

**H I S T O R Y**





**DENVER MUSEUM OF NATURE & SCIENCE  
ANNUAL REPORT**

# 115 YEARS OF HISTORY IN THE MAKING

In 1900, when the Denver Museum of Nature & Science was established, the population of Denver was about 130,000.

Today, the population of the seven-county metropolitan area exceeds 3 million people. In 2015, likely beyond our founders' wildest dreams, the Museum served 1.7 million people reaching one of the highest annual attendances in our history.

This Museum has grown right along with the region, and the Board of Trustees, staff, and volunteers are continuing a legacy of creating a world-class institution that helps make metro Denver among the most vibrant American cities.

We are thrilled that so many donors, members, and local citizens play a role in this history. In addition to the incredible attendance, the Museum ended the year with a record 70,000 member households. Community Free Days also experienced a surge, with 124,600 guests enjoying free access made possible by the citizens of the Scientific & Cultural Facilities District (SCFD).

After our first full fiscal year of operation, our investment in the new south wing has clearly expanded our ability to serve the community.

- The Morgridge Family Exploration Center has boosted our field trip experiences, offering a fresh approach to science education. More than 311,200 people visited in school and organized youth groups, nearly all for free or at a reduced cost. Ongoing collaborations with several metro area schools and districts ensure we are offering rich opportunities for both students and teachers.
- The Anschutz Gallery has doubled our capacity to present engaging experiences through exhibitions. For the first time, there was a temporary exhibition open for our guests every day in 2015. While all five exhibitions that filled the two galleries were successful, *Mythic Creatures* significantly exceeded expectations. With more than 524,000 guests, it is our most popular nonsurcharged temporary exhibition to date.

- Seventy percent of the science collections have been relocated to their forever home in the Avenir Collections Center. With the scientists actively collecting at sites across the country and beyond, this state-of-the-art facility provides not only long-awaited expanded space to safely preserve the collections but also vastly improved conditions in which to conduct research and make new discoveries. Especially notable is the increase in the number of people we can now accommodate for behind-the-scenes collections tours, 10,500 in 2015—five times the number from previous years.

The Museum team also devoted 2015 to a renewed commitment to building and deepening relationships.

- The first Girls and Science event was a phenomenal success, with dozens of professionals from the STEAM community serving as role models and igniting a passion for science in nearly 7,000 girls and their families.
- The second annual Día del Niño celebration, copresented with the Mexican Cultural Center and many other partners, was enjoyed by more than 18,000 people of all ages.
- The Denver Mini Maker Faire was held at the Museum for the first time, tapping into a natural partnership with people who use their curiosity and imagination to innovate, create, and sustain.
- Firefly Autism held their annual party at the Museum, the beginning of a collaboration with the autism community to intentionally provide resources to families whose children benefit from low-sensory experiences.
- *Dinosaur Gulch* at Cherry Creek Shopping Center, our first offsite exhibition, opened and brings the Museum experience beyond our walls and further into the community, sparking a passion for nature and science in young children and their families.



Being an established cultural institution for 115 years comes with a special responsibility. Our guests range from older people who have lived here their whole lives and remember their first childhood visit, to young people who represent the first generation to grow up in this country. And they all matter as the Museum strives to help make Colorado a great place to live by offering experiences that are fun, informative, inspiring, and relevant. We are committed to continually asking both our most dedicated supporters and those who are not regular visitors what they want, need, and expect from us.

Since our founding, the Museum has been the grateful recipient of tremendous support from individuals, foundations, corporations, and government entities. This partnership has continually expanded the Museum into new and exciting arenas while staying true to our mission. The Museum today reflects the legacy of local citizens who had a vision, and we will continue to evolve and grow with this community. Thank you for being a part of making innovative experiences and discoveries, making new relationships, making future scientists, and making history.

A handwritten signature in white ink, reading "Wayne Hutchens".

Wayne Hutchens, Chairman, Board of Trustees

A handwritten signature in white ink, reading "George Sparks".

George Sparks, President and CEO









**T**hrough a new initiative entitled No Walls, we are intentionally looking outward, taking the Museum to where people live, work, play, and learn, through both physical “discovery outposts” and virtual platforms.

The first outpost, *Dinosaur Gulch* at Cherry Creek Shopping Center, opened in 2015. Museum scientists and educators collaborated on the development of this play area, making an experience that while whimsical is also steeped in science. *Dinosaur Gulch* represents only the first of what will eventually be a variety of offsite exhibits and other interactive ways to enjoy the Museum in the heart of metro neighborhoods and outlying communities. Conversations between the Museum and area schools are defining what this audience needs from us, leading to pilot projects that will launch for testing in 2016. A similar process will guide our reimagining of programming for family and public audiences.

