



SANTA CRUZ MUSEUM

of natural history



2024

ANNUAL REPORT

July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024



Tara Redwood School students with the sloth fossil



Fungus February walk

**Connecting people
with nature and science
to inspire stewardship
of the natural world.**

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Dear Friends of the Museum,

This has been a year of great accomplishments as we continue fulfilling our mission. In spring, the Museum announced the acquisition of an Ice Age ground sloth fossil unearthed by a kindergarten class. Such discoveries inspire us to envision the landscape in different eras. It also forces us to think about Santa Cruz's changing landscape as atmospheric rivers continue to intensify erosion, prompting new fossil discoveries.

At the Museum, we look to the past to help understand the present and prepare for the future. We are proud to be a trusted resource for preserving Santa Cruz's natural history, interpreting its open spaces, and connecting with the next generation of scientists.

The young naturalists who discovered the sloth bone embody the ethos of Museum founder Laura Hecox, who spent her childhood exploring Santa Cruz's natural landscapes, learning about natural history. Anyone can be a naturalist! This is especially heartwarming to me as I introduce my young family to the Museum. My dream for the future is to cultivate the Museum as a place for my kids to grow as members of our community, as critical thinkers, and as stewards of the environment.

I invite you all to join us in working towards this vision by supporting the Bright Future Campaign to enhance the Museum for generations of Santa Cruz naturalists to come.

In Community,



FELICIA B. VAN STOLK
Executive Director

**Preserving
our community's
natural treasures
for the next
generation.**



CONNECTING OUR COMMUNITY TO NATURE AND SCIENCE

Through immersive exhibits, engaging education for learners of all ages, and outreach across the county, the Museum welcomes our whole community to learn with us and become inspired.



"CZU and You: Reintroducing Fire" Naturalist Night lecture



Magnificent Museum summer camp



17,374
MUSEUM
VISITORS



785
STUDENTS
PARTICIPATED IN
AFTER SCHOOL
PROGRAMS



1,822
VOLUNTEER
HOURS



23,323
PEOPLE SERVED
THROUGH
PUBLIC PROGRAMS



938
TOTAL
MEMBERSHIPS

INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION

K-12 EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS



6,371
STUDENTS
FROM ACROSS
SANTA CRUZ
COUNTY



 school districts served



2,127
STUDENTS
LEARNED WITH
EDUCATIONAL
KITS FOR
CLASSROOMS



648
STUDENTS
BENEFITED FROM
TRANSPORTATION
SCHOLARSHIPS



275
YOUTH
CONTRIBUTED TO
COMMUNITY
SERVICE PROJECTS



The Watershed Walk field trip at Neary Lagoon



Chairman Valentin Lopez and Education Manager Jenny Rieke

EDUCATION WORKSHOP WITH THE AMAH MUTSUN TRIBAL BAND

The Museum hosted its annual workshop with the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band led by Chairman Valentin Lopez for teachers from across the county. The Museum continues to offer a First Peoples of Santa Cruz field trip and resources including lesson plans and classroom kits.



Teachers at the Education Workshop with the Amah Mutsun

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION TEACHER LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Museum educators hosted a nature-based poetry workshop for SCCOE's Youth-Led Leadership Alliance, and supported a classroom action project by teaching students about developing interpretive signs.

¡VAMOS AFUERA! LET'S GO OUTSIDE!

NATURE PROGRAMMING FOR SOUTH SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

The Outdoor Equity Program provides bilingual Spanish/English nature education with support from California State Parks including summer camps for kids, multigenerational nature walks, and nature art activities.


8,849
**COMMUNITY
MEMBERS**

38
**NATURE
FIELD TRIPS**

35
**COMMUNITY
ACTIVITIES**


OEP summer camp



OEP summer camp



Elkhorn Slough tour with New School students



OEP summer camp

EXHIBITS

THE ART OF NATURE

Featuring 59 pieces from 46 local artists, the diversity of topics and techniques on display for our annual exhibition of science illustration was inspirational. Museum intern Mason Schratter's illustration of the Jefferson's ground sloth was featured alongside the famous fossil.



