

ANNUAL PLAN

2022/2023



NORTH CAROLINA **Museum of Natural Sciences**



NORTH
CAROLINA
**Museum
of Natural
Sciences**

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State of North Carolina, Roy Cooper, Governor;
Department of Natural and Cultural Resources,
D. Reid Wilson, Secretary

ANNUAL PLAN

2022/2023

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VISION & MISSION

Mission: To illuminate the natural world
and inspire its conservation.

Vision: A knowledgeable and empowered society,
making decisions informed by science.

INTRODUCTION

It is my pleasure to present the 2022/2023 Annual Plan for the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences, the second to arise from our FY2022–2024 Strategic Plan. Last year we continued to be touched by the pandemic, but we're emerging from it with a new normal. These challenges gave us a chance to press pause for a moment and look at the work we do.

The document that follows represents an advance on the process we use to track and assess our work. In addition to priorities derived from the strategic plan, measures are presented that lay down a basis for a set of dashboards that will monitor our progress against key institutional measures. This allows us to understand directly how our work contributes to the direction we articulated in our Strategic Plan. We've assessed afresh our values and ways of working. We've formed new synergies and partnerships among our teams. The content of this Annual Plan builds on the achievements of last year, grounded in the perspective of aligning our core activities with our priorities. As a coordinated process, it brings us steadily closer to our ambitious vision.

The initiatives described here range from consolidation and analysis efforts to support our business operations, projects to allow us to gain a better understanding of our audiences, and programs that help us to tell the stories of the natural world and our place within it.

In offering this next year of planning, we are keenly aware of the support offered to us by the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, the State Legislature, the Friends of NCMNS, and the Museum's Advisory Commission, as well as our statewide community. Their ongoing involvement has strengthened our resolve to have the greatest impact possible. Last, but far from least, I am extremely grateful to the Museum staff, whose commitment and dedication are the major drivers of our ongoing achievements.



Eric Dorfman, PhD
Director & CEO
North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences



GOAL 1

Relevant & Influential

World-class organizations strive on a daily basis to make a positive impact on the lives of others. When the world changes as rapidly as it does today, one of our greatest challenges is staying relevant to our audiences and communities. There are far more distractions, choices, opportunities and ways to communicate than in times past, and this can test the strength of the bond with our public. While finding new ways to remain top of mind, we must remain faithful to our core drivers of science, education and conservation.

1A. Excellence in Research and Collections. Conducting novel research and stewarding our collections are core functions of NCMNS. Collections provide a platform for much of the Museum's research. In addition, they offer evidence of global change and give insights into interactions between people and the environment. Over the next two years, we will provide infrastructure that supports collections and research, including showcasing our scientific endeavors and planning and designing spaces for enhanced storage.

1A.1. Collection storage and interpretation

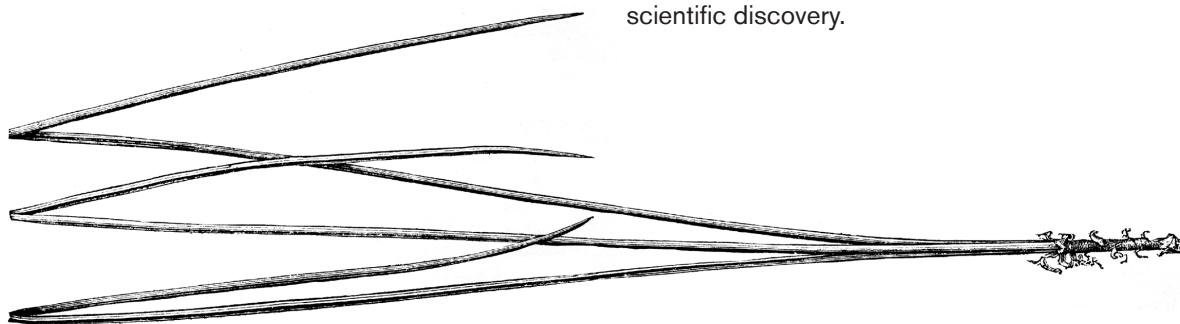
Lead Section: Director

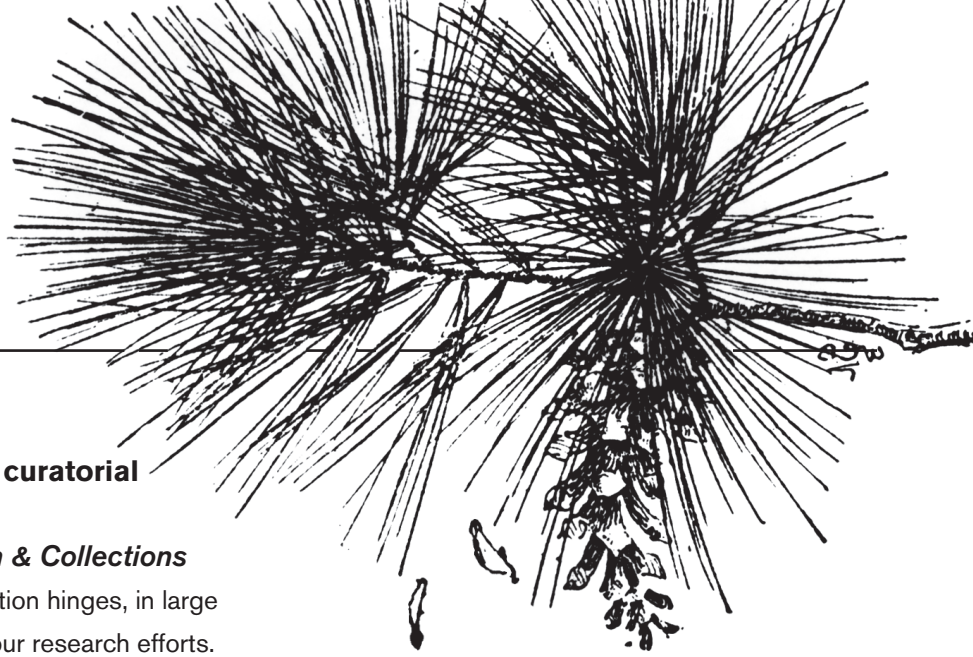
This plan will provide critical information for development at Prairie Ridge and the Research Lab and allow us to plan for our future scientific capacity, as well as public engagement. In 2022/2023, we will consolidate thinking for the site and create a roadmap for implementation.

