

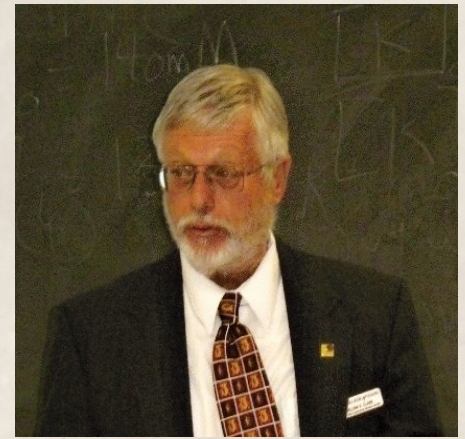
Orma J. Smith Museum of Natural History



Annual Report, Fiscal Year 2014
July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014

From the Director

"The Orma J. Smith Museum of Natural History will be the premier collections-based environmental education and natural history resource in our region. The Museum's programs and resources will be integrated into the educational programs of the college to help meet the educational needs of students at The College of Idaho and provide outreach to the general public."



With this vision in mind, I hope you find this, the first Annual Report written for the Museum, interesting and useful. It provides an overview of some of our many activities during Fiscal Year 2014 (July 1, 2013, through June 30, 2014).

The Museum is an integral part of The College of Idaho, which works with the Museum's Board of Directors to provide oversight and help the Museum to meet its stated mission:

"The Orma J. Smith Museum of Natural History seeks to instill an awareness of the natural world through the educational programs of The College of Idaho, provide public service, and serve the general and research public by holding in trust collections of natural history objects for this and future generations. The Museum serves students and the general public by offering tours, interpretive displays, and other educational programs that foster life-long learning by all who visit."

The Museum supports The College of Idaho and other educational institutions in our area, houses valuable research collections, conducts and publishes world-class research, and supports a vigorous public outreach program.

Except for a small number of student interns, the Museum is an all-volunteer organization that relies on donations, grants, and contracts. Our needs are great. Please feel free to contact me if you would like to donate time, money, or goods and services.

We hope you will visit us. The Museum is in the basement of Boone Hall on the campus of The College of Idaho (corner of Fillmore & 20th Streets, Caldwell, Idaho). We're open Friday afternoons from 1-5 pm, one Saturday a month, and by appointment. Admission is free, and tours are available on request.

I present to you this report and look forward to your comments and involvement.

Sincerely,

William H. Clark, Director

bclark@collegeofidaho.edu, 208-459-5507

www.collegeofidaho.edu/museum

Like us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/TheOrmaJSmithMuseumOfNaturalHistory

An Idaho museum with a world-wide presence



Fiscal Year 2014 highlights

- ★ Boise Art Museum returned ethnographic artifacts borrowed for their "Origins" Exhibit, which was seen by more than 35,000 visitors between February 23, 2013 and January 14, 2014
- ★ Museum staff helped other museums to build, care for, and document collections
- ★ Specimens were traded or loaned to other museums
- ★ Museum researcher identified a sample of early Middle Eastern cuneiform writing in College of Idaho collections
- ★ Homes of Museum visitors, volunteers, and student interns

Educating citizens and scientists for today and tomorrow

Fiscal Year 2014 highlights

- **College of Idaho Art Majors** used their pictures of the Museum to advertise their graduation art show
- Student Interns from **The College of Idaho** and **Boise State University** spent more than 1000 hours learning skills needed for scientific, research, and museum careers
- **College of Idaho classes** used Museum collections and held labs in the Museum
- **Cub Scouts** and **Boy Scouts** toured the museum and listened to talks by Museum staff
- Students from **Homedale, Caldwell, and Vallivue School Districts**, and from **Caldwell Adventist Elementary School** visited the Museum for tours and after-school activities
- Museum scientist taught future public health professionals at **Carrington College** about diseases caused by soft-shell ticks
- Staff member conducted fish identification workshops for **Idaho Department of Environmental Quality**
- Volunteers from **Idaho Department of Fish and Game's Master Naturalist Program** visited the Museum for discussions with curators
- Researcher judged competitions and gave presentations for **National History Day** and **Archaeology Month**
- Staff members conducted tours for numerous groups including **Idaho Archaeological Society**
- **Museum volunteers interacted with researchers** at monthly Museum work days



Staff members are happy to help with educational activities

Research focus: Understanding biodiversity

We've all heard about species disappearing or appearing in places they've never been seen before.

