, -39); three Curculionidae (weevils) PARATYPES donated to VMNH by Dr. R. Anderson (Canadian Museum of Nature; RIM2025-38); and 398 pinned/pointed identified Coleoptera and Hemiptera (true bugs) donated to VMNH by Dr. J. Leavengood (USDA-APHIS; RIM2025-40).

## **Education & Outreach**

Dr. Means led a special event “Natural History of Chocolate” at VMNH explaining the production process of chocolate and how to taste chocolate and wine. The event was attended by 48 museum patrons. (October 4)

Dr. Means and L. Hightower gave tours of VMNH’s arachnid and myriapod collections and live invertebrates to 40 participants in the museum’s Homeschool Science and Engineering Academy Arachnology Day.

Dr. Means, L. Hightower, and M. Boyd participated in the 14<sup>th</sup> annual Hokie Bugfest on the campus of Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, VA. The single day event was attended by over 6,000 visitors and offered a great opportunity to promote VMNH and the museum’s entomology collection. (October 18)

Dr. Means, L. Hightower, and Recent Invertebrates volunteer L. Apel participated in VMNH’s fourth annual Bonez & Booz Halloween and Fall festival. The event attracted 1,855 children and adults from Virginia and six additional states. (October 25)

Liberty Hightower provided training in mammal insect collecting, identification, and natural history to members of the Southwestern Piedmont Chapter of the Virginia Master Naturalists (VMN). VMNH is one of the sponsoring agencies of the VMN Program which is designed to develop well-trained volunteers to provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the management of natural resources and natural areas for the Commonwealth of Virginia. (October 27)

Dr. Ivanov provided training in insect collecting, identification, and natural history to members of the Southwestern Piedmont Chapter of the Virginia Master Naturalists. (November 17)

Dr. Ivanov and L. Hightower met with F. Lash (Ferrum College) and student D. Adams to discuss an undergraduate project involving invertebrates at Ferrum. (December 4)

Dr. Ivanov contributed five posts to VMNH’s FB page outlining recent field work in Vietnam.

This quarter, volunteer Lauren Apel continued work in the Department of Recent Invertebrates by processing litter samples from Texas and Virginia in support of various research projects.

## **Exhibits**

Dr. Means participated in a meeting regarding early planning stages for VMNH’s planned Early Childhood Education Center.

## **Professional Service**

Drs. Ivanov and Means and museum staff completed interviews of applicants for the position of Assistant Curator of Herpetology and made final selection in early January.



Drs. Ivanov (co-Treasurer and Copy Editor) and Means (Secretary and Webmaster) participated in the [virtual] Virginia Natural History Society Executive Committee meeting on December 8. Among the discussed topics were the election of new officers, membership incentives, review of the 2025 general meeting, and the time and location of the next general meeting of the Society. (December 8)

Drs. Ivanov and Means participated in a Board meeting of the Virginia Institute for Invertebrates (VII). The meeting was devoted to discussing details regarding the Virginia Outdoors Foundation's Forest CORE Fund proposal. (December 16)

Drs. Means and B. Jantzen (VII; Virginia Tech) continued work on a proposal to the Virginia Outdoors Foundation's Forest CORE Fund (Mountain Valley Pipeline Region) in association with VII and the 500-Year Forest Foundation. If awarded, VII would purchase property in Virginia for use in monitoring invertebrate diversity, abundance, and health.

Dr. Means served as an editor for a manuscript submitted to Virginia Natural History Society's periodical *Banisteria*. (published December 22)

Dr. Ivanov copy edited six articles for *Banisteria* (Volume 59). (completed November 7, 24, December 2, 22)

Dr. Ivanov reviewed a manuscript for *Diversity*. (completed December 1)

Dr. Means reviewed a manuscript for *Insecta Mundi* and two manuscripts for *Zootaxa*. (completed October 14, 16 and November 14)

**Hayden Bassett, Ph.D.**  
**Assistant Curator of Archaeology**

Dr. Hayden Bassett is on military leave and will return to the museum in mid-February.

**Adam Pritchard, Ph.D.**  
**Assistant Curator of Paleontology**

- Dr. Pritchard published two scientific papers, sent a third in for revisions.
- In collaboration with the Smithsonian, Dr. Pritchard coordinated the loan and display logistics for giant ground sloth skull, claws, and limb bones as part of the Virginia 250 celebrations in 2026.
- Dr. Pritchard worked with research assistant Joshua Safley to prepare for his Q1-Q2 2026 internship funded by the Luck Companies Foundation.

## **Research & Collections**

Dr. Pritchard published two papers in Q4 2025.

