

Board of Trustees Quarterly Meeting
Saturday, August 15, 2026, 10 AM – 12 PM
Virginia Museum of Natural History
Distance Learning Classroom B159

AGENDA

Welcome and Call to Order

- Overview of meeting
- Welcome new Board members
 - [Dr. John Almarode](#)
 - [Dr. Christine May](#)

Dr. Melany Clark, Chair

Approval of Minutes (Action)

- [May 16, 2026](#)

Dr. Clark

Chair's Report

- Interaction with Dept of Education
- Staff Spotlight
 - Dr. Jackson Roberts,
Assistant Curator of Herpetology
- Deep Dive
 - Dr. Adam Pritchard,
Associate Curator of Paleontology

Dr. Clark

[Electronic Meeting Policy](#) (Action Item)
Voice Vote Required

Ms. Ambria Wood, Office of
the VA Attorney General

Consent Agenda (Action Item)

- [Treasurer's Report](#)
- [Facilities Report](#)
- [Waynesboro Advocacy Report](#)

Mr. Will Clements, Treasurer
Dr. Tom Benzing
Dr. Benzing

Research and Collections Report

- [Fourth Quarter Report](#)

Dr. Carole Nash

Education and Public Programs Report

Ms. Christy Deatherage

- [Education by the Numbers](#)

[Executive Director's Report](#)

Dr. Joe Keiper

- Museum Updates, [Upcoming Events](#)
- [Advancement Report](#)

Mr. Ryan Barber

Closed Session (Action Item)

Ms. Sarah Bowman

Voice Vote Required

The Board of Trustees of the Virginia Museum of Natural History will 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).

Certification of Closed Session (Action Item)

Voice Vote Required

Announcements and Other Matters

Dr. Joe Keiper

Adjournment

Dr. Clark

No public comment will be heard at this meeting.

**Board of Trustees
Virginia Museum of Natural History
Quarterly Meeting
Saturday, May 16, 2026, 10:00 AM
In person with remote option
VMNH - Distance Learning Classroom**



MINUTES

The Virginia Museum of Natural History Board of Trustees held their quarterly meeting in person with a remote attendance option on Saturday, May 16, 2026.

Trustees Present In-Person:

Dr. Melany Clark (Chair)	Ms. Lauren Hall
Mr. Will Clements	Dr. Art Evans
Dr. Mindy Vandevelder	Ms. Cathy Manion
Mr. Nathan Sanford	Ms. Katherine McGuire

Trustees Present Remote:

Ms. Lisa Carter (attending to a family medical issue)
Ms. Sarah Bowman (travel exceeds 50 miles)
Dr. Tom Benzing (travel exceeds 50 miles)
Dr. David Furth (travel exceeds 50 miles)
Mr. Dick Bratcher (travel exceeds 50 miles)

Trustees Absent:

Ms. Emma Ito	Dr. Carole Nash
--------------	-----------------

Others Present:

Dr. Joe Keiper (Exec. Director)	Mr. Ryan Barber
Ms. Ambria Wood (OAG Rep)	Ms. Jennifer Whitlow
Mr. Jonathan Martin	Mr. Zach Ryder
Ms. Christy Deatherage	Mr. Ben Williams
Ms. Elizabeth Carter Bailey (Foundation liaison)	

WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER

Dr. Melany Clark opened the meeting at 10:00 AM with a welcome to all in attendance. Trustees attending remotely provided their locations and rationale. A quorum was found to be physically present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Dr. Art Evans made a motion to approve the February 6, 2026, minutes with one correction to the spelling of a name. Ms. Lauren Hall seconded the motion. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Dr. Melany Clark noted the 2026 – 2027 General Assembly budget remains under consideration. Staff are closely monitoring the situation and are ready to adjust based on approval of the final budget.

Staff Spotlight – Mr. Tim King was unexpectedly unable to attend the meeting.

Deep Dive – Mr. Zach Ryder provided a talk about the museum's current social media strategies. Staff primarily use Facebook and Instagram to target our core audience, for (1) storytelling and (2) sales, sponsorship, individual and corporation. Social media allows the museum to expand stories in innovative ways as well as promote festivals and other social events. Our results have been very successful, even breaking through some previously held geographic barriers.

The YouTube platform, particularly video shorts was noted as a popular option for some demographic groups. Mr. Ryder assured the Board that sponsors receive social media posts for their commitment to festivals and other museum activities.

CONSENT AGENDA

Dr. Clark removed the 2026-2027 budget proposal from the consent agenda for further discussion. Following brief remarks, Mr. Nathan Sanford made a motion to approve the 2026-2027 budget as presented. Mr. Clements seconded. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Dr. Keiper offered a few remarks related to the facilities report. Utilizing Mr. Bratcher's expertise, the facilities committee recommends that an additional line item be added to the strategic plan to proactively handle building maintenance and special projects. It was noted that as the Starling Avenue building ages, more systems will begin to fail and having a proactive maintenance mindset will be important. After brief discussion there was consensus among board members to add an addendum to the Strategic Plan in May 2027 that addresses ongoing building maintenance. In the meantime, maintenance schedules and other proactive measures are being implemented.

Mr. Sanford made a motion to approve the remaining items from the consent agenda, the Treasurer's Report, Facilities Report and Waynesboro Advocacy Report. Ms. Hall seconded the motion. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The 2026-2027 Slate of Officers was announced.

Chair – Melany Clark

Vice-Chair – Lauren Hall

Secretary – Sarah Bowman

Treasurer – Will Clements

Dr. Evans made a motion to approve the entire slate of officers as presented. Ms. Manion seconded. The motion was carried by unanimous voice vote.

RESEARCH AND COLLECTIONS

Mr. Ben Williams gave a brief report from the Research and Collections Committee meeting. The museum Archeology staff have been evaluating a property owned by Carter Bank and Trust that includes a historic kitchen structure believed to have been built in the 1830's. It was determined that the site was beyond the scope of the museum, but staff are happy to assist with any grants and provide technical support as the situation warrants.

Mr. Sanford made a motion to appoint trustee, Dr. Art Evans to the prestigious and rare Senior Fellow position at the museum. Ms. Hall seconded the motion. Dr. Evans graciously accepted the nomination. The motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

EDUCATION AND PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Mr. Sanford gave a brief report for the Education Committee. He noted the number of programs and individuals served continues to outpace the same quarter in 2025. The Education department will be extremely busy this summer as they will provide 45 programs at 17 different libraries in the Commonwealth as well as provide four, week-long day camps at the museum. Exhibit work continues with the largest ongoing project to include the renovation of the former library space and the temporary exhibits gallery.

BREAK

Dr. Clark recessed the meeting for a short break.

Following the short break, Dr. Clark called the meeting back into session.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Jonathan Martin spoke about the stagnant budget appropriation the museum has experienced over the past fifteen years. Mr. Martin created a comparison sheet to be shared with the full board to demonstrate how VMNH funding falls short when compared to similar agencies. Mr. Martin also noted required contract costs and the increase in general day-to-day operations makes our current appropriation unsustainable. Mr. Martin urged the Board to support the full funding request which will go through the Secretary of Education in August. The Board engaged in discussion regarding seeking funding through other Virginia agencies to compensate for the work of specimen processing and collection.

Mr. Martin will investigate cost sharing with other partner agencies and will report the findings to the Board.

Dr. Keiper reported the meeting with the Department of Education Secretary, Dr. Jeffery Smith, went well. The department staff were knowledgeable and spoke favorably about the Waynesboro project. The Secretary's Senior Advisor, Kate Maxlow, will visit the Martinsville Museum on June 2nd. Any interested Board member is welcome to attend.

CHML was awarded a grant from the Department of Historic and Cultural Resources to support and expand work being done on Virginia Indian sites.

Dr. Evans shared the success of his collection trip to Florida with Dr. Ivanov. Together the pair collected three to four thousand specimens to be categorized.

Dr. Keiper reported that myriapodologist, Dr. Jackson Means, is doing groundbreaking research with the genes of a cave dwelling cryptic milliped species.

Senior Fellow, Dr. Noel Boaz and paleontologist Dr. Adam Pritchard, are working to determine if the mastodon teeth in our collection are the missing teeth of Jefferson's mastodon on display at Monticello.

The museum received a series of cold-water aquariums by interagency transfer from James Madison University. The intention is to install the aquariums across from the education classrooms to exhibit non-game fish in our local rivers.

Ms. Deatherage noted running two sessions of the Homeschool Science Academy was extremely successful this year and allowed more participants for age groups age 6 – High School.

Mr. Ryan Barber reported 17% revenue growth for the Foundation. The museum continues to experience steady growth in all areas. Planning for festivals and other initiatives is ongoing as staff collaborates across departments to submit appropriate grants and recruit sponsors. Of note, visitation in April 2026 was the highest April since the museum opened in 2007. VMNH will host the local Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours event at the end of the month.

RESOLUTIONS

Dr. Clark read resolutions of appreciation to honor Ms. Lisa Carter, Dr. Art Evans, and Ms. Emma Ito who are finishing their terms on the Board of Trustees. Mr. Nathan Sanford made a motion to approve all three resolutions with Mr. Clements providing a second. The motion carried unanimously.

OPEN DISCUSSION

The Board briefly discussed requirements for a sanctioned Virginia license plate to bring awareness to the museum.

ADJOURNMENT

Dr. Evans made a motion with a second by Mr. Sanford to adjourn the meeting at 11:55 AM. Motion carried unanimously.

The next meeting of the Virginia Museum of Natural History Board of Trustees will be held on:

Saturday, August 15, 2026
Virginia Museum of Natural History
10 AM – 12 PM

ELECTRONIC MEETINGS POLICY
VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
AUGUST 2026

It is the policy of the Virginia Museum of Natural History (VMNH) that VMNH members of the Board of Trustees may participate in meetings of VMNH by electronic communication as permitted by § 2.2-3708.3 of the Code of Virginia. This policy shall apply to the entire membership and without regard to the identity of the member requesting remote participation or the matters that will be considered or voted on at the meeting. The membership of the Board interprets this policy and this policy applies to the full Board, its designated subcommittees, and ad hoc committees.

A. Member Remote Participation

Whenever an individual member wishes to participate from a remote location, the law requires a quorum of the Board, or committee when applicable, to be physically assembled at the primary or central meeting location. A member who is a “person with a disability” (as defined in § 51.5-40.1) or a member who is a “caregiver” (as defined in § 2.2-3701) for a “person with a disability” and uses remote participation counts towards the quorum as if the member was physically present.

An individual member may use remote participation if in advance of the public meeting, the member makes a request in accordance with Section C of this policy and states that the member meets one of the following:

1. The member has a temporary or permanent disability or other medical condition that prevents the member's physical attendance;
2. A medical condition of a member of the member's family requires the member to provide care that prevents the member's physical attendance or the member is a caregiver who must provide care for a person with a disability at the time the public meeting is being held thereby preventing the member's physical attendance;
3. The member's principal residence is more than 60 miles from the meeting location identified in the required notice for such meeting; or
4. The member is unable to attend the meeting due to a personal matter and identifies with specificity the nature of the personal matter.

When such individual participation is due to a personal matter, such participation is limited by law to two meetings per calendar year or 25 percent of the meetings held per calendar year rounded up to the next whole number, whichever is greater.

If the member's remote participation is approved, the Board will record in its meeting minutes:

1. The fact of the remote participation;
2. The location of the remote participation (the remote location need not be open to the public, and may be identified in the minutes by a general description);
3. Whether the remote participation is because of:
 - a. a temporary or permanent disability or other medical condition, or

- b. a family member's medical condition that required the member to provide care for such family member, or
- c. the distance between the member's principal residence and the meeting location, or
- d. a personal matter; and
- e. in the case of a personal matter, the specific nature of the personal matter.

The Board must plan for the voice of the remote participant to be heard by all persons at the primary or central meeting location.

Should the requirements of this policy not be met, the Board member will be allowed to listen into the proceedings through an electronic means, if available.

B. All-Virtual Meetings

Further, it is the policy of VMNH that the Board or any committee may hold all-virtual public meetings pursuant to subsection C of § 2.2-3708.3, provided the Board (or committee as applicable) follows the other requirements of Chapter 37 of Virginia Code Title 2.2, and:

1. An indication of whether the meeting will be an in-person or all-virtual public meeting is included in the required meeting notice along with a statement notifying the public that the method by which a public body chooses to meet shall not be changed unless the public body provides a new meeting notice in accordance with the provisions of § 2.2-3707;
2. Public access to the all-virtual public meeting is provided via electronic communication means;
3. The electronic communication means used allows the public to hear all members of the public body participating in the all-virtual public meeting and, when audio-visual technology is available, to see the members of the public body as well. When audio-visual technology is available, a member of a public body shall, for purposes of a quorum, be considered absent from any portion of the meeting during which visual communication with the member is voluntarily disconnected or otherwise fails or during which audio communication involuntarily fails;
4. A phone number or other live contact information is provided to alert the public body if the audio or video transmission of the meeting provided by the public body fails, the public body monitors such designated means of communication during the meeting, and the public body takes a recess until public access is restored if the transmission fails for the public;
5. A copy of the proposed agenda and all agenda packets and, unless exempt, all materials furnished to members of a public body for a meeting is made available to the public in electronic format at the same time that such materials are provided to members of the public body;
6. The public is afforded the opportunity to comment through electronic means, including by way of written comments, at those public meetings when public comment is customarily received;
7. No more than two members of the public body are together in any one remote location unless that remote location is open to the public to physically access it;
8. If a closed session is held during an all-virtual public meeting, transmission of the meeting to the public resumes before the public body votes to certify the closed meeting as required by subsection D of § 2.2-3712;

9. The public body does not convene an all-virtual public meeting (i) more than two times per calendar year or 50 percent of the meetings held per calendar year rounded up to the next whole number, whichever is greater, or (ii) consecutively with another all-virtual public meeting; and
10. Minutes of all-virtual public meetings held by electronic communication means are taken as required by § 2.2-3707 and include the fact that the meeting was held by electronic communication means and the type of electronic communication means by which the meeting was held.

C. Request, Approval Process, and Minutes

Requests for remote participation or that VMNH conduct an all-virtual public meeting shall be conveyed to the Administrative Coordinator who shall then relay such requests to the Board Chair or committee chair when applicable.

Individual participation from a remote location shall be approved unless such participation would violate this policy or the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (§ 2.2-3700 et seq. of the Code of Virginia). If a member's participation from a remote location is challenged, then the VMNH Board of Trustees shall vote whether to allow such participation.

