

2025 - 2026

# NEW JERSEY STATE MUSEUM

## HIGH SCHOOL FIELD TRIP GUIDE 9TH - 12TH GRADE

### EXPLORE OUR FIELD TRIP GUIDE!

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### PLAN YOUR MUSEUM ADVENTURE TODAY!

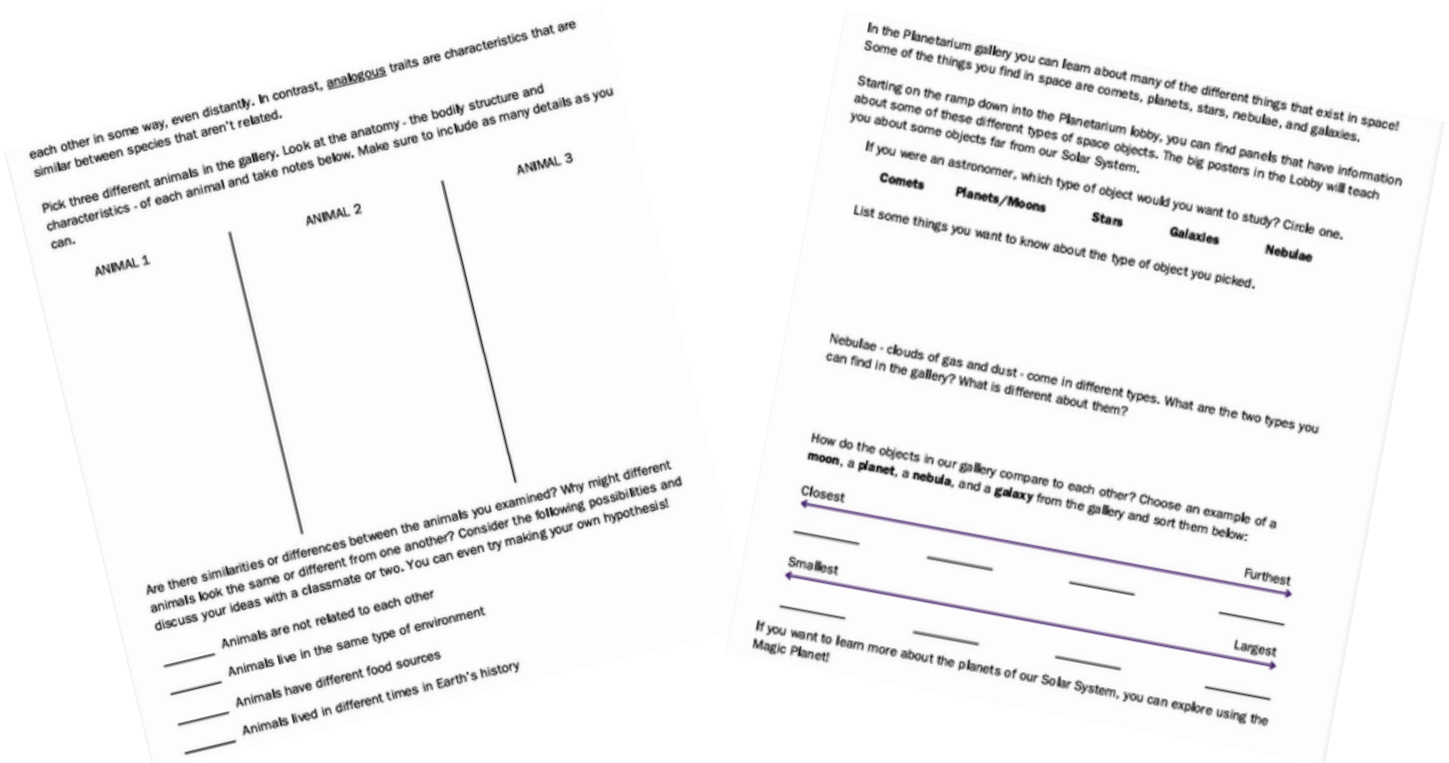
**SCIENCE, HISTORY, ART -  
IT'S ALL UNDER ONE ROOF!**

- Engage with hands-on workshops designed with NJ curriculum standards in mind
- Book a Planetarium show to explore space and the planet we call home
- Learn directly from Museum experts
- Explore new ideas in our exhibits

## TEACHER RESOURCES

We are currently developing new teacher resources for you to use before or after your visit to the Museum. These resources can help prepare your students for learning at the Museum, and keep the learning going once you're back in the classroom! Check our [Digital Resources tab](#) on our website, and keep checking for more resources as we post them.

