Board of Trustees Quarterly Meeting
Saturday, November 14, 2026, 10 AM – 12 PM
Virginia Museum of Natural History
Walker Lecture Hall

AGENDA

Welcome and Call to Order • Overview of Meeting • Success of Petra Program	Dr. Melany Clark, Chair
Approval of Minutes (Action) • August 15, 2026	Dr. Clark

Chair's Report
• Interaction with Dept. of Education
• Staff Spotlight
• Deep Dive
  ○ Haley Cartmell, Collections Manager
  Integrated Pest Management (IPM)
	Dr. Clark

Consent Agenda (Action) • Treasurer's Report • Facilities Report • Waynesboro Advocacy Report	 Will Clements, Treasurer Dr. Tom Benzing Dr. Benzing
Research and Collections Report • First Quarter Report	Dr. Carole Nash
Education and Public Programs Report • Education by the Numbers	Nathan Sanford
Executive Director's Report • Museum Updates, Strategic Plan progress • Upcoming Events • Advancement Report	Dr. Joe Keiper Ryan Barber
Announcements and Other Matters	Dr. Keiper
Adjournment	Dr. Clark

No public comments will be heard at this meeting.

Board of Trustees
Quarterly Board Meeting
Saturday, August 15, 2026
Virginia Museum of Natural History
In-person and remote attendance options

Virginia Museum of NATURAL HISTORY
IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

MINUTES

The Virginia Museum of Natural History Board of Trustees held their quarterly meeting at 10:00 AM at the Virginia Museum of Natural History on Saturday, August 15, 2026.

Board Members Present in Person:	Dr. Melany Clark (Chair)	Ms. Sarah Bowman
	Ms. Lauren Hall	Dr. Tom Benzing
	Dr. Christine May	Dr. Mindy Vandevelder
	Mr. Will Clements	Dr. John Almarode
Board Members Present Remote:	Mr. Dick Bratcher (distance greater than 60 miles)	
	Ms. Cathy Manion (distance greater than 60 miles)	
	Ms. Katherine McGuire (distance greater than 60 miles)	
	Dr. David Furth (distance greater than 60 miles)	
VMNH Staff Present:	Dr. Joe Keiper (Executive Director)	
	Mr. Ryan Barber	Mr. Jonathan Martin
	Ms. Christy Deatherage	Dr. Jackson Roberts
	Ms. Jennifer Whitlow	
Others Present:	Ms. Ambria Wood (OAG Office Representative)	
	Ms. Elizabeth Carter Bailey (Foundation Liaison)	

WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER

Dr. Melany Clark called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM with a welcome to all attending in person and online. A special welcome was extended to two new Board members, Dr. Christine May and Dr. John Almarode.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Sarah Bowman made a motion to approve the minutes from the May 16, 2026, meeting. Dr. Tom Benzing seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Dr. Clark commended staff for a productive fourth quarter. Dino festival was a crowd pleaser featuring a large animatronic T-rex.

DRAFT

The momentum to secure funding for the Waynesboro project continues with several planned meetings with elected officials and the Virginia Secretary of Education and his staff.

Dr. Clark asked members of the Board to hold November 13 and November 14 as possible meeting dates.

Our new curator, Dr. Jackson Roberts, shared information about his international herpetology work, current research and excitement in moving to Southwest Virginia.

Dr. Keiper briefly touched on a paleontology project completed this summer which involved using sophisticated fossil scans of tanytrachelos to create the only known 3-D image. This is now on exhibit outside of the STEM lab window.

ELECTRONIC MEETING POLICY

Ms. Lauren Hall made a motion to approve the Electronic Meeting Policy as presented and Mr. Will Clements seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA

Dr. Benzing noted a team of twelve volunteers in Waynesboro have counted 2,054 visitors to the mobile museum this summer which is only open on Saturday mornings and during special events in town. Volunteers giving permission to be publicly recognized for their work are Gwen Allen, Susan V., Francine Johnston, Jordan Malinowski, Faye Cooper, and Len Poulin.

Mr. Clements expressed gratitude for the thorough finance report and balanced budget.

Dr. Keiper added that staff are requesting an increase in appropriation to offset the increased costs in electric, transportation, supplies, contractual agreements and other day-to-day expenses. Additionally, Mr. Jonathan Martin explained the practice of asking for state dollars to provide partial project support funding with the understanding that private funds (foundation) provide a dollar match to ensure mission-based projects are completed.

Ms. Bowman moved to approve the consent agenda with a second from Ms. Hall. The motion passed unanimously.

RESEARCH AND COLLECTIONS

Dr. Benzing reported for the Research and Collections committee noting that due to a lack of quorum, the live animal policy and research associate positions were unable to be formally approved. Dr. Benzing also shared that Archeology curator, Dr. Hayden Bassett uncovered a “corduroy” road site along the Smith River. Dr. Bassett plans to use dendrochronology techniques to officially date the bridge construction which he believes to be from the mid eighteenth century.

DRAFT

EDUCATION AND PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Ms. Christy Deatherage reported a very strong quarter and year end-numbers for the Education and Public Programs Committee. She mentioned a survey assessment is distributed following each program for evaluation of all aspects of the program.

This week, the education department hosted a successful Homeschool Science and Engineering Academy Open House and registration event. It was noted that programs are aligned with both Virginia Standards of Learning and North Carolina Standard Course of Study.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Dr. Keiper reminded the board of the reasons Waynesboro was selected as a site for the branch campus. Dr. Benzing recounted the recent Virginia tourism report noting the Shenandoah Valley as a prime tourist destination.

A remote meeting in late August with Virginia Education Secretary Smith is scheduled to discuss funding for the Waynesboro capital project, salary realignment and submitting an increased appropriation. Dr. Kate Maxlow, Deputy Secretary, is also actively engaged with our needs during monthly meetings.

The museum is starting a new initiative suggested by Foundation Board member, Melanie Gilbert to host a monthly, hour-long discovery session with curatorial staff. Planning is underway with the first session to be held in September. The Board was encouraged to attend.

Asbestos removal at Douglas Ave. is scheduled to begin next week and preliminary HVAC planning is underway.

Several staff members are part of a citizen amphibian conservation team. The museum's marketing team intends to highlight that work as a gateway to science and create engaging, digital storytelling for our audience.

The museum will host author and artist, Suzanne Stryk on Sept. 17-18 for a member's talk and children's art classes.

A museum consultant will be working with our Exhibits Manager Lila Dougherty.

The Young Explorers Center's scheduled opening is Summer 2027 with funding to complete the project already secured and available. Conceptual work for the Petra exhibit is also underway. Dr. Keiper expressed sincere gratitude for the individual board member donations toward Petra's Lair and reiterated the relationship between the Foundation Board and Board of Trustees is more important than ever.

ADVANCEMENT REPORT

Mr. Ryan Barber reported a steady visitation growth pattern of 5% year after year. Dino festival saw almost 4,000 visitors with the Museums for All providing significant accessibility to EBT card holders.

DRAFT

Carter Bank is also providing support for the Homeschool Academy. Other grants are in various stages of process to fund future festivals, events, and curator research.

On August 27 the museum will host a members reception and exhibit opening for the traveling Smithsonian exhibit, Water/Ways. Staff is developing an in-house exhibit featuring birds of Virginia to be installed in November following the conclusion of Water/Ways.

Dr. Benzing mentioned the ongoing Waynesboro Theatre Lecture Series will resume on September 8th.

The museum is still collecting information about cost sharing among other Virginia agencies that utilize our services and space.

CLOSED SESSION

A motion was made by Dr. Clark and seconded by Mr. Clements to enter closed session.

I make a motion 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).

Ms. Bowman conducted a roll call vote, which passed unanimously.

CERTIFICATION OF CLOSED SESSION

The VMNH Board of Trustees returned from closed session. Certification was read and a unanimous roll call vote was conducted by Ms. Bowman to certify the discussion.

Whereas, the Virginia Museum of Natural History Board of Trustees 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 Virginia Museum of Natural History Board of Trustees 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.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND OTHER MATTERS

Dr. Clark encouraged the Board to attend events when possible.

After the adjournment of the meeting, Dr. Clark recognized that the Board needed to vote on discussions occurring in closed session.

DRAFT

While a quorum of the Board was still physically present. Dr. Clark made a motion to reconvene which was seconded by Dr. John Almarode.

Dr. Clark moved that the Chair work with appropriate staff to follow through on the personnel matters discussed, consistent with the discussion held in the closed session. Dr. Mindy Vandevelder seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Dr. Clark made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:48 AM with Dr. Almarode seconding. Motion carried unanimously.

The next meeting will be held on
November 14, 2026

DRAFT

Virginia Museum of
NATURAL HISTORY

First Quarter FY27 Financials

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Virginia Museum of NATURAL HISTORY

First Quarter FY26 Summary

The first quarter of FY2027 was a productive one, with continued efforts to manage costs and make progress on several important funding priorities.

One of our biggest accomplishments was getting the VMNH-Waynesboro capital funding request resubmitted, along with three additional General Fund requests. These included increased funding for general operations, a curator promotion, and workforce stability, recruitment, and retention. Together, these requests aim to address some of the funding challenges we've faced for years.

We continue to battle the challenges that come with an aging building. Equipment issues, rising utility costs, and ongoing maintenance needs continue to put pressure on our operating budget and staff resources.

Despite these challenges, we've continued to manage our resources carefully while working toward long-term goals that will allow the museum to better serve the Commonwealth.

