

MISSOULA BUTTERFLY HOUSE & INSECTARIUM



NEWS



The Buzz

Cupcakes, Backhoes, & Butterflies!

By Jen Marangelo, Executive Director

Summer 2021

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Our Mission

The Missoula Butterfly House and Insectarium inspires an appreciation and understanding of insects and their relatives.

Join the Buzz!

We're moving closer to realizing our dream each day! For more information about our exciting future, go to jointhebuzzmissoula.org or give us a call at 406-317-1211.



The items in the title of this article may paint an image of an unlikely combination. But on a picture-perfect spring day, they blended perfectly in celebration of a milestone that's been over a decade in the making.

Together with our partners at the Missoula County Weed District and Extension, the Healthy Acres Healthy Communities Foundation, and the Missoula Conservation District, on May 14th we broke ground on the Rocky Mountain Gardens and Exploration Center! Incorporating the dream we've had of building a tropical butterfly house and insect museum, this project has blossomed into a unique public-private partnership that will bring something truly extraordinary to Missoula.

While realizing our long-term dream, this project also realizes the even longer-held dream of Jerry Marks, the Department Head of the Weed District and Extension. For over 20 years Jerry has envisioned the creation of a "learning center" in Missoula that marries the many education programs the Weed District and Extension provide with complimentary opportunities from community partners in establishing an education destination unlike anything Montana has seen. Breaking ground on this

premier education destination was not the only thing we celebrated that day. It just happened to be Jerry's 80th birthday. And yes, cupcakes were served.

With construction underway, the clock on our 18-month build has begun ticking, setting a host of exciting gears in motion. In addition to securing the remaining funds for our new home, our focus is turning from the big picture to the many details: determining the layout of our 2,500 square foot butterfly house and what species of tropical plants we'll have; designing the new exhibit space and researching the new insects and arthropods we plan to showcase; incorporating new curriculum and ways of delivering our education programs; and planning for our expanded staff and volunteer requirements for when we open our doors.

If you've followed and supported our vision over the years, you already know that it's taken a while to get to this exciting stage. With over 80% of our fundraising goal secured, the dream we've built with partners like you is well along the road to reality. My sincere thanks to everyone who's contributed to our buggy mission. Whether you've supported us since the beginning, or just recently jumped on board this exciting ride, you're part of our growing family. 🦋

Education Programs - 306 Field Trips

Our Museum Educator, Carolyn Taber, shows off a Rainbow Stag Beetle.



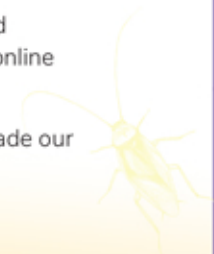
Last school year, in-person field trips and programs were not an option. This had most (if not every) organization that primarily conducts in-person education programs scrambling – along with the teachers and parents of school-aged children. And while there were plenty of challenges to address, there were also significant opportunities created.

In past years, we typically welcomed 125 field trips to the Missoula Insectarium for in-person programming. For the 2020 – 2021 school year, our staff quickly tweaked our field trips to an online / distance learning format ...and the results were dramatic! By the end of June, we had hosted over 300 online education programs. And with geographic location no longer a hindrance, the reach of our programs went well beyond western Montana. We worked with schools all across Montana as well as in other states including Washington, Pennsylvania, Louisiana, and more. We even did an online field trip in New Zealand!

What does this mean for the 2021-2022 school year and beyond? Online programming will remain an important tool in our Education Program's expanding toolbox.

While our focus will return to providing in-person programming once our new facility opens, the enthusiastic response and demand we saw for remote field trips made it clear that this new option is here to stay. Even after our new facility opens, online field trips will enable us to bring our unique programs into schools across Montana where physical visitation is impractical.

While the past year and a half has had its share of challenges, the opportunities presented and new tools created have made our education efforts stronger than ever. Upward and onward! 🐛



Butterfly License Plate



Ever wonder how impactful all of these nonprofit license plates are in Montana? Showcasing the amazing art work of Courtney Blazon, to date we've received over \$7,000 from our license plate in 2021. That makes a big difference for our education programs, amazing critters, and efforts to open our new facility. Are you getting a new or used vehicle or are you ready to renew your registration? Contact us for more information or visit your County Treasurer's office to get your butterfly plate today!

Butterfly House Planning

As we move closer to opening our new facility, a range of new tasks are coming to the fore. As you might guess, the one we're most excited about is designing the tropical butterfly house!

Acquiring the beautiful butterflies that will flutter about this 2,500 square foot space is the easy part. It's things like planning the layout and deciding what plants to feature that quickly bring us into the weeds.

In regard to the flora, the fact that we are in Montana adds significantly to the list of considerations – which plants will provide great year-round nectar sources; how tall will individual plants get; what specific requirements does each species have; and what species do well in northern climates (particularly during the shorter, darker days of winter). We also need to strike a balance between providing a lush environment and having too many plants (more plants mean more places for butterflies to hide from view).

There are also considerations of "traffic flow" – providing nice places to sit, relax, and observe, while also providing adequate space around the water feature, chrysalis viewing exhibit, and areas for programs, butterfly releases, and other gatherings.

And then, of course, there are the butterflies. Throughout the year we'll host around 35 different species. With some butterflies only being available at certain times of year, and our desire to feature certain species at special times, there will always be something new to see.

There's a lot to consider in putting together the type of experience we plan to provide. Thanks to the expertise of our consultants and all that we've learned from colleagues at other facilities, we've got a strong framework to build from. It will be the tweaks and additions we'll make along the way that will make it unique, make it Montana's first tropical butterfly house, and make it the Missoula Butterfly House and Insectarium! 🦋



Welcome Doug!

Earlier this year we welcomed Dr. Douglas Emlen to our Board of Directors. Doug is a Montana Regents Professor of Evolutionary Biology at the University of Montana. Our vision is certainly not new to Doug. Aside from serving as co-chair of our capital campaign committee for the past year and a half, the idea for the Missoula Butterfly House and Insectarium began when our Executive Director worked with Doug many years ago. Doug brings never-ending enthusiasm for all things buggy and a tremendous wealth of knowledge to back it up. We're thrilled to have him on board!



Welcome Briana!

This past April, Briana Wentworth joined our team as our new Administrative Assistant. With a strong organizational background, Briana hit the ground running and is quickly becoming the glue that keeps our ship together and moving forward. Never one to shy away from a new project or challenge, she's a most welcome addition to our crew. Welcome Briana!



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Missoula Butterfly House &
Insectarium

MISSOULA BUTTERFLY HOUSE & INSECTARIUM STAFF

Jen Marangelo
Executive Director

Brenna Shea
Lead Animal Keeper

Sam McFarland
Animal Keeper

Carolyn Taber
Museum Educator

Briana Wentworth
Admin Assistant

Glenn Marangelo
Development Director

Nicole Emlen & Hallee Olsen
Animal Care Interns

Karen Weaver
Interpretive Content Creator



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COME LEARN ABOUT THE LITTLE
THINGS THAT RUN THE WORLD!

Join the Buzz!

Together, we've come a long way! From starting this organization as an all-volunteer effort in 2009 ...to opening the Missoula Insectarium in 2015... to breaking ground on our dream of opening a tropical butterfly house and insectarium in May, over the years we've made steady progress and added a cadre of butterfly house visionaries along the way. This is what we've been working toward for so long. And we're so close! Join the Buzz today!

If you have questions about our programs, making a general donation, or considering a gift to our capital campaign, please contact Glenn at 406-317-1211 or glenn@missoulabutterflyhouse.org.



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