- A description of the oldest terrestrial snake ever found in Virginia in *Acta Palaeontologia Polonica* (<https://www.app.pan.pl/archive/published/app70/app012652025.pdf>).
- An analysis of claw anatomy and structure in Triassic reptiles in *Anatomical Record* (<https://anatomypubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/ar.70057>).

He worked with a team led by Alan Turner (Stony Brook University) to revise a manuscript on a toothless reptile in the *Journal of Vertebrate Paleontology*.

In ongoing projects, Dr. Pritchard worked on reconstructions of the most complete Triassic drepanosaurs (enigmatic large-clawed reptiles). He began a project with Dr. Sterling Nesbitt (VT) to describe a series of skull bones from the Triassic UK collections of Nicholas Fraser, the bones belonging to a Triassic predatory rauisuchid. He also continued work with Dr. Noel Boaz on a skeleton of a mastodon originally transferred to the VMNH by the University of Virginia in 1987.

Dr. Pritchard developed the collections in several targeted ways:

- Dr. Pritchard worked with Dr. Sterling Nesbitt on identifying and describing fossils of a Triassic predatory reptile from the 1990s collections of Dr. Nicholas Fraser. The specimen is currently being prepared for publication in the *Earth and Environmental Sciences Transactions* journal.
- Dr. Pritchard obtained microCT scans of *Tanytrachelos* from the Virginia Tech in preparation for anatomical reconstruction as part of the Luck Companies Foundation-sponsored "Reconstructing an Ancient Virginian" project.
- Dr. Pritchard worked with Ferrum College student Daniel Jackson on cataloging and curating vertebrate and invertebrate fossils from the collections of the NSF-sponsored Jurassic dinosaur field project.
- Dr. Pritchard worked with University of Lynchburg intern Nicholas Brewton to develop protocols for 3D surface scanning of fossil specimens and 3D animation of said scans.

Dr. Pritchard worked with many scientific workers and private citizens seeking to use VMNH collections in their work:

- Prospective UNC student Connor Neagle, developing a grant to study Triassic fossil fish collections.

- Utah State University researchers, who borrowed *Tanytrachelos* skeletons from the Cow Branch Formation for destructive sampling.
- VMNH research associate Dr. Noel Boaz, who sampled mastodon samples for chemical analysis.
- VT professor Sterling Nesbitt, who borrowed specimens of a predatory rauisuchid reptile from the VMNH fossil collections from the UK.
- Burke Museum paleontologist Chris Sidor for field notes on the 'Nickapod' fossil site in the Jurassic of Wyoming.
- Private citizens from Gainesville, FL and Henrico County, VA, seeking information about possible donations.

## **Education & Outreach**

Dr. Pritchard presented to an assembly of roughly 100 Salem High School biology students on his career at a curator and the role of paleontology in understanding evolution. His presentation featured genuine dinosaur fossils.

Dr. Pritchard, Lucy Treado, and a team of volunteers presented a table of fossil insects under microscopes for the VMNH 2025 Bonez and Booz event. The festival drew over 1,855 visitors, and the display was particularly exciting for visitors.

Dr. Pritchard hosted collections tours for over forty students from the University of Lynchburg and Virginia Tech.

Dr. Pritchard presented the Master Naturalist paleontology course for the local Master Naturalist chapter.

## **Grants & Funding**

Dr. Pritchard worked with Lucy Treado and Dr. Brooke Haiar on using the remaining funds of the National Science Foundation grant to develop lab capacity for the fossils collected and to continue the 3D modeling and reconstruction components of internship projects and resultant research products in perpetuity.

## **Professional Service**

Dr. Pritchard reviewed two articles: one on aquatic reptiles for the journal *Science Advances* and a second on early reptile hearing structures for the journal *Papers in Palaeontology*.

Dr. Pritchard worked with the Herpetology Curator search committee at the VMNH for video interviews and the first two finalist interviews.

**Collin VanBuren, Ph.D.**  
**Visiting Scholar**

- Dr. VanBuren and colleagues resubmitted one paper that is now in review and submitted a second paper for the first time, which is also in review.
- Dr. VanBuren staffed an outreach table at Bonez and Booz where he displayed specimens that glow under blacklight
- Dr. VanBuren completed the supervision of two undergraduate student projects at the University of Lynchburg, one on communicating impacts of biodiversity change and another on impacts of plastic pollution in Virginia's freshwater systems

### **Research & Collections**

Dr. VanBuren resubmitted one paper and submitted another:

- van Rees, VanBuren, et al. *In review*. Eight recommendations to enhance biodiversity outcomes of nature-based solutions at multiple scales. *Journal of Environmental Management*
- VanBuren and Alroy. *In review*. Range maps and occurrence data support different hypotheses about Australian amphibians. *Global Ecology and Biogeography*

Dr. VanBuren continues to prepare additional publications for submission, including those on reconstructing the grazing history of the American west (with colleagues from Northern Arizona University, Auburn University, and the Canadian Museum of Nature) and the effects of measurement scale on the results of grazing research (with colleagues from Northern Arizona University).