Base Budget FY27 & FY28

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

General Fund	$ 3,782,634
Estimated Revenues	$ 556,011

Virginia Museum of NATURAL HISTORY

VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
MONTHLY STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENSES
FOR THE PERIOD ENDING SEPT 30, 2026

NOTE		BUDGET	YTD	YTD%
	SUPPORT & REVENUES			
	Support:			
	Commonwealth	**$3,782,634.00**	3,782,634	100%
1	Add: Appropriation	**$135,318.00**	135,318	100%
	Total Support	**$3,917,952**	3,917,952	100%
	Revenues:			
	Admission to Museum	**$103,500**	38,336	37%
	VMNH Publications	**$1,000**	301	30%
	Receipts from City & County	**$37,890**	37,457	99%
	Honorariums/Misc. Inc.	**$1,000**	0	0%
	Restricted Gifts Foundation/Grants:Research&Education/Memberships	**$280,000**	38,613	14%
	Rental of Museum Rooms	**$6,000**	3,285	55%
	Exhibit Rentals	**$500**	0	0%
	Souvenirs- Misc. Sales	**$78,800**	28,659	36%
2	Classes, Workshops, Kit Rentals, Education Projects	**$50,000**	46,545	93%
	Federal Funds Budgeted/Recv'd	**$0**	0	0%
	Total FY2027 Budgeted Revenues	**$558,690**	193,197	35%
	Special Funds Carryover FY'26*	**$443,339**	443,339	100%
	Federal Funds Carryover FY'26*	**$6,561**	6,561	100%
	Total Revenues and Carryover from FY2026	**$1,008,590**	643,098	64%
	TOTAL OPERATING FUNDS/APPROP	**$4,926,542**	4,561,050	93%
	EXPENSES:			
	Salaries	**$2,331,799**	647,898	28%
	Payroll Benefits	**$976,907**	316,510	32%
	Contractual Services	**$400,000**	59,968	15%
	Supplies	**$80,000**	20,928	26%
	Equipment	**$50,000**	2,078	4%
	Equipment Maintenance	**$38,000**	12,024	32%
	Travel	**$40,000**	8,003	20%
3	Staff Training	**$7,000**	4,520	65%
4	Repairs/Construction	**$105,000**	42,395	40%
	Subscriptions	**$1,000**	0	0%
5	Utilities	**$326,179**	107,796	33%
	Telephone	**$17,000**	2,846	17%
	Mailing	**$5,000**	0	0%
	Insurance	**$23,500**	0	0%
	Vehicle Maint./Fuel	**$18,000**	1,508	8%
	Organ. Memberships	**$20,000**	5,819	29%
	Printing	**$5,000**	498	10%
	Other:	**$5,000**	0	0%
	Awards/Unem.Comp./Ind Cost	**$1,000**	0	0%
	Exhibit & Equipment Rentals	**$40,000**	9,942	25%
	Building Rentals	**$1,000**	0	0%
	Agency Service Charges	**$145,000**	29,352	20%
	TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	**$4,636,385**	1,272,084	27%
	PERCENT SPENT OF YTD INCOME RECEIVED			
	TOTAL INCOME BALANCE	$290,157	3,288,966	

*** 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 a result of legislative action, VMNH received additional appropriations to help cover statewide employee salary increases, rising health insurance premiums, minimum wage adjustments, and changes in state-mandated service costs.

2.) Classes, Workshops, Kit Rentals, Education Projects

Reflecting the seasonal nature of its programming, Education generates most of its projected annual revenue during the summer. Programs were fully booked for much of the summer, even after an additional homeschool sessions were added to meet demand. As always, the Education team worked tirelessly to accommodate as many students as possible while continuing to deliver high-quality educational experiences.

Expenses:

3.) Staff Training

VMNH staff continue to take full advantage of the staff professional development funds provided by the foundation.

4.) Repairs/Construction

Repair costs continue to trend higher as we address the challenges of our aging facility. We anticipate that repairs currently underway will help reduce operating costs later this fiscal year.

5.) Utilities

Utility spending is above expected levels as staff have worked to replace aging parts on chillers and other components related to the HVAC system. The non-functioning or worn parts created inefficiencies in the operation. As of the November Board meeting, all defective parts will have been replaced and staff are exploring with the Board of Trustees' Facilities Committee entering into a professional HVAC Service Agreement as a cost savings for the agency.

Virginia Museum of NATURAL HISTORY

First Quarter FY27 Capital Projects Summary

Capital Projects – Maintenance Reserve Fund Spending

Douglas Renovation Project

Update:
Asbestos abatement work is complete, and the contract with the A/E has been signed, initiating the HVAC replacement portion of the project.

General Background:
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.

Over the course of the project several items will be addressed including efficient weatherization, plumbing, electrical, structural, and HVAC systems. Total costs will be covered by Maintenance Reserve.

Capital Projects – Pool Funded

VMNH-Waynesboro – New Facility Construction

Budget and Legislative

Detailed planning for the VMNH-Waynesboro Campus was completed in late 2025.

Although capital funding was not approved during the 2026 General Assembly session, VMNH submitted a renewed funding request this summer for consideration during the 2027 legislative session. If necessary, an additional request will be submitted for the 2028–2030 biennium.

Background:

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

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 once funding becomes available.

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.**

Fiscal Year 27: Virginia Museum of Natural History

Staffing

Metric	FY27
Total Employees	51
Full-Time	33
Part-Time	18

Funding	FY27
General Fund Positions	35
Special Revenue Positions	16

Department Breakdown	FY27
Executive Office	2
Advancement	4
Fiscal	5
Education	3
Education Outreach	4
Box Office	7
Collections	4
Archaeology	8
Entomology	3
Paleontology	2
Mammalogy	1
B&G	7
Herpetology	1

Board of Trustees
Facilities Committee
Saturday, August 15, 2026
Virginia Museum of Natural History
In-person and remote attendance option

Virginia Museum of NATURAL HISTORY
IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

MINUTES

The Facilities Committee of the Virginia Museum of Natural History held their quarterly meeting at 8:30 AM on Saturday, August 15, 2026 at the Virginia Museum of Natural History

BOT MEMBERS PRESENT:	Dr. Tom Benzing (Chair) Ms. Lauren Hall
BOT MEMBERS REMOTE:	Mr. Dick Bratcher (Distance) Dr. David Furth (Distance)
OTHERS PRESENT:	Dr. Joe Keiper (Executive Director) Mr. Ryan Barber — Mr. Jonathan Martin Mr. Tim King — Ms. Ambria Wood (OAG Rep)

WELCOME

Dr. Tom Benzing called the meeting to order at 8:30AM and welcomed everyone. Both Mr. Bratcher and Dr. Furth reported their physical absence was due to distance.

As there was not a quorum, no previous meeting minutes were approved.

ONGOING PROJECTS

Mr. King reported that the chiller was a priority and several contractors were assisting. Many of the issues are tied to the chillers being 20 years old, and that a lightning strike impacted some components. He was confident that the issues could be remedied through parts replacement.

Joe Keiper added that if the chillers begin to fail at the Starling Facility, we may need to look strategically at the maintenance reserve budget and tackle that issue rather than improving the HVAC capacity at the Douglas Facility due to the sensitivity of the collections.

OPEN DISCUSSION

Mr. Bratcher inquired about the progression on a protocol/dashboard for the building as well as a preventative maintenance plan. Mr. King noted a lot of progress was made, but that the staffer spearheading that initiative has just gone out for elective surgery and will reinitiate work upon return.

At Douglas Avenue, Mr. King and his crew have been busy prepping the building for asbestos abatement to begin 18 August 2026.

Dr. Keiper noted the VMNH-Waynesboro outreach trailer was well-used and Dr. Benzing noted over 2,000 have been served during Saturday morning hours. Mr. Bratcher gave the team advice on how to get an appointment with Dominion regarding securing permanent electric power. For the time being, a solar generator runs lights, monitors, and fans, but cannot run the HVAC thus limiting the hours the trailer can be used in the summer.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business Dr. Benzing adjourned the meeting at 8:55 AM.

Board of Trustees
Facilities Committee
Wednesday, October 21, 2026
Virginia Museum of Natural History
Remote Meeting

MINUTES

The Facilities Committee of the Virginia Museum of Natural History Board of Trustees held a meeting remotely on Wednesday, October 21, 2026, beginning at 2:30 PM.

BOT MEMBERS PRESENT:	Dr. Tom Benzing (Chair)	Mr. Dick Bratcher
	Dr. David Furth	
BOT MEMBERS ABSENT:	Ms. Lauren Hall	
OTHERS PRESENT:	Dr. Joe Keiper (Ex officio)	Mr. Tim King
	Mr. Jonathan Martin	Mr. Ryan Barber

WELCOME

Dr. Tom Benzing called the meeting to order welcoming all in attendance at 2:30 PM.
It was determined that a quorum was in attendance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Benzing ran through approval of the 16 May 2026 and 16 August 2026 meeting minutes, and both were approved unanimously.

ONGOING PROJECTS

Douglas Ave. Mr. King and Mr. Martin gave an update on the Douglas Avenue project, noting that the asbestos abatement has been completed. Next, the contractor is developing the drawings for the HVAC upgrades which will be submitted to the Department of Engineering and Buildings. Approval will be a multi-month process.

APPA The discussion on the Association of Physical Plant Administrators (APPA) included Mr. Bratcher suggesting the team check on other VA state agencies and museums that are members. Tim King indicated that he and Jennifer Whitlow had started the process of gathering all data needed for the national survey of facilities. This would provide comparable data on facilities and employee composition for VMNH. Mr. Bratcher noted there were regional meetings that can facilitate a networking group.

