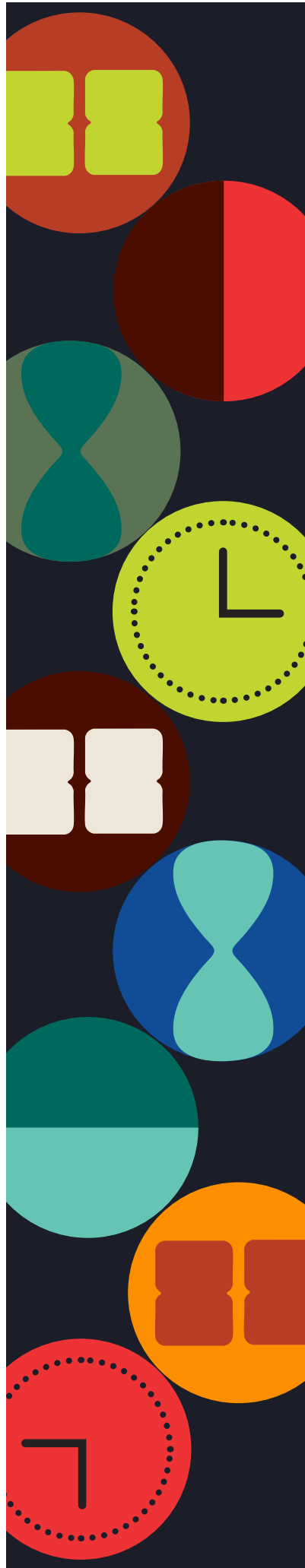


MILWAUKEE PUBLIC MUSEUM

annual report

24 / 25



the
countdown
begins...



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THE MISSION

of the Milwaukee Public Museum is to inspire curiosity, excite minds, and increase desire to preserve and protect our world's natural and cultural diversity through exhibitions, educational programs, collections, and research.



dear friends

This past year was filled with extraordinary progress as we continued to take mammoth steps toward readying Milwaukee Public Museum (MPM) for its final year in operation and the transition to its new home, the Nature & Culture Museum of Wisconsin. We are now counting down to an exciting new era of this institution!

But a countdown isn't just measured by a finite period of time. It's measured by the countless goals met and obstacles overcome along the way. Each of these accomplishments is a "tick" on the clock, moving us closer to completing our transformative future museum project.

Throughout the year, MPM partnered with other museums, uplifted local organizations, and launched educational initiatives that infused inclusivity and authenticity into our cultural and science programming. This effort sets us up for strong, meaningful connections when we welcome visitors into our new home.

Our researchers deepened international collaboration, sharing updates on species documentation and discovery. Through published papers, major grants, and widespread fieldwork, MPM's curators enhanced the Museum's scientific profile and the visibility of our world-class collections.

These collections—the foundation and heart of the Museum—continue to be prepared for their eventual move. Our Collections team not only wrapped and packed hundreds of thousands of priceless artifacts and specimens from storage, they also began the complicated and meticulous process of deinstalling a small number of objects on display.

The new museum has also reached remarkable heights. The building achieved maximum vertical construction, followed by the installation of the exterior panels. We revealed the official name, logo, and brand identity of our future home—a bold vision that honors both the physical design and the 143-year-old legacy of this groundbreaking institution.

With every program delivered, every partnership strengthened, every object packed, every dollar invested, and every panel installed, we count down to history being made. Thank you for joining us on this incredible journey. Together, we are creating a place of wonder, a place to gather, and place to welcome the next generation of curious minds.