Our current pre-visit resources include our gallery guides. Gallery guides encourage students to engage and explore each of our long-term exhibits. Feel free to use these guides to help plan your day at the Museum, especially for student gallery exploration.. If you choose to use the guides, please make sure your students bring a pencil and something to write on. Pens and markers are not allowed in the galleries, and cases and walls cannot be used to write on. You can check out the gallery guides [here](#).



# GALLERY EXPLORATION

Gallery exploration is an important part of any field trip to the New Jersey State Museum.

Keep the learning going outside of your workshop or Planetarium show by planning time to allow your group to explore our four floors of exhibits.

## WRITTEN IN THE ROCKS: THE FOSSIL HISTORY OF NEW JERSEY

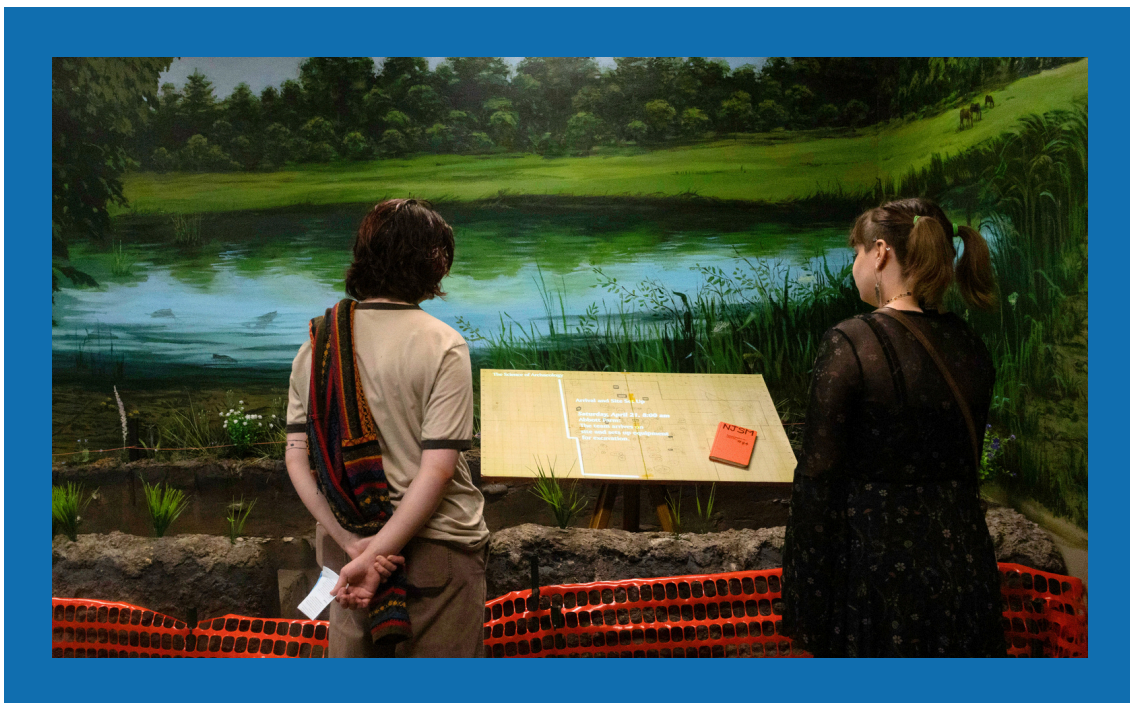
The exhibition presents unique fossil stories that offer intriguing clues about our ever-changing planet, how life on Earth has evolved and adapted... or gone extinct. Step back 3.5 billion years to explore the geology of New Jersey, the oldest fossils from the state and the progression of life here. Learn about the evolution of turtles, fish, mammals and birds. Meet New Jersey's own *Dryptosaurus*, the world's first known carnivorous dinosaur, reconstructed and displayed for the first time ever! Marvel at a life-sized cast of New Jersey's state dinosaur, *Hadrosaurus foulkii*, and a *Mosasaurus maximus* – a 50-foot marine reptile discovered in southern New Jersey. The exhibition concludes with a look at Ice Age animals and their modern day relatives.





