



BY BRANDI BERRY

# New adventures at Atlanta's Fernbank Museum of Natural History

Fernbank Museum of Natural History in Atlanta invites students to explore a world of nature, live animals, fossils, dinosaurs, archaeological artifacts, cultural objects, hands-on science, immersive film experiences on a five-story IMAX screen, and more. Permanent and special exhibitions combine with IMAX films, instructor-led auditorium programs, and pre- and post-visit activities to make lessons come alive and keep your students inspired to learn more.

There is always something new to discover at Fernbank, and the all-new children's exhibition Fernbank NatureQuest brings the museum experience to new heights, where students are

invited into a world that truly belongs to children. Students in Pre-K and elementary school can climb up a tree to an elevated rope bridge for an aerial view of the immense expedition that awaits. They'll journey into a working clubhouse built among the towering trees and learn new ways to investigate the natural world through the roles of different scientists as they examine the roles of biologists, archaeologists, geologists and more.

Special interactive opportunities exist in every nook and cranny. Highlights include "night vision binoculars" that reveal the landscapes and inhabitants in the twilight hours; a realistic archaeol-

ogy dig with layered artifacts for exploration; a traversable cave filled with fossils, geodes, echoes and speleothems; a magic mirror that brings objects placed in front of it to life, including an acorn that grows into a tree and a fossilized trilobite that suddenly stirs again after 500 million years; a simulated river that ripples as you cross and scatters with fish when you "splash;" and much more.

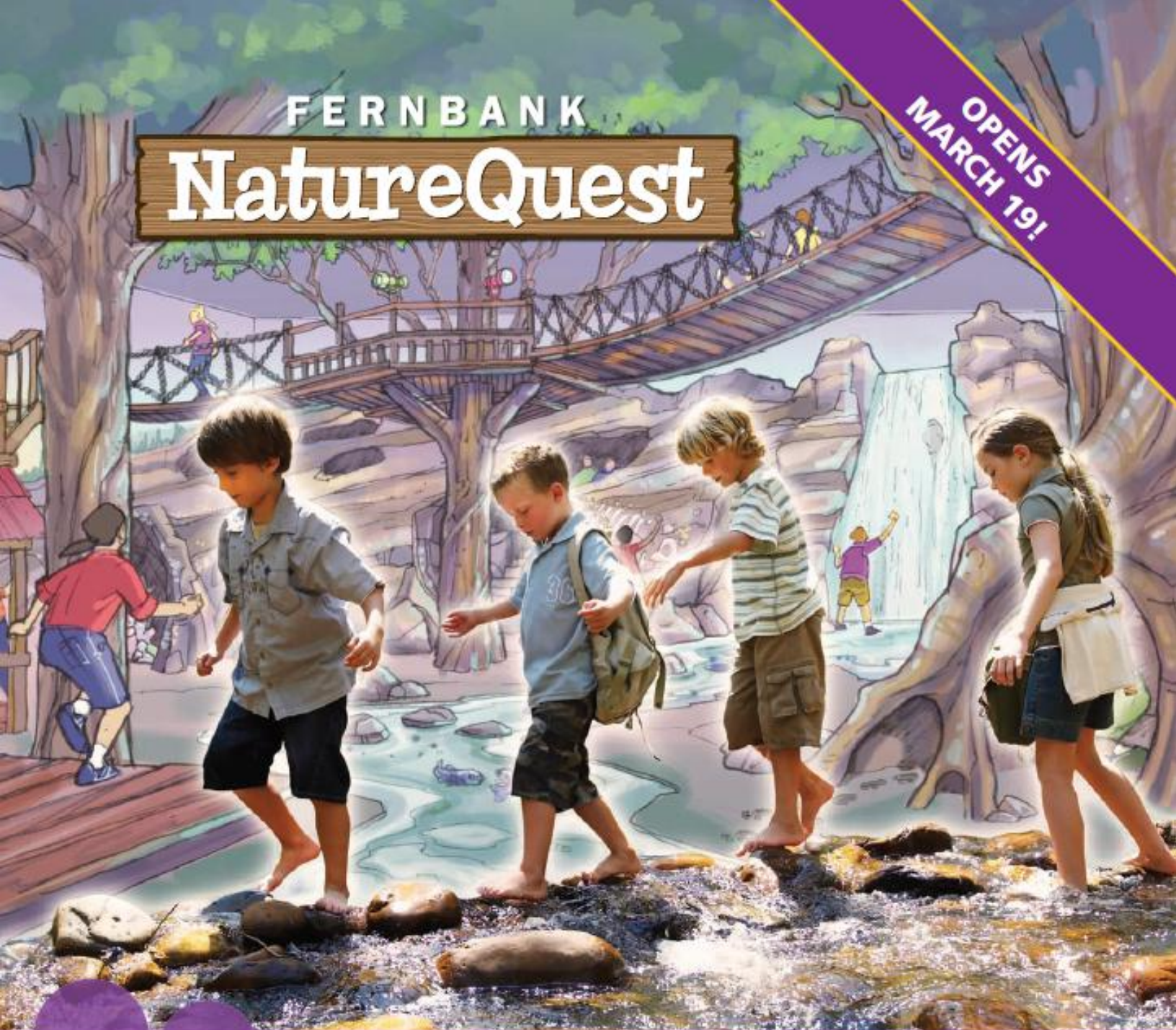
Fernbank NatureQuest offers over 100 interactive components and features multiple layers of learning opportunities, including visual, auditory and tactile, for children of all ages and