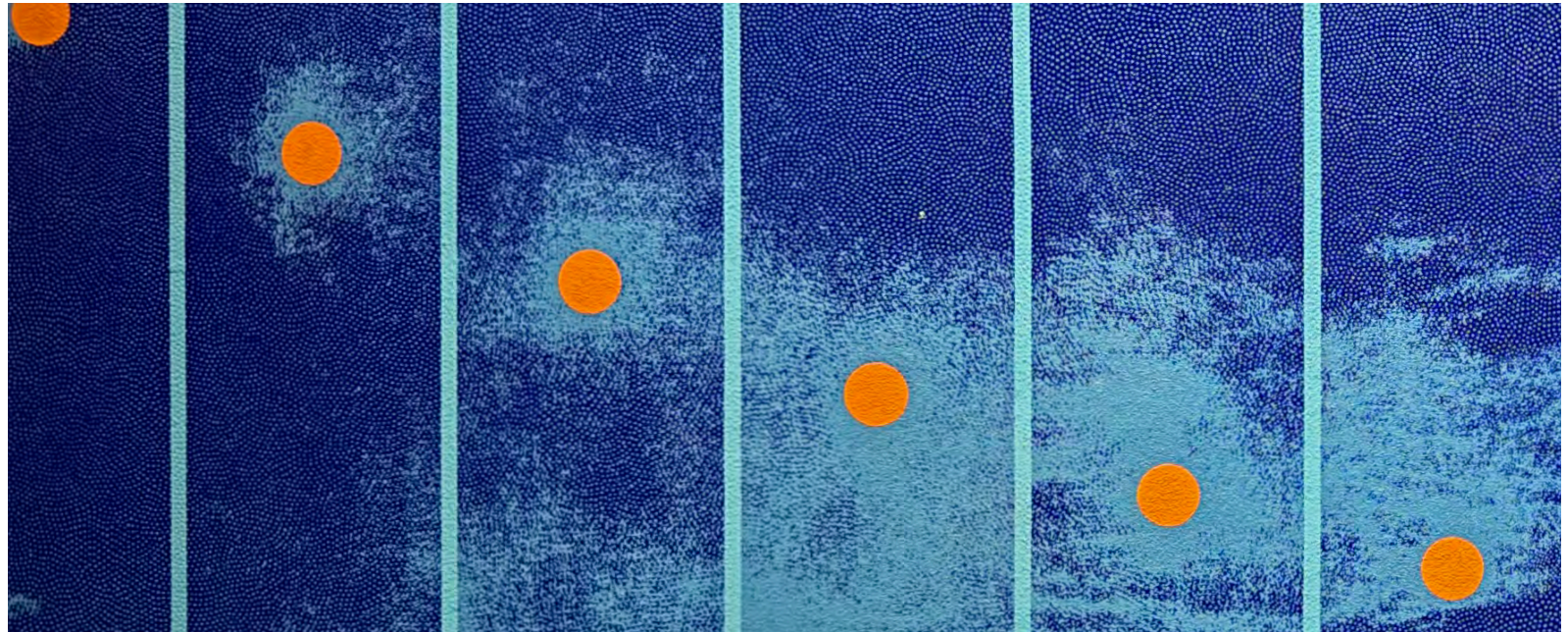
With gratitude,



Dr. Ellen Censky
President & CEO



John Roberts
Board Chairman



OFFICERS

John Roberts | Chair
Executive Vice President &
Chief Distribution Officer,
Northwestern Mutual

Patrick (P.J.) DiStefano | Past Chair
Managing Partner, Deloitte

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Chief Information Officer/Managing Director, Baird

Charlie Wright, Jr. | Second Vice Chair
VPO, Rheocast Company,
a division of The Fall River Group, Inc.

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Vice President & Deputy General Counsel,
WEC Energy Group, Inc.

Mike Van Asten | Assistant Treasurer
Founder & President, Incredible Edibles, Inc.

Christine (Chris) Rundblad | Secretary
Community Volunteer

Mary Ellen (Candy) Pindyck | Assistant Secretary
Vice President, Meridian Industries, Inc.

Ellen Censky, PhD | President & CEO (ex-officio)
Milwaukee Public Museum

board of directors

SEPTEMBER 1, 2024 - AUGUST 31, 2025



DIRECTORS

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Partner, Foley & Lardner, LLP

Lynn Warner Brengel

Community Volunteer

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President, CEO, Coakley Brothers

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President, Milwaukee Bucks,
President, Fiserv Forum

Ivan Gamboa

SVP, Tri City National Bank

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Community Volunteer

Patricia Hoben, PhD

Community Volunteer

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Marlon Sullivan

Executive Vice President &
Chief Human Resources Officer,
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Principal, Wavecrest Consulting and Analytics

Jerome (J.J.) Weis

President & Lead Administrator,
Jerome J. and Dorothy H. Holz Family Foundation

Gail Yabuki

Director, The Yabuki Family Foundation

Patricia (Patty) Yunk

Community Volunteer



2,748,212
Total website views



1,340,450
Specimens digitized by Terrestrial Parasite Tracker



501,887
People served



400,000
Items packed for our big move



150,999
Planetarium-loving stargazers and filmgoers



62,788
Global Biodiversity Information downloads



25,600
Visitors who received free admission
on Kohl's Thank You Thursdays



3,020
Ring Pops sold



160
Museum staff members



50
Adjunct
Curators,
Research
Associates,
Honoraries,
and Emeritus
Curators

counting
down
the
numbers

Next page: Time passes
with each generation.
Mother and daughter share
a moment looking in a
diorama, Africa, 3rd Floor

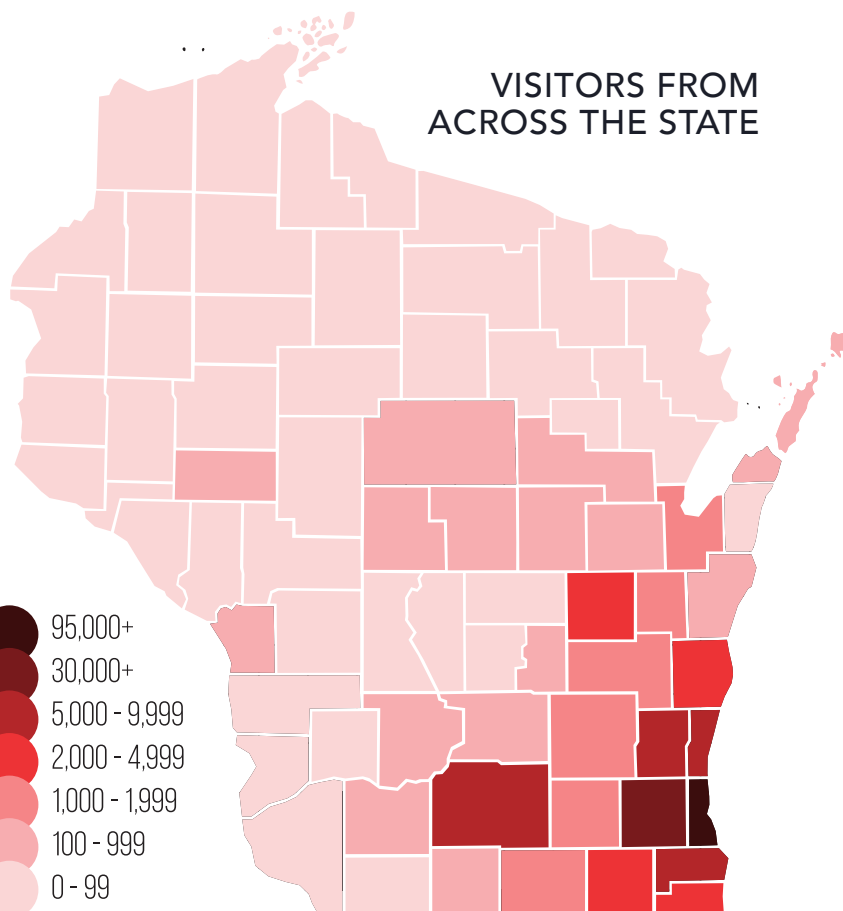
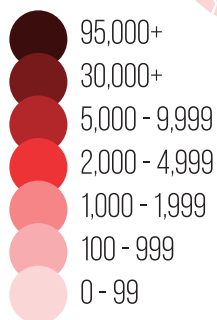
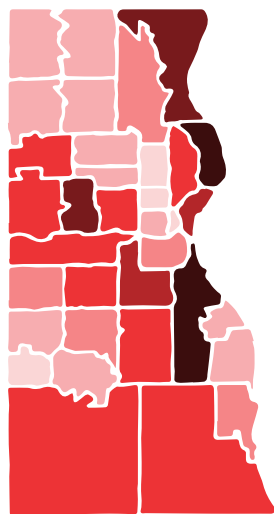
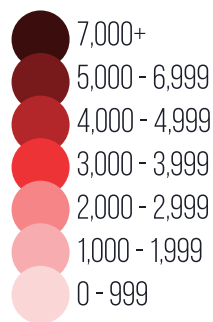
07

