

Annual Report FY2023

REPORTING PERIOD: JULY 1, 2022–JUNE 30, 2023



Director's Report



SPRING IS A FITTING TIME to reflect back on another year's activities and achievements at the

University of Alaska Museum of the North (UAMN). As the last fiscal year recedes into the rearview mirror, I am grateful that a relative sense of normalcy has returned to our daily lives. Tourism numbers have significantly rebounded, and it is energizing to see visitors from across the globe enjoying our galleries. Our collections labs and facilities are busy with volunteers, students, collection managers and curators working to preserve and study over 2.5 million artifacts and specimens in our care. Our education team is busy with a full year of school and public programming, and our exhibition team has several exciting projects in development.

Among the most exciting conservation and exhibit projects underway is Bus 142, also known as the "Into the Wild" bus. Bus 142 evokes a multitude of different emotional responses, but it is undeniably an internationally recognized icon for Alaska and promises to be a great draw for museum visitors. The conservation work of the bus was completed this year while on display in the high bay at the Joseph E. Usibelli Engineering Learning and Innovation Building. We are now making plans for preparation of the outdoor exhibition site in the forest north of the museum building. Our intent is to use Bus 142 as a touchstone to share many stories of Alaska Interior history, Indigenous peoples, and natural sciences.

The close of this fiscal year coincided with another major accomplishment. UAMN again achieved accreditation by the American Alliance of Museums. Accreditation, last awarded in 2008,

is the gold standard of excellence among US museums. It recognizes our commitment to, and demonstration of, the highest professional standards for education, public service, and collections stewardship. While we are delighted to have reached this milestone for the fifth time, it is not an excuse to rest on our laurels; rather, we have much work ahead to continually improve the museum for the benefit of its collections, staff and people we serve.

UAMN is rapidly approaching a century of service. It is exciting to think what the coming years will bring!

Patrick Druckenmiller,
UAMN Director

Photo Above: The UAMN special exhibition *Perspective: Ways to See a Whale* investigated the scientific understanding and cultural significance of the bowhead whale. PHOTO BY ROGER TOPP

Mission, Vision, and Values

UAMN Mission

UAMN illuminates the natural history and cultural heritage of Alaska and the North through collections, research, education, and partnerships, and by creating a singular museum experience that honors diverse knowledge and respect for the land and its peoples.

UAMN Vision

UAMN is an essential contributor to the well-being of the local and global community, an engaging gathering space, and a recognized resource and leader among circumpolar museums.

UAMN Core Values

Preserving our shared cultural and natural history

We are committed to preserving collections in perpetuity to address present and future needs.

Partnership

Collaboration with Indigenous, academic, agency, and other communities is central to our efforts.

Integrity

We foster public trust through openness and ethical approaches to our research, education, and partnerships.

Respect and inclusivity

We are stronger when we honor diversity and are committed to making the museum economically, physically, culturally, and intellectually accessible to everyone.

Engagement

We encourage curiosity, creativity, and lifelong learning through teaching, exhibitions, and programming.

Photo Top Right: Museum assistant preparator Chelsea Wallace works on Gallery of Alaska renovations. PHOTO BY TAMARA MARTZ **Photo 2:** UAMN school programs include docent-guided and teacher-led field trips. PHOTO BY GAIL PRIDAY **Photo 3:** Museum Earth Sciences crew member excavates a new dinosaur bone bed along the Colville River. PHOTO BY ROGER TOPP **Photo Bottom:** Guests try out lab tools with Research Assistant Mallory Gulbranson and Genomic Resources Collections Manager Kyndall Hildebrandt during DNA Family Day. PHOTO BY EMILY KOEHLER-PLATTEN



Research and Collections



The 42-foot bowhead whale skeleton at UAMN is the first display of its kind in a North American museum. PHOTO BY JR ANCHETA.

Collections

The collections are organized into 10 disciplines (archaeology, birds, documentary film, earth sciences, ethnology/history, fine arts, fishes/marine invertebrates, insects, mammals, and plants) and serve as a valuable resource for research on climate change, genetics, contaminants, and other issues facing Alaska and the circumpolar North. The museum is also the premier repository for artifacts and specimens collected on public lands in Alaska and a leader in northern natural and cultural history research.



Holdings

2.5
MILLION*

Total specimens and artifacts in collection

1.67
MILLION

Total cataloged/
databased entries

*estimated; backlog cataloging of older holdings is ongoing



Growth

33,996

New catalog/database entries



Herbarium curator Steffi Ickert-Bond presses plants collected on the Ugadaga trail in Unalaska. PHOTO BY ROGER TOPP.



Collections Use

449

Visitors to collections
(professional and student)

~ 1,000

Public contacts

38

Publications and
technical reports

102

Loans



Digital Data Use

Millions of data records accessed
(downloads and queries) through
our online database, Arctos.