# NEW JERSEY'S ORIGINAL PEOPLE, CULTURES IN COMPETITION & A MUCH MOVED PEOPLE EXHIBITIONS

“New Jersey’s Original People,” “Cultures In Competition,” “A Much Moved People” – these three exhibitions are located on the Museum’s lower level and encompass two galleries and the hallway between them. “New Jersey’s Original People: Interpreting the Archaeological Collection” tells the story of New Jersey’s native people and their cultural adaptation to an ever-changing climate. The term “Original People” is one translation of the words Lenni Lenape, the name of New Jersey’s native peoples. “A Much Moved People” offers visitors a glimpse into the lives of the Delaware Indians over a two hundred year time span. From the 1740s to the 1890s, many of New Jersey’s Indians moved - by choice or by force - out of the state ahead of the ever-expanding non-Indian population. Artist and chronicler of American Indians, George Catlin (1796-1872), noted as early as 1832 that the Delaware were among the most relocated Indians in the United States. This exhibition tells the story of these migrations.





# PRETTY BIG THINGS: STORIES OF NEW JERSEY HISTORY

“Pretty Big Things: Stories of New Jersey History” is the long-term core exhibition for the State Museum's Cultural History Bureau, a diverse collection of historical artifacts documenting the history of everyday life in New Jersey from colonial times through the present day.



# ECOSYSTEMS AT RISK: THREATENED & ENDANGERED IN NEW JERSEY



Our first floor temporary exhibition is on display until March 2026.

“Ecosystems at Risk” walks visitors through the major ecosystems in New Jersey - the Skylands, Piedmont, Pinelands, Delaware River, Delaware Bay, and the Atlantic Coast, and highlights the threatened and endangered species in each. Working closely with NJ’s Department of Environmental Protection, the exhibit also showcases the research being done on these species at risk and offers hope for the long-term survival of biodiversity in New Jersey.

# AMERICAN PERSPECTIVES: THE FINE ART COLLECTION

This installation highlights the diversity of voices and visions found in 19th through 21st century American art. The exhibition explores the sources of artists' inspiration and how these inspirations changed over time; how travel to Europe - and the art being made there - influenced American trends; the impact of immigrant artists bringing their own sensibilities to the US; and how world and US events (historical, political, cultural, etc.) impacted artists.

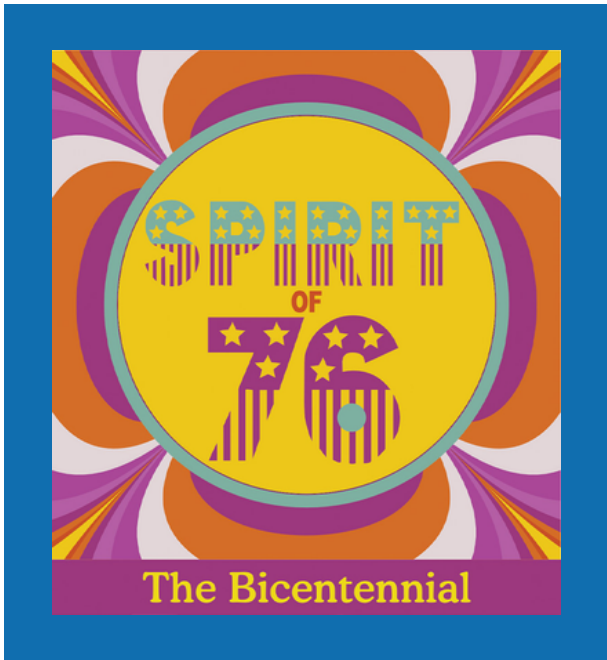


## RECENT ACQUISITIONS: FINE ART



Our second floor temporary exhibit will be on view through December 2025. Over the last three years, the Fine Art Bureau has made important additions to the collection that open up opportunities to explore new narratives in American art history, and NJ's role in a global contemporary art world. Discover some of the latest accessions to the Fine Art collection, many of which will be on view to the public for the first time, including works by artists Robert Smithson, Cindy Sherman, Willie Cole, Mel Edwards, Nancy Cohen, and Purvis Young.