visitorship & reach

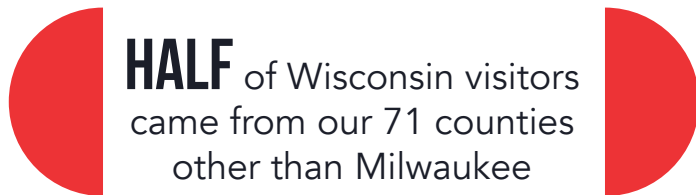


inspires curiosity and excites minds... **both near and far!**

VISITORS FROM MILWAUKEE COUNTY
(by zip code)



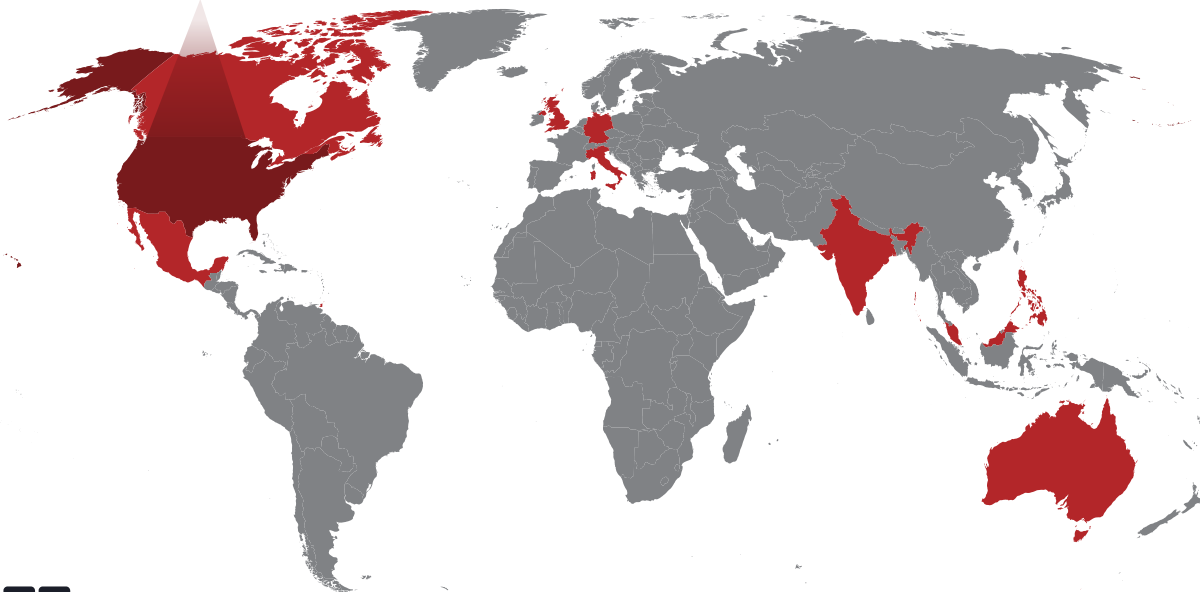
VISITORS FROM ACROSS THE STATE



SOCIAL MEDIA IMPRESSIONS

@574,229 **f 14,709,115**

MPM had visitors from **EVERY STATE**



1 MILLION+ web visitors from across the states as well as web visitors **FROM ACROSS THE WORLD**

09

future museum preparation



History
Hallway

112.2



29430

Cabinet 112 - Shelf 2

Previous page: Clocks
ready for packing,
History collections



SEPTEMBER 2024

Tower crane erected at construction site, in preparation for the building going vertical



FEBRUARY 2025

Planetarium vendor selected

DECEMBER 2024

First concrete deck pour completed

OCTOBER 2024

Exhibit fabricators and building systems vendors selected

JANUARY 2025

Community Job Fair for construction and trade work

MARCH 2025

Second Community Job Fair

THIS PAST YEAR

included important milestones in the future museum project, including the announcement of the official new name and its branding: the **Nature & Culture Museum of Wisconsin**.

The once-in-a-generation opportunity to bridge our institution into its next phase—the most inspiring, engaging, and relevant museum of nature and culture for tomorrow's Wisconsin and world—continues.





