



The Natural
History Museum
of Los Angeles
County

Reimagined.
Beginning
Summer 2010.

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Kristin Friedrich, NHM

Email: kfriedri@nhm.org

Phone: (213) 763-3532; Cell: (323) 449-7370

Rachel Bauch, Ruder Finn

Email: bauchr@ruderfinn.com

Phone: (310) 882-4013; Cell: (323) 841-4139

NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY UNVEILS PLANS FOR NEW NORTH CAMPUS, OPENING JULY 2011



View of the Natural History Museum master plan with North Campus interactive outdoor exhibits, new entrance and car park. Rendering by CO Architects. Courtesy of the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County.

Project is Part of Transformation That Will Change Institution Inside and Out

Museum to Begin Outdoor Programming with New Urban Nature Experiences in Heart of Los Angeles

LOS ANGELES, CA, April 22, 2010—The Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County announced today a \$30 million plan to create an expansive North Campus on the Museum site in Exposition Park: 3.5 acres of urban wilderness experiences and exhibits, serving as a new front yard for the Museum, and a new nature destination in the heart of Los Angeles.

North Campus (working title) is the first outdoor expression of the Museum's master plan, an historic transformation of public spaces and visitor experiences leading up to its centennial in 2013. Inside, the metamorphosis has included renovations and seismic retrofitting to the 1913

Building (the Museum’s original home), seven new galleries, five new permanent exhibitions, and a slate of new visitor amenities, including a renovated store and café.

Outside, the master plan component for North Campus includes interactive outdoor exhibits, a new main entrance to the Museum, and a new car park. With habitats of butterflies, birds, bugs, and plants, the outdoor exhibits will be activated as a living laboratory—a place where Angelenos will partner with Museum scientists on public science projects.

“North Campus is a major part of the historic metamorphosis taking place at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County,” said Dr. Jane Pisano, president and director of the Museum. “We are entering a new dimension of programming, extending the visitor experience from an incredible collection of natural specimens inside, to an outdoor space where plants and animals can be interpreted in a living context. We have always made connections to the natural world, but now the connections are literal. It is a dramatic new way for us to apply the mission ‘to inspire wonder, discovery, and responsibility for our natural and cultural worlds.’”

The North Campus is a collaboration among Don Webb of the Cordell Corporation (master planning and project management), Jorge de la Cal, AIA, of CO Architects (master planning, car park and bridge design), and Mia Lehrer + Associates (MLA, landscape design). All are California-based firms. Cordell Corporation is a privately held management firm specializing in the development, renovations and management of major public projects. CO Architects’ cultural work includes historical renovations of NHM’s 1913 Building—and new designs for libraries, civic centers, museums, and performing arts centers. MLA has earned a reputation for integrating design with engagement in order to create sites that a community can embrace.

Within the Museum, the North Campus team includes Dr. Karen Wise (Vice President, Education and Exhibits), Dr. Brian Brown (Entomology Curator), Lila Higgins (Special Project Assistant) and Mary Baerg (Project Manager, Visitor Experience).

The project, based on conceptual plans, has an estimated budget of \$30 million. The County of Los Angeles funded one third of the project with a grant of \$10 million for the car park, and the remaining \$20 million—budgeted to cover the urban habitats, an indoor/outdoor teaching lab, a permanent exhibit pavilion for butterflies, and a living canopy for the car park—is being raised from individuals and private donors.

Set to open in July 2011, North Campus will increase the programming area of the Museum by 50 percent and give visitors the opportunity to deepen their understanding of the natural world before walking through the Museum’s doors. It will serve as a main entrance for the public, connecting with a new MetroLink Expo Line stop in front of the Museum and creating an extraordinary destination and resource for Angelenos and visitors to Los Angeles.

A Living Laboratory

Scientists anticipate the North Campus area will quickly be colonized by local wildlife. They have already tracked hundreds of mammals, invertebrates, and insects in Exposition Park, which the

green space is meant to accommodate. The city's existing wildlife might surprise Angelenos: Los Angeles is the "birdiest" county in the U.S., for instance, home to more species than any other locale. Ornithology Collections Manager Kimball Garrett has a growing list of 159 different species sighted in Exposition Park over the past few decades, and expects North Campus' trees and bird feeders to be quickly populated.

Visitors will partner with Museum scientists on science projects that research this local wildlife. Together, they will inventory plants and animals, and then relate their findings to longer-term climate alterations that will also be measured. The lab experience won't end when visitors leave the Museum, however; curatorial staff will post lists and images of species on photo walls onsite and online.

The Lost Lizards of Los Angeles Project (LLOLA) is one of the Museum's new biodiversity initiatives set to launch on Earth Day, as part of the North Campus announcement. Prodigious as the local wildlife is, Museum scientists were surprised by the lack of lizards in Exposition Park, so they created a project that would ask the people of Los Angeles to help document their presence (and that of other reptiles and amphibians) in their backyards, parks, and schoolyards. Photographic submissions of local lizards will be accepted through the website (www.nhm.org/site/research-collections/community-science/lost-lizards-project) which will help reveal where lizards are found in Los Angeles, which species are present, and what their habitat preferences are. Scientists will monitor public participation to the online research project in preparation of its integration into North Campus.

"The North Campus will generate important research on the area's rich biodiversity. It is the world's first long-term, institutionally sponsored, urban biodiversity survey and monitoring project," says Dr. Brian Brown, who created LLOLA and will oversee the North Campus' lab components.



