FULL STEAM AHEAD

2012 ANNUAL REPORT

EcoTarium

science. nature. explore. connect.®
Dear Friends and Supporters,

As the new stewards of the EcoTarium, we are delighted to have come on board at a time when the museum is steaming ahead to become a community leader and informal educational resource in Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math (STEAM). The year 2012 saw us moving forward in so many ways:

- Working as one of three sites on a cutting-edge National Science Foundation grant that adds Art to the STEM mix, exploring how to spark creativity in science education and develop an innovative 21st Century STEM workforce – a role that resulted in the EcoTarium receiving the Massachusetts Cultural Council’s 2013 Commonwealth Award for Art / Science Collaboration.

- Designing new exhibits and programs with assistance from some of our region’s most exciting and inventive companies, researchers, and experts that will help our museum guests understand and interact with today’s fast-moving world

- Teaming up with Hanover Insurance Group Foundation to present The Hanover Matching Gift Program that will help us complete Phase One of our Third Century capital campaign

- Partnering with our community to increase accessibility to the museum, ensuring everyone has the opportunity to experience the EcoTarium as part of our Special Community Outreach Programs of the EcoTarium (SCOPE)

The museum is moving ahead, and we are thrilled to be stoking the engines that power it forward!

None of this would be possible without our community of friends and supporters. As we meet and reach out to the organizations and individuals that continue to invest in this historic museum’s future, as we listen to the stories of the families and educational groups that visit with us – often the latest in generations of families who have made happy childhood memories within our gates – and as we talk and advocate with political and cultural leaders in the state and beyond, we cannot help but realize we have inherited the stewardship of a much-loved treasure that is an integral part of New England’s burgeoning future. Thank you - and all aboard for a great journey!

Joe Cox, President
Todd Brodeur, Chair, Board of Trustees

About the EcoTarium: A Few Fun Facts

- In 2012 the EcoTarium welcomed 140,582 guests, a 10% increase in visitation since 2011, and a thrilling 25% increase since 2005

- As one of Central Massachusetts’ leading informal educational resources, the EcoTarium welcomed 24,398 people visiting as part of an educational group

- 2012 saw memberships to the EcoTarium increase for the 12th year in a row

- Kudos: 2012 saw the EcoTarium once again named the “Best Place to Take Kids” in Worcester Living Magazine!

A Conductor Extraordinaire

Eight years after joining the EcoTarium as Interim President, Stephen Pitcher stepped down as President in September 2012. Under his leadership, the EcoTarium enjoyed fiscal stability, growth in visitation, and strengthened partnerships with schools, community groups, and our neighbors. His achievements include upgrading the Alden Planetarium to digital technology (the first in Massachusetts), adding programs and exhibits, rebranding the museum, launching the Third Century Campaign, and completing the new Arctic Next Door exhibit. We are profoundly grateful for Steve's passionate dedication, which made it possible for the EcoTarium to push full steam ahead today.

Membership News

The EcoTarium is now a reciprocating Member of the Association of Children’s Museums (ACM). EcoTarium members at the $150 Contributor level and above receive half price admission for up to six people at over 100 ACM Reciprocal Network children’s museums around the country. For more information about our membership levels visit ecotarium.org
The Third Century Plan: Phase One – Next Step: Success!

The year 2012 saw the EcoTarium steaming ahead with our Third Century Plan: Phase One capital campaign. Thanks to our many supporters, in the fall we unveiled the beautiful new pathway to our main entrance. Iconic New England stonewalls, native plants, and a gentle waterfall now frame the habitats of our beloved bald eagles and barred owls.

We were thrilled on November 14 when Mr. Fred Eppinger, President and CEO of The Hanover Insurance Group, Inc., announced The Hanover Matching Gift Program on behalf of the Hanover Group Foundation. Challenging the community to match a $500,000 gift to the museum in support of The Third Century Plan: Phase One, it urged our region’s corporate and foundation leaders to support the EcoTarium as a cultural resource for all.

With the end of Phase One rapidly approaching, here’s a sneak peak behind the scenes at one of our many Third Century projects currently underway:

City Science: An Exhibition in the Making

Do you know how trees affect temperature – or your air conditioning bill? Or how buildings and bridges keep standing? Or what a heat island is? If the answer is no, you will be excited to learn that we are currently prototyping a new exhibition that explores urban science and nature in Worcester and Central Massachusetts. This exhibition will be housed on the historic Third Floor of the museum. Central Massachusetts is already the home of many great inventors and innovators, and is likely to be the home of many more to come. For information on how your company can participate in the development of this exhibition, please contact Alice Promisel at 508.929.2736 or apromisel@ecotarium.org.

Thank You to Our Third Century Plan: Phase One Donors!