APRIL 2025

Deinstallation of some collections currently on display at MPM begins



JUNE 2025

Final concrete deck pour completed

AUGUST 2025

First 100 collections crates labeled and packed (about 400,000 total items packed)

MAY 2025

Announcement of new name and branding for the organization, the Nature & Culture Museum of Wisconsin

Collections storage and furniture vendors selected

JULY 2025

Museum staff, donors, and project team members celebrate "topping off!" Final beam placed on the structure; Museum building fully vertical



LIVING IN A DYNAMIC WORLD: CONNECTIONS EFFORTS BREAKDOWN

Through immersive environmental scenes and our vast collection of global artifacts, the exhibits in the Nature & Culture Museum of Wisconsin's *Living in a Dynamic World* gallery examine how ways of life are shaped by natural landscapes. We are digging even deeper into this concept by engaging in conversations with the origin communities who created the priceless items in the Museum's care. Our goal is that this dialogue will help guide us in telling these items' stories respectfully and comprehensively.

968+

days
cultivating
relationships

18

countries
connected
with



ARCTIC

18 people connected with
across 12 organizations



GRASSLANDS

24 people connected with
across 17 organizations



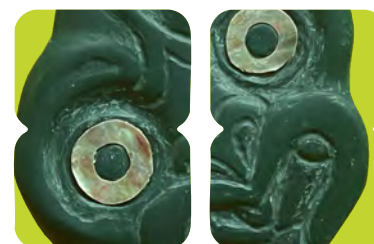
MOUNTAINS

18 people connected with
across 13 organizations



DESERTS

08 people connected with
across 07 organizations

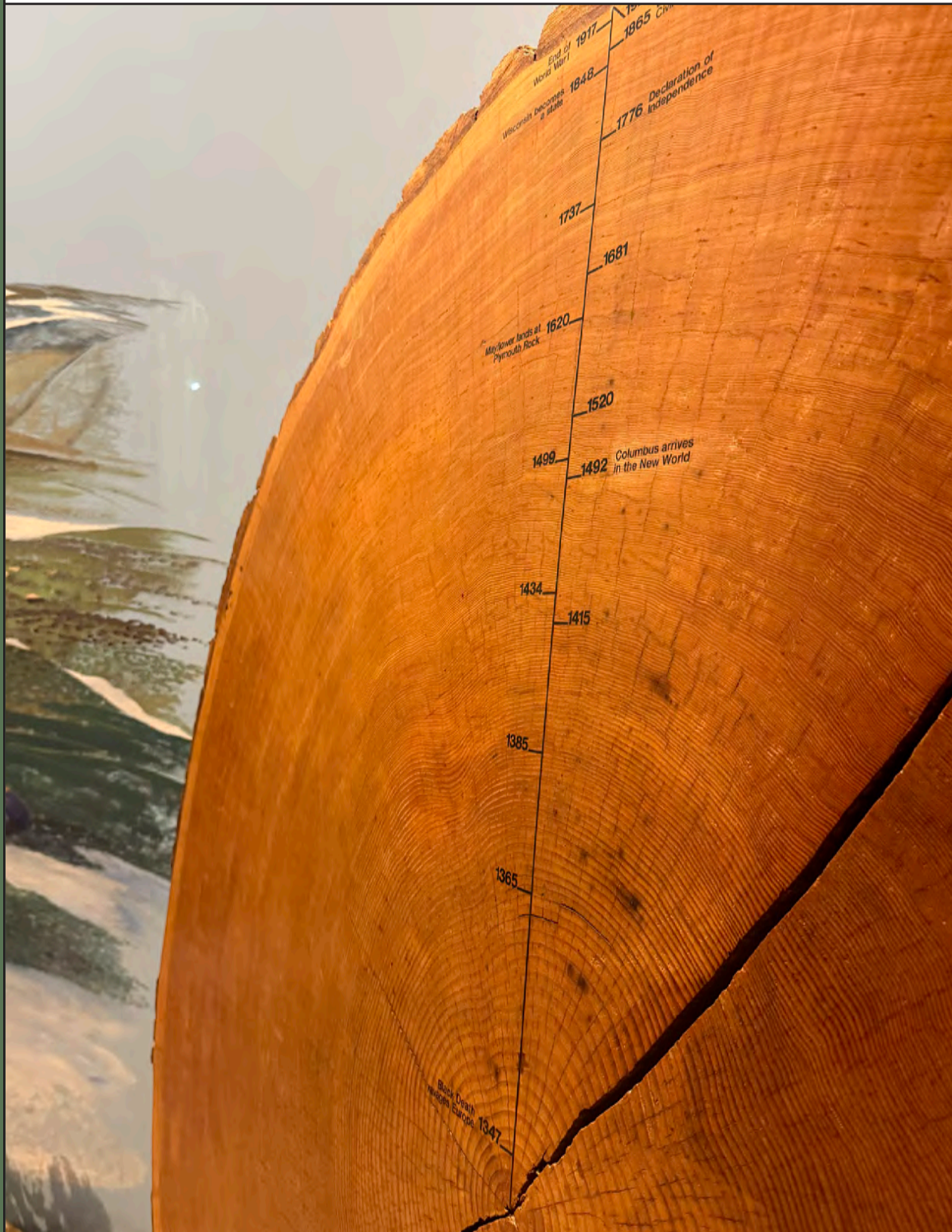


ISLANDS

34 people connected with
across 18 organizations

13

collections & research

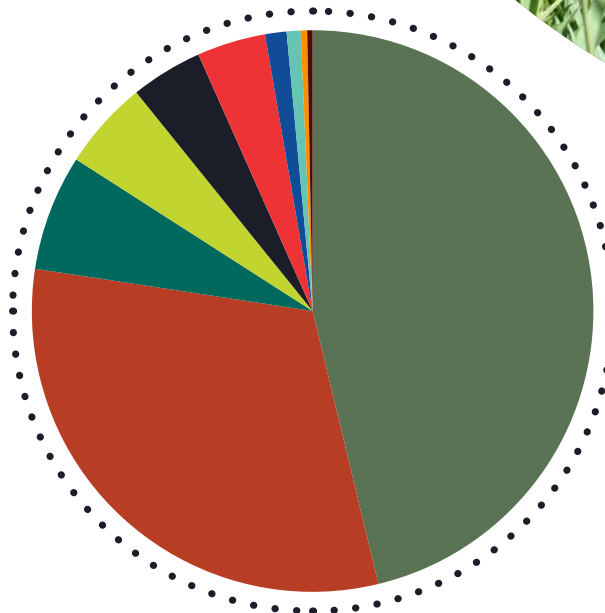
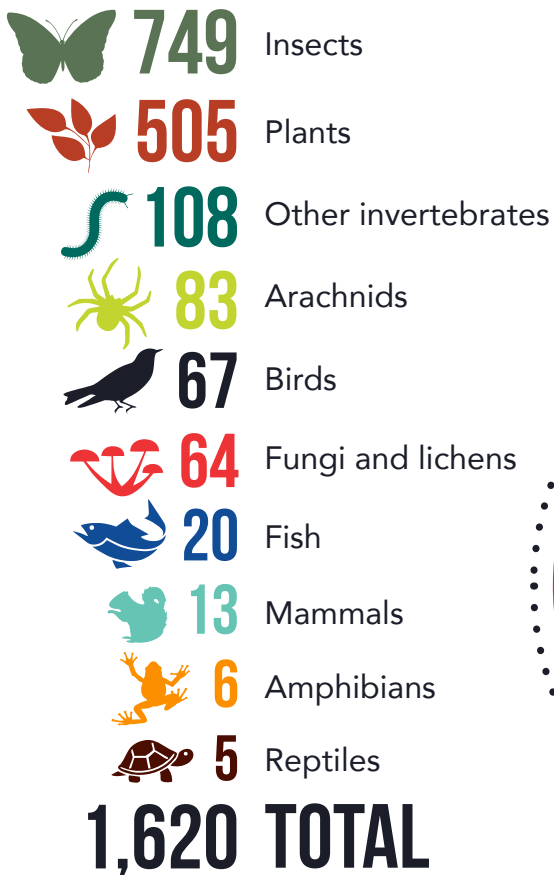


MPM IS HOME to unique collections of more than 4 million objects and specimens in the departments of Anthropology, History, Botany, Zoology, and Geology. These collections have always been, and will continue to be, the very root of this institution – regardless of their physical location.

Active in research around the world, the Museum engages the people of Wisconsin and strengthens our global impact through community science and interactive programming. Without the collections serving as a “library of life,” much of Wisconsin’s ecological history would be unrepresented.

ANNUAL BIOBLITZ

A BioBlitz is part contest, part festival, part educational event, and part scientific endeavor where MPM brings together a group of scientists in a race against time to see how many species they can count in a 24-hour celebration of biodiversity in a designated Wisconsin natural area.



Aldo Leopold
Foundation,
June 2025