Back at the Museum, new studios for the Virtual Science Academy were completed in 2015, greatly enhancing opportunities for students to engage with the Museum without leaving their classroom using interactive video conferencing. With recent advances in software, any school with a camera-enabled laptop and projector can participate, no matter their budget and resources, and engage with real scientists and the Museum’s educational content. A milestone in 2015 was a live Scientist in Action broadcast featuring Colorado-educated astronaut Kjell Lindgren from the International Space Station, temporarily transporting hundreds of kids from their desks and into a world of boundless possibilities.



**F**ree access for our guests who can use a little extra support continues to be a priority for the Museum. A successful example of this model has been in operation since 2011, when the Museum began extending free general admission for schools and organized youth groups, offering the opportunity to enjoy enriching field trips without having to worry about tight budgets.

The Cultural Pass Program, which invites families to borrow free memberships from the library, was significantly expanded in 2015. The Museum is partnering with Denver, Aurora, Jefferson County, and Westminster library systems in some of the metro area's most diverse neighborhoods to offer 67 Cultural Passes. Each pass constitutes a Family Plus membership and can be enjoyed by up to seven total guests in the group. The Museum participated in the City of Denver's MY Denver Card and 5 by 5 Program, each of which grants free admission benefits to school-aged children. As a Blue Star Museum we also extend free general admission to active-duty military personnel and their families all summer long.


Free Days sponsored by the Scientific & Cultural Facilities District continue to be extremely popular with the community. We welcomed 124,600 guests during 12 Free Days, which are always among the liveliest days at the Museum. Partnerships with the citizens of the SCFD and other generous supporters make great things happen as together we carefully consider how to best serve our entire community.











**R**elationships are what make the difference between an isolated cultural institution and a community anchor. Since its founding, the Museum has been dedicated to making and fostering connections in order to truly be our community's museum, and today these efforts are more vital than ever as the metro area grows and changes at the a phenomenal pace.

In 2015, a plethora of events were co-created with organizations tied to people who are historically underrepresented among our visitors or in the STEAM world. During the inaugural Girls and Science event, in partnership with CBS4, 7,000 girls and their families explored science careers and interacted with women scientists. This intention to consider what the Museum can do for our community was the impetus behind other collaborations, such as with The Center to present LGBT Family Day, and with the Mexican Cultural Center and the Mexican Consulate to offer Día del Niño, an SCFD Free Day enjoyed by 18,200 guests. The Denver Mini Maker Faire was held at the Museum for the first time, highlighting our common interest with the maker movement in invention, creativity, and resourcefulness.

The Museum also cohosted its first sensory-friendly event, with Firefly Autism. Families with a child on the autism spectrum report that museums are a stressful high-sensory environment during regular business hours. New partnerships with Firefly and the Autism Society of Colorado are leading to more events in 2016, and the development of backpacks containing supplies designed to aid individuals with sensory processing disorders to access the Museum in comfort and security.

**T**he energy of people tapping into their natural curiosities is palpable in the Museum. School groups are among our most enthusiastic guests, and we continue to seek new models for serving this audience. Now in its second year, a partnership with Westminster Public Schools (formerly Adams County 50) targets the needs of both the student and the teacher.

During eight weeks in fall 2015, students and teachers from all Westminster elementary and K–8 schools came to the Museum for a special field trip. The teachers received a professional development session—co-created with district leaders to address training priorities—while students participated in a dynamic Field Trip Adventure. The partnership removes logistical and cost barriers and provides customized learning experiences that address science achievement gaps and benefit districts, teachers, students, and chaperones.

Throughout the year, all of our Museum audiences engage in an array of science education programs. Science Sprouts is a bilingual workshop for Spanish-speaking families that offers a foundation in science learning for preschoolers. During our enormously popular spring and summer break camps, children ages 6–12 spend their vacations keeping their minds and bodies moving. Adults enjoy the Museum after hours during Science Lounge, a variety of film series, and dozens of lectures and courses. In 2015, more than 346,000 students, teachers, children, teens, adults, and families participated in experiences that encourage lifelong enthusiasm for science and learning.















