

**The Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History**  
**The Museum’s Mission**

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## **I. SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS**

### **A. Background**

For over 120 years, the Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History (the “Museum”) has been a local attraction and a cultural jewel of the City of Pacific Grove (the “City”). Founded as an independent institution by the Chautauqua, the Museum is the ninth scientific institution established in California and has a long tradition of being an integral part of the local scientific and education community. Founded as a private institution, the operation and governance of the Museum was ceded to the City in 1917. The Museum became accredited by the American Association of Museums (the “AAM” in 1972). The Museum manages volunteers for the Museum host program and the Pt. Pinos Lighthouse.

The Pacific Grove City Council (the “City Council”) currently serves as the Museum’s governing body, with management responsibility with the City Manager. Under Article 26 of the City’s Charter, a Museum Board is empowered to act in an advisory capacity to the City Council and the City Manager “in all matters pertaining to the operation...” of the Museum.

The Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History Association (the “Association”) was established in 1967 to support the Museum by providing both volunteers and financial assistance. Each year the Association contributes funds to provide exciting temporary exhibits, educational activities, and public lectures. The Association runs a small Gift Shop in the Museum that is staffed by volunteers. The Association also manages volunteers for the Monarch Butterfly Sanctuary.

### **B. The Need for Change**

The last two Museum Directors, Dr. Steve Bailey (director tenure 1985-2004) and Paul Finnegan (director tenure 2004 – 2007) communicated to the AAM the City’s financial crises and its negative impact on the operation of the Museum. Indeed after the Museum was reaccredited by the AAM in 1996, one statement of concern by the AAM was that “Personnel is the most significant area in which resources are not sufficiently allocated to meet the Museum’s Mission.”

Reviewing the Museum’s budget over the years provides support to these claims of under-funding. Below are the Museum’s budget levels for the past 14 years:

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>City of Pacific Grove General Fund Budget</b>	<b>City of Pacific Grove Museum Budget</b>	<b>% of City Budget</b>
1993/1994	\$8,147,553	\$204,653	2.5%
1994/1995	\$8,247,497	\$224,443	2.7%
1995/1996	\$8,651,633	\$259,549	3%
1996/1997	\$9,302,258	\$269,800	2.9%
1997/1998	\$10,140,328	\$301,300	2.9%
1998/1999	\$10,790,750	\$310,700	2.9%
1999/2000	\$10,676,867	\$315,200	3%
2000/2001	\$11,796,100	\$337,400	2.9%
2001/2002	\$12,390,265	\$349,500	2.8%
2002/2003	\$12,690,139	\$342,527	2.7%
2003/2004	TBD	TBD	TBD
2004/2005	\$14,011,819	\$347,364	2.5%
2005/2006	\$14,419,678	\$312,574	2.2%
2006/2007	\$15,593,854	\$305,023	2%
2007/2008	\$16,499,044	\$282,981	1.7%
2008/2009	\$15,237,498	\$151,542	1%

The Museum has been a lower budget priority for the City in its struggle to maintain other City services even though the City has a legal responsibility to maintain the valuable Museum collection held in public trust.

In 2008/2009, the Museum was the smallest department budget in the City of Pacific Grove and suffered the largest amount of cost reduction.

<b>Department</b>	<b>Amount of Cost Reduction</b>	<b>As % of FY 2007/2008 General Fund Budget</b>	<b>2008/2009 Budget</b>
Museum	\$148,000	52%	\$151,542
Library	\$473,000	50%	\$673,810
Recreation	\$325,000	34%	
Public Works	\$410,000	20%	
Administration	\$296,000	15%	
Police	\$410,000	9%	
Fire	\$182,000	6%	

The Museum has enjoyed 37 years of accreditation and was one of the first AAM accredited Museums in the nation. However, in the current reaccreditation process, the AAM has stated that the Museum’s governing body, the City Council, has not resolved the serious issues raised during the 1994 AAM reaccreditation process. These issues include the Museum’s under-funding and the lack of support by the Museum’s governing body. On September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2008, the AAM stated to Lori Mannel, the current Museum Manager, its intention to cease the Museum’s AAM reaccreditation process. After further discussion, the AAM did agree to allow the Museum Manager to resubmit the reaccreditation papers for one last reaccreditation attempt. However, since the Museum was due to be reaccredited in 2006 and since after 16 years little progress has been made toward solving the critical issues facing the Museum, the AAM has indicated that the chances of reaccreditation at this point are small. If the Museum is not reaccredited, it will be in violation of City Council Policy #200-5. Moreover, without accreditation, securing funding from non-profit foundations and other granting institutions will be exceedingly difficult.