Previous page: A tree cross-section dating back to the 1400s, 2nd Floor. This tree’s rings represents over 500 years of growth; certain major human events are marked on it as a timeline.



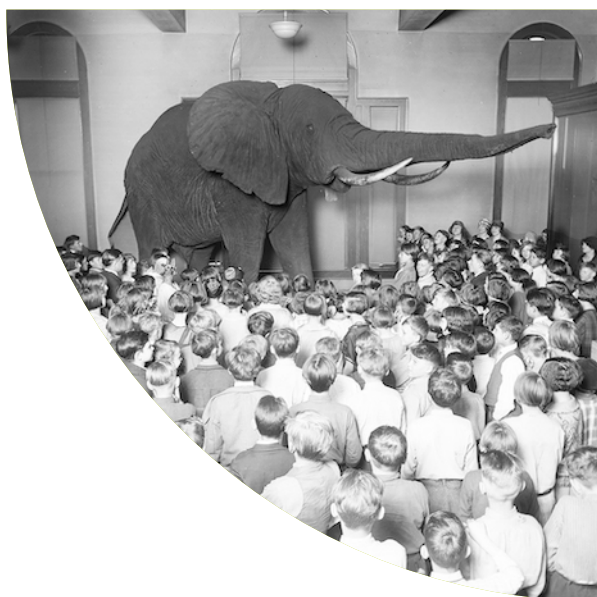
IN MEMORIAM

Curator Emeritus and retired herbarium curator Neil T. Luebke died on September 21, 2024. Neil was on staff at MPM for 42 years before retiring in late 2013.

SPECIAL EXHIBIT

140

Years of innovative achievements celebrated through our in-house special exhibit, *Groundbreaking*. It debuted October 2024 and ran through January 2025, exploring MPM's evolution in research, preservation, and education. Highlighted topics included the Museum's origins as an academy, notable figures who helped shape MPM, and the revolutionary practices that have earned us our pioneering legacy. An interactive "Follow the Object" experience illustrated how our perspectives on collections have also evolved through the introduction of modern technology, new research methods, and cultural responsiveness.



trailblazers

NICK DOWDY, PHD

Zoology Research Curator & Director of Collections Informatics

47,000

Number of new Zoology specimens acquired through three donors

6,400

Miles traveled to Kyoto, Japan to present tiger moth research at the International Congress of Entomology

50

Participants in the international Arctiinae Research Community 2025 conference (an annual meeting bringing researchers together for discussions about the biology of tiger moths), organized and hosted by Dr. Dowdy

10

Peer reviews for scientific journals, including one peer-reviewed article published

7

Media interviews, consultations, and lectures

2

Exchange opportunities at international host institutions through newly awarded position on the "Fulbright Specialist Roster" by the US Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and World Learning

1

Orchestral piece created, inspired by Nick's research, using MPM's real field recordings of tiger moth ultrasonic emissions



Left: Nick Dowdy, PhD
Top: Tiger moth specimen
Bottom: A small fraction
of the Zoology specimens
acquired



JAMES FLORES

Manager of Tribal Relations

11

Federally recognized Wisconsin Tribes at the State of the Tribes address in Madison, WI, which Flores attended in March 2025

“Following the address, I attended the reception at the governor’s house. It was a great opportunity to meet with various Tribal representatives and Governor Tony Evers to discuss the many initiatives happening at MPM, such as the future museum and the Native American exhibits that will be on display, and our continued efforts to work with Tribal Nations regarding NAGPRA.”