Invasive species damage Idaho agriculture and recreational opportunities.

Sometimes people even find a new kind of animal that no one has reported before.

How do we know?

Museum researchers use reference collections to tell what has been seen, and where and when. This lets them know what has changed.

The collections are always growing. Researchers collect new specimens and trade with other museums. People and organizations donate specimens to the museum. Museum collections include hundreds of thousands of specimens including insects, shellfish, other invertebrates, fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals.

With assistance from student interns, Museum curators ensure that samples are properly labeled, stored and protected.

Fiscal Year 2014 highlights

- Discovered a family of beetles previously unknown from Mexico
- University of Montana researchers identified a new species of fish based on comparison with specimens in Museum collections
- Accepted fish collections donated by the University of Montana, United States Geological Survey, and Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
- Museum researcher co-authored a new book on Native Fishes of Idaho, published by the American Fisheries Society



Research focus: Understanding ancient plants and animals in Idaho

What was Idaho like millions of years ago?
What kinds of plants and animals did it have?
Where did they live?
How were they different from what we see today?

How do we know?

A lot has changed in the 3.8 billion years since life began on Earth. Collections of modern plants and animals show only a small part of what has happened in the past.

Fossils provide researchers with more information about the past, leading to a better understanding. That is why fossil collections are so important to science.

Museum paleontologists (scientists who study fossils) work in the field to collect and document new samples, and in the laboratory to understand and preserve them.



Fiscal Year 2014 highlights

- Fossil collections from new areas on Payette Lake and continuing collections from Paddock Valley and Succor Creek have turned up many new discoveries
- Museum staff members were invited speakers at Western Snake River Symposium (co-sponsored by Idaho State University and the Smithsonian Institution)



Public Outreach

Museum scientists share their knowledge and enthusiasm at events including:

BioBlitz 2014: Almost 300 people visited Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge to learn about local animal and plant biodiversity and see the Museum's reference collection of specimens from Deer Flat. In preparation, Museum researchers visited Deer Flat and identified about 150 kinds of local insects that were currently present (including some not previously known from Deer Flat). This data was added to the Museum's Deer Flat database and reference collection.



Boise Front 4th of July Butterfly Count: The Museum sponsored one of eight butterfly counts held for the North American Butterfly Association in Idaho in 2013. Twenty-four volunteers spent nine hours visiting five Boise-area locations to seek out and identify over 1600 butterflies from 57 different species. A butterfly identification workshop was held at the Museum the day before the count.



Bug Day at the Idaho Botanical Garden: The Museum co-sponsored this event dedicated to the appreciation and understanding of "bugs." Over 1,000 children and adults showed up to take part in entomological activities, look at the Museum's reference collections and other displays, buy entomology-oriented merchandise, and get their questions about insects and other bugs answered by Museum curators at the "Ask an Entomologist" table.



Staff members are available to answer questions and give presentations

2014 Volunteer of the Year

Dr. Paul J. Castrovillo



Museum Director Bill Clark presented the award as part of the Museum's Homecoming Week activities. Other Homecoming Week events included a public reception, lecture, and book signing.

For service including:

- **20 years as Curator of Entomology** and **14 years as Research Associate** at the Museum
- **Collecting and adding more than 20,000 specimens** to Museum collections
- **Co-organizing BioBlitz events**, including compiling reference collections with more than 800 kinds of insects from Deer Flat
- **Organizing and leading annual 4th of July butterfly counts**, and getting results entered in national database
- **Staffing the "Ask an Entomologist" table** at Bug Days
- **Numerous public presentations** at locations including the Museum, Nampa Public Library, MK Nature Center, and Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge.