1A.2. Promoting Museum science

Lead Sections: Marketing & Communications; Exhibits & Digital Media

Science is the engine that drives much of what we do at the Museum. Our effort in making new discoveries and creating new knowledge comes both through studying our collections and engaging in field-based research. As a public-facing institution, our duty is to make the results of our scientific discoveries as relevant and accessible to the public as possible. In 2022/2023, we will develop and implement a plan to enhance the visibility of our researchers' accomplishments and the advances they bring to scientific discovery.





1A.3. Collections and curatorial strengths

Lead Section: Research & Collections

Our reputation as an institution hinges, in large part, on the robustness of our research efforts. This is related to our collections, and to the strengths in curatorship that allow us to leverage opportunities for knowledge creation. As the world changes, opportunities for our scientists to add value grows commensurately. In 2022/2023, we will finish the review of collections and curatorial strengths begun last year.



1B. Telling Stories People Care About. We make discovery accessible by offering immersive experiences. Our important stories reach outside the present moment, making surprising connections between unrelated ideas. This is especially true exploring the connections between humanity and nature and in the multitude of ways that nature impacts our lives.

1B.1. Live animals at the Museum

Lead Sections: Living Collections; Research & Collections; Veterinary Sciences

Live animals displayed within the Museum have the power to unite and educate the community, providing an understanding of the interdependence of animals and their habitats, as well as forming the basis for conservation programs. Additionally, a living collection provides unique research opportunities and contributions to nonliving collections. In 2022/2023, we will finish the analysis, begun last year, of the role of live animals, with an eye to exploring future potential.

1B.2. Regional stories

Lead Section: Marketing & Communications

One of the most important goals for science education is engendering trust in the scientific process and its conclusions, at the same time sharing the stories of our Museum and North Carolina's natural heritage. Even in the digital age, geography is an important influence on the uptake of our messages. In 2022/2023, we will set the stage for increased statewide communication by developing and implementing a system of information sharing that integrates with our other activities.

1B.3. Scholarly publications

Lead section: Research & Collections

One of the Museum's aims is to create new knowledge through research. A key component of the success of a research program is the dissemination of its findings, in part, through field-advancing scholarly publications. In 2022/2023, we will understand and communicate a baseline of scholarly publications in the context of output, impact and reach.

GOAL 1

1B.4. Outreach in research programs

Lead Section: Research & Collections

One thing that makes NCMNS unique is the proximity of researchers to the public, providing an important insight into the scientific process. Contributions of our scientists can come in many forms, from the structured to the informal, in person, online or in print. In this financial year, we will take stock of scientific contributions to the Museum's educational activities and engagement.

1C. The “It” Factor. Like charismatic people, organizations can stand out for being magnetic, creative, innovative, and for having bold ideas that break through the noise. In the coming two years, we will undertake initiatives that focus on culture and communications, with an eye to being grounded in our authentic voice internally and exerting that influential voice externally.

1C.1. Rebrand the Museum

Lead Section: Director; Deputy Museum Director

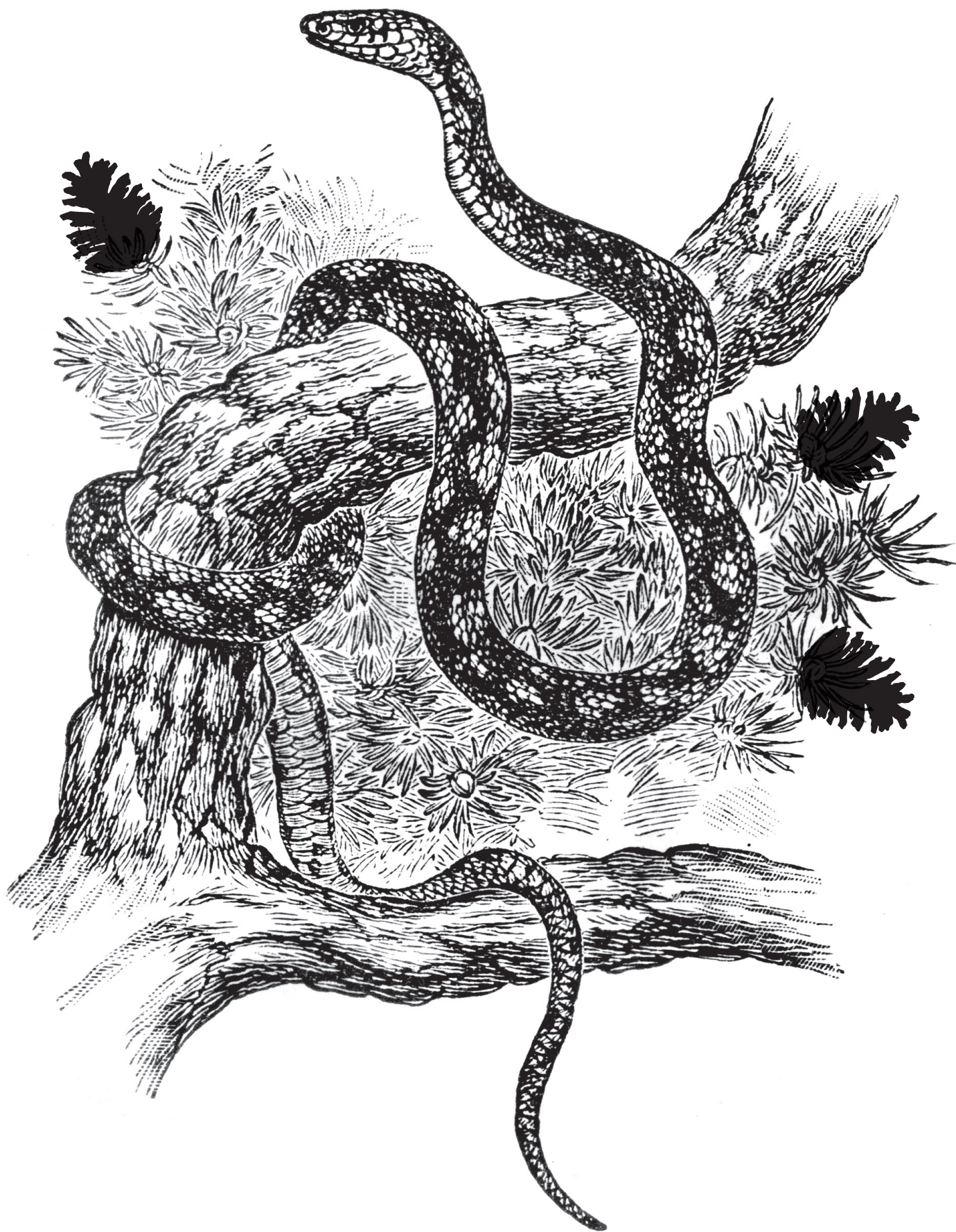
Our brand is the outward manifestation of our Museum's personality. Our new strategic plan refines our direction. It is an opportunity to create and strengthen our brand's message and allow it to evolve, supporting our core values and priorities, connecting with our audiences in a new, authentic way. In 2022/2023, we will continue to investigate core strengths and rebrand accordingly.

