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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mississippi Museum of Natural Science
Preserving Natural Mississippi for over 75 years

Jackson, Miss. - Mississippi has long been one of America's havens for wildlife and natural habitat, and for more than 75 years, the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science has stood in the forefront of efforts to raise awareness of the value of these living natural resources. Visitors from all 82 Mississippi counties, all 50 states and many foreign countries tour the Museum annually to see how it showcases the state's living heritage and learn its ecological story of rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, marshes and the Mississippi Sound. "Since the opening of our new building in March 2000, the Museum has served more than one million visitors as they learn more about Mississippi," states museum director Libby Hartfield.

Overview

The Museum's expanses of glass and octagonal skylight invite visitors to share their time between the indoor exhibits and the outdoor environment. Life-size habitat displays, in this 73,000-square foot building, reveal the rich diversity of Mississippi's living heritage.

- A 100,000-gallon aquarium system houses over 200 species of native fishes, reptiles, amphibians, and aquatic invertebrates.
- A 1,700-square foot greenhouse containing a 20,000-gallon aquarium provides a home for alligators, turtles, fish, and a lush native plant garden.
- An open-air amphitheater and over 2.5 miles of walking trails wind through the 300-acre natural area. The outdoor trails meander through wooded bluffs, river bottoms, lakes, and scenic swamplands, offering opportunities for nature walks, photography, and the study of

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- living things in their environment.
- Plus, a 2500 square foot space allows the Museum to showcase special changing exhibits.

Mission

The Museum's mission is to promote understanding and appreciation of Mississippi's biological diversity through collections, research, scientific data bases, education, and exhibits; and to inspire the people of our state to respect the environment and to preserve natural Mississippi.

Nearly 60 employees ranging from an education coordinator, librarian and gift shop manager to an aquatic biologist, ichthyologist, and an ornithologist carry out this mission with the help of a dedicated team of volunteers.

Awards

Since the 1930's, the Museum has been a leader in protecting our natural heritage while establishing a distinguished national and international reputation. The Museum is fortunate to have received the following awards recently: "Mississippi's Travel Attraction of the Year" (Mississippi Tourism Association), "Attraction of the Year" (SUMITT Award presented by the Jackson CVB), "Best Museum" by the readers of the *Jackson Free Press*, "Best Museum" by the readers of *Mississippi Magazine*, and "Family Favorite - Best Museum for Kids" by the readers of Jackson's *Parents & Kids Magazine*.

Education

Education Coordinator Angel Rohnke explains that, "The members of the Museum staff, drawing from their individual backgrounds in education and research, derive great personal satisfaction from sharing the museum's resources with the people of Mississippi." For schools across the state, they distribute instructional materials and present hands on, interactive educational programs and teacher training

workshops. They also contribute professionally to museum publications and fill hundreds of requests for literature and information. The Museum's hands-on Pre-School Room is designed especially for children ages three through pre-kindergarten five.

Research

“The Museum is responsible for studying, preserving, and enhancing Mississippi's living natural resources,” explains the museum’s assistant director Charles Knight. The staff includes ten research biologists who are chiefly concerned with protecting our state's rare and endangered species. The staff also administers federal research and education grants and maintains the Mississippi Natural Heritage Database, a computerized information bank containing some 5,000 individual files.

Library

A collection of more than 15,000 volumes concerning Mississippi's natural history support the Museum’s various programs and research efforts. The library started as a donation of materials by Miss Fannye A. Cook in 1965. The mission of the Library is to provide high quality information services on natural history subjects. The library meets our clientele's information needs through a variety of services utilizing the Library and Archival collections, resource sharing with other libraries, and accessing information available electronically.

The Dragonfly Shoppe

Tucked just inside the lobby of the Museum is the Dragonfly Shoppe. This shop is a special place to purchase nature related gifts for adults and children. Featuring items from books to butterfly houses, our unique store offers something for everyone.

Volunteer and Membership Information

Volunteering at the Museum is an opportunity to share, learn, serve, meet people, teach, and

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experience the stimulating environment of Mississippi's natural resources. All kinds of people volunteer - teens, college students, professionals, and retirees. Training is provided and the number of hours is flexible. Also, Museum memberships through the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science Foundation help make it possible for the Museum to continue and expand its work into the future and provide benefits to members such as free admission and a quarterly newsletter.

The museum is located at 2148 Riverside Drive in Jackson. Call 601.354.7303 or visit <http://msnaturalscience.org> for details about this event and other programs offered by the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science, which is a part of the [Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks](#). The Mississippi Museum of Natural Science is an Equal Opportunity Employer and is compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Museum Hours: Monday - Friday: 8:00 am to 5:00 pm; Saturday: 9:00 am to 5:00 pm; Sunday: 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm. **Admission:** \$6 adults; \$4 children ages 3-18; \$5 senior citizens (60+); free for children under 3; free for Museum Members; school teachers with classes: call for group information.

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