DRAFT

Starling Ave. After discussion, it was agreed that the staff should pursue receiving a quote for a Maintenance Service Agreement for HVAC. The staff will share the quote for discussion at the 14 November Facilities Committee meeting. In the meantime, Joe Keiper will work with Mr. Bratcher to develop an outline of what a VMNH maintenance plan that complements the overall museum Strategic Plan should look like.

OPEN DISCUSSION

Dr. Furth asked about space allocation considerations at Douglas Avenue. As staff are awaiting the work plan for HVAC, they will wait until it is known what areas the contractors need clear for work before finalizing the space assignments.

ADJOURNMENT

Dr. Benzing adjourned the meeting at 3:14PM.

DRAFT

Board of Trustees
Waynesboro Advocacy Committee
Tuesday, September 1, 2026
Virginia Museum of Natural History

Virginia Museum of NATURAL HISTORY
IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

MINUTES

The Waynesboro Advocacy Committee of the Virginia Museum of Natural History Board of Trustees held their monthly meeting at 1:00 PM at the Waynesboro Office of Economic Development.

Members Present:	Dr. Tom Benzing (Chair)	Mr. Dick Bratcher
	Mr. Greg Hitchin	Ms. Ann Peltier
Present Remote:	Dr. Carole Nash (distance)	Mr. Rick Kane
	Mr. Len Poulin	Ms. Faye Cooper
	Mr. Urbie Nash	Ms. Jennifer Whitlow
	Dr. Joe Keiper (ex officio)	Mr. Ryan Barber
	Mr. Jonathan Martin	Mr. Zach Ryder

WELCOME

Dr. Tom Benzing called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM with a welcome to all in attendance. It was determined that a quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Greg Hitchin made a motion to approve the August 4, 2026 minutes with Mr. Bratcher seconding. The motion carried unanimously.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Advocacy – Dr. Benzing began by expressing sincere gratitude for the volunteers who work the trailer each weekend. Volunteers were recognized at the August Board of Trustees meeting. An appreciation luncheon will be held in Waynesboro on October 6th. All committee members are invited to attend.

- Department of Education – Dr. Keiper reported he had a virtual meeting with Secretary Smith and the Secretary's staff to discuss the Waynesboro project. Working drawing funding is the next step needed. An executive summary outlining a comparison between the Martinsville facility and the Waynesboro project as well as Chumura data of economic return was presented to Sec. Smith at his request. Dr. Keiper reiterated that the funding has been requested timely for inclusion in the next General Assembly short session budget considerations.
- Staunton Montessori School – Dr. Keiper visited the new facility and manned a table with specimens and information about Waynesboro last Saturday.

Trailer – The trailer has been open each weekend this summer and volunteers continue to ask visitors to submit their support for the project to the Governor's Office. Mr. Poulin asked if there was a way to

know if the support messages are getting to the appropriate office. He also mentioned that many visitors do not know their legislative representatives. It was suggested to add a QR code linking directly to the “find my legislator” website for garnering additional support through widespread regional districts and to better represent the draw of regional visitors.

- So far, the trailer has seen more than 2400 visitors this season. Visitor feedback has been overwhelmingly positive with some declaring the Science trailer as their primary reason for visiting the Waynesboro area.
- The appropriate site visit paperwork has been submitted to Dominion Power for electric hookup.

Events –

- The fall lecture series at the Wayne Theatre is set to begin on Tuesday, September 8 with a talk about quail habitats and conservation. Speakers for October and November have been secured. The spring series is already fully planned with the exception of April.
- Dr. Benzing will represent the Waynesboro building project informally at the Virginia Chili Blues and Brews Festival in Waynesboro on Sept. 11 and 12.
- The Fall Foliage Festival in Waynesboro is October 10 and 11. Museum personnel and Waynesboro volunteers will staff a table at the festival.

OPEN DISCUSSION

- Waynesboro councilman, Mr. Wood was recently briefed about the status and next steps of the project.
- Mr. Poulin mentioned presenting the Return on Investment (ROI) as a percentage on promotional materials.
- Suggestion was made to investigate a cost sharing agreement between Department of Education and Commerce and Trade to help get project over finish line.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business or discussion, Dr. Benzing adjourned the meeting at 1:47 PM.

The next meeting of WAC will be held on Tuesday, October 6, 2026, at 1 PM at the Waynesboro Office of Economic Development.

Board of Trustees
Waynesboro Advocacy Committee
Tuesday, October 6, 2026
Virginia Museum of Natural History

Virginia Museum of NATURAL HISTORY
IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

MINUTES

The Waynesboro Advocacy Committee of the Virginia Museum of Natural History Board of Trustees held their monthly meeting at 1:00 PM at the Waynesboro Office of Economic Development on October 6, 2026.

Members Present:	Dr. Tom Benzing (Chair)	Dick Bratcher
	Faye Cooper	Len Poulin
	Dr. Joe Keiper (ex officio)	Urbie Nash
	Mr. Greg Hitchin	Ann Peltier
	Mr. Rick Kane	
Present Remote:	Ryan Barber (Staff)	Jennifer Whitlow (Staff)
Members Absent:	Dr. Carole Nash	Dr. Steve Powers
	Stephanie Duffy	Bill Alexander

WELCOME

Dr. Tom Benzing called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM with a welcome to all in attendance. It was determined that a quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Having no corrections to the September 2026 minutes, Dr. Benzing declared it approved.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Advocacy – Dr. Keiper mentioned ongoing advocacy work to move the project to the next step of funding with the Department of Education and auxiliary staffers.

- Mr. Poulin shared some recent conversations with legislative officials and implored the committee and citizenry to passionately advocate for the project using consistent messaging.
- It was suggested that a QR code linking to the VMNH-Waynesboro donation page be projected in the auditorium before the monthly science lecture series.

Trailer - It was noted that visits by school groups are a challenge. Ideas to overcome this challenge include dividing classes into smaller groups and rotating them through activities both outside and inside the trailer. Science trailer visitors include many educators who would benefit from having access to the 2026-2027 education program guide.

DRAFT

- Science trailer volunteers reported a very successful season and were treated to an appreciation luncheon earlier today.
- Volunteers provided additional feedback for next season.
    - Incorporate an additional visitor activity table outside the trailer.
    - Continue to coordinate science trailer openings with the farmers market schedule.
    - Publish hours of operation in advance.
    - Include science trailer publicity in official Waynesboro City tourism efforts.
- Electric hook-up conversations with Dominion Power are ongoing.
- Several actions are forthcoming to close the science trailer for the season; including removal of the skirt and solar panels.

EVENTS

Various volunteers and VMNH staff are expected at the upcoming Virginia Fall Foliage Festival Art Show in Waynesboro.

The science lecture series continues later in October with a talk about South American birds and their relationship with the Shenandoah Valley. November's talk will be conducted by Jackson Roberts, VMNH Curator of Herpetology.

OPEN DISCUSSION

Due to Election Day, there will be no November WAC meeting.

Dr. Benzing reminded the committee that he will be rotating off the Board in the spring therefore a new chair will need to be selected.

Dr. Keiper provided the committee with a list of donors with the hope of bolstering committee membership.

There was a brief discussion about communication to local government officials.

ADJOURNMENT

Dr. Benzing adjourned the meeting at 2:00 PM and reminded the committee the regular meeting schedule will resume in December.

DRAFT

VMNH Board of Trustees Education and Public Programs Committee

November 14, 2026, 9:00AM, VMNH

Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions
- Approval/review of October 30, 2025, May 16, 2026, and August 15, 2026 meeting minutes
- Education Updates-
    - Quarterly Numbers Served - (graphs attached)
        - At-the Museum highlights – Four Summer Adventure Camps were held during June and July with 58 children participating, Dino Festival activities highlighting microscopic fossils and popular tile art, over 100 Homeschool family members attended our Homeschool Open House to start the school year, and over 350 Danville City Schools 5th graders visited the museum and participated in educator-led programs in September
        - Outreach highlights – Wrap-up of educator-led programs with libraries across the state for their “Unearth a Story” Summer Reading Program with 64 programs serving 1,849 participants (map attached), Bird Focused information table at the Nature Expo at Smith Mountain Lake State Park, and summer afterschool programming with Boys and Girls Clubs and MHC After 3
- Department Updates:
    - Department staff renewed their CPR/First Aid Certifications
    - Artist Suzanne Stryke education programs with homeschool students
    - Rosemary Wagoner, Waynesboro based outreach educator, scheduled for Fall programs in the Charlottesville area
    - Received $5,000 from Monogram Foods Loves Children Foundation, $5,000 from Robert E. Browning Fund, and $1,000 from Captain Til Lester Fund towards program scholarships. Pending proposal with Dominion Energy Charitable Foundation (total $15,000) towards science festival support and program scholarships ($6,000)
- Exhibit Updates with Ms. Dougherty

Education & Public Programs Committee
VMNH Board of Trustees
Thursday, October 30, 2025, 3 PM
Fully remote meeting

Present: Mr. Nathan Sanford (Chair)
Ms. Cathy Hincker (BOT)
Ms. Emma Ito (BOT)
Ms. Christy Deatherage (Education Manager)
Ms. Annabelle Sechrist (Educator)
Ms. Jordan Brim (Educator)
Dr. Joe Keiper (Executive Director)
Ms. Jennifer Whitlow (Staff)

Not Present: Ms. Lauren Hall (BOT)
Ms. Gail Vogler (Foundation)

WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER

Christy Deatherage welcomed everyone and opened the meeting at 3:00 PM. Museum educators Annabelle Sechrist and Jordan Brim introduced themselves to the committee. It was determined that a quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Sanford made a motion to approve minutes from August 9, 2025, May 17, 2025, and November 16, 2024. Ms. Ito seconded the motion which was unanimously approved.

