

2013 ANNUAL REPORT



CONNECTICUT STATE MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY &
CONNECTICUT ARCHAEOLOGY CENTER

University of Connecticut, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences



OUR MISSION

The Connecticut State Museum of Natural History and Connecticut Archaeology Center serve the University of Connecticut and the public by promoting an understanding and appreciation of our natural and cultural world, especially as related to New England.

Within the mission, the Museum's fundamental goals are to acquire and preserve collections and to use collections, exhibits, and programs:

- To cultivate an interest about natural history among the citizens of Connecticut.
- To communicate the significance and vulnerability of archaeological and natural resources.
- To enhance University learning, teaching, and research.
- To enrich elementary and secondary education.
- To acquire and present knowledge about the natural and cultural history of Connecticut and New England.
- To showcase the academic resources of the University of Connecticut and provide a public connection to them.

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FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

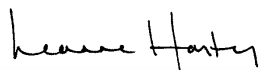
With the close of 2012-2013, we reflect on change and continuity at the Museum and Archaeology Center.

This year we welcomed a new Membership Coordinator and a number of new student employees into the office. We developed a new gallery exhibit for visitors, and worked on new programs, projects, and committees at UConn to advance our education missions. Each month the Office of State Archaeology was involved in new field reviews and development evaluations, assisting towns and citizens throughout the state preparing for the future.

As the state mandated repository for Connecticut archaeological materials and home to a large education collection of natural history specimens, our ongoing responsibility is to protect and preserve these resources for future generations. By integrating collections and preservation themes in our educational activities, we seek to engage people's curiosity and wonder to develop closer connections with our region's rich history.

Now as ever, research and education are the bridges to critical thinking and decision-making in our world, and we know that work being done every day at UConn is expanding knowledge and increasing information. As part of the University community, we are proud of our longstanding role connecting people across the state with new information and resources—and as a new year begins, we look forward to creating more opportunities for people to build appreciation and understanding.

Thank you for your continued support!



Leanne Harty, Director



Nicholas Bellantoni, State Archaeologist



OVERVIEW

As part of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at UConn, the Connecticut State Museum of Natural History supports the University's most fundamental academic traditions—traditions built not only on passing knowledge to future generations, but also on applying this knowledge to solve problems and improve the quality of people's lives. The Museum provides a unique platform to showcase the teaching, research, and resources of the University of Connecticut by providing opportunities for people of all ages to interact with and learn from leading scholars in meaningful and engaging ways. At a time when Public Engagement focus is increasing at UConn, with the UConn Office of Public Engagement expansion in 2012-13, this role underscores the Museum and Archaeology Center as important components of the University's public education and community outreach endeavors. Through the Museum's permanent exhibit, *Human's Nature: Looking Closer at the Relationships Between People and the Environment*, campus and community-based programs, traveling exhibits, and outreach activities, the Museum served more than 90,000 people this year.

EDUCATION

PUBLIC PROGRAMMING

To advance our goals of increasing people's understanding of natural and cultural history, and the intimate role humans play in it, the Museum offered fourteen field-learning activities, two workshops, one KAST science module, one adult field school, two day trips, and nine Museum lectures this year. The Museum also co-sponsored seven Teale lectures, and participated in five community events. Below are some of the program highlights from those 41 activities.

In Museum and Archaeology Center field learning activities, participants have the opportunity to conduct experiments, test ideas, make field observations, and use sophisticated tools they might not otherwise have access to. Activities this year included *Fish Field Sampling* with Dr. Eric Schultz from the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at UConn, *Exploring Cedar Hill Cemetery* in Hartford, examining the taxonomy and lifecycle of mushrooms in *Mysterious Mushrooms* with Connie Borodenko from the Connecticut Valley Mycological Society, and learning about *Winter Habitats for Wildlife in the UConn Forest* with Thomas Worthley from UConn's Cooperative Extension System. Astronomy programs continued to be popular and Dr. Cynthia Peterson from UConn's Physics Department led *Look Up! It's the Waning Frost Moon*, and *Look Up! Viewing Winter's Night*



Sky. George Bailey of Bailey's Maple Syrup and Honey offered a hands-on maple sugaring program, and science educator Paula Coughlin presented two field activities: *Vernal Pools in Spring* and *The Birds of Bafflin Sanctuary*. During the *Learn to Throw the Atlatl* activity, participants used atlatls and darts with Gary Nolf, a member of the World Atlatl Association and nationally ranked atlatl competitor. Rounding out the field activities, Steve Broderick, Forester and Program Director of the Goodwin Forest Conservation Center, led a tour of Connecticut's Historic Goodwin Forest that showcased forest management from a historic point of view.

