

- Campaign Summary -

The history of Virginia and the leadership of Thomas Jefferson are inseparable. While well known for his role in government, education, and architecture, Thomas Jefferson also merits distinction as the father of North American paleontology. Imagine a time when giant ground sloths stood nearly 10 feet tall, giant beavers were the size of modern



bears, and mastodons roamed Virginia. These animals transfixed the ever-inquisitive Jefferson. He believed that the American frontier still supported these megafaunal creatures. In fact, during his presidency he directed Lewis & Clark to keep an eye out for them.

While Jefferson was genuinely disappointed when the great explorers reported that they did not encounter any of these animals roaming the frontier, we actually have an opportunity to enjoy them today as fossils and wonder what the world must have been like when they lived. The

Virginia Museum of Natural History envisions a new center along the South River in Waynesboro that will honor Jefferson’s legacy – and, the rich natural history of Virginia – with reconstructions of the skeletons of animals that Thomas Jefferson studied during his life.

This is just one example of the exhibits and stories that will come to life in the proposed museum center to be located in heart of the Shenandoah Valley and Blue Ridge region.

The Virginia Museum of Natural History is the place where visitors learn about the Commonwealth’s remarkable natural heritage and the local cultures that are an important part of Virginia’s history. At the Museum, curators assemble and study a vast array of artifacts and specimens to better understand our natural treasures and resources. At the same time, the Museum’s educators and staff create imaginative exhibits to share scientific information in ways that are fascinating and enjoyable.

The Museum first opened its doors to the public in 1984 in a renovated school building in Martinsville. In 2007, it celebrated the opening of its new home, a 21st century facility complete with modern exhibits and hi-tech laboratories. In just three decades, the Museum has assembled 10+ million specimens and artifacts in its collections, created academic relationships throughout the Commonwealth, and established itself as a tourism and economic draw in Virginia’s southern tier, attracting tens of thousands of visitors to Martinsville.

“To interpret Virginia’s natural heritage within a global context in ways that are relevant to all citizens of the Commonwealth.”
 - Statement of Mission

This is good news and reflects dedicated work by all involved with the Museum. In looking at our future, we now are preparing to take another exciting step – creating a second home for the Museum. More than a new place, the new center planned for Waynesboro represents a new way to share the story of Virginia’s natural history and bring our interest in the study of the natural sciences to a new level. Its convenient location in Waynesboro means the center will be just a short distance from the South Entrance of the Shenandoah National Park.

Our center will fulfill this desire – and, so much more. It will not only have science-based exhibits, but it will also contain classrooms, meeting space, and a large child-friendly Playscape for our young visitors to participate in creative early childhood learning experiences. The focus throughout the center will be on the balance between entertainment and education. Parents and teachers will appreciate that all the exhibit information will align with the expectations of Virginia’s Standards of Learning for Science. Visitors will find the experience one that not only informs, but also inspires.

With Waynesboro currently undergoing a renaissance, we believe this is an optimal time for this initiative. According to a study by Chmura Economics & Analytics, The proposed facility will draw more than 65,000 people to the downtown area annually who otherwise might not visit providing \$1.8 million in economic benefits. Once there, visitors also will have opportunities to visit the Wayne Theater, Constitution Park, the South River, and the area’s many shops and restaurants. Our center will anchor an array of commercial, cultural, and recreational activities to mark Waynesboro’s emergence as a destination city.



Simply, this is the right time and place for the Virginia Museum of Natural History to branch out. It’s the right time to create a place in Waynesboro that reflects our values, enriches our programs, and meets the needs of Virginia for an expanded focus on nature, the environment and our natural history. To fulfill this aspiration, the Museum aims to raise \$10 million to provide the financial resources for a state-of-the-art natural science interpretive center that sets a new standard for excellence. It will have the kind and quality of facilities needed to best serve the people of Virginia and our visitors from throughout the United States and beyond. To date, the city, community organizations, and individuals have secured more than \$280,000 in cash and firm commitments for the new center. It’s the right time to take this step.

The Virginia Museum of Natural History operates as an agency of the Commonwealth and – through the Virginia Museum of Natural History Foundation – its operating revenue reflects a combination of philanthropic support and public sector funds. This partnership was evident in 2007 when the Museum’s home facility in Martinsville was built, at a cost of \$22 million, with both public sector and charitable contributions funding the construction project.

Looking ahead –

- We have initiated discussions with Commonwealth officials to identify potential funding opportunities for the center, through budget appropriations and an anticipated bond issue.
- We anticipate drawing on our strong track record in attracting grant funds for this project. Over the years, we have raised several million dollars through the National Science Foundation, the Institute for Museum & Library Services, and the National Geographic Society.
- A critically important milestone recently was reached when the City of Waynesboro agreed to provide one half acre on Main Street and related services worth roughly \$165,000 for the center.

