

PRESERVE THE
WANDER



National Mississippi River
Museum & Aquarium



This is where my heart is.

This [place] teaches kids things they've never seen before. Can you imagine through the eyes of a 6-year-old? You walk into this building, go past the big water wall and that big tank. For the first time, you see a sea turtle — there it is, swimming around — you've never seen anything like that. It's amazing to watch their expressions."

Tracy Fischer
Educator and Guide
National Mississippi River
Museum & Aquarium



SMALL WONDERS

The background of the page is a photograph of an aquarium tank. The water is a deep blue, and there are several fish of various species swimming. In the foreground, there are dark, rocky structures that appear to be part of the tank's decor. The overall lighting is somewhat dim, creating a sense of being underwater.

The surface of the giant glass wall fogs momentarily as a little girl tiptoes up and presses her face closer. Her hands press against the glass, framing for a moment a sea turtle, gliding past her wide-open eyes. Around her, a scattering of her classmates are transfixed in similar poses, their teacher behind them smiling at the wonder of young minds fully engaged.

A bit later, the girl leans over the short wall of an indoor seascape, reaching in to run her hand over the back of a Cownose ray. She continues on and giggles at the antics of otters at play and gets her first look at a live American alligator.

In these moments, she connects like never before to the mystery and majesty of our rivers and sea, which perhaps become her early inspiration for a career in marine biology.

Dozens of similar scenes unfold nearby and all around the 14-acre facility. Children and adults of every description connect with wonders of our living history, our conservation successes, and the majesty of the natural world. The power of past, present and future comes to life at the edge of the great river.

In Case You're Wondering

When you help Preserve the Wonder,
you help open children's eyes
and minds through new experiences.

A CONSERVATION LEADER

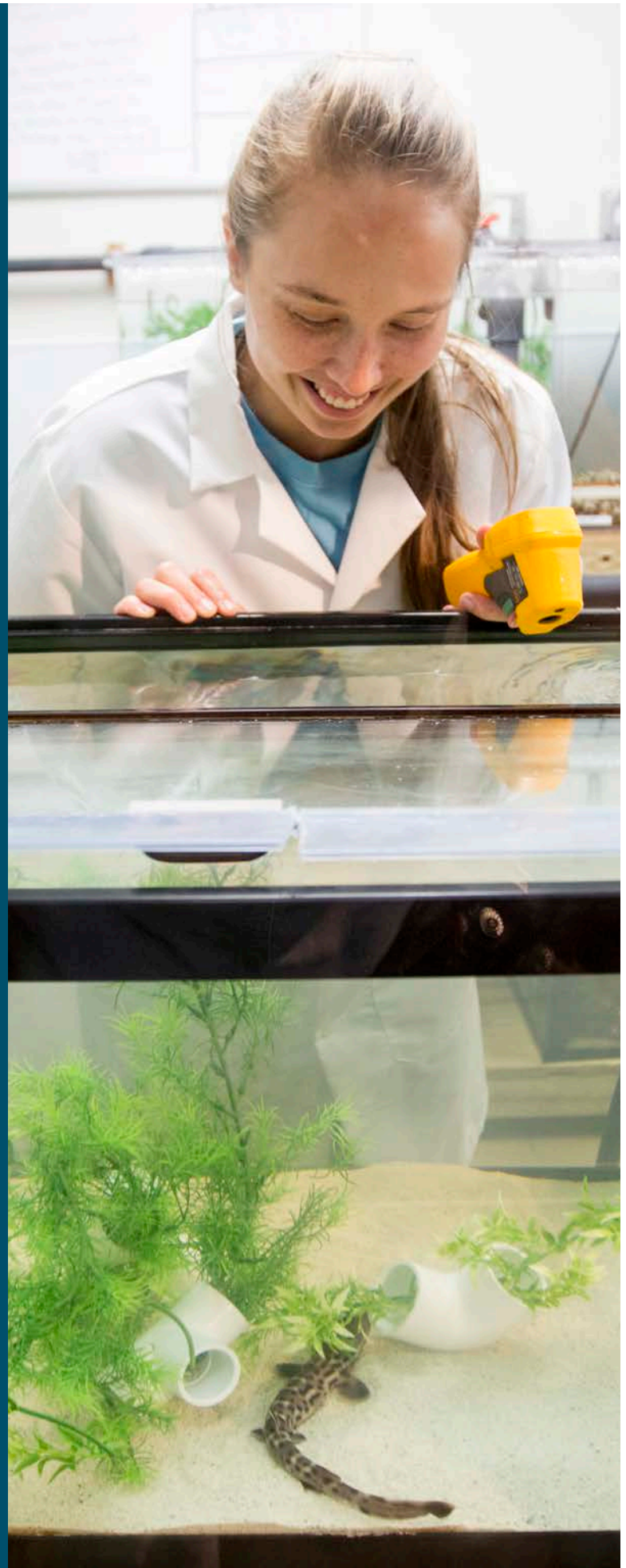
The National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium partners with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and additional federal, state and local agencies to rear and return these endangered and threatened species back to the wild.