1C.2. RACE exhibition and popup

Lead Section: Exhibitions & Digital Media

RACE: Are We So Different? was originally shown at NCMNS in 2017. This exhibition looks at race through the lens of science, history, and personal experiences to promote a better understanding of human variation. The purchase of the exhibition for NCMNS allows us to reinvigorate the stories through the latest lenses, emerging audiences and our local context. In 2022/2023, we will create and disseminate a popup version of this exhibition, in preparation for relaunching the main exhibition for display at various venues in North Carolina.





GOAL 2

Prioritizing People

Every aspect of what we do, from dedicated staff within the Museum, to the children and parents who come through our doors, boils down to people, what they think, and how they feel. And by understanding the human element, we will be more productive, lead our sector more effectively, create brand loyalty, and do better work. To enjoy these benefits, however, we must be purposeful about integrating the human element into the Museum's key priorities.

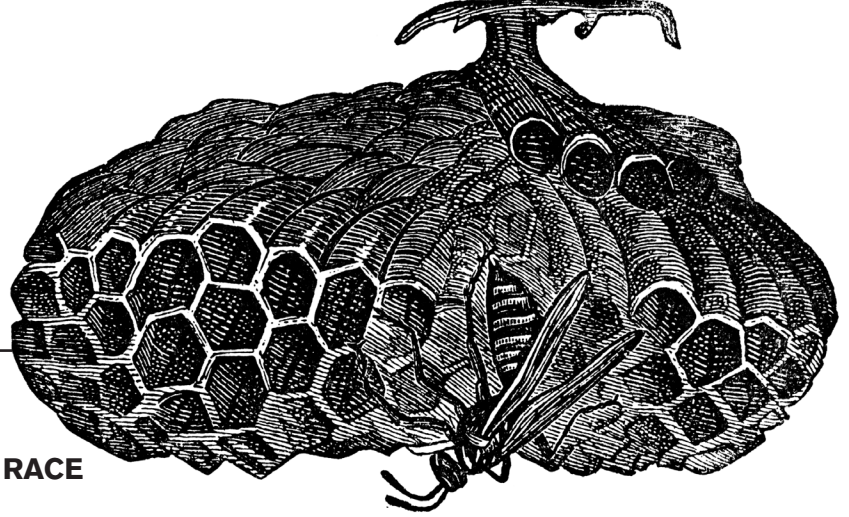
2A. Meeting People Where They Are. Considering people's needs and drivers on an individual basis involves recognizing that no one channel, language or voice speaks to everybody. This perspective is important to our efforts to address disparities that disproportionately affect ethnic minorities and other marginalized communities. From 2022 to 2024, we will examine our communication style, as well as opportunities for guests to play an active role in making meaning. Within the Museum, we will explore pathways to encourage tomorrow's leaders to make a long-term contribution to society and the planet.

2A.1. Bilingual and multilingual experiences

Lead Section: Education

Museums are by nature outward facing. In our state, 690,000 households speak primarily Spanish at home, by far the most common of the more than 20 non-English languages spoken. Part of our commitment to inclusiveness is using languages that let people know they are welcome within all of the Museum's offerings. In 2022/2023, we will evaluate opportunities for bilingual and multilingual offerings within our visitor experiences and formalize this capacity within our infrastructure.





2A.2. Informal education for RACE

Lead Section: Education

One of the most important aspects of the North Carolina relaunch of the RACE: Are We So Different? exhibition is leveraging the content to enhance the experience and give people from every background the chance to engage and grow. In 2022/2023, we will begin to develop and roll out informal programming based on themes developed within this initiative.

2A.3. iPAGE

Lead Sections: Guest & Volunteer Services; Education

iPAGE is the Science Museum of Minnesota's leadership program for teams of informal STEM institution (ISI) professionals from across the United States. Dedicated to supporting diversity, promoting inclusion, increasing access, and achieving equity in the ISI sector, iPAGE is designed to support participants in bringing about meaningful and lasting institutional change. Last year, a group of NCMNS staff attended the iPAGE course, setting the stage for further involvement by our Museum. In the next financial year, we will continue to participate and draft a program for promulgating it throughout NCMNS.