The pond is one of the North Campus' centerpieces, where visitors and school groups can engage in living habitat filled with animals ranging from Western Pond Turtles to dragonflies. Rendering by Mia Lehrer + Associates. Courtesy of the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County.

A Natural Transition: Cityscape to Museum Front Yard

Eleven thematic zones—Urban Edge, Transition Garden, Car Park, Living Wall, Entrance Plaza, Urban Wilderness, Pollinator Garden, Shadow Garden, Get Dirty Zone, Home Garden and 1913 Garden—will be interwoven with landscape features such as a pond and dry creek, groves of trees, and walking paths.

- **Urban Edge** spans the Museum’s perimeter on Exposition Boulevard, where nature begins to interface with the Los Angeles streetscape, linking exhibit areas such as the **Transition Garden, Car Park** and **Living Wall** to ease visitors into the immersive site. This perimeter is made of a series of butterfly and bird hedges formed by fencing and steel panels with angled views in and out of the site that will provide a playful interaction with nearby pedestrians, train passengers and drivers, while also allowing privacy within the North Campus. A bio-swale planted with a mixture of grasses and yarrow for a sustainable and colorful landscape will wash away urban runoff.
- The **Transition Garden**, devoted to the history of the Los Angeles landscape, will feature plantings that might include Spanish Olive Trees, South African Birds of Paradise and Mexican Fan Palms from the mission period to present day.
- **Car Park** begins visitors’ transformative experience when they park their cars in a nature-filled structure that will feature a canopy of flowering vines and hummingbird and butterfly habitats creating a “park” like setting instead of a stark concrete parking garage. Details, such as insect specimens encased in “amber” to delineate parking spaces, add to the sense of discovery and wonder.
- A **Living Wall** will bridge the Entrance Plaza with the eastern portion of the campus experiences. Created out of stone and recycled concrete rubble from the Museum’s reclaimed former north entrance, the **Living Wall** will feature a planter on top of the structure, and cracks big and small—where spiders and other wildlife will live.
- The **Entrance Plaza** will be an unticketed gathering place, where visitors can enjoy the urban nature experience for free, meet up with friends arriving from the Metro Rail or enjoy a snack at an outdoor café. After purchasing tickets, visitors may then explore the rest of the North Campus or head straight into the Museum’s main building via the new Main Entrance Bridge, whose form is influenced by the beauty and majesty of mammalian bone structure.
- **Stramphitheater** (stair, ramp, amphitheater), a stepped landscaped seating area will form natural seating for outdoor events, classes and performances with the Museum as the backdrop.

The East Side: Urban Wilderness and Beyond

The eastern portion of North Campus will be filled with varying microclimates and the potential for diversified habitats. From **Urban Wilderness** to the **Home Garden**, these environments will make ideal exhibit areas for contemplative and learning-based exploration.

- **Urban Wilderness** will bring the landscape of the local hills to the middle of the city with a planting of native trees creating an expansive living area for birds and insects, with an understory landscaped with native California plants.
- The **Pollinator Garden** composed of pollinators such as butterflies, bees and flowering plants, will serve as an important education venue where Museum staff will teach about the diversity of habitats and lifestyles with live turtles, dragonflies and water plants.
- A **Shadow Garden** will be set aside by Museum scientists as a relatively undisturbed location, to be experienced at a distance from a wooden boardwalk and an enclosed bird-viewing platform.
- The **Get Dirty Zone**, the entry point and outdoor exhibit companion for the Museum's future Discovery Center, composed of a pill bug discovery component, composting activities, interactive exploration areas and seating for families.
- The elegant **1913 Garden** will be anchored by a sculptural fountain that will pay tribute to the building's Beaux-Arts architectural beauty and its adjacent Mulholland Fountain in the Exposition Park Rose Garden. Raised planters and mazes of walls with "nature treasure drawers" will create a tactile and interactive experience for visitors to select their favorite natural objects for storage in this unique outdoor "collection."
- The **Home Garden** will be a showplace of fruit trees, terraced agricultural plots, beneficial garden bugs and a home-landscape display where homeowners and school children will learn about water conservation and how to foster biodiversity at home.

###

NHM Next

The evolution at the Natural History Museum means exciting new experiences and resources will open to the public each and every year through 2013:

July 2010: The milestone reopening of the Museum's **1913 Building** begins this summer with a new ***Age of Mammals*** experience and exhibitions inside the iconic Haaga Family Rotunda.

July 2011: The opening of **North Campus** and the highly anticipated exhibition ***Dinosaur Mysteries***.

Fall 2012: *Under the Sun*, an exhibition exploring the natural and cultural history of Los Angeles and Southern California, opens to the public, along with a new hands-on indoor space that replaces the museum's existing Discovery Center.

2013: More transformed gallery spaces are unveiled, leading to the celebration of **NHM's Centennial** in 2013.

About the Museum

The Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County is located at 900 Exposition Blvd., Los Angeles. It is open daily 9:30 am to 5 pm. The Museum was the first dedicated museum building in Los Angeles, opening its doors in 1913. It has amassed one of the world's most extensive and valuable collections of natural and cultural history—with more than 35 million objects, some as old as 4.5 billion years. The Natural History Family of Museums includes the NHM, the Page Museum at the La Brea Tar Pits (Hancock Park/Mid-Wilshire), and the William S. Hart Park and Museum (Newhall, California).