Dr. VanBuren worked with M. Boyd and H. Cartmell with input from other R&C staff to identify collections priorities suitable for volunteer project opportunities.

Dr. VanBuren currently has four papers in review.

### **Education & Outreach**

Dr. VanBuren participated in Bonez and Boos by leading an outreach table on animals that glow under blacklight

Dr. VanBuren mentored two undergraduate students at the University of Lynchburg for semester-long projects on communicating impacts of biodiversity change and impacts of plastic pollution on Virginia's freshwater ecosystems.

Dr. VanBuren presented volunteer opportunities to the Master Naturalists at the 2025 graduation ceremony and started accepting applications for new volunteers to start in January 2026

Dr. VanBuren joined M. Boyd and B. Williams to represent the VMNH at the Patrick County High School Career Fair

### **Professional Service**

Dr. VanBuren continues to participate in the “nutria task force” monthly calls with state and federal wildlife managers.

Dr. VanBuren began meeting with the Martinsville City Tree Board to discuss potential grant opportunities and other ways to build collaborations with the VMNH.

### **Misc**

Dr. VanBuren joined other staff (K. Ivanov, H. Bassett, M. Boyd, A. Pritchard, B. Williams, C. Deatherage, and L. Perkins) to participate on the Hiring Committee for the Herpetology Curator position.

Dr. VanBuren met with the Executive Director of the Amphibian Survival Alliance to learn about updates to the Future Leaders of Amphibian Conservation program (which he co-founded in 2014) and opportunities to collaborate, including through delivering workshops or joining the Alliance’s Advisory Board as a youth inclusion advisor.

**Vertebrate Zoology**  
**Marshall Boyd, Research Technician**

## **Research & Collections**

### *Field work*

M. Boyd, Dr. Joe Keiper, Dr. Collin VanBuren, and Dr. Hayden Bassett visited public property near Philpott Lake to begin a joint effort of local beaver documentation alongside the archaeological study of dendrochronology. This preliminary field work will combine the presence of beaver populations effects on the local landscape with empirical data collected on trees targeted by these rodents. More properties have been contacted for this preliminary work, and a growing network of research collaborators and landowners continues.

### *Professional Presentations/Conferences*

M. Boyd traveled to Richmond for the annual Virginia Herpetological Society Fall Meeting where he and the executive committee hosted presenters who talked about herpetofauna conservation efforts throughout the state, conducted the business meeting, and helped with the continued collaborative efforts of the nonprofit

### *Ongoing research*

M. Boyd began correspondence for documenting Timber Rattlesnake populations at Fairy Stone State Park with fieldwork to begin in early 2026.

### *Professional Development*

M. Boyd along with all search committee members completed the process of application reviews and online interviews for the vacancy of Assistant Curator of Herpetology. Two (2) of the three (3) in-person candidate interviews were completed within this timeframe with the third anticipated to occur in the beginning of January.

### *Collections Growth, Management and Use*

M. Boyd assisted with the delivery and set up of specimens used in a “Cabinet of Curiosities” exhibit showcased at the Taubman Museum of Art in Roanoke, VA. The short-term exhibit was on display this entire quarter anticipated to be picked up early 2026.

M. Boyd along with other staff members finished the processing of Usak taxidermy specimens with incorporation into collections storage space nearly complete. Several specimens were rearranged to a wall mounted storage style allowing more optimal space availability and proper storage style based on the design of the mounts themselves.

M. Boyd finished the curation of the fish collection donated by Old Dominion University (ODU) which more than doubled the ichthyology wet collections. Plans have been made for identifications of the mixed lot specimens so database cataloging can occur in the future.

M. Boyd continues to collect DOR specimens and those donated by other institutions for the growth of vertebrate zoology research collections along with the education/outreach collections.

#### *Grants*

None in this timeframe.

### **Education & Outreach**

#### *VMNH-based Activities*

M. Boyd along with the Martinsville Tree Board, Virginia Department of Forestry, DRBA, Fairy Stone State Park, and Philpott Lake hosted a Tree Festival where visitors could learn about local tree species, conservation efforts around planting native trees, and receive a free tree sapling in an effort to have more native trees planted in the Martinsville/Henry County area.

M. Boyd and the rest of the VMNH staff hosted the Bones & Booz fall festival showcasing VMNH specimens from across the all museum collections featuring new stories of specimens not previously seen at Bones & Booz before.