1

New annual powwow created and announced at Wisconsin Indian Education Association Conference: MPM’s 3 Rivers Powwow (held on November 1, 2025)



Left: James Flores

Right: Art developed by Flores for the 3 Rivers Powwow

Top left, clockwise:
John Hendricks, PhD,
Geology specimens,
Elizabeth Hermsen, PhD,
paleopotany fossil



JONATHAN HENDRICKS, PHD

Robert & Sally Manegold Associate Research
Curator of Paleontology

900,000

Specimens of rocks, minerals, fossils, and meteorites in the Geology department, newly overseen by Dr. Hendricks as of September 2024

474,605

Dollars transferred to MPM through National Science Foundation grant

3

Published works (two research papers and one children’s book about fossils)

ELIZABETH HERMSEN, PHD

Collections Move Scientist

6,000

Miles traveled to Tierra del Fuego, with a team from Cornell University and the Museo Paleontológico Egidio Feruglio, to collect plant fossils from Miocene (23 to 5.3 million years ago) deposits, which will help us understand plant diversity and paleoclimate during a time of global cooling

CHRIS TYRRELL, PHD

Curator of Botany

6,150

Miles traveled to present at conferences (International Symposium on Aquatic Plants in Lisbon, Portugal; 14th National Water Quality Monitoring Conference in Green Bay, WI; and 2025 Botany Conference in Palm Springs, CA)

500

New plant specimens added to MPM's Herbarium (collection of plant specimens) found during the sixth annual Wisconsin Botanical Foray in Manitowoc County, led by Dr. Tyrrell

4

Unusual bamboo species found, leading to the creation of three new branches of the plant tree of life, or "genera" (group of related species): *Vianaea*, *Quixiume*, and *Stelanemia*

3

New works published

2

Grant partnerships: One investigating the evolution of leaf micromorphology and anatomy in Neotropical woody bamboos; the other to help "unravel" the evolution of bamboos on a global scale



JENNIFER ZASPEL, PHD

Vice President & Academic Dean

261,232

Parasite specimen data transcriptions representing 84,067 unique specimens across seven major institutions

24,078

Total butterfly observations recorded so far as part of the Statewide Community Science Project

7,200

Miles traveled to Okinawa, Japan to present collections-based research at the Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections (SPNHC) Conference

7

Published works (five research papers, one article, and one data paper) plus one invited submission



Bottom left, clockwise:
Chris Tyrrell, PhD
A *stelanemia* bamboo specimen
Jennifer Zaspel, PhD
Photo taken for the community science project

19

education, events, & programs



MPM'S EDUCATION

initiatives are crafted with its visitors in mind: those curious about both culture and the natural world, ready to explore through various lenses. Having had its beginnings by local schoolchildren of the German-English Academy, the Museum continues to hold ways of learning, and the sharing of stories through collections, in the highest regard.

BILINGUAL PROGRAMMING

Bilingual-Spanish programming expanded in FY25 through additional outreach, early learning, and informal engagement offerings as well as an increase in resource translations.

DOCENT TOURS

651 visitors attended **41** docent-led Museum tours

2,222 students attended **101** docent-led Museum tours during field trips

EARLY LEARNING

Served **695** students via **32** programs

FIELD TRIPS

43,606 students with their chaperones visited MPM on a school field trip

LEARN WITH AN EXPERT

Served **3,256** students virtually

This live-streamed program connects classrooms with real experts in scientific and cultural fields.

Previous page: A wood turtle shell, native to Wisconsin, Zoology collections. Some Tribes use the divisions on a turtle shell as the lunar calendar, with 13 sections representing the 13 annual lunar cycles.

Kids exploring in the Early Learning Classroom



INFORMAL PROGRAMS – NEW!

In FY25, the Education department piloted two new school programs: Reserve an Educator and Museum Academies.

551 people served through Reserve an Educator

In this program, an Educator joins a visiting group in an exhibit relating to a rotating topic with a variety of hands-on materials and resources.

420 students served through Museum Academies

This program for middle and high school students highlights different fields of study, supported by Museum collections, through hands-on learning experiences.

Two trick-or-treaters at
Halloween Hauntings

MEMBER EVENTS

HALLOWEEN HAUNTINGS is a bewitchingly fun family event with activities like trick-or-treat, ghost tours, and more.

INSIDE OUT allows MPM members to view rare—and rarely seen—collections objects.

6,336 attendees were welcomed to these two member-favorite events.



MPM ON THE MOVE

Served **7,733** people at schools and community organizations across

9 Wisconsin counties and

4 out-of-state counties (virtually)

Our outreach program, MPM on the Move, seeks to improve scientific and cultural literacy through both formal programs and events with community partners. It has something for everyone and can be adapted for different age groups.