Education & Public Programs

Education & Public Programs offers a wide array of activities and resources for teachers, students, families, community members and visitors of all ages and backgrounds. We offer opportunities to learn from and be inspired by diverse museum collections and related research. Through collaboration with UAF departments and community members, we are proud to connect the public with Alaska's science, arts, history, and cultures.



Classroom Kits

~ **3,600**

students served in
13 Alaska communities

Homeschool Kits

73

students served in
7 Alaska communities

10

Sun Discovery Kits created and
distributed to communities throughout
Alaska, funded by NASA HEAT*.

17

Sun Kit USB drives and resources
distributed, funded by NASA HEAT.

*UAMN is a partner in the
NASA Heliophysics Education
Activation Team.



Field Trips

2,853

students

82

docent-guided field trips

40

teacher-guided groups



Programs & Events

4,800+

attendees

5

Family Days

5

Annual Events

21

Family and Teen Programs

2

Space Camp sessions

17

Offsite events



Whale Lab field trip participants look
closely at krill using a microscope.
PHOTO BY ELISABETH PADILLA



Volunteer Hours

1,857

volunteer hours



Volunteers

DOCENTS

Charley Basham	Helyn Lefgren
Lynn Basham	Dori Olsen
Sadie Blancafor	Tish Perkins
Janet Brower	Gabrielle Sevillano
Bekah Chatterley	Richard Stolzberg
Cheryl Clarke- Hopcroft	Betsy Sturm
Tim Doran	Leslie Swenson
Mary Ann Fathauer	Janet Taylor
Judy Ferri	Avalon Wappett
Carolyn Foelsch	Nicole Webster
Sandy Lachman	David Weissman

DOCENT LONGEVITY AWARDS

Charley Basham
<i>Spruce Award, 10 years (20 semesters)</i>
Judy Ferri
<i>Birch Award, 8 years (16 semesters)</i>
Helyn Lefgren
<i>Birch Award, 8 years</i>
Betsy Sturm
<i>Willow Award, 5 years (10 semesters)</i>
David Weissman
<i>Willow Award, 5 years</i>
Richard Stolzberg
<i>Fireweed Award, 3 years (6 semesters)</i>

EVENT VOLUNTEERS

Kelsey Aho	Vicki Koehler
Marcus Alphin	Helyn Lefgren
Charley Basham	Lyric St. John
Lisa Guffey	Betsy Sturm
Justin Guffey	David Weissman
Judy Ferri	

Exhibits, Design, and Digital Media

July 2022

The Collect Alaska tabletop game was completed, printed, and made available for sale in the museum store. The card game is a tour of all UAMN departments and features all 10 research collections and 50 museum objects selected by the curators.



September 2022

The Collect One Square Meter (COSM) touch table was developed and installed in the Collections Gallery. The installation invites visitors to look at a collection of meter-square plots of boreal forest ground and find the animals and plants in the images.



February 2023

UAMN produced exhibit *Expedition Alaska: Crossroads of Beringia* was installed in the Collections Gallery accompanied by a 77-stop audio tour and extended array of locally collected and prepared plant specimens for use under the gallery microscope.



February – April 2023

The Bus 142 Conservation project was documented through interviews, photographs, and video, later presented in the museum's lobby.



March 2023

Exhibits staff installed new components in the museum's case at the Fairbanks International Airport.



March 2023

UAMN began development and production of a new podcast (*The More You Look*) seeking to tell the stories of all museum departments, from archaeology to mammals, exhibits development to visitor services.

The Perspective: Ways to See a Whale special exhibit was digitized (3D scans and 360-degree photographs) for later development into one of the museum's virtual exhibition galleries.

June 2023

The first of the new Gallery of Alaska introductory panels were installed, welcoming visitors to Alaska, to Fairbanks, to Troth Yeddha' (UAF campus).

The new Gallery of Alaska Western and Arctic Coasts casework and whale wall was completed, showcasing Arctic whale species through mounted skulls.

Digital Media documented the archaeology collection's work at the Hollembaek site near Delta, Alaska, producing audio for a podcast episode and photographs and video for the collection.



Donors | Visitor Services & Marketing

DONORS

The UA Museum of the North recognizes its most generous donors in the 2023 fiscal year. Our community of supporters is essential for advancing the museum's mission. Thank you!

\$2500+

Anonymous (3)	Edward L. Hutton Foundation
Airport Equipment Rental	Institute of Northern Engineering High Bay
Alaska 529	JL Properties
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\$1000 – \$2499

Anonymous (2)	Paul and Karen Layer
Alcan Builders	Steven and Patricia Linn
Charles and Janet Brower	Kevin Winker and Rose Meier
The Tim and Barb Cerny Foundation	Mary Ann Nickles
Jason Dantico	Matthew Wooller and Diane O'Brien
Timothy and Kathleen Doran	Susan Hills and William Rimer
Cathy and Mark Gunderson	Richard and Patricia Seifert
Judy A. Hundrup	Spine Care Specialists of Alaska
Dr. Aldona C. Jonaitis	UAF Dining Services/Chartwells
Mark Withrow and Carol Juergens	Wentz Orthodontics
Quentin and Margaret Kessel	