EDUCATION UPDATES

- Ms. Deatherage noted that the contact numbers look robust, and the education department is now fully staffed with programming in full swing. Ms. Deatherage showed pictures of Dino Festival featuring an interactive activity developed in collaboration with Dr. Adam Pritchard. This was a very well received activity.

- The team has recently completed STEM programing for all Danville City 5th graders who visited the museum within the span of two weeks.

- The staff is currently conducting a Virginia Master Naturalist Program which is a statewide program. VMNH is a host for a local chapter consisting of about 40 people. Christy is the chapter advisor, Ms. Brim is chapter basic training chair, and Ms. Sechrist

is enrolled in the class. Classes are held each Monday evening. Topics are presented by subject area specialists from the museum and around the commonwealth. Graduation is in December.

- The outreach educator providing programming in the Waynesboro area is working to make regional connections. She provided programming in a couple of elementary schools in the previous quarter.

- The museum has three small greenhouses on the property, two of which are utilized by other groups, and one of which is being used by our home school group to grow lettuce. Students planted seeds and each week are measuring growth. They will take the lettuce home in December. Additional soil experiments will begin in January.

- The Jean S Adams Education Pavilion has been used numerous times for programming, outdoor student lunch, and teaching area. Teachers have been very appreciative of the new space.

- Staff continue to take advantage of professional development opportunities with Ms. Sechrist earning the *Certificate of Interpretive Guiding*.

- Ms. Deatherage reminded the committee that the educators will be attending and presenting at the Virginia Association of Science Teachers in November. Their topic will be: The Power of Real, Utilizing Museum Specimens to Deliver Powerful Programming.

- Ms. Deatherage noted the recent upgrades to the technology in uncovering VA: Carmel Church Quarry which included installation of a large TV monitor and a looping slide show have been well received by teachers and repeat visitors.

In summary, Mr. Sandford, mentioned his appreciation of the healthy programming trends and noted it was great to see the new staff and level of engagement.

GRANT UPDATE

Ms. Deatherage stated that we have not heard from our $10,000 Monogram Food Loves Kids grant renewal. This grant provides scholarships for classroom programming and aids with support for our science festivals.

With nothing further to report and no further business, Mr. Sanford adjourned the meeting at 3:32 PM.

The next meeting of the Education and Public Programming Committee will be on Saturday, February 7, 2026, at 9:00 AM.

Board of Trustees
Education Committee
Saturday, May 16, 2026, 9 AM
Virginia Museum of Natural History
Distance Learning Classroom, In-Person only

Virginia Museum of NATURAL HISTORY
IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

MINUTES

The Education Committee of the Virginia Museum of Natural History Board of Trustees held their quarterly meeting in-person at 9:00 AM on Saturday, May 16, 2026.

BOT MEMBERS PRESENT:	Mr. Nathan Sanford (Chair)	Ms. Lauren Hall
	Ms. Cathy H. Manion	Dr. Mindy VanDevelder
BOT MEMBERS ABSENT:	Ms. Emma Ito	
OTHERS PRESENT:	Ms. Christy Deatherage (Education Manager)	
	Ms. Lila Dougherty (Exhibits Manager)	
	Ms. Jennifer Whitlow (Minutes)	

WELCOME

Ms. Christy Deatherage opened the meeting at 9:00 AM with a welcome and opportunity for introductions. A quorum was present for business to be conducted.

EDUCATION UPDATES

Ms. Deatherage reported very strong numbers of students served in the third quarter. Quarterly comparison data indicated an increase in both programs delivered and individuals served in 2026. Ms. Deatherage reviewed other activities supported by education staff during the quarter.

- Hands-on table and craft activity during Bug Day event
- Several scout sleep overs and programs
- Manned an immersive experience for guests at the Starlington Gala event

Ms. Deatherage highlighted the activity of off-site educators and noted the opportunity to serve all areas of the Commonwealth.

Ms. Deatherage informed the board that education staff will be collaborating with the Virginia Library System this summer presenting 45 programs at 17 sites across the Commonwealth. This is an excellent opportunity to raise awareness about the museum. Board members offered suggestions such as giving passes to summer program participants and creating a “passport” for children who attend several programs. It was noted that local Teachers for Tomorrow programs often look for volunteer opportunities during the summer which may fit nicely with the mission of both organizations. Additionally, some school divisions promote the opportunity to earn a community service sticker to be added to high school diplomas, which may appeal to some students.

DRAFT

DEPARTMENT UPDATES

Ms. Anabelle Sechrist was recently appointed to the Martinsville City Tree Board as the museum's liaison.

The Virginia Master Naturalist SW Piedmont Chapter along with museum staff worked to revitalize the garden in front of the museum with native species plants. Additional projects are on the horizon such as cleaning out the monarch waystation and replanting the garden strip between the parking lot and the front patio.

EXHIBIT UPDATES

Ms. Dougherty shared information about some of the exhibit work completed in the previous quarter.

- The VA 250 exhibits were completed including a new case in the lobby and additional cases in the Hall of Ancient Life and Virginia Waterways.
- Work on the Young Explorer's Center continued through the ideation process, gathering of technical specifications from firms, and developing a cohesive theme.
- Renovation of the Library space and hallway included painting and securing contracts for new flooring and new lighting.
- The Waynesboro library display was revitalized.
- The Waynesboro outreach trailer was outfitted with new exhibit materials.
- Reptile Festival T shirt design was extremely popular and sold out!

DISCUSSION

Ms. Manion and Dr. Vandevelder suggested a seed exchange or giveaway next spring. Possibly to coincide with Mother's Day.

Ms. Deatherage reminded the committee that in addition to the Library programs, staff would be busy with multiple week-long summer camps for various ages. There are still some scholarships available for these camps.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further discussion the meeting was adjourned at 9:44 AM.

DRAFT

The next meeting of the Education Committee will be held:

Saturday, August 15, 2026, at 9:00 AM.

Board of Trustees
Education and Public Programs Committee
Saturday, August 15, 2026
Virginia Museum of Natural History
In-person Only

MINUTES

The Education and Public Programs Committee of the Virginia Museum of Natural History held their quarterly meeting at 9:00 AM on Saturday, August 15, 2026, at the Virginia Museum of Natural History.

BOT MEMBERS PRESENT:	Ms. Lauren Woodson Hall	
	Dr. John Almarode	
BOT MEMBERS ABSENT:	Mr. Nathan Sanford	Ms. Cathy Manion
STAFF PRESENT:	Ms. Christy Deatherage (ex officio)	
	Mr. Ryan Barber	Ms. Jennifer Whitlow

WELCOME

Ms. Deatherage welcomed everyone in attendance and opened the meeting at 9:05 AM. A quorum was not present, so no votes could be taken. Dr. John Almarode was welcomed to the committee with brief introductions.

EDUCATION UPDATES

Ms. Deatherage reviewed the number of programs and students served in both the final quarter of 2026 and overall year-to-year comparisons. It was noted that June was a very busy month with Library programs accounting for the significant increase in numbers served. Ms. Deatherage reminded the committee that programs are heavily supplemented with grants from individuals, localities, and corporate sponsorships.

The Waynesboro outreach educator successfully provided public and homeschool programing during the school year and provided many library programs this summer. Opportunities to expand programming in the Waynesboro area are being explored. The final numbers regarding all library programs will be available at the November meeting.

Ms. Deatherage briefly talked about the department's practice of using surveys to evaluate programs. In short, each teacher receives a survey with a variety of questions following a program. The survey response rate is generally good at the beginning of the year but falls off especially early in the spring semester.
General discussion ensued about best practices and/or incentives to increase survey response rates and ways to combat survey fatigue.

Ms. Deatherage reminded the committee that she and her staff are certified Project WILD/Project Learning Tree trainers and can serve as excellent resources for teachers who are uncomfortable teaching natural resource SOLs to their students.

DEPARTMENT UPDATES

Education staff members Anabelle Sechrist and Jordan Brim served as judges for the Patrick County High School Science Fair.

The homeschool Open House and Registration event was well attended and beneficial. The program continues to serve new students and repeat families year to year.

Local funding from Henry County and Martinsville City supplements the salaries of our two educators.