“The mission of the National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium is to inspire stewardship by creating educational experiences where history and rivers come alive. We are an organization that focuses on history. We focus on conservation. We focus on STEM education — science, technology, engineering and math. All to help our guests and our stakeholders become more knowledgeable and engaged citizens.”

Kurt Strand

President & CEO

National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium,
Dubuque County Historical Society



CONSERVATION IMPACT

WYOMING TOAD

The Wyoming toad, a species listed as extinct in the wild, is recovering thanks to a partnership with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Since 2008, we have propagated and released more than 52,000 tadpoles back into their Laramie, Wyoming, home.



CORALS

In response to a devastating coral disease outbreak in the Florida Reef Tract, the Florida Wildlife Conservation Commission, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and other partners reached out to Association of Zoos & Aquariums institutions across the country to help create a land-based ark to preserve coral diversity and house a number of coral species indefinitely. The National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium was the FIRST institution outside Florida to receive corals as part of this effort to save America's barrier reef and is housing corals in an off-exhibit holding area until they can be released.



MUSSELS

Engaging local students, we raise freshwater mussels in the Ice Harbor to improve river quality. Since 2010, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources have released over 66,000 of our juvenile mussels in local waters, which filter water and improve water quality.



OUR
IMPACT

200,000+

VISITORS PER YEAR

50

STATES REPRESENTED

75,000

SCHOOL-AGE VISITORS PER YEAR

70+

COUNTRIES REPRESENTED

\$10.5+ MILLION

ANNUAL ECONOMIC
IMPACT FOR DUBUQUE
COUNTY

STRONG CURRENTS

The river is mighty. The facility is the National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium (NMRMA), a man-made wonder of its own built fast to the riverbank in downtown Dubuque, Iowa.

The NMRMA and the Mathias Ham Historic Site are properties of the Dubuque County Historical Society. The NMRMA is home to the National Rivers Hall of Fame and supports the national outreach program called RiverWorks Discovery. The collective mission is to inspire stewardship by creating educational experiences where history and rivers come alive.

The NMRMA features aquariums, aviaries, 2D and 4D theaters, hands-on programs, exhibits, archives, wetlands, a wet lab, a conservation lab and water tables — all with significant scientific, educational and research functions.

These jewels of history, conservation and education touch hundreds of thousands of people each year. Financially, educationally and culturally they have an enormous impact on Dubuque, the nation and the world, yet there is a cost.

The NMRMA needs funding to refresh and maintain its exhibits, facilities and mission. Along with an endowment for maintenance and ongoing expenses, the Preserve the Wonder campaign seeks to raise significant funds to refresh and update animal and historical exhibits and learning opportunities throughout all DCHS facilities.

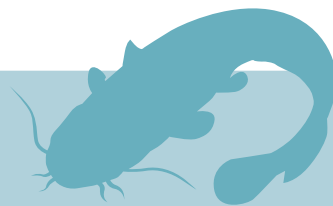
MIGHTY
RIVER

4TH



LARGEST
WATERSHED
on the planet

FRESH DRINKING
water source for more than
20 MILLION AMERICANS



HOME
to more than
445 SPECIES
OF FISH



The River Museum is

an anchor of the Dubuque community, of the greater tri-state area. The foundation of this area is the river and development that occurred from the commerce of the river. To have a facility like this in the Port of Dubuque, along with Diamond Jo and the other facilities that are here, is important to our community. What I like to see is people learning about the history, the environment, how we did things with equipment and technology and linking that to the future of where we're going with building better communities"