The success of our Third Century Plan is completely reliant on the support, input, enthusiasm, and energy of our donors. They help us clarify our vision, inspire our imagination, and broaden our impact. Without their investment, the fundraising – and the projects, programs, and upgrades to the museum that it supports – would not be possible. Thank you to the many individuals, foundations, corporations, and government entities that have made this possible. As of the end of April 2013, we have together raised $7.8 million toward the $8.2 million goal of Phase One.

$1,000,000 and above

The Hanover Insurance Group Foundation
The Stoddard Charitable Trust

$500,000 - $999,999

George I. Alden Trust
The George F. and Sybil H. Fuller Foundation

$100,000 - $499,999

The Fred Harris Daniels Foundation, Inc.
The Ruth H. and Warren A. Ellsworth Foundation
The Eppinger Family*
The Fletcher Foundation
Janet K. and Gordon B. Lankton
Stephen and Valerie Loring
The C. Jean and Myles McDonough Charitable Foundation

$25,000 - $99,999

Centene Charitable Foundation
Mary H. Coolidge
Rosemary Davis Memorial Fund of Greater Worcester Community Foundation
Michael T. Gorman and Rebecca E. Wetzel
Sarah and Richard Hardy
Hermann Foundation, Inc.
Institute of Museum and Library Services
Massachusetts Cultural Council
The Mildred H. McEvoy Foundation
Morgan Worcester, Inc.

$2,500 - $9,999

Angela and Dexter Bailey
Kay and John Bassett
Rosamond L. Bennett
Mr. and Mrs. Todd E. Brodeur
Dr. and Mrs. Stephen Tosi
Mark and Barb Wetzel

* In honor of Steve Pitcher’s dedicated service as EcoTarium President from 2005 to 2012, we established the Stephen M. Pitcher Educational Endowment Fund in support of EcoTarium educational programs, exhibits, and professional development. Donors to this fund help us reach our Third Century Plan endowment goals.
EcoTarium Volunteers – We Couldn’t Do It Without Them!

While the EcoTarium is a favorite destination for so many, to our volunteers it is a calling, a passion, even a vocation. Their enthusiasm is priceless. From helping plot a spaceship’s flight to Mars to providing directions to the fox habitat, they can turn a great visit to the museum into a fantastic one! For every staff member at the museum, there are six volunteers who freely give their time, energy, and expertise.

In 2012 there were 134 active individual volunteers, who provided us with a total of 14,229 hours of work. We are grateful for this tremendous gift that benefits not only the EcoTarium, but the whole community!

Corporate and Organizational Volunteers – Giving Back With Heart!

Big projects require big hearts to complete! That’s one reason our Corporate and Organizational Volunteers make the difference at the EcoTarium. When we need help parking thousands of cars at Great Pumpkin Fest, strong backs to clear out winter scrub from our nature trails, or lots of extra hands to help with lots of extra guests – our friends in the community get right on board.

In 2012 we received 1,447 hours of volunteer assistance from the following corporations and organizations: Alternatives Unlimited, Inc.; Bancroft School Senior Cooperative; Center of Hope Foundation; Hanover Insurance Group; Mercy Centre, North High School; Retired Senior Volunteer Program; United Parcel Service; Worcester Technical High School; Worcester Youth Center; Wachusett Regional High School; YouthBuild USA.

For information on EcoTarium Volunteer and Corporate and Organizational Volunteer opportunities, please visit our website: ecotarium.org

What About Those Frogs?

Did you ever wonder why our volunteers wear frog pins? They are hard-earned badges of achievement! A frog is awarded for every 51 hours of work donated a year; gold frogs for more 200 hours of donated work. In 2012 we awarded 24 gold frogs! Congratulations to you all!

A Word About SCOPE: Special Community Outreach Projects

The EcoTarium measures everything we do by our mission – to inspire a passion for science and nature through discovery. Our mission doesn’t define our audience, because we believe the EcoTarium should be a resource for everyone. SCOPE is how we make that dream of accessibility for all come true. Here are some of the things we achieved through SCOPE in 2012:

- A total of 13,186 guests benefited from reduced or free admission when they attended Earth Day (April 20) or Free Fun Friday (August 31), visited during half-price September, or used our half-price group rate for schools during January or February.

- Through our Complimentary Pass Program, we provided $30,672 in admission passes to help schools and non-profits raise money for charitable purposes.

- With the support from our community, we provided 16 two-week scholarships for underserved children through our Summer Discovery Camp Scholarship Program.

- We provided 1,446 admission free event admission passes to Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts as thanks for carving the 1,500 pumpkins featured in our Great Pumpkin Fest.

- As a result of our endowed scholarship programs, we provided 842 students and their teachers or chaperones with field trips to the EcoTarium.

- Through our Education Accessibility Fund and the generous gift of a dedicated supporter, we helped the Worcester Academy Summer Scholars Program – a non-profit summer camp for disadvantaged middle schoolers – provide 30 kids and their chaperones with a special day at the EcoTarium.

