



Florida Museum
of Natural History

Strategic Plan 2014 – 2019





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Executive Summary

The Florida Museum of Natural History at the University of Florida will celebrate its first 100 years as the state museum while planning for its next century at the forefront of cutting-edge science and education. Housing collections that have grown to 40 million specimens and artifacts, the Museum is one of the top three university-based natural history museums in the nation with active collecting, research and teaching programs. Major priorities for the future include building new state-of-the-art facilities, securing large-scale external grant funding for scientific research programs and leading the NSF-funded iDigBio project, a national effort to digitize and connect all biodiversity collections in the U.S. The Museum hosts 200,000 visitors annually and will further enhance its ability to inspire and educate the public through exhibits and programs by renovating Powell Hall and building new components, including a permanent children's Discovery Room, while also reaching beyond the Museum walls with traveling exhibitions and other outreach programs. Through realignment of existing staff and resources, in concert with vigorous fundraising and expansion of entrepreneurial activities, the Museum will secure the resources necessary to support its strategic priorities and future growth.

Special thanks to Jodi Gentry and Bob Parks with UF Human Resources for their assistance in guiding the Museum through the strategic planning process.

Graphic Design: Hollis Wooley

Editor: Paul Ramey



Mission

The Florida Museum of Natural History – Understanding, preserving and interpreting biological diversity and cultural heritage to ensure their survival for future generations.

Impact

The Florida Museum of Natural History inspires people to value the biological richness and cultural heritage of our diverse world and make a positive difference in its future.

Tagline

Inspiring people to care about life on Earth.

Vision

The Florida Museum of Natural History is a leading authority in biodiversity and cultural heritage, using its expertise to advance knowledge, solve real world problems, and impact public policy and perception. An engaging and impactful hub for teaching and learning science, the Museum has been particularly successful at utilizing research collections and making them accessible to diverse audiences, demonstrating relevance in their daily lives. In so doing, the Florida Museum of Natural History inspires people to value the biological richness and cultural heritage of our diverse world and make a positive difference in its future.



Key Strengths

- World-class collections.
- State museum of natural history.
- Distinguished faculty curators recognized for excellence in research, teaching and graduate mentoring.
- Leader of large-scale, multi-institution NSF-funded projects (iDigBio, FOSSIL, PIRE).
- Situated within AAU Research I university with extensive collaboration between allied colleges and departments.
- Thriving temporary and traveling exhibit programs.
- Dedication to fostering public awareness, interest, engagement and understanding of science.
- Welcoming and accessible center for community engagement.
- Diverse university and community audiences.
- Large and dedicated corps of community volunteers.
- Commitment to planning and alignment.



Core Principles

The Museum's mission is grounded in a set of core principles. These principles reflect the charge of all museums, as stated in the American Alliance of Museums Code of Ethics for Museums:

Taken as a whole, museum collections and exhibition materials represent the world's natural and cultural common wealth. As stewards of that wealth, museums are compelled to advance an understanding of all natural forms and of the human experience. It is incumbent on museums to be resources for humankind and in all their activities to foster an informed appreciation of the rich and diverse world we have inherited. It is also incumbent upon them to preserve that inheritance for posterity.



The Florida Museum is guided by four core principles:

Collections: The Museum acquires and preserves a systematic record of natural and cultural diversity with a regional emphasis and exercises proper stewardship over specimens, artifacts and other resources entrusted to its care by the state of Florida. The Museum adheres to professional standards established for the acquisition, curation, use and disposal of collections, and encourages use of its collections by other institutions, scholars, students and the general public.

Research: The Museum conducts scientific investigations, particularly through fieldwork and collections-based research, to document, understand, sustain and foster a greater appreciation for the natural world and mankind's place in it. The Museum makes available and encourages use of its collections by other institutions, scholars, students and the general public.


Education: The Museum interprets collections and research for multiple audiences. This includes developing state-of-the-art exhibits and educational products and programs based on sound scholarship and featuring excellence and accuracy of presentation. The Museum also provides research training in the natural and cultural sciences; encourages critical thinking by presenting scientific knowledge as a continuing process; and fosters understanding of the core ideas, crosscutting concepts and practices of science.