## SPRIT OF '76: THE BICENTENNIAL



Opening in February 2026, “Spirit of ‘76: The Bicentennial” showcases never-before-exhibited artifacts and artworks produced fifty years ago as part of the energy and excitement of the Bicentennial. Students can make their own button at an interactive station. We suggest visiting “Power to Change: Revolutionary Stories from the New Jersey State Archives” and this exhibit for students to appreciate the past and present celebrations of our nation.

## POWER TO CHANGE: REVOLUTIONARY STORIES FROM THE NEW JERSEY STATE ARCHIVES

Opening in April 2026, celebrate the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution with this exciting exhibit, developed in collaboration with the New Jersey State Archives. The exhibit highlights rarely seen foundational federal and state government documents. Visitors will also explore how revolutionary ideals, fought for by our founders, influenced the newly established government and continue to allow for reinterpretation and adaptation today.





# WORKSHOPS

Enhance your field trip with hands-on experiences, designed around New Jersey's curriculum standards.

Our high school workshops encourage critical thinking by incorporating authentic data and primary sources while prompting students to work together to create possible solutions for real-world problems. These workshops build on topics throughout the Museum, and allow for a fully comprehensive visit for your group.

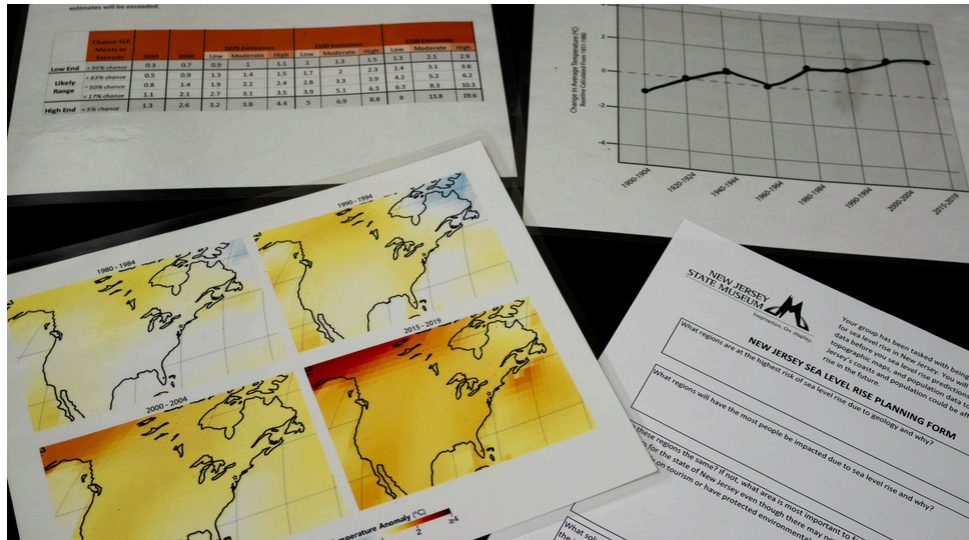


## Workshop FAQs:

- **How long is a workshop?** All workshops are 45 minutes long.
- **How many students can fit in one workshop?** All workshops can accommodate groups of 15 - 30 students.
- **What should I do if I have multiple classes on the same day?** Large groups will be divided into multiple sessions, often with two workshops occurring at the same time in our two classrooms.

# CHANGING COASTLINES

Using scientific data, explore how climate scientists decode and predict patterns of change.



**Overview:** In our most science-filled workshop, students explore how climate scientists work with data to generate patterns of change. In groups, students examine global temperature maps from the last decade to build charts displaying changes in temperature. Students then work together as state planners for sea level rise, utilizing geological data in the form of topographic maps, sea level rise forecast data, and population data. Students must consider how New Jersey's coasts could be affected in the future and what steps might be taken to lessen the impact.

**Suggested Planetarium Shows:** We offer a few Planetarium shows focusing on climate change that would be an excellent complement to this workshop.

- We Are Guardians
- Climate Change in Our Backyard

# CHANGING COASTLINES

**Suggested Skills:** While the following skills are not requirements for your students to have, if your students do have them it can lead to deeper learning outcomes.

- Ability to make and read scientific graphs and charts
- Familiarity with modern, anthropogenic climate change & its impacts



**Related Galleries:** Learn about the last time our planet went through a major climate change at the end of the last Ice Age in our “Written in the Rocks” gallery. Students can explore the megafauna and learn how animals adapt to changing environments.