Artist Mason Schratter with museum patrons at the Art of Nature

THE CURIOUS WORLD OF SEAWEED

This extraordinary traveling exhibition featured captivating color "portraits" of seaweed inspired by Josie Iselin's book of the same name.



Seaweed Naturalist Night lecture



MUSEUM OF THE MACABRE



The annual Macabre party

This exhibit dug into the vast and complicated landscape beneath our feet, from scary geological forces to fossils emerging to tell stories about pre-historic Santa Cruz.

COTONI-COAST DAIRIES: MONUMENTAL STEPS

Through maps, community voices, and breathtaking landscapes, *Monumental Steps* explored this unique open space that is now part of the National Monument system.

BEHIND-THE-SCENES TOURS

The Museum partnered with the Bureau of Land Management to provide interpretive hikes to Cotoni-Coast Dairies and will continue offering tours until the property opens to the general public.



COTONI-COAST DAIRIES MONUMENTAL STEPS

Sponsored by Sempervirens Fund



Museum staff hike led by the Bureau of Land Management



Museum patrons at the exhibit opening

PRESERVING NATURAL HISTORY & CULTURE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

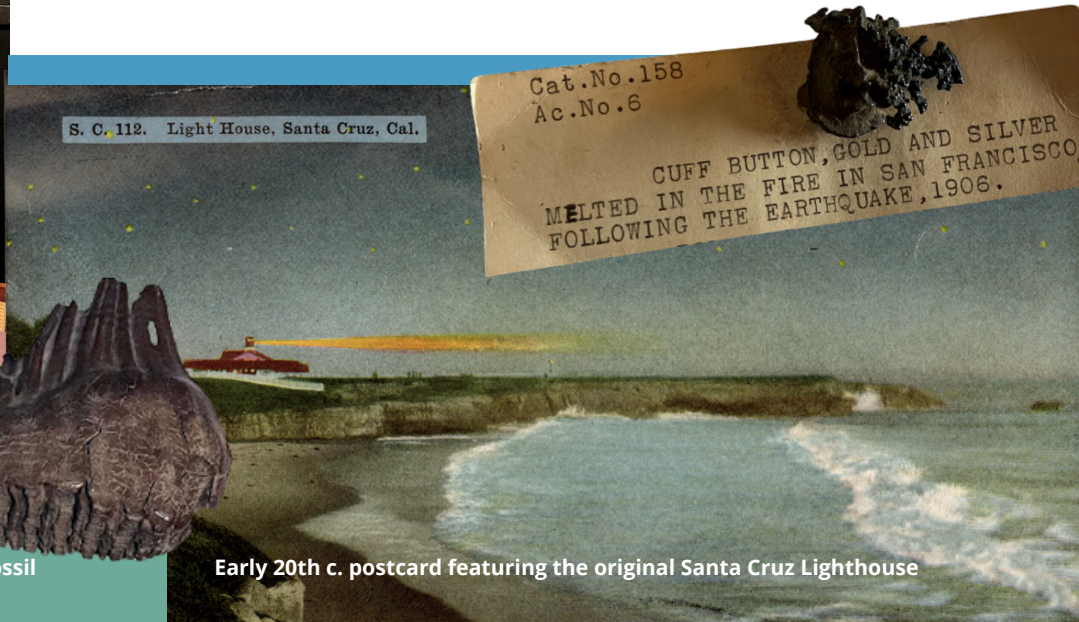
10



Hannah Caisse leading a cavity mount training

Mammoth tooth fossil

The capacity for our collections to serve our mission and community is constantly expanding. With the support of an incredible team of digitization-focused volunteers, our geology, postcard, and ornithology records have been captured in our database, which will be the foundation for a publicly accessible collections catalog, coming soon.