2A.4. The 100 Counties Project

Lead Section: Regional Network

Our mandate as a statewide institution is to serve all of the people of North Carolina. The 100 Counties Project is a Museum initiative to record the activities we undertake in different counties across the state and to use this information to help us set future programming priorities. In the next financial year, we will use the initiative to inform business-as-usual activities, update the site annually, and review the 100 Counties operations.

2B. Knowing Our Audiences. As one of the most-visited attractions in North Carolina, and with a mandate to serve customers across the state, audience engagement is a clear indicator of performance. Over the next two years, we will use a number of complementary methods to understand the diverse needs of our audience segments so we can focus our engagement and education efforts, and better understand guest satisfaction.



GOAL 2

2B.1. Audience segmentation

Lead Section: Deputy Museum Director

Audience segmentation works to divide our audiences into groups that have similar interests or behaviors. By considering our audiences as segments who engage with culture in different ways, we can craft more targeted marketing messages and provide more consistently relevant content. In 2022/2023, we will continue to advance this program of analysis.

2C. Optimizing Physical Infrastructure and Activating Spaces.

The vast majority of what the Museum does, even creating our digital offerings, involves physical infrastructure. When we fully leverage the emotional power of that infrastructure by activating it, our galleries can capture our guests' imagination. In 2022/2023 we will create a baseline for master planning to provide insights to evaluate, maintain, improve and activate our premises. In this way, we will ensure that our assets are protected and evolving for future generations.

2C.1. Gallery review

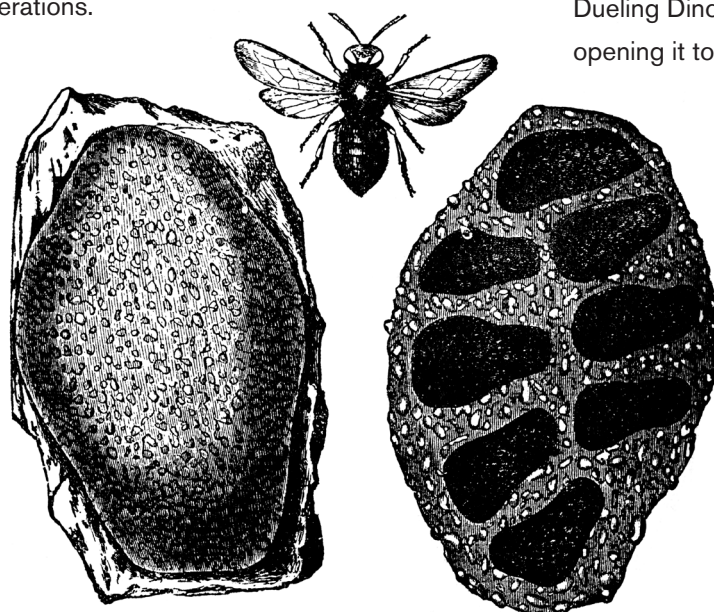
Lead Sections: Exhibitions & Digital Media

Many of our long-term galleries in the downtown Raleigh campus remain unchanged since they were installed and are in need of refreshment. While updating stories is largely the province of master planning, updating them to maintain aesthetic currency will serve an interim purpose. In 2022/2023, we will develop a plan to refresh existing galleries, setting the stage for larger-scale thinking later on.

2C.2. Dueling Dinosaurs

Lead Sections: Friends; Research & Collections; Exhibitions & Digital Media; Development

One of the most important paleontological discoveries of our time, Dueling Dinosaurs is a major strategic initiative of the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, as well as the Museum. It touches the work of many of the Museum's sections. In 2022/2023, we will continue the building and installation of the Dueling Dinosaurs exhibition in preparation for opening it to the public.



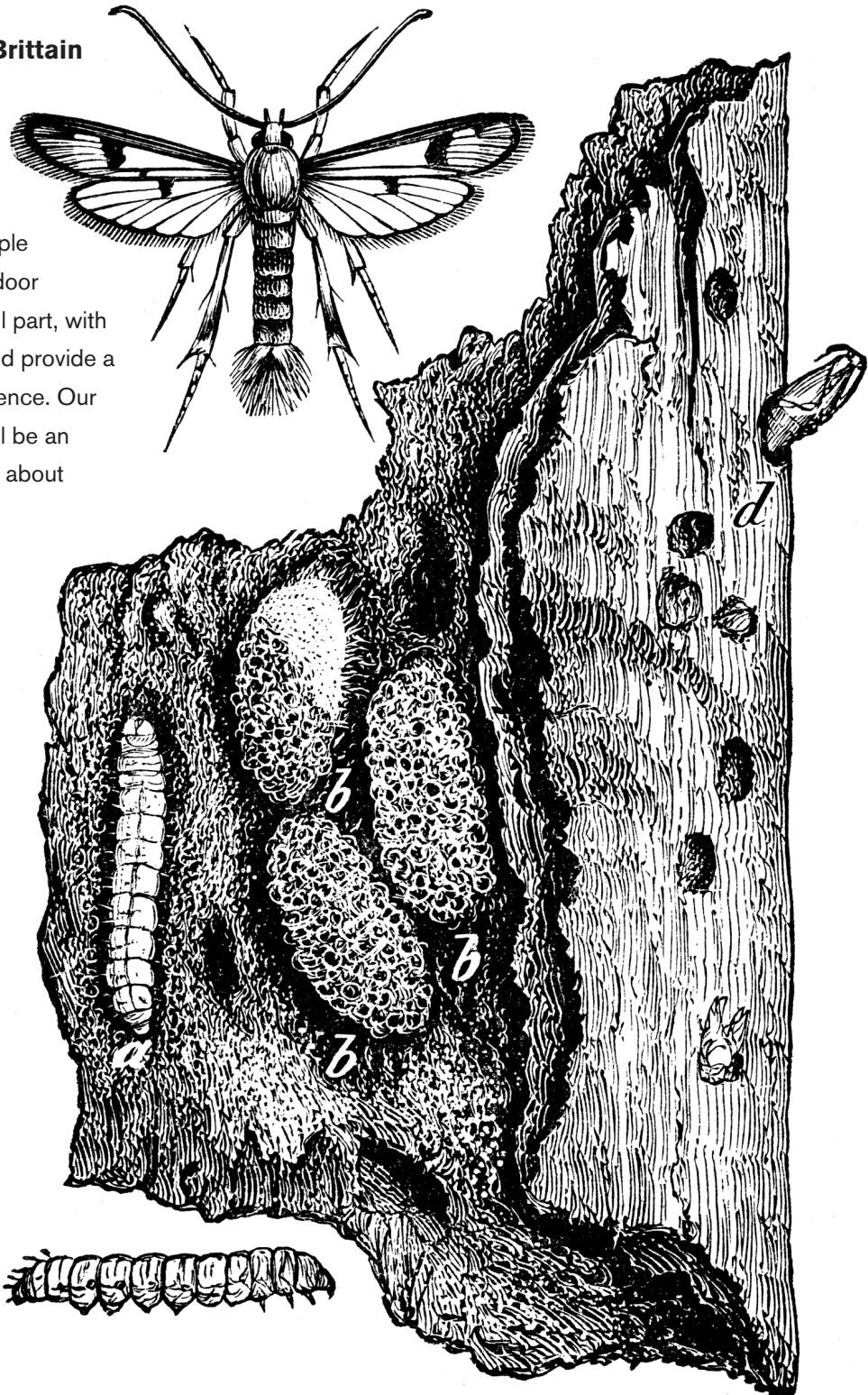
2C.3. The Mary Ann Brittain Education Center

