



SANTA CRUZ MUSEUM of natural history
**BRIGHT FUTURE
CAMPAIGN**

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**CITY'S BELOVED GREY WHALE STATUE TO UNDERGO
RESTORATION AND ADDITION OF CALF THROUGH REDESIGN
BY THE SANTA CRUZ MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY**

*EVOLUTIONARY PROJECT TO REVITALIZE THE ICONIC STATUE AND PRESERVE ITS LEGACY IS
PART OF EXCITING NEW ENHANCEMENTS*

CONSTRUCTION TO BEGIN MID-APRIL AND EXPECTED TO LAST EIGHT WEEKS

SANTA CRUZ, CA — APRIL 2, 2025. — A cherished Santa Cruz landmark is about to embark on an exciting new chapter. Beginning mid-April, the iconic grey whale statue, which has resided in Tyrrell Park outside the Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History since 1982, will undergo a significant restoration and enhancement, including the addition of a companion baby whale. The project, expected to last eight weeks, will revitalize the aging sculpture to ensure its continued presence as an educational and artistic centerpiece for years to come.

Over time, the beloved statue has required increasingly costly maintenance to address surface deterioration and fading details. In partnership with the City of Santa Cruz, the Museum is spearheading this refurbishment project using state-of-the-art materials to restore the sculpture's life-like appearance while improving its long-term durability.

"Generations of visitors have formed fond memories with this whale, and we're thrilled to rejuvenate it in a way that is both scientifically accurate and visually captivating," said Felicia Van Stolk, Executive Director at the Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History. "With the addition of the calf, we hope to deepen the story this sculpture tells about grey whale migration, family bonds, and marine conservation in the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary."

The project is being carried out by Nautilus Arts Studio, specialists in scientifically accurate statues and models with experience working in coastal environments and high-traffic public spaces. The artist's previous projects include work for the San Francisco Zoo and the iconic glove at Oracle Park. Additionally, Whitlow Concrete, a trusted local company that has maintained the whale statue for years, will play a crucial role in the restoration.

While the whale statue belongs to the City of Santa Cruz, it has long been a symbol associated with the Museum. No City funding is allocated for this project, and the Santa Cruz Arts Commission approved the refurbishment as a restoration of public art on June 12, 2024. This restoration has been made possible through the generous support of local donors and is part of a larger vision of community-funded improvements for the facility and park.

The Museum is in the leadership-giving phase of its Bright Future campaign, a capital initiative to update and expand its historic facilities. The unveiling of the enhanced sculpture will serve as an opportunity to generate excitement and support for this broader campaign.

As part of the Museum's Bright Future campaign, this project goes beyond preservation—it enhances the interpretive and storytelling value of the sculpture. In addition to revitalizing the adult whale, a new companion will be introduced: a baby whale calf “swimming” alongside it.

This addition will offer a more complete and engaging representation of grey whale life history, inspiring visitors of all ages to connect with the natural world. The project is strategically scheduled to take place between the Museum's Spring Break and Summer Break camps to minimize disruption to Museum programming.

A public celebration will be held upon the project's completion.

About The Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History

The Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History's mission is to connect people with nature and science to inspire stewardship of the natural world. The Museum was first established with the personal collection of local naturalist and lighthouse keeper Laura Hecox. Founded in 1904, and becoming an independent nonprofit in 2009, it has a proud history as the first public museum in Santa Cruz. The Museum is located in Tyrrell Park, bordered by its Garden Learning Center featuring native plants and grasses and a life-size grey whale model greeting the public. The historical collection, public programs, and location make this institution a cherished landmark located across from the entrance to Seabright State Beach.

For updates on the renovation, the history of the whale statue, and celebration event details, visit santacruzmuseum.org or follow on social media @santacruzmuseum on all platforms.

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