EXHIBIT UPDATES

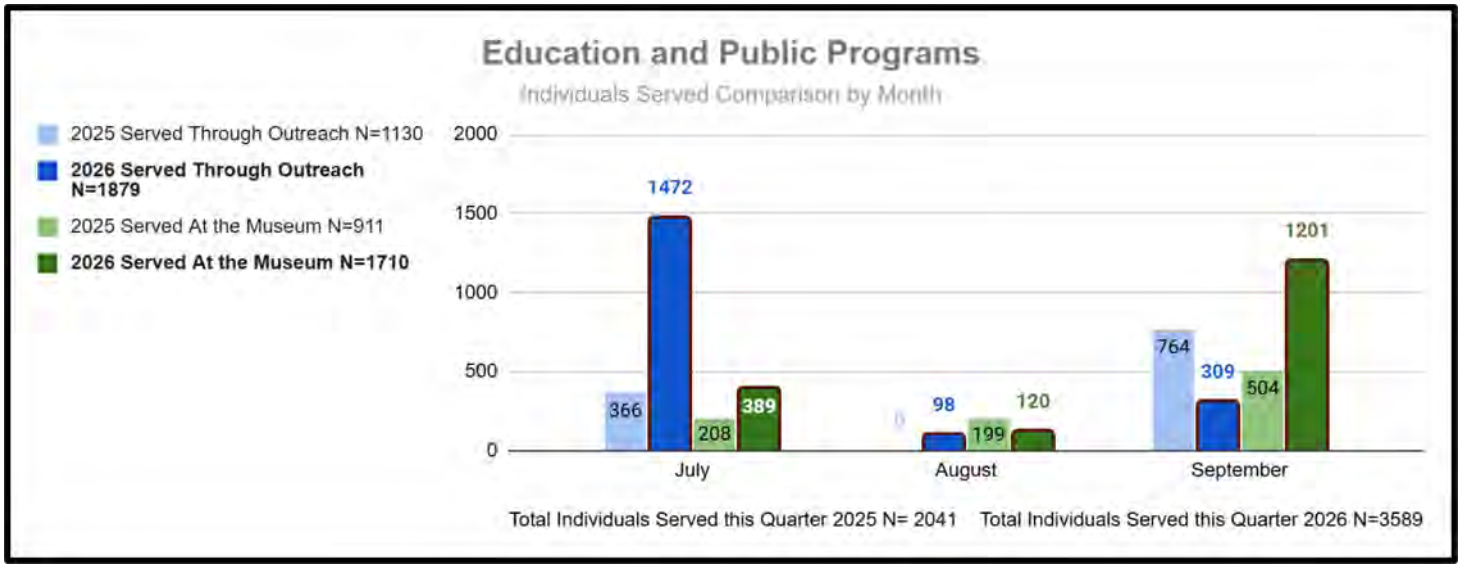
Mr. Barber spoke on behalf of the exhibits department and reported that seven exhibits are in various stages of development or removal. The most immediate of which is the installation of the traveling Smithsonian exhibit, Water/Ways. Some of our own collections will be used to supplement this exhibit. Mr. Barber further reported that elements of the current Dinosaur Discovery exhibit will be removed incrementally to make way for the Young Explorers Center to open late July 2027. Followed by the Petra exhibit taking over the current children's play space in October 2027.

Mr. Barber stated there is ongoing work to secure grant funding for education programming along with exhibit sponsors with the goal of working two years in advance.

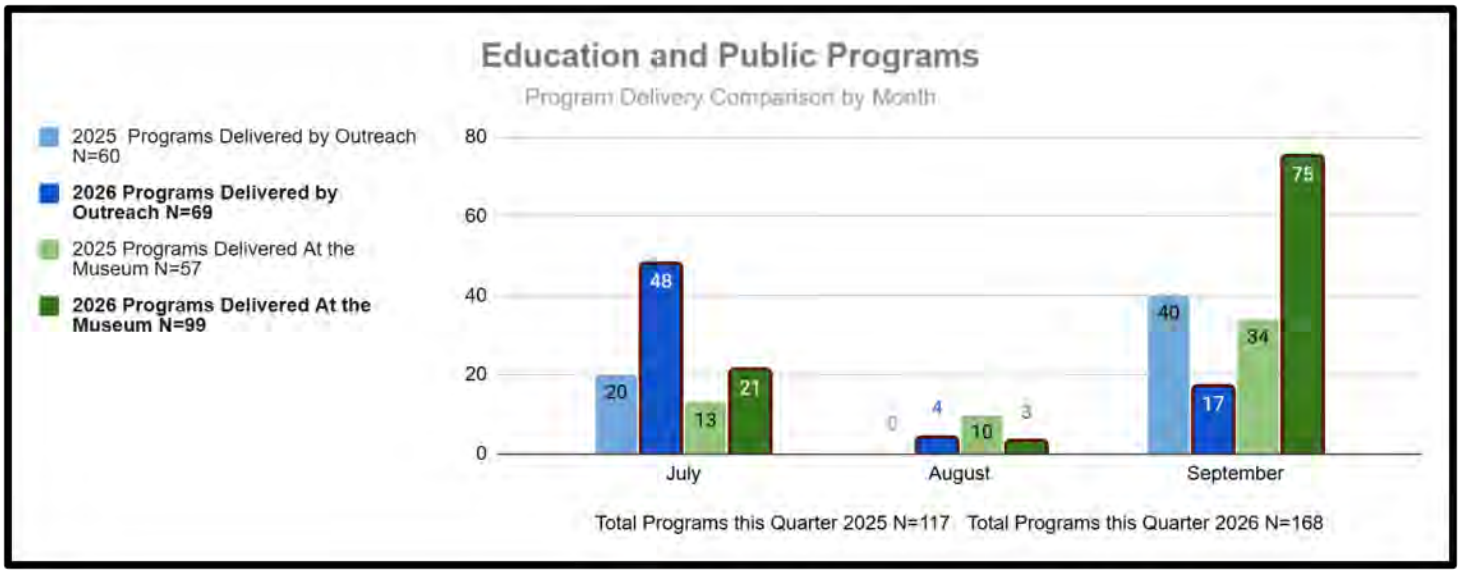
ADJOURNMENT

With no further business or discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 9:47 AM.

Comparison of Individuals Served July – September 2025 and July – September 2026



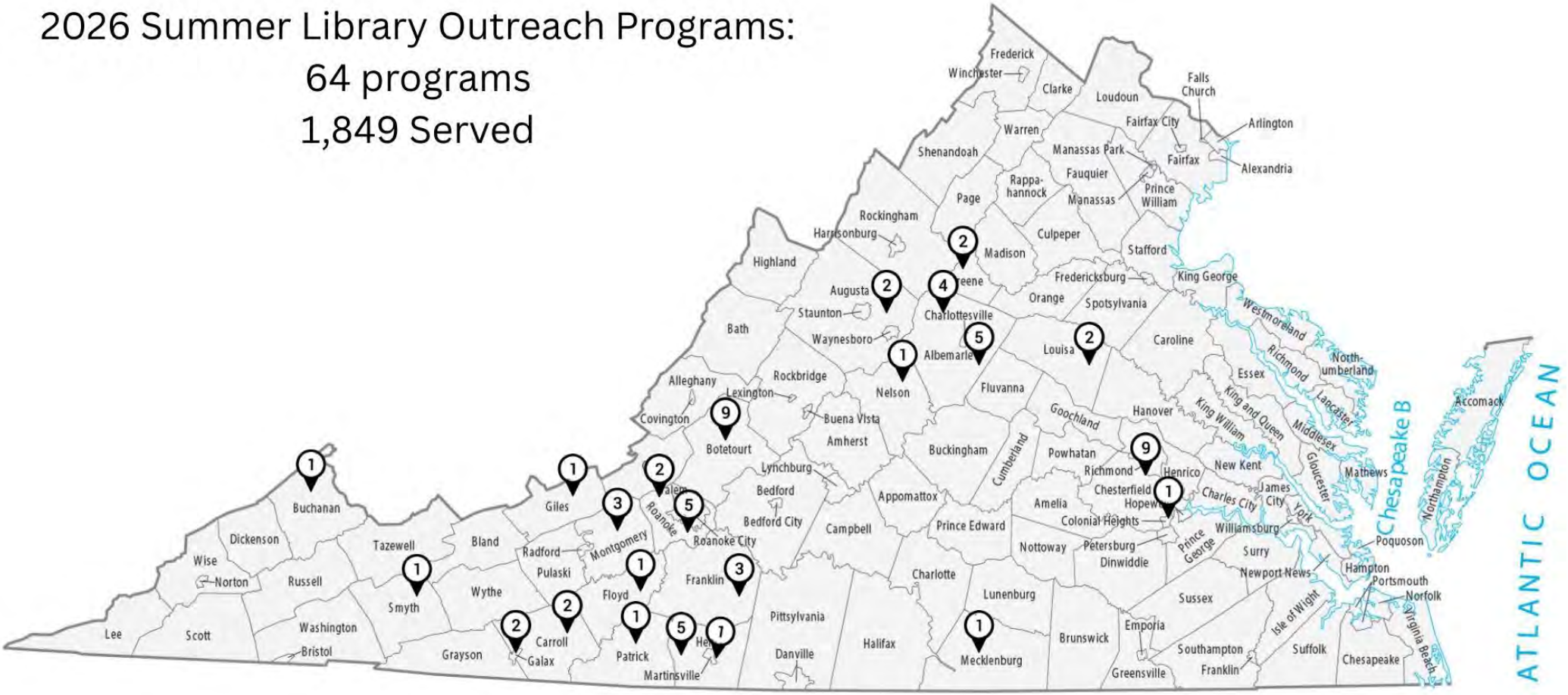
Comparison of Programs Delivered July – September 2025 and July – September 2026



2026 Summer Library Outreach Programs:

64 programs

1,849 Served



VMNH Executive Director's Board Report
2025–2030 Strategic Plan
November 2026, through 1st Quarter FY27
J. B. Keiper

Executive Summary

- The Board of Trustees is scheduled to have an off-site retreat in May 2027. VMNH-Foundation will be invited. A location will be discussed at November meeting.
- After a successful Dino Fest, Bones & Booz drew over 1,800 people, with 900+ gaining free entry through *Museums for All*. Both festivals garnered strong revenues.
- Offsite efforts have continued to project the reputation of VMNH outwards to the Commonwealth, including an education collaboration with VCU and Science Museum of Virginia, a busy outreach schedule, and positive ongoing interactions with the office of the Secretary of Education.
- Homeschool programming was begun for the new school year with sold-out groups participating in both sessions.
- The Douglas Avenue asbestos abatement has been completed. The museum's contracted architect is developing the design and install process for a new HVAC system.
- The VMNH-Waynesboro outreach trailer has been closed for the season after serving approximately 2,400 people.
- The Secretary approved the submission of a request to the VA General Assembly to move the VMNH-Waynesboro project to the Capital Construction Pool
- A second request is a match from the Commonwealth against the anticipated contributions the VMNH-Foundation will contribute to mission-based projects going forward.
- The VMNH-Foundation's *Behind the Science*, an effort to engage our supporters to matriculate some up the donor pyramid, saw two events in September and October – the first was an exclusive look at recent curatorial work, the second was a ticketed special event *Spirits of the Dead*.
- An Assistant Curator of Vertebrate Biology will be announced November 2026.
- Recent work connecting curator-led efforts with contemporary needs include:
    - Continued work by the Cultural Heritage Monitoring Lab protecting cultural resources in armed conflict and natural disaster;
    - Exploration of "beaver-based solutions" for ecosystem-level challenges such as water quality, wildfire suppression, and climate change; and
    - Full genome work on venomous snakes to provide a roadmap for the identification of "wild proteins" potentially useful to medicine.