M. Boyd attended the annual graduation of new Virginia Master Naturalists entering the local Southwest Piedmont Chapter of the nonprofit.

#### *non-VMNH based Activities*

M. Boyd along with Annabelle Sechrist and Jordan Brim arranged for the herpetofauna portion of a bioblitz at Fairy Stone State Park utilizing assistance of the Park Rangers to showcase animal ambassadors and host searching for herpetofauna of the park.

M. Boyd traveled with Liberty Hightower and Dr. Jackson Means to assist with the annual Hokie Bugfest event showcasing VMNH Recent Invertebrate Zoology specimens.

M. Boyd traveled with Dr. Collin VanBuren and Ben Williams to Patrick County High School for the annual Career Day event connecting with upcoming graduates about careers the students could pursue.

M. Boyd traveled to Richmond for the annual Virginia Herpetological Society Fall Meeting where he and the executive committee hosted presenters who talked about herpetofauna conservation efforts throughout the state, conducted the business meeting, and helped with the continued collaborative efforts of the nonprofit.



M. Boyd along with Christine Stewart (Virginia Master Naturalist) hosted an Education Station presentation and Q+A with the residents of Kings Grant retirement community.

## **Media**

M. Boyd continues to be the social media chair for the Virginia Herpetological Society (VHS) where educational material, announcements for programming and community outreach occur.

## **Professional Service**

M. Boyd continues to be the Vice President and Social Media Chair for the Virginia Herpetological Society.

M. Boyd continues to serve on the executive committee for the Friends of Fairy Stone State Park nonprofit organization.

M. Boyd continues to be a member of the local young professionals ("Yo-Pros") group by attending events. The group is working to connect younger professionals of the Martinsville/Henry County area in a social but also collaborative way.

## **Research and Collections**

### **Jill K. Harris, Registrar**

Twelve (12) collections acquisitions were recorded for 2,881 individual specimens. These specimens were added to the invertebrate zoology and vertebrate zoology collections.

Five (5) outgoing loans were recorded from the herpetology, vertebrate zoology, paleontology, and education collections. The loans were made to: North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences, Reynolds Homestead, New Jersey State Museum, and Virginia Tech.

Ms. Harris (database administrator) reports that, within the collections management system *Re:discovery Proficio*, VMNH staff added/modified/updated 29,993 catalog records, according to database statistics.

Ms. Harris ran one cycle of the anoxic (CO<sub>2</sub>) chamber for disinfestation. The cycle was full of taxidermy mounts, returned loan items, and new acquisitions prior to these going into permanent storage.

### **Haley Cartmell, Collections Manager**

Curators and staff modified/updated 27,839 existing records and added 15 new records to the VMNH collections database Proficio during the months of October, November, and December 2025.

## VMNH Board of Trustees Education and Public Programs Committee

Report for February 6, 2026

- Education Updates-
  - Quarterly Numbers Served - (second page table)
    - At-the Museum highlights – Collaborated with Martinsville Tree Board for tree product usage/importance of trees programming and free tree giveaway during the Tree Festival held at VMNH, Collaborated with Dr. Pritchard for Bonez and Booz event programming with various Solite Quarry insect and arachnid fossil material magnified utilizing the Microscopy Lab scopes
    - Outreach highlights – continuation of scholarship programming and afterschool programming, partnership with Fairy Stone State Park for educational programming with VMNH animal ambassadors and fall Bio Blitz
- Department Updates:
  - Presented at VAST (Virginia Association of Science Teachers) Conference Nov 13-15- *The Power of Real: Utilizing Museum Specimens to Deliver Powerful Programming*
  - Department partnership with Martinsville/Henry County Helping Youth Thrive Collaborative providing support and expanding future opportunities for local youth
  - Master Naturalist Basic Training session completed (VMNH sponsoring agency and host of Southwestern Piedmont Chapter)
- Exhibit Updates:
  - VA 250 Exhibit, *Water/Ways* (Aug 29-Nov 8), and planning for Young Explorer's Center

**Numbers Served Data on Page 2**

## DEPP Quarterly Numbers

Total Programs for Quarter: **196**

Total Number Served for Quarter: **3,163**

	Outreach (Martinsville, Central, South Central, Eastern)		At-the-Museum	
MONTH	PROGRAMS	SERVED	PROGRAMS	SERVED
Oct 2025	61	1117	37	579
Nov 2025	36	612	23	322
Dec 2025	19	327	20	206
Totals	<b>116</b>	<b>2,056</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>1,107</b>

	Outreach (Martinsville, Central, South Central, Eastern)		At-the-Museum	
MONTH	PROGRAMS	SERVED	PROGRAMS	SERVED
Oct 2024	42	762	39	709
Nov 2024	45	773	20	427
Dec 2024	26	409	24	415
Totals	<b>113</b>	<b>1,944</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>1,551</b>