Lead Sections:

Development;

Regional Network

Our ability to engage people authentically with our outdoor spaces comes, in no small part, with our ability to host them and provide a quality educational experience. Our new Education Center will be an anchor for further thinking about the site. Design has been finished for this project. In 2022/2023, we will continue to raise funds and work towards implementation.

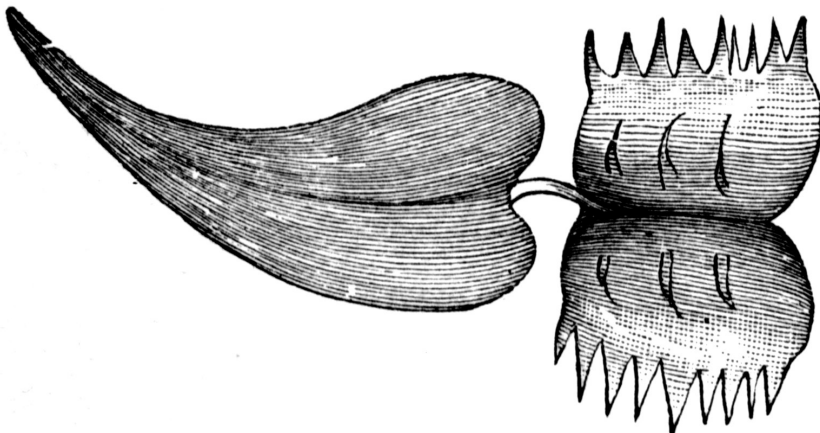


GOAL 3

An Environment that Fosters Innovation

A forward-looking institution develops and implements new ideas in a culture that rewards experimentation and taking calculated risks. Innovation is about creating new value that is relevant for our stakeholders. Our strategy needs to harness our resources to support achieving this aspiration. This is more than the simple formation of ideas. It means we will be mapping the Museum's mission, vision and offerings onto defined customer markets in an organized way, to ensure the greatest possible impact.

3A. Anticipating Trends. Being able to identify and respond to trending topics significantly increases our effectiveness. This can provide opportunities across the Museum's activities. Within merchandising, it allows us to manage our brand's reputation. In science, it encourages us to interface with colleagues who have made strides in our field and look for opportunities for synergy and collaboration. Over the next two years, we will formalize systems and capacity to monitor trends and incorporate them throughout our efforts.



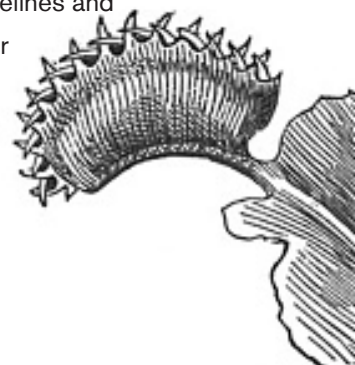
3A.1. Environmental best practice

Lead Section: Director

The North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences (NCMNS) is committed to pursuing a triple-bottom-line approach of environmental, financial and social responsibility. Our mandate as the State science museum challenges us to support an economy aimed at reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities, one that aims for sustainable development without degrading the environment. By finding innovative ways to do more while lessening our ecological footprint, we aim to drive sustainability efforts and build resilience into all of our activities in order to continue positively impacting the communities we serve. In the next financial year, we will consolidate our cross-institutional activities in aid of sustainability into a single framework.

3B. Embracing Creative Thinking From Within Our Institution.

We aspire to a culture that embraces and encourages innovative thinking to keep the Museum relevant. Giving our team members permission to take action and make decisions within our institution is key to achieving this. Under this Strategic Plan, we will foster a culture of inclusive creativity and curiosity to develop new pipelines and enhance existing avenues for staff contributions.



3B.1. Creativity & innovation

Lead Sections: Education; Exhibitions & Digital Media

No organization, especially one like ours, could flourish without a considerable degree of creativity. The type of ideation that generates new, unconventional products and services has to exist in some capacity for every successful enterprise. Creativity isn't just a "nice-to-have." It is important in a very literal way that can directly affect how a product or activity is designed, how it's promoted, and how our team continues to work. In 2022/2023, we will continue our work to develop a system supporting imagination, creativity and innovation.

