



Marion Natural  
History Museum

# Beyond the Exhibit

## Foyer meteorite returns to Harvard

Between 2022 and 2025 the museum was proud to exhibit the Coahuila meteorite, which was on loan from Harvard University Mineralogical and Geological Museum. The loan was facilitated by town resident Edward Brainard. The theme of the exhibit was enabling visitors to touch things that were hard to reach.

Continuing the same theme, with help from the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, the museum is now developing a new exhibit for the building foyer, and upstairs in the museum. It will focus on a deep-sea ecosystem that is hard to reach, namely hydrothermal vents. These are cracks in the deep ocean seabed in geologically active areas of the deep sea, near volcanoes and spreading tectonic plates.

Vents release nutrient rich warm water enabling diverse organisms unique to vents, including giant tube worms, clams, limpets, and shrimp. The exhibit will include some of these animals and images of vents and their exploration.



## this issue

Children's Birding Program **P.1**

Museum Programming **P.2**

Archeological Stewardship **P.3**

## After School Programs Get Kids Outside and Engaged

The Marion Natural History Museum welcomed its after-school group for a special educational program focused on common backyard birds. The session was led by Carol Molander of the Nasketucket Bird Club, who shared her knowledge and enthusiasm to help prepare the students for the upcoming Great Backyard Bird Count taking place February 13–16. Through engaging discussion and hands-on learning, Carol introduced the children to several bird species they might encounter right in their own neighborhoods.

To support their learning, each child received a mini bird guide featuring clear photographs of common local species along with audio recordings of their distinctive calls. Listening to the sounds while studying the images helped students begin developing important bird identification skills. Carol explained how experienced birders use a combination of visual clues, such as size, color patterns, and flight style, along with bird songs and calls, to identify different species.

Following the indoor session, the group headed outside for a short observation walk. The young birders were thrilled when a red-

tailed hawk appeared, soaring high overhead, providing a dramatic highlight to their outing. The children also spotted several familiar backyard birds, including European Starlings, American Crows, American Robins, House Sparrows, and an American Herring Gull. With their guides in hand, they eagerly compared what they were seeing and hearing with the information they had just learned.

Experiences like this help bring nature study to life, encouraging curiosity and careful observation. "By learning to identify birds and understand their behaviors, the students are building skills that will allow them to participate more confidently in citizen science efforts like the Great Backyard Bird Count," said Elizabeth Leidhold, museum executive director.

A heartfelt thank you to Carol for sharing her time, expertise, and patience with our young birders. Her guidance enriched the children's learning experience and helped spark an appreciation for the wildlife that surrounds us



Marion Natural  
History Museum  
—NATURALLY CURIOUS—

## New Board Members

Eileen J. Marum recently joined the board of the Marion Natural History Museum. Eileen is a habitat specialist with a strong background in restoration, pollution control, and ecosystem protection. She holds a bachelor's degree in Government with a concentration in economics and environmental studies from Smith College, a master's degree in public policy and a master's degree in professional writing from the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth. Eileen has been a research scientist with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, focusing on scallop surveys aboard the R/V Albatross sailing out of Woods Hole, MA. Eileen currently serves as the clerk on the Marion Planning Board where she has helped develop the Town's 2017 Master Plan Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Additionally, she has actively engaged in environmental legislation and regulations while interning in NOAA's Northeast Regional Office. She is actively engaged in town and serves on the Planning Board's Codification Committee, Marion's Affordable Housing Trust, is a past member of Marion's Energy Management Committee, and the chair of the League of Women Voters SouthCoast.



### Nature Journaling

Launched in August with an immersive walk through the woods, the Nature Journaling Program at the Museum invites participants to sit, observe, and thoughtfully record their experiences in nature. Under the guidance of Tricia Cassidy from the Art and Nature Studio in Middleboro, attendees have received instruction in watercolor, pen and ink, pencil shading, and the art of observation. The program welcomes both beginners and experienced artists, fostering a supportive environment for creative growth.

Throughout the winter, sessions have been held indoors, allowing the group to explore various artistic media and refine their observational skills. Looking ahead, future programs will take place both within the Museum and out in the field, offering new opportunities for engagement and learning. Updates and schedules will be posted on the Museum's website and distributed via email notices. All community members are encouraged to participate—prior attendance is not required, and everyone is welcome to join.