MUSEUM VOLUNTEERS & INTERNS

148 volunteers gave **7,365** hours across **3** departments

5 interns worked in Education, Development, Community Science, and Zoology

PARTNERSHIPS

4 new partnerships

MPS First Nations Studies, Wisconsin Association of Bilingual Education, Black Educators Caucus MKE, and MPS Black Latino Male Achievement

2 ongoing partnerships

WATERMARKS

WaterMarks is an initiative to develop an inclusive and urban-scaled vision for Milwaukee, to help people better understand their relationship with the water systems and infrastructure that supports their lives. In August 2025, a new WaterMarker was installed at 16th and Harrison.

AMERICA'S BLACK HOLOCAUST MUSEUM (ABHM)

MPM Educators attended a workshop with ABHM's team to learn how to apply culturally responsive teaching strategies for early learners in museums. This was part of our reciprocal relationship with ABHM educators for their help in putting together new Black History Month programming.



Left: A MPM docent with the day's schedule

Right: A bilingual MPM educator at a visitor engagement table

SPECIAL EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

For **1,000** visitors, Indigenous Peoples' Day 2024 celebrations included performances by Little Priest and México Indígena, plus activities through community partners and Museum curators.

Serving more than **26,000** visitors and Tribal members, Native American Heritage Month was celebrated throughout November with drop-in programming, docent tours, learning carts, and lectures.

SUMMER CONNECTIONS

Served **547** kids by providing free educational outreach as well as access to the Museum and pop-up activities for K-8 students at

7 Milwaukee youth organizations across
10 individual sites

MPM's Education department coordinates with community resource centers in under-resourced areas to provide summer engagement to students during the summer with the goal of connecting our community with our mission, connecting youth with their natural world, and connecting families through learning. Each participating student receives a family membership to continue exploring the Museum throughout the year.

VISITOR ENGAGEMENTS

52,312 visitors served through combined volunteer and education engagements

Visitor engagements include hands-on activities and learning stations, free to all visitors with admission.



Top: Two dancers at Indigenous Peoples' Day
Bottom: A visitor engagement table teaching about horns vs. antlers

23

a museum for all



MPM strives to be inclusive, diverse, equitable, and accessible to all visitors, regardless of cultural, financial, or physical barriers. The Museum is dedicated to continuously collaborating on progressing that work through a tradition of fostering learning, dialogue, and self-reflection in a safe and welcoming environment for all people.

46

Accommodation tools checked out by visitors (may include noise-cancelling headphones, sensory kits, compression vests, and sensory lab coats)

473

Affordable Adventure memberships

The Affordable Adventure membership was created so all families, regardless of income level, can enjoy the Museum and receive all membership programming opportunities and discounts. Affordable Adventure includes all the same benefits as a Family membership.

15,139

Museums for All program participants

Through this program, those receiving food assistance (SNAP benefits) can gain free or reduced admission to more than 500 museums throughout the United States simply by presenting their EBT card.

10,112

Words translated into Spanish for signage, programs, and resources

*Left: A MPM educator at this year's Braille Games
Right: The sensory lab coat available for checkout*



HIGHLIGHTS

In May 2025, approximately **60** people participated in the 23rd Annual Braille Games at MPM. This year's theme was Native Games, as participants learned about lacrosse, the Ojibwe Snake Game, and a card game similar to Go Fish featuring Wisconsin birds and an audio element.

Testing of audio tours began for *Streets of Old Milwaukee*, *Rainforest*, and *The Third Planet* for the development of future audio tours at the Nature & Culture Museum of Wisconsin. Different individuals will provide feedback on three styles of tour, and we will use this feedback to produce a universally beneficial product – regardless of age, ability, etc. The future tours will eventually include audio in other languages and printed scripts in both standard and large print.

There are now **12** sensory materials at MPM through a partnership with Marquette University Capstone Occupational Therapy Doctor students.



25

financials & giving



you keep mpm going.

THANKS FOR ALL YOU DO!

25TH ANNUAL FOOD & FROTH

\$202,000 raised

1,400 guests

87 vendors

Guests sampled brews and bites throughout the exhibit floors with live music, all while supporting MPM's mission.

38TH ANNUAL GALA

\$841,000 raised

400 guests

"Metamorphosis: Flight to Our Future" set a fundraising record!

GIVING DAY

Thank you to all who contributed to MPM's record-breaking 2025 Giving Day!

\$623,650

GRAND TOTAL!

459

donors supporting nature & culture

142

first-time donors

83

gifts over \$1,000

Previous page:
Marsh diorama,
2nd Floor. Animal
migration indicates
the changing of
the seasons.

Our donors,
members, visitors,
staff, volunteers, and
community support
this institution in
countless ways.

MEMBERS

13,389

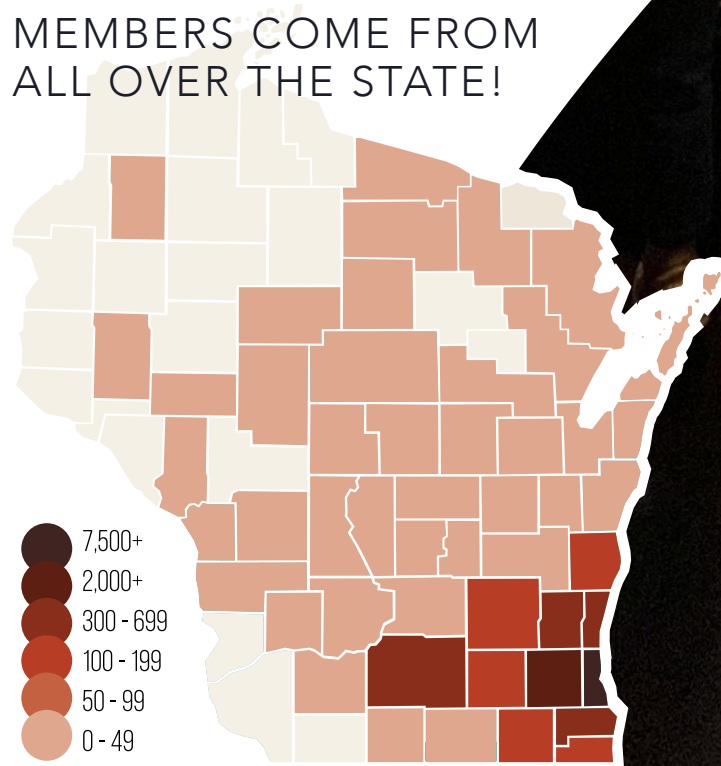
Members as of August 31, 2025.