Museum workshops offer an intimate and exciting way to learn about natural and cultural history and are led by innovative educators from UConn. Virge Kask, Scientific Illustrator with the biological sciences at UConn, presented *Scientific Illustration—Wildlife!*, where participants examined a variety of specimens from the Museum's collections and learned about illustration techniques for drawing still and live subjects. Dr. Kenneth Noll from UConn's Department of Molecular and Cell Biology, with instructors from the Department of Chemical, Materials & Biomolecular Engineering, led *The Artificial Termite Gut: A Hi-Tech Exploration of Microbes and Biofuels*. Participants learned how termite gut microbe communication might teach us how to better process wood to make biofuels and then constructed their own microfluidic devices, an important tool used for this type of research.

Participants spend an exciting week exploring the world of nature and culture at the Museum's field school programs. The Museum's *Archaeology Field School for Adults* was led by Dr. Bellantoni and took place at an 18th-19th century historic farmstead in Ashford, Connecticut. The Museum and Archaeology Center also continued its participation in the longstanding UConn *Kids Are Scientists Too (KAST)* program with the popular *Archaeology Field School for Kids* module.

Museum Day Trips were popular additions this year with two bus trips to New York City attractions. The first trip was to the world's largest natural history museum, the American Museum of Natural History. The second trip was to the Bronx Zoo, the world's largest urban zoo, featuring more than 600 species from around the globe.

Experts from diverse academic backgrounds, many recognized as leaders in their field, shared their knowledge and research during lectures presented by the Museum. Some of the highlights from this year included *Time Traveler* by Dr. Ronald Mallett from UConn's Physics Department, who talked about his lifelong quest to design and build a machine for time-travel. *Distorted History: Pop Culture and the Science of Archaeology* was presented by Connecticut State Archaeologist Dr. Nicholas Bellantoni, who examined the different ways the science of



archaeology is portrayed in media programming. *Climate Change Where We Live*, by Dr. Anji Seth from UConn's Department of Geography, discussed what science tells us about global climate change and what impact it will have on the Northeast United States. *The Myriad Defenses of Caterpillars: Tales of Woe, Deception, and Wonder*, looked at the deceitful ploys caterpillars use to dupe predators and was presented by Dr. David Wagner from UConn's Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology. Spencer Nyholm, from UConn's Department of Molecular and Cell Biology, presented *Deep-Sea Tube Worms: Life By The Hydrothermal Vents*. During *Connecticut Curiosities*, Joan Allen, from UConn's Home & Garden Education Center, discussed an array of unique living things found in Connecticut. Gerald A. Berkowitz, Professor of Horticulture from UConn's Department of Plant Science and Landscape Architecture, presented *It Came from the Grocery Shelf! A Look Under the Hood at Genetically Modified Foods*.

As we have in previous years, the Museum also co-sponsored the *Edwin Way Teale Lecture Series*, which brings leading scholars and scientists to the University of Connecticut to present public lectures on nature and the environment.

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

The Museum participated as an exhibitor at several large-scale community events this year. These events included the 9th Annual Festival on the Green in Mansfield with 3,000 visitors, the Hammonasset Jamboree with 3,200 visitors, the FOSA Archaeology Fair with 100 visitors, the Annual Big Y Kids Fair with 17,000 visitors, and the 2013 Connecticut Flower & Garden Show with 35,000 visitors. The goal of participation in these large-scale events is to create awareness of the Museum and Archaeology Center with special emphasis on museum visitation and educational opportunities for the general public.