3B.2. Leadership pathways

Lead Section: Deputy Museum Director

Good leaders consciously impact the world around them in a positive direction, with significantly more powerful mental, emotional and relational capabilities, including new ways of seeing, knowing and being. A career development path provides employees with leadership opportunities and an ongoing mechanism to enhance their skills and knowledge. It can also have a direct positive impact on morale and career satisfaction in meeting section-level and institutional objectives. In 2022/2023, we will

continue to develop a leadership pathway system to foster the growth of existing talent within the Museum.

3C. Sharpening Our External Focus.

Looking outside the boundaries of our field can yield very powerful and often surprising ideas for innovation. Between FY 2023 and FY 2024 we will develop a formal pipeline of new thinking into the Museum to create synergies, map and fill gaps in community needs, and innovate in the delivery of our exhibits, programs and activities.

3C.1. Best practice forums

Lead Section: Deputy Museum Director

Professional development helps employees continue to not only be competent in their profession, but also excel in it. Engaging in external best-practice forums like conferences are key to ensuring that knowledge and skills stay relevant and up to date. It also allows us to be more aware of changing trends and directions in our field. In the next financial year, we will review and adjust the scheme as necessary.

3C.2. Experts at the Museum

Lead Section: Education

"Not all smart people work for us," as the saying goes. By encouraging our teams to scout for new ideas among external partners, such as universities, research institutes and our community, we expose our institution to a broad range of external ideas that can lead to a greater level of innovation. In 2022/2023, we will roll out and implement the program.

GOAL 4

Nimble & Responsive

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown us how quickly and comprehensively our circumstances can change. Our challenge is to be able to adapt quickly to changing environments, while maintaining and growing our relevance. The measure of both nimbleness and responsiveness is our ability to keep transforming ourselves based on developing circumstances. Our systems must be ready to anticipate and adapt to shifting needs, both internally and externally.

4A. Total Quality Management.

Quality is a crucial parameter that can differentiate our institution from others in our sector. Its tools ensure continuous quality improvement in the systems and processes that eventually result in superior products and services and guarantee wise stewardship of public and private funds. In FY 2023-2024, we will develop and implement management methods to deliver a high-quality product.

4A.1. Lean/Six Sigma

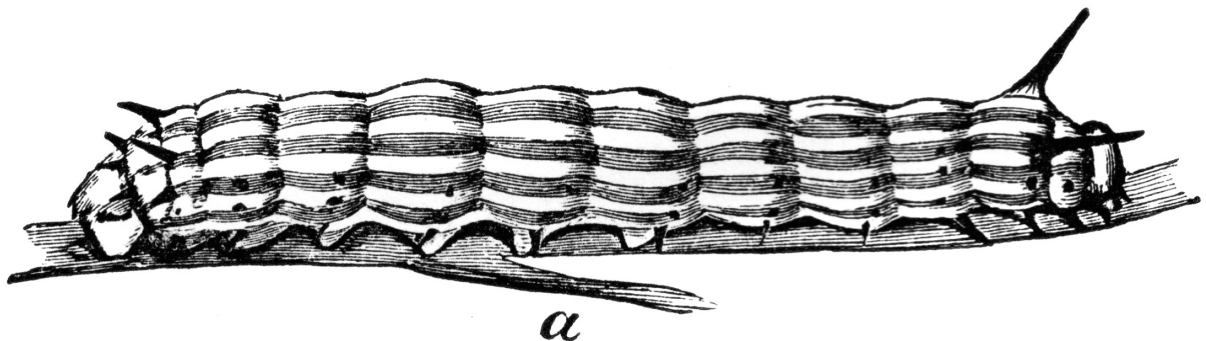
Lead Section: Deputy Museum Director

Six Sigma is a project management methodology that uses data, measurements and statistics to identify process inefficiencies and then applies strategic tools to introduce refinements that optimize productivity. In 2022/2023, we will finish the evaluation of this method for our context and create a pathway for its adoption.

4A.2. Tracking animal health & welfare

Lead Section: Veterinary Sciences

Monitoring the health and welfare of our live animals is an essential feature of the Veterinary Sciences team. Establishing baselines and trends is essential to have the ability to interpret any observed fluctuations. In the next financial year, we will define parameters of a system of tracking animal health and welfare and put it into practice.



4B. Business Continuity.

Anticipating and controlling for risk allows us to account for unforeseen challenges and sometimes prevent them. In minimizing risks, we increase productivity by limiting waste of time and resources. Under this strategic plan, we will address business continuity and institute a framework for managing risks within the Museum's operations.

