

ANNUAL REPORT  
2022 - 2023



SUPPORTING THE SCIENTIFIC, EDUCATIONAL, AND PUBLIC OPERATIONS OF THE ROYAL TYRRELL MUSEUM

*The Royal Tyrrell Museum Cooperating Society (the “Society”) and Royal Tyrrell Museum of Palaeontology (the “Museum”) had a record-breaking year, with the highest attendance at the Museum, the highest sales in the Museum Shop, and record memberships sold. We also celebrated the 15 millionth visitor to the Museum!*

This year, the Society contributed \$180,000 in support of the research, educational programming, and exhibit development for the Museum.

Some of the projects included:

- Funding fieldwork in Devil’s Coulee, Alberta
- Travel and accommodation for a Museum Curator to use the Synchrotron at the University of Saskatchewan
- Safety equipment rental and training for fieldwork in Dinosaur Provincial Park
- Travel and accommodation costs for curatorial candidates to visit Drumheller during the interview process
- Refreshments for visiting colleagues and conferences held at the Museum
- Funding for Drumheller high school graduation scholarships
- Museum playground cleaning and maintenance
- Hiring a content provider for the upcoming *First Life* gallery
- Attendance milestone celebrations



The Society funds the Fee Assistance Program where underprivileged adults and youths visit the Museum for free. This year, the Society made it possible for 83 adults and 28 youths (aged 7 – 17) to visit the Museum.

The Society also administers the Drumheller Fund, which presents grants to the local community on behalf of the Drumheller Family and the Calgary Foundation. This year's grant was split between supporting the Friends of the Drumheller Valley Secondary School's application to resurface the outdoor tennis courts in the amount of \$9,774 and the Town of Drumheller Library Board's application for \$6,800 to bring Dolly Parton's Imagination Library to Drumheller. Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is a free book gifting program where children, aged 0 – 5 years, who are registered in the program receive free books sent directly to them each month. The Society was pleased to be able to support both worthy projects.

Dr. Femke Holwerda, the Society's Dr. Betsy Nicholls Postdoctoral Fellow is concluding research on the feeding niches and mechanisms of mosasaurs (marine reptiles) with expected completion by the end of summer 2023. As part of her project, Dr. Holwerda performed a pilot study on Strontium (Sr) isotope analysis of mosasaur teeth. The results may indicate that mosasaurs were migratory and were eating diverse types of food from different areas of the Western Interior Seaway during the Late Cretaceous. The preliminary results have been presented at the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology conference held in Toronto, the European Association of Vertebrate Palaeontologists conference in Benevento, Italy, and the Canadian Society of Vertebrate Palaeontology in Ottawa.

The Society continues to host the annual Speaker Series where scientists from around the world present their current research. The Speaker Series was held virtually again this year and covered such diverse subjects as growth rates in *Tyrannosaurus rex*, Late Cretaceous vertebrate assemblages of Manitoba, mammal evolution, fossil bird locomotion, and the domestication of cats and dogs.

Presenters were from various institutions including the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, Oxford University in the UK, the University of Toronto, the University of Sao Paulo in Brazil, and the Philip J. Currie Museum in Grande Prairie, Alberta.

Speaker Series participants attended the Zoom-hosted presentations from all over Canada and the U.S. as well as Argentina, Belgium, France, Germany, India, Japan, Kenya, Mexico, Spain,



Poland, South Africa, and Uzbekistan! Many of the presentations have been uploaded to the Museum's YouTube Channel and can be found [here](#). This year's presentations have already had over 21,000 views.

The Society-sponsored Badlands Science Camp returned to the popular overnight format during the summer of 2022 and sold out at 181 participants! Two junior camps for campers aged 9 – 12 and three senior camps for campers aged 13 – 17 were held from Sunday evening to the following Saturday. Campers went on field trips to Horseshoe Canyon, Dry Island Buffalo Jump Provincial Park, and the Tolman Bridge badlands. They attended live lectures by Museum scientists and assisted in actual research projects by:

- Screen washing and sorting Palaeocene microvertebrate material
- Identifying, measuring, and recording hadrosaur hand and foot elements
- Removing overburden at sites in both Horseshoe Canyon and Dry Island Buffalo Jump Provincial Park to allow access to fossil resources

The Society hosted two 18+ events at the Museum in the past year. In October 2022, the *Dinosaurs After Dusk* event welcomed 74 registrants who were given behind-the-scenes tours of Collections, the Preparation Lab, and the galleries, and enjoyed tasty treats. In February 2023, the *Fossils After Dusk* event welcomed 59 registrants who brought in approximately 70 fossils for identification, enjoyed a presentation by the Curator of Dinosaurs, Dr. Donald Henderson, and participated in mystery fossil identification activities.

The Membership program sold a record-breaking 977 memberships this year. Thank you to all our valuable members for making this milestone possible!

The Society would like to thank our Executive Members for their continued support: Brianne Christie, Cory and Kirstie Edlund, Rebecca Hobbs and Glen Cuming, Samuel and Pearl Huang, Liz Hughes, Yasser Hussein, Yvonne and Johannes Irnich, Daniel and Rachel Jones, Brad and Danni Krusky, Hailey and Jay Lafond, Jack and Daphne Lucas, Summer and Greg Manca, David and Ruth Martin, Genevieve Michel and Chad Harrison, Christopher Nowell and Angie Wisk, Dan and Lisa Peseski, Elaine and Tony Piwin, Veronique and Rithesh Ram, Janet and Brent Schulze, Munish Sharma, Robert and Cathrine Solomonson, Andrew Williams and Bonnie Presser, Carson Woitas, and Arden Zylla.



The Society thanks everyone who contributed donations this year, be it directly, through the website, or by dropping coins in the donation boxes found within the Museum galleries. We received \$44,000 in donations, honorariums, and grants this year.

Thank you to Alberta Blue Cross in memory of Scott Newborn, Toby Brown in memory of Scott Newborn, Geoffrey Christmas, Melissa DiGirolamo, Walter DiMattia, Dawn Fovargue, Gerald Gish, Elaine Piwin, Gary Posehn, Syed Umair Raza, James Skinner, Ross White, Jason Wong, and several anonymous donors for their generous donations.

We were also honoured to receive a substantial bequest from the estate of William G. Mellett. These funds will be held in reserve for an upcoming capital project.

This year, the Shop welcomed more than 100,000 customers and sold approximately \$3.6 million in merchandise. This is a significant increase over the 2022 fiscal year sales of \$2.3 million.

The Shop sold over 280,000 individual products including 30,000 plush animals, 29,000 T-shirts/hoodies, 12,000 mugs/water bottles, and 5,000 reusable bags.

Sales through the Online Shop have remained steady with 380 orders placed for a total of \$26,000. The highest sales occurred in November and December ahead of the holiday season. Top sellers in the Online Shop include the custom skeletal mugs, adult ball caps, and adult T-shirts. Fourteen customers used the local pick-up option and 30 customers redeemed various discounts.



We have added over two dozen new items to the Online Shop including the new Dire Wolf plush, three beautiful silk ties, a snow globe featuring our Black Beauty *Tyrannosaurus rex* skull, and much more. Don't forget that members receive a 15% discount in-store and online. Contact the Membership department at [membership@tyrrellmuseum.ca](mailto:membership@tyrrellmuseum.ca) for more information.

All net profit generated from the Museum Shop is held in reserve for future Museum projects, except for a small amount that is set aside for Society technological needs and improvements.

The Society is currently working with the Museum to implement our new Strategic Plan, which focuses on raising funds for future Museum projects. The projects will support the Museum's exhibitory needs and enhance visitor experiences.

As we continue to reach new milestones and create new goals, I have been reflecting on the strong relationship that the Society has maintained with the Museum, the Government of Alberta, the Town of Drumheller, and surrounding communities. I would like to thank our dedicated board members, the Society's staff and Executive Director, Patty Ralrick, as well as Museum staff and management for their continued hard work, dedication, and support over the past year. I look forward to maintaining and enhancing these relationships.



Bridget Unland

Chairperson, Royal Tyrrell Museum Cooperating Society

