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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Museum of Natural History Unveils New Butterfly Pavilion and Transformed Backyard**

*Second Phase of \$20 Million Centennial Project Now Complete*

**Santa Barbara, CA (September 24, 2018)** – After a year of renovations, the second phase of the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History's \$20 million Centennial Project opened to the public on September 22, welcoming over 3,500 guests in the first two days.

The first phase of the Centennial Project was completed on June 2, 2018, and includes extensive renovations of three major galleries—Mammal Hall, Bird Habitat Hall, and a brand new Santa Barbara Gallery—plus a new ADA-accessible arrival plaza and pedestrian path along the Museum's entire frontage.

The new Sprague Butterfly Pavilion, a one-of-a-kind permanent structure built from local Santa Barbara sandstone and steel ribs, features hundreds of local flowering plants, a water pond, and wooden benches, inviting guests to relax and enjoy the naturally beautiful surroundings along the shaded banks of Mission Creek. The Museum's popular *Butterflies Alive!* exhibit, with nearly 1,000 butterflies of various shapes and colors, will be open for three weeks from noon-4:00 PM each day through October 14. This inaugural run celebrates the Pavilion opening and gives guests a taste for the summer exhibit that will occur every year from Memorial Day to Labor Day starting in 2019.

Located just beyond the Pavilion, the renovated and now ADA-accessible Museum Backyard includes new elements to help children and adults better connect with nature. In the Nature Club House, a naturalist is available to answer questions, help guests interact with touchable objects and live animals and insects, as well as suggest Backyard activities including the Bio Builders Zone where guests can create forts, nature art, or whatever their imagination dreams up. The Create Zone lets guests get dirty making mud pies, and the new waterway provides a place to explore and get wet even when Mission Creek is dry. Guests can even check out a paleontologist kit and help excavate real fossils trapped inside a piece of stone matrix from a local quarry.

A ribbon cutting ceremony held on Friday, September 21 formally unveiled the Norman F. Sprague III Butterfly Pavilion, the Museum Backyard, and the Nature Club House to over 100 guests including donors, trustees, staff, and community leaders.

Museum President and CEO Luke Swetland shared, "I am so proud of the reception we have received from members and visitors regarding the improvements to the Mammal Hall and Bird Habitat Hall. As envisioned, the new Santa Barbara Gallery is truly serving as a space for inspiration for visitors to get out and explore the diverse habitats that can be found close by. The beauty of the improved entrance areas sets the stage for the wonderful experience our visitors will enjoy, and the new Butterfly Pavilion and improved Backyard are the perfect next step in our revitalization of the Museum campus."

In 2019, the Museum will comprehensively restore Fleischmann Auditorium, its largest venue for events and temporary exhibits. With work slated to last through November, the 80 year-old building will be refurbished from top to bottom, receiving improvements such as a new heating and air conditioning system, refinished



wooden floors and exhibit cases, and a lift to make the stage fully ADA-accessible. The project will expand the Centennial Campaign from the already raised \$18.7 million to a final goal of \$21 million.

Open daily from 10:00 AM-5:00 PM, the Museum welcomes everyone to explore these newly transformed spaces and learn about Santa Barbara's unique ecosystems and natural history, ultimately better connecting them with the natural world around us.



New Sprague Butterfly Pavilion made from local Santa Barbara sandstone and steel ribs



A Red Admiral butterfly in the new Sprague Butterfly Pavilion



3-year-old Adriana Lopez talks with a Naturalist Dylan Otte in the new Nature Club House



Renovated and ADA-accessible Museum Backyard

### **About the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History**

*Powered by Science. Inspired by Nature.* Founded in 1916, the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History inspires a thirst for discovery and a passion for the natural world. The Museum seeks to connect people to nature for the betterment of both, and prides itself on being *naturally different*. For more information, visit [www.sbnature.org](http://www.sbnature.org).

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