Category	Meaning
On Track	Progress is proceeding as planned.
Slightly Delayed	Minor issues; schedule impact manageable.
Major Obstacle	Significant issues; needs intervention.
Not Started	Planned but not yet begun.

Strategic Priorities Overview

Strategic Priority 1: Achieving Mission

Objective	Description	Status	Completion Target	Board Support Needed
1.1 Douglas Ave.	HVAC & Asbestos		Q2 FY27	
1.2 Space	Tasks assigned to staff		Q1 FY27	Facilities Comm support
1.3 R&C to Needs	Beaver-based solutions, wild proteins advancing medicine		ongoing	

1.4 Strategic use	Pavilion programming and rental opportunities; Homeschool support.		ongoing	
1.5 VA250 Exhibit	Exhibits, event, and Stryke Event all completed.	Complete		
1.6 Traveling Ex.	Trilobite and *Tanytrachelos* exhibits being researched and prepped		Q2 FY27	
1.7 Science story	Planning in queue, *Petra's Lair*, *Tany*'s story installed		ongoing	
1.8 VMNH-W	Funding request submitted			GA Advocacy, visits to home districts
1.9 New Wing	Begin in-house master plan		Q2 FY27	Engage Facilities Comm, include in Retreat May 2027.
1.10 Wilson Park	Staff outline possibilities		Q2 FY27	

Strategic Priority 2: Great Sustainable Impact

Objective	Description	Status	Completion Target	Board Support Needed
2.1 Grow Support	Engagement via events, press, social media		ongoing	Prospect identification, VMNH-F endowment mgt
2.2 Boards	Boards determine collaborative avenues; endowment requests		Q1 FY28	Begin requests of VMNH-F Q1 FY28
2.3 Festivals	Dino Fest, Bones & Booz each with strong attendance & revenues. Trailer restarts spring 2027.		Q2 FY25	Board volunteer work at Festivals, VMNH-W Trailer
2.4 Young Expl.	Designing layout, interactives designed		Q4 FY27	Exhibit Subcommittee engagement
2.5 Staff	Staff recruited; Professional development funds		ongoing	
2.6 2030-2035	Start ~August 2029		Q4 FY30	Strategic Planning Retreat May 2027

Director's Narrative

- No projects delayed at this point.
- Points of main focus:
    - Preparations and design for Young Explorers Center.
    - Advocation for movement of VMNH-Waynesboro to construction phase.
        - This includes general advocacy (Board participation welcome)
    - Working with architect for next steps in Douglas Avenue rehab project – asbestos mitigation completed, HVAC work to follow.
    - Thanking donors for annual fund and other forms of support.
    - *Bonz & Boos* served over 1,800 with nearly 1,000 gaining free admission with *Museums for All*. Partners included Appalachian State University, US Army Corps of Engineers, VA Master Naturalists, SPCA, and others.
- Notes on Strategic Goals
    - 1.1: Douglas Avenue rehab
        - Contractor is actively designing HVAC installation.
        - Risk: High inflationary numbers could impact future budget.
    - 1.3: Connect R&C to contemporary issues
        - Dr. Collin VanBuren is investigating "beaver-based solutions" for environmental concerns, including water (trout) quality and habitat, flooding, and wildfire suppression. Currently partnering with the Southeast Beaver Alliance.
        - Dr. Hayden Bassett continues work with the Cultural Heritage Monitoring Lab.
        - Dr. Jackson Roberts examining feasibility of the discovery of "wild proteins" applicable to medical treatments via whole genome sequencing of all venomous snakes of eastern North America.
    - 1.4: Strategic use of the Jean S. Adams Education Pavilion
        - Homeschool and summer camp programs use the space regularly.
    - 1.7: Storytelling and science
        - Preparations for *Petra* exhibit include a narrative on discovery, recovery, and what we've learned.
        - Paleontology has a new short story on *Tanytrachelos* (arboreal proto-lizard) now on exhibit.
    - 2.1: Grow philanthropic support
        - Endowment has grown well (and safely) thanks to excellent management by VMNH-F and our investment firm.
        - Risk: volatile environment financially, but specific choices in how our funds are invested insulate us from catastrophes.

        - Working with VMNH-F to run *Behind the Science*. These Thursday evening events are kept small to directly engage supporters by giving them special experiences.
    - 2.4 Young Explorers Center
        - A general layout has been determined.
        - A contractor has been engaged to design the initial primary engagement features to be installed in summer 2027.

Board Actions or Support Requested

- Movement of **VMNH-Waynesboro** to the Capital Construction Pool will be a challenge. Advocating for this with the new Governor and General Assembly will be required. Board members may:
    - Reach out to their local delegate and senator to give support.
    - Contact the Governor's Office
    - Join staff in museum advocacy ~February 2027
- The Facilities Committee should have an initial meeting with staff to develop a roadmap forward for the development of a **new wing** at our Martinsville facility in Q2 FY27, including generating specific goals for conducting an in-house *master plan*. Possible avenue for help from outside expert identified July 2026.
- In addition, the Facilities Committee will identify additions to the 2025-2030 Strategic Plan pertaining to building maintenance, upkeep, and the identification of future equipment life-expectancy issues.
- Board members can identify **potential prospects** for new memberships, new donations, new corporate partners, and future endowment gifts.
    - Host a cocktail hour at location of choice, to be accompanied by Director and other staff.
    - Set a meeting with a company's Community Liaison.
    - Invite associates to attend a museum event with you.
    - Organize with a curator's input a field trip for natural history enthusiasts.
    - Schedule a facilities tour with the Director.
    - Schedule a hard hat tour of a new facility (e.g., Young Explorers Center) in Spring 2027.
- The Board of Trustees should be prepared for the first annual disbursement of funds from the VMNH-Foundation endowment in October 2027. The Board will work with staff to **determine funding priorities**.
- The Exhibits Subcommittee of the Board of Trustees should be prepared to engage in strategic discussion of goals, outcomes, and needs as related to the **Young Explorers Center** (discussion to be engaged November 14th, 2026).
- The Board of Trustees should hold a strategic planning retreat in May 2027 to review progress of the 2025-2030 plan, and to start to outline future goals of the museum that may be included in the 2030-2035 plan.

Appendix A – Explicit Calls to Action

- **Advocacy Tasks**
  - VMNH-Waynesboro
- **Fundraising Tasks**
  - Volunteer to write thank you notes/letters to end-of-year donors.
- **Engagement & Visibility Tasks**

Board Opportunities

Advocacy & Government Relations

- Reach out to your local delegate and senator to express support for VMNH-Waynesboro.
- Contact the Governor's Office to reinforce funding priorities.
- Join staff during February museum advocacy events in Richmond.

Fundraising & Partnerships

- Identify prospects for memberships, donations, corporate partners, and future endowment gifts.
- Host a small gathering or cocktail hour with the Director to introduce new potential supporters.
- Set a meeting with a company's Community Liaison to explore partnership opportunities.

Community Engagement & Visibility

- Invite colleagues or friends to a museum event.
- Use your own social network to promote VMNH events.

Appendix B – Continuity of current 5-year plan with the VMNH 2020–2025 plan

- 1.1: Work on **Douglas Avenue** was initiated in 2022, resulting in a new roof, drainage, and an interior reorganization.
- 1.2: **Collections space** was recognized as limited, and curators determined size of their collections, rate of growth, and future expansion. This drives current space assessments at all facilities.
- 1.3: Connecting **R&C work to contemporary needs and issues in society** – VMNH recognizes the need to inform audiences how our work is relevant.
- 1.4: With the completion of the Jean S. Adams Education Pavilion, **creative use of that space and others** is an opportunistic way to better engage the community.
- 1.5: The **VA250 exhibit** will be opened in January 2026, and will be the result of work done with the Secretary of Education in 2025.
- 1.6: VMNH has historically created **exhibit rental** opportunities to generate revenue.
- 1.7: Employing **story telling** in the galleries is a new initiative.

- 1.8: **VMNH-Waynesboro** is a long-standing project, with detailed design being completed in 2025.
- 1.9: **New wing** discussions were started with identification of collections storage needs and surging audiences at Family Science Festivals.
- 1.10: With the completion of the Jean S. Adams Education Pavilion, new connections to **Wilson Park** will be strategic.