	Outreach (Martinsville, Central, South Central, Eastern)		At-the-Museum	
MONTH	PROGRAMS	SERVED	PROGRAMS	SERVED
Oct 2023	81	1924	15	377
Nov 2023	69	1275	19	362
Dec 2023	39	644	22	633
Totals	<b>189</b>	<b>3,843</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>1,372</b>



# MEETINGS

*Board of Trustees*

May 16, 2026

August 15, 2026

November 14, 2026

# EVENTS

Virginia Museum Advocacy Day  
February 12, 2026

The Clash of Giants: Jefferson vs Buffon  
February 19, 2026

Starlington: A Bridgerton-inspired  
Evening  
March 21, 2026

# FESTIVALS

Bug Day at VMNH  
February 7, 2026

Waynesboro Riverfest  
Year of the Brook Trout  
May 2, 2026

Reptile Festival  
April 24-25, 2026

Virginia Museum of  
NATURAL HISTORY

IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE  
SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

# NOTES

*John* ON THE *Young* *Young*

STATE OF VIRGINIA.

WRITTEN BY

THOMAS JEFFERSON.

ILLUSTRATED WITH

A MAP, including the States of VIRGINIA, MARY-  
LAND, DELAWARE and PENNSYLVANIA.

*John*

*Young*

L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR JOHN STOCKDALE, OPPOSITE  
BURLINGTON-HOUSE, PICCADILLY.

MDCCLXXXVII.

1778 by *Tho Jefferson*



## Advancement Report

*FY26 through the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter*

### EARNED REVENUE

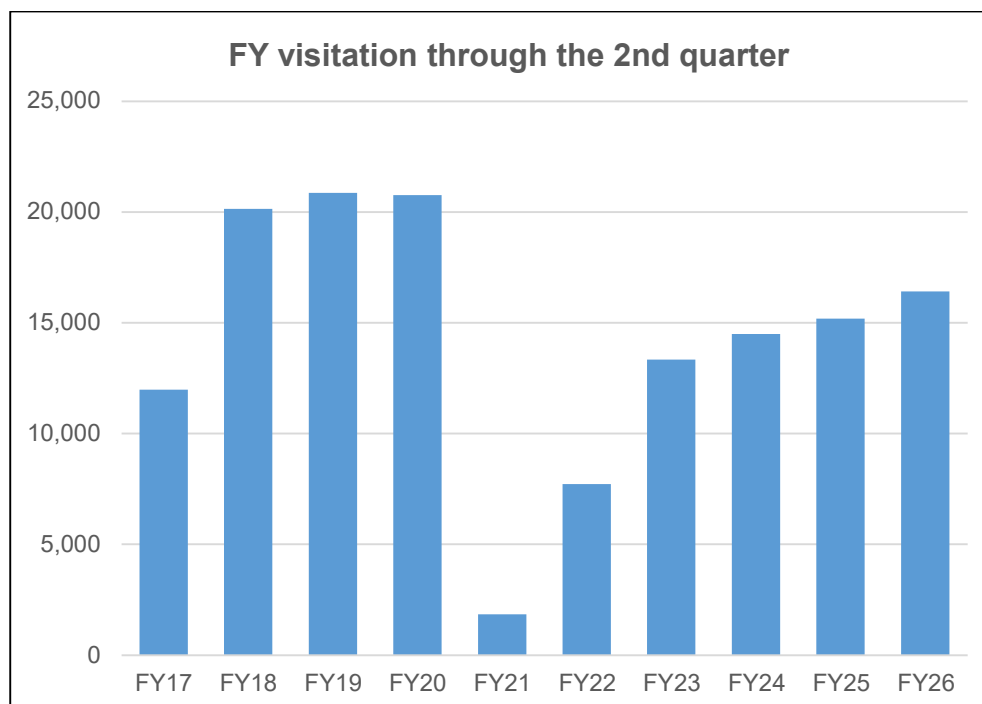
	<i>FY25</i>	<b>FY26</b>
VMNH Foundation	\$338,613	\$4,768,011
Museum	\$92,383	\$103,848
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$430,996</b>	<b>\$4,871,859</b>

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

2. Earned revenue details  
Endowment, Memberships, Partnerships
3. Recent events (2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of FY26)
4. Upcoming events (3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of FY26)
5. Exhibits  
Marketing  
Museums for All
6. Demographics

### VISITATION

FY26 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter: Visitation:      Admissions: \$61,672      Museum Store: \$38,498



*VMNH Mission: to interpret Virginia's natural heritage within a global context in ways that are relevant to all citizens of the Commonwealth.*