A comparison of the governance structure of eight museums with natural history/science focus, developed under Interim Museum Director Bob Snyder, showed that the Museum was the only museum fully owned and managed by a City. It is significant that other coastal natural history museums had

beginnings in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries similar to that of the Museum. For example, like the Museum, the natural history museums in San Diego and Santa Barbara began as private non-profit institutions. Both museums, however, remained private non-profit institutions instead of transitioning into City governance. These two museums currently operate on annual budgets of \$5 million or more.

The City's budget crisis has been painful for all, but it has brought to light the need for real change at the Museum. The Museum needs an operating and governance structure that provides a singular focus on the Museum and has full responsibility, and accountability, for funding, operations, and staffing, with the authority to implement strategy quickly and efficiently.

C. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis

The following table shows a SWOT analysis of the Museum’s internal strengths and weaknesses and its external opportunities and threats.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Rich and diverse Museum collection (31,000 artifacts of substance and import</li> <li>▪ Rich natural history of California Central Coast (many specified items of national interest)</li> <li>▪ Great location in downtown Pacific Grove near the recreation trail and shoreline</li> <li>▪ No facility rental costs</li> <li>▪ Rich community of scientists and academics</li> <li>▪ 127 year old Museum founded by Chautauqua holds a key cultural significance to the City</li> <li>▪ Active and supportive Association, providing funding support for special exhibits and community events</li> <li>▪ Partnerships with regional institutions such as Hopkins Marine Station, Monterey Bay Aquarium, Monterey County Regional Parks District, Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute, Moss Landing Marine Laboratories, Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, Hastings Natural History Reservation and CSUMB</li> <li>▪ Monarch Butterfly Sanctuary and Pt. Pinos Lighthouse as natural and cultural drawing points</li> <li>▪ Many local citizens have a personal connection to the Museum</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hours of operation not aligned to peak visitor times</li> <li>▪ No Educational programs</li> <li>▪ No strong earned revenue stream</li> <li>▪ Historically under-funded and financially unstable</li> <li>▪ Museum collection largely inaccessible to public (collections not digitized in database, funding not available to rotate exhibits)</li> <li>▪ Collections/specimens may be at risk if current short term private funding does not continue in future</li> <li>▪ Many Museum processes and policies are not adequately implemented</li> <li>▪ No fund development plan (e.g., No donor database, no grant management, no major gift donation program)</li> <li>▪ Association not prepared to provide large scale funding assistance</li> <li>▪ Museum is not the top priority or focus of City’s budget process or Museum’s governing body</li> <li>▪ Complex organizational structure leads to slow and complex decision making</li> <li>▪ Accountability difficult</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Potential for public/private partnership to reduce stress on City finances and provide operations and managerial assistance to City</li> <li>▪ Unfulfilled community needs (enriched natural history education programs, teen market under developed, center for community discussions on science)</li> <li>▪ Reduced travel brings renewed interest in local attractions</li> <li>▪ Potential for creating forum for regional scientists to communicate their research findings</li> <li>▪ Potential to become the leading natural history museum on the Central Coast Large base of bird and Monarch Butterfly enthusiast for programs built around Museum’s bird collection and the Butterfly Sanctuary</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ City’s budget is stressed</li> <li>▪ Potential of resistance to change in Museum operations by some City residents</li> <li>▪ Turbulent financial environment</li> <li>▪ Significant competition for private funding, with at least 13 organizations in region currently pursuing endowment campaigns</li> <li>▪ Potential loss of accreditation, resulting in weakened collection oversight and reduced ability to raise private funds</li> </ul>

The Museum has great strengths and opportunities. The threats facing the Museum speak largely to the Museum's lack of financial stability. Therefore, a successful Museum strategy must address the Museum's fiscal health while pursuing its great opportunities.

## **II. THE NEW MUSEUM MISSION**

### **A. The Current Museum Mission**

The Museum's current Mission statement, as set forth in the 1994 application to the AAM for reaccreditation is derived from the substance of the Statement of Purpose, as stated in City Council Policy #200-5. It is as follows:

The Museum's mission is to preserve, study, exhibit, and interpret the natural history and aboriginal inhabitants of Monterey County, with special emphasis on the Monterey Peninsula region, and to preserve, study, exhibit, and interpret other natural history and aboriginal collections as resources permit. The Primary purpose of these activities is the education of the public, both local residents and visitors, both children and adults. A corollary function of the Museum is to advise the City of Pacific Grove and other public agencies on matters of facts, principles, and issues regarding natural history. Secondly, the Museum supports original science through its collections and staff.

### **B. The Target Audience**

The Museum's current program focus is on the natural history of Monterey County with an audience of "the public, both local residents and visitors, both adults and children." This significantly limits funding from donors outside Monterey County at a time when the Museum needs to broaden its support base.