A passion for sharing science inspires the Research and Collections Division to create opportunities for the public to connect science to their everyday lives. In 2015 this team of curators, collections managers, archivists, librarians, researchers, lab staff, and conservators delivered field trips, classes, lectures, teacher trainings, and tours to more than 52,600 people, both inside and outside of the Museum.

Generations of Museum scientists have been making discoveries not only in our own backyard but around the globe. These researchers bring science to life by collecting and analyzing data, participating in a collaborative scientific process, and using the results to develop and publish new understandings about Earth, its inhabitants, and beyond. However, what makes the Museum's contributions to science unique today is a commitment to engaging the public in authentic research.

Carefully trained citizen scientists contribute to vital and meticulous fieldwork, to behind-the-scenes collections preparation, and to projects such as the Colorado Spider Survey, which has established the Museum as a major regional repository for this taxonomic group. Citizen scientists contributed to a project in 2015 in the Genetics of Taste Lab that defined fatty acid as a sixth taste and whose results were published in a peer-reviewed paper. More than 100 people helped the Earth Sciences team with fieldwork across the American West and with preparing hundreds of fossils in the lab. They were among 600 volunteers who contributed 78,000 hours to science research projects. Citizen science is a meaningful and powerful way to immerse everyone in the scientific process and the compelling business of asking why.

**F**or the first time, the Museum hosted five temporary exhibitions in one calendar year. *Whales: Giants of the Deep* and *Traveling the Silk Road* both completed their runs in early 2015. These were the first two exhibitions to simultaneously use Phipps Gallery and the new Anschutz Gallery, a model that is greatly expanding our offerings of educational and entertaining experiences.

*Mythic Creatures: Dragons, Unicorns, and Mermaids* opened in March, and Denver went wild. It was the Museum's highest attended non-surcharged temporary exhibition in our history, with more than half a million visitors. The year closed out with *The Power of Poison* and *The International Exhibition of Sherlock Holmes*, both exceeding attendance projections as well.

Our permanent exhibitions continue to attract both new and longtime visitors. In its first full year of operation, the *Discovery Zone*, for our youngest visitors, experienced a 66 percent increase in visitorship from its previous location. Guests celebrated the 20th anniversary of perennially popular *Prehistoric Journey* during a fossil-themed Free Day. The Exhibits team completed upgrades to the Darwin and Galápagos exhibit in South America Hall, featuring new specimens, an early edition of *On the Origin of Species*, and a chance for guests to observe "Darwin's desk." Great exhibits continue to be a key way to inspire our guests to make their own discoveries about nature and science.









Trustees in front of *Snowmastodon*, top, from left: N. Mandava, J. Levisay, J. Crocker, E. Warner, M. Burkett, M. Sexton, W. Koelbel, P. Dea, T. Ryan; bottom, from left: C. Chavez, S. McConahey, M. Cleworth, C. Marquez-Hudson, A. McCarthy, M. R. Thomasson, S. Halstedt, A. Haynes, J. Couzens, L. Appel, H. Logan, H. Gordon, S. McIntire, L. Tilman, W. Hutchens

### 2015 TREASURER'S REPORT

The Denver Museum of Nature & Science is pleased to report another successful year. In 2015, the Museum achieved operating revenues of \$37,004,000, exceeding plan due to strong attendance for our temporary exhibitions, a record number of memberships, and increased funding from the Scientific & Cultural Facilities District (SCFD).

We owe special recognition to the City and County of Denver and the SCFD for their ongoing operational support. SCFD revenue increased over 5 percent in 2015 from the previous year, due to the improved economy in the seven-county SCFD area.

The Museum moved forward in 2015 with important capital projects, including the replacement of the south escalator bank, replacement of the southeast wing roof, acquisition of the Smoky Hawk King amazonite, and improvements to several permanent exhibits. We also continued to improve technology systems to achieve increased efficiencies and better customer experiences. With these transformative and planned projects, the year ended with an operating surplus of \$507,000.

These capital investments enhanced our visitor experience and existing infrastructure and completed several initiatives specified in the Museum 20/20 Strategic Plan. On the following page, we present our financial results with strategic activity detailed separately.

The Museum received a clean audit opinion from our independent accounting firm.