The request for remote participation or that the VMNH Board conduct an all-virtual public meeting shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting. If the Board votes to disapprove of the member's participation because such participation would violate this policy, such disapproval shall be recorded in the minutes with specificity. The minutes shall include other information as required by §§ 2.2-3707 and 2.2-3708.3 depending on the type of remote participation or all-virtual public meeting.

D. State of Emergency Declarations

This policy shall be effective during times when Governor has not declared an emergency pursuant to Virginia Code § 44-146.17 or when the locality in which the body is located has not declared a local state of emergency pursuant to Virginia Code § 44-146.21. When an emergency has been declared, other provisions of law or declarations of Governor or the locality may prevail. In such cases, the Board may meet by electronic communication means in accordance with Virginia Code § 2.2-3708.2 and other applicable law.

E. Education and Compliance

Members of the Board shall be made aware of this policy as part of the new Board member orientation process. Any changes to this policy shall be communicated to the Board by the Board Chair or Board liaison no later than the Board's next scheduled meeting. The Board Chair shall be responsible for ensuring annual compliance with the provisions of this policy. In order to hold all-virtual meetings or allow members to use remote participation, the Board shall at least once annually adopt an electronic meeting policy by recorded vote at a public meeting.

Fourth Quarter FY26 Financials

Brief Budget Summary	1
Balance Sheet Q4 FY26	2
FY26 Fourth Quarter Budget Notes	3-4
Capital Projects Q4 FY26	5-7
Budget Amendment Request FY26	8
VMNH Staff FY27	9

Fourth Quarter FY26 Summary

The fourth quarter concluded a successful fiscal year marked by solid revenue growth and disciplined financial management. Admissions revenue exceeded the prior fiscal year, driven in part by the museum's revised admission pricing strategy. Following several years without rate adjustments, the increases in both daily and festival admission prices were implemented with little to no customer resistance, reinforcing that visitors continue to recognize the exceptional value of the museum experience.

Inflationary pressures continued to affect operating costs. Utility expenses fluctuated as natural gas prices temporarily increased during the winter before stabilizing, while fuel prices required continued monitoring with a focus on travel-related expenditures. At the same time, the museum's aging facilities continued to require additional maintenance and investment to ensure reliable operations and preserve our collections.

Despite these ongoing challenges, thoughtful prioritization of resources and operational decisions enabled the museum to stay within budget. The organization remains solid as it enters the new fiscal year, with increased revenues, responsible cost management, and a continued commitment to sharing educational experiences across the commonwealth.

Base Budget FY25 & 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 JUNE 30, 2026

NOTE		BUDGET	YTD	YTD%
		=====	=====	=====
	SUPPORT & REVENUES			
	Support:			
	Commonwealth	\$3,578,220	3,578,220	100%
	Add: Appropriation	\$204,414	204,414	100%
	Central Accounts Distribution	\$0	0	0%
	Total Support	\$3,782,634	\$3,782,634	100%
		=====	=====	=====
	Revenues:			
1	Admission to Museum	\$92,075	108,016	117%
	VMNH Publications	\$2,000	847	42%
	Receipts from City & County	\$37,890	37,890	100%
2	Honorariums/Misc. Inc.	\$1,000	5,133	513%
	Restricted Gifts Foundation/Grants:Research&Education/Memberships	\$270,000	229,295	85%
	Rental of Museum Rooms	\$6,000	4,642	77%
	Exhibit Rentals	\$500	0	0%
	Souvenirs- Misc. Sales	\$72,800	70,270	97%
	Classes, Workshops, Kit Rentals, Education Projects	\$50,000	52,625	105%
	Federal Funds Budgeted/Rec'd	\$0	0	0%
	Total FY2026 Budgeted Revenues	\$532,265	508,718	96%
	Special Funds Carryover FY25*	\$354,599	354,599	100%
	Federal Funds Carryover FY25*	\$6,561	6,561	100%
	Total Revenues and Carryover from FY2025	\$893,425	869,878	97%
		=====	=====	=====
	TOTAL OPERATING FUNDS/APPROP	\$4,676,059	4,652,512	99%
		=====	=====	=====
	EXPENSES:			
	Salaries	\$2,214,187	2,149,561	97%
	Payroll Benefits	\$961,261	1,000,677	104%
3	Contractual Services	\$336,944	416,166	124%
	Supplies	\$80,000	73,802	92%
	Equipment	\$50,000	15,085	30%
	Equipment Maintenance	\$37,703	17,238	46%
4	Travel	\$60,000	35,845	60%
	Staff Training	\$14,000	3,150	23%
	Repairs/Construction	\$105,000	62,148	59%
	Subscriptions	\$1,000	2,733	273%
	Books	\$1,000	0	0%
5	Utilities	\$294,945	326,179	111%
	Telephone	\$15,000	14,721	98%
	Mailing	\$5,000	1,819	36%
6	Insurance	\$23,000	0	0%
	Vehicle Maint./Fuel	\$18,000	7,217	40%
	Organ. Memberships	\$20,000	15,549	78%
	Printing	\$5,000	918	18%
	Other:	\$5,000	0	0%
	Awards/Unem.Comp./Ind Cost	\$1,000	0	0%
	Exhibit & Equipment Rentals	\$40,000	32,121	80%
	Building Rentals	\$1,000	515	52%
7	Agency Service Charges	\$185,000	162,704	88%
	TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	\$4,474,039	4,338,149	97%
		=====	=====	=====
	PERCENT SPENT OF YTD INCOME RECEIVED			
		=====	=====	=====
	TOTAL INCOME BALANCE	\$202,020	314,363	
		=====	=====	=====

*** 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.) Admissions

The Board's decision to revise admission rates at the beginning of FY26 proved successful, with attendance remaining strong and visitors continuing to recognize the museum's exceptional value. Beyond successful festivals, staff have seen increases in overall visitation and strengthening of VMNH's reputation as a preferred field-trip destination. The Education Department's engaging programs continue to build lasting relationships with schools, encouraging repeat visits, which certainly contributes to strong growth in attendance and admissions revenue.

2.) Honorariums

We are pleased to report that the VMNH Foundation is using the Pete Henika Memorial Fund and are moving forward with utilizing the fund to support an intern. We appreciate the Foundation's continued partnership and look forward to expanding internship opportunities through this valuable resource.

Expenses:

3.) Contractual Services

Contractual service costs continue to rise due to persistent inflation and are expected to remain elevated into the new fiscal year. As FY26 came to a close, several HVAC, maintenance, and other service contractors indicated that contract renewals will likely include price increases.

4.) Travel

FY26 was a lighter-than-normal year for travel expenditures. In previous fiscal years, staff participated in significant fieldwork and research opportunities, including expeditions to Madagascar and Wyoming for dinosaur excavations. This year, uncertainty surrounding grant funding limited travel opportunities, while onboarding a new herpetologist shifted resources toward building internal capacity. The museum remains committed to supporting scientific research and fieldwork and is optimistic that travel associated with grants, collections, and research initiatives will increase as funding opportunities improve.

5.) Utilities

Utility expenses came in 11% over projections during FY26, reflecting higher electric rates, winter natural gas price volatility, and the demands of maintaining an aging museum with strict environmental controls for collections. Staff continue to optimize HVAC operations and building controls to improve efficiency while protecting collections and managing long-term operating costs.

6.) Insurance premiums

Insurance premiums are strategically paid at the end of the fiscal year. When funds are available, payments are made in the current fiscal year; if year-end balances are tight, payments are deferred to the following fiscal year.

7.) Agency Service Charges

Deputy Director Ryan Barber worked closely with VITA representatives to identify unnecessary critical systems, reducing the museum's information technology costs by approximately \$23,000 during FY26. While these savings are significant, anticipated VITA rate increases may offset a portion of this benefit in the coming fiscal year. Nevertheless, the review established a more efficient and cost-effective technology environment that will provide ongoing value to the museum.

Fourth Quarter FY26 Capital Projects Summary

Capital Projects – Maintenance Reserve Fund Spending

FY26 Breakdown	
Education Pavilion Stairs	\$36,882.71
Security Cameras	\$112,089.86
Cavalier Carpets	\$28,893.00
JC Joyce Trucking & Paving	\$37,504.40
Trane	\$98,980.00
Waynesboro Trailer	\$82,066.61
Total	<u>\$396,416.58</u>

Douglas Renovation Project

Update:

Asbestos abatement work is under contract and set to be completed in the next 60 days (as of July 10th). The next step is to evaluate the boiler system before moving on to the full HVAC renovation.

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 the Maintenance Reserve.

Capital Projects – Pool Funded

VMNH-Waynesboro – New Facility Construction

Budget and Legislative

Detailed planning for the future VMNH-Waynesboro Campus was completed in late 2025, representing an important milestone for the project. With this completion, the project was submitted for state capital funding in the 2026 General Assembly session. While capital funding was unfortunately not approved during the recent legislative session, VMNH remains committed to moving the project forward in partnership with the City of Waynesboro and the Commonwealth. A budget amendment request for capital funding will be developed and submitted for consideration in the 2027 mid-biennium session, followed by a budget request for the next biennial budget in 2028, as needed.

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 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 once funding becomes available.

The next steps include:

- **Legislative Approval to move into the Capital Construction Pool**
- **Allocation of funds to complete Working Drawings 2.9 million**
- **Final project approval from Mike Coppa, enabling the project to advance to working drawings.**

Detailed Design work for the project has been completed and approved, and the project is now ready to advance to the Working Drawings Phase once funding becomes available.

Additional Projects FY26

- Window Decal Installation: Quoted
- Next Exhibit Banner: Quoted
- Library Compactors: Removed and Stored
- Track lighting for future Special Exhibit Hall: Complete
- Flooring for future Special Exhibit: Complete
- Young Explorer Center: Development
- Petra Lair: Development

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

Staffing

Metric	FY27
Total Employees	54
Full-Time	34
Part-Time	20

Funding	FY27
General Fund Positions	36
Special Revenue Positions	18

<u>Department Break Down</u>	FY27
Executive Office	2
Advancement	4
Fiscal	5
Education	3
Education Outreach	3
Box Office	8
Collections	4
Archaeology	8
Entomology	3
Paleontology	3
Mammalogy	1
B&G	9
Herpetology	1

MINUTES

The Facilities Committee of the Virginia Museum of Natural History Board of Trustees held their quarterly meeting remotely at 8:00 AM on Saturday, May 16.

BOT MEMBERS PRESENT:

Dr. Tom Benzing (Chair)	Dr. David Furth
Mr. Dick Bratcher	Ms. Lauren Hall

OTHERS PRESENT:

Mr. Ryan Barber	Dr. Joe Keiper (Exec. Director)
Mr. Jonathan Martin	Ms. Ambria Wood (OAG Rep)
Mr. Tim King	Mr. Zach Ryder

WELCOME

Dr. Tom Benzing called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM with a welcome. It was determined a quorum was present for the electronic meeting.

MINUTES

Minutes from August 9, 2025, and November 15, 2026, were approved with no corrections.

ONGOING PROJECTS

- Douglas Avenue - Project is in progress. Phase one of asbestos removal is ready to begin and is contingent upon the contractor's schedule. Phase 2 including HVAC is in the working drawings phase. The timeline for completion of the project is still unknown. The committee will be informed of progress and notified when room allocation should again be discussed.
- Library and Hallway Renovation – Painting is complete. Both flooring and lighting contracts have been awarded. The lighting contractor is expected to begin work in the next two weeks. The new flooring should be installed within the next two months.
- VMNH – Waynesboro Mobile Outreach Trailer – Solar panels have been installed to run everything except the HVAC unit in the trailer while efforts to permanently provide electricity to the trailer continue. Volunteers and staff welcomed 775 visitors during Riverfest. This summer volunteers will man the trailer each Saturday.
- Ongoing – Many projects continue on the Starling Avenue building. Mr. Tim King reported Building and Grounds staff are being trained on HVAC features as components are replaced and upgraded. The camera system upgrade was completed.

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

- Facilities Strategic Plan – Mr. Dick Bratcher noted the need to include facility management as part of the overall museum strategic plan. As such, staff will pivot to proactively maintaining systems in the museum and look toward capital projects with intention.

OPEN DISCUSSION

- An update/report of the proposed schematic to the Douglas Avenue facility will be presented in August.

ADJOURNMENT

Dr. Benzing adjourned the meeting at 9:00 AM

The next meeting of the Facilities Committee will be held on:
Saturday, August 15, 2026, at 8:30 AM

**Virginia Museum of Natural History
Waynesboro Advocacy Committee Meeting
Tuesday, July 7, 2026, 1 PM
Waynesboro Office of Economic Development**



MINUTES

Present In-person:

Dr. Tom Benzing (Chair)	Mr. Dick Bratcher
Mr. Len Poulin	Mr. Urbie Nash
Ms. Stephanie Duffy	Ms. Ann Peltier
Mr. Rick Kane	

Present Remote:

Mr. Greg Hitchin	Ms. Faye Cooper
Dr. Steve Powers	Dr. Christine May

Staff Present In-person:

Dr. Joe Keiper	Mr. Jonathan Martin
----------------	---------------------

Staff Present Remote:

Mr. Ryan Barber	Mr. Zach Ryder
Ms. Jennifer Whitlow	

Absent:

Dr. Carole Nash	Dr. Maggie Van Huss
Mr. Bill Alexander	

WELCOME

Dr. Tom Benzing opened the meeting with a welcome to those attending online and in-person at 1:00 PM. It was determined that a quorum was present to conduct business.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Peltier noted a typographical error in the spelling of her name. Mr. Kane made a motion to approve the minutes with the spelling correction which was seconded by Mr. Bratcher and approved unanimously by voice vote of the committee.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Advocacy Mr. Martin spoke about the museum's financial timeline going forward with the biennial budget approval of the General Assembly. Mr. Martin noted this General Assembly relaxed some of the previous spending moratoriums as projects were approved based on a hierarchy. Mandated projects received priority funding followed by projects already in process. Although many projects are in the queue, the Waynesboro project is considered "in process" awaiting a subsequent round of

funding. Mr. Martin reported he will submit the next budget request by the July 30th deadline to be included in the Governor's December budget proposal.

Dr. Keiper reported that the Secretary of Education's staffer, Dr. Maxlow recently visited VMNH and shared some of the secretary's goals as it relates to the overall mission and the Waynesboro project.