NEW

# REVOLUTIONARY CHOICES, NEW JERSEY LIVES

Using primary source documents from the New Jersey State Archives, students work in teams to uncover stories from the past.



**Overview:** It all happened so long ago... Why does it still matter today? The American Revolution took place in the distant past, but the ideals behind it endure. In this workshop, students explore how foundational documents in the collection of the New Jersey State Archives guide us today. Through object-based learning combined with primary source documents students will team up to solve the case recreating stories of New Jersey's past.

NEW

# REVOLUTIONARY CHOICES, NEW JERSEY LIVES

**Suggested Skills:** While the following skills are not requirements for your students to have, if your students do have them it can lead to deeper learning outcomes.

- Knowledge of US history
- Practice in observation



**Related Galleries:** Once they open, explore our temporary exhibits focusing on the revolution - “Spirit of ’76: The Bicentennial” and “Power to Change: Revolutionary Stories from the New Jersey Archives.” These galleries allow students to learn more about the American Revolution and how we have previously commemorated the occasion. Until then, we invite you to explore “Pretty Big Things: Stories of New Jersey History.”

# ASK THE EXPERTS CAREER TALKS

**Ask the Experts Career Talks** are great for any size group, but especially suited to large groups!

**Learn from museum professionals with different backgrounds as they share what drew them to their field of study, how they received their degree, and information about job options. Questions are encouraged during and after the talk.**



**Astronomy/Physics:** What do astronomers do when the stars aren't out? Talk with astrophysicist Dr. Jacob Hamer about what a day in the life of an astronomer looks like and the path to careers in astronomy.

**Earth Sciences:** What does it mean to be a paleontologist? Talk with paleontologist Dr. Devra Hock-Reid about her path in paleontology and career options within the earth sciences and science education.

**Fine Art:** What can you do with an Art degree? Talk with Museum Technician Amy Stevens, MFA, about art careers and her focus on art education in a variety of settings.

**Public History:** What is public history? Talk with Curator Beth Cooper, M.S. Ed, to learn how archaeology, ethnography, historic preservation and history museum interpretation are all careers in Public History.



# PLANETARIUM SHOWS

From the prehistoric jungles of Antartica to the moons of Jupiter, we have shows for all age groups and interests!



## Planetarium FAQs:

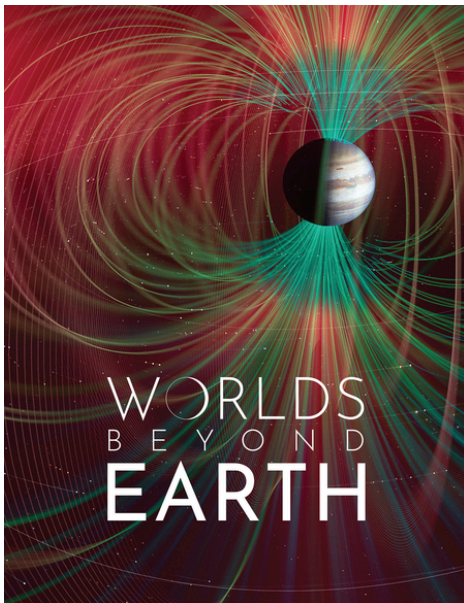
- **How long is a Planetarium show?** All workshops are 45 minutes long and include a Sky Talk about the New Jersey night sky.
- **What happens if we are late?** Planetarium shows begin promptly at the scheduled time. We are unable to start the show late or issue refunds for late arrivals.
- **How many students can fit in one Planetarium show?** The Planetarium can accommodate a total of 140 people. Larger groups will be split into two or more shows.
- **Are teachers and chaperones included in the total count?** Yes! All students, teachers, and chaperones must be included in the total count when reserving the Planetarium.

## **Spark: The Universe in Us** ***Available in Spanish***

From the oxygen we breathe to the uranium that warms our planet's core, we owe everything to the stars! Narrated by Diego Luna, *Spark: The Universe in Us* explores how hundreds of millions of celestial events have forged the elements that make up the Solar System, Earth, and us. Join us as we travel deep inside a giant star that is about to implode, experience the quiet demise of a star like the Sun, and witness the collision of compact stellar cores. Journey across space and time as we explore the movement of elements through our galaxy to understand how stars seed the Universe with the building blocks of life. Watch the trailer [here](#).