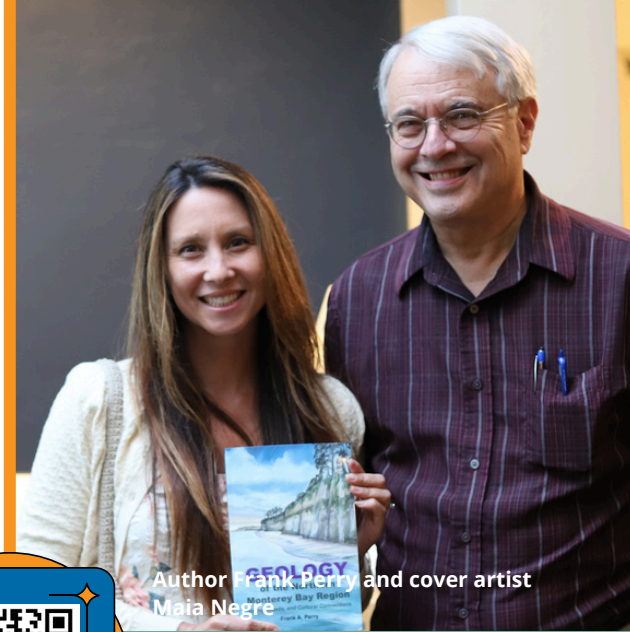
Early 20th c. postcard featuring the original Santa Cruz Lighthouse

FRANK PERRY'S GEOLOGY OF THE NORTHERN MONTEREY BAY REGION

We were honored to host a book launch event for long-time Museum friend, Frank Perry, whose newest publication features Museum artifacts and specimens. This accessible and informative text shines a light on the ways in which people have related to local geology through time.

The Museum is proud to feature local authors and publications that deepen our connection to local natural history.

*Learn
more*



Author Frank Perry and cover artist
Maia Negre

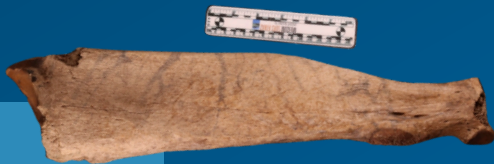


JEFFERSON'S GROUND SLOTH DISCOVERY

This year the Museum celebrated the first reported fossil evidence of a Jefferson's ground sloth in Santa Cruz County. Encountered by school children, the specimen is the arm bone of a ground sloth (*Megalonyx jeffersonii*). Not only do discoveries like this help us understand the ancient ecologies of Santa Cruz County, they also inspire the next generation of paleontologists.

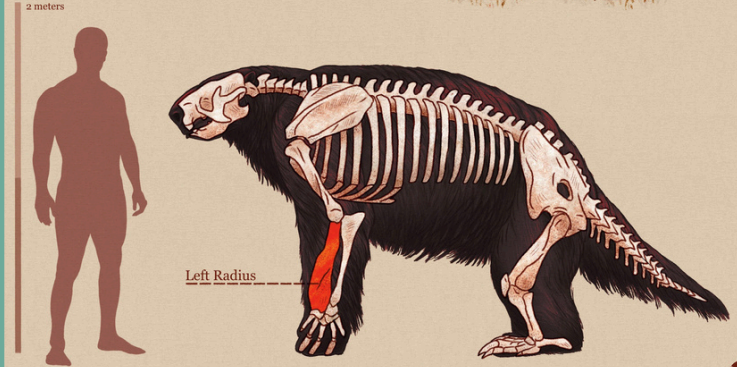
ICE AGE FOSSIL CAMPAIGN RECEIVED ASTC AWARD

The Museum earned the Association of Science and Technology Center's 2024 Roy L. Shafer Leading Edge Award for the Ice Age Sloth Campaign, which effectively wove together the crucial work in our collections with education, exhibits, and public outreach. The campaign received widespread media attention and attracted new audiences to the Museum!