- (1) Expanding STEM career pathways and quantifying effectiveness
 - a. Internship placement expansion
 - b. Field trip opportunity expansion
 - c. Homeschool programs expansion
- (2) ESL (English as a second language) as it relates to aligning math, science and engineering to national education standards.
- (3) Fostering collaboration between Virginia agencies. Particularly using CHML (Cultural Heritage Monitoring Lab) to aid the VA Department of Emergency Management.

Dr. Maxlow proposed a short monthly Zoom touch base meeting which will be scheduled soon.

Trailer Mr. Poulin noted that in addition to her normal volunteers, Mary has been actively engaging with the local Latino community to recruit volunteers. Dr. Benzing noted a potential partnership between a program through JMU's Health Department actively involved in mitigating negative health effects of mercury content in the South River among Latino residents. This program is funded through JMU.

Mr. Poulin also inquired about the opportunity to use the QR code from our flyer to directly message the Governor's Office in support of the Waynesboro project. There was brief discussion about incorporating the Secretary's goals using a short consistent message. Mr. Ryder will provide the messaging details so that volunteers can encourage visitors to navigate the online system.

Dr. Benzing volunteered to have the Waynesboro flyer translated to Spanish.

Events Mr. Poulin confirmed the Street Arts Festival was a success with between 300 and 400 visitors over the two-day event.

Dr. Keiper confirmed that a touch table and some additional exhibit components were brought to the trailer today. Exhibit adjustments and general maintenance are ongoing and should be expected.

Mr. Bratcher volunteered to meet with a local industrial electrician to look at the electrical power of the trailer. The electrical hookup process is elusive, but efforts are ongoing.

It was noted that having the trailer onsite has been a very productive economic development tool for Waynesboro.

Work is ongoing to secure and confirm speakers for next season's lecture series. September 8 will be the first in the series with a lecture by Caty McVicker entitled, "Northern Bobwhite Quail and Managing Land for Wildlife".

Confirmation of several speakers is ongoing in anticipation of filling all the open dates next season.

It was noted that past talks are archived through the CCR YouTube channel.

VMNH staff will continue to participate in the Fall Foliage Festival as usual.

OPEN DISCUSSION

Dr. Benzing called upon new Board of Trustees member, Dr. Christine May to introduce herself to the committee.

Several committee members mentioned people or organizations who may be resources to either assist with ESL goals or assist with general promotion of the Waynesboro project. Potential advocates include Rosemary Wagoner, Elsa Kiser, the Embrace organization, and Kim Gearheart with Cline's Dairy

Mr. Poulin emphasized the importance of friend-raising not only in Waynesboro but also in the surrounding area.

Dr. Benzing reminded the committee of an opportunity to advocate at Delegate Katrina Coulson's town hall event on July 15, 2026.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business or discussion Dr. Benzing adjourned the meeting at 1:43 PM.

The next meeting of the Waynesboro Advocacy Committee will be on August 4th.

**Board of Trustees
Waynesboro Advocacy Committee
Tuesday, August 4, 2026
Virginia Museum of Natural History**



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:

Ms. Ann Peltier	Mr. Dick Bratcher
Mr. Len Poulin	Mr. Greg Hitchin
Dr. Joe Keiper (ex officio)	Mr. Jonathan Martin (staff)

Present Remote:

Dr. Carole Nash	Dr. John Almarode
Dr. Christine May	Dr. Steve Powers
Mr. Ryan Barber (staff)	

WELCOME

Dr. Keiper welcomed all to the meeting at 1:00 PM. It was determined by general consensus that Dr. Keiper would moderate the meeting. A quorum was determined to be present. New Board of Trustees member, Dr. John Almarode introduced himself and as a resident of Waynesboro is particularly interested in the project.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Len Poulin made a motion to approve the July 7, 2026, meeting minutes. Dr. Carole Nash seconded and all approved unanimously.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Advocacy

State budget - Mr. Martin reported he continues to work with the Virginia Department of Planning and Budget in requesting the funds necessary to build the Waynesboro campus building. This is the standard timing and procedure for large capital projects. In the meantime, we are also asking for approximately 2.9 million dollars to complete working drawings to move the project closer to the full appropriations phase.

Mr. Martin reported that all feedback from various state offices has been very positive. It was noted that the timing is typical for this type of project; often taking many years from concept to completion.

STEM - Dr. Keiper noted the need for additional conversation about STEM career pathways and opportunities for ESL learners of all ages.

Trailer

Visitors - Mr. Poulin reported a robust number of visitors each Saturday with the majority of them first time visitors and not from Waynesboro City limits. Most visitors gladly submit the online comment card to the Governor's Office as they are leaving the trailer. It was noted the use of consistent verbiage may be beneficial toward the cause.

Volunteer coverage remains strong even through the heat of the summer. Additionally, volunteers greatly appreciated the added professional atmosphere generated due to the polo shirts and name badges.

Electric Hook-up - Mr. Bratcher reported that the process of getting electricity to the trailer begins with creating an online profile and setting up an onsite meeting. There were general discussions and consensus that an April 2027 electric hook-up goal is attainable. More information and discussion are needed to investigate possible stand-alone air conditioning.

Events

Lecture Series – The fall lecture series will begin on Sept. 8, 2026, at 7 PM at the Wayne Theatre with the topic of – “Northern Bobwhite Quail and Managing Land for Wildlife” This popular series has a full lineup of speakers for the fall and only a few spaces left for the spring.

Fall Foliage Festival – Upcoming with VMNH participation

OPEN DISCUSSION

Long time supporter and committee member, Maggie Van Huss will be stepping away from the Advocacy Committee. Committee members expressed gratitude for her support through the years.

It was suggested that local business owner, Kim Gearheart be approached as a possible replacement for Dr. Van Huss.

Dr. Keiper mentioned that at the request of the Virginia Secretary of Education, staff have a standing monthly meeting with one of his assistant secretaries, Dr. Kate Maxlow. As follow-up we have requested that our Board Chair meet with the Secretary with the priority being to advocate for an increase in funding for ongoing expenses and for the Waynesboro project.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business the meeting was adjourned at 1:40 p.m.

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

Saturday, August 15, 2026

9 a.m.

A G E N D A

- Call to order
- Roll call: Dr. Carole Nash, Dr. Tom Benzing, Dr. Melany Clark, Dr. David Furth, Katherine McGuire
- Approval of minutes from the Nov. 15, 2025 and May 16, 2026 meetings of the Research and Collections Committee
- Approval of acquisitions from September 2025-June 2026 (action item)
- Recommendation to full board regarding changes to live animals policy
- Consideration of Dr. Paul Sattler, Dr. Kevin Bezy, Dr. Ben Kligman, Dr. Keiko Meshida, and Jeff Carpenter as Research Associates
- Other business
- Adjourn

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 BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MINUTES OF THE RESEARCH AND COLLECTIONS COMMITTEE
May 16, 2026, 9 A.M.
Virginia Museum of Natural History, Room 237 Conference Room A**

Present at the meeting were Dr. Art Evans, Katherine McGuire, Dr. Hayden Bassett, Ambria Wood, Dr. Kal Ivanov, Ryan Barber, Dr. Joe Keiper, Jonathan Martin, and Ben Williams. Committee members Dr. Carole Nash, Dr. David Furth, Dr. Melany Clark, and Dr. Tom Benzing were absent and no quorum was provided.

Ben Williams called the meeting to order. Due to the lack of quorum, Williams tabled all action items until the next committee meeting and called upon VMNH Assistant Curator of Archaeology Dr. Hayden Bassett to address a recent conversation his department has had with Carter Bank and Trust.

According to Dr. Bassett, the bank acquired a former plantation house to serve as their new headquarters. On the same property is a detached kitchen dating back to the 1830s that has unfortunately fallen into disrepair. According to Dr. Bassett, leadership at Carter Bank reached out to the VMNH archaeology department to inquire about what steps could be taken to restore the kitchen facility or if VMNH would like to take ownership of the facility as a donation.

Dr. Bassett said that unfortunately, the structure is far too damaged for restoration to be feasible, and even stabilizing the ruins would be an expensive proposition. The costs to stabilize the building are likely outside the scope of either VMNH's budget or Carter Bank's.

However, Dr. Bassett said, the archaeology department will be happy to provide any technical assistance for grant writing if another local organization decides to take on the project, such as the Fayette Area Historical Initiative.

Board of Trustees member Katherine McGuire asked if the kitchen has historical significance. Dr. Bassett said it had immense historical significance locally, as the plantation house was the main Hairston plantation. Many descendant communities locally would likely identify with the property, he said, adding that the plantation house is part of the National Register of Historic Places. Dr. Art Evans agreed with Dr. Bassett's assessment that offering technical support is the best approach.

Dr. Joe Keiper said that he wished to recommend Dr. Art Evans for the title of Senior Fellow given his 25+ year association with VMNH. Evans, who concluded his second and final term with the Board of Trustees at the May 16 meeting, is one of just four people to be named a Senior Fellow at VMNH.

Joe asked new board member Katherine McGuire to introduce herself, and McGuire discussed her career and 30-year stint on Capitol Hill.

Ben Williams adjourned the meeting.

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

**Report to the Board of Trustees
April-June 2026**

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

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

- Dr. Means and colleagues published a paper at *Banisteria*.
- Drs. Ivanov and Means, and colleagues have manuscripts accepted at *Zoologia* and *Spixiana*.
- Drs. Ivanov and Means, and colleagues have manuscripts in review at *Austral Ecology* and *Zoologia*.
- Dr. Ivanov and colleagues have a manuscript in review at *Zootaxa*.
- Dr. Ivanov VMNH Research Associate Dr. Art Evans recently returned from a 2-week-long trip to southern Florida.
- Dr. Means recorded an interview for the Xerxes Society's Bug Banter podcast.
- Drs. Ivanov and Means, and L. Hightower participated in VMNH's Reptile Festival and interacted with 1,300+ visitors.

Research & Collections

Dr. Means, Dr. E. Day, T. A. Dellinger, A. D. Thompson, and A. G. Swenson (Virginia Tech) published a paper at the Virginia Natural History Society's periodical *Banisteria*. The work summarizes 25 years of survey efforts of native and introduced woodboring insects at Virginia Ports of Entry (VPN) and Emergency Action Notification (EAN) sites and will help inform efforts to reduce the importation of potentially harmful insects into the state for years to come.

[Day, E. R., T. A. Dellinger, J. C. Means, A. D. Thompson, and A. G. Swenson. 2026. A checklist of woodboring insects (Coleoptera: Cerambycidae, Buprestidae, Oedemeridae, and Hymenoptera: Siricidae) associated with Virginia ports of entry and emergency action notification sites. *Banisteria* 61: 59–78.]

Drs. Ivanov and Means, Dr. R. S. Bouzan, Dr. A. D. Brescovit, Caroline T. Paranhos, Ricardo Cezar Ramos Nicolau (Instituto Butantan, Brazil), and Dr. L. F. M. Iniesta (Universidade Federal de Pernambuco, Brazil) have a manuscript accepted 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 and Means, Bouzan, Brescovit, and Iniesta have a manuscript accepted 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 the order Polydesmida.

Drs. Ivanov, Means, Bouzan, Iniesta, Brescovit, Dr. R. A. Castro-Souza (Universidade Federal de Lavras, Brazil), and Ph.D. student M. D. Faustino-Magalhães (Instituto Butantan) have a manuscript in review at *Austral Ecology*. The paper explores the sampling biases associated with the known distribution of the millipede order Spirostreptida in Brazil's Atlantic Forest biome.

Drs. Ivanov, Means, Iniesta, Brescovit, Bouzan, and Castro-Souza have a manuscript in review at *Zoologia*. The work is the first global assessment of the distribution and sampling ignorance of cambalidean millipedes (Diplopoda: Spirostreptida: Cambalidea). By integrating species richness and ignorance metrics, the study identifies regions where collecting efforts, taxonomic revisions, and biodiversity inventories are most urgently needed.

Dr. Ivanov, Dr. C. Bartlett and student L. Hook (U Delaware), Dr. J. Leavengood (USDA- APHIS), and Dr. B. R. Garcete-Barrett (Museo Nacional de Historia Natural, Paraguay) have a manuscript in review at *Zootaxa*. The work is a revision of the South American planthopper genus *Protachilus* (Hemiptera: Fulgoridae) and includes the description of the previously unknown male of *Protachilus rex* Fennah, 1944, and two new species from Brazil, Ecuador, and Peru.

Dr. Ivanov and colleague myrmecologists from various Florida and Georgia institutions continued work on a manuscript focused on the non-native myrmecofauna of Florida. When completed, the paper will offer a comprehensive account of all non-native ant taxa recorded from Florida, a global hotspot of introduced and invasive ants.

Drs. Ivanov and Means, Dr. J. Pérez-Schultheiss (Museo Nacional de Historia Natural, Chile), and A. Parra-Gómez (Universidad Austral de Chile) continued work on revising the South American millipede genus *Monenchodesmus* (Polydesmida: Dalodesmidae). The work includes the description of a new genus and species from Chile.

Drs. Ivanov, Means, Bouza, Brescovit, Iniesta, and Dr. Dr. Rodrigo L. Ferreira (Universidade Federal de Lavras, Brazil) are working on a manuscript focused on testing the monophyly and tribal placement of the Brazilian endemic millipede genus *Rupidesmus* (Diplopoda: Chelodesmidae). The study includes the description of two new cave-dwelling species from the state of Minas Gerais.

Drs. Ivanov, Means, Bouzan, Brescovit and Iniesta, Dr. Hevana S. Lima (Universidade Federal de Pernambuco, Brazil), and Dr. Ricardo Basini-Silva (Instituto Butantan, Brazil) are working on a comprehensive review of bird anting behaviors utilizing millipedes, a significant, yet understudied, resource for avian self-anointing.

Dr. Ivanov and VMNH Research Associate Dr. Art Evans recently returned from a 2-week-long expedition to Florida where they continued work on one of the nation's richest arthropod faunas. Using a combination of various collecting techniques, Ivanov and Evans conducted field work in thirteen protected areas and preserves primarily targeting the southern part of the state. The trip included work at the Archbold

Biological Station's arthropod collection, one of the largest holdings focused on any single location in North America

Dr. Means conducted fieldwork at various sites in North Carolina and Virginia in support of ongoing research projects.

Dr. Means and Liberty Hightower processed (removed and sorted specimens for identification) 39 litter samples from recent collecting trips to Japan, Philippines, Vietnam, and the United States (Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia).

Dr. Means identified and curated 20 specimens (millipedes and spiders) for VMNH's molecular collection, with another 2,000+ specimens put aside for various taxonomic experts.

Dr. Means curated and identified 43 specimens (millipedes and spiders) from a recent trip to Florida.