## **Worlds Beyond Earth** ***Available in Spanish***



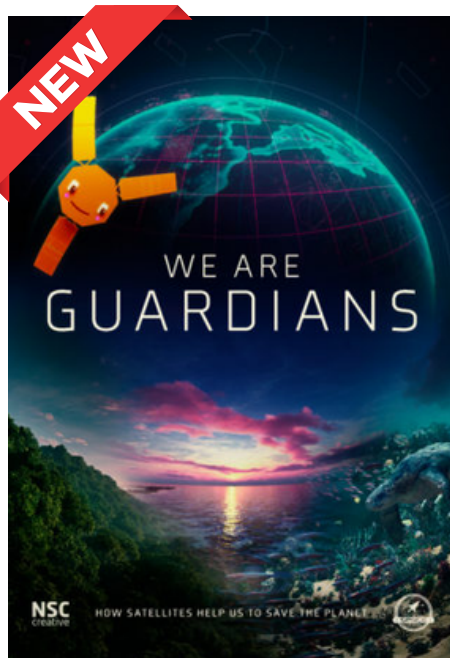
Narrated by Academy Award-winner Lupita Nyong'o, *Worlds Beyond Earth* tells the story of the surprisingly dynamic worlds that orbit our Sun. Based on authentic scientific data from groundbreaking space missions, the show takes viewers on an exhilarating adventure through our cosmic neighborhood. Immersive visualizations showcase the solar system with unprecedented accuracy, including a landing on the cratered surface of our own Moon, a dramatic flight through the swirling rings of Saturn, and soaring encounters with distant worlds of active volcanoes and buried oceans. Watch the trailer [here](#).

## Messengers of Time and Space

*Messengers of Time and Space* is a fulldome planetarium show that illuminates the imminent revolution in astronomy driven by time-domain and multi-messenger observations. Learn how the Gemini Observatory will work together with observatories that monitor the night sky for exciting astronomical events that change with time, like Rubin Observatory. Sometimes, light is not the only indicator of these short-term events. Audiences will learn how information can reach us through other messengers like cosmic rays, elusive particles called neutrinos, and even gravitational waves rippling through the Universe. Watch the trailer [here](#).



## We Are Guardians Available in Spanish



Come get a view of our world from a satellite's perspective! *We Are Guardians* is a visually stunning show that reveals how the Earth, its ecosystems, and its people are all intrinsically connected. From a single bumblebee to an expansive forest, discover how each component of our planet's beautiful ecosystems fit together. Find out how satellites can help us monitor these environments, better understand the impact of climate change, and help us to protect our shared home! Watch the trailer [here](#).



## 5000 Eyes: Mapping the Universe with DESI *Available in Spanish*

The largest structures in the universe evolve over timescales much longer than a human lifetime, so how can we understand how the universe has changed over time? Luckily, there is a way for astronomers to look back in time. DESI, the Dark Energy Spectroscopic Instrument, is mapping out the positions of millions of galaxies from Kitt Peak National Observatory, Arizona to reveal how the universe has evolved over the last 13.7 billion years. Meet the astronomers who are designing and using DESI to map our cosmos and take a trip through the history of our universe! Watch the trailer [here](#).



## Áróra

Áróra is an immersive fulldome show that transports audiences to Iceland to learn the story of the aurora, the northern and southern lights. Join us on a voyage through time and space to find out how auroras are caused by the Sun, how Earth's auroras have siblings across the Solar System, and how different cultures have explained this majestic and mysterious phenomenon. Watch the trailer [here](#).