### **EARNED REVENUE DETAILS**

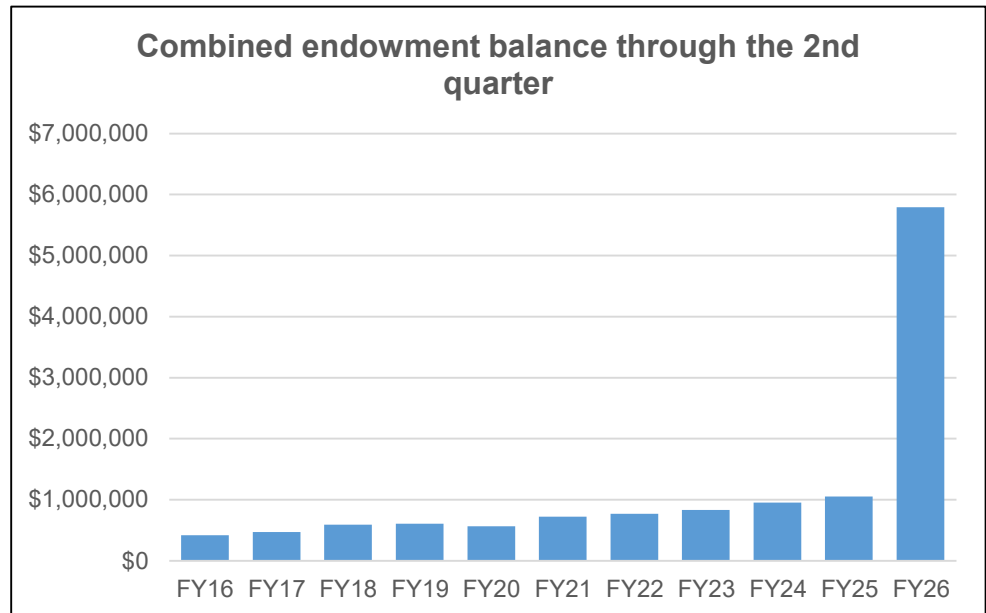
<u>Museum earned revenue</u>	<u>FY25</u>	<u>FY26</u>
Admissions	\$50,019	\$61,672
Museum Store	\$37,489	\$38,498
Museum Rental	\$4,300	\$3,308
Publications	\$575	\$370
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$92,383</b>	<b>\$103,848</b>
<u>VMNH Foundation revenue</u>	<u>FY25</u>	<u>FY26</u>
Memberships/Corp.		
Partnerships	\$20,746	\$9,768
Annual Fund	\$50,366	\$82,149
Research restricted gifts	\$99,251	\$62,729
Education restricted gifts	\$800	\$1,100
Exhibits restricted gifts	\$2,000	\$0
*Other restricted gifts	\$165,450	\$4,612,265
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$338,613</b>	<b>\$4,768,011</b>

\*There were \$22,700 in endowment gifts through the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of FY25 and \$4,569,370 in endowment gifts through the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of FY26, all included in the "Other restricted gifts" total.

### **ENDOWMENT, MEMBERSHIPS, PARTNERSHIPS**

**Endowment** (balance ending 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter)

FY16	\$421,096
FY17	\$470,098
FY18	\$593,732
FY19	\$606,475
FY20	\$566,410
FY21	\$722,012
FY22	\$769,984
FY23	\$834,689
FY24	\$955,860
FY25	\$1,053,359
FY26	\$5,791,977



#### **December 31, 2025 balances:**

General Endowment Fund balance:	\$5,339,218
Pete Henika Memorial Fund balance:	\$202,522
Richard Hoffman Fund balance:	\$226,740
Pete Boisseau Research Fund balance:	\$23,497
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5,791,977</b>

*VMNH Mission: to interpret Virginia's natural heritage within a global context in ways that are relevant to all citizens of the Commonwealth.*

## Memberships

<u>FY21</u>	<u>FY22</u>	<u>FY23</u>	<u>FY24</u>	<u>FY25</u>	<u>FY26</u>
197	333	332	366	367	487

**Corporate Partnerships: 43**

### **RECENT EVENTS (2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of FY26)**

October 4 – *Natural History of Chocolate* event

October 7 – Waynesboro Advocacy Committee meeting, 1 p.m.

October 10 – VMNH Foundation Advisory Board meeting, noon to 1 p.m.

October 11-12 – Fall Foliage Art Show, Waynesboro

October 15 – National Fossil Day

October 15 – VMNH Foundation Executive/Finance Committee, noon to 1 p.m.

October 21 – Wayne Theatre Science Talk...*Historic Bird Collections: A Time Machine for Bird Conservation and a Gateway for Avian Appreciation*, Joe B. Keiper, Ph.D.