Jefferson's Ground Sloth *Megalonyx jeffersonii*

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Artwork by Mason Schratte



Collection Manager Kathleen Aston, and Paleontology Advisor Wayne Thompson at the discovery site of the sloth fossil

CELEBRATING HISTORY IN THE MAKING



1905

Carnegie Library, home of the Museum since 1954



2024

COMING
SOON

SANTA CRUZ'S FIRST MUSEUM

The City of Santa Cruz's first public museum opens its doors. It features the collection of lighthouse keeper Laura Hecox, credited as the Museum's founder who donated her collection to bring her community "into partnership with her in the enjoyment of it."

COMMUNITY CORNERSTONE

The Museum launches its Bright Future Campaign to renovate and expand the historic building for the first time in nearly 60 years, ensuring the organization can advance its mission for generations to come.

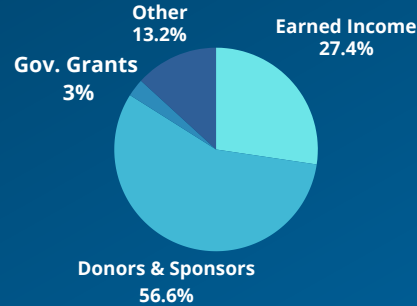
OUR FUTURE MUSEUM

The Museum features enhanced programs, immersive exhibits, and state-of-the-art collections, which deepen the love of nature and learning held by all who visit.

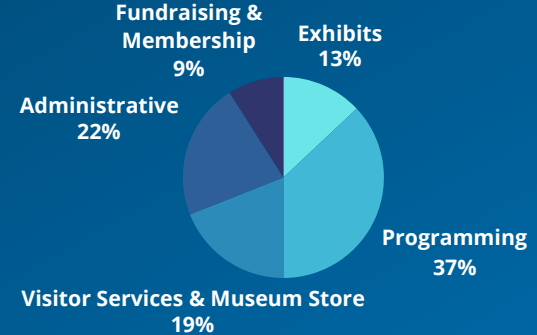
FINANCIAL HEALTH

Diverse funding streams including earned revenue from the membership program, gift shop, and ticketed programs ensure the Museum's fiscal sustainability.

REVENUE



EXPENSES



WAYS TO SUPPORT

- ✓ Give a one-time gift
- ✓ Sign up to give monthly
- ✓ The Lightkeeper Society
- ✓ Sponsor an event or program



LEARN ABOUT THE BRIGHT FUTURE CAMPAIGN!

By renovating and expanding our historic museum, we will advance and modernize our immersive exhibits, programs, and collections, sustaining and deepening the love of nature and learning experienced by all who visit us.

www.santacruzmuseum.org/brightfuture

Contact development@santacruzmuseum.org to learn more about special programs.



OUR COMMUNITY OF SUPPORTERS

MUSEUM STAFF

Executive Director Felicia B. Van Stolk

Emily Antonino
Kathleen Aston
Liz Broughton
Hannah Caisse
Tricia Hayes
Beck Hong

Ross Johnston
Lucy Logsdon
Lu Moon
Monica Richardson
Jenny Rieke
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Rocio Sánchez-Nolasco
Chris Soriano
Ellen Stone
Tara Thomas
Mary A. Verutti
Isabelle West



The education team

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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JM Brown
Steve Davenport
Gage Dayton
Terry Eckhardt
Elida Erickson
Megan Gnekow

Mark Hylkema*
Juliana Rebagliati
Alison Russell
Susan Pearce

*New board member - Welcome!

2024 NATURALIST AWARD

At the annual Laura Hecox Day event, Dr. Philip D. Carpenter received the award in honor of his commitment to education and sharing his passion for mycology with the community.



Philip Carpenter accepts the Naturalist Award

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THE LIGHTKEEPER SOCIETY



Glenn C. Joy and Kathleen Willott
Robert Stephens

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Tacos al Fuego
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Tracy's Nails
Verve Coffee Roasters
Wyatt Hersey



Seaweed Naturalist Night lecture

OUR COMMUNITY OF SUPPORTERS

\$5,000+

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Robert Stephens
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Connections to nature and science
education should be available to everyone.
You help us make that possible.

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SANTA CRUZ MUSEUM
of natural history

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