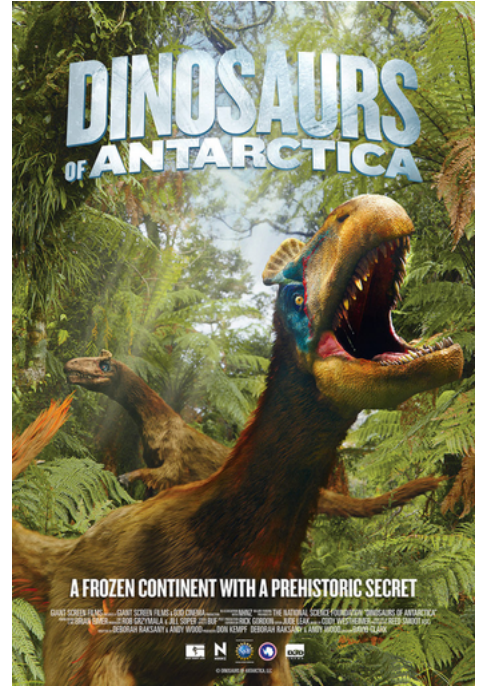




## **Dinosaurs of Antarctica** **Available in Spanish**

Roam through primitive forests and thick swamps filled with bizarre dinosaurs, colossal amphibians, and egg-laying mammals all fighting for survival! *Dinosaurs of Antarctica* tells the story of Antarctica's geological and ecological history, focusing on the Permian and Triassic extinction and Antarctica's climate transition from Greenhouse to Icehouse. Follow along as an expedition of scientists uncover Antarctica's past through the discovery of ancient animal and plant fossils. Computer-generated imagery brings to life these past eras of Antarctica's history! Watch the trailer [here](#).

*Note: This show is 40 minutes, which does not leave time for the live pre-film sky talk.*



## **Destination Mars: The New Frontier** **Available in Spanish**



Ever wonder what it would be like to fly to Mars? NASA – and others – have their sights set on the Red Planet and they're building the technology to get us there! Explore the work being done globally to help make the dream of getting humans to Mars a reality. Fly through the International Space Station, where astronauts are already living and working in space, and follow the rockets and vehicles that will take humans beyond the Moon and, one day, all the way to Mars! Travel along as we imagine this remarkable journey. This film is narrated by former NASA astronaut Mae Jemison and Emmy-award winning actor Keith David. Watch the trailer [here](#).

## Secrets of the Universe

*Secrets of the Universe* immerses audiences in the greatest mysteries of our time – puzzles spanning from the infinitesimal to the infinite – and introduces the brilliant minds seeking to unravel them. Travel with scientist Manuel Calderon de la Barca Sanchez as he visits the largest scientific instrument ever created, the Large Hadron Collider (LHC). Learn just what it means to do science by taking a journey through the history of our understanding of the world around us, and get an inside look at the machine scientists are using to recreate the high-energy conditions of the early universe. Watch the trailer [here](#).



## Climate Change in Our Backyard



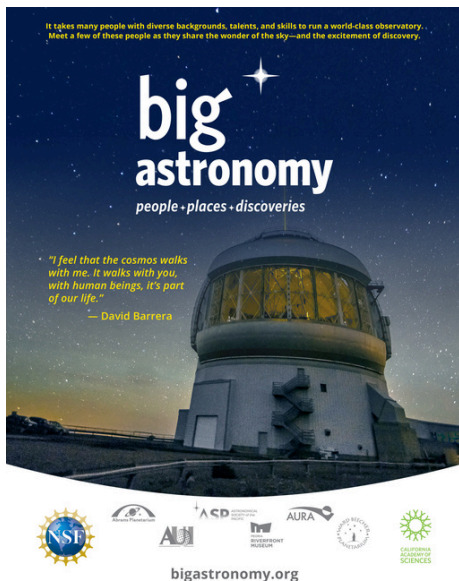
As we develop a larger picture about our Earth as a whole, we are coming to see it as a complex, interconnected, remarkable world, and one that humans have impacted directly. Explore the role of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere, the natural temperature variations that Earth has experienced over millions of years, and how humans are affecting our planet today. How are scientists learning about our changing climate, and what strategies are people taking to protect our future? *Climate Change in Our Backyard* illuminates the story of how and why our climate is changing, from the remote mountain shack in the Colorado Rockies, through ancient bubbles in Antarctic ice, and into our own homes. Watch the trailer [here](#).

## EXO: Are We Alone?

Humankind has always sought to understand the mysteries of the Universe and speculated about the possibility of extraterrestrial life. Today we know of thousands of exoplanets — planets located outside our Solar System — that offer valuable information about our own planet, its origins and life on Earth. We're on the cusp of making some fascinating discoveries. But how will they change our lives? Explore the exciting realm of exoplanetary science in this show. Watch the trailer [here](#).