October 23 – BOT Finance/Advancement Committee, 11 a.m.

October 25 – Bonez & Booz

*Sponsored by:*

**Bassett Furniture Industries**

**Carter Bank**

**Hooker Furnishings**

**Atlantic Union Bank**

**The Helen S. & Charles G. Patterson Jr. Charitable Foundation Trust**

**Boxley**

**Renewal by Andersen of Roanoke**

**Brightspeed**

October 30 – Public opening of the exhibit *Making American Artists: Stories from the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1776-1976* at the Taubman Museum of Art, featuring VMNH collections

November 2025 – Wayne Theatre Science Talk (speaker TBD)

November 2025 – Strategic Planning Committee (specific date TBD)

November 2025 – BOT Facilities Committee (day/time to be confirmed)

November 2025 – Virginia Explorer (VA250 edition) to be sent to printer

*Sponsored by:*

**Virginia Tourism Corporation**

**The late W. Bruce Wingo**

November 3 – Waynesboro Advocacy Committee meeting, 1 p.m.

November 14 – BOT Executive Committee

*VMNH Mission: to interpret Virginia's natural heritage within a global context in ways that are relevant to all citizens of the Commonwealth.*



November 15 – BOT Education Committee, 9:00 a.m.

November 15 – BOT Research & Collections Committee, 9:00 a.m.

November 15 – BOT meeting

November 21 – VMNH Foundation Board meeting

December 2025 – Wayne Theatre Science Talk (speaker TBD)

December 1 – Waynesboro Advocacy Committee meeting, 1 p.m.

December 5 – *A Night at the Museum with Santa*

### **UPCOMING EVENTS (3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of FY26)**

January 5, 2026 – Waynesboro Advocacy Committee meeting, 1 p.m.

January 21, 2026 – VMNH Foundation Executive/Finance Committee, noon to 1 p.m.

February 2, 2026 – Waynesboro Advocacy Committee meeting, 1 p.m.

February 6, 2026 – BOT meeting (virtual), 3:30 to 5 p.m.

February 7, 2026 – Science Saturday: Bug Day at VMNH

February 19, 2026 – VA 250 event (invitation event to members and donors) - *Clash of Giants: Jefferson vs Buffon and the Battle for America's Natural Legacy*

February 20, 2026 – VMNH Foundation Board meeting

February 20-21, 2026 – Sleepover event: Community Lab School, Charlottesville

March 2, 2026 – Waynesboro Advocacy Committee meeting, 1 p.m.

March 21, 2026 – *Starlington*, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m.

April 6, 2026 – Waynesboro Advocacy Committee meeting, 1 p.m.

April 18, 2026 – VMNH Foundation Executive/Finance Committee meeting, noon to 1 p.m.

April 24-25, 2026 – Reptile Festival

*Sponsored by:*

**Boxley**

**Carter Bank**

**Bassett Furniture Industries**

**Brightspeed**

**Renewal by Andersen of Roanoke**

**Hooker Furnishings**

**Virginia Tourism Corporation**

**The Helen S. & Charles G. Patterson Jr. Charitable Foundation Trust**

## **EXHIBITS**

Now open – *Stories from Skeletons* in the Hall of Ancient Life

Now open to July 26, 2026 – *The Age of Dinosaurs* exhibit

*Sponsored by:*

**Patterson Trust**

**Bassett**

**MHC Tourism**

**Community Foundation Serving Western Virginia**

October 30, 2025 to January 25, 2026 – VMNH exhibit materials on loan to the Taubman Museum of Art for the exhibit *Making American Artists: Stories from the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1776-1976*.

January through December 2026 – VA 250 exhibit at VMNH... *Clash of Giants: Jefferson vs Buffon and the Battle for America's Natural Legacy*

*Sponsored by:*

**Virginia Tourism Corporation**

**O. Randolph and Martha Rollins**

## **MARKETING**

Cardinal News

[Annual Study Shows Increase in Tourism Spending for Martinsville, Henry County](#)

Knowable Magazine

[Can Science Help Oyster Reefs Thrive Again](#)

Virginia Retirement System

[Marshall Boyd Taps Passion for Science as Museum Research Technician](#)

## **MUSEUMS FOR ALL**

<b>MFA as a % of total visitation</b>	<b>FY22</b>	<b>FY23</b>	<b>FY24</b>	<b>FY25</b>	<b>FY26</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	4.0%	16.5%	16.2%	21.4%	14.0%
2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter	2.5%	28.6%	20.3%	19.7%	19.1%
3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter	6.0%	9.5%	6.8%	8.1%	
4 <sup>th</sup> quarter	8.2%	15.8%	17.4%	14.1%	