Audiences included Museum volunteers at monthly work days, school classes, Idaho Department of Fish and Game's Master Naturalist Program, and viewers of Idaho Public Television's Dialogue for Kids program

Lunchtime research presentations at monthly Museum work days

July 6, 2013:

"Interesting Butterflies of Idaho" and "Training for the 4J Butterfly Count,"
Dr. Paul Castrovillo

September 7, 2013:

"Native bee survey and collection in Canyon County," Dr. Ron Bitner

October 5, 2013:

"Ant community response to tree encroachment in the Great Basin," Dr.
James McIver and Dr. Paul E. Blom

November 2, 2013:

"Ground Squirrels as Ecosystem Engineers," Dr. Eric Yensen

December 7, 2013:

"Plants and Reshmerga: Botanizing in Iraqi Kurdistan," Dr. Barbara Ertter

January 4, 2014:

"Spider Identification and Biology," Dr. Craig R. Baird

February 1, 2014:

"PEAK, the liberal arts, and the Museum," Dr. John Ottenhoff (Dean, The
College of Idaho)

March 1, 2014:

"Semilla Nueva and Agricultural Development in Guatemala," Ben Simko

April 5, 2014:

"Fowl, Feathers, and Flight," Steve Bouffard

May 3, 2014:

"5 Myths of Petroglyphs," Bill Nance

June 7, 2014:

"Oligocene Flora of the Salmon City Formation, Salmon, Idaho," Howard
Emry

Concluding Remarks

The Orma J. Smith Museum of Natural History at The College of Idaho is the only natural history museum in Southwestern Idaho. It provides educational services and experiences for students at The College of Idaho. It serves the public through outreach events and by providing expert scientists to answer questions and make presentations. It serves researchers around the world with its unique reference collections. All labor is provided by volunteers and student interns.

Although the Museum is open to the public, it only had about 700 visitors in Fiscal Year 2014 (far fewer than other museums in the area). To expand visitor opportunities, the Museum needs a modern exhibit area, upgraded storage capabilities, better publicity and marketing, and funding for staff to care for collections and enhance public access to exhibits.

The Museum is supported by the community. In Fiscal Year 2014, volunteers donated more than 2500 hours of labor (with some volunteers traveling hundreds of miles to help the Museum). The Museum received approximately \$15,000 in financial and in-kind donations, which were used to support educational, research, and public outreach activities. The Museum also received a single bequest of approximately \$200,000, which was added to the Museum Endowment Fund. When enough money has been accumulated, the Fund will be used to pay for a new building for the Museum.

Admission to the Museum is free. We need and appreciate donations of all sizes to fund current operations and future expansion.

Key needs are:

- New building for exhibits and storage
- Shelving and storage containers for reference collections and library materials
- Funding for student interns and staff members working on collections, exhibits, and tours
- Funding to develop computerized databases to allow remote access to collections and library
- Reference materials (books and journal subscriptions)
- Supplies for daily operations and maintenance activities

Please contact the Director (Bill Clark, bclark@collegeofidaho.edu, 208-459-5507) if you want to volunteer or make a donation.



Written by Dawn E. Janney and Museum staff members, with assistance from the Board of Directors and The College of Idaho, December 1, 2014

Photo credits: Hill Street Studios with individual photos by Paul Castrovillo (Bug Day, BioBlitz, butterfly count), Ralph Stearley (paleontologists in field), Prof. Garth Claassen and the College of Idaho's Senior Art Class of 2014 (Here or Somewhere Else announcement), Dawn E. Janney (Bill Clark, fossil leaves)

Board of Directors: Dr. Ron Bitner, Jack V. Cafferty, David Cannamela, William H. Clark, Billie Farley, Dr. Chris Walser, Dr. Eric Yensen

Museum staff members: Dr. Craig R. Baird, Dr. Ron Bitner, Dr. Paul E. Blom, Stephen H. Bouffard, Kinga Britschgi, Sharon Brown, Nathan E. Carpenter, Dr. Paul Castrovillo, William H. Clark, Janet L. Summers Duffy, Howard Emry, Dr. Sean D. Farley, Dr. Patrick F. Fields, Dr. Alan R. Gillogly, Dr. David H. Greeger, Jr., Dr. James B. Johnson, Wayne Lewis, Steven J. Lysne, William James Nance, James H. Pike, Dr. James K. Ryan, Richard A. Salisbury, Dr. Gerald R. Smith, Teresa Tarifa, Leland Thames, Geraldine van Curen, Dr. Chris Walser, Dr. David M. Ward, Jr., Gerald E. Wood, Dr. Eric Yensen, Dr. Donald W. Zaroban

Student Interns: Marabie Barck, Simon Boycott, Chanmiko Carrillo, Hannah Dixon, Alexandria Hickle, Caitlin Indart, Courtney Indart, Sarah de Leon, Alexandra Knoblock, Megan Luchs, Corino Spitaleri, Amanda Wunder

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Orma J. Smith Museum of Natural History

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