- 2.1: The **growth of philanthropic support** has always been a VMNH objective.
- 2.2: Enhanced **communication between Boards** has been recognized as a strategic need.
- 2.3: Due to their success, the continued **investment in Family Science Festivals** is needed to keep them fresh for audiences and a strong revenue source.
- 2.4: The **Young Explorers Center** was a project from 2023 onward has been mapped out.
- 2.5: The enhancement of **staff recruitment and retention** has been recognized as a value to the agency, and efforts in 2024 and 2025 has positioned VMNH well for developing new staff benefits.
- 2.6: The eventual development of the **2030-2035 Strategic Plan** was follow four sequential efforts that visualized future successful strategic outcomes for VMNH that have led to museum growth (staff, gallery space, collections), expanded service area (outreach, VMNH-Waynesboro), and reputation (Family Science Festivals, endowment growth).

Virginia Museum of
NATURAL HISTORY
IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE
SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

Exhibit Opening

Wonders of Waterfowl

Members Reception

Thursday, January 14, 2027
5:30 PM



Meetings

Board of Trustees

February 20, 2027
May - TBA
August 14, 2027

Science Saturday

Bug Day

January 23, 2027



Behind the Science

Where Discovery Happens First

Thursday, Nov. 19
Thursday, Dec. 17
Thursday, Jan. TBA

Become a Member

Annual Gala

A Great Gatsby Inspired Evening

Saturday, February 27, 2027

Tickets on sale soon

Advancement Report

FY27: 1st quarter

EARNED REVENUE

	FY26	**FY27**
VMNH Foundation	*$3,161,324*	$63,181
Museum	*$75,280*	$73,626
Total	*$3,236,604*	**$136,807**

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2. Earned revenue details
   Endowment, Memberships, Partnerships

3. Recent events (1st quarter of FY27)

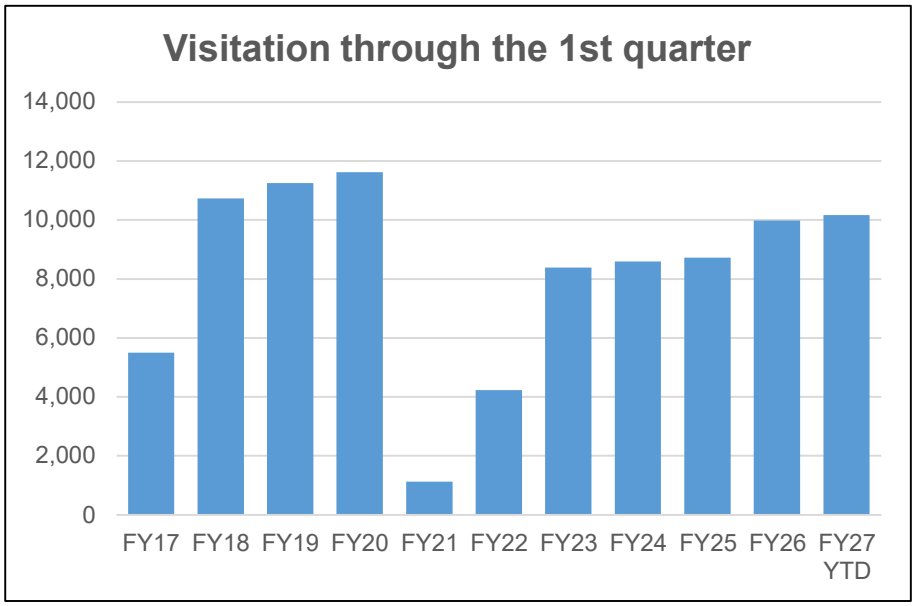
4. Upcoming events (through FY27)

7. Exhibits
   Marketing
   Museums for All

8. Demographics

VISITATION

FY27 1st quarter: Visitation: 10,169 Admissions: $41,247 Museum Store: $28,844



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

Museum earned revenue	*FY26*	FY27
Admissions	*$43,848*	$41,913
Museum Store	*$29,144*	$29,164
Museum Rental	*$2,118*	$2,248
Publications	*$170*	$301
Total	*$75,280*	**$73,626**

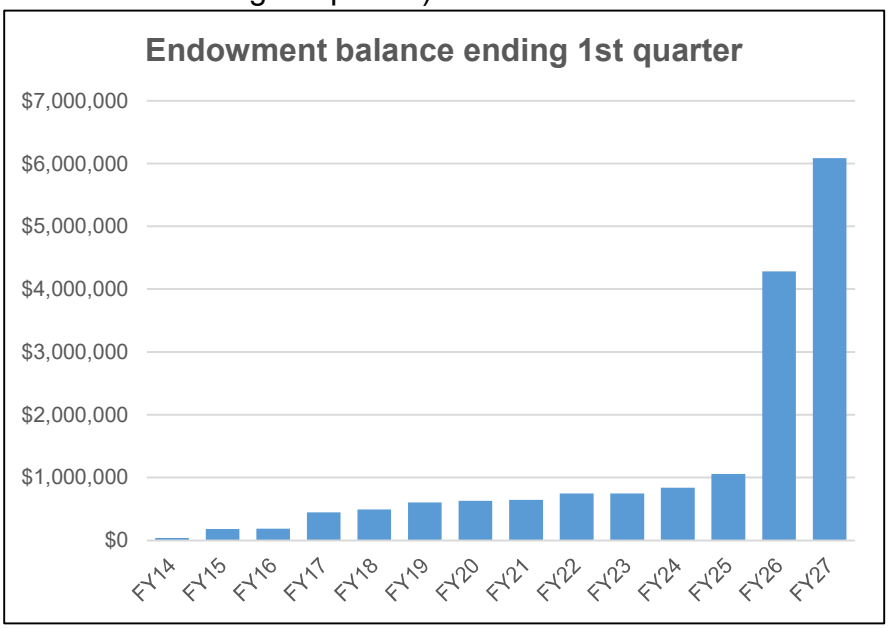
VMNH Foundation revenue	*FY25*	FY26
Memberships/Corp. Partnerships	*$5,043*	$5,794
Annual Fund	*$20,482*	$6,167
Research restricted gifts	*$43,949*	$6,490
Education restricted gifts	*$1,100*	$6,750
Exhibits restricted gifts	*$0*	$24,480
*Other restricted gifts	*$3,090,750*	$13,500
Total	*$3,161,324*	**$63,181**

**There were $3,063,610 in endowment gifts in the 1st quarter of FY26 and $0 in the 1st quarter of FY27, all included in the "Other restricted gifts" total.*

ENDOWMENT, MEMBERSHIPS, PARTNERSHIPS

Endowment (combined balance ending 1st quarter)

FY14	$38,800
FY15	$182,220
FY16	$183,773
FY17	$446,041
FY18	$492,320
FY19	$600,846
FY20	$627,097
FY21	$644,609
FY22	$745,191
FY23	$743,248
FY24	$836,615
FY25	$1,056,743
FY26	$4,280,023
FY27	$6,083,953



September 30, 2026 balances:

General Endowment Fund balance:	$5,614,960
Pete Henika Memorial Fund balance:	$206,797
Richard Hoffman Fund balance:	$242,232
Pete Boisseau Research Fund balance:	$19,964
Total	$6,083,953

Memberships

FY22	*FY23*	*FY24*	*FY25*	*FY26*	FY27
446	588	632	*593*	*578*	549

Corporate Partnerships: 43

RECENT EVENTS (1st quarter of FY27)

June-July 2026 – VMNH Summer Camps
Sponsored by:
SW VA Master Naturalists
Kiwanis
Wallace Parham
Dr. Ray Bernor

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

July 15 – VMNHF Executive/Finance Committee meeting, noon to 1 p.m.

July 24-25 – Dino Festival
Sponsored by:
Carter Bank
Brightspeed
Hooker Furnishings
Virginia Tourism Corporation
The Helen S. & Charles G. Patterson Jr. Charitable Foundation Trust
Renewal by Andersen of Roanoke
Community Foundation Serving Western Virginia
Bassett Furniture Industries

July 30 – BOT Finance and Development/Marketing Committee meeting, 10 a.m.

August 4 – Waynesboro Advocacy Committee meeting, 1 p.m.

August 12 – Homeschool Science & Engineering Academy in-person registration for the 2026-27 academic year

August 15 – BOT meeting

August 15 – BOT Research & Collections Committee meeting

August 15 – BOT Education Committee meeting

August 15 – BOT Facilities Committee meeting

August 21 – VMNHF Board meeting

August 27 – Member/Supporter opening reception for *Water/Ways* exhibit, 5:30 to 7 p.m.

August 29 to November 8 – *Water/Ways* exhibit, a Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES) exhibit

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

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

September 8 – Wayne Theatre Science Talk: Caty McVicker, Quail Forever Biologist, "Northern Bobwhite Quail and Managing Land for Wildlife"

September 17 – Invitation Only Member Event. Suzanne Stryk, Artist and Author, “The Middle of Somewhere, an Artist Explores the Nature of Virginia.”

September 18 – Suzanne Stryk student programming

September 19 – Latino Festival at PHCC (VMNH booth)

September 19 – Science Saturday: Fish

September 24 – First Look: New Discoveries evening event

UPCOMING EVENTS (through the end of FY27)

October 6 – Waynesboro Advocacy Committee meeting, 1 p.m.