## DEMOGRAPHICS

### Where our visitors came from

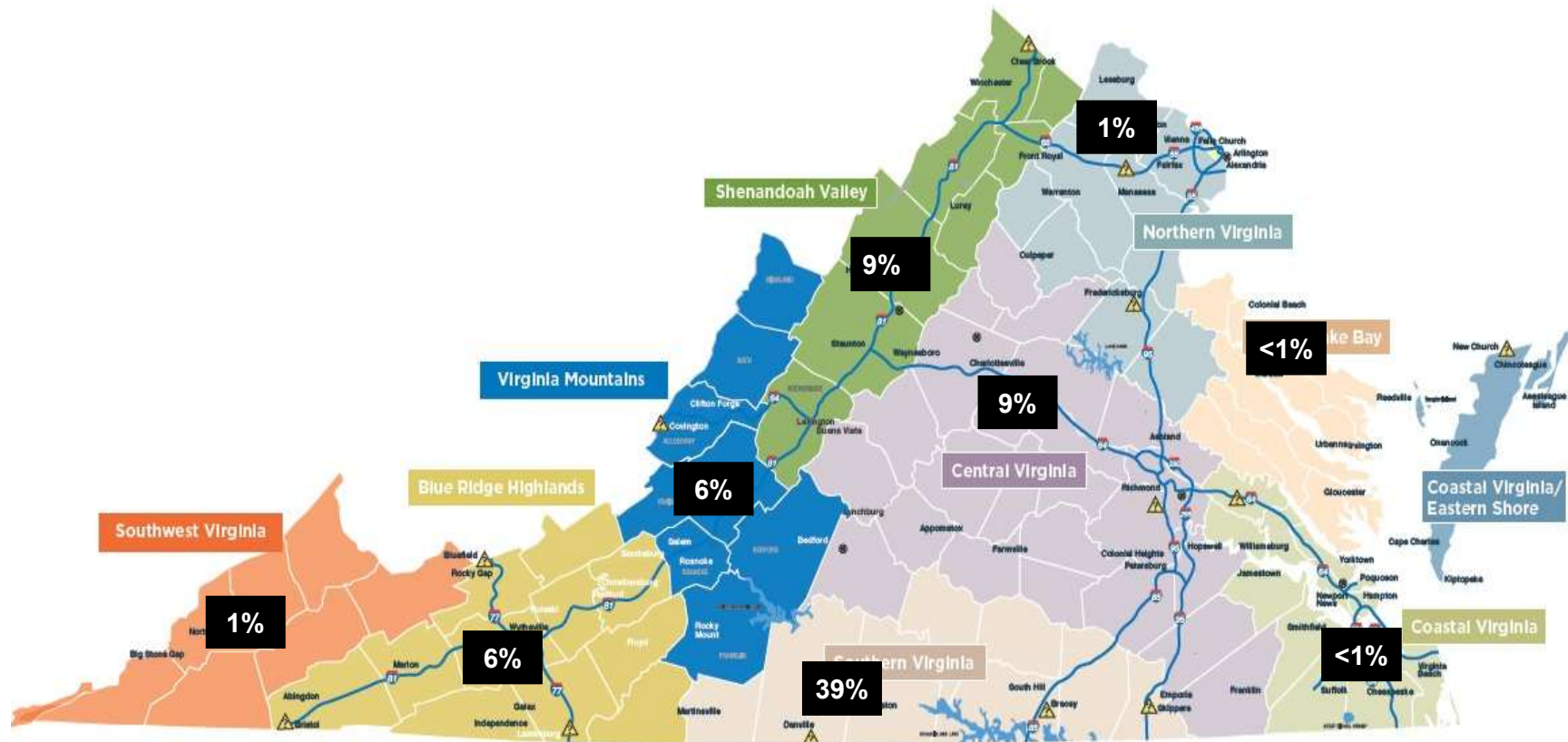
Virginia	73% (see map for breakdown among the 10 Virginia Tourism Regions)
Martinsville/Henry County	30%
Danville/Pittsylvania County	9%
Other Virginia	34%
North Carolina	22%
States other than VA & NC	7%

*\*Includes visitors from 35 states and Canada:*

AK, AL, AZ, CA, CO, CT, DC, DE, FL, GA, IL, IN, KS, KY, LA, MD, MI, MN, MO, MT, NC, NJ, NY, OH, OK, OR, PA, RI, SC, TN, TX, VA, WA, WI, WV

### Who our visitors are

Adults (ages 19-59):	43%
Seniors (ages 60+):	8%
Children (ages 3-18):	35%
Children under 3:	3%
VMNH Members:	11%
Adults (ages 19-59):	4%
Seniors (ages 60+):	<1%
Children (ages 3-18):	5%
Children under 3:	1%



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