Ernest & Peggy Jackson
Community Leaders

INCLUDES
all of parts of
32 STATES &
2 CANADIAN
PROVINCES

FLYWAY
FOR MORE THAN

60%

OF NORTH AMERICAN BIRDS

THE RIVER ROLLS THROUGH HISTORY

Initially formed out of the Richard Herrmann Museum of Natural History in 1950, the Dubuque County Historical Society was officially established as a nonprofit. Like the great river's course, it rose from simple beginnings to become the nation's most comprehensive and visited Mississippi River museum, with two campuses, the National Rivers Hall of Fame and the RiverWorks Discovery national outreach program.

Over the last 70 years, the National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium has grown from a county historical society to the nation's largest museum and aquarium devoted to the preservation and interpretation of the Mississippi River and its watershed.

With an economic impact to match, the NMRMA is one of the area's largest tourist attractions. From the start, the goal was to create a world-class museum to interpret the Mississippi River and rivers of America. The result surpassed expectations. But — like a river itself — education, conservation and history efforts are dynamic, evolving and ongoing.

BY THE
NUMBERS

2 BUILDINGS ON THE
NATIONAL REGISTER
OF HISTORIC PLACES

1 NATIONAL
HISTORIC
LANDMARK

1 OF 14
ONLY

U.S. ORGANIZATIONS ACCREDITED BY

ASSOCIATION
OF ZOOS &
AQUARIUMS



American
Alliance of
Museums



Smithsonian
Affiliate

Long-term partnership allows the River Museum to share collections, exhibitions and educational strategies and conduct joint research.

1870s
Richard Herrmann Museum of Natural History establishes the forerunner of DCHS.

1950
DCHS organizes as a private nonprofit in Iowa.

1964
DCHS opens its first museum, the Mathias Ham Historic Site, and receives nonprofit status.

1982
Fred W. Woodward Riverboat Museum opens to the public.

1980
The steamboat William M. Black opens to the public.

1977
A riverboat museum idea is proposed at a DCHS board meeting by Wayne Norman and accepted by the DCHS.

1990
The museum is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums.

2001
Visions Iowa, City of Dubuque, Dubuque county, Dubuque Area Chamber of Commerce and private donors combine for the largest fundraising campaign in Dubuque history.

2010
The diamond to National River Center opens after gift of the building by Peninsula Gaming.

2003
The National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium opens.

1999
William Woodward estate gift of \$1.76M establishes the need for the 1st major capital campaign.

2013
The National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium welcomes its 2 millionth guest in 10 years.

2015
Under new leadership, plans to revitalize both campuses through the Preserve the Wonder campaign are set in motion.

2022-23
New exhibits open, all major exhibits are refreshed and vital maintenance continues thanks to donors to Preserve the Wonder.

2020
River of Innovation opens. Mathias Ham Historic Site restoration begins. NMRMA welcomes its 3 millionth guest.

2018
Strategic planning finalized. Three themes emerge: A more concentrated focus on history, conservation, and STEM education.

2023
NMRMA 20th anniversary.

MORE THAN A

RIVER MUSEUM

While the National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium is the crown jewel of the Dubuque County Historical Society, a historic property, major programs and national outreach efforts are among its offerings.

OUR IMPACT

100,000+

ANIMALS PROPAGATED
& RELEASED BACK TO
THE WILD

51,000

ARTIFACTS & ARCHIVAL
DOCUMENTS





MATHIAS HAM HISTORIC SITE

Owned and operated by the Dubuque County Historical Society and listed on the National Register of Historic Places, this historic property includes the Mathias Ham House, Arriandeaux log cabin (Iowa’s oldest building), the Humke Schoolhouse from Centralia, a replica lead mine and miner’s dwelling, and a historic granary. Costumed interpreters provide guided tours of the site, sharing the rich history of Mathias Ham, the city of Dubuque, life on the Mississippi River and life during the Victorian era.