October 10-11 – Virginia Fall Foliage Art Show, Waynesboro

October 14 – National Fossil Day at VMNH

October 20 – Wayne Theatre Science Talk

October 21 – VMNHF Executive/Finance Committee meeting, noon to 1 p.m.

October 24 – Bonez & Booz

Sponsored by:
Brightspeed
Virginia Tourism Corporation
Hooker Furnishings
The Helen S. & Charles G. Patterson Jr. Charitable Foundation Trust
Renewal by Andersen of Roanoke
Community Foundation Serving Western Virginia
Bassett Furniture Industries

October 29 – Spirits of the Dead (Ticketed event)

October 30 – BOT Finance and Development/Marketing Committee meeting

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

November 6-7 – VAM meetup sleepover

November 14 – VMNH BOT meeting

November 2026 – BOT Research & Collections Committee meeting

November 2026 – BOT Education Committee meeting

November 2026 – BOT Facilities Committee meeting

November 17 – Wayne Theatre Science Talk

November 19 – Behind the Science event

November 20 – VMNH Foundation Board meeting

December 4 – *A Night at the Museum with Santa*

December 8 – Waynesboro Advocacy Committee meeting, 1 p.m.

December 17 – Behind the Science event

January 2027 – (specific date TBD) BOT Finance and Development/Marketing Committee meeting

January 2027 – Behind the Science event (date TBD)

January 7, 2027 – Member/supporter reception for the *Birds of Virginia* special exhibit, 5:50 to 7 p.m.

January 9, 2027 to February 5, 2028 – *Wonders of Waterfowl* special exhibit
Sponsored by:
The Helen S. & Charles G. Patterson Jr. Charitable Foundation Trust
Hooker Furnishings
Bassett Furniture Industries

January 19, 2027 – Wayne Theatre Science Talk

January 20, 2027 – VMNHF Executive/Finance Committee meeting, noon to 1 p.m.

January 23, 2027 – Bug Day: Science Saturday
Sponsored by:
Brightspeed
Carter Bank
The Helen S. & Charles G. Patterson Jr. Charitable Foundation Trust

February 2027 – Behind the Science event (date TBD)

February, 4, 2027 – Luke Flowers Puppetry Event

February 16, 2027 – Wayne Theatre Science Talk

February 19, 2027 – VMNH Foundation Board meeting

February 20, 2027 – VMNH BOT meeting

February 20, 2027 – BOT Research & Collections Committee meeting

February 20, 2027 – BOT Education Committee meeting

February 20, 2027 – BOT Facilities Committee meeting

February 27, 2027 – Speakeasy event

March 2027 – Behind the Science event (date TBD)

March 16, 2027 – Wayne Theatre Science Talk

April 2027 – (specific date TBD) BOT Finance and Development/Marketing Committee meeting

April 2027 – Behind the Science event (date TBD)

April 20, 2027 – Wayne Theatre Science Talk

April 21, 2027 – VMNHF Executive/Finance Committee meeting, noon to 1 p.m.

April 23-24, 2027 – Reptile Festival

Sponsored by:

Brightspeed
MHC Tourism
Monogram Foods Loves Kids Foundation
Bassett Furniture Industries
Carter Bank
The Helen S. & Charles G. Patterson Jr. Charitable Foundation Trust

May 2027 – Behind the Science event (date TBD)

May 6, 2027 – Teacher Appreciation Event

May 15, 2027 – VMNH BOT meeting

May 15, 2027 – BOT Research & Collections Committee meeting

May 15, 2027 – BOT Education Committee meeting

May 15, 2027 – BOT Facilities Committee meeting

May 21, 2027 – VMNH Foundation Board meeting

June 2027 – Behind the Science event (date TBD)

EXHIBITS

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

January through December 2026 – VA 250 exhibit at VMNH
Sponsored by:
Virginia Tourism Corporation
O. Randolph and Martha Rollins

August 29 to November 8, 2026 – *Water/Ways* exhibit
Sponsored by:
Bassett Furniture Industries

January 9, 2027 to February 5, 2028 – *Wonders of Waterfowl* exhibit
Sponsored by:
The Helen S. & Charles G. Patterson Jr. Charitable Foundation Trust
Hooker Furnishings
Bassett Furniture Industries

MARKETING

New Snake Species Found in New Guinea Named After Slash (People Magazine)
https://people.com/new-snake-species-found-in-new-guinea-named-after-slash-12064996

Dino Festival returns to Virginia Museum of Natural History (WDBJ7 - CBS affiliate)
https://www.wdbj7.com/2026/07/23/dino-festival-returns-virginia-museum-natural-history/

The Virginia Museum of Natural History's 'bug guys' (WFXR - FOX affiliate)
https://www.wfxrtv.com/homepage-video/learning-more-about-the-virginia-museum-of-natural-historys-bug-guys/

MUSEUMS FOR ALL

MFA as a % of total visitation	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27
1st quarter	16.5%	16.2%	21.4%	14.0%	14.2%
2nd quarter	28.6%	20.3%	19.7%	19.1%	
3rd quarter	9.5%	6.8%	8.1%	1.9%	
4th quarter	15.8%	17.4%	14.1%	14.6%	

DEMOGRAPHICS

Where our visitors came from

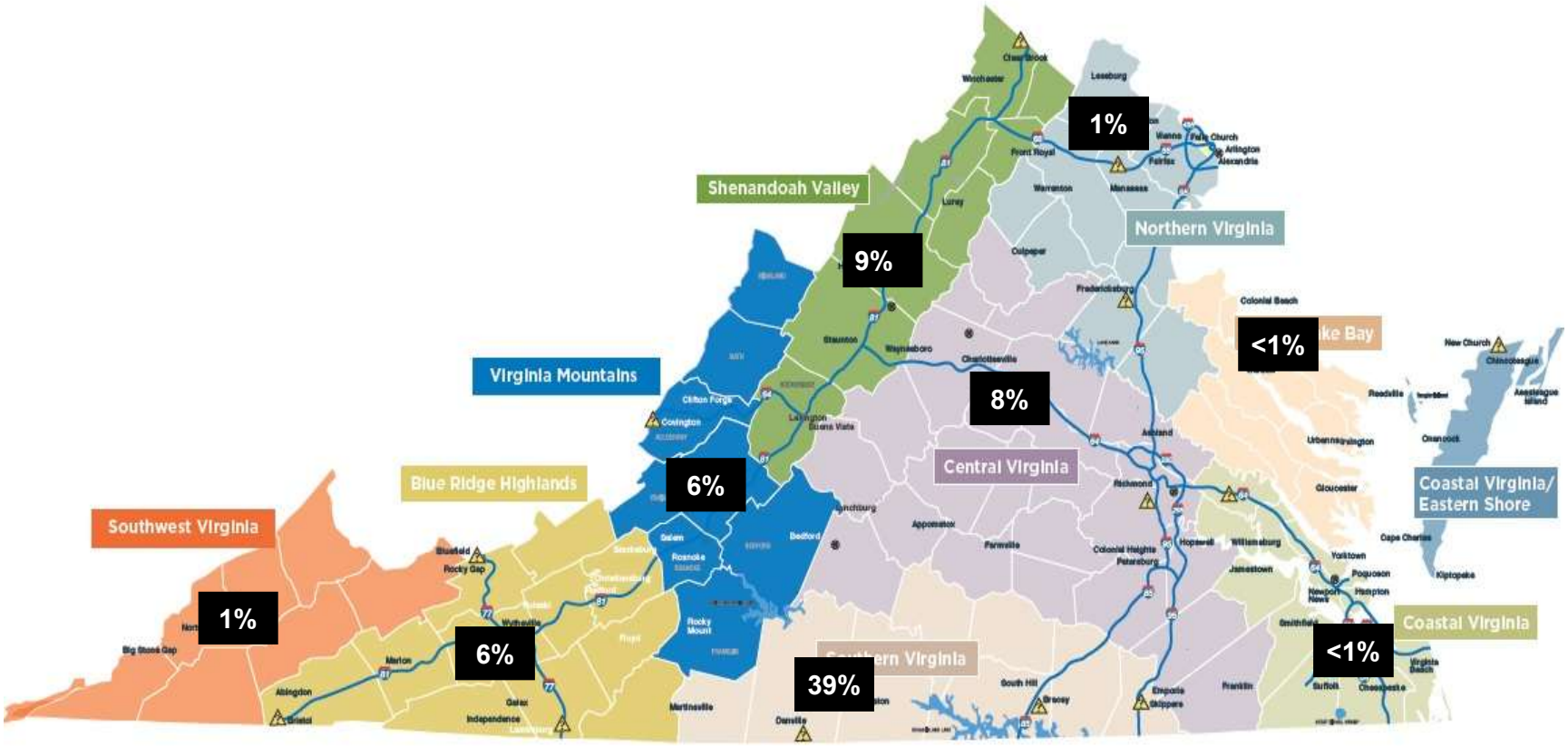
Virginia 71% (see map for breakdown among the 10 Virginia Tourism Regions)
- Martinsville/Henry County 29%
- Danville/Pittsylvania County 9%
- Other Virginia 33%

North Carolina 24%
States other than VA & NC 5%

**Includes visitors from 32 states and Canada:*
AL, AZ, CA, CO, CT, DC, DE, FL, GA, IL, IN, KS, LA, MD, MI, MN, MO, NC, NJ, NY, OH, OK, OR, PA, RI, SC, TN, TX, VA, WA, WI, WV

Who our visitors are

Adults (ages 19-59): 44%
Seniors (ages 60+): 8%
Children (ages 3-18): 34%
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%



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