Ethical Conduct and the Public Trust: The Museum honors its ethical contract with the public by providing candid, substantive and scientifically sound learning opportunities; consistently promoting public service by putting its visitors first, as guests; involving community voices; performing outreach and other public services; and listening to its constituents and considering their comments and suggestions. The Museum promotes an environment that encourages all staff to be ethical, courteous, helpful, professional and nondiscriminatory with coworkers and guests while seeking to inform, communicate and collaborate with each other and constituents in effective and meaningful ways.



World Issues the Museum Addresses...





The Florida Museum of Natural History manages some of the most comprehensive and widely utilized collections in the world. While the Museum's primary geographic strengths are in Florida, the southeastern U.S. and the Caribbean Basin, its collections and research programs span the globe to include every continent and nearly every island group on Earth. These collections and related research initiatives inform wide-ranging issues of global change that affect the health and sustainability of Earth and its inhabitants, including:

- *Climate change*
- *Invasive species*
- *Ecosystem services and human health*
- *Evolution*
- *Human interactions with the environment*
- *Biodiversity—loss and extinction, endangered species*
- *Environmental conservation, management and sustainability*
- *Public understanding of science*
- *Cultural heritage and change*
- *Water/air quality*

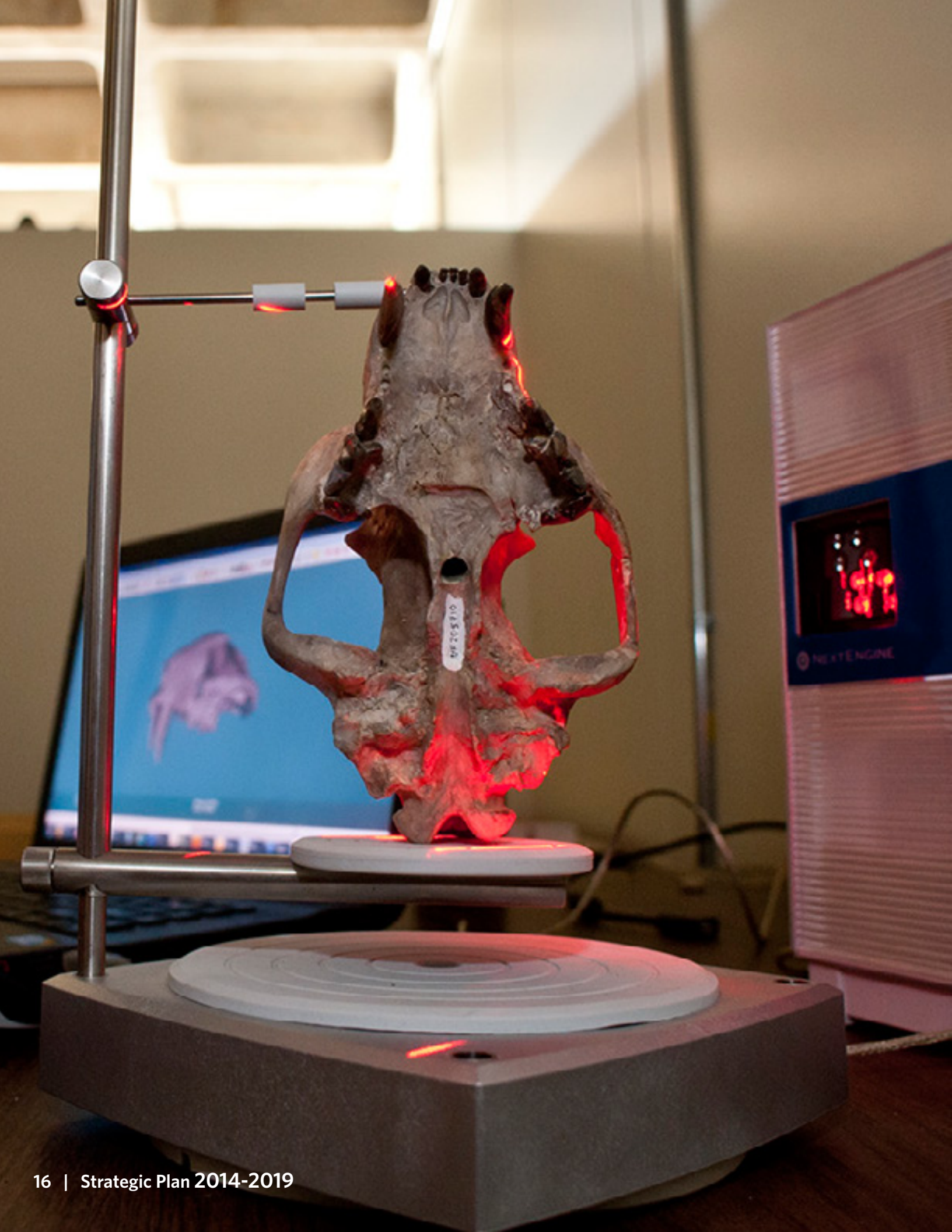
Moving Forward: A Vision for the Future



Priority: *Align museum staff and resources with strategic objectives.*

Strategies:

- Determine funds and infrastructure needed to implement priorities.
- Expand and strengthen the Museum's financial base to sustain current and future levels of activity. Increase private philanthropic gifts, especially endowments, corporate sponsorship and revenues from earned income.
- Build state-of-the-art facilities to adequately house collections and research, and renovate existing facilities to support mission and impact.
- Create long-term collaborative teams focused on major world issues.
- Reassess current physical structures including space use and deployment, potential relocation of working groups and creation of collaborative/collision spaces.
- Assess organizational structure and activities to realign resources with needs and goals, including evaluation of the current reporting structure.
- Support shared priorities with clear communication from the Director's Office, providing incentives for participation in interdisciplinary/museumwide projects and flexibility in time commitments.
- Develop new or improve existing internal communication methods to build excitement/engagement of shared vision.
- Diversify the Associates Board; align and engage board members more fully with the Museum's strategic priorities.



Priority: *Increase access and use of collections and demonstrate their importance and relevance to research, education and outreach.*

Strategies:

- Target important collections or portions of collections for digitization.
- Significantly increase the number of users and new audiences of digitized data for researchers and the public.
- Position the Museum to be recognized as a clearinghouse for biodiversity data.
- Improve Museum and other researchers' ability to address big data questions through acquisition of required hardware and software.
- Develop and launch Digital Florida.
- Develop new technologies and methods for using collections to solve real-world issues.





Priority: *Be a leading authority in biodiversity and cultural heritage, solving real-world problems and impacting public policy.*

Strategies:

- Develop new interdisciplinary collaborations that contribute to solving real-world issues and creating new knowledge in these fields.
- Secure new high-profile interdisciplinary research grants.
- Recruit and train highly qualified graduate students.
- Publish across disciplines and enhance communication highlighting the impacts of Museum research, reaching broad audiences and becoming an established source of science-related news for major national and international media outlets.
- Engage state legislators and policymakers to increase their appreciation and understanding of the role and value of collections in addressing world issues.
- Develop exhibits and programs that focus on world issues.
- Launch and direct the UF Biodiversity Initiative.

Priority: *Become a more engaging, innovative and impactful center for teaching and fostering science understanding.*

Strategies:

- Become a center for town/gown interactions, providing a more engaging community gathering space.
- Increase collaboration on exhibits and programs within the Museum and university, and with other state/national universities and organizations.
- Expand the reach of communities served through developing online UF courses or certificate programs that can become earned income streams.
- Effectively relate the “big picture” impacts of key topics/research in exhibits and programs.
- Develop resources based on Museum research for national reach.
- Incorporate new technologies into exhibits, programs and the Museum website to better communicate with and engage diverse audiences.
- Improve website analytics analysis to target information to specific audience interests; and expand social media including the Museum’s YouTube and TeacherTube presence.
- Encourage and model energy conservation and sustainability by reducing the Museum’s carbon footprint and incorporating more sustainable methods into operations.



¿Cómo lo Sabemos? — El P HOW DO WE KNOW? — TH

Archaeology is based on controlled field excavation and collaboration with many specialists and long hours in the laboratory.
La arqueología se basa en las excavaciones controladas y la colaboración con muchos diferentes especialistas y muchas horas en el laboratorio.

Organizando Toda la Información PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

The most costly part of a project is the laboratory analysis of soil contents and artifacts. The biggest risk of a project is the loss of the artifacts and the objects excavated that are lost in the laboratory.