NATIONAL RIVERS HALL OF FAME

Established in 1985 with 113 national advisers, the mission of the National Rivers Hall of Fame is to collect, preserve and share the stories of the women and men who have had a significant impact on the rivers of America — from Mark Twain to Capt. Mary Miller, Chief Black Hawk to Louis Armstrong. The Hall of Fame is supported by members in 36 states and is part of the National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium.



RIVERWORKS DISCOVERY

RiverWorks Discovery is an outreach program of the National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium and the National Rivers Hall of Fame. Over the past 10 years, the program and its former traveling exhibit have reached an estimated 650,000-750,000 individuals in 18 states. The program focuses on the commerce, culture, conservation and careers of our rivers through a multi-disciplinary program that includes math, history, geography and mapping. The curriculum encourages further exploration of our rivers. RiverWorks Discovery is designed to correlate to state education standards, while encouraging children to get outside and explore the water that flows through their lives.



Information about all DCHS programs and services is available at RiverMuseum.com/PreservetheWonder.

FUNDING PRIORITIES

The Preserve the Wonder campaign is financing a variety of important upgrades to exhibits and facilities designed to keep the learning experience fresh, along with vital maintenance to ensure the quality and safety of public-facing infrastructure.

RIVER OF INNOVATION

Opened fully in 2021, public and school-based audiences have been at the center of planning for the River of Innovation exhibit and its STEM-education model. The exhibit ties deeply to our region's rich manufacturing history, providing cultural preservation of local and river-centric history, while offering participatory STEM-based learning experiences for 75,000 school-age youth of our 200,000 annual visitors and various key community and education partners.



RIVERS TO THE SEA

The newly reimagined Rivers to the Sea exhibit opened in March 2023. Featuring 12 aquariums displaying 100 species of marine animals, a model Marshallese outrigger canoe, tidepool touch tank and interactive areas within the exhibit, all of which draw cultural and conservation connections from America's major watersheds to the oceans.





"We want to make sure

that people understand what's going on and how we are evolving down here, because it is different than it was 16 years ago when we built [the River Museum & Aquarium]. The endowment piece, the refresh pieces, the new exhibit pieces are all intimately tied into an overall strategic vision of how we continue to be one of the renowned interpretive centers for the Mississippi, but also folding in education in a way that has never been done before."

Mike Donahue
Past Board Chair
Dubuque County Historical Society

BY THE
NUMBERS

49

FULL-TIME
STAFF

94

PART-TIME
STAFF

100+

ACTIVE
VOLUNTEERS

HERE COMES THE FUTURE

OTTER HABITAT

One of the most popular exhibits will double in size and will allow for more up close and personal experiences for visitors as well as training and breeding opportunities.

PADDLEFISH

Among the most local unique creatures in the river and the museum, this exhibit experience will be shifted to an improved location to be more immersive, interactive, and will tell a bigger story about the impact of paddlefish on our river.

BY THE NUMBERS

1,630+

INDIVIDUAL ANIMALS
UNDER OUR CARE

197+

SPECIES REPRESENTED AT
THE RIVER MUSEUM



RIVER-CENTRIC TRAVELING EXHIBIT

Our first traveling exhibit traveled the country for 5 years, visiting 15 locations throughout the country and reaching over 550,000 individuals. Our new traveling exhibit, in development with our national outreach program RiverWorks Discovery, will educate the public on the culture, commerce, conservation, and careers of the river—connecting the many faces and facets of the Mississippi River to engage and educate a national audience.



WILLIAM M. BLACK

This National Historic Landmark, a steam-propelled dredge boat, is one of the last paddle steamers built in the U.S. before diesel engines replaced steam power. Restorations will be made to the 1934 boat's deck and roof, with additional cosmetic improvements.



MATHIAS HAM HISTORIC SITE

Improvements to the site include accessibility, log cabin and Humke schoolhouse restoration, and decorative enhancements to the mansion, all while preserving the site's rich history.



INFRASTRUCTURE

Costly maintenance and infrastructure upgrades will be made to the entire museum campus.



ENDOWMENT

Our first 18 years brought significant growth to our campus, programs and infrastructure. The last two years brought unprecedented challenges. Thanks to careful fiscal management and a strong team of passionate staff, we were able to successfully navigate the pandemic and its impacts. As we look toward the next 20 years, we seek to strengthen our financial position and ensure the resources necessary to face the next unexpected hurdle with even greater strength and preparation. For this reason, we are looking to grow our endowment to support ongoing improvements and future needs.