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# FERNBANK NatureQuest

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## Let the adventure begin!

Your students will explore the nooks and crannies of a multi-level clubhouse, shimmy up the insides of a mighty red oak tree, walk through a virtual waterfall and more in Fernbank's ground-breaking **NEW** children's exhibition.

Visit [fernbankmuseum.org/naturequest](http://fernbankmuseum.org/naturequest) for tickets and details.



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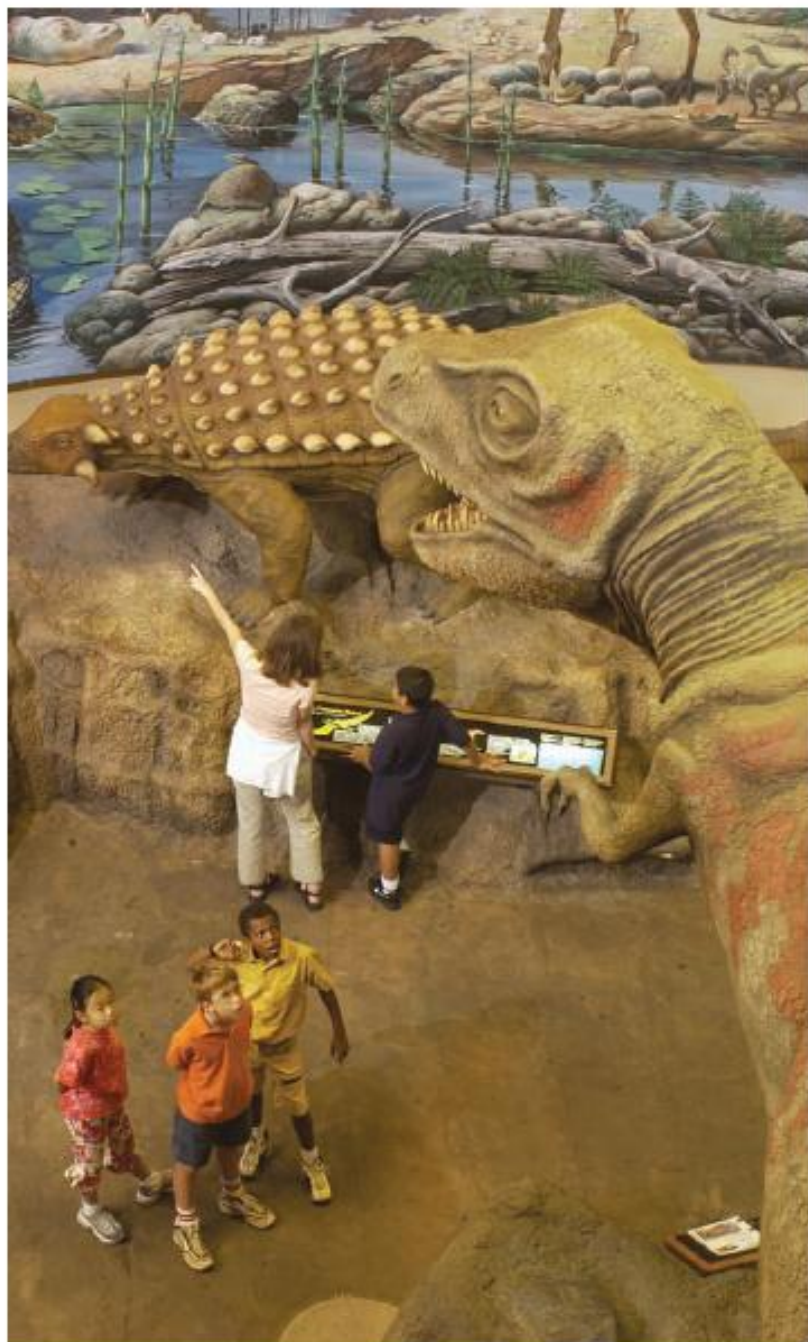
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## Fernbank Museum