Your support of this campaign will help bring this educational, scientific, and tourism asset to Waynesboro. By your investment in this new center, you will be creating a cornerstone for the

Shenandoah Valley's educational and cultural community. You will touch the lives, the passions, and the imaginations of the individuals, families, and students who visit the Center as well as our talented behind the scenes professionals and volunteers, our curators, scientists, and visiting faculty members, and all those who share a deep appreciation for the natural sciences and our own Commonwealth's rich natural history.



We believe you will see that our priorities in this campaign will enhance the lives of those who call this region home – and who visit our region – in multiple ways. The new branch of the Museum in Waynesboro will add important exhibit space and environmental classrooms; enhance laboratory capacity to explore, understand, and conserve the ecology of the region; and foster collaborative ventures with local

college & universities unlike anything being done anywhere in the Commonwealth. Your support will propel us into the future. Here is a brief overview of our plans –

- Highlights of Our Campaign Initiatives -

The Waynesboro Natural Science Interpretive Center \$5,400,000.

The heart of the campaign is the construction of a 20,000 square-foot facility to serve as a new and permanent second home for the Museum. Within the center, we envision an array of activities that will bring the wonders of our natural history to patrons and the entire region in new and exciting ways.

- When you enter, you'll first see an attractive and dynamic landscape of exhibits. The Museum will use its extensive collections to interpret natural history with a focus on the unique and beautiful resources of the Shenandoah Valley and the Blue Ridge region.
- Exhibits will feature the South River, site of aquatic study by more than a dozen universities.
- The Big-Levels Salamander is a small terrestrial salamander found nowhere else on earth other than a high mountain ponds 15 miles south of Waynesboro. Its presence at the center will be a testament to the ecological distinctiveness of this part of Virginia.
- Past peoples of the region will be explored, as well as fossils representing ancient life that once lived here.
- In the center's open space, the curators will focus on a steady stream of special exhibits to keep the galleries dynamic and fresh. The open space also will be ideal for private events. Imagine attending a reception or dinner in the presence of the creatures that riveted Jefferson!

With a commitment to forging collaborations in the community, we are exploring strategies to engage scientists and educators from Waynesboro's near-by colleges and universities in joint research and educational sessions for school-age visitors and K-12 classes. Our multi-use year-round facility will offer creative opportunities for local undergraduate students and their faculty mentors to engage in laboratory research and present their discoveries as special exhibits and educational programs.

The Exhibits

\$3,600,000.

The center will offer a place for our curators to unveil many artifacts and collections that have not yet been exhibited by the Museum. The creative new exhibits will feature items that represent the local environment and natural history of the Shenandoah Valley and Blue Ridge region.

- Environmental classrooms will support STEM education for students and a wide variety of special events for civic, conservation, and private groups.
- The nearby Wildlife Center of Virginia will provide live animal programs featuring native raptors, amphibians, and other fauna.
- Interactive video links will connect the students in Waynesboro and around the state with our exhibits in Martinsville as well as our staff scientists who discover species new to science.

The Playscape

\$750,000.

In this 2,000 square foot highly interactive area, children will be encouraged to –

- Dig for fossils.
- Go spelunking in a simulated cave environment.
- Engage water tables that demonstrate hydrology.
- Explore on their own (or with their families) the contents of educational kits on local fauna.

Whatever they choose to do, the Playscape will be a special place for our young visitors to have fun while learning more about the world around them.



The Laboratory

\$250,000.

The center will feature publicly viewable laboratories in which scientists can conduct bench research within a short distance of their field sites.

- Curators and university partners will have the opportunity to work on questions pertaining to the South River and the National Park right within our facility.
- As in Martinsville, volunteers and student interns will participate in these studies, which might involve analysis of water chemistry, sorting through samples of amazing insects, or scraping rock away from fossil bones exposing ancient animal life to human eyes for the first time.

The Campaign For The Virginia Museum of Natural History’s Waynesboro Center – Join Us!

As we prepare to move forward, we ask you to be a part of this special endeavor that will dramatically broaden the educational outreach of the museum to a larger share of the Commonwealth’s population and visitors. We are confident those who come to the center and participate in its programs will better understand and appreciate the natural treasure of the Blue Ridge Mountains and the Shenandoah Valley.

This is no small project. It will require financial support and advocacy from generous individuals, foundations, corporations, and government. Your investment in the Waynesboro Center will ensure that you, your family, and friends enjoy the opportunity to experience personally the museum’s extensive collections and its innovative and informative programs. It’s time for this exciting new step for the region, its economy, and the Virginia Museum of Natural History. We invite you to join us!

Thank you.