Liberty Hightower prepared 1,225 ants and 161 non-ants from recent field work in Paraguay, Peru, and Florida.

Dr. Ivanov processed and curated 1,559 fly specimens from a recently returned loan.

Dr. Ivanov responded to information request regarding VMNH holdings: *Scaphinotus (Irichroa)* (Carabidae; ground beetles) (James R. LaBonte, Oregon Department of Agriculture, retired).

Visiting researchers Dr. P. Wooden and student N. Collins (Virginia Tech), and Dr. S. Roble (VA DCR) worked on capturing data and curating VMNH's Corixidae (water boatmen) and Ichneumonidae (ichneumon wasps), and Odonata (dragonflies and damselflies) holdings, respectively. (June 1, 24)

Dr. Ivanov satisfied a loan request regarding VMNH's invertebrate holdings: 332 pinned/pointed unidentified Corixidae (water boatmen) to Dr. P. Wooden (Virginia Tech).

Dr. Ivanov oversaw the acquisition of 307 lots of ethanol-preserved bulk invertebrates donated to VMNH by Dr. D. Hennen (VA DCR); 303 pinned/pointed unidentified Trichoptera and 232 pinned/pointed unidentified Hymenoptera donated to VMNH by Dr. S. Roble (VA DCR); and 26 lots of ethanol-preserved unidentified Myriapoda and 5 lots of ethanol-preserved unidentified Formicidae donated to VMNH by T. Malabad (VA DCR).

Liberty Hightower, VMNH Visting Scholar Dr. C. Vanburen, Biology Technician M. Boyd, and Collections Manager H. Cartmell attended a bird study skin preparation workshop at the National Museum of Natural History, Washington DC. (April 12-18)

Education & Outreach

Drs. Ivanov and Means, L. Hightower and museum staff participated in VMNH's 12th annual Reptile Festival, which offered a variety of displays and activities that ranged from preserved amphibian and reptile specimens from the museum's collections to live arthropods, amphibians and reptiles, and variety of herpetology-themed children's crafts and activities. The two-day event attracted over 2,500 children and adults from Virginia, North Carolina, and five additional US states. (April 24-25)

Liberty Hightower served as an adjudicator for the Piedmont Governor's School Senior Science Research Symposium. (May 6-7)

Dr. Means presented a large collection of pinned insects to four classes of students at Salem Montessori. (June 17)

This quarter, Drs. Ivanov and Means, and L. Hightower gave tours of museum's labs and collections to members of VMNH's "Science Exploration" and "Camp-ology" summer camps, PHCC, and visitors from Henry Co., VA. (June 3, 4, 10, and 24)

Student intern Sara Wall (Virginia Wesleyan U) began work in the Department of Recent Invertebrates in late May. Sara's primary duties are related to assisting with various aspects (data capture, literature review, etc.) of the recently launched Millipedes of Virginia Project.

Dr. Means recorded a 1-hour interview for the Xerxes Society's Bug Banter podcast (May 19).

Drs. Ivanov and Means were interviewed for an upcoming WFXR Science Series. (June 23)

Dr. Ivanov contributed five posts to VMNH's FB page outlining recent field work in southern Florida.

Exhibits

Dr. Means and L. Hightower participated in a meeting regarding early planning stages of VMNH's upcoming temporary exhibit.

Dr. Ivanov and L. Hightower, with help from VMNH Trades Technician D. Eanes, updated the small pollinator exhibit in VMNH's Hanh Hall of Biodiversity.

Professional Service

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

Dr. Means served as an editor for two manuscripts submitted to *Banisteria*. (completed May 20 and June 24)

Dr. Ivanov served as an editor for a manuscript submitted to *Historia Naturalis Bulgarica*. (completed May 29)

Dr. Ivanov copy edited three articles for *Banisteria* (Volume 61). (completed April 9, May 26, and June 25)

Hayden Bassett, Ph.D.
Assistant Curator of Archaeology

Introduction

The VMNH Archaeology Department is currently staffed by 8 personnel as of July 2026. This includes the Department Curator, the VMNH Archaeologist, the four core staff of the Cultural Heritage Monitoring Lab and two Archaeology Lab technicians. Over the past three months, Dr. Hayden Bassett focused the department's efforts on publications, collections management, and fieldwork on the Smith River in Henry County, VA.

Research and Collections

The VMNH Archaeology Department continued collections organization efforts with the goal of enabling research in Virginia Archaeology. The lab coordinated volunteers to re-bag and label artifact assemblage bags from several sites in Virginia with high research potential. This effort ensures that the VMNH is maximizing research potential with the Commonwealth's collections.

In July, the Archaeology Department continued field work on the Smith River Survey, a grant-funded project that seeks to document all in-water cultural resources in a 25-mile section of the Smith River in Henry County, VA. The team completed survey of the first 16 miles of the river. The documented the condition of previously recorded sites and identified four new archaeological sites associated with early river crossings, 19th century use of the river to move timber, and 19th century modifications to the river for batteau navigation. Dr. Bassett coordinated site visits to the newly identified sites with a range of stakeholders, including other state agencies: VDOT and VDHR. He will continue this in-water survey throughout the summer.

As a producer and curatorial repository of digital collections, the VMNH Archaeology Department has expanded its digital collection holdings by nearly 10,000 "objects" this quarter and anticipates further growth in digital collections with each new quarter. At the request of its research stakeholders, the new objects include expanded cultural heritage site locations for Venezuela and the Marianna Islands. The Archaeology Department's CHML is using these data to assess impacts to cultural heritage from the recent floods and earthquakes. These digital objects in the VMNH's collections have already been requested/accessed by multiple outside organizations.

A part of Dr. Bassett's research efforts this quarter were dedicated to continuing the leading role played by the VMNH's Cultural Heritage Monitoring Lab (CHML) in response to the destruction of museums, archaeological sites, and other cultural heritage sites in Ukraine and Sudan. Since February 2022, the VMNH-CHML team has been monitoring over 28,000 cultural heritage sites in Ukraine, identified potential damage to 4,483 sites, and confirmed damage to 780. The VMNH team is also monitoring Sudan's museums, religious sites, and archaeological sites in the areas impacted by the ongoing civil war. As previously mentioned, the CHML at VMNH also responded to the recent storms in Marianna Islands and the major earthquake in Venezuela.

Publications

In May, Dr. Bassett and his team submitted a manuscript titled “Riverine Settlement and Aquatic Resource Use in Late Woodland Virginia” for publication. It is currently in peer review with the journal *American Antiquity*. Additionally, VMNH’s CHML team published three open access reports this quarter through the Smithsonian Institution. As of July 2026, the total readership of the VMNH’s Archaeology Departments publications from the past 34 months is 69,073 reads and 10,173 downloads.

Published Reports this Quarter (VMNH Archaeology authors in bold):

Hanson, K., **Fitzgerald, K.**, Meharry, J. E., Tuttle, E., Bakhshi, R., Rozhko, V., Makar, R., Zadorozhna, M., Kovalova, P., Oleksii, A., Cil, D., **Bassett, H.**, Averyt, K., Kane, K. E., **Gunter-Bassett, M.**, **Welsh, W.**, **Mahe, A.**, Muller, C. E., and Daniels, B. I. (2026). “[Site Report: Damage and Cross Removal at Christian Churches in Melitopol, Ukraine](#),” Ukrainian Heritage Monitoring Lab; Virginia Museum of Natural History, Cultural Heritage Monitoring Lab; University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Penn Cultural Heritage Center; University of Maryland, Center for International Development and Conflict Management; and Smithsonian Institution, Museum Conservation Institute—Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25573/data.30826295>.

Carroll, C., Griffin, K., **Welsh, W.**, Hanson, K., **Bassett, H.**, **Fitzgerald, K.**, **Mahe, A.**, Averyt, K., **Gunter-Bassett, M.**, Gottlieb-Miller, L., Markle, N., Pate, L., Martindale, K., Muise, I., and Sproat, M. (2026). “[Potential impacts to Cultural Heritage Sites from Flash Floods Burnet, Guadalupe, Kerr, Kimble, McCulloch, Menard, San Saba, Tom Green, Travis, and Williamson Counties, Texas, USA](#),” Virginia Museum of Natural History, Cultural Heritage Monitoring Lab; Smithsonian Institution, Museum Conservation Institute—Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative; and Texas Collections Emergency Resource Alliance. DOI: [10.25573/data.32060373](https://doi.org/10.25573/data.32060373).

Bassett, H. F., Aronson, J., Cil, D., Hanson, K., Meharry, J. E., **Fitzgerald, K.**, **Welsh, W.**, **Mahe, A.**, **Gunter-Bassett, M.**, Averyt, K., Kane, K. E., Muller, C. E., and Daniels, B. I. (2026). “[Damage to Cultural Heritage Sites in Ukraine: 24 February 2022 to 30 November 2025](#),” Ukrainian Heritage Monitoring Lab; Virginia Museum of Natural History, Cultural Heritage Monitoring Lab; University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Penn Cultural Heritage Center; University of Maryland, Center for International Development and Conflict Management; and Smithsonian Institution, Museum Conservation Institute - Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative. DOI: [10.25573/data.32025594](https://doi.org/10.25573/data.32025594)

Education and Outreach

Museum Exhibits / Services / Outreach:

Between May and July, VMNH Archaeology Lab technician Aidan Lawrence conducted experimental archaeology in the VMNH greenhouses, growing a range of plants recovered archaeologically on Virginia’s Late Woodland archaeological sites. This included Tutelo Strawberry Corn, Hidatsa Red Indian Bean, Ozark Melon, Sacred Tobacco/Indian Tobacco/Mapacho, Jamestown Weed, and Longleaf Groundcherry/Wild Tomatillo. This combined research and outreach project allowed the archaeology

department to understand the affordances and risks of small-scale horticulture for these specific plants, while producing a large quantity of seeds for the museum's archaeobotanical reference collection. The Archaeology Department documented this project on [a dedicated section of the VMNH website](#).

This quarter, the VMNH Archaeology Department visited the headquarters of the Archaeological Society of Virginia at Kittiewan in Charles City, VA. The VMNH helped process a large library of archaeological books for multiple institutions. A significant number of these books will be integrated into the VMNH Research Library.

In July, the Archaeology Department also participated in the VMNH Dino Fest. Archaeology Lab Technician Madison Ross created hand drawn coloring pages of VMNH dinosaur specimens, and the lab staffed this station for the two-day festival.

Professional Service:

In July, Dr. Bassett was selected to serve as a peer reviewer for the journal *American Antiquity*. Additionally, he continued his appointments as a Research Associate at the Smithsonian Institution, a Fellow of The Explorers Club, a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, and an Adjunct Lecturer in William & Mary's Department of Anthropology. He continued his duties as Vice President of the Board of Trustees for Falmouth Heritage Renewal, an international historic preservation non-profit.

This quarter, Dr. Hayden Bassett and VMNH staff archaeologist Dr. Madeleine Gunter Bassett continued to fulfill their duties in the Archaeological Society of Virginia (ASV) and Council for Virginia Archaeologists (CoVA). This included participating in the annual ASV and CoVA meeting in Staunton, VA. In their roles on committees in these organizations, VMNH Archaeology staff provide direction, technical review, grant approvals, among other tasks for state-wide archaeological research for the foreseeable future.

Adam Pritchard, Ph.D.
Assistant Curator of Paleontology

- Dr. Pritchard published a scientific article in the *Journal of Vertebrate Paleontology* on a two-legged toothless reptile from the Age of Dinosaurs in New Mexico. He and an international team of colleagues, including collaborators from Virginia Tech have an article in press on a newly discovered species of crocodile relative found in the VMNH collections.
- Dr. Pritchard worked with intern Joshua Safley (all of Q2) on the 3D modeling of the Virginian reptile *Tanytrachelos*. The project is funded by the Luck Companies Foundation and will produce an exhibit (coordinated with Lila Dougherty). An abstract describing the new discovery was submitted for presentation at the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology Annual Meeting in Q4 of 2026.
- Dr. Pritchard led a field trip to the Ashland Triassic Site with a team of students from the college of William & Mary, amateur paleontologists from the area, and retired field paleontologists. Their work recovered many fossil fish skeletons, invertebrates, and new tiny fossil reptile teeth that likely represent new species.

Research & Collections

Dr. Pritchard published one paper and has a second in press:

- A description and analysis of a toothless bipedal reptile from Triassic New Mexico in the *Journal of Vertebrate Paleontology*, led by Dr. Alan Turner of Stony Brook University.
- An analysis of VMNH reptile skull bones from Fraser sites in the United Kingdom that represent a new taxon of small carnivorous reptile in revision for *Earth & Environmental Science Transactions*, led by Dr. Sterling Nesbitt of Virginia Tech.

Dr. Pritchard submitted as primary author or co-author three abstracts for presentation at the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology Annual Meeting in Cleveland, OH.

In ongoing projects, Dr. Pritchard developed a database of three-dimensional models for an article on Triassic drepanosaurs of Utah. He also contributed a section on geological and discovery context for a manuscript on pathological fossil crocodylian bones from the VMNH collections from the Age of Dinosaurs in North Carolina.

Dr. Pritchard developed the collections in several targeted ways:

- Dr. Pritchard brought in a specimen of a fossil mammal from Westmoreland State Park that represents a single incisor tooth from a large big cat, most likely a jaguar.

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

- He and technician Lucy Treado oversaw two visits from teams from the College of William & Mary seeking to examine and borrow specimens of fossil clams for environmental studies.

- He sent field journals and maps to the Bureau of Land Management related to ongoing work in Jurassic rocks in the Big Horn Basin of Wyoming. These will be used in collaboration with teams from the University of Washington.

Education & Outreach

Dr. Pritchard oversaw a short internship project by a Virginia Tech paleontology undergraduate student focused on developing an annotated guide to completeness and photography on specimens of the Virginian fossil reptile *Tanytrachelos ahynis*.

Dr. Pritchard oversaw the beginning of a month-long internship (June-July) for an undergraduate geology student from the University of Mary Washington. Funded by a grant from Mary Washington, the student will be documenting, photographing, and cataloging vertebrae from the giant marine snake *Paleophis*.

Dr. Pritchard and Education Manager Christy Deatherage presented an educational activity focused on fossil shark teeth to a group of science instructors at a symposium hosted by Southwest Virginia Community College.

Dr. Pritchard, technician Lucy Treado, and museum director Joe Keiper presented for children and adults at an event at the Caroline County Visitor's Center, focused on the fossil record of whales and marine animals in the region.

