

EXHIBIT SPOTLIGHT

Wild Wonder: A Journey Through the Natural History of Vashon-Maury Islands

An exciting new exhibit opens at the Vashon Heritage Museum on First Friday, June 5, 2020. A joint effort of the museum and the Vashon Nature Center, the exhibit is curated by Bianca Perla and Maria Metler; and a wide range of island scientists and environmentalist is involved in its creation.

This interactive, sensory-rich experience invites visitors to explore the island's diverse wildlife and habitats and learn the personal stories of people connected to them. Step outside yourself and into the wings, hooves, roots, and fins of your wild neighbors while learning about the connections between living things that exist across space and time. Explore the forces of change that have created our island's natural heritage as we see it today. The exhibit draws on photographs, maps, oral histories, and artifacts from historical times through the present day.

Wild Wonder is more than an exhibit—it is a community-based collaboration that takes the visitor beyond the museum's walls. Concurrent programs celebrating our natural heritage will include art shows, self-guided tours, workshops, talks, and a Vashon Nature Center BioBlitz survey. The exhibit is designed around nine major themes: migration, geology, forests, streams, wetlands and bogs, meadows and madrone forests, shorelines, marine life, and humans.

Migration: Our island draws life to its shores from as far away as the Bering Strait and South America. From salmon migration maps to a Native American seasonal wheel, explore the flux and change, and the pulse of life into and out of our island throughout the seasons. How did you end up here and why?

Geology: Experience the birth of Vashon-Maury Island during the last glacial age. Learn to identify signs of the island's creation that you can still see today—from old glacial moraines to glacial erratics to the beach pebbles under your feet. How did geologic history influence the life we see here today?

Forests: Experience the living lungs of our island through maps, photos, and a central tree with exploratory surprises. What do our forests provide us and how have we interacted with them through time? How many different forest types occur on the island and why do they occur? Who lives in our forests and what ecosystem services do forests provide?

Streams: Streams are more than water. Learn about our watersheds and which one you live in. Take a tour through our sole source aquifer into a cross-section of running stream—have you ever traveled to the hyporheic zone? This is your chance! Learn the stories of salmon, trout, bridges, water, aquatic insects, and the many wondrous worlds a stream contains.

Wetlands and bogs: Learn about the mysteries of bog life—from carnivorous plants to ancient pollen records. Learn about freshwater snails with ancestors going back to ancient Lake Russell that live in island wetland seeps. Discover how islanders connect, learn from, use, and protect these important ecosystems.

Meadows and madrone forests: How does a butterfly see a flower? Differently from how you see one? Learn about the role of fire and land-use history in shaping our open island landscapes. And tour the incredible beauty of the small ones—from bees to beetles to western fence lizards—that call these unique areas home.

Shorelines: Venture out the museum's back doors to explore the life zones on our beaches. What creates a beach? Why are some beaches sandy and some rocky, and how does this affect what lives there? If you were a beach creature, how would you adapt to mud, tides, and sea-level rise? Learn about this incredible world and the humans here who care for it.

Marine: We are part of the Salish Sea, an inland body of water that covers 6,500 square miles! What lives in its depths and how are these animals intricately connected to the lands where we live? From tiny plankton to large orca pods, learn about the fascinating wilderness that laps at our shores.

Humans: Listen to the voices and words of those who came before us. How did previous generations view nature on this island? Each species contributes something to the wide web of life. What do we contribute? We hope visitors leave this exhibit with a transformed view of our value and potential as a species connected to others in a world of wild wonder.

Join us at the museum on June 5 to celebrate the opening of this amazing new exhibit.

If you would like to volunteer to help with museum events or tours, [click here](#).

—Bianca Perla and Maria Metler