*Edward D. Scholz*

Edward D. Scholz  
Vice President, Finance and Business Operations

*Harold R. Logan Jr.*

Harold R. Logan Jr.  
Chair, Finance and Audit Committee

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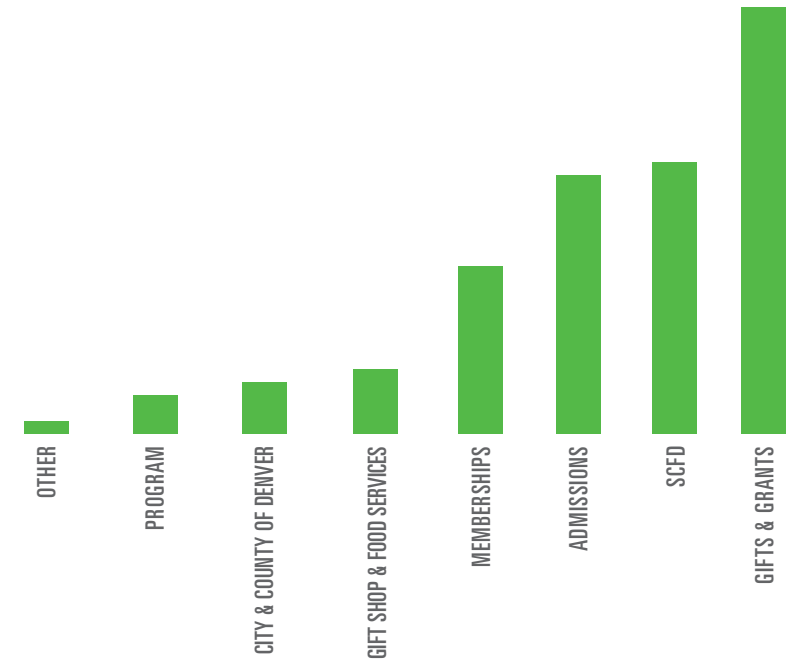
## STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

Year ended December 31, 2015 (in thousands)

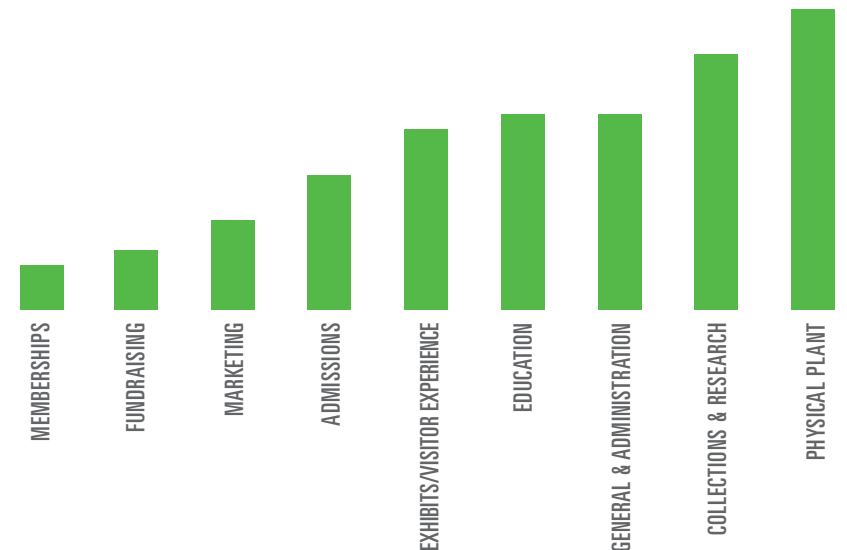
SUPPORT AND REVENUE	OPERATIONS	INITIATIVES	ALL MUSEUM
SCFD	8,837	—	8,837
Admissions	8,625	(1)	8,624
Gifts and grants	8,558	5,220	13,778
Memberships	5,480	—	5,480
City & County of Denver	1,774	(22)	1,752
Gift shop and food services	2,160	—	2,160
Program	1,290	—	1,290
Other	280	—	280
<b>TOTAL support and revenue</b>	<b>37,004</b>	<b>5,197</b>	<b>42,201</b>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>			
<b>Program Activities</b>			
Exhibits/Visitor Experience	4,717	73	4,790
Physical Plant	6,902	1,260	8,162
Admissions	3,801	—	3,801
Collections and Research	4,923	2,026	6,949
Education	4,633	430	5,063
<b>TOTAL program activities</b>	<b>24,976</b>	<b>3,789</b>	<b>28,765</b>
<b>Supporting Activities</b>			
General and Administration	4,922	156	5,078
Marketing	2,289	—	2,289
Fundraising	1,539	25	1,564
Membership	1,136	—	1,136
<b>TOTAL supporting activities</b>	<b>9,886</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>10,067</b>
Distributions to DMNS Foundation	1,635	—	1,635
<b>TOTAL expenditures</b>	<b>36,497</b>	<b>3,970</b>	<b>40,467</b>
Change in Net Assets from Operations*	507	1,227	1,734