Dr. Pritchard hosted collections tours for three groups of private citizens.

Dr. Pritchard coordinated with technician Lucy Treado on a display of fossil sea turtles for Reptile Festival 2026, including never-before-seen-publicly specimens from Virginia

Dr. Pritchard served ten requests for specimen identifications.

Grants & Funding

Dr. Pritchard began discussions with other members of the curator and technical team on developing a cross-departmental initiative focused on photogrammetry—using photography to obtain high-quality three-dimensional models of objects—targeting the most vulnerable specimens in collections. This project will be developed further following the 2026 Dinosaur Festival.

Professional Service

Dr. Pritchard reviewed an article for *Scientific Advances*.

Jackson Roberts, Ph.D.
Assistant Curator of Herpetology

- Dr. Roberts began as the Assistant Curator of Herpetology on 16 June 2026.
- Dr. Roberts co-authored a paper with colleagues describing a new species of snake from Papua New Guinea (accepted – *Zootaxa*).
- Dr. Roberts presented at the 2026 Joint Meeting of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists (New Orleans, Louisiana; 8-12 July) on the genetics and origins of an introduced Western Diamond-backed Rattlesnake population in central Kansas. In addition, Dr. Roberts' undergraduate researcher at Fort Hays State University presented a poster on their work documenting a rattlesnake hybrid from west Texas.
- Dr. Roberts met with the leaders of Philpott Lake's management team to discuss Timber Rattlesnake and Copperhead sampling/monitoring on US Army Corps of Engineers' property.
- Dr. Roberts participated in the 2026 Dino Festival by preparing and managing a table on extant and extinct crocodilians.
- Dr. Roberts led three lab tours to visitors to show them the herpetology research lab, including the live snakes held for education, as well as the growing parasitology station equipped with compound microscope and camera lucida.
- Dr. Roberts has submitted collection and salvage permit applications to VDWR to begin regular surveying of reptiles and amphibians of Virginia for physical vouchers and molecular-grade tissue samples. He has received verbal approval but is still waiting for the official paperwork.

Research & Collections

This June, Dr. Roberts began as the second Assistant Curator of Herpetology for the VMNH. His research focus is overarching evolution and biogeography, utilizing the morphology and genomics of herpetofauna (and their parasites) to test patterns of change and relatedness over time. He and his family are ecstatic to begin their Virginia chapter for many years to come.

Shortly after beginning (25 June 2026), Dr. Roberts received acceptance on a co-authored new snake species description submitted to *Zootaxa*. The snake is a new species of Papuan Groundsnake (genus *Lielaphis*), from the north coast of Papua New Guinea. Collaborators include researchers from the Field Museum, Louisiana State University Museum of Natural Sciences, American Museum of Natural History, University of Kentucky, and the Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery.

In July, Dr. Roberts presented work he began in Kansas on the population structure and origins of an introduced population of Western Diamond-backed Rattlesnakes at the 2026 Joint Meeting of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists in New Orleans, Louisiana. More importantly, Dr. Roberts was able to introduce himself to the field and colleagues as the VMNH herpetology curator for the first time. In addition, he also coauthored the poster presentation given by his current undergraduate researcher, Amelia Coykendall

(Fort Hays State University, Hays, Kansas). Her poster documents with morphology and genomics evidence of a Mohave Rattlesnake x Western Diamond-backed Rattlesnake in west Texas.

On June 30th, Dr. Roberts met with the rangers and managers at Philpott Lake (US Army Corps of Engineers) to discuss land access and collaborations for pit viper monitoring around the lake. The meeting was successful, the USACE rangers showing enthusiasm for focus on the snakes living around the lake. In addition to the future plans for research (once Dr. Roberts has received VDWR permits in-hand), the rangers gave precise localities where Timber Rattlesnakes and Copperheads have been encountered by the public. Dr. Roberts drove one of these localities late at night on July 3rd and found three adult Timber Rattlesnakes crossing the road. This was an exciting find to confirm a future long-term site for a species of conservation concern so close to the museum's location.

Exhibits

Dr. Roberts joined the Advisory Committee created by our exhibit's director, Lila Dougherty, to advise on the upcoming temporary Virginia Birds exhibit.

Education & Outreach

Dr. Roberts curated and worked a crocodilian table at the 2026 Dino Festival July 23-24. The festival was a massive success. As his first VMNH festival, Dr. Roberts enjoyed discussing modern crocodilians and their long evolutionary history on earth.

Dr. Roberts led three lab tours of the herpetology division since arriving to the area. The tours were given to eight total individuals comprising the family of a fellow curator (three people), colleagues of our research technician (two people), and a representative from the Attorney General's office and her family (three people).

Professional Service

Dr. Roberts reviewed a manuscript for the journal *Ichthyology and Herpetology*, the journal of the American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists.

Dr. Roberts continued the mentorship of his two remaining students in Kansas, Dawson Kosmicki (MSc student at Fort Hays State University) and Amelia Coykendall (Undergraduate at FHSU).

Collin VanBuren, Ph.D.
Visiting Scholar

- Dr. VanBuren resubmitted two papers after completing revisions and submitted another paper with VMNH colleagues
- Dr. VanBuren and colleagues presented a webinar to conservation practitioners around the world through the Amphibian Survival Alliance
- Dr. VanBuren helped strengthen the capacity of VMNH staff by co-organizing a training workshop on bird specimen preparation at the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History

Research & Collections

Dr. VanBuren and colleagues revised two papers and resubmitted them:

- van Rees, VanBuren, et al. *In review*. Eight recommendations to enhance biodiversity outcomes of nature-based solutions at multiple scales. *Journal of Environmental Management* (Accepted in July)
- Stevenson et al. *In review*. Changes in plant community composition and diversity in a high-elevation rangeland: implications for pollinators. *Rangeland Ecology & Management*

Dr. VanBuren submitted another paper with VMNH colleagues M. Boyd and Dr. H. Bassett that is in review at the *Northeastern Naturalist*, titled “Observations of beaver (*Castor canadensis*) foraging on autumn olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*) in southern Virginia.

Dr. VanBuren coordinated with staff at the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History to organize a week-long workshop for himself and other VMNH staff (M. Boyd, H. Cartmell, and L. Hightower) on preparing bird study skins, which staff had minimal experience with.

Dr. VanBuren and M. Boyd received three nutria carcasses from the USDA-APHIS team managing the invasive nutria population in southeastern Virginia and these are set to be processed in the near future

Dr. VanBuren visited multiple additional sites to assess them for the beaver and autumn olive study

Dr. VanBuren is working with VMNH colleagues Dr. H. Bassett and M. Boyd to establish a monitoring program along the Smith River with the goal of capturing biodiversity change associated with hydroelectric power generation when the dam comes back online within the next year.

Dr. VanBuren and VMNH staff (H. Cartmell and M. Boyd) hosted the Gomez-Bahamon lab from Virginia Tech to visit VMNH collections for their research

Education & Outreach

Dr. VanBuren gave a webinar for the Amphibian Survival Alliance and Mohammed bin Zayed Foundation with former USAID colleagues Dr. Sara Carlson and Jennifer Kane titled "Connecting Amphibian Conservation with International Development"

Dr. VanBuren worked with M. Boyd and L. Dougherty to finish and publish an infographic informing the public about bird window strikes, including how to prevent them and what to do if a window strike happens.

Dr. VanBuren and M. Boyd visited Staunton River State Park to assess the location for inclusion in a study about beavers and autumn olive. During this visit, they learned about beaver coexistence issues at the State Park and connected the Park Manager with wildlife coexistence professionals to identify solutions.

Dr. VanBuren spoke with homeschool students of various ages about careers in natural history.

Dr. VanBuren created and ran a table at Reptile Fest on the differences between mammal and reptile vertebrae.

Dr. VanBuren's incoming summer intern from Longwood University received a grant to fund his accommodation in Martinsville during the seven-week internship.

Dr. VanBuren met with a student at Hanover High School working on a research project to provide feedback and guidance on her project.

Professional Service

Dr. VanBuren continues to participate in the "nutria task force" monthly calls with state and federal wildlife managers, and in his role as Strategy Planning and Implementation Chair of the Southeast Beaver Alliance (SEBA).

Dr. VanBuren and colleagues hosted a consultation of SEBA members to inform the development of the organization's strategy.

Vertebrate Zoology
Marshall Boyd, Research Technician

Research & Collections

Field work

M. Boyd, C. VanBuren, and H. Bassett have continued documenting beaver activity across areas surrounding about a 1 hour radius of Martinsville including site visits, trail camera documentation and dendrochronology specimen acquisition. Anticipation of intern involvement for continued data collection and hopeful publication of this activity will continue throughout 2026. More sites with active beavers and the presence of Autumn Olive have been documented and are planned to be visited in the next quarter stretching to the surrounding counties.

Professional Presentations/Conferences

M. Boyd attended the North Carolina Herpetology Society Meeting in Asheboro, NC where collaborators/colleagues presented on past, currently active, and upcoming research projects related to the herpetofauna of the Mid-Atlantic but also elsewhere in the world.

Ongoing research

M. Boyd continues to collaborate with Dr. VanBuren on beaver and autumn olive research along with coordination of the developing Smith River project including Dr. Bassett. The project has reported on fauna found in or around the Smith River using camera traps with more technology and coordination on survey methods in the coming quarter. This project will include intern work, active collaboration with Fairy Stone State Park, Philpott Dam, and Dan River Basin Association (DRBA).

Professional Development

M. Boyd along with several other staff traveled to Washington, D.C. to attend a bird specimen preparation workshop led by Smithsonian staff where dry bird specimens were the main focus of learning techniques but also included a rundown of fluid bird specimen preparation and several collections tours both downtown and at the satellite facility Museum Support Center (MSC).

M. Boyd submitted a proposal for Dr. Paul Sattler to become a research associate of the VMNH. Approval of this proposal is still be awaited.

M. Boyd along with Dr. Jackson Means began hosting a paid intern Majestic Utt funded through one of the VMNH endowment programs. Majestic will be working part-time for several weeks on collections based projects determined by Boyd and Means per schedule allowance.

M. Boyd attended a training workshop in North Carolina to learn updated protocols, techniques, and procedures for mist netting bats in the region.

Collections Growth, Management and Use

M. Boyd along with H. Cartmell, C. VanBuren, and L. Hightower have continued to have volunteers working on collections either through Virginia Master Naturalist or more generalized volunteers who apply through the programs at the VMNH.

M. Boyd and J. Harris have continued to coordinate with Margaret Harden for the digitization of the VMNH nest and egg collection. M. Harden is documenting all the information of the ledger catalog that is associated with that collection into a digital spreadsheet. This ongoing project, when finished, will contribute towards the recuration of the collection and hopeful research project collaboration(s) 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.

Education & Outreach

VMNH-based Activities

M. Boyd along with the rest of the VMNH staff hosted the 2026 ReptileFest bringing in thousands of visitors of all ages. Newer partnerships with groups like the Department of Forestry, Martinsville Fire Department, and others.

M. Boyd worked alongside the VMNH education team to give short presentations about working at the museum in collections, background of Boyd's career trajectory to today, and projects that are currently happening at the VMNH.

M. Boyd assisted with an after hours event at the VMNH as a reprise to ReptileFest for the Martinsville Chamber of Commerce. Live animals were highlighted including the newest animal ambassador Uromastyx lizard.

M. Boyd led a behind the scenes tour to Ruth and Marvin Key, the winners of the auction item at the Wildlife Center of Virginia's gala event.

non-VMNH based Activities

M. Boyd led a herpetology hike at Sycamore Station near Roanoke, VA with 15 participants to learn about the ecology of the area. Snakes, turtles and frogs were all observed along with the occasional other non-anticipated animals like insects, birds, and mammals.

M. Boyd and other educators of the Virginia Herpetological Society (VHS) hosted an educational table at the Waynesboro Riverfest event where thousands of visitors came to learn about the ecology of Virginia but specifically the riparian habitats throughout the region.

M. Boyd worked alongside the park rangers of Fairy Stone State Park for the spring bioblitz. Live animals from the VMNH, local collaborators, and some live caught animals from the park itself aided in the educational programming. About 15 participants either staying at the park for the weekend or came in specifically for the event were present.

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.

M. Boyd continues to be the Social Media Coordinator for the Virginia Chapter of The Wildlife Society including the Facebook and Website 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 the role as Social Media Coordinator for the Virginia Chapter of The Wildlife 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

Sixteen (16) collections acquisitions were recorded for 540 individual specimens, 348 vials, 1 bag, and 5 boxes of specimens. These specimens were added to the invertebrate zoology, vertebrate zoology, and paleontology collections.

Three (3) outgoing loans were recorded from the invertebrate zoology and paleontology collections. The loans were to a VMNH Research Associate and William & Mary.

Ms. Harris (database administrator) reports that, within the collections management system *Re:discovery Proficio*, VMNH staff added/modified/updated 9,246 catalog records, according to database statistics.

Haley Cartmell, Collections Manager

Curators and staff modified/updated 7,194 existing records and added 25 new records to the VMNH collections databases during the months of April, May, and June 2026.

In April, VMNH staff members H. Cartmell, L. Hightower, M. Boyd, and C. VanBuren attended a week-long training class at the National Museum of Natural History in Washington, D. C., led by Museum Specialists Christina Gebhard and Brian Schmidt with the Division of Birds. This class focused on preparation techniques for bird specimens, which included demonstrations and hands-on practice.