We greatly appreciate your
continued support!

2,467

Memberships made free for
families in the community, thanks
to our generous donors

MEMBERS COME FROM ALL OVER THE STATE!



financial information

FISCAL YEAR
2025

FISCAL YEAR
2024

SUPPORT AND REVENUE BY SOURCE

Contributions & Membership	\$ 6,286,125	\$ 5,977,587
Public Support	\$ 3,508,922	\$ 3,572,168
Earned Revenue	\$ 3,872,484	\$ 3,728,617
Other (Released from Restriction)	\$ 2,752,761	\$ 2,152,590
TOTAL REVENUE	\$16,420,292	\$15,430,962

MUSEUM OPERATING EXPENSES

Cost of Goods Sold	\$ 386,999	\$ 351,970
Supplies & Subscriptions	\$ 798,801	\$ 859,840
Wages & Benefits	\$ 9,141,884	\$ 8,818,283
Travel	\$ 79,986	\$ 149,459
Insurance	\$ 76,227	\$ 71,507
Marketing/Donor Development	\$ 717,675	\$ 665,575
Maintenance	\$ 685,010	\$ 605,298
Utilities	\$ 1,180,734	\$ 1,075,772
Professional Fees	\$ 914,896	\$ 416,577
Miscellaneous/Sales Tax	\$ 181,836	\$ 196,947
SUBTOTAL MUSEUM OPERATING	\$14,164,048	\$13,211,228

Interest Expense	\$ 2,454	\$ 3,342
Depreciation	\$ 1,548,112	\$ 1,454,543

TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES

CHANGE IN NET ASSETS WITHOUT DONOR
RESTRICTIONS BEFORE NON-OPERATING ITEMS

\$ 705,678

\$ 761,849

NON-OPERATING INCOME

Pension & Retiree Benefits Gain/(Loss)	\$ 623,872	\$ 568,161
Net Investment of Return	\$ 1,249,696	\$ 1,206,110

CHANGE IN NON-OPERATING NET ASSETS

CHANGE IN NET ASSETS W/DONOR RESTRICTIONS

TOTAL CHANGE IN NET ASSETS

\$ 1,873,570

\$ 1,774,271

\$ 570,986

\$ 2,357,418

\$3,150,232

\$4,893,538

CONSOLIDATED ASSETS, LIABILITIES, & NET ASSETS

TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 37,886,283	\$ 35,476,491
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$ 3,846,065	\$ 4,586,505
TOTAL NET ASSETS	\$ 34,040,218	\$ 30,889,986

CHART 1: Support
and revenue by
source

CHART 2: Museum
operating expenses

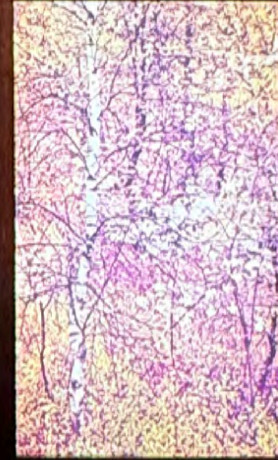
THE CHANGING SEASONS

The Broadleaf Deciduous Forest is more profoundly affected by seasonal change than any other community of plants and animals. The annual cycle of production and loss of leaves affects every organism of the forest.

In **SPRING**, trees are still leafless and ample sunlight reaches the forest floor. The plants hasten to grow and bloom. Many animals awake from hibernation or return to spring migration. In **SUMMER** the canopy of tree leaves intercepts the sunlight. Trees grow and store food. The dense layer of leaves protects the interior of the forest from storms and changing weather. In **AUTUMN** the food supply of the forest is replenished as leaves and fruits drop from the trees and animals fatten for the winter. **WINTER** is the time of severe trial. The leafless trees provide little cover or protection from wind and cold. Water is frozen and there is little food available from the plants.

For the broadleaf trees, the loss of leaves in winter is an adaptation for survival in a field climate. In colder regions a reliable early snow cover insulates the soil and prevents deep ground frost. Needleleaf evergreens can take up water through their roots to replace that lost by evaporation from their leaves. But in a temperate climate a snowless winter may result in frozen ground water below the depth of tree roots. Only dormant, leafless trees can survive these conditions.

22



24 / 25 annual fund giving

With the generous support of our donors, MPM brings the world to the residents of Wisconsin and beyond. The stewardship of your gifts is of utmost importance to us, and we are sincerely grateful to each and every donor.

INDIVIDUALS, FAMILY FOUNDATIONS, AND PRIVATE PHILANTHROPIC FOUNDATIONS

The Museum recognizes donors listed below whose gifts of \$2,500 or more to the Annual Fund were received between September 1, 2024, and August 31, 2025.

EXCEPTIONAL ANNUAL SUPPORT

Milwaukee County

\$100,000 - \$499,999

John Mark Bohler*
The Lynde & Harry Bradley Foundation
Leona Fitzsimonds
Four-Four Foundation, Inc., in memory of Sally Schley Manegold
Greater Milwaukee Foundation
Helen and Jeanette Oberndorfer Fund
Herzfeld Foundation
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