### Natural History Book Club

The Natural History Book Club began meeting again in 2025 under the lead of Alan Harris after a hiatus and loss of longtime leader and member John Cedarholm. Thus far, the book club has read *The Light Eaters* by Zoë Schlanger exploring the latest scientific research on plant intelligence, revealing plants' complex abilities to communicate, sense, remember and adapt and challenging our traditional views of consciousness.

Next the club discovered *Bicycling with Butterflies* by Sara Dykman, following her on her solo, 10,201- mile bicycle journey following the monarch butterfly migration from Mexico to Canada and back. In March, the book club read *Blue Mind* by Wallace J. Nichols exploring the science behind why being near, in, on, or under water makes people happier, healthier, and more creative, coining the term "Blue Mind" for this state of calm and peace.

In May, the club will discuss the book *Beaverland: How One Weird Rodent Made America*. The club invites you to read along and explore these books with us.

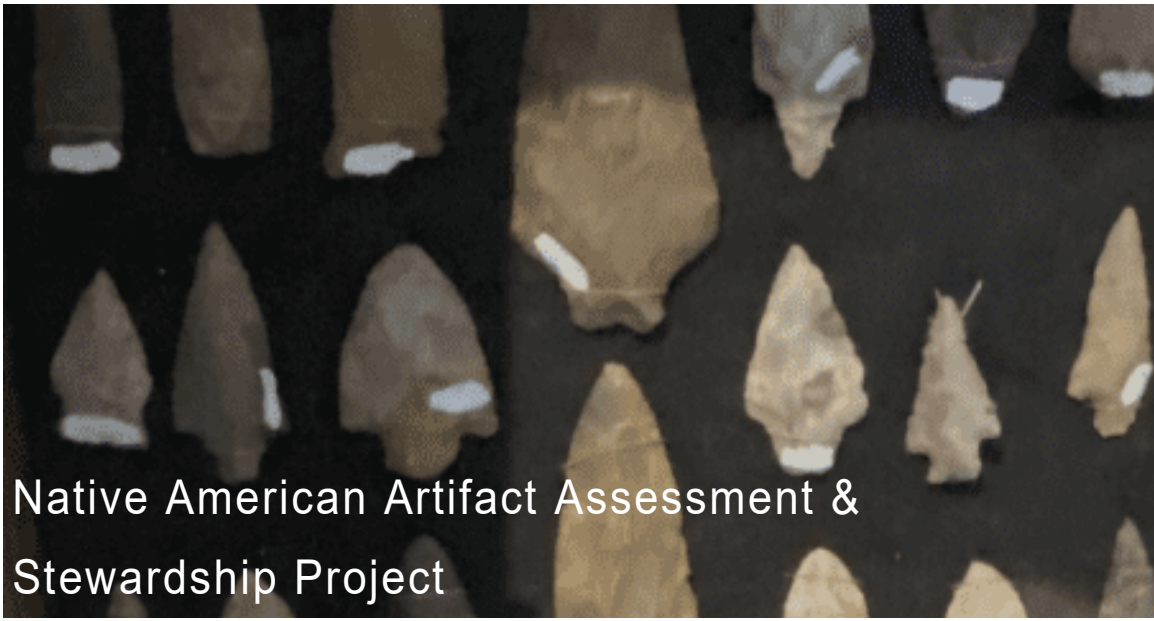
## Museum Programs

### Beavers in Massachusetts

The Marion Natural History Museum recently welcomed state fish and wildlife biologist **Stephen Wright** for an engaging winter program focused on the North American beaver. Despite cold weather, a large audience gathered to learn about this remarkable species and its vital role in wetland ecosystems. Wright explored the beaver's natural history, including its recovery in Massachusetts after near elimination during the fur trade era.



Attendees learned how beavers build and maintain their lodges, raise their young, and prepare for winter by storing underwater food caches. Guests also examined real specimens, including pelts, skulls, and branches marked by beaver teeth, and learned how to distinguish beavers from similar species such as muskrats. The program highlighted how beaver dams and lodges create wetlands that benefit many other plants and animals. The evening offered an informative look at a familiar but often misunderstood native mammal.