The Museum continues to be a unique and active outreach contributor at UConn. Through our programs, exhibits, publications, and media, we bring the work and scholarship of the University to audiences that other programming and activities may not. Recognizing the importance of this role, the Museum is active in the University's Office of Public Engagement. The Museum has supported this effort particularly this year in development and launching the Year of Engagement in 2013-14. Director Leanne Harty served as co-chair of the Steering Committee for UConn Year of Engagement, which will be celebrated during 2014.



STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

The Museum and Archaeology Center employed 10 UConn student workers this year. New students were Christine Gagnon, Michael Holler, James McGann, Matt Tuscano, and Moriah Whitehead. The returning students were Katelynn Henion, Angelina Hernandez, Myles Jones, Kathleen Lynch, and Kelsey Sullivan. From greeting museum visitors, organizing archaeological artifacts and site files, registering people for programs, and supporting educational activities, the student staffers bring enthusiasm and a diverse set of skills to the Museum experience. Additionally, the Museum and Archaeology Center provide a dynamic and multifaceted work environment, offering student staff a unique opportunity for academic enrichment and skill development at the University of Connecticut.

Thirteen students in the department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology received student awards and research support funding from the Museum this year. In addition to the Undergraduate Teaching Assistantship award, funding for student support was made possible from a number of named endowments including the Clark, Wetzel, Rankin, Manter, Slater, and DeCoursey funds. The principal in these funds continues to grow, and insure that support for student research and awards in the department will continue in perpetuity.

EXHIBITS

The Museum's permanent exhibit, *Human's Nature: Looking Closer at the Relationships Between People and the Environment*, continued to present only the most minor maintenance needs and costs during 2012-13.

In addition to self-guided student visits tied to courses and assignment completion, the exhibit was utilized in two undergraduate courses this year. In February, Walt Woodward, State Historian and Associate Professor in the History Department, and Alan Marcus, Associate Professor in the Neag School of Education, brought 24 students in their *Teaching History with Film and Museums* course into the Museum to examine the process, choices, and compromises involved in developing the exhibit's storyline. Nick Bellantoni and Collin Harty, the Museum's Exhibits Planner, met with the class to provide insight into the development process and lead group discussion after.

In March, Françoise Dussart, Professor of Anthropology and Women's, Gender and Sexualities Studies, brought the 45 upper undergraduate students enrolled in her *Anthropological Perspectives on Art* course to the exhibit to explore how the Museum's stated mission, role within



2013 ATTENDANCE

Public Programming

Workshops & Trips	386
Lectures	526
Meetings & Events	600
Total	1,512

Outreach Activities

Small Group	1,500
Community Events	57,400
Total	58,900

Exhibits

In-House Exhibits	3,000
Collections on Display	30,000*
Total	33,000

Total Attendance..... 90,412

* Approximate--Does not include the Mashantucket Pequot Museum & Research Center.

the University, and responsibility to the broader community combine to influence the choices made in developing the exhibit. Nick Bellantoni and Collin Harty shared information with the class and facilitated discussion.

ONLINE & PRINT COMMUNICATIONS

During the year, the Museum produced our regular annual publications, which include newsletters and seasonal program brochures to describe and promote each season's slate of workshops, lectures, and activities.

Webpage publications for the period included our Fall 2012 and Winter 2013 Calendar of Events, Summer 2013 Calendar of Events, and upgrades and additions to our Publications Archives page. As an interesting contrast, when tracking web traffic specifically for our online Calendar of Events page we find we are receiving approximately 3,500 hits when extrapolated over a six month winter/spring period. That is a result of both user-initiated visits and email marketing through a list of approximately 4,000

addresses. Of the printed programs, 3,400 are distributed through direct mail to members and recent museum program participants, and 600 are distributed by hand.

Overall web statistics for this period accounted for 7,410 unique visits, 10,641 visits overall (for a total of 1.4 visits per visitor), who tallied a total of 346,560 hits throughout the website.

Friends and supporters world-wide also follow the Museum on Facebook. We currently have over 800 followers and have seen consistent growth in that number since our Facebook presence went live.