4B.1. Business Continuity Plan

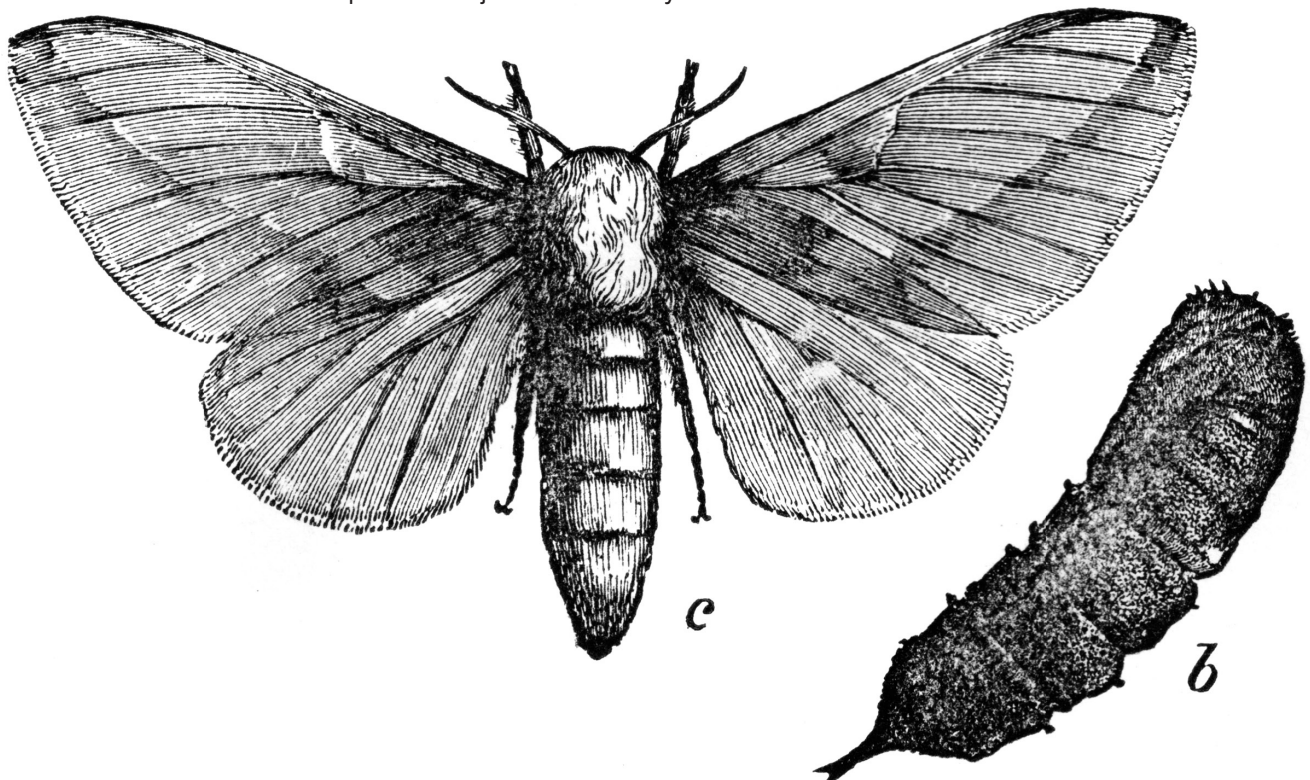
Lead Section: Deputy Museum Director

Business continuity is a proactive plan to avoid and mitigate risks that could lead to a disruption of operations. It details steps to be taken before, during and after an event to maintain the viability of an organization. Anticipating these risks is key to an organization's ability to respond effectively to challenges when they arrive. In 2022/2023, we will review the plan and adjust as necessary.

4B.2. Special exhibitions

Lead Sections: Exhibitions & Digital Media; Friends

Special exhibitions that we bring to the Museum are important to NCMNS as they provide the opportunity to show our community a range of perspectives on science and nature. They also provide a tangible member benefit and extend our prominence by giving us another stream of stories to discuss. In 2021/2022, we relaunched the special exhibitions program. In the next financial year, we will use the first exhibition (Exquisite Creatures: The Art of Christopher Marley and others) as a baseline to analyze the relative success of others, while bringing in future exhibitions.



GOAL 4

4B.3. Education in special exhibitions

Lead Section: Education

Providing education content associated with special exhibitions is an important way to deepen our guests' understanding, while aiding in the success of the show as a whole. To solidify this support, we will establish a program of educational contributions to special exhibitions. In 2022/2023, we will design and implement a plan to enhance this activity.

4B.4. Live animal habitat enclosures

Lead Sections: Living Collections

Live animals are important to guests' overall feeling about the Museum, and provide a portal to specific stories about science and conservation. It is vital to the success of these experiences, as well as to the health and welfare of the animals, that the enclosures are in peak condition. In 2022/2023, we will develop and implement a tracking system to monitor and report maintenance of enclosures, as well as required upgrades.





4C. A Framework for Institutional Growth.

Every organization goes through phases in its existence, typically from consolidation, transition and then to growth in a cyclical fashion. NCMNS grew enormously between 2000 and 2012 and is due for another consolidation phase to ensure it can move smoothly, once again, to another period of growth. Over the next two years, we will map out and implement these phases, specifically addressing gaps in infrastructure and business systems.