*Partial list only. For a detailed list of all items to be funded, visit [RiverMuseum.com/PreservetheWonder](https://www.rivermuseum.com/PreservetheWonder).

A woman and a child are looking at an aquarium tank. The woman is on the left, looking up and to the right. The child is on the right, pointing towards the tank. The tank is filled with various fish, including blue and yellow ones. The background is a deep blue color.

HOW YOU CAN HELP PRESERVE THE WONDER

In Case You're Wondering

When you help Preserve the Wonder, you're ensuring that the focus on STEM education continues to spark innovation in young minds.

Photo credit: Travel Iowa

\$12.75M CAMPAIGN

Our *Preserve the Wonder* campaign goal is to raise \$12.75 million towards newly expanded exhibits, an increase in endowment and an upgrade in our maintenance and facilities while providing a more comprehensive approach to history, STEM, and conservation. With your help, in the near future, we will be able to look back and see what we've done to protect and preserve this national treasure and the history of our life on the river.

How will we answer?

PRESERVE THE WONDER TODAY.

Please choose a way to give that works for you, and please give generously.

- Gifts may be made in cash or securities.
- Matching gifts through your employer or spouse's employer can double, even triple your gift.
- Bequests will be counted in addition to the campaign goal of \$12.75 million.
- Pledges are encouraged and may be extended over a period of up to three years (a reminder will be mailed to you each year).
- Your gift may be made in honor or in memory of someone; a card recognizing your gift will be mailed to the person you are honoring or to the family you are memorializing.

Your contributions should be made payable to National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium and designated on the memo line to the Preserve the Wonder Campaign. Please know that your gift is tax deductible to the extent permitted by law.

"Our museum is a beacon for our community, and it has become an inseparable part of our quality of life and our regional economy. Where else can you touch a stingray, tinker with a belt-driven machine shop and tour a steam-powered dredge boat all in the same day? All of us living and working in the Greater Dubuque Area are blessed to have in our midst the treasure that is the National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium."

Rick Dickinson

President & CEO, Greater Dubuque Development Corporation



“This Mississippi River icon has been a cultural anchor for the City of Dubuque and State of Iowa for over 70 years. The Museum & Aquarium has given our state, regional and national partners an in-depth understanding about the importance of rivers to America’s past, present and future while positively impacting children and families across the country.”

Teri Goodmann
National Waterways Foundation

“I heartily endorse this effort to tell the great story of Dubuque and the rivers of America. These improvements will reach new audiences, create new opportunities for innovation and profoundly impact the lives of residents and visitors for years to come.”

Jerry Enzler
President Emeritus & Founding Director
National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium, Dubuque County
Historical Society

**Preserve the Wonder
Leadership**
CAMPAIGN CHAIRS

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Lime Rock Springs Co. *(retired)*

CHUCK SCHRUP
Board of Directors
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TOM WOODWARD
Director, President & CEO
Woodward Communications Inc.

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President Emeritus &
Founding Director
National Mississippi River
Museum & Aquarium
Dubuque County Historical Society

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MURRAY**
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N.A.-Investment Services *(retired)*

CHUCK SCHRUP
Co-Chairman of the Board
American Trust & Savings Bank
(retired)

LORI THIELEN
Vice President of Finance
Rainbo Oil

TOM WOODWARD
Director, President & CEO
Woodward Communications Co.

**2022 Dubuque County Historical Society & National
Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium**

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Director, President & CEO
Woodward Communications, Inc.

In Case You're Wondering

Endowments for future improvements build on existing funds. Approximately 25% of the Preserve the Wonder campaign is designated for endowment.



VISION STATEMENT

Our vision is to become the world's leader in interpreting and protecting the life, history and culture of our region and rivers, to create a more global, knowledgeable and engaged citizen.



DUBUQUE COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY



MATHIAS HAM
HISTORIC SITE



NATIONAL
MISSISSIPPI RIVER MUSEUM
& AQUARIUM



NATIONAL RIVERS
HALL OF FAME



RIVERWORKS
DISCOVERY

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RiverMuseum.com/PreserveTheWonder