Q4 OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2025
VMNH ACQUISITIONS FOR REVIEW BY BOARD OF TRUSTEES RESEARCH AND COLLECTIONS COMMITTEE

RIM* #	Collector/Donor	Date at VMNH	VMNH Dept.	QTY	Description	Method	To Be Accessioned (Y/N)
RIM 34-2025	VA Dept of Wildlife Resources (Leah Card)	10/18/2025	MAMMALOGY	1	American Porcupine (<i>Erethizon dorsatum</i>)	Transfer	Y
RIM 35-2025	Dr. Steven M. Roble	11/10/2025	RECENT INVERTEBRATES	1035	pinned beetles (Coleoptera), most unidentified	Transfer	Y
RIM 36-2025	Dr. Arthur V. Evans	5/16/2025	RECENT INVERTEBRATES	57	pinned insects, with data	Gift	Y
RIM 37-2025	Dr. Arthur V. Evans	5/16/2025	RECENT INVERTEBRATES	347	pinned insects, no data	Gift	N
RIM 38-2025	Canadian Museum of Nature (Dr. Robert S. Anderson)	9/30/2025	RECENT INVERTEBRATES	3	pinned weevil (Coleoptera: Curculionidae) PARATYPES; <i>Eurhoptus cariniventris</i> , <i>E. limbricatus</i> , <i>E. occidentalis</i>	Gift	Y
RIM 39-2025	Dr. Arthur V. Evans	11/13/2025	RECENT INVERTEBRATES	1029	pinned insects, with data	Gift	Y
RIM 40-2025	USDA-APHIS (John M. Leavengood, Jr. PhD)	11/19/2025	RECENT INVERTEBRATES	398	pinned insects (124 Coleoptera, 274 Hemiptera)	Gift	Y
RIM 41-2025	John D. Kleopfer	4/29/2025	HERPETOLOGY	1	Mole Kingsnake (<i>Lampropeltis rhombomaculata</i>)	Gift	Y
RIM 42-2025	Arianna Kuhn	3/4/2025	HERPETOLOGY	1	Bluetongue Skink (<i>Tiliqua scincoides</i>)	Gift	Y
RIM 43-2025	Marshall Boyd	11/24/2025	HERPETOLOGY	4	Wormsnake (<i>Carphophis amoenus</i>), Five-lined Skink (<i>Plestiodon fasciatus</i>), Dekay's Brownsnake (<i>Storeia dekayi</i>), Mole Kingsnake (<i>Lampropeltis calligaster rhombomaculata</i>)	Salvaged	Y
RIM 44-2025	Marshall Boyd	11/24/2025	MAMMALOGY	3	Flying Squirrel (<i>Glaucomys volans</i>), American Beaver (<i>Castor canadensis</i>), Raccoon skull (<i>Procyon lotor</i>)	Salvaged	Y
RIM 45-2025	Marshall Boyd	11/24/2025	ORNITHOLOGY	2	Barred Owl (<i>Strix varia</i>), Sharp-shinned Hawk (<i>Accipiter striatus</i>)	Salvaged	Y

* RIM is an acronym for the Record of Incoming Material form

Q1 JANUARY-MARCH 2026 and Q2 APRIL-JUNE 2026
VMNH ACQUISITIONS FOR REVIEW BY BOARD OF TRUSTEES RESEARCH AND COLLECTIONS COMMITTEE

RIM* #	Collector/Donor	Date at VMNH	VMNH Dept.	QTY	Description	Method	To Be Accessed (Y/N)
RIM 01-2026	Curt W. Harden	12/26/2025	RECENT INVERTEBRATES	192	dry, pinned beetles	Gift	Y
RIM 02-2026	Todd Gearheart	12/28/2025	RECENT INVERTEBRATES	9	frozen (deceased) invertebrates from pet trade: 7 tarantulas, 1 scorpion, and 1 centipede	Gift	N
RIM 03-2026	Elizabeth Moore	Pre 2017	HERPETOLOGY	3 boxes	turtle shells, no data	Found In Collection	N
RIM 04-2026	Robert Weems	2/19/2026	PALEONTOLOGY	7	footprints: dinosaur: theropod, sauropod, thyreophoran	Gift	Y
RIM 05-2026	Dr. Julian J. Lewis	3/13/2026	RECENT INVERTEBRATES	164 lots (910 indiv.)	75 lots (629 specimens) of identified Asellidae, including 4 male paratypes of <i>Caecidotea malarki</i> , 89 lots (281 specimens) of identified Oniscidea all lots in 95% ethanol	Gift	Y
RIM 06-2026	Marshall Boyd	3/25/2026	HERPETOLOGY	1	Eastern Rat Snake (<i>Pantherophis alleghaniensis</i>)	Salvaged	Y
RIM 07-2026	Liberty Hightower	3/3/2026	ORNITHOLOGY	1	Eastern Screech Owl, red phase (<i>Megascops asio</i>)	Salvaged	Y
RIM 08-2026	Todd Gearheart	12/28/2025	HERPETOLOGY	3	frozen (deceased) vertebrate lizards from pet trade: 2 <i>Uromastix ocellata</i> (male and female) and 1 <i>Trioceros hoenelii</i>	Gift	N
RIM 09-2026	VA DCR - NHP (Derek Hennen)	4/17/2026	RECENT INVERTEBRATES	307 vials	bulk samples of invertebrates in EtOH, also, one bee bowl sample contains a vertebrate (small frog)	Transfer	Y
RIM 10-2026	Columbia University - Paul E. Olsen	3/25/2026	PALEONTOLOGY	3	Item 1: 4 pcs of sediment w/giant paleonisciform fish bones and scales; Item 2: 2 pcs of sediment w/small paleonisciform fish skull and scales; Item 3: 2 slabs of mudstone w/ <i>Rhynchosauroides</i> footprints, small lizard- like reptile tracks	Gift	Y
RIM 11-2026	Adam Pritchard	4/14/2026	PALEONTOLOGY	1 box	shale and mudstone slabs w/Actinopterygian fishes, reptile tooth, fern, conchostracan invertebrates	Field Collection	Y
RIM 12-2026	One More Find - Doug Meneely	5/9/2026	PALEONTOLOGY	1	incisor, carnivoran mammal (most likely felid)	Gift	Y

* RIM is an acronym for the Record of Incoming Material form

Q1 JANUARY-MARCH 2026 and Q2 APRIL-JUNE 2026
VMNH ACQUISITIONS FOR REVIEW BY BOARD OF TRUSTEES RESEARCH AND COLLECTIONS COMMITTEE
Page 2

RIM* #	Collector/Donor	Date at VMNH	VMNH Dept.	QTY	Description	Method	To Be Accessioned (Y/N)
RIM 13-2026	Marshall Boyd	5/5/2026	HERPETOLOGY	1	Red Cornsnake (<i>Pantherophis guttatus</i>)	Salvaged	Y
RIM 14-2026	USDA-APHIS (Mary Krieger)	5/1/2026	MAMMALOGY	3	Nutria (<i>Myocastor coypus</i>)	Gift	Y
RIM 15-2026	Hayden Bassett	5/13/2026	ORNITHOLOGY	1	Scarlet Tanager (<i>Piranga olivacea</i>)	Salvaged	Y
RIM 16-2026	Markus Martin	4/15/2026	PALEONTOLOGY	6	2 <i>Triarthrus</i> trilobite specimens w/pyritized soft tissues and 4 slabs w/trilobite segments	Gift	Y
RIM 17-2026	William F. Schmachtenberg	4/15/2026	PALEONTOLOGY	1	pyritized <i>Triarthrus</i> trilobite exoskeletons w/soft tissues	Gift	Y
RIM 18-2026	Virginia Museum of Natural History Foundation	4/15/2026	PALEONTOLOGY	1	pyritized <i>Triarthrus</i> trilobite exoskeletons w/soft tissues	Purchase	Y
RIM 19-2026	Ryan Collins	4/12/2026	PALEONTOLOGY	5	4 boxes and 1 bag of vertebrate fossils	Gift	Y/N TBD – some may be accessioned; some may not be.
RIM 20-2026	Jackson R. Roberts	5/21/2026	HERPETOLOGY	1	Eastern Copperhead (<i>Agkistrodon contortrix</i>)	Field Collection	Y
RIM 21-2026	Robbie Hendrix- Wirt	6/25/2026	ORNITHOLOGY	1	Red-eyed Vireo (<i>Vireo olivaceus</i>)	Salvaged	Y
RIM 22-2026	VA DCR-DNH (Steven M. Roble)	6/24/2026	RECENT INVERTEBRATES	535	pinned insects - 303 unidentified Trichoptera and 232 unidentified Hymenoptera	Transfer	Y
RIM 23-2026	VA DCP-NHP (Thomas Malabad)	7/2/2026	RECENT INVERTEBRATES	31 vials	26 vials of myriapods and 5 vials of ants	Transfer	Y
RIM 24-2026	Michael Jeremiah	5/29/2026	PALEONTOLOGY	16	Models/casts: whale, shark, walrus, and <i>Archaeopteryx</i>	Gift	N

* RIM is an acronym for the Record of Incoming Material form

**OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2025 Q4, JANUARY-MARCH 2026 Q1, and APRIL-JUNE 2026 Q2
VMNH ACQUISITIONS FOR REVIEW BY BOARD OF TRUSTEES RESEARCH AND COLLECTIONS COMMITTEE**

VMNH Collections Committee and Executive Director have Approved Acquisitions:

RIM 34-2025 through RIM 45-2025 and RIM 01-2026 through RIM 24-2026

VMNH Board of Trustees Research & Collections Committee Review of Acquisitions:

RIM 34-2025 through RIM 45-2025 and RIM 01-2026 through RIM 24-2026

Dr. Carole L. Nash, Chair

(signature) Carole L. Nash, Chair

Date

Dr. Thomas R. Benzing

(signature) Thomas R. Benzing

Date

Dr. Melany Clark

(signature) Melany Clark

Date

Dr. David Furth

(signature) David Furth

Date

(signature)

Date

(signature)

Date

Note: this info will not print on final version, it is for informational purposes only, to help reviewers.

The only edits made to this document since the August 2023 BOT approved version are:

- the leaf cutter ant colony paragraph was removed, since we no longer have the ant colony, and
- all animal care sheets were removed. These care sheets are not policy, so they will become a procedural document, rather than a policy document. This is due to how frequently these care sheets change and every time they do, they would need BOT approval.

These changes have been approved by the VMNH Collections Committee and Executive Director.

Virginia Museum of Natural History

Policies for Live Animals

Table of Contents

I. Preface	3
II. Institutional Commitment and Animal Care	3
III. Acquisition.....	3
IV. Access and Use of Collections	4
V. Removal and Disposal of Deceased Animals	4
VI. Administration and Employee Responsibilities.....	4
VII. Permits, Inventory, and Annual Assessment of Resources	5
VIII. Transparency and Accountability	5
APPENDIX I. Live Animal Acquisition Consideration Form	6
APPENDIX II. Gift-In-Kind Form	9
APPENDIX III. Live Animal Annual Assessment Form	10
APPENDIX IV. Guidelines for Care and Maintenance.....	12

I. Preface

The Virginia Museum of Natural History (VMNH) uses live invertebrates, fish, amphibians, and reptiles in exhibits, education, and public programs as part of its mission to interpret Virginia's natural heritage within a global context in ways that are relevant to all citizens of the Commonwealth. These living collections serve an important role by helping to instill a sense of understanding and respect for creatures that are often misunderstood for a variety of reasons. The VMNH will not keep live mammals or birds without undergoing the American Zoological Association's accreditation process.

II. Institutional Commitment and Animal Care

The VMNH is committed to providing the financial, physical, and human resources necessary to safely and humanely care for the animals entrusted to its care. The Manager of the Department of Education and Public Programs (DEPP) and the Exhibits Manager, in consultation with other relevant staff and outside animal-care experts, are responsible for recommending to the VMNH Executive Director all the resources needed to effectively care for the VMNH's live animals that are housed at the museum. Research and Collections Division staff are responsible for effective care of all live animals housed in their research laboratories and office spaces.

The VMNH staff research the best practices of care and maintenance for each type of animal, and then apply these practices to the fullest extent possible. Under no circumstances will the VMNH take on responsibilities for numbers or types of animals that are beyond its ability to care for humanely, nor will it engage in any activity that threatens the welfare of animals, staff, or visitors. All staff assigned to assist in the maintenance of VMNH animals receive detailed training in the care and handling procedures for each species. The live animal collection at the VMNH is under the care of a licensed veterinarian, as required by permits issued by state and federal regulatory agencies. Yearly wellness checks will be conducted, and veterinary medical staff are contacted if emergency care is needed.

The live animal collection is funded in a variety of ways, such as through grants and individual donations. Funds acquired for the live animal collection may be secured through the Virginia Museum of Natural History Foundation, a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization that exists to support the mission and programs of the VMNH.

III. Acquisition

Acquisition of live animals is in full compliance with all applicable laws and regulations of local, state, federal, and international authorities. Animal ambassadors that are used in education and public programs are generally acquired through proposed donations that are considered on a case-by-case basis.

Acquisition of live animals requires VMNH staff to consider multiple criteria, including: the animal's health, habitat needs, veterinary care requirements, cost of care, legal concerns, and available

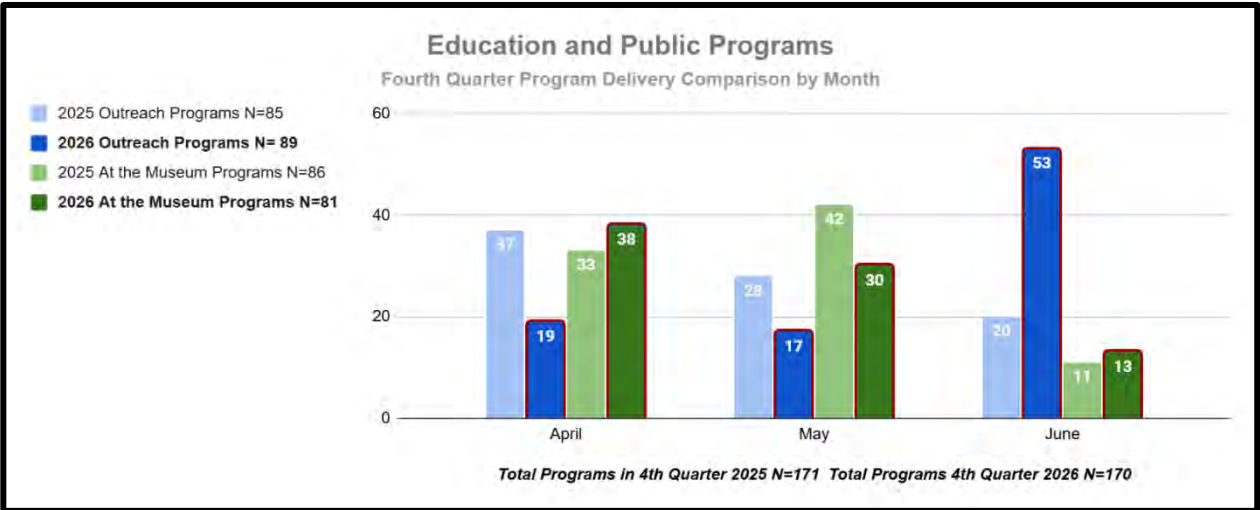
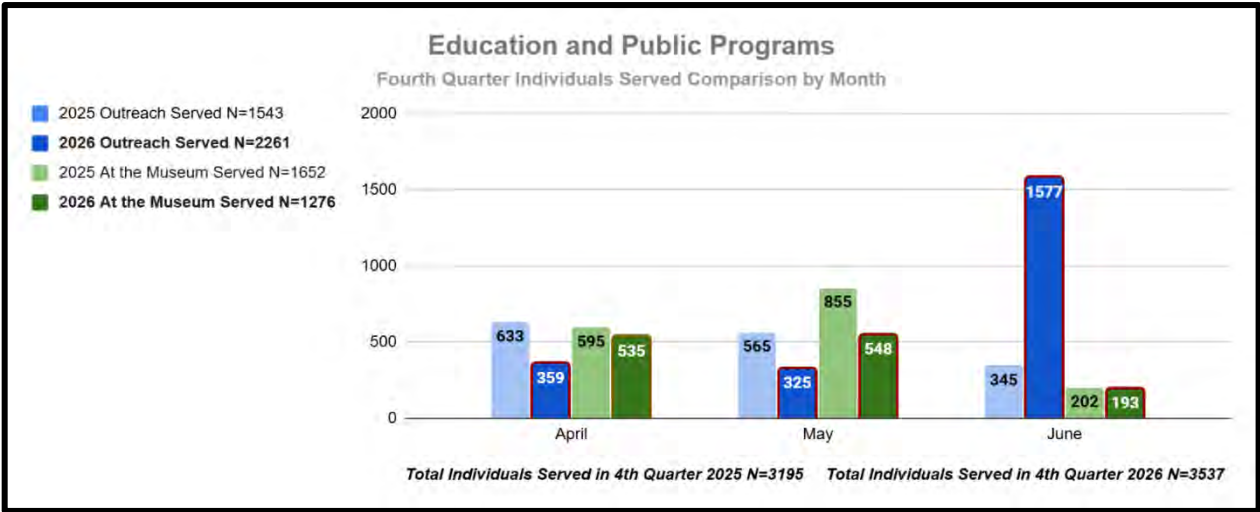
VMNH Board of Trustees Education and Public Programs Committee