The Publications Archive page offers access to Museum newsletters and annual reports back to 2004. We continue to make our publications available to the public for free several months after they have been released to our members and donors. Low resolution PDFs are made of the print publications and posted for online viewing here: <http://www.cac.uconn.edu/newsletterarchives.html>. We also respond to requests throughout the year for reprints of articles featured in our publications, and provide support for groups and individuals wishing to make use of the materials online. For example, the FOSA webmaster requested use of archaeological articles including "A Long Trip Home: The 112 Year Journey of Albert Afraid of Hawk," which featured work and research that FOSA members assisted with.



RESEARCH & ACADEMICS

THE OFFICE OF STATE ARCHAEOLOGY

Activities within the OSA often arouse the curiosity of the general public as well as those within the professional archaeology community. These efforts provide insights into our collective history as well as build upon our contemporary archaeological understandings. Particular highlights during the 2012-2013 academic year included the story of Albert Afraid of Hawk, a Lakota Sioux who died in June 1900 while performing with Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show in Danbury, CT. Buried in an unmarked grave in Wooster Cemetery, a local historian found the cemetery archives and the burial location in 2008. Family members on the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation requested that Albert's remains be returned to the reservation for reburial according to Lakota heritage, with the archaeological exhumation, forensic identification, and repatriation of his remains overseen by Dr. Bellantoni. Another story that gained attention in the media was when winds from Hurricane Sandy toppled the New Haven Green's "Lincoln Tree," an oak planted in 1909 to mark the 100th anniversary of President Abraham Lincoln's birth. The toppled tree uncovered human skeletal remains from the late 1700s. Dr. Bellantoni worked with Dr. Gary Aronsen, a biological anthropologist for the Yale Department of Anthropology, as well as city and area church officials, concerning identification of the remains and their proper reburial.

As the Connecticut State Archaeologist, Dr. Bellantoni receives numerous requests to provide special lectures about his experiences and historical investigations in Connecticut and beyond. Due to his many responsibilities and full schedule, lecture requests are now referred to the Program and Public Information Office, which provides an application and list of frequently requested talks. Returned applications are then reviewed to ensure scheduling requests are compatible and the time of the State Archaeologist is being utilized appropriately. During the 2012-2013 year, 20 lecture applications/requests were processed. Over 1,500 people attended public presentations by Dr. Bellantoni this year. Additionally, Dr. Bellantoni offered numerous informal talks beyond those scheduled through the Museum for special events, K-12, and college-level classes across the state.



COLLECTIONS & LOANS

In February, we worked to reorganize and consolidate space and materials in the collections facilities provided at the Thomas J. Dodd Research Center and at the Horsebarn Hill Road building. The Museum and Office of State Archaeology are increasingly pressed for space and will have dozens of boxes of archaeological material to transfer from the Connecticut Department of Transportation in the near future.

For the second year in a row, staff from the Benton Museum borrowed items from the Museum's collections to provide subjects for their annual Draw On! event. Draw On! is a four-day program, where they offer the materials, ideas, and support for free-form and observation drawing to artists of all ages and abilities. The Museum provided mounted mammals, birds, insects, and skeletal material.

ADMINISTRATION

MEMBERSHIP

Megan Delaney became Membership Coordinator in September 2012. The Membership Coordinator provides information and support to the Museum's current members, and answers questions regarding membership and its benefits from the general public. Due to the Membership position being vacant for much of 2012, a large renewal mailing was sent out in October 2012. This mailing was sent to members who did not receive renewal materials by mail during the transition period, and was very successful. Overall membership numbers remained steady this year in spite of the staffing challenges.

The Membership Office maintains the donor and member database, and processes deposits and paperwork to both the University and the UConn Foundation. The Foundation is in the process of converting to a new system which will be utilized by the Museum in order to allow for greater efficiency and accuracy in record keeping and reporting. The Membership Coordinator is working with the Foundation to transition the Museum to the new system, which is set to go live in July.

PROGRAM MARKETING & PUBLIC INFORMATION

Diverse media coverage of Museum and Archaeology Center activities remains an important component of the Museum's public information and marketing strategy. Over a dozen online calendars are utilized, sharing Museum programming with the public through diverse platforms maintained by news media, educational, cultural, and tourism outlets. Press releases are distributed to Connecticut's media outlets, sharing unique stories on the Museum's endeavors as well as promoting upcoming Museum activities.



VOLUNTEERS

CONTRIBUTING EXPERTS

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