The newly proposed target audience resides in California's Central Coast, including tourists visiting Monterey County. In other words, anyone living in California's Central Coast should see the Museum as an integral part of their lives through community outreach projects, education of their children, and increasing their personal connection to and involvement with nature. Anyone visiting Monterey County will receive numerous compelling marketing messages ultimately landing the Museum on their list of "Must See Before Leaving." The Museum's marketing campaigns will seek to attract regional tourists to this area by targeting residents of the Central Coast, as well as other tourists once they are in Monterey County.

With audience locale established, the Museum would benefit from more targeted marketing campaigns.

The targeted audiences are:

- Teachers/Schools (school program and teacher education)
- Parents (children programs)
- Senior Citizens
- Scientists, including amateur naturalists

Additional audiences will be targeted based on affinity to the Museum's areas of programmatic focus.

Based on the Museum's current collection, the following target audiences are likely contenders:

- Bird Enthusiasts: The Museum's collection includes the largest display of mounted birds in California north of Santa Barbara, and Monterey County has one of the largest number of different bird species in the country. Birding expert Don Robeson estimates that there are about 10,000 bird enthusiasts in Monterey County.
- Butterfly Enthusiasts: About 20,000 people visit the City's Monterey Butterfly Sanctuary annually (Docent Records), and about 60,000 visit Santa Cruz's Natural Bridges Monarch Butterfly sanctuary annually (State Parks Records).
- Rock Hounds: Jade Cove is an internationally renowned locale for jade. The Museum is fortunate to have several large unique jade sculptures on loan in its collection.
- Botanists: The Museum and the California Native Plant Society host an annual 3-day exhibit of native plants of the Central Coast, which is attended by about approximately 2000 people.
- Beachcombers: The Pt. Pinos tide pools are among the best in the world and draw around 30,000 to 50,000 visitors annually. (Tenera Environmental Report, 2003)
- Whale Watchers: Whale watching is a long-held seasonal activity in the Monterey Bay and surrounding coastal waters.
- Cultural Anthropologists: The California Central Coast is rich in the history of Native Americans. In Pacific Grove alone, archeological sites have discovered artifacts dating over 5300 years old.
- Heritage Enthusiasts: The Museum's history holds a special place in the heritage of the City and Monterey County. The Museum holds numerous heritage artifacts and photographs in its collection.

### C. The Proposed Mission

As previously described, the current Museum Mission is as follows:

The Museum's mission is to preserve, study, exhibit, and interpret the natural history and aboriginal inhabitants of Monterey County, with special emphasis on the Monterey Peninsula region, and to preserve, study, exhibit, and interpret other natural history and aboriginal collections as resources permit. The Primary purpose of these activities is the education of the public, both local residents and visitors, both children and adults. A corollary function of the Museum is to advise the City of Pacific Grove and other public agencies on matters of facts, principles, and issues regarding natural history. Secondly, the Museum supports original science through its collections and staff.

A "mission statement" is intended to represent a clear and succinct representation of the organization's purpose for existence, stated at the highest level. It should be accessible, motivating, readily visible to patrons, and backed up by a set of values that set performance standards and direct the implementation of the mission. The current "mission statement" for the Museum seems to fall short of this standard, and provides little guidance to its users. Furthermore, as discussed above in Section II.B, it limits the potential audience and funding sources of the Museum. It also sets out duties that the current funding for the Museum renders unachievable (*e.g.*, advising the City and other public agencies on matters of facts, principles and issues regarding natural history). Furthermore, the last sentence of the current mission statement implies that the Museum should support original research by Museum staff. With the Museum's budget being chronically under-funded, paying staff to perform original scientific research would seem to be far beyond the Museum's mission.

In an attempt to strengthen and clarify the Museum Mission Statement, and to expand the potential of the Museum itself, the following Mission Statement was presented to the City Council for approval and was approved on June 4, 2008 for the purposed of strategic planning:

***To Inspire Discovery, Wonder, and Stewardship of our Natural World.***

**The Museum does this by:**

- Emphasizing the unique and diverse natural and cultural history of the California Central Coast, while maintaining a global perspective;
- Preserving the heritage of Pacific Grove and the Museum;
- Managing collections for research, education, and as a continuous record of the changing world for future generations;

- Serving as a resource center for the regional scientific and educational communities;
- Providing dynamic leadership in natural history, conservation, and environmental education through exhibits and educational programs, striving to make this outreach relevant to all the people of the California Central Coast;
- Fostering cooperative efforts in natural history research and education throughout our region.

This proposed Museum Mission has been approved by the Museum Association and by the Museum Advisory Board.