4C.1. Organizational life cycle

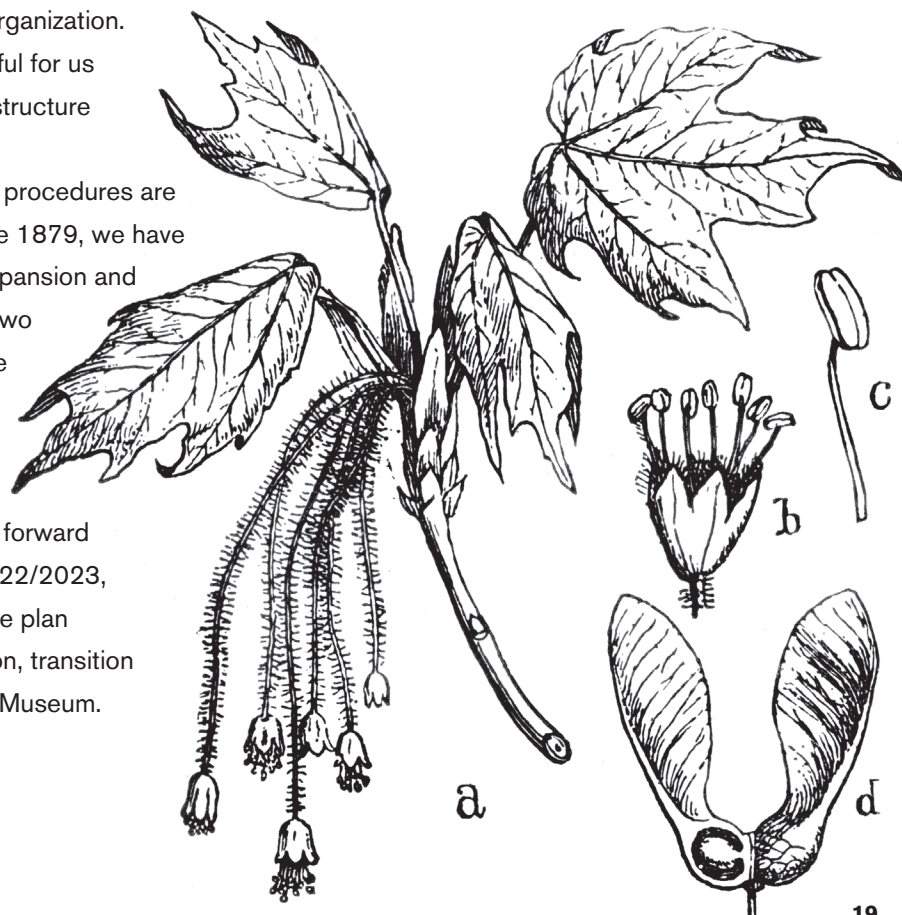
Lead Section: Director

There are many different models describing the lifecycle stages of an organization. One that is particularly useful for us describes a period of infrastructure consolidation in which the organization's systems and procedures are reviewed and refined. Since 1879, we have been through periods of expansion and review. We currently have two major capital projects in the works, making it imperative that we undertake a review of the administrative infrastructure on which our forward momentum depends. In 2022/2023, we will review and refine the plan encompassing consolidation, transition and growth phases for the Museum.

4C.2. Conservation Action Plan

Lead Sections: Research & Collections; Living Collections; Veterinary Sciences

A Conservation Action Plan (CAP) is important to develop focused strategies and measures of success. A CAP will integrate project teams across many parts of the Museum to identify appropriate and effective conservation strategies and actions in an objective, consistent and transparent manner. In the coming financial year, we will draw together existing resources, perform a gap analysis, and draft a road map for completion.

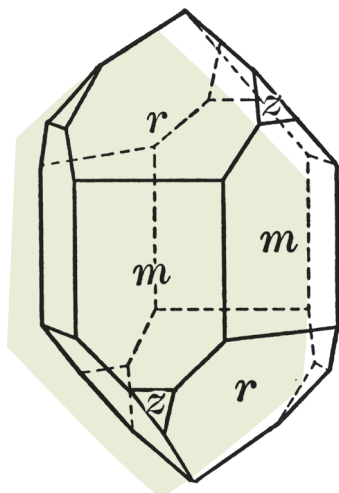


GOAL 5

Business Acumen

This area of leadership thinking helps us perform locally and globally under the influence of a logical thought progression. Keenness and quickness in understanding and dealing with business situations promotes good outcomes in the face of changing circumstances and is a method of improving financial performance and leadership development.

5A. Resource Planning. With the aim of prioritizing the Museum's financial needs, under this Strategic Plan we will assist the Friends of NCMNS in developing and refining a revenue generation plan that focuses on forecasting both earned and contributed income. It will explore ways to expand and deepen our commercial offer, as well as chart a direction for philanthropy. Further analysis will also consider return on investment and effort, with an aim to increasing efficiency and productivity of these work areas.



5A.1. Revenue Generation Plan

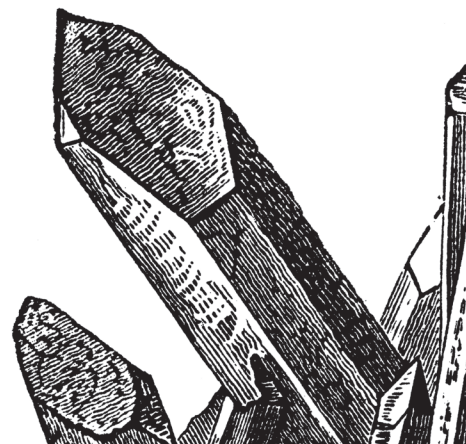
Lead Sections: Deputy Museum Director; Friends

Revenue generation planning is one of the most important activities any organization can engage in. Simply put, a Revenue Generation Plan describes how to market and sell products or services in order to generate income, and sets targets as to what will be achieved. The specific need for NCMNS is to identify existing and new revenue-generating opportunities and, to the best of our knowledge, forecast their contributions. In 2022/2023, we will support the Friends of NCMNS in developing and rolling out a Revenue Generation Plan in line with the FY2022–FY2024 Strategic Plan.

5A.2. Fundraising framework

Lead Section: Development

We are already engaged in a number of activities for which major external funding is required. These initiatives are important and strategically aligned with the Museum's mission. In 2022/2023, we will work closely with the Friends of NCMNS to establish a holistic perspective and plan for fundraising at the Museum.



5B. Effective Systems For Efficiency And Productivity.

Improving our efficiency is crucial for the productivity of our Museum, ensuring opportunities for growth and improved service to our community. In this part of our strategy, we will advance initiatives that refine our processes through improved technology, placing greater focus on stakeholder communications and relationship building, assessing the management of our resources, and investing in employee training.

5B.1. Professional development for volunteers and interns

Lead Section: Guest & Volunteer Services

Those who volunteer for us benefit the Museum in myriad ways, many contributing prodigious skills to help us achieve success. As with our paid staff, professional development benefits those who receive it, as well as the institution as a whole. In 2022/2023, we will establish and implement a program for professional development for volunteers and interns.

5C. Data Collection. For an institution like ours, gathering data to help us better understand our guests and communities is vitally important. Through data collection we have the quality information we need to make informed, evidence-based decisions. Under this strategic plan, we will use data-driven methodologies to stay on top of trends, provide answers to problems, and analyze new insights that affect our business.

5C.1. Data collection

Lead Section: Deputy Museum Director

Because of the importance of data collection in effective decision making, it is imperative that we identify disparities in the knowledge that underpins our activities. Our aim is to be better able to focus our resources and energy on those areas for continuous quality improvement. In 2022/2023, we will perform a gap analysis against data required for the Strategic Plan and make adjustments if necessary.





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