\*Excludes DMNS Foundation operating results

## 2015 SUPPORT AND REVENUE (ALL MUSEUM)



## 2015 EXPENDITURES (ALL MUSEUM)



## 2015 DONORS

The Denver Museum of Nature & Science expresses its deepest gratitude to all of the individual donors, members, foundations, government agencies, and businesses that supported the Museum in 2015. Your gifts sustain education programs for all ages, conservation of artifacts and specimens, significant scientific research, and first-class permanent and temporary exhibitions.

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#### \$100,000+

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 Enerplus Resources (USA) Corporation  
 Enstrom Toffee & Confectionery  
 EON Office  
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More than 900 guests gathered at Museum After Dark and the After Dark Soiree to support science education. Museum Trustee Donna Lynne and Jim Brown hosted an evening that complemented *The International Exhibition of Sherlock Holmes*.

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Tiye Garrett-Mills, a Teen Science Scholar, was selected to participate in the White House Science Fair in March 2015, hosted by President Obama. Tiye presented "It's All In The Same Vein," in which she concluded that desktop scanning can be used to image some fossil leaf venation systems, providing a high-quality, economic solution for scientists. Each summer 20 teens are selected to work with scientists and collections staff on real Museum projects, made possible by generous donors to the Teen Science Scholars Endowment Fund.

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An Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) grant is funding a project to rehouse and recatalog the Oceanic ethnology collection, containing 700 artifacts from Australia, Polynesia, Micronesia, and Melanesia, including this club (*Wahaika*), A442, Maori, New Zealand.



## 2015 SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATIONS

Names of Museum authors appear in bold. These are peer-reviewed publications. For more information about the Museum's science research, visit [dmns.org/science](http://dmns.org/science) and [dmns.org/museum-blog](http://dmns.org/museum-blog).

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Art Students League of Denver	Friends of Dinosaur Ridge
Arvada Center for the Arts and Humanities	Golden Eagle Concert Band
Audubon Society of Greater Denver	Golden History Museums
Aurora Cultural Services Division	Grand Design, Inc.
Bird Conservancy of the Rockies	Harmony: A Colorado Chorale
Black American West Museum	HawkQuest
Boulder Ensemble Theatre Company	Hudson Gardens and Event Center
Boulder History Museum	Lakewood Heritage, Culture, & Arts
Buffalo Bill Museum and Grave	Lighthouse Writers Workshop
Butterfly Pavilion	Lone Tree Arts Center
Central City Opera	Longmont Museum
The Cell	Mizel Art and Culture Center
Children's Museum of Denver	Mizel Museum
Clyfford Still Museum	Molly Brown House Museum
cmDance	Museo de las Americas
Colorado Children's Chorale	Museum of Contemporary Art
Colorado Honor Band Association	Opera Colorado
Colorado Mountain Club	Plains Conservation Center
Colorado Railroad Museum	RedLine
Colorado Symphony Orchestra	South Platte Park/Carson Nature Center
Denver Architectural Foundation	St. Martin's Chamber Choir
Denver Art Museum	Su Teatro Cultural and Performing Arts Center
Denver Botanic Gardens	Swallow Hill Music Association
Denver Center for the Performing Arts	Think 360 Arts for Learning
Denver Film Society	Turning the Wheel Productions
Denver Firefighters Museum	Westminster Historical Society
Denver Museum of Miniatures, Dolls, and Toys	Wings Over the Rockies Air and Space Museum
Denver Urban Gardens	Wonderbound
Denver Zoo	WOW! Children's Museum

## MISSION

Be a catalyst! Ignite our community's passion for nature and science.

## VISION

An empowered community that loves, understands, and protects our natural world.

Every effort has been made to accurately list the Museum's 2015 donors. If there are errors or omissions, please accept our apology and contact the Development Division at 303.370.8347, and we will correct our records.

The 2015 Annual Report is also available online at [dmns.org/annualreport](http://dmns.org/annualreport). If you would prefer to no longer receive a print copy of the Annual Report, please contact us at 303.370.8347 or [development@dmns.org](mailto:development@dmns.org).

For information about all donor opportunities at the Museum, please visit [dmns.org/give](http://dmns.org/give).

## 2015 Annual Report

Produced by the Denver Museum of Nature & Science

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