## Big Astronomy: People, Places, Discoveries Available in Spanish



A great deal of astronomy is done in the nation of Chile, due to its special climate and location, which creates stable, dry air. With its high, dry, and dark sites, Chile is one of the best places in the world for observational astronomy. *Big Astronomy: People, Places, Discoveries* explores three observatories located in Chile, at extreme and remote places. It gives examples of the multitude of STEM careers needed to keep the great observatories working. Barbara Rojas-Ayala, a Chilean astronomer, narrates the show. Watch the trailer [here](#).



## One Sky Project

This fulldome feature film, developed by the One Sky Project collaboration, consists of six short films that represent the perspectives of different cultures or indigenous societies from around the globe. These shorts include “The Forge of Artemis” (Greece), “Thunderbird” (Diné/Navajo), “Jai Singh’s Dream” (India), “Celestial Canoe” (Innu/Indigenous Canada), “The Samurai and the Stars” (Japan), and “Hawaiian Wayfinders” (Hawai’i). The films revolve around the themes of “Finding Patterns” and “To Seek Far,” exploring how our *One Sky* connects us all.

*Note: This show is 40 minutes, which does not leave time for the live pre-film sky talk.*



# RESERVATION & FIELD TRIP POLICIES

**Cost & Discounts:** The New Jersey State Museum has free admission. Planetarium shows are \$5 per person, including chaperones. Workshops are \$5 per student. A minimum of 15 students is required to reserve any program. We offer a 20% discount for Trenton Public School District schools and Title 1 schools. It is the responsibility of the group making the reservation to notify the reservationist if eligible for one of the discounts.

**Online Reservation Form:** Please use our [online reservation form](#) to submit your reservation request. Use this guide to explore the options at the Museum before submitting the reservation request. After submitting your request, our reservationist will review it. If no other information is needed, they will build your itinerary and send a confirmation email. To help you plan your visit, we have created an orientation video. You can watch it [here](#).

**Bulk Orders:** If you are interested in making five or more reservations in a school year and will be paying for all with one PO, please contact our reservationist directly at [reservations.NJSM@sos.nj.gov](mailto:reservations.NJSM@sos.nj.gov). You will get a personal account representative who will work with you to schedule all of the trips.

**Payments:** All payment is due before arrival, and payment is required for the entire group in one payment, we do not accept deposits or partial payments. Reservations must be pre-paid in full, two weeks prior to your field trip date.

**Arrival & Late Policy:** Please have an arrival time in mind when making your reservation. We suggest arriving at least 15 minutes before the start of your first program. If your group is over 100 students, we suggest arriving at least 30 minutes before your first program. We are unable to hold Planetarium shows for late arrivals. If you are late, we can try and accommodate your original reservation, but cannot guarantee that. If you are more than 30 minutes late, your first program may be cancelled without a refund.

# RESERVATION & FIELD TRIP POLICIES

## Chaperones:

- We request 1 teacher or chaperone per 20 students for our high school groups.
- Teachers and chaperones must be included in the total number of seats for the Planetarium.
- We strongly request that teachers and chaperones have eyes on students at all times in galleries and refrain from talking on the phone in the galleries.
- This will help Museum staff maintain the safety of visitors and museum objects alike.

## Code of Conduct:

The following behavior will result in the removal of individual students or the entire group:

- Locking the public bathrooms
- Smoking or vaping anywhere within the Museum facilities
- Defacing or graffiti anywhere within the Museum facilities
- Harassing Museum visitors, staff or guards
- Throwing food or objects
- Loud noises including music, shouting, banging etc.
- Failure to comply with directions from Museum staff or guards
- Any behavior that impacts the safety of students, visitors, or staff
- You can find the full Code of Conduct [here](#).



# RESERVATION & FIELD TRIP POLICIES

## Available Lunch Spaces:

- Lunch room reservations are no longer accepted.
- Limited seating (up to 60) is available indoor on the Museum's first floor on a first come basis.
- Please keep your students together so that there is seating available for other small groups.
- All groups must limit their lunch to 30 minutes.
- Outdoor seating for up to 150 people is available at picnic tables around the Museum
- Groups may also picnic on the front lawn.
- There is no alternate space in the case of inclement weather.
- Lunches can be stored in bins inside the main entrance of the Museum, students are not permitted to carry food or drink throughout the Museum.

**We can't wait to see you and your students!**