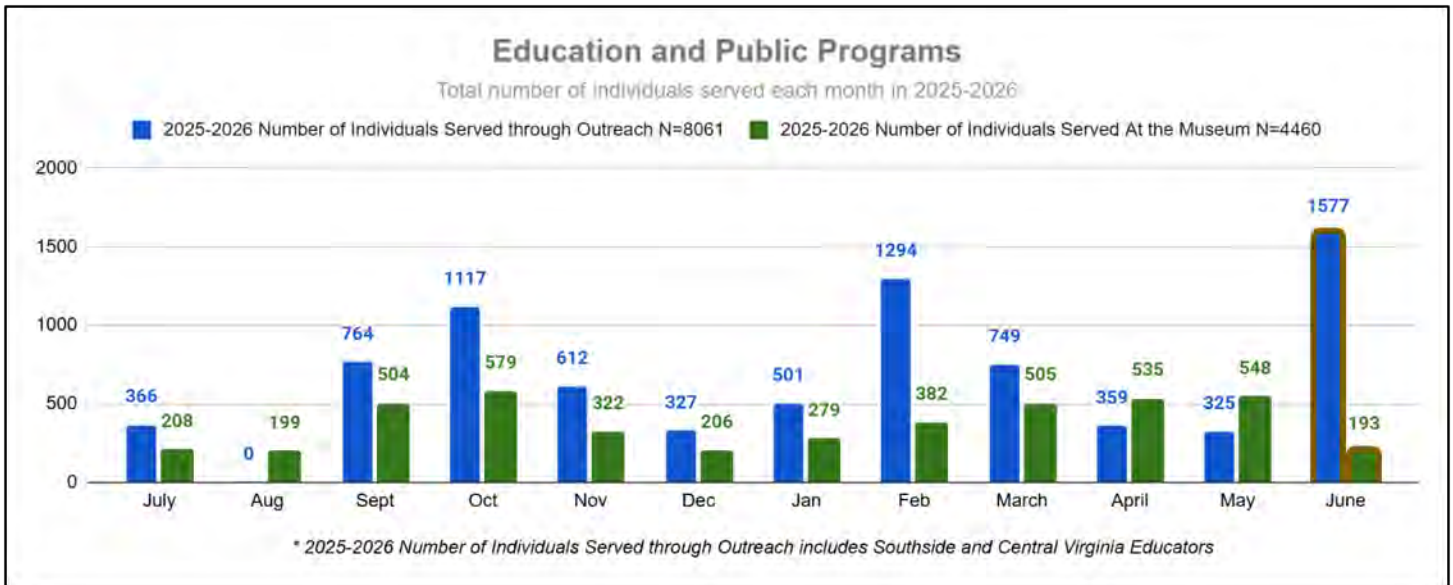
August 15, 2026, 9:00AM, VMNH

Agenda

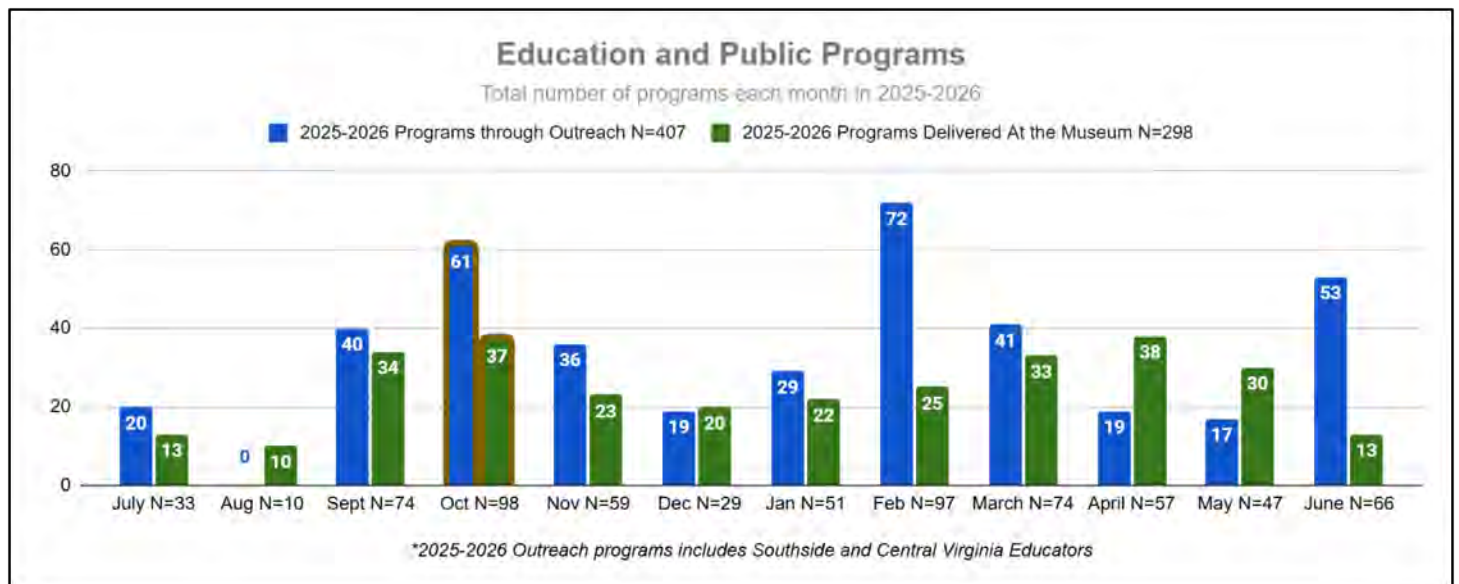
- Welcome and Introductions
- Approval/review of October 30, 2025 and May 16, 2026 meeting minutes
- Education Updates-
 - o Quarterly Numbers Served - (graphs attached)
 - At-the Museum highlights – educational activities for Reptile Festival, Homeschool Science and Engineering Academy year wrap-up, kick-off of summer adventure camps
 - Outreach highlights – wrap-up of scholarship programs with schools, partnered with Dr. Pritchard for education program at Piedmont VA Community College (Charlottesville), kick-off of programs with libraries across the state for their “Unearth a Story” Summer Reading Program
 - o FY 2025-2026 Education Department Year-End Report and assessments (graphs attached)
- Department Updates:
 - o Served as judges for Hardin Reynolds Memorial School (Patrick County) Science Fair
 - o Ms. Deatherage presented a Project WILD/Project Learning Tree workshop (environmental education curriculum) for formal and informal teachers in Danville. Ms. Brim and Ms. Sechrist participated and are now certified in the curriculum.
 - o Homeschool Science and Engineering Academy Open House scheduled for August 12 as launch for the next school year
 - o FY27 budget received from Martinsville City (requested \$10,815 and received \$10,382) and Henry County (requested \$35,000 and received \$27,075)
- Exhibit Updates with Ms. Dougherty

Numbers Served Data on Pages 2 and 3





For the year 2025-2026, June 2026 saw the highest number of individuals served.



For the year 2025-2026, October 2025 saw the highest number of programs delivered.

VMNH Executive Director's Board Report
2025–2030 Strategic Plan
August 2026, through 4th Quarter FY26
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.
- Reptile Festival was a success with 2500 in attendance. Preparation for July's Dinosaur Festival began shortly after.
- Offsite efforts have continued to project the reputation of VMNH outwards to the Commonwealth, including Riverfest, Waynesboro Street Art Festival, Cave and Karst Festival, Fossil Day in Caroline County, and others.
- Summer Camps were off to an excellent start, with all camps near or at capacity.
- The wind-down of this year's Homeschool Science and Engineering Academy illustrated the success of running both morning and afternoon sessions to serve a growing audience.
- New Assistant Curator of Herpetology Dr. Jackson Roberts began at VMNH in June.
- In a collaboration between VMNH Education, Herpetology, and Virginia Master Naturalists a new initiative of participating in the national data gathering program *Frog Watch* has been initiated.
- The VMNH-Waynesboro outreach trailer has been reopened with an installation of solar panels to enhance programming.
- A contract is underway to remove all asbestos-laden materials from the Douglas Avenue building. This will be a 60-day project.



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	
1.3 R&C to Needs	New exhibits manager hired, Amphibian Cons. Team		ongoing	
1.4 Strategic use	Pavilion programming and rental opportunities; Homeschool support.		ongoing	
1.5 VA250 Exhibit	Exhibits installed, VA250 event Feb. 2026	Complete	Q3 FY26	
1.6 Traveling Ex.	Trilobite and <i>Tanytrachelos</i> exhibits being researched and prepped		Q2 FY27	
1.7 Science story	Planning in queue, <i>Petra's Lair</i> , <i>Tany's</i> story		ongoing	
1.8 VMNH-W	Advocacy in General Assembly, Lobbying			GA Advocacy, visits to home districts
1.9 New Wing	Begin in-house master plan		Q2 FY27	Engage Facilities Comm, begin formulation of B&G strategy going forward.
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

2.2 Boards	Boards determine collaborative avenues; endowment requests		Q1 FY28	Begin requests of VMNH-F Q1 FY28
2.3 Festivals	Reaching full complement of staff; VMNH Exhibits Trailer returns to Waynesboro April 2026 – <i>Riverfest, Museum Rodeo</i>		Q2 FY25	Board volunteer work at Festivals, VMNH-W Trailer
2.4 Young Expl.	Designing layout, selecting interactives		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:
 - o Preparations and design for Young Explorers Center.
 - o Advocation for movement of VMNH-Waynesboro to construction phase.
 - This includes general advocacy (Board participation welcome)
 - o Working with architect for next steps in Douglas Avenue rehab project – currently engaging with asbestos mitigation, with HVAC work to follow.
 - o Thanking donors for annual fund and other forms of support.
 - o Planning for July *Dinosaur Festival*.
- Notes on Strategic Goals
 - o 1.1: Douglas Avenue rehab
 - Contractor is actively working on asbestos abatement
 - Risk: Next step in HVAC. High inflationary numbers could impact future budget.
 - o 1.3: Connect R&C to contemporary issues
 - A partnership between VMNH Education, Herpetology, and Virginia Master Naturalists generated the Amphibian Conservation Team, which gathers frog call data observations for the international program *Frog Watch*. Amphibians are important indicators of ecosystem health.
 - o 1.4: Strategic use of the Jean S. Adams Education Pavilion
 - Homeschool and summer camp programs use the space regularly.
 - A pilot happy hour/trivia evening was conducted for 18 visitors.

- o 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) for exhibit.
 - Beginning of storytelling with the Amphibian Conservation Team.
- o 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 start monthly donor engagement activities.
- o 2.4 Young Explorers Center
 - A general layout has been determined.
 - Some specific activities facilitating open-ended play have been selected, and more will be selected in near future.

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:
 - o Reach out to their local delegate and senator to give support.
 - o Contact the Governor's Office
 - o Join staff in museum advocacy ~ February 2026
- 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.
- Board members can identify **potential prospects** for new memberships, new donations, new corporate partners, and future endowment gifts.
 - o Host a cocktail hour at location of choice, to be accompanied by Director and other staff.
 - o Set a meeting with a company's Community Liaison.
 - o Invite associates to attend a museum event with you.
 - o Organize with a curator's input a field trip for natural history enthusiasts.
 - o Schedule a facilities tour with the Director.
 - o Schedule a hard hat tour of a new facility (e.g., Young Explorers Center) in late 2026.
- 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**.
- 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**
- **Fundraising Tasks**
- **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).