LABORATORY ANALYSIS
The most costly part of a project is the laboratory analysis of soil contents and artifacts. The biggest risk of a project is the loss of the artifacts and the objects excavated that are lost in the laboratory.



READING THE DIRT

SOIL STRATIGRAPHY

Soil stratigraphy is the study of the layers of soil and the artifacts found in them. It is a key part of understanding the history of a site.

Excavación de un Yacimiento TAKING A SITE APART

EXCAVATING AND RECORDING

Excavating and recording is the process of digging up a site and recording the findings. It is a key part of understanding the history of a site.



Interpretando la Tierra

INTERPRETING THE LAND

Interpreting the land is the process of understanding the history of a site. It is a key part of understanding the history of a site.



THE RESEARCH TEAM

COLLABORATION ACROSS DISCIPLINES

Collaboration across disciplines is the process of working with experts from different fields to understand the history of a site. It is a key part of understanding the history of a site.



SCREEN
Pull the tarp out to screen your dirt.



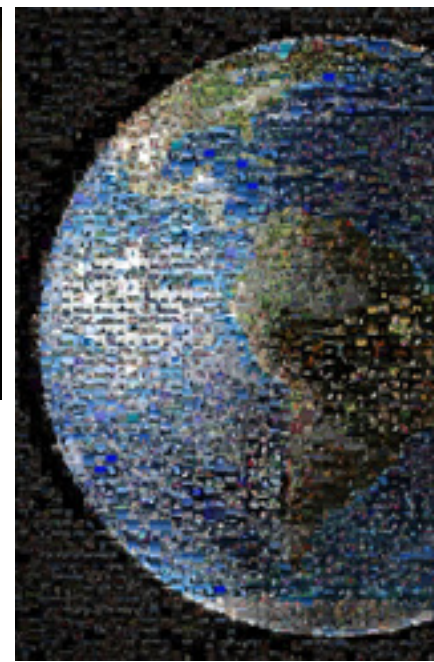
***Our greatest challenge
today is the preservation
of the Earth's biodiversity.***

–William W. McGuire





UF UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA



Milestones

2014

- Launch the UF Biodiversity Initiative.
- Hire big data and Historical Archaeology faculty as part of UF's Preeminence Plan.
- Secure UF approval for a new special collections facility. Work with the Vice President for University Relations to approach the Florida Legislature.
- Complete fundraising for the new Discovery Room.
- Celebrate the 10th anniversary of the McGuire Center for Lepidoptera and Biodiversity.
- Complete the Charles and Wanda Denny Central Gallery renovations.

2015

- Plan celebration for the 100th anniversary as the state museum.
- Launch Digital Florida.
- Pilot an e-learning module, potentially on broader impacts of science on society.
- Secure funding for a special collections facility.
- Secure funding to develop a new traveling exhibit.

2016

- Update the Museum Master Building Plan.
- Design a new special collections facility.

- Complete construction of the new Discovery Room.
- Complete migration of all existing data sets to Specify or Re:discovery.
- Design a new traveling exhibit.
- Launch the "First Colony: Our Spanish Origins" exhibition tour.

2017

- Celebrate the 100th anniversary as the state museum.
- Renew iDigBio.
- Build a new traveling exhibit.
- Build a new special collections facility.

2018

- Open a new traveling exhibit.
- Assess the Strategic Plan.

2019

- Open a new special collections facility.
- Develop a new Strategic Plan.





Some of our favorites...

Front, back cover

This Florida panther, *Felis concolor coryi*, was photographed during a docent trip to Lowry Park Zoo in Tampa. Photo by Eric Zamora

Contents Page

These immature Florida alligators, *Alligator mississippiensis*, were photographed during a docent trip to the Florida Aquarium in Tampa. Photo by Jeff Gage

This one-sixth scale model of a glyptodont, *Glyptotherium arizonae*, is displayed in the “Florida Fossils: Evolution of Life and Land” permanent exhibition. Photo by Eric Zamora

Page 4

A volunteer and Museum visitor make virtual rain in an augmented-reality sandbox during the annual “Can You Dig It?” geology program. Photo by Kristen Grace

Page 6

Assistant Curator for Lepidoptera Akito Kawahara displays a tobacco hornworm larva, *Manduca sexta*, in the McGuire Center for Lepidoptera and Biodiversity. Photo by Kristen Grace

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This Luna moth, *Actias luna*, was photographed inside the “Butterfly Rainforest” exhibition for use in a new ID guide. Photo by Jeff Gage

Page 8-9

This pottery specimen from the Museum’s Florida Archaeology Collection, circa 200-500, is an Early Swift Creek cooking vessel from northern Florida. Photo by Kristen Grace

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These specimens, Garden nasturtium, *Tropaeolum majus* (clockwise from left) Loblolly bay, *Gordonia lasianthus*; Flowering maple, *Abutilon striatum*; and Perennial hibiscus, *Hibiscus* ‘Flare’ are part of the Museum’s Herbarium Collection at Dickinson Hall. Photos courtesy of the UF Herbarium Collections Catalog

Page 11

This 1,600-year-old earthenware effigy of a turkey vulture head from the Weeden Island culture was excavated from the McKeithen site in northern Florida. Photo by Kristen Grace

Page 12-13

This satellite photograph of Earth is similar to the image displayed in the McGuire Center for Lepidoptera and Biodiversity Aase and Rick Thompson Gallery. Photo courtesy of NASA

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This Gray Kingbird, *Tyrannus dominicensis*, nest and eggs are part of the Museum’s Ornithology Collection. Photo by Mary Warrick

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A scanner in the Vertebrate Paleontology Collection captures 3-D images of this skull of *Dinictis*, a genus of false saber-toothed cats. Photo by Kristen Grace

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Florida Museum Ichthyology Curator Larry Page described this small species of catfish, *Akysis scorteus*, in 2007. Photo by Eric Zamora

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Herpetology Collection Manager Kenneth Krysko displays the tanned skins of two Burmese pythons captured in Everglades National Park. The snakes measured 17 feet 7 inches and 16 feet 6 inches. Photo by Kristen Grace

Page 19

This specimen of fossil coral, *Oculina sarasotana*, from the early Pleistocene and part of the Museum’s Invertebrate Paleontology Collection, was found in Charlotte County. Photo by Eric Zamora

Page 20-21

Children use a multimedia interactive display that simulates an archaeological dig in the Museum’s “First Colony: Our Spanish Origins” exhibition in St. Augustine. Photo by Kristen Grace

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Museum visitors may view more than 13,000 butterfly and moth images and specimens on the McGuire Center for Lepidoptera and Biodiversity “Wall of Wings” display. Photo by Eric Zamora

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Left to right, top to bottom:

The “Butterfly Rainforest” exhibition contains waterfalls, walking paths and 60-80 Lepidoptera species at any given time. Photo by Kristen Grace

The McGuire Center for Lepidoptera and Biodiversity’s “Butterfly Rainforest,” pictured here from the front of the Museum during early evening, celebrates its 10-year anniversary in 2014. Photo by Jeff Gage

The “First Colony: Our Spanish Origins” exhibition begins with the recreated interior of a Spanish ship, pictured here, where visitors may learn why colonists risked their lives traveling 4,000 miles to La Florida. Photo by Kristen Grace

This photo collage was constructed using more than 1,400 images submitted by people around the world as part of the July 2013 Wave at Saturn event organized by NASA’s Cassini mission. Photo courtesy of NASA

The Museum’s newly redesigned Charles and Wanda Denny Central Gallery was completed in summer 2014. Photo by Kristen Grace

The Museum will soon begin construction on a new, permanent “Discovery Room” area for families with children 8 and under. Design concepts by Skolnick

This building design concept by SmithGroupJJR is part of the Florida Museum Master Plan.

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These various pre-Columbian points from northern Florida are part of the Museum’s Florida Archaeology Collection. Photo by Kristen Grace

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Volunteer Rachel Narducci prepares *Titanoboa* fossils in the paleontology lab during the “Titanoboa: Monster Snake” featured exhibition. Kristen Grace

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This specimen of a true tulip, *Fasciolaria tulipa*, from the Museum’s Malacology Collection was photographed for the “Surf Science: Waves and Wildlife” exhibition. Photo by Kristen Grace





FLORIDA MUSEUM
OF NATURAL HISTORY



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