

Virginia Museum of Natural History Interpretive Center in Waynesboro Brief History

- The Center for Coldwater Restoration (CCR), a committee of the Waynesboro Downtown Development Inc, has been working on a strategic vision using natural resources to foster sustainable jobs and economic vitality with a concentration on the South River and its attributes since 2007. Their focus has been in four main areas:
 - Interpretive Center
 - University Research / Commercialization
 - Hatchery / Grow out facility / Fishery
 - Agency (Federal and State Government) Campus
- In 2011, a connection was made with the VMNH in Martinsville. It was noted that the objective of the CCR Interpretive Center goal and VMNH were very similar and the discussion of a joint project was started
- In 2012, the City retained (with funding from VMNH and a grant from Virginia Tourism Corporation) Chmura Economics and Analytics to conduct two studies; a Tourism Market Analysis and a Museum Feasibility Study
 - Both studies were published in early 2013
 - The Tourism Market Analysis provided in-depth information about the Waynesboro visitor – including data confirming that a museum in Waynesboro would attract visitors looking for more to do while visiting or passing through
 - The Museum Study, indicated that a branch location of the VMNH would be successful
 - Would serve a population of 450,000 (45-60 minute drive) including 63,000 K-12 students and the 300,000 visitors to the Shenandoah National Park who utilize the south entrance near Waynesboro
 - A new 21,850 square foot facility (this size facility was used as an example – actual proposed size and a new or reutilized facility will be better defined in the next step below) would cost \$7.4 million to construct providing 108 construction jobs; ten jobs would be created for the annual operation of the museum; annual visitor spending would be \$1.8 million and create 20 indirect jobs; provide local tax revenue of \$23,608 and state tax revenue of \$49,576; and provide net revenue to the VMNH of \$84,628 per year
- In summer of 2013, the VMNH Board of Directors appointed a sub-committee to review the feasibility study and determine if the VMNH should continue the process by hiring a consultant to develop an Exhibit Master Plan and Schematic Design

Virginia Museum of Natural History Interpretive Center in Waynesboro Brief History

- In November of 2013, the City proposed funding the schematic design 50% up to \$25,000
- In first quarter of 2014, the sub-committee made their report to the VMNH Board of Directors.
 - The Board directed the Executive Director to proceed with the next step in the process by working with Waynesboro to raise \$25,000 in private donations to match the City of Waynesboro's contribution of \$25,000 and begin the competitive bid process of selecting a consultant
- During spring of 2014, private fund raising was coordinated between the VMNH Foundation Board and representatives of the CCR. In addition, representatives from the VMNH, City of Waynesboro, and CCR selected a consultant for the study
- On July 7, 2014, the private donation total reached \$25,000!
- On July 24, a press event was held to announce that the goal had been reached, and to introduce Quatrefoil Associates as the consultant retained to produce the Exhibit Master Plan and Schematic Design
- During the summer and fall of 2014, Quatrefoil met with museum staff, citizens, and other interesting parties to gain insight to the focus of the museum
- In February 2015, Quatrefoil made a presentation of their findings, including analysis of four possible locations within the main street area, to the VMNH Board of Trustees
- The Board accepted the report, and requested that the Waynesboro Committee reconvene and review the site locations and that the Executive Director begin the process of conducting a financial feasibility study
- During summer of 2015, the Waynesboro Committee recommended that the sites under consideration be reduced to two, the "Open Municipal Site" and the "G&W Motorwerkes Building". The full Board concurred.
- Also in summer of 2015, the VMNH working with City staff and the CCR Board selected a financial feasibility consultant, to begin work in late summer with a report due to the VMNH Board in October. The CCR board developed a list of potential donors and others as a base for the consultant to contact as part of their research.
 - The City contributed \$3,000, applied for and received a \$16,000 USDA grant to match the private donations of \$24,000 collected by the CCR Board to fund the study.