FESTIVALS

Waynesboro Fall Foliage

**Waynesboro
October 17 - 18**

Bonez and Booz
October 24

CELEBRATING VIRGINIA'S Natural History

*An evening with author and artist
Suzanne Stryk*

*The Middle of Somewhere:
An Artist Explores the Nature
of Virginia*

Thursday, September 17, 5:30 PM

EVENTS

Special Exhibit Opening
**Water/Ways
August 27, 5:30 PM**

Behind the Science Tour
**Spirits of the Dead
October 29**

MEETINGS

Board of Trustees
**November 14, 2026
February 19, 2027
May 15, 2027**



Virginia Museum of
NATURAL HISTORY
IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

Advancement Report

FY26 through the 4th quarter

EARNED REVENUE

	<i>FY25</i>	FY26
VMNH Foundation	\$420,926	\$5,091,911
VMNH	\$188,687	\$200,311
Total	\$609,613	\$5,292,222

TABLE OF CONTENTS

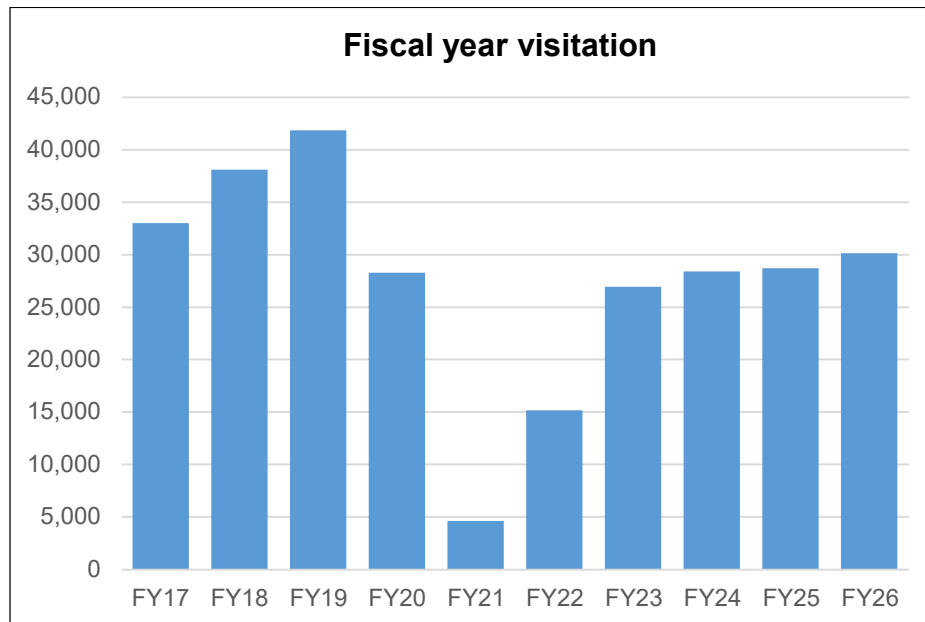
2. Earned revenue details
Endowment, Memberships, Partnerships
3. Recent events (4th quarter of FY26)
4. Upcoming events (FY27)
8. Exhibits
Marketing
Museums for All
9. Demographics

VISITATION

Visitation: 30,151

Admissions: \$115,677

Museum Store: \$77,871



EARNED REVENUE DETAILS

<u>Museum earned revenue</u>	<u>FY25</u>	<u>FY26</u>
Admissions	\$96,165	\$115,677
Museum Store	\$83,963	\$77,871
Museum Rental	\$7,768	\$5,840
Publications	\$791	\$923
Total	\$188,687	\$200,311

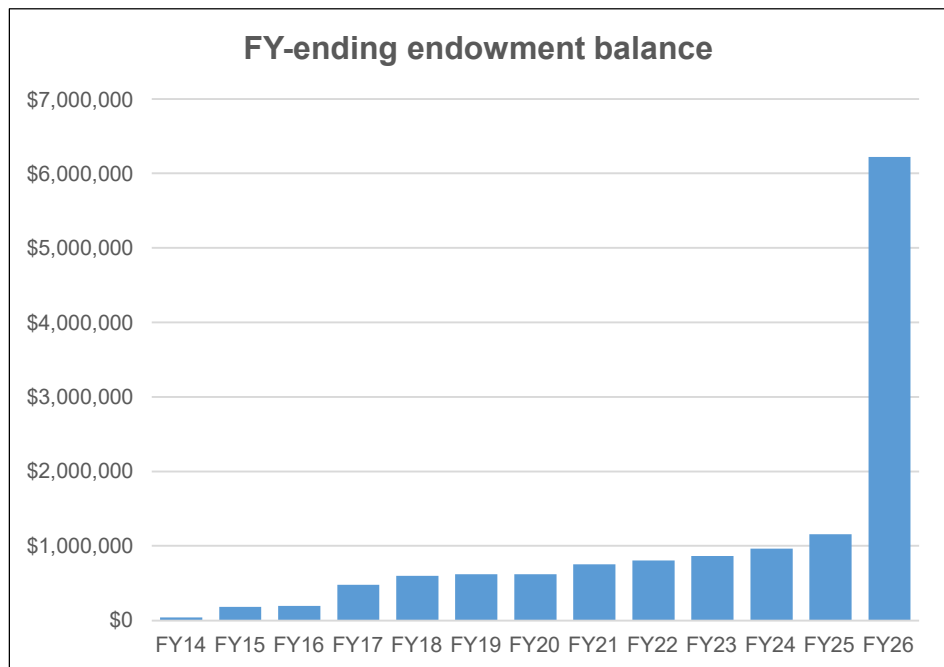
<u>VMNH Foundation revenue</u>	<u>FY25</u>	<u>FY26</u>
Memberships/Corp.		
Partnerships	\$33,320	\$25,377
Annual Fund	\$71,819	\$90,341
Research restricted gifts	\$103,677	\$88,708
Education restricted gifts	\$15,825	\$4,160
Exhibits restricted gifts	\$3,500	\$1,500
*Other restricted gifts	\$192,785	\$4,881,825
Total	\$420,926	\$5,091,911

**There were \$22,920 in endowment gifts during FY25 and \$4,809,385 in endowment gifts during FY26, all included in the "Other restricted gifts" total.*

ENDOWMENT, MEMBERSHIPS, PARTNERSHIPS

Endowment (balance ending 4th quarter)

FY10	\$30,244
FY11	\$32,949
FY12	\$33,666
FY13	\$38,737
FY14	\$38,800
FY15	\$182,220
FY16	\$192,479
FY17	\$476,480
FY18	\$598,483
FY19	\$618,827
FY20	\$618,492
FY21	\$752,978
FY22	\$802,161
FY23	\$864,019
FY24	\$961,883
FY25	\$1,156,569
FY26	\$6,222,790



June 30, 2026 balances:

General Endowment Fund balance:	\$5,737,780
Pete Henika Memorial Fund balance:	\$210,937
Richard Hoffman Fund balance:	\$249,170
<u>Pete Boisseau Research Fund balance:</u>	<u>\$24,903</u>
Total	\$6,222,790

Memberships

<u>FY22</u>	<u>FY23</u>	<u>FY24</u>	<u>FY25</u>	<u>FY26</u>
446	588	632	593	592

Corporate Partnerships: 43

RECENT EVENTS (4th quarter of FY26)

April 1 – VMNH Foundation Nominating Committee meeting, noon to 1 p.m.

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

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

April 21 – Wayne Theatre Science Talk: Chris Bolgiano

April 24-25 – Reptile Festival

Sponsored by:

Community Foundation Serving Western Virginia

Boxley

Carter Bank

Bassett Furniture Industries

Brightspeed

Renewal by Andersen of Roanoke

Hooker Furnishings

Virginia Tourism Corporation

Community Foundation Serving Western Virginia

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

May 2 – Waynesboro Riverfest, 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

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

May 7 – Teacher Appreciation Event

May 15 – VMNH Foundation Board meeting (Distance Learning Classroom)

May 16 – VMNH BOT meeting

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

June-August 2026 – VMNH Summer Camps

Sponsored by:

Kiwanis

Southwestern Piedmont Chapter – Virginia Master Naturalists

Wallace Parham

Dr. Ray Bernor

UPCOMING EVENTS (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 26 – Closing day of *The Age of Dinosaurs* exhibit

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 – 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

October 2026 – (specific date TBA) BOT Finance and Development/Marketing Committee meeting, 10 a.m.

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

October 13 – Wayne Theatre Science Talk (speaker TBA)

October 14 – National Fossil Day at VMNH

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

October 24 – Bonez & Booz

Sponsored by:

Brightspeed

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

October 29 – Spirits of the Dead (Ticketed event) \$25.00, 50 Tickets

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

November 6-7 – (rescheduled from May 1-2) – VAM meetup sleepover

November 13 – VMNH BOT meeting (Richmond)\

November 2026 – BOT Research & Collections Committee meeting

November 2026 – BOT Education Committee meeting

November 2026 – BOT Facilities Committee meeting

November 10 – Wayne Theatre Science Talk (speaker TBA)

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 – BOT Finance and Development/Marketing Committee (date TBD)

January 2027 – Behind the Science event (date TBD)

January 12, 2027 – Pete Eshelman, Director, Roanoke Outside Foundation,
"Harnessing/Marketing Our Outdoor Resources"

January 14, 2027 – Member/supporter reception for the *Birds of Virginia* special exhibit,
5:50 to 7 p.m.

January 16, 2027 to February 5, 2028 – *Birds of Virginia* special exhibit

January 19, 2027 – Wayne Theatre Science Talk (speaker TBA)

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

February 2027 – Behind the Science event (date TBD)

February 9, 2027 – Wayne Theatre Science Talk (speaker TBA)

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 9, 2027 – Wayne Theatre Science Talk (speaker TBA)

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

April 2027 – Behind the Science event (date TBD)

April 20, 2027 – Wayne Theatre Science Talk (speaker TBA)

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

April 23-24, 2027 – Reptile Festival

Sponsored by:

Brightspeed

Carter Bank

Bassett Furniture Industries

May 2027 – Behind the Science event (date TBD)

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

May 6, 2027 – Teacher Appreciation Event

June 2027 – Behind the Science event (date TBD)

June-July 2027 – Summer Adventure Camps

Sponsored by:

SW VA Master Naturalists

Kiwanis

EXHIBITS

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

Open through July 26, 2026 – *The Age of Dinosaurs* exhibit

Sponsored by:

Patterson Trust

Bassett

MHC Tourism

Community Foundation Serving Western Virginia

January through December 2026 – VA 250 exhibit at VMNH

Sponsored by:

Virginia Tourism Corporation

O. Randolph and Martha Rollins

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

January 16, 2027 to February 5, 2028 – *Birds of Virginia* special exhibit

MARKETING

Virginia Living Magazine

[10 Prim and Proper Ways to Celebrate Bridgerton in Virginia](#)

WHSV-TV (ABC Affiliate - Harrisonburg)

[Waynesboro campus of Virginia Museum of Natural History seeking funding](#)

MUSEUMS FOR ALL

**MFA as a % of total
visitation**

	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26
1 st quarter	4.0%	16.5%	16.2%	21.4%	14.0%
2 nd quarter	2.5%	28.6%	20.3%	19.7%	19.1%
3 rd quarter	6.0%	9.5%	6.8%	8.1%	1.9%
4 th quarter	8.2%	15.8%	17.4%	14.1%	14.6%

DEMOGRAPHICS

Where our visitors came from

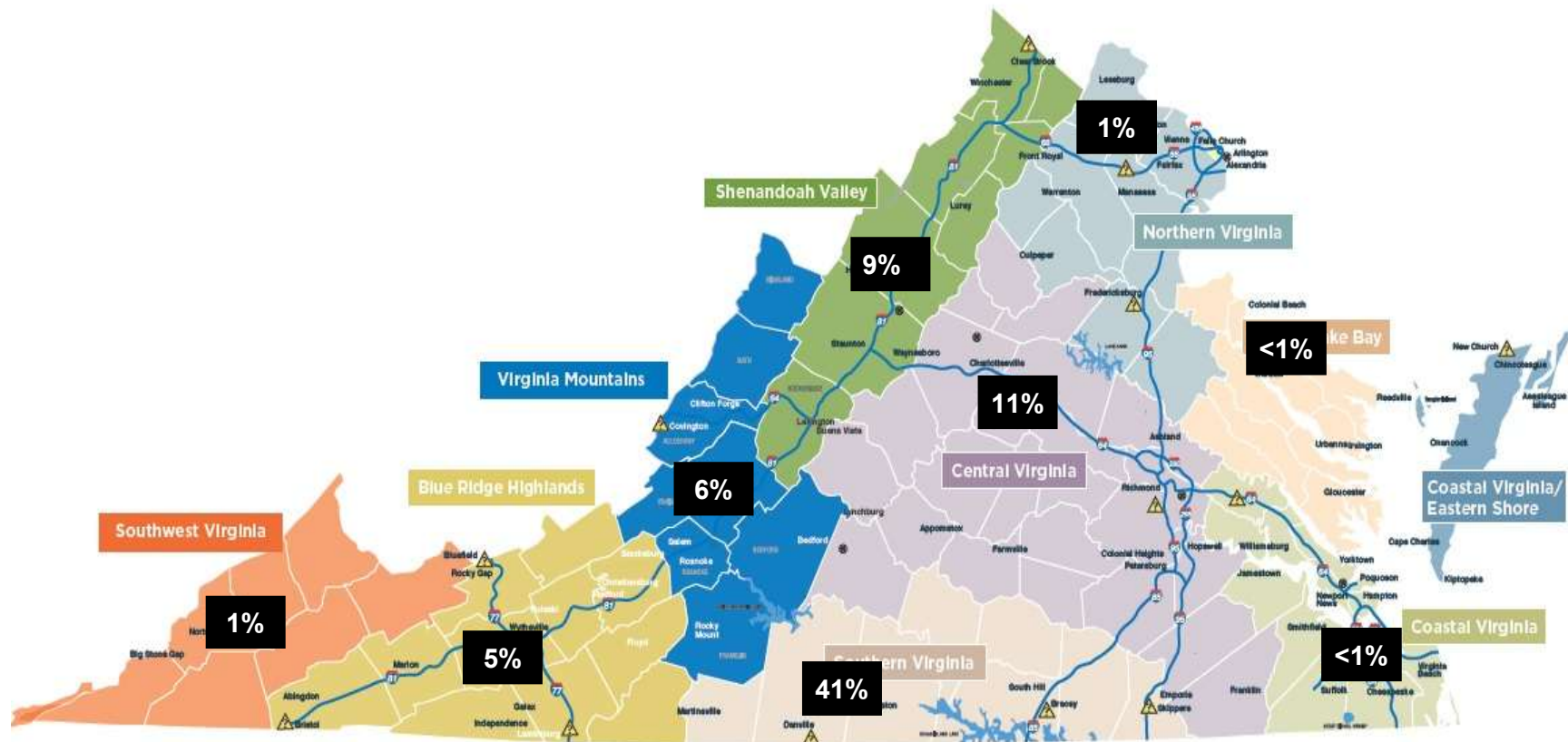
Virginia	75% (see map for breakdown among the 10 Virginia Tourism Regions)
Martinsville/Henry County	31%
Danville/Pittsylvania County	9%
Other Virginia	35%
North Carolina	19%
States other than VA & NC	6%

FY26 saw visitors from 37 states:

AK, AL, AR, AZ, CA, CT, FL, GA, HI, IL, KS, KY, LA, MA, MD, ME, MI, MO, MS, NC, NH, NJ, NY, OH, OK, OR, PA, SC, TN, TX, UT, VA, VT, WA, WI, WV

Who our visitors are

Adults (ages 19-59):	44%
Seniors (ages 60+):	7%
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%



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