



Reach Into the Past!



GREAT LAKES AQUARIUM
AN EXHIBIT PROPOSAL
ARTS AND CULTURAL HERITAGE FUND
FY 24/25

Minnesota's diverse landscape connects us to the natural world and each other. When people understand the patterns of ancient landscapes, they are better equipped to interpret the events of the present, and plan for the future. Changes in the environment related to weather and water resources affect both human and animal homes and behaviors. Understanding this critical knowledge supports engagement with our local economy of natural resources, planning for climate change mitigation, and securing the future of Minnesota and the Great Lakes Watershed.

Lake Superior Center dba Great Lakes Aquarium reveals the wonder of freshwater education and conservation through learning, play, and animal encounters for all ages. We engage and inspire more than 200,000 visitors with water and wildlife each year. Despite a tumultuous few years in the wake of the pandemic, the Aquarium continues to create safe and meaningful community experiences. We have been planning our next undertaking, an immersive new exhibit experience called **Lava to Lakes**. We invite you to uncover life's ancient secrets written in the landscape all around us.

GREAT LAKES AQUARIUM BY THE NUMBERS

200,000 GUESTS
VISIT ANNUALLY

**10,000 SCHOOL-AGED
CHILDREN** ATTEND CAMPS
AND CLASSES

**10,000+ STUDENT
CONTACT HOURS**
THROUGH CLASSROOM
OUTREACH AND TEACHER
RESOURCE KITS



PROJECT OVERVIEW

People have been drawn to the Great Lakes region since time immemorial for the vast opportunities the landscape provides.

Geologic history has shaped the varied ecosystems of our region – thousands of lakes both big and small, prairies, bluffs, river valleys, hills, and mountains. The legacy of geologic time created communities rooted in the resources of these landscapes: agriculture, forestry, fisheries, raw materials, recreation, and tourism.

In the past 100 years we have become increasingly aware of the significant impact humans have on their environment. We ask ourselves how do we know what to expect for the future? How would our lives be different if the landscapes changed or shifted? What happened in the past to create the landscape we see today? How do we sustain the life of today in a changing world?

Great Lakes Aquarium proposes a new exhibit gallery that explores these questions through immersive interactives, hands-on learning, and expanded touchpool opportunities. Exhibit elements will uncover life's ancient secrets hidden throughout the landscape by showcasing the ancient history of our region. The inextricable connection between land and life are at the center of this tactile story from the volatile beginning of Earth itself to the lakes in our backyards today.

Throughout the 2,500 square foot exhibit guests will reach into the past to engage with animals and the waters of our region's ancient seas. Interactive elements will connect the cause-and-effect relationships that shape life and the environment while revealing the impacts of incremental changes on the diversity of life. Woven into the tactile experience will be opportunities to explore the connection between geologic history and human cultural history. Strategically placed social cues pose questions to stimulate conversations and intergenerational learning.

These exhibit elements will be designed for use by all people providing access points to touchpools at varying heights, invite tactile exploration for people with low vision, include audio descriptions of the content, and closed captioning on digital animations. In addition, the exhibit will foster creativity and collaborative problem solving – all skills needed for a healthy and vibrant Minnesota.

**“What happened in the past to
create the landscape
we see today?”**



PROPOSED EXHIBIT

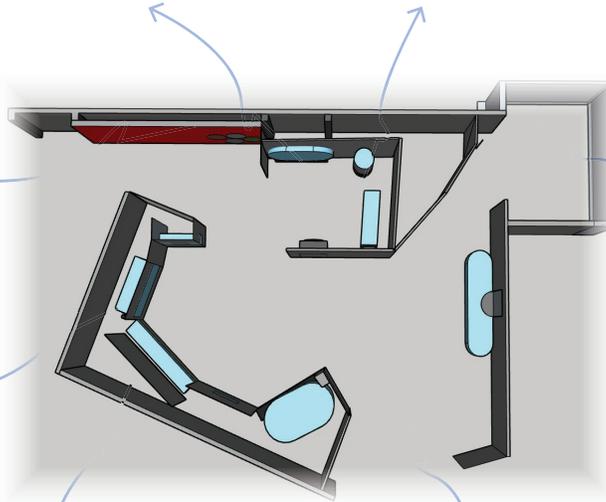
The Lava to Lakes exhibit gallery invites hands-on exploration and tactile learning of concepts ranging from geology and biology, to natural resources and cultural history.



Regional rocks and fossils showcase ancient life's impact on regional resources and culture.

A sea jelly gallery immerses guests as they explore some of Earth's oldest life that paved the way for us today.

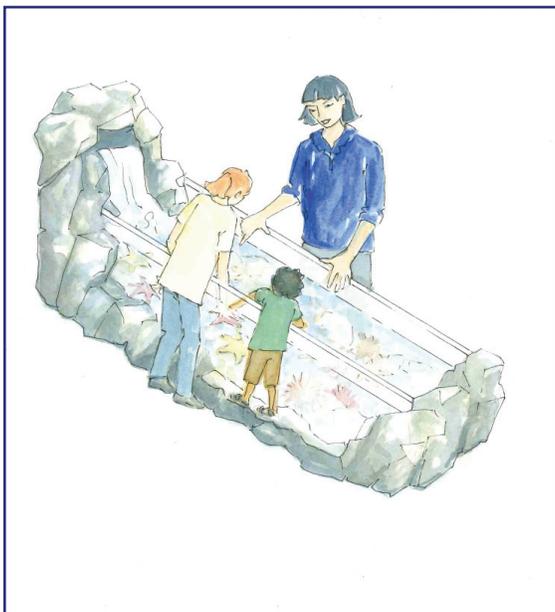
Interactive media details Lake Superior's molten past.



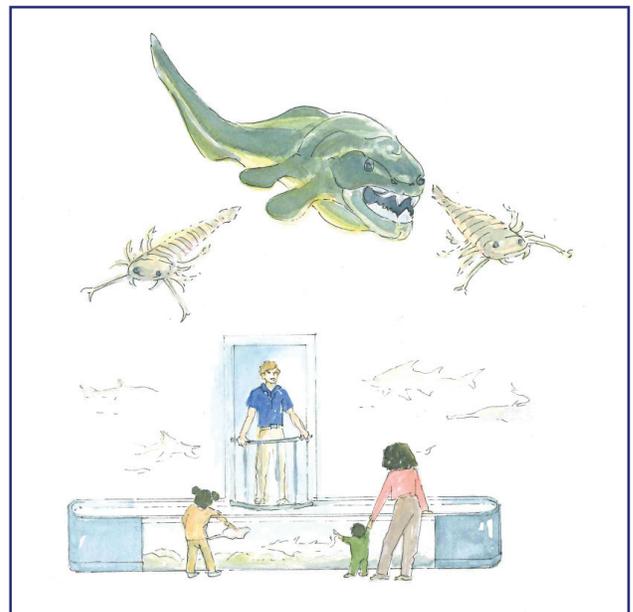
Sweeping views of Lake Superior's north and south shores tell of a frozen past.

Live animals reveal clues of survival when faced with a changing Earth.

Reach into ancient seas that once covered the landscape, leaving rich deposits behind.



Size up against the monster fish and sea scorpions that once ruled the shallow seas.



TIMELINE

Research and Design	November 2022 - November 2023
Fabrication and Production	November 2023 - November 2024
Installation	November 2024 - January 2025
Finishes	January - February 2025
Exhibit Opening Event	March 2025

BUDGET

CATEGORY	AMOUNT	FUNDING SOURCE
Staff (Design, Installation, Evaluation)	\$ 71,000	Great Lakes Aquarium
Gallery Preparation and Animal Habitats (Fabrication and Installation)	\$ 500,000	Legacy Fund
Models and Interactives (Fabrication and Installation)	\$ 326,600	Great Lakes Aquarium Partner Match
Interpretive Labels, Photography, and Multi-Media	\$ 52,000	Partner Match
Marketing	\$ 7,000	Great Lakes Aquarium
TOTAL	\$ 956,600	

The Aquarium is currently seeking partners from all sectors to contribute to the project as content collaborators, fabricators, and funders. Historically, Great Lakes Aquarium has completed major exhibit projects with excellence and economy. We are able to design and install exhibits for approximately one-third the cost of exhibit design firms. This also serves to keep Legacy funds within the state and our community as we employ designers, fabricators, and artists from within our region. Potential partners include state, county, and municipal entities.



PAST ARTS & CULTURAL HERITAGE FUND PROJECTS

Funded in FY 2020, **H2O: Watersheds at Work** engages visitors with function, importance, and role of water in our communities through water play and experimentation.

2022 3rd Place

Interpretive Media Award - Indoor Exhibit
National Association of Interpretation



Funded in FY 2016, **Unsalted Seas** bring visitors closer to the life, function, challenges, and beauty of the planet's largest lakes.



Funded in FY 2014, **Shipwrecks Alive!** showcases the story under the waves as submerged structures become habitat for wildlife.

2015 2nd Place

Interpretive Media Award - Indoor Exhibit
National Association of Interpretation



GREAT LAKES AQUARIUM

CONTACT INFORMATION

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