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2012: All Aboard for a Year of Fun!
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July 17 & August 21: Nearly 3,200 people visited our Free Fun Friday. Please accept our apologies. If your name has been inadvertently omitted or incorrect, please call Development at 508.929.2718 or omitted or incorrect, please call Development at 508.929.2718 or 10

ECOTARIUM DONORS

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The Art of Science Learning

In September 2012, the EcoTarium was announced as a host-site in a ground-breaking National Science Foundation (NSF). One of only three national sites – alongside Balboa Park Cultural Partnership in San Diego, and the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago – the EcoTarium will serve as an “arts incubator,” helping community members apply creative learning practices to a real-world problem facing Worcester. The project aims to strengthen creativity and innovation while engaging the public in STEM, with long term goals of inspiring a STEM-ready workforce that is truly pioneering and original, as well as skilled in science and math.

Exhibit-Lab: Developing Exhibits that Foster Learning

If you’re a mid-sized science and children’s museum, how do you develop an exhibit that’s innovative, really cool, and encourages people to learn without the resources of the big museums? You join together with other similar sized museums, of course. That’s just what the EcoTarium has been doing since 2004 as the lead organization in the Environmental Exhibit Collaborative (EEC). Exhibit-Lab, the latest venture of the EEC partners and funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), helps museum professionals understand how museum guests learn, and how to develop exhibits that meet their learning needs. EEC helps us make STEM learning fun!

Real Math Real Science

The EcoTarium has a long history of creatively combining math, science and environmental learning. Since 2006, long before “STEM” became the buzz-word for excellence in education, the EcoTarium partnered with Massachusetts Audubon’s Broad Meadow Brook and Worcester Public Schools to teach students how to measure water flow in streams and calculate the volume of trees.

Developed through support from the Greater Worcester Community Foundation, and most recently by Deluxe Corporation Foundation, and the George I. Alden Trust through the Worcester Educational Development Foundation
Naturally Fun! Wildlife and More at the EcoTarium

The EcoTarium’s beautiful 55 acre campus and living collection of wildlife are two of the many reasons our guests come back time after time. Here’s a few of 2012’s exciting flora and fauna happenings:

- With the assistance of the New England Beekeepers Association, we added a beehive to the Middle Level of the museum – watch the bees as they leave the hive through a tube to the outdoors to collect their pollen!
- With support from Worcester’s Regional Environmental Council and neighboring Spositos’ garden center, we worked with North High School to establish a Community Garden on EcoTarium property.
- Check out the mastodon teeth now on display as part of our The Arctic Next Door: Mount Washington exhibition on the Upper Level of the museum.
- Meet Odin and Oliver – our two new opossum. Welcome to the EcoTarium!
- One of our Wildlife Department staff attended Otter Keeper Workshop, hosted by the Dallas Zoo and the Dallas World Aquarium, where leading otter experts provided advanced training on the care and husbandry of river otters like our own adorable Slydel and Ariel.
- We introduced Tree Climbing Expeditions to our outdoor adventure repertoire – a private two-hour venture into the treetops. No experience necessary!
- Thanks to Jess Beckstrom, a wildlife volunteer and student at Wheaton College, some of our favorite feathered friends are now more social than they used to be. She helped our barn owls feel more comfortable with staff entering their habitat; taught Stan the turkey vulture to pick out objects of varying colors, shapes, and textures; and Archie, our red-shouldered hawk, to fly to a gloved hand, step on a scale, and go into a travel box. Training our animals helps them get the care they need to stay healthy. Plus it turns out that Stan is brilliant!

EcoTeasers: Here’s What’s Coming Up in 2013!

- Jump down the rabbit hole to Alice’s Wonderland, our latest educational exhibit, showing now through September 8
- Don your own mad hat and join Alice and the Mad Hatter for A Mad Hatter Party on July 13
- Satisfy your curiosity on Curiouser and Curiouser Thursdays, exploring the odd science behind Alice’s Wonderland, June 27 through August 29
- Party like it’s the Jurassic on June 23 with a Birthday Party for Siegfried, Worcester’s favorite stegosaurus
- Ever climbed a tree? No experience is necessary as you and your friends don helmets and harnesses and reach new heights during our Tree Climbing Expeditions, now through October 13
- Enjoy science under the sun through October 6 with Play on the Plaza, featuring our popular Bubbles exhibit, Tube-A-Phone musical sculpture, and new Koala Maze
- Let your creativity go wild with our new Imagination Playground, coming June 22
- Visit the EcoTarium for free on Free Fun Friday, August 30, supported by the Highland Street Foundation
- Put on your lab coat and be an experimental scientist solving today’s health problems when the Science + You exhibit arrives on September 16
- Get your chills and thrills at Great Pumpkin Fest on October 19, Central Massachusetts’ most spook-tacular, family-friendly event
- Everyone’s favorite holiday celebration, A Christmas Journey, rolls up to the EcoTarium’s railway station on December 7, 8, and 14
The EcoTarrium’s mission is to contribute to a better world by inspiring a passion for science and nature through discovery.