## Native American Artifact Assessment & Stewardship Project

In 2025, the Marion Natural History Museum was awarded a grant from the Marion Community Preservation Committee to advance its ongoing commitment to responsible stewardship of Native American artifacts. This initiative builds upon previous efforts by undertaking a comprehensive assessment and documentation of the Museum's collection, with a focus on ensuring ethical handling and cultural sensitivity. The project encompasses tribal consultation, provenance research, and enhancements to long-term storage practices for artifacts associated with the Wampanoag people, the original stewards of this region.

Through updated exhibits, culturally accurate interpretation, and adherence to best practices, the Museum seeks to honor Indigenous heritage and foster greater public understanding. This project offers the Marion Natural History Museum a meaningful opportunity to celebrate and preserve the history of the Wampanoag people—not as a relic of the past, but as a living heritage that continues to enrich our community. By prioritizing responsible stewardship, engaging in tribal consultation, and promoting public education, the Museum aims to deepen appreciation for the region's

first inhabitants and ensure that their stories are conveyed with accuracy, respect, and authenticity.

As part of this initiative, the Museum has partnered with the Public Archaeology Lab (PAL), a distinguished organization specializing in archaeological research, laboratory analysis, and curatorial best practices. PAL will conduct a thorough assessment of the Museum's Native American artifacts, documenting their condition, provenance, cultural significance, and alignment with ethical stewardship standards. Based on PAL's recommendations the Museum will enhance artifact documentation and storage, integrating them into the existing online database. Input from PAL and tribal representatives will guide updates to the Native American Display, ensuring that all interpretive materials fully and respectfully reflect the significance of these artifacts.

**We invite the community to stay informed about upcoming updates and programs highlighting this important project at the Museum.**

## New Board Members

Wanju Dai, MD, DrPH, joined the board as the membership director. Wanju is a retired epidemiologist with a career in clinical research and drug safety investigation. Born and raised in Taiwan, she moved to the United States after medical school to pursue her passion for scientific inquiry. After earning a Doctorate in Public Health from the University of Pittsburgh and serving on its faculty, she transitioned to the pharmaceutical industry, leading pharmacoepidemiology research at several major pharmaceutical companies in New Jersey. A lifelong admirer of the natural world, she joined the MNHM board to deepen her exploration of the universe's wonders and to support the museum's mission of discovery. For Wanju, MNHM is a gateway to understanding the wonders of the universe, and she is thrilled to contribute to its growth and educational outreach.

The board welcomes Wanju and Eileen and looks forward to working with them to continue to bring valuable scientific and educational resources to the town of Marion.

**Elizabeth Leidhold – Executive Director**

### Board of Directors:

Maggie Payne - President

Marc Sylvia – Vice President

Justin Barrett - Treasurer

Michael Moore – Secretary

Eileen Marum

Wanju Dai – Membership Officer

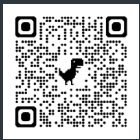


**Marion Natural  
History Museum**

Visit us at [marionmuseum.org](http://marionmuseum.org)



Stay up to date  
with Programs  
Online



Check out the upcoming  
programs for children and  
adults listed on our website  
at [marionmuseum.org/](http://marionmuseum.org/)

## Upcoming Events

- **Native Plants and Pollinators**

After School Program April 15 @ 3:30 pm – 4:30 pm

- **Early Risers – Flowers and Butterflies of the Early Spring**

After School Program May 6 @ 3:30 pm - 4:30 pm.

- **Rocket Science!**

After School Program – May 20 @ 3:30 pm - 4:30 pm.

- **Expedition to an Island**

After School Program – June 3 @ 3:30 pm - 4:30 pm.

- **Annual Meeting and Evening Speaker**

Community Program – May 15<sup>th</sup> 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm.

- **Coastal Explorations**

Summer Program – July 6<sup>th</sup> – July 10<sup>th</sup> 8:00 am – 5:00 pm

**Beyond the Exhibit** April 2026



**Marion Natural  
History Museum**

8 Spring Street,  
Marion, MA 02738

508-748-2098  
[info@marionmuseum.org](mailto:info@marionmuseum.org)