FRIENDS OF UA MUSEUM

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Janet Brower	Dorothy Jones
Roger and DeLois Burggraf	Vera Lincoln
	Dave Norton
	Wendy Ward
	Linda Witt

VISITOR SERVICES & MARKETING



Museum Visitation

81,117

total visitors



Tour Groups

59

tour operators

16,130

visitors



Memberships

197

at the close of FY23



Website Visits

120,710

total visits



Facebook

14,189

followers at the close of FY23



Instagram

3,184

followers at the close of FY23



Advertising Partners & Platforms

Explore Fairbanks

Alaska Travel Industry Association (ATIA)

Fairbanks Daily News-Miner

UAF Visitors' Guide/Summer Campus Shuttle

The Milepost

Bearfoot Guide

YouTube

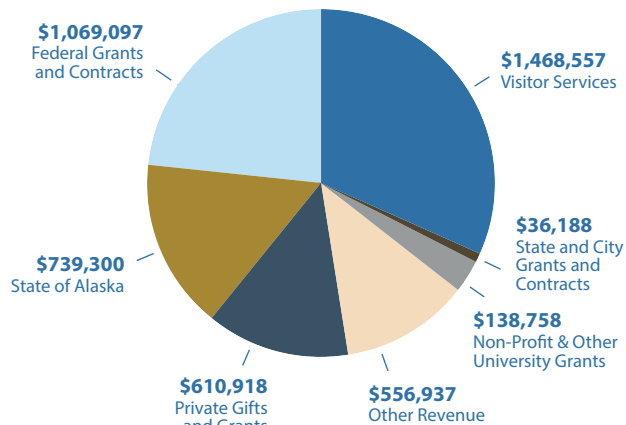
Google Business

Tripadvisor

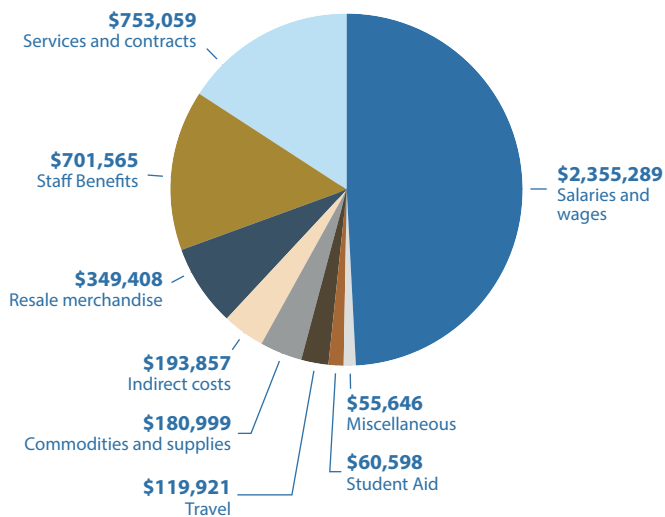
Meta/Facebook/Instagram

Financials | Museum Staff

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FY23 MUSEUM STAFF

ADMINISTRATION

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MUSEUM DIRECTOR

Emilie Nelson
ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS MANAGER

Barbara Ellanna
FISCAL PROFESSIONAL

Kevin May
HEAD OF OPERATIONS

DEVELOPMENT

Aelin Allegood
DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

VISITOR SERVICES, MARKETING, & MEMBERSHIP

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VISITOR SERVICES MANAGER

Carson Frank
SALES LEAD

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VISITOR SERVICES & MARKETING LEAD

Maxine Laberge
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Jennifer Arseneau
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION & PUBLIC PROGRAMS

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OUTREACH SPECIALIST & FIELD TRIP COORDINATOR

Emily Koehler-Platten
OUTREACH SPECIALIST

Nan Werdin-Pfisterer
OUTREACH SPECIALIST

EXHIBITS, DESIGN, AND DIGITAL MEDIA

Roger Topp
DIRECTOR OF EXHIBITS

Tamara Martz
LEAD DESIGNER

Jonah Wright
CHIEF PREPARATOR

ALASKA CENTER FOR DOCUMENTARY FILM

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ARCHAEOLOGY

Josh Reuther
CURATOR

Scott Shirar
COLLECTION MANAGER

Sam Coffman
RESEARCH ARCHAEOLOGIST

EARTH SCIENCES

Patrick Druckenmiller
CURATOR

ENTOMOLOGY

Derek Sikes
CURATOR

ETHNOLOGY & HISTORY

Angela Linn
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FINE ARTS

Della Hall
COLLECTION MANAGER

GENOMIC RESOURCES

Mallory Gulbranson
COLLECTION MANAGER

HERBARIUM

Stefanie Ickert-Bond
CURATOR

Carolyn Parker
RESEARCH PROFESSIONAL

FISHES AND MARINE INVERTEBRATES

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CURATOR

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