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abilities. In addition to the clubhouse, the exhibition features six diverse ecosystems, each providing homes to a variety of plants and animals. The science concepts that can be explored in Fernbank NatureQuest include basic needs and lifecycles of plants and animals, adaptation, fossils, rocks and minerals, and more. The power of observation offers visitors a wealth of learning opportunities, and the interactive components and other exhibit content were informed by Georgia Performance Standards to ensure teachers, parents and children have a rich learning experience while also having fun.



Young visitors will enjoy the opportunity to match shapes of starfish, sponges and barnacles to an underwater pier piling while those in their later elementary school years will benefit from higher-level concepts such as change over time as they investigate fossils and the strata layers of a rock outcropping.

"Fernbank NatureQuest was designed to provide an experience where students and other visitors are challenged, engaged and able to explore in ways that cultivate curiosity — just like real scientists," said Christine Bean, Fernbank's VP of Education. "We want children to become part of the exhibition and set their own path for how to explore and engage with it. The sophisticated experiences in NatureQuest will inspire further investigation year after year."

The new Fernbank NatureQuest exhibition is not the only new feature at Fernbank, though. The special exhibition *Mythic Creatures: Dragons, Unicorns and Mermaids* will delight and inspire students as they connect the natural and cultural roots of some of the world's

most enduring mythical creatures with their science, social studies and language arts curriculum. This exhibition features paintings, textiles, authentic cultural objects, and life-sized models of incredible creatures, including a mermaid, unicorn, kraken, Pegasus, Roc and others. Students will understand how cultures throughout time have been inspired by nature to envision and depict these strange and wonderful creatures. *Mythic Creatures* is on view for a limited time only and will be available for field trips through August 14, 2011.

Fernbank always offers a variety of permanent exhibitions, including a journey through the prehistoric and modern landscapes of the region in *A Walk Through Time in Georgia*; a closer look at the objects, clothing and body art that people around the world wear to reflect personal information in *Reflections of Culture*; the world's largest dinosaurs in *Giants of the Mesozoic*, and the clues that archaeologists excavate to reveal the early history of Native Americans in *Conveyed in Clay: Stories from St. Catharines Island*.

Because it's not practical to take students back in time to visit ancient cultures or journey into wildlife habitats around the world, the IMAX Theatre is a great way to share the wonders of the world with students. The immersive, five-story screen puts classes in the action, leaving educational content sharp in students' memories long after their visit.

Fernbank's field trip team is available to help educators plan the perfect visit to Fernbank Museum of Natural History. A variety of online resources are also available to demonstrate how Fernbank's exhibits, programs and films correlate to Georgia Performance Standards. The museum also offers scholarship funding to Title 1 schools. Funds are limited but the Fernbank Field Trip Team is available to assist in any way possible.

Visit [fernbankmuseum.org/fieldtrips](http://fernbankmuseum.org/fieldtrips) or call 404.929.6320 for more information. Educators are invited to sign up on Fernbank's Web site for the educator e-newsletter program, offering monthly updates on special activities, events, educator